



Frontpiece to *The Power of Sympathy* (1789).

EARLY AMERICAN NOVELS YOU (MIGHT HAVE) MISSED

There is something like a reported ninety novels written in America in the span from 1776 to 1820.¹ Why the relatively sudden surge of the genre in this and other countries during this period is understandably a matter of speculation and conjecture. But among the reasons that have been or might be adduced for the phenomena are:

1. Novels, in supplementing music and poetry, served as an added and convenient form of home entertainment, and at a time when improved and developing economies allowed for greater domestic leisure.

2. Over time, the high quality work of writers such as Cervantes, de Vega, Le Sage, Defoe, Swift, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Voltaire, Rousseau, Goldsmith, Godwin, Sterne, Goethe and others helped to create a demand and insure their popularity.

3. They offered authors a new and “novel” means of expression and creativity beyond what newspapers, essays, and sermons made possible.

4. The rise of sentiment and sensibility at the dawn of the romantic era increased the desire for writings, as well as other works of art, that reflected these attitudes; while serving as a sort of spiritual dress particularly suited to adorn the Age of Revolution.

5. Although women authors had by the late 18th century distinguished themselves in poetry, belles lettres, stage drama and even writings pertaining to the realm of political activism, the work of such nevertheless represented a very small percentage of the published output of such genres; so that to a very large degree, the novel became a medium which made it possible for women to have a voice and form of public participation largely denied them.² This in turn brought in a larger and notably enthusiastic audience for published writings.

¹ On this point and with respect to the topic of the novel in early America generally, see chapter “The Novel” by Michael T. Gilmore, pp. 620-642; as found in *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Volume One 1590-1820*, General Editor Sacvan Bercovitch (1994).

² 1st Corinthians 14:34-35, for instance, states: “Let women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be subject, as also the law saith. But if they would learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church;” and yet this viewpoint was hardly or exclusively a Christian one; indeed, Christianity in its earliest days actually improved the social status and dignity of women.

Using William Hill Brown's preface to his³ *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), the "first" written and published American novel, as a cue and where he pointedly defends the moral edification and assistance they have the potential to afford, it has been made to sound as if novels in America were of themselves widely frowned upon in early America. This is misleading; since few by that hour were going to be so if at all offended by the likes of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Roderick Random*, or *The Vicar of Wakefield*. More specifically what many people felt threatened by was novels of the sort written by Samuel Richardson, Rousseau, and Goethe; which packed an emotional dynamite that in close and intricate detail touched on some very private and personal concerns, especially such as related to sexual temptation and or illicit love. Yes, we as Americans were decidedly revolutionary, but there was considerable disagreement and debate whether we were or ought to be as extreme as the "enlightened" French or certain English radicals and would-be reformers.

As a result, American authors of the late 18th century sought to establish a clearly defined moral justifications and excuse for novels that touched on psychologically analyzed interpersonal relationships between men and women. For example, one criticism of the novel was that it encouraged unhealthy fantasizing; when what citizens should be concerned with rather was sober reality; that they might be better equipped to deal with and address public affairs and questions. In addition, by dwelling too much on purient desires, the novel steered readers away from focusing on family and community interests, and that we ought not be confusing (to use Milton's distinction) noble liberty with cheap license.

In response, the novelists like Hill Brown, Brockden Brown, Susanna Rowson and Hannah Webster Foster were careful to explain or imply that their fictions writings were based on or drawn from real life events and personalities, and that as such they offered a way to better educate people about the dangers that potentially lay in wait for them; which would take hold of and possible ruin them if they were not informed in advance of their existence. In other words, one of the optimal, indeed perhaps necessary, means of *avoiding captivity* and being taken into slavery by some devil or other was to both begin to understand and be apprised of his existence by way of real life, documented accounts and circumstances. If you want to want to guard someone's loyalty to the family from the potential harm posed by one's won unreflecting infatuation and or love for a dubious and seducing stranger, one needed to better know one's self while obtaining a clearer idea and more educated idea of what such strangers were or might be like. At the same time as it exposed the darker side of human natures to be avoided and shunned, the novel also afforded the opportunity of showing the admirable beauty and salutary benefits of moral virtue and heart-based idealism. The format almost always preferred for such works was the series of letters presentation introduced by Richardson; as it gave the novel an air of day-to-day life realism and immediacy; all the more to bring attention to the serious of the matters and controversies being examined.

And yet, as some would argue, the novel itself and in the wrong hands was notwithstanding and could itself be a kind of masquerading seducer of the unwary; even when it pretended to be an ethical or religious teacher. Is this accusation fair? It all depends on the individual work in question. Doubtless, even with authors we like, it is not inconceivable we encounter points or opinions on which we might dissent from them. Despite this, it seems scarcely sufficient grounds to do away with the novel entirely.

What then about we might best do is advise -- *caveat lector!*

While the novel is one of the most challenging forms of literature to excerpt, prepared here are seven terse samplings; that though naturally these cannot do justice to the given opus overall, at least, and hopefully, they convey some of their character and flavor.

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Amelia: or The Faithless Briton. An Original Novel, Founded Upon Recent Facts (1787), by an anonymous writer, came out in Philadelphia in issues of *The Columbian Magazine*; with the extract

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<sup>3</sup> Although Wm. Hill Brown is generally agreed to be the author of *The Power of Sympathy*, the conclusion is one based on persuasive surmise, not irrefragable fact.

*presented here courtesy of the labor of scholars Duncan Faherty, Queens College & The CUNY Graduate Center, and Ed White, University of Florida.*

It has often been observed that despondency begets boldness and enterprize; and the female heart, which is susceptible of the gentlest sentiment, is, likewise, capable of the noblest fortitude. Amelia perceived all the baseness of the desertion meditated by Doliscus [a wounded British officer she had earlier fallen in love with], she foresaw all its ruinous consequences upon Horatio's peace, her own character, and the fate of the innocent being which she bore, and, wiping the useless tears from her cheek, she resolved publicly to vindicate her honor, and assert her rights. Animated then, with the important purpose, supported by the presumption of her marriage, and hoping yet to find Doliscus in New-York, she immediately repaired to that city—but, alas! he was gone! This disappointment, however, did not defeat, nor could any obstacle retard the prosecution of her design: a ship that sailed the succeeding day wafted her to Britain, friendless and forlorn.

Innumerable difficulties and inconveniences were encountered by the inexperienced traveller, but they vanished before the object of her pursuit; and even her entrance into London, that chaos of clamour and dissipation, produced no other sensations than those which naturally arose from her approach to the dwelling of Doliscus.

Amelia recollected that Doliscus had often described the family residence to be situated to Grosvenor-place, and the stage, in which she journeyed, stopping in the evening, at a public house in Picadilly, she determined, without delay, to pay him her unexpected and unwelcome visit. The embarrassed and anxious manner with which she enquired for his house, exposed her to unjust surmise and senseless ribaldry; but her grief rendered her incapable of observation, and her purity was superior to insult.

Doliscus had arrived about a fortnight earlier than Amelia. The title, influence, and fortune which devolved upon him in consequence of his father's death, had swelled his youthful vanity to excess, and supplied him with a numerous retinue of flatterers and dependants. At the moment that he was listening in extasy to that servile crew, the victim of his arts, the deluded daughter of the man to whom he was indebted for the preservation of his life, stood trembling at his door. A gentle rap, after an awful pause of some minutes, procured her admission. Her memory recognized the features of the servant that opened the door; but it was not the valet who had attended Doliscus at the cottage—she remembered not where or when she had seen him.

