



N^o 375. Saturday, May 10.

*Non possidentem multa vocaveris
 Rectè beatum : rectius occupat
 Nomen beati, qui Deorum
 Muneribus sapienter uti,
 Duramque callet Pauperiem pati,
 Pejusque Letho flagitium timet.*

Hor.

I Have more than once had occasion to mention a noble Saying of *Seneca* the Philosopher, That a virtuous Person struggling with Misfortunes, and rising above them, is an Object on which the Gods themselves may look down with Delight. I shall therefore set before my Reader a Scene of this kind of Distress in private Life, for the Speculation of this Day.

AN eminent Citizen, who had lived in good Fashion and Credit, was by a Train of Accidents, and by an unavoidable Perplexity in his Affairs, reduced to a low Condition. There is a Modesty usually attending faultless Poverty, which made him rather choose to reduce his Manner of Living to his present Circumstances, than sollicit his Friends in order to support the Shew of an Estate when the Substance was gone. His Wife, who was a Woman of Sense and Virtue, behaved her self on this Occasion with uncommon Decency, and never appear'd so amiable in his Eyes as now. Instead of upbraiding him with the ample Fortune she had brought, or the many great Offers she had refused for his sake, she redoubled all the Instances of her Affection, while her Husband was continually pouring out his Heart to her in Complaints that he had ruined the best Woman in the World. He sometimes came home at a time when she did not expect him, and surpris'd her in Tears, which she endeavour'd to conceal, and always put on an Air of Chearfulness to receive him. To lessen their Expence, their eldest Daughter, (whom I shall call *Amanda*) was sent into the Country, to the House of

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an honest Farmer, who had married a Servant of the Family. This young Woman was apprehensive of the Ruin which was approaching, and had privately engaged a Friend in the Neighbourhood to give her an account of what passed from time to time in her Father's Affairs. *Amanda* was in the Bloom of her Youth and Beauty, when the Lord of the Manor, who often called in at the Farmer's House as he follow'd his Country Sports, fell passionately in love with her. He was a Man of great Generosity, but from a loose Education had contracted a hearty Aversion to Marriage. He therefore entertained a Design upon *Amanda's* Virtue, which at present he thought fit to keep private. The innocent Creature, who never suspected his Intentions, was pleased with his Person; and having observed his growing Passion for her, hoped by so advantageous a Match she might quickly be in a capacity of supporting her impoverish'd Relations. One day as he call'd to see her, he found her in Tears over a Letter she had just received from her Friend, which gave an account that her Father had lately been stripped of every thing by an Execution. The Lover, who with some difficulty found out the Cause of her Grief, took this occasion to make her a Proposal. It is impossible to express *Amanda's* Confusion when she found his Pretensions were not honourable. She was now deserted of all her Hopes, and had no power to speak; but rushing from him in the utmost Disturbance, locked her self up in her Chamber. He immediately dispatched a Messenger to her Father with the following Letter.

S I R,

I Have heard of your Misfortune, and have offer'd your Daughter, if she will live with me, to settle on her four hundred Pounds a year, and to lay down the Sum for which you are now distressed. I will be so ingenuous as to tell you that I do not intend Marriage: But if you are wise, you will use your Authority with her not to be too nice, when she has an opportunity of saving you and your Family, and of making her self happy.

I am, &c.

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THIS Letter came to the Hands of *Amanda's* Mother; she open'd and read it with great Surprise and Concern. She did not think it proper to explain her self to the Messenger, but desiring him to call again the next Morning, she wrote to her Daughter as follows.

Dearest Child,

YOUR Father and I have just now received a Letter from a Gentleman who pretends Love to you, with a Proposal that insults our Misfortunes, and would throw us to a lower degree of Misery than any thing which is come upon us. How could this barbarous Man think that the tenderest of Parents would be tempted to supply their Want by giving up the best of Children to Infamy and Ruin? It is a mean and cruel Artifice to make this Proposal at a time when he thinks our Necessities must compel us to any thing; but we will not eat the Bread of Shame; and therefore we charge thee not to think of us, but to avoid the Snare which is laid for thy Virtue. Beware of pitying us: It is not so bad as you have perhaps been told. All things will yet be well, and I shall write my Child better News.

I have been interrupted. I know not how I was moved to say things would mend. As I was going on I was startled by a Noise of one that knocked at the Door, and hath brought us an unexpected Supply of a Debt which had long been owing. Oh! I will now tell thee all. It is some Days I have lived almost without Support, having convey'd what little Money I could raise to your poor Father—Thou wilt weep to think where he is, yet be assured he will be soon at liberty. That cruel Letter would have broke his heart, but I have concealed it from him. I have no Companion at present besides little *Fanny*, who stands watching my Looks as I write, and is crying for her Sister: She says she is sure you are not well, having discover'd that my present Trouble is about you. But do not think I would thus repeat my Sorrows, to grieve thee: No, it is to intreat thee not to make them insupportable, by adding what would be worse than all. Let us hear chearfully an Affliction, which we have not brought on our selves, and remember there is a Power who can better deliver

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us out of it than by the Loss of thy Innocence. Heaven
preserve my dear Child.

Thy Affectionate Mother——

THE Messenger, notwithstanding he promised to deliver this Letter to *Amanda*, carry'd it first to his Master, who he imagined would be glad to have an opportunity of giving it into her hands himself. His Master was impatient to know the Success of his Proposal, and therefore broke open the Letter privately to see the Contents. He was not a little moved at so true a Picture of Virtue in Distress: But at the same time was infinitely surpris'd to find his Offers rejected. However he resolv'd not to suppress the Letter, but carefully sealed it up again, and carried it to *Amanda*. All his Endeavours to see her were in vain, till she was assur'd he brought a Letter from her Mother. He would not part with it but upon condition that she should read it without leaving the Room. While she was perusing it, he fix'd his Eyes on her Face with the deepest Attention: Her Concern gave a new Softness to her Beauty, and when she burst into Tears, he could no longer refrain from bearing a Part in her Sorrow, and telling her, that he too had read the Letter, and was resolv'd to make Reparation for having been the Occasion of it. My Reader will not be displeas'd to see the second Epistle which he now wrote to *Amanda's* Mother.

M A D A M,

I Am full of Shame, and will never forgive my self, if I have not your Pardon for what I lately wrote.

It was far from my Intention to add Trouble to the Afflicted; nor could any thing, but my being a Stranger to you, have betray'd me into a Fault, for which, if I live, I shall endeavour to make you amends, as a Son. You cannot be unhappy while *Amanda* is your Daughter: nor shall be, if any thing can prevent it, which is in the power of,

M A D A M,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant——

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