


William Hill Brown

*THE
POWER
OF SYMPATHY*

Edited by William S. Kable



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PREFACE.

NOVELS have ever met with a ready reception into the Libraries of the Ladies, but this species of writing hath not been received with universal approbation: Futility is not the only charge brought against it. Any attempt, therefore, to make these studies more advantageous, has at least a claim upon the patience and candour of the publick.

IN Novels which *expose* no particular Vice, and which *recommend* no particular Virtue, the fair Reader, though she may find amusement, must finish them without being impressed with any particular idea: So that if they are harmless, they are not beneficial.

OF the Letters before us, it is necessary to remark, that this error on each side has been avoided—the dangerous Consequences of SEDUCTION are exposed, and the Advantages of FEMALE EDUCATION set forth and recommended.



THE
POWER OF SYMPATHY, &c.

LETTER I.

HARRINGTON *to* WORTHY

BOSTON.

YOU may now felicitate me—I have had an interview with the charmer I informed you of. Alas! where were the thoughtfulness and circumspection of my friend *Worthy*? I did not possess them, and am graceless enough to acknowledge it. He would have considered the consequences, before he had resolved upon the project. But you call me, with some degree of truth, a strange medley of contradiction—the moralist and the amoroso—the sentiment

and the sensibility—are interwoven in my constitution, so that nature and grace are at continual fisticuffs.—To the point:—

I PURSUED my determination of discovering the dwelling of my charmer, and have at length obtained access. You may behold my Rosebud, but should you presume to place it in your bosom, expect the force of my wrath to be the infallible consequence.

I DECLARED the sincerity of my passion—the warmth of my affection—to the beautiful *Harriot*—Believe me, *Jack*, she did not seem inattentive. Her mein is elegant—her disposition inclining to the melancholy, and yet her temper is affable, and her manners easy. And as I poured my tender vows into the heart of my beloved, a crimson drop stole across her cheek, and thus I construe it in my own favour, as the sweet messenger of hope:—

“DO not wholly despair, my new friend; excuse the declaration of a poor artless female—you see I am not perfectly contented in my situation—[Observe, *Jack*, I have not the vanity to think this distress *altogether* upon my account]—Time therefore may disclose wonders, and perhaps more to your advantage than you imagine—do not despair then.”

SUCH vulgar, uncongenial souls, as that which animates thy clay cold carcase, would have thought this crimson drop nothing more than an ordinary blush! Be far removed from my heart, such sordid, earth-born ideas: But come thou spirit of celestial language, that canst communicate by one affectionate look—one tender glance—more divine information to the soul of sensibility, than can be contained in myriads of volumes!

HAIL gentle God of Love! While thou rivetest the chains of thy *slaves*, how dost thou make them leap for joy, as with delicious *triumph*. Happy enthusiasm! that while it carries us away into captivity, can make the heart to dance as in the bosom of content. Hail gentle God of Love! Encircled as thou art with darts, torments, and ensigns of cruelty, still do we hail thee. How dost thou smooth over the roughness and asperities of present pain, with what thou seest in reversion! Thou banishest the *Stygian* glooms of disquiet and suspense, by the hope of approaching *Elysium*—Blessed infatuation!

I DESIRE you will not hesitate to pronounce an *amen* to my Hymn to Love, as an unequivocal evidence of your wish for my success.

LETTER II

WORTHY *to* HARRINGTON

NEWYORK.

“WISH you success!”——In what? Who is this lady of whom you have been talking at such an inconsistent rate? But before you have leisure to reply to these inquiries, you may have forgotten there is such a person, as she whom you call *Harriot*——I have seen many juvenile heroes, during my pilgrimage of two and twenty years, easily inflamed with new objects——agitated and hurried away by the impetuosity of new desires——and at the same time they were by no means famous for solidity of judgment, or remarkable for the permanency of their resolutions. There is such a tumult——such an ebullition of the brain in these paroxisms of passion, that this new object is very superficially examined. These, added to partiality and prepossession, never fail to blind the eyes of the lover. Instead of weighing matters maturely, and stating the evidence fairly on both sides, in order to form a right judgment,

every circumstance not perfectly coincident with your particular bias, comes not under consideration, because it does not flatter your vanity. "Ponder and pause" just here, and tell me seriously whether you are in love, and whether you have sufficiently examined your heart to give a just answer.

DO you mean to insinuate that your declaration of love hath attracted the affection of the pensive *Harriot*? If this should be the case, I wish you would tell me what you design to do with her.