After considerable solicitation the porter consented to call Doliscus from his company, and conducted Amelia into an antichamber [sic] to wait his arrival. A roar of laughter succeeded the delivery of her message, and the word *assignation*, which was repeated on all sides, seemed to renovate the wit and hilarity of the table. The gay and gallant host, inflamed with Champagne, was not displeased at the imputation, but observed that as a lady was in the case, it was unnecessary to apologize for a short desertion of his friends and wine.

At the sight of that lady, however, Doliscus started. Amelia's countenance was pale and haggard with fatigue and sorrow, her person was oppressed with the burthen which she now bore in its last stage, and her eye, fixed steadfastly upon him, as he entered the room, bespoke the complicated anguish and indignation of her feelings. Her aspect so changed, and her appearance so unexpected, added to the terrors of a guilty conscience, and, for a moment, Doliscus thought the visitation supernatural. But Amelia's wrongs having inspired her with courage, she boldly reproached him with his baseness and perfidy, and demanded a public and unequivocal acknowledgement of their marriage. In vain he endeavoured to sooth and divert her from her purpose, in vain to persuade her to silence and delay,—his arts had lost their wonted influence, while the restoration of her injured fame and honor absorbed every faculty of her mind.

At length he assumed a different tone, a more authoritative manner. "Madam," exclaimed he, "I am not to be thus duped or controuled. I have a sense of pity, indeed, for your indiscretion, but none for your passion: I would alleviate your afflictions, but I will not submit to your frenzy." "Wretch!" retorted Amelia, "but that I owe something to a father's peace, I should despise to call thee husband."—"Husband" cried Doliscus, with a sneer, "Husband! why truly, I remember a rural masquerade, at which an honest

soldier, now my humble porter, played the parson, and you the blushing bride—but, pr’ythee, do not talk of husband.”—

This discovery only was wanting for the consummation of Amelia’s misery. It was sudden and fatal as the lightning’s blast—she sunk beneath the stroke. A deadly stupor seized upon her senses, which was sometimes interrupted with a boisterous laugh, and sometimes with a nervous ejaculation...

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From The Power of Sympathy, attributed to Wm. Hill Brown; first published in Boston in 1789.

LETTER XLII.

The Hon. Mr. HARRINGTON to the Rev. Mr. HOLMES.

BOSTON.

YOU very well know of my amour with *Maria*, and that a daughter [Harriot] was the offspring of that illicit connexion [i.e., with *Maria*]—That sixteen years have elapsed since, by your goodness, she has lived with Mrs. *Francis*, and let me add, daily improving in beauty and every amiable accomplishment—But how shall we be able— how shall we pretend to investigate the great springs by which we are actuated, or account for the operation of SYMPATHY—my son [Harrington, or whom for convenience we might denote “Harrington Jr.”], who has been at home about eight weeks, has accidentally seen her, and to complete THE TRIUMPH OF NATURE—has loved her. He is now even upon the point of marrying— shall I proceed!—*of marrying his Sister!*—A circumstance seemingly fortuitous has discovered this important affair—I fly to prevent incest—Do not upbraid me with being the author of my own misfortunes.—”This comes of your libertinism,” you will say, “this comes of your adultery!” Spare your reflections, my friend— my heart is monitor enough—I am strangely agitated!

Adieu!

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LETTER XLIII.

The Hon. Mr. HARRINGTON to the Rev. Mr. HOLMES.

BOSTON.

MY heart failed me! twenty times have I attempted to break the matter to my son—and twenty times have I returned from the task—I have engaged a friend to acquaint him how nearly connected he already is with the object of his love. This is a new, and to me a sorrowful instance of the force of SYMPATHY —My grief is insupportable—my affliction is greater than I can bear—it will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Farewel[!]

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LETTER XLIV.

HARRINGTON *to* WORTHY

BOSTON.

ALL my airy schemes of love and happiness are vanished like a dream. Read this, and pity your unfortunate friend.

To Mr. T. HARRINGTON.

“SIR,

“YOU are about to marry a young lady of great beauty and accomplishments—I beg you to bestow a few serious thoughts on this important business—Let me claim your attention, while I disclose an affair, which materially concerns you—Harriot must not be your wife— You know your father is averse to your early connecting yourself in marriage with any woman—The duty we owe a parent is sacred, but this is not the only barrier to your marriage—the ties of consanguinity prevent it— She is your SISTER Your

father, or Miss [Myra] *Harrington*,⁴ will inform you more particularly —It is sufficient for me to have hinted it in time. I am, with the most perfect esteem, and sincere wishes for your happiness, your
“UNKNOWN FRIEND, &C.”

(IN CONTINUATION.)

THE gloom of melancholy in the faces of the family but too well corroborated this intelligence—so I asked no questions—they read in my countenance that I had received the letter, and my sister put into my hand *The History of Maria* [Harriot’s mother and seduction victim of Harrington Sr.]—I concealed my emotion while I read the account—“It is a pitiful tale,” said I, as I returned it—and walked out of the room to give vent to the agitation of my heart.

I HAVE not yet seen *Harriot*—*Myra* has run to greet her with the new title of *sister*. Adieu! my friend—little happiness is left for me in this world...

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LETTER XLVI.
HARRINGTON *to* WORTHY

BOSTON.

I HAVE seen her—I prest her to my heart—I called her my Love—my *Sister*. Tenderness and sorrow were in her eyes—How am I guilty, my friend—How is this transport a crime? My love is the most pure, the most holy —*Harriot* beheld me with tears of the most tender affection—“Why,” said she, “why, my friend, my dear *Harrington*, have I loved! but in what manner have I been culpable? HOW WAS I TO KNOW YOU WERE MY BROTHER? Yes! I might have known it—how else could you have been so kind—so tender—so affectionate!”—Here was all the horror of conflicting passions, expressed by gloomy silence— by stifled cries—by convulsions—by sudden floods of tears—The scene was too much for my heart to bear—I bade her adieu—my heart was breaking—I tore myself from her and retired.

WHAT is human happiness? The prize for which all strive, and so few obtain; the more eagerly we pursue it, the farther we stray from the object: Wherefore I have determined within myself that we increase in misery as we increase in age—and if there are any happy they are those of thoughtless childhood.

I THEN viewed the world at a distance in perspective. I thought mankind appeared happy in the midst of pleasures that flowed round them. I now find it a deception, and am tempted sometimes to wish myself a child again. Happy are the dreams of infancy, and happy their harmless pursuits! I saw the *ignis fatuus*, and have been running after it, but now I return from the search. I return and bring back disappointment. As I reflect on these scenes of infantine ignorance, I feel my heart interested, and become sensibly affected—and however futile these feelings may appear as I communicate them to you—they are feelings I venture to assert which every one must have experienced who is possessed of a heart of sensibility.

Adieu!

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LETTER XLVII.
HARRINGTON *to* WORTHY

BOSTON.

I NO longer receive satisfaction from the enjoyments of the world—society is distasteful to me—my favourite authors I have entirely relinquished—In vain I try to forget myself, or seek for consolation—my repose is interrupted by distressing visions of the night —my thoughts are broken—I cannot even think regularly.

HARRIOT is very weak—there is no hope of her life.

Adieu!

⁴ [Edit. Note. Myra is the sister of Harrington Jr., and also friend, and as the reader comes to learn step-sister, of Harriot.]