~~LETTER III~~~~HARRINGTON to WORTHY~~~~BOSTON.~~

~~I CANNOT but laugh at your dull sermons, and yet I find something in them not altogether displeasing; for this reason I permit you to prate on. "Weigh matters maturely!" Ha! ha! why art thou not arrayed in canonicals! "What do I design to do with her?" Upon my word, my sententious friend, you ask mighty odd questions. I see you aim a stroke at the foundation upon which the pillar of my~~

LETTER XV

HARRINGTON *to* WORTHY

BOSTON.

AM I to believe my eyes—my ears—my heart!—and yet I cannot be deceived.—We are generally most stupid and incredulous in what most materially concerns us. We find the greatest difficulty, in persuading ourselves of the attainment of what we most ardently desire—She loves!—I say to myself, *Harriot* loves me, and I reverence myself.

I THINK I may now take upon me some share of happiness—I may say I have not lived in vain—for all my heart holds dear is mine—joy and love encompass me—peace and tranquillity are before me; the prospect is fair and promising as the gilded dawn of a summer's day—There is none to supplant me in her affection—I dread no rival, for our tempers are similar, and our hearts beat in unison together.

Adieu!

does not consist in affluence and independence—nor can it be reflected on us by the glory of our connexions—those who pride themselves on it, make but an indifferent figure; for in the estimation of all sensible people—true merit is personal.

HOWEVER, my dear friend, as one who wishes for your welfare and the happiness of your family, I advise you to discourage the proposed connexion—and if you cannot undertake this disagreeable task with a *certainty of success*, do not fail to acquaint me of it *speedily*.

Adieu!

LETTER XXXII.

HARRINGTON to WORTHY

BOSTON.

WHAT ails my heart? I feel a void here—and yet I verge towards my happiness—for a few days makes *Harriot* mine—*Myra* says I had *better not marry her*. What could prompt her to use such an expression? *Better*

not marry her. She has repeated it several times—and with too much eagerness—I give no heed to it—and yet why should it affect me in this manner? Is it an artifice to fathom the depth of my love? Such schemes are my utter aversion—it disturbs me—I hate such artifice—You cannot imagine how it touches my heart.

Adieu!

LETTER XXXIII

Mrs. HOLMES *to* MYRA.

BELLEVIEW.

IT is the duty of friends to be interested in all the concerns of one another—to join in their joys and to avert the stroke of danger. It is the duty of a centinel to give the alarm at the approach of what he may think such—and if the result does not prove to be a real evil—he has but performed his duty, and the action is meritorious.

IF your exertions to countermine the connexion of your brother with *Harriot* should

prove ineffectual (and do not fail to acquaint me with it either way) I HAVE A TALE TO UNFOLD which may possibly forbid the bans.

LETTER XXXIV

HARRINGTON *to* WORTHY

BOSTON.

I FIND my temper grow extremely irritable—my sensibility is wounded at the slightest neglect—I am very tenacious of every thing, and of every body.

A PARTY was made yesterday to go on the water; I was omitted, and the neglect hurt me. I inquired the cause, and what think you is the answer? “I am no company—I am asked a question and return nothing to the point—I am absent—I am strangely altered within a few days—I am thinking of a different subject when I ought to be employed in conversation—I am extravagant in my observations—I am no company.”

THEY would persuade me that I am little better than a mad man—I have no patience with

tion—I read it—but the shock was too severe—it fell from my hands, and I sunk into the chair.

MY fainting was not of any duration. I opened my eyes and found my father supporting me—but the idea of *Harriot* was still engraven deeply in my heart—I inquired for my sister—the tear rolled down his cheek—it was a sufficient answer to my inquiry—He said nothing—there was no necessity of his saying a word.

COULD I ask him to explain your letter? No—my heart anticipated his feelings—the impropriety struck me at once. “*You have a tale to unfold.*” Do not delay to unfold it.

Adieu!

LETTER XXXIX.

Mrs. HOLMES to MYRA.

BELLEVIEW.

I READILY undertake to give you a sketch of the history of *Harriot*. Her mother’s name was *Maria Fawcet*; her person I yet recollect, and forgive me if I drop a tear of pity at the recital of her misfortunes.

MY mother and Mrs. *Holmes* were remarkable friends, and the intimacy, you know, was maintained between the two families. I was on a visit with my mother when the destiny of *Maria* led her to *Belleview*. I was frequently there during her illness—and was with her in her last moments.