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*From The Hapless Orphan; or, Innocent Victim of Revenge (1793) by "an American Lady."*

### LETTER XXXVII.

*Havre-de-Grace.*

WHEN I last addressed you, I flattered myself my next letter would be dated from Philadelphia, as Captain Green had consented to take the charge of Captain Clark's men. But I am yet detained in this city by an unfortunate accident, in which my friend, the Captain, is particularly concerned.

A few days after his arrival at Havre-de-Grace, as he was standing at the door of the coffee-house, a Mr. Peters went up to him, and said, "Was my brother, who served upon Rhode-Island, arrested for cowardice in that expedition?" Captain Clark, with an air of indifference, replied, "Just as you say, Sir."

Nothing farther passed between them, until the night previous to our intended departure for Philadelphia; when Mrs. Gardner, alarmed by a knocking at the street door, jumped out of bed, and pushing up the window, requested to know who was there. A person now inquired for Captain Clark, adding, "He must see him immediately. She observed, "The Captain intended setting off very early in the morning for Philadelphia, and she could not think of calling him at so late an hour—pray Sir, please to leave your name, I will not omit to tell him you called." "Madam," said he, "be so obliging as to step to his door, and tell him Captain Peters is in waiting and must see him, as an event of the utmost importance has taken place at the coffee-house, and his advice is wanted, to settle an unhappy affair." Mrs. Gardner appearing to hesitate, he continued, "*I give you my honour, Madam, that no injury is intended him.*" Finding she could not put him off, she delivered the message to Captain Clark, who, ever ready to assist all who were involved in difficulty, arose, and putting on his clothes, hurried down stairs, and opening the street door, found *Captain Peters and his brother*, who apologized for calling him out of bed, by observing, that a number of gentlemen, engaged in a dispute at the coffee-house, had agreed to leave it with him to settle. And taking him under each arm, they walked on, till they reached the spot, intended for their pusil[<sup>l</sup>]animous plan, when Captain Peters thus addressed him: "Did you, Sir, assert that I was arrested upon Rhode-Island for cowardice?" "No," he replied, "I did not." "It is a lie, Sir," said Captain Peters, and instantly gave him a severe stroke with his cane, which brought him to the ground; when, like cowards, *they both* beat him until he was senseless, and then left him. In this situation, he remained all night. In the morning he was taken up, and carried into a house in the neighbourhood. A physician was called, who fortunately was the one that attended Mr. Barton; and having washed and dressed the wounds, recollected the countenance of my friend. He accordingly dispatched a person to Mrs. Gardner to acquaint her with the accident. As soon as she received this information, she came into my chamber, to inform me of the cause of our delay, and added, "There was nothing to fear from the wounds, no bones being broken." Distressed by this circumstance, I hastened down stairs, and dispatched a servant to the doctor, requesting to see him. He soon came, and begged me to entertain no fears in behalf of my friend, assuring me he was greatly recovered since the dressing of his wounds, and he flattered himself would, in a few days, be able to pursue his journey. An unavoidable engagement obliges me at present, to subscribe,

CAROLINE.

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English born Susanna Rowson's Charlotte. A tale of truth, published in Philadelphia by Mathew Carey in 1794 (though it saw its first printing in London in 1791 under the title Charlotte Temple), was one of the hugest and most popular American best-sellers of its day and sometime afterward. In addition to being a novelist, the prolific Rowson was (as noted elsewhere) a talented poet, lyricist, and playwright. A professionally employed school-teacher for young ladies (lack of enforceable copyright prevented her from garnering much income from her compositions), she distinctly viewed her role as an educator and less so literary entertainer. Her other prose fictions include The inquisitor; or, Invisible rambler (1793); Rebecca,

or *The fille de chamber (1794)*; *Mentoria*; or *The young lady's friend (1794)*; *Trials of the human heart (1795)*, and *Reuben and Rachel (1798)*.

CHAPTER XXI.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see,
That mercy I to other show,
That mercy show to me.
Pope.

WHEN Mrs. Beauchamp was dressed, she began to feel embarrassed at the thought of beginning an acquaintance with Charlotte, and was distressed how to make the first visit. "I cannot go without some introduction," said she, "it will look so like impertinent-curiosity." At length recollecting herself, she stepped into the garden, and gathering a few fine cucumbers, took them in her hand by way of apology for her visit.

A glow of conscious shame vermillioned Charlotte's face as Mrs. Beauchamp entered.

"You will pardon me, Madam," said she, "for not having before paid my respects to so amiable a neighbour; but we English people always keep up that reserve which is the characteristic of our nation wherever we go. I have taken the liberty to bring you a few cucumbers, for I observed you had none in your garden."

Charlotte, though naturally polite and well bred, was so confused she could hardly speak. Her kind visitor endeavoured to relieve her by not noticing her embarrassment. "I am come, Madam," continued she, "to request you will spend the day with me. I shall be alone; and, as we are both strangers in this country, we may hereafter be extremely happy in each other's friendship." "Your friendship, Madam," said Charlotte blushing, "is an honour to all who are favoured with it. Little as I have seen of this part of the world, I am no stranger to Mrs. Beauchamp's goodness of heart and known humanity: but my friendship—" She paused, glanced her eyes upon her own visible situation, and, spite of her endeavours to suppress them, burst into tears. Mrs. Beauchamp guessed the source from whence those tears flowed.

"You seem unhappy, Madam," said she: shall I be thought worthy your confidence! will you entrust me with the cause of your sorrow, and rest on my assurances to exert my utmost power to serve you." Charlotte returned a look of gratitude, but could not speak, and Mrs. Beauchamp continued—"My heart was interested in your behalf the first moment I saw you, and I only lament I had not made earlier overtures towards an acquaintance; but I flatter myself you will henceforth consider me as your friend."

"Oh Madam!" cried Charlotte, "I have forfeited the good opinion of all my friends; I have forsaken them, and undone myself."

"Come, come, my dear," said Mrs. Beauchamp, "you must not indulge these gloomy thoughts: you are not I hope so miserable as you imagine yourself: endeavour to be composed, and let me be favoured with your company at dinner, when, if you can bring yourself to think me your friend, and repose a confidence in me, I am ready to convince you it shall not be abused." She then arose and bade her good morning.

At the dining hour Charlotte repaired to Mrs. Beauchamp's, and during dinner assumed as composed an aspect as possible; but when the cloth was removed, she summoned all her resolution and determined to make Mrs. Beauchamp acquainted with every circumstance preceding her unfortunate elopement, and the earnest desire she had to quit a way of life so repugnant to her feelings.

With the benignant aspect of an angel of mercy did Mrs. Beauchamp listen to the artless tale: she was shocked to the soul to find how large a share La Rue had in the seduction of this amiable girl, and a tear fell, when she reflected so vile a woman was now the wife of her father.

When Charlotte had finished, she gave her a little time to collect her scattered spirits, and then asked her if she had never written to her friends.

“Oh yes, Madam,” said she, “frequently: but I have broke their hearts; they are either dead or have cast me of for ever, for I have never received a single line from them.”

“I rather suspect,” said Mrs. Beauchamp, “they have never had your letters: but suppose you were to hear from them, and they were willing to receive you, would you then leave this cruel Montraville, and return to them?”

“Would I!” said Charlotte, clasping her hands; “would not the poor sailor, tost on a tempestuous ocean, threatened every moment with death, gladly return to the shore he had left to trust to its deceitful calmness; Oh, my dear Madam, I would return, though to do it I were obliged to walk barefooted over a burning desert, and beg a scanty pittance of each traveller to support my existence. I would endure it all cheerfully, could I but once more see my dear blessed mother, hear her pronounce my pardon, and bless me before I died; but alas! I shall never see her more; she has blotted the ungrateful Charlotte from her remembrance, and I shall sink to the grave loaded with her’s and my father’s curse.”