IT was the custom of Mrs. *Holmes* to walk in the garden towards the close of the day. She was once indulging her usual walk, when she was alarmed by the complaints of a woman which came from the road. Pity and humanity were ever peculiar characteristicks of my amiable parent—She hastened to the place from whence the sound issued, and beheld a young woman, bathed in tears, sitting upon the ground. She inquired the cause of her distress, with that eager solicitude to relieve, which a sight so uncommon would naturally occasion. It was sometime before the distressed woman could return an intelligible answer, and then she with difficulty proceeded: “Your goodness, Madam, is unmerited—you behold a stranger, without home—without friends—and whose misery bears her down to an untimely grave—Life, truly is a blessing—but my life is become burthensome, and were the Almighty this moment to command me to the world of spirits, methinks I could gladly obey the summons, and

rejoice in the stroke which bade me depart from sorrow and the world." "Moderate your grief, my dear woman, repine not at the will of Providence, nor suffer yourself to despair, however severe your misfortunes."

THE unfortunate woman was at length prevailed on to accompany Mrs. *Holmes* into the house, she partook of some refreshment and retired to sleep. In a few days she appeared to be better; but it was a temporary recovery; she then told her story, with frequent interruptions, in substance as follows:—

History of Maria.

"I DATE the rise of my misfortunes," said *Maria*, "at the beginning of my acquaintance with the Honourable Mr. *Harrington*.—But for his solicitations I might still have lived in peace—a sister would not have had occasion to blush at the sound of my name—nor had a mother's pillow been steeped in tears, too fondly prone to remember a graceless but repenting child—We lived happily together in the days of my father, but when it pleased Providence to remove him, we no longer asserted our pretensions to that rank of life which our straitened finances were unable to continue—A young woman in no eligible circumstances, has

much to apprehend from the solicitations of a man of affluence. I am now better persuaded of this truth, than I ever was before—for this was my unhappy situation—I always entertained a predilection for Mr. *Harrington*—he urged his passion with protestations of sincerity and affection—he found my heart too slightly guarded—he strove—he triumphed.

“——MUST I proceed!——

“A SMILING female was the offspring of our illicit connexion——Ah! my little *Harriot!*” continued *Maria*, as she wiped away a tear from her eye, “mayest thou enjoy that happiness which is denied to thy mother.

“OUR amour was not fated to last long—I discovered his gay temper to be materially altered—he was oftentimes thoughtful and melancholy, and his visits became suddenly shorter, and less frequent.

“I AFTERWARDS thought this change of conduct owing to jealousy—for he once asked me if a gentleman had called upon me—I persisted in avowing my abhorrence of his ungenerous suspicion—He left me abruptly, and I saw nothing of him after.

“A STROKE so unexpected fell heavy on my heart—it awakened me to the state of misery into which my imprudence had hurried me.—What recompense could I expect from my Se-

ducer?—He had been married two years—From the inflexibility of his temper I had little to hope, and I formed a determination of leaving town, for I had now indubitable testimony of his affection being estranged from me—half frantick, I immediately set out—but whither I knew not—I walked with precipitation until Providence directed me to your hospitable door: To your goodness, Madam, I am indebted for prolonging my existence a *few days*: For amidst the kindness and civilities of those around me, I feel myself rapidly verging towards the grave. I prepare myself for my approaching fate—and daily wait the stroke of death with trembling expectation.”

SHE wrote to Mr. *Harrington* about a week before her decease—I transcribe the Letter:—

“*The Hon. Mr. HARRINGTON.*

“TO the man for whom my bleeding heart yet retains its wonted affection, though the author of my guilt and misery, do I address my feeble complaint—O! *Harrington*, I am verging to a long eternity—and it is with difficulty I support myself while my trembling hand traces the dictates of my heart. Indisposed

as I am—and unable as I feel to prosecute this task—I however collect all my powers to bid you a long—a final farewell.

“OH! *Harrington*, I am about to depart—for why should I tarry here? In bitter tears of sorrow do I weep away the night, and the returning day but augments the anguish of my heart, by recalling to view the sad sight of my misfortunes. And have I not cause for this severe anguish, at once the sorrow and disgrace of my family?—Alas! my poor mother!—Death shall expiate the crime of thy daughter, nor longer raise the blush of indignation on thy glowing cheek.—Ought I not, therefore, to welcome the hand of death?

“BUT what will become of my poor helpless infant, when its mother lies forgotten in the grave? Wilt thou direct its feet in the path of virtue and rectitude?—Wilt thou shelter it from the rude blasts of penury and want?—Open your heart to the solicitude of a mother—of a mother agonizing for the future welfare of her child. Let me intreat you to perform this request—by the love which you professed for thy *Maria*—by her life which you have sacrificed.

“AND wilt thou not drop a tear of pity in the grave of thy *Maria*?—I know thy soul is a soul

of sensibility; but my departure shall not grieve thee—no, my *Harrington*, it shall not wrest a sigh from thy bosom—rather let me live, and defy the malice and misery of the world—But can tenderness—can love atone for the sacrifices I have made?—Will it blot out my errors from the book of memory? Will love be an excuse for my crime, or hide me from the eye of the malignant—No, my *Harrington*, it will not. The passion is unwarrantable. Be it thine, gentle *Amelia*—be it thine to check the obtruding sigh, and wipe away the tear from his face—for thou art his wife, and thy soul is the seat of compassion—But—for me——

“Farewel—farewel forever!

MARIA.”

SHE survived but a short time—and frequently expressed a concern for her child—but Mrs. *Holmes* quieted her fears by promising to protect it. She accordingly made inquiry after it—and it is the same *Harriot* who was educated by her order, and whom she afterwards placed in the family of Mrs. *Francis*.

THE assurances of my mother were like balm to the broken hearted *Maria*—“I shall now,” said she, “die in peace.”

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~~therefore attended with more danger—Unless a speedy alteration should take place, the physician has little hopes of her recovery.—Heaven preserve us!~~

~~Farewell!~~

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 horreur of con-

flicting 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

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to assert which every one must have experienced who is possessed of a heart of sensibility.

Adieu!

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!

LETTER LXIV

HARRINGTON *to* WORTHY

HARRIOT is dead—and the world to me is a dreary desert—I prepare to leave it—the fatal pistol is charged—it lies on the table by me, ready to perform its duty—but that duty is delayed till I take my last farewell of the best of friends.

YOUR letter is written with the impetuosity of an honest heart; it expresses great sincerity and tenderness.

I THANK you for all your good advice—it comes too late—O *Worthy!* she is dead—she is gone—never to return, never again to cheer my heart with her smiles and her amiable manners—her image is always before me—and can I forget her?—No!—She is continually haunting my mind, impressing the imagination with ideas of excellence—but she is dead—all that delighted me is become torpid—is descended into the cold grave.

- - - - With thee
 Certain my resolution is to die;
 How can I live without thee—how forego
 Thy converse sweet, and love so dearly join'd,
 To live again in these wild woods forlorn?

- - - - -
 - - - - loss of thee
 Will never from my heart—no! no!—I feel
 The link of nature draw me.

- - - - From thy state
 Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.

THOU hast sat out on a long journey—but
 you shall not go alone—I hasten to overtake
 thee. My resolution is not to be diverted—is
 not to be shaken—I will not be afraid—I am
 inexorable——

——I HAVE just seen my father—he is
 dejected—sullen grief is fixed on his brow—
 he tells me I am very ill—I looked at *Myra*—
 she wiped her face with her handkerchief—
 perhaps they did not imagine this was the last
 time they were to behold me.

SHE mentioned the name of *Worthy*, but my
 thoughts were differently engaged. She re-
 peated your name, but I took no heed of it.—
 Take her, my *Worthy*—*Myra* is a good girl—

take her—comfort her. Let not my departure interrupt your happiness—perhaps it may for a short time. When the grass is grown over my grave, lead her to it, in your pensive walks—point to the spot where my ashes are deposited—drop one tear on the remembrance of a friend, of a brother—but I cannot allow you to be grieved—grieve for me! Wretch that I am—why do I delay——

——I WISH I could be buried by the side of her, then should the passenger who knows the history of our unfortunate loves, say—“Here lies *Harrington* and his *Harriot*—in their lives they loved, but were unhappy—in death they sleep undivided.”—Guardian spirits will protect the tomb which conceals her body—the body where every virtue delighted to inhabit.——

Do not judge too rashly of my conduct—let me pray you to be candid—I have taken advantage of a quiet moment, and written an Epitaph—If my body were laid by hers, the inscription would be pertinent. Let no one concerned be offended at the moral I have chosen to draw from our unfortunate story.

——MY heart sinks within me—the instrument of death is before me—farewell! farewell!—My soul sighs to be freed from its con-

finement—Eternal Father! accept my spirit
 —Let the tears of sorrow blot out my guilt
 from the book of thy wrath.

~~LETTER LXV~~~~WORTHY to Mrs. HOLMES.~~~~BOSTON.~~

~~WE have surmounted the perform-~~
~~ance of the last scene of our tragedy, with less~~
~~difficulty and distress than I imagined. Great~~
~~numbers crouded to see the body of poor Har-~~
~~rington; they were impressed with various emo-~~
~~tions, for their sympathizing sorrow could not~~
~~be concealed—Indeed a man without sensibility~~
~~exhibits no sign of a soul. I was struck with~~
~~admiration at the observations of the populace,~~
~~and the justness of the character they drew of~~
~~the deceased. “Alas!” said one—“poor youth,~~
~~thou art gone. Thou wast of a promising~~
~~genius, of violent passions, thou wast possessed~~
~~of a too nice sensibility, and a dread of shame.~~
~~It is only such an one who would take the~~
~~trouble to kill himself. Ah! poor well natured,~~