Mrs. Beauchamp endeavoured to sooth her. “You shall write to them again,” said she, “and I will see that the letter is sent by the first packet that sails for England; in the mean time keep up your spirits, and hope every thing, by daring to deserve it.

She then turned the conversation, and Charlotte having taken a cup of tea, wished her benevolent friend a good evening...

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MAN MAY SMILE, AND SMILE, AND BE A VILLAIN.

WHILE Charlotte was enjoying some small degree of comfort in the of Mrs. Beauchamp, Montraville was advancing rapidly in his affection towards Miss Franklin. Julia was an amiable girl; she saw only the fair side of his character; she possessed an independant fortune, and resolved to be happy with the man of her heart, though his rank and fortune were by no means so exalted as she had a right to expect; she saw the passion which Montraville struggled to conceal; she wondered at his timidity, but imagined the distance fortune had placed between them occasioned his backwardness, and made every advance which strict prudence and a becoming modesty would permit. Montraville saw with pleasure he was not indifferent to her, but a spark of honour which animated his bosom would not suffer him to take advantage of her partiality. He was well acquainted with Charlotte’s situation, and he thought there would be a double cruelty in forsaking her at such a time: and to marry Miss Franklin, while honour, humanity, every sacred law, obliged him still to protect and support Charlotte, was a baseness which his soul shuddered at.

He communicated his uneasiness to Belcour: it was the very thing this pretended friend had wished. “And do you really,” said he, laughing, “hesitate at marrying the lovely Julia, and becoming master of her fortune, because a little foolish, fond girl chose to leave her friends, and run away with you to America. Dear Montraville, act more like a man of sense; this whining, pining Charlotte, who occasions you so much uneasiness, would have eloped with somebody else, if she had not with you.”

“Would to heaven,” said Montraville, “I had never seen her; my regard for her was but the momentary passion of desire, but I feel I shall love and revere Julia Franklin as long as I live; yet to leave poor Charlotte in her present situation would be cruel beyond description.”

“Oh my good sentimental friend,” said Belcour, “do you imagine no body has a right to provide for the brat but yourself.”

Montraville started. “Sure,” said he, “you cannot mean to insinuate that Charlotte is false.”

“I don’t insinuate it,” said Belcour, “I know it.”

Montraville turned pale as ashes. “Then there is no faith in woman,” said he.

“While I thought you attached to her,” said Belcour with an air of indifference, “I never wished to make you uneasy by mentioning her perfidy, but as I know you love and are beloved by Miss Franklin, I was determined not to let these foolish scruples of honour step between you and happiness, or your tenderness for the peace of a perfidious girl prevent your uniting yourself to a woman of honour.”

“Good heavens!” said Montraville, “what poignant reflections does a man endure who sees a lovely woman plunged in infamy, and is conscious he was her first seducer; but are you certain of what you say, Belcour?”

“So far,” replied he, “that I myself have received advances from her which I would not take advantage of out of regard to you: but hang it, think no more about her. I dined at Franklin’s today, and Julia bid me seek and bring you to tea: so come along my lad, make good use of opportunity, and seize the gifts of fortune while they are within your reach.”

Montraville was too much agitated to pass a happy evening even in the company of Julia Franklin: he determined to visit Charlotte early the next morning, tax her with her falsehood, and take an everlasting leave of her; but when the morning came, he was commanded on duty, and for six weeks was prevented from putting his design in execution. At length he found an hour to spare, and walked out to spend it with Charlotte: it was near four o’clock in the afternoon when he arrived at her cottage: she was not in the parlour, and without calling the servant he walked up stairs, thinking to find her in her bed room. He opened the door, and the first object that met his eyes was Charlotte asleep on the bed, and Belcour by her side.

“Death and distraction,” said he, stamping, “this is too much. Rise, villain, and defend yourself.”

Belcour sprang from the bed. The noise awoke Charlotte: terrified at the furious appearance of Montraville, and seeing Belcour with him in the chamber, she caught hold of his arm as he stood by the bed side, and eagerly asked what was the matter.

“Treacherous infamous girl,” said he, “can you ask? How came he here?” pointing to Belcour.

“As heaven is my witness,” replied she weeping. “I do not know. I have not seen him for these three weeks.”

“Then you confess he sometimes visits you?”

“He came sometimes by your desire.”

’Tis false; I never desired him to come, and you know I did not: but mark me, Charlotte, from this instant our connexion is at an end. Let Belcour, or any other of your favoured lovers, take you and provide for you: I have done with you for ever.”

He was then going to leave her: but starting wildly from the bed, she threw herself on her knees before him, protesting her innocence and entreating him not to leave her. “Oh Montraville,” said she, “kill me, for pity’s sake kill me, but do not doubt my fidelity. Do not leave me in this horrid situation; for the sake of your unborn child, oh! spurn not the wretched mother from you.”

“Charlotte,” said he, with a firm voice, “I shall take care that neither you nor your child want any thing in the approaching painful hour; but we meet no more.” He then endeavoured to raise her from the ground: but in vain: she clung about his knees, entreating him to believe her innocent, and conjuring Belcour to clear up the dreadful mystery.

Belcour cast on Montraville a smile of contempt: it irritated him almost to madness; he broke from the feeble arms of the distressed girl; she shrieked and fell prostrate on the floor.

Montraville instantly left the house and returned hastily to the city.

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*From Fidelity Rewarded: or The History of Polly Granville. In a Series of Letters; Giving an account of her sufferings for her steadfast adherence [sic] to her promise; and also of her deliverance from her troubles, and her marriage, in consequence of her father's commencing a virtuous and religious course of life; Boston 1796, by anonymous.*

**LETTER IX. From Miss POLLY GRANVILLE, to Mr. DANFORD.**

*My Dearest Friend,*

I RECEIVED your letter with as true affection, perhaps, as you wrote it; but language will fail me to describe the gratitude of my heart, for your regard and tenderness to me, after your having experienced such insulting behaviour and outrageous language from my father. But there is no comparison between virtue and vice: for virtue will ever set a man above resentment at the little foibles of those that have no regard to virtue; causing him to act consistently in every occurrence of life; not even aiming to take the advantage of the low minded; but passing on in quiet, through the boisterous tumults of a noisy world, with a mind fully fixed, and firmly rested, on a kind Providence; he is willing to wait the determination of that Providence; and not to rush into fraudulent measures to extricate himself out of difficulty. This is the characteristic of my dear Mr. Danford, when, at the same time, those, that are not possessed of your noble mind, would try to retaliate and use every kind of fraud, to be revenged on such as they think are their enemies; by which means they often involve themselves in inextricable difficulties, which often end in their utter ruin.

But to return: I think you have pitched upon a noble mode of conduct, which cannot fail of salutary effects. It will, doubtless, be productive of my enlargement. And, in the time of your absence, something, I doubt not, will turn up to our advantage in an honorable way, which will be vastly preferable to the same end gained in a clandestine manner. For, to use your language, I don't think fraud ought to be used in any case whatsoever. If we trust to Providence, I don't think we shall be disappointed.

I fully acquiesce in your proposal of visiting the eastern part of the world. And may your life and health be preserved, and the best of heaven's blessings attend you, until you return, richly experiencing the kind hand of Providence. In the mean time, I experience great trials, and afflictions on your account: for my father, using me with great severity, has confined me to the house; except that I have the privilege of the garden, with my maid to attend me as usual. But his severity has only this effect, to increase my affections to you: causing me to see the vast disparity between a virtuous character, and a man whose aims are wholly confined to this world. But I must tell you that I have gained my mother over on my side, who no doubt will try all in her power to help me.

I still expect to suffer great trials; but am determined to adhere firmly to the promise I made you. And you may rest assured, that I will prove constant to you even to a punctilio. Neither shall any trouble that I may meet with lessen my attachment to you. I have requested of my father to allow me to go to my uncle's at Philadelphia, and was denied. But I shall renew my request when you are gone, and perhaps by the interference of my mother, I may gain his consent. But I hope I shall conduct myself in all these affairs, so as that I may be blameless, and have a conscience void of offence; ever trusting and looking to him for aid, who is able to rescue in the greatest distress.

And so I conclude with my warmest and most unfeigned wishes, and prayers, that you may be returned in safety to your friend and humble servant,

POLLY GRANVILLE.

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Another of the lesser known earliest American novels, the following is taken from Samuel Relf's Infidelity, or The Victims of Sentiment; Philadelphia 1797.

LETTER XXXI. TO MISS HARRIOT HAYWORD.

OH God!—Oh God!—how in me has the Poet's emphatic admonition been verified!

“Seize wisdom e'er it seizes thee; that is,
“Be wise e'er it be torment to be wise.”

Now indeed it is an innate hell to my soul to “*know myself*,” and what a wretch I am!—Ignorance, blindness, and insensibility were highly preferable to this cruel and excruciating wisdom!—Like our first forefather, I have been blind to one blessing in my temporal Eden; on the knowledge of which the flaming sword of the angel of remorse persecutes;—yea, murders me!—Where or *what* am I!—A being endowed with intellects?—A man of human passions;—and do I tremble at the execution of retribution?—Oh, it is guilty self that keeps me from doing vengeance to myself!—The wretch who hurries destruction on himself by plunging into the bosom of a fierce volcano, is not more guilty of his fate, than am I the cause and author of my present agony of soul. Yet hold!—Can the wretch, who has murdered my honour, who has cankered my hopes of peace, plead extenuation of his crime in the proof of my own guiltiness?—Will my offence against one woman, (and oh, confusion to my soul!) against my marriage oath, palliate his more aggravated insult against me, and his outrage on the holy institution of heaven?—Say, my sympathetic friend, will the acknowledgment on my part, of the want of love and tenderness for her whom I espoused as my wife, be a defence, or a colouring for the adulterous and sacrilegious passion of young Alfred?—Oh that my heart were steeled to these tormenting inquiries!—But they rush like torrents in excruciating conviction on my soul!—They soon must waste their violence, or it very soon fall a victim to their unremitted pungency!—

—RETIRED from worldly objects, I have endeavoured to allay my soul rending suspicions; nay, my sensible convictions of the baseness of my wife, by studying the philosophy of the human heart, and its innate propensities to good and evil. Alas, these philosophic contemplations too generally terminate in a bitter consciousness of self-blame!—

“Who breathes must suffer, and who thinks must mourn;
“And he alone is blest, who ne'er was born.”

REASON, nature, religion, and philosophy, though each opposed to lawless love, are all conjoined to reproach the remiss conduct of my nuptial life, and point to it as the creative cause of my present dilemma, and ever-lasting ignominy!—Burthened with these contemning sensations I dare not, cannot assume the tone of uprightness, to vindicate the honour of my bed—Hah! what do I say!—Alas, let me not die with false conjecture!—Hymeneal chastity is yet, I know, uncontaminated:—sensual debasement is not yet perpetrated:—but that their mental faculties have long engaged in illicit affection;—that their souls even now revel in the voluptuousness of lascivious sentiment, is undemonstrably evident in the amorous language of their love-fraught eyes!

I FIND myself in a condition so mentally distracted, that I must beg you will break down the obstacles of custom, and favour me with a few lines of consolation. Though I lose the melody of thy tongue in the manner of communication, yet will thy words retain their original balsam!—Yes, what one ungenerous, thoughtless woman has destroyed, thy virtues and superior accomplishments shall doubly replenish.

Adieu, The Unhappy FRANKS.

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The Coquette; or, The history of Eliza Wharton (1797, Boston) by Hannah Webster Foster has come to be counted among the most critically lauded and frequently reviewed and analyzed of first American novels. Like Rowson, Foster was a staunch Federalist conservative who advocated the importance of strengthening the part of parents in overseeing and governing their children's marriages. Here the character of Eliza is torn between the affections and courtship of the dry but pious Reverend Boyer versus that of the wily and worldly Major Sanford.

**LETTER XLI. [Eliza] TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.**

*HARTFORD.*

THE retirement of my native home is not so gloomy, since my return from Boston, as I expected, from the contrast between them.

Indeed, the customs and amusements of this place are materially altered, since the residence of Major Sanford among us. The dull, old fashioned sobriety which formerly prevailed, is nearly banished; and cheerfulness, vivacity, and enjoyment are substituted in its stead. Pleasure is now diffused through all ranks of the people, especially the rich; and surely it ought to be cultivated, since the wisest of men informs us, that "a merry heart doth good like a medicine." As human life has many diseases, which require medicines, are we not right in selecting the most agreeable and palatable? Major Sanford's example has had great influence upon our society in general; and though some of our old dons think him rather licentious; yet, for ought I can see, he is as strict an observer of decorum, as the best of them. True, he seldom goes to church; but what of that? The Deity is not confined to temples made with hands. He may worship him as devoutly elsewhere, if he chuses; and who has a right to say he does not?

His return from Boston was but a day or two after mine. He paid me an early visit; and, indeed, has been very attentive ever since. My mamma is somewhat precise in her notions of propriety; and of course, blames me for associating so freely with him. She says, that my engagements to Mr. Boyer ought to render me more sedate; and more indifferent to the gallantry of mere *pleasure-hunters*, to use her phrase. But I think otherwise. If I am to become a recluse, let me, at least, enjoy those amusements, which are suited to my taste, a short time first. Why should I refuse the polite attentions of this gentleman? They smoothe the rugged path of life, and wonderfully accelerate the lagging wheels of time....

*Wednesday Evening.* Last night I closed not my eyes. I rose this morning with the sun, and went into the garden till breakfast. My mamma doubtless saw the disorder of my mind, but kindly avoided any inquiry about it. She was affectionately attentive to me, but said nothing of my particular concerns. I mentioned not my embarrassment to her. She had declared herself in favor of Mr. Boyer; therefore I had no expectation, that she would advise impartially. I retired to my chamber, and remained in a kind of reverie, for more than an hour; when I was roused by the rattling of a carriage at the door. I hastened to the window, and saw Major Sanford just driving away. The idea of his having been to converse with my mamma, gave me new sensations. A thousand perplexities occurred to my mind relative to the part most proper for me to act in this critical situation. All these might have been avoided, had I gone down and inquired into the matter; but this I delayed till dinner. My mamma then informed me, that Major Sanford had been with her, and inquired for me; but that she thought it unnecessary to call me, as she presumed I had no particular business with him. I knew the motives by which she was actuated, was vexed at her evasions. I told her plainly, that she would never carry her point in this way; that I thought myself capable of conducting my own affairs; and wished her not to interfere, except by her advice, which I should always listen to, and comply with when I could possibly make it consistent with my inclination and interest. She wept at my undutiful anger (of which I have severely repented since) and affectionately replied, that my happiness was the object of her wishes and prayers; conformably to which she felt constrained, freely to speak her mind, though it incurred my displeasure. She then went through again with all the comparative circumstances and merits of the two candidates for my favor, which have perpetually rung in my ears for months. I shed tears at the idea of my embarrassment; and in this condition Mr. Boyer found us. He appeared to be affected by my visible disorder; and without inquiring the cause, endeavored to dissipate it. This was kindly done. He

conversed upon indifferent subjects; and invited me to ride, and take tea with your mamma, to which I readily consented. We found her at home; and passed the time agreeably, excepting the alloy of our absence. Mr. Boyer touched lightly on the subject of our last evening's debate; but expatiated largely on the pleasing power of love; and hoped that we should one day both realize and exemplify it in perfection. When we returned, he observed that it was late, and took his leave; telling me that he should call to-morrow; and begged that I would then relieve his suspense. As I was retiring to bed, the maid gave me a hint that Major Sanford's servant had been here and lest a letter. I turned instantly back to my mamma, and telling her my information, demanded the letter. She hesitated, but I insisted on having it; and seeing me resolute, she reluctantly gave it into my hand. It contained the following words:

“Am I forsaken? Am I abandoned? Oh my adorable Eliza, have you sacrificed me to my rival? Have you condemned me to perpetual banishment, without a hearing?”

I came this day, to plead my cause at your feet; but was cruelly denied the privilege of seeing you! My mind is all anarchy and confusion! My soul is harrowed up with jealousy! I will be revenged on those who separate us, if that distracting event take place! But it is from your lips only that I can hear my sentence! You must witness its effects! To what lengths my despair may carry me, I know not! You are the arbitress of my fate!

Let me conjure you to meet me in your garden to-morrow at any hour you shall appoint. My servant will call for an answer in the morning. Deny me not an interview; but have pity on your faithful –  
*Sanford.*”

I wrote for answer, that I would meet him to-morrow, at five o'clock in the afternoon.

I have now before me another night for consideration; and shall pass it in that employment. I purpose not to see Mr. Boyer, till I have conversed with Major Sanford.

*Thursday Morning.* The morning dawns, and ushers in the day; a day, perhaps big with the fate of your friend! What that fate may be is wrapped in the womb of futurity; that futurity which a kind Providence has wisely concealed from the penetration of mortals!

After mature consideration; after revolving and re-revolving every circumstance on both sides of the question, I have nearly determined, in compliance with the advice of my friends, and the dictates of my own judgment, to give Mr. Boyer the preference, and with him to tread the future round of life.

As to the despair of Major Sanford, it does not much alarm me. Such violent passions are seldom so deeply rooted, as to produce lasting effects. I must, however, keep my word, and meet him according to promise.

Mr. Boyer is below. My mamma has just sent me word that he wished to see me. My reply was that I had lain down, which was a fact.

*One o'Clock.* My mamma, alarmed by my indisposition, has visited my apartment. I soon convinced her that it was but trifling, owing principally to the want of sleep; and that an airing in the garden, which I intended towards night, would restore me.

*Ten o'clock, at night.*—The day is past! and such a day it has been, as I hope never move to see!

At the hour appointed, I went tolerably composed and resolute into the garden. I had taken several turns, and retired into the little arbor, where you and I have spent so many happy hours, before Major Sanford entered. When he appeared, a consciousness of the impropriety of this clandestine intercourse suffused my cheek, and gave a coldness to my manners. He immediately penetrated the cause, and observed that my very countenance told him he was no longer a welcome guest to me. I asked him if he ought so to be; since his motives for seeking admission, were unworthy of being communicated to my friends? That he said was not the case, but that prudence in the present instance required a temporary concealment. He then undertook to exculpate himself from blame, assuring me that as soon as I should discountenance the expectations of Mr. Boyer, and discontinue the reception of his address, his intentions

should be made known. He was enlarging upon this topic, when we heard a footstep approaching us; and looking up saw Mr. Boyer within a few paces of the arbor.—Confusion seized us both! We rose involuntarily from our seats, but were mute as statues! He spoke not a word, but casting a look of indignant accusation at me, a glance which penetrated my very soul, turned on his heel, and walked hastily back to the house.

I stood a few moments, considering what course to take, though shame and regret had almost taken from me the power of thought.

Major Sanford took my hand. I withdrew it from him. I *must* leave you, said I. Where will you go? said he. I will go and try to retrieve my character. It has suffered greatly by this fatal interview.

He threw himself at my feet and exclaimed, leave me not Eliza, I conjure you not to leave me. Let me go now, I rejoined, or I bid you farewell for ever. I flew precipitately by him, and went into the parlor, where I found Mr. Boyer and my mamma, the one traversing the room in the greatest agitation; the other in flood of tears! Their appearance affected me; and I wept like an infant! when I had a little recovered myself, I begged him to sit down; He answered no. I then told him, that however unjustifiable my conduct might appear, perhaps I might explain it to his satisfaction, if he would hear me; that my motives were innocent, though they doubtless wore the aspect of criminality, in his view. He sternly replied, that no palliation could avail; that my motives were sufficiently notorious! He accused me of treating him ill, of rendering him the dupe of coquetting artifice, of having an intrigue with Major Sanford, and declared his determination to leave me for ever, as unworthy of his regard, and incapable of love, gratitude, or honor!—There was too much reason in support of his accusations for me to gainsay them, had his impetuosity suffered me to attempt it.

But in truth I had no inclination to self defence. My natural vivacity had forsaken me; and I listened without interrupting him to the fluency of reproachful language, which his resentment inspired. He took a very solemn and affectionate leave of my mamma; thanking her for her politeness, and wishing her much future felicity. He attempted to address me, I suppose somewhat in the same way but his sensibility overcome him; and he only took my hand, and bowing in silence, departed.

The want of rest for two long nights together, the exercise of mind, and conflict of passions, which now tortured my breast, were too much for me to support!

When I saw that he was gone; that he had actually forsaken me, I fainted. My mamma, with the assistance of the maid, soon restored me.

When I opened my eyes, and beheld this amiable and tender parent, watching and attending me with the most anxious concern; without one reproachful word, without one accusing look, my reflections upon the part I had acted, in defeating her benevolent wishes, were exquisitely afflictive! But we mutually forbore to mention the occasion of my illness; and I complied with her advice to take some refreshment, and retire to my chamber. I am so much fatigued by the exertions of the day, that rest is absolutely necessary; and I lay aside my pen to seek it...

As I know you are impatient to hear from me, I will now dispatch this long letter without any other addition, than that I am your sincere friend,

ELIZA WHARTON.

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**LETTER XLII. TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.**

*HARTFORD.*

WELL, Charles, the show is over, as we yankees say; and the girl is my own. That is, if I will have her. I shall take my own time for that, however. I have carried my point, and am amply revenged on the

whole posse of those dear friends of her's. She was entangled by a promise (not to marry this priest without my knowledge,) which her conscience would not let her break. Thank God, I have no conscience. If I had, I believe it would make wretched work with me! I suppose she intended to have one, or the other of us; but preferred me. I have escaped the noose, this time, and I'll be fairly hanged, if I ever get so near it again. For indeed Charles, I was seriously alarmed. I watched all their motions; and the appearances of harmony between them awakened all my activity and zeal. So great was my infatuation, that I verily believe I should have asked her in marriage, and risked the consequences, rather than to have lost her!

I went to the house, while Mr. Boyer was in town, but her mamma refused to call her, or to acquaint her that I was there. I then wrote a despairing letter, and obtained a conference with her in the garden. This was a fortunate event for me. True, Eliza was very haughty, and resolutely insisted on immediate declaration or rejection. And I cannot say what would have been the result, if Mr. Boyer had not surprized us together. He gave us a pretty harsh look and retired without speaking a word.

I endeavored to detain Eliza, but in vain. She left me on my knees, which are always ready to bend on such occasions.

This finished the matter, it seems. I rose, and went into a near neighbor's to observe what happened; and in about half an hour saw Mr. Boyer come out, and go to his lodgings.

This, said I to myself, is a good omen. I went home, and was informed next day, that he had mounted his horse and departed.

I heard nothing more of her till yesterday, when I determined to know how she stood affected towards me. I therefore paid her a visit, her mamma being luckily abroad.

She received me very placidly, and told me, on inquiry, that Mr. Boyer's resentment at her meeting me in the garden was so great, that he had bid her a final adieu. I congratulated myself on having no rival; hoped that her favor would now be unbiased [sic], and that in due time I should reap the reward of my fidelity. She begged me not to mention the subject; said, she had been perplexed by our competition, and wished not to hear any thing further about it at present. I bowed in obedience to her commands and changed the discourse.

I informed her, that I was about taking a tour to the southward; that I should be absent several months, and trusted that on my return her embarrassments would be over.

I left her with regret. After all, Charles, she is the *summum bonum* of my life. I must have her in some way or other. No body else shall, I am resolved.

I am making preparations for my journey; which between you and me, is occasioned by the prospect of making a speculation, by which I hope to mend my affairs. The voyage will at least lessen my expenses, and screen me from the importunity of creditors till I can look about me.

PETER SANFORD.

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Royall Tyler's The Algerine captive; or, The life and adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill (1797) is a picaresque novel reminiscent of and in quality terms worthy of both Smollett and Sterne. Though less known today than his comedy play "The Contrast" (1787), it ostensibly had a far greater influence on other authors; including (one reasonably infers) Brackenridge, Paulding, Irving and Melville (the last, for instance in Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile [1855], adopts Tyler's device of having his central character meet real life, historical personalities.) While some of Tyler's jibes are at times verging on the sophomoric or over done, most of what he writes is usually both well-said and right on the money. The story takes up the career of young Updike Underhill; who after several failed attempts at other

avocations, pursues that of a physician. At this point in his journeys, he finds himself acting at ship's doctor.

CHAP. XXXI.

Can thus
The image of God in man created, once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly suffering be debased
Under inhuman pains?
MILTON.

...No sooner was the purchase completed, than these wretched Africans were transported in herds aboard the ship, and immediately precipitated between decks, where a strong chain, attached to a staple in the lower deck, was rivetted to the bar, before described; and then the men were chained in pairs, and also hand cuffed, and two sailors with cutlasses guarded every twenty: while the women and children were tied together in pairs with ropes, and obliged to supply the men with provisions, and the flush bucket; or, if the young women were released, it was only to gratify the brutal lust of the sailors; for though I cannot say I ever was witness to an actual rape, yet the frequent shrieks of these forlorn females in the births of the seamen, left me little charity to doubt of the repeated commission of that degrading crime. The eve after we had received the slaves on board, all hands were piped on deck, and ordered to assist in manufacturing and knotting cat o' nine tails, the application of which, I was informed, was always necessary to bring the slaves to their appetite. The night after they came on board was spent by these wretched people, in sobbings, groans, tears, and the most heart rending bursts of sorrow and despair. The next morning all was still. Surprised by this unexpected silence, I almost hoped that providence, in pity to these her miserable children, had permitted some kindly suffocation to put a period to their anguish. It was neither novel nor unexpected to the ship's crew. It is only the dumb fit come on, cried every one. We will cure them. After breakfast, the whole ship's crew went between decks, and carried with them the provisions for the slaves, which they one and all refused to eat. A more affecting group of misery was never seen. These injured Africans, preferring death to slavery, or perhaps buoyed above the fear of dissolution, by their religion, which taught them to look with an eye of faith to a country beyond the grave; where they should again meet those friends and relatives, from whose endearments they had been torn; and where no fiend should torment, or christian thirst for gold, had, wanting other means, resolved to starve themselves, and every eye lowered the fixed resolve of this deadly intent. In vain were the men beaten. They refused to taste one mouthful; and, I believe, would have died under the operation, if the ingenious cruelty of the clerk, Randolph, had not suggested the plan of whipping the women and children in sight of the men; assuring the men they should be tormented until all had eaten. What the torments, exercised on the bodies of these brave Africans, failed to produce, the feelings of nature effected. The Negro, who could undauntedly expire under the anguish of the lash, could not view the agonies of his wife, child, or his mother; and, though repeatedly encouraged by these female sufferers, unmoved by their torments, to persevere unto death; yet, though the *man* dared to die, the *father* relented, and in a few hours they all eat their provisions, *mingled with their tears*.

Our slave dealers being unable to fulfil their contract, unless we tarried three weeks longer, our captain concluded to remove to some other market. We accordingly weighed anchor, and steered for Benin, and anchored in the river Formosa, where we took in one hundred and fifteen more slaves. The same process in the purchase was pursued here; and, though I frequently assured the captain, as a physician, that it was impracticable to stow fifty more persons between decks, without endangering health and life, the whole hundred and fifteen were thrust, with the rest, between decks. The stagnant confined air of this infernal hole, rendered more deleterious by the stench of the faeces, and violent perspiration of such a crowd, occasioned putrid diseases; and, even while in the mouth of the Formosa, it was usual to throw one or two Negro corpses over every day. It was in vain I remonstrated to the captain. In vain I enforced the necessity of more commodious births [berths], and a more free influx of air for the slaves. In vain I represented, that these miserable people had been used to the vegetable diet, and pure air of a country life. That at home they were remarkable for cleanliness of person, the very rites of their religion consisting, almost entirely, in frequent ablutions. The captain was, by this time, prejudiced against me. He observed

that he did not doubt my skill, and would be bound by my advice, as to the health of those on board his ship, when he found I was actuated by the interest of the owners; but, he feared, that I was now moved by some *yankee nonsense about humanity*.

Randolph, the clerk, blamed me in plain terms. He said he had made seven African voyages, and with as good surgeons as I was; and that it was their common practice, when an infectious disorder prevailed, among the slaves, to make critical search for all those, who had the slightest symptoms of it, or whose habits of body inclined them to it; to tie them up and cast them over the ship side together, and thus, at one dash, to purify the ship. *What signifies, added he, the lives of the black devils; they love to die. You cannot please them better, than by chucking them into the water.*

When we stood out to sea, the rolling of the vessel brought on the sea sickness, which encreased the filth; the weather being rough, we were obliged to close some of the ports, which ventilated the space between decks; and death raged dreadfully among the slaves. Above two thirds were diseased. It was affecting to observe the ghastly smile on the countenance of the dying African, as if rejoicing to escape the cruelty of his oppressors. I noticed one man, who gathered all his strength, and, in one last effort, spoke with great emphasis, and expired. I understood, by the linguist, that, with his dying breath, he invited his wife, and a boy and girl to follow him quickly, and slaken their thirst with him at the cool streams of the fountain of their Great Father, beyond the reach of the wild white beasts. The captain was now alarmed for the success of his voyage; and, upon my urging the necessity of landing the slaves, he ordered the ship about, and we anchored near an uninhabited part of the gold coast. I conjecture not far from Cape St. Paul.

Tents were erected on the shore, and the sick landed. Under my direction, they recovered surprisingly. It was affecting to see the effect gentle usage had upon these hitherto sullen, obstinate people. As I had the sole direction of the hospital, they looked on me as the source of this sudden transition from the filth and rigour of the ship, to the cleanliness and kindness of the shore. Their gratitude was excessive. When they recovered so far as to walk out, happy was he, who could, by picking a few berries, gathering the wild fruits of the country, or doing any menial services, manifest his affection for me. Our linguist has told me, he has often heard them, behind the bushes, praying to their God for my prosperity, and asking him with earnestness, why he put my good *black* soul into a *white* body. In twelve days all the convalescents were returned to the ship, except five, who staid with me on shore, and were to be taken on board the next day.

CHAP. XXXII.

Chains are the portion of revolted man;
Stripes and a dungeon.
COWPER.

...NEAR the close of the fourteenth of November, one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight, as the sun was sinking behind the mountains of Fundia, I sat at the door of my tent, and perceived our ship, which lay at one mile's distance, getting under way, apparently in great haste. The jolly boat, about ten minutes before, had made towards the shore; but was recalled by a musket shot from the ship. Alarmed by this unexpected manoeuvre, I ran to the top of a small hill, back of the hospital, and plainly discovered a square rigged vessel in the offing, endeavouring to lock our ship within the land; but a land breeze springing up from the north east, which did not extend to the strange vessel, and our ship putting out all her light sails, being well provided with king sail, scudding sails, water sails, and driver, I could perceive she out sailed her. It was soon so dark that I lost sight of both, and I passed a night of extreme anxiety, which was increased by, what I conjectured to be, the flashes of guns in the *south west*; though at too great distance for me to hear the reports.

The next morning no vessels were to be seen on the coast, and the ensuing day was spent in a state of dreadful suspense. Although I had provisions enough with me for some weeks, and was sheltered by our tents, yet to be separated from my friends and country, perhaps forever, and to fall into the hands of the barbarous people, which infested this coast, was truly alarming. The five Africans, who were with me, could not conceal their joy, at the departure of the ship. By signs they manifested their affection towards

me; and, when I signified to them that the vessel was gone not to return, they clapped their hands, and pointing inland, signified a desire to convey me to their native country, where they were sure I should be happy. By their consultation, I could see that they were totally ignorant of the way. On the third day towards evening, to my great joy, I saw a sail approaching the shore, at the prospect of which my African associates, manifested every sign of horror. I immediately concluded that no great blame would arise, from my not detaining five men, in the absence of the ship; and I intimated to them that they might conceal themselves in the brush and escape. Four quitted me; but one, who made me comprehend, that he had a beloved son among the slaves, refused to go, preferring the company of his child, and *slavery* itself, to *freedom* and the land of his nativity. I retired to rest, pleased with the imagination of soon rejoining my friends, and proceeding to my native country. On the morning of the fourth day, as I was sleeping in my tent with the affectionate negro at my feet, I was suddenly awakened, by the blowing of conch shells, and the sound of uncouth voices. I arose to dress myself, when the tent was overset, and I received a blow from the back of a sabre, which levelled me to the earth; and was immediately seized and bound by several men of sallow and fierce demeanour, in strange habits, who spake a language I could not comprehend. With the negro, tents, baggage, and provisions, I was carried to the boat, which, being loaded, was immediately pushed off from the shore, and rowed towards a vessel, which I now, for the first time, noticed, and had no doubt but it was the same, which was in pursuit of the *Sympathy*. She was rigged differently from any I had ever seen, having two masts, a large square main sail, another of equal size, seized by the middle of a main yard to her fore mast, and, what the sailors call, a shoulder of mutton sail abaft; which, with top sails and two banks of oars, impelled her through the water with amazing velocity: though, from the clumsiness of her rigging, an American seaman would never have pronounced her a good sea boat. On her main mast head was a broad black pennant, with a half moon, or rather crescent, and a drawn sabre, in white and red, emblazoned in the middle. The sides of the vessel were manned as we approached, and a tackle being let down, the hook was attached to the cord, which bound me, and I was hoisted on board in the twinkling of an eye. Then, being unbound, I was carried upon the quarter deck, where a man, who appeared to be the captain, glittering in silks, pearl, and gold, set cross legged upon a velvet cushion [cushion] to receive me. He was nearly encircled by a band of men, with monstrous tufts of hair on their upper lips, dressed in habits of the same mode with their leader's, but of coarser contexture, with drawn scimitars in their hands, and by his side a man of lighter complexion, who, by the captain's command, inquired of me, in good English, if I was an Englishman. I replied I was an American, a citizen of the United States. This was no sooner interpreted to the captain than, at a disdainful nod of his head, I was again seized, hand cuffed, and thrust into a dirty hole in the fore castle, where I lay twenty four hours, without straw to sleep on, or any thing to eat or drink. The treatment we gave the unhappy Africans, on board the *Sympathy*, now came full into my mind; and, what was the more mortifying, I discovered that the negro who was, captured with me, was at liberty, and fared as well as the sailors on board the vessel. I had not however been confined more than one half hour, when the interpreter came to examine me privately respecting the destination of the ship, to which he suspected I belonged; was anxious to know if she had her full cargo of slaves; what was her force; whether she had English papers on board; and if she did not intend to stop at some other African port. From him I learned that I was captured by an Algerine Rover, Hamed Hali Saad captain; and should be carried into slavery at Algiers. After I had lain twenty four hours in this loathsome place, covered with vermin, parched with thirst, and fainting with hunger, I was startled at a light, let through the hatchway, which opened softly, and a hand presented me a cloth, dripping with cold water, in which a small quantity of boiled rice was wrapped. The door closed again softly, and I was left to enjoy my good fortune in the dark. If Abraham had indeed sent Lazarus to the rich man, in torment, it appears to me, he could not have received a greater pleasure, from the cool water on his tongue, than I experienced, in sucking the moisture from this cloth. The next day, the same kindly hand appeared again, with the same refreshment. I begged to see my benefactor. The door opened further, and I saw a countenance in tears. It was the face of the grateful African, who was taken with me. I was oppressed with gratitude. Is this, exclaimed I, one of those men, whom we are taught to vilify as beneath the human species, who brings me sustenance, perhaps at the risk of his life, who shares his morsel with one of those barbarous men, who had recently torn him from all he held dear, and whose base companions are now transporting his darling son to a grievous slavery? Grant me, I ejaculated, once more to taste the freedom of my native country, and every moment of my life shall be dedicated to preaching against this detestable commerce. I will fly to our fellow citizens in the southern states; I will, on my knees, conjure them, in the name of humanity, to abolish a traff[ic], which causes it to bleed in every pore. If they are deaf to the pleadings of nature, I will conjure them, for the sake of consistency, to cease to deprive their fellow creatures of freedom, which their writers, their orators,

representatives, senators, and even their constitutions of government, have declared to be the unalienable birth right of man. My sable friend had no occasion to visit me a third time; for I was taken from my confinement, and, after being stripped of the few clothes, and the little property I chanced to have about me, a log was fastened to my leg by a chain, and I was permitted to walk the fore castle of the vessel, with the African and several Spanish and Portuguese prisoners. The treatment of the slaves, who plied the oars, the management of the vessel, the order which was observed among this ferocious race, and some notices of our voyage, might afford observations, which would be highly gratifying to my readers, if the limits of this work would permit. I will just observe however that the regularity and frequency of their devotion was astonishing to me, who had been taught to consider this people as the most blasphemous infidels. In ten days after I was captured, the Rover passed up the straits of Gibraltar [Gibraltar], and I heard the garrison evening gun fired from that formidable rock; and the next morning hove in sight of the city of Algiers.

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