

ARGUMENT.

Abelard and Eloisa flourished in the twelfth century; they were two of the most distinguished persons of their age in learning and beauty, but for nothing more famous than for their unfortunate passion. After a long course of calamities they retired each to a several convent, and consecrated the remainder of their days to religion. It was many years after this separation, that a letter of Abelard to a friend, which contained the history of his misfortunes, fell into the hands of Eloisa: this occasioned those celebrated letters (out of which the following is partly extracted) which give so lively a picture of the struggles of grace and nature, virtue and passion.



Isaac Taylor del. et sculp.

ABELARD TO ELOISA.

BY MR. CAWTHORNE,

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AH, why this boding start? this sudden pain,
That wings my pulse, and shoots from vein to vein?
What mean, regardless of yon midnight bell,
These earth-born visions saddening o'er my cell?
What strange disorder prompts these thoughts to glow?
These sighs to murmur, and these tears to flow?
'Tis she, 'tis Eloisa's form restor'd,
Once a pure faint, and more than saints ador'd:
She comes in all her killing charms confess'd,
Glares thro' the gloom, and pours upon my breast,

Bids heav'n's bright guard from Paraclete remove,
And drags me back to misery and love.

Enjoy thy triumphs, dear illusion! see
This sad apostate from his God to thee;
See, at thy call, my guilty warmth return,
Flame thro' my blood, and steal me from my urn.
Yet, yet, frail Abelard! one effort try,
Ere the last lingering spark of virtue die;
The deadly charming forcerefs controul,
And spite of nature tear her from thy soul.

Long has that soul in these unfocial woods,
Where anguish muses, and where horror broods,
From love's wild visionary wishes stray'd,
And sought to lose thy beauties in the shade,
Faith dropt a smile, devotion lent her fire,
Woke the keen pang, and sanctify'd desire;
Led me enraptur'd to the blest abode,
And taught my heart to glow with all its God.
But oh, how weak fair faith and virtue prove!
When Eloisa melts away in love!
When her fond soul impassion'd, rapt, unveil'd,
No joy forgotten, and no wish conceal'd,
Flows thro' her pen as infant softness free,
And fiercely springs in ecstasies to me.
Ye heavens! as walking in yon sacred fane
With every seraph warm in every vein,
Just as remorse had rous'd an aking sigh,
And my torn soul hung trembling in my eye,

In that kind hour thy fatal letter came,
 I saw, I gaz'd, I shiver'd at the name;
 The conscious lamps at once forgot to shine,
 Prophetic tremors shook the hallow'd shrine;
 Priests, censors, altars from thy genius fled,
 And heaven itself shut on me while I read.

Dear smiling mischief! art thou still the same,
 The still pale victim of too soft a flame?
 Warm, as when first with more than mortal shine
 Each melting eye-ball mix'd thy soul with mine?
 Have not thy tears for ever taught to flow,
 The glooms of absence, and the pangs of woe,
 The pomp of sacrifice, the whisper'd tale,
 The dreadful vow yet hovering o'er thy veil,
 Drove this bewitching fondness from thy breast?
 Curb'd the loose wish, and form'd each pulse to rest?
 And canst thou still, still bend the suppliant knee
 To love's dread shrine, and weep and sigh for me?
 Then take me, take me, lock me in thy arms,
 Spring to my lips, and give me all thy charms:
 No, fly me, fly me, spread th' impatient sail,
 Steal the lark's wing, and mount the swiftest gale;
 Skim the last ocean, freeze beneath the pole;
 Renounce me, curse me, root me from thy soul;
 Fly, fly, for justice bares the arm of God,
 And the grasp'd vengeance only waits his nod.

Are these my wishes? can they thus aspire?
 Does phrenzy form them, or does grace inspire?

Can Abelard, in hurricanes of zeal,
 Betray his heart, and teach thee not to feel?
 Teach thy enamour'd spirit to disown
 Each human warmth, and chill thee into stone?
 Ah, rather let my tenderest accents move
 The last wild tumults of unholy love!
 On that dear bosom trembling let me lie,
 Pour out my soul, and in fierce raptures die,
 Rouze all my passions, act my joys anew,
 Farewell, ye cells! ye martyr'd faints! adieu:
 Sleep, conscience, sleep! each awful thought be drown'd,
 And seven-fold darkness veil the scene around.
 What means this pause, this agonizing start?
 This glimpse of heaven quick-rushing thro' my heart?
 Methinks I see a radiant cross display'd,
 A wounded Saviour bleed along the shade;
 Around th' expiring God bright angels fly,
 Swell the loud hymn, and open all the sky:
 O save me, save me, ere the thunders roll,
 And hell's black caverns swallow up my soul.

Return, ye hours! when guiltless of a stain,
 My strong-plum'd genius throbb'd in every vein,
 When warm'd with all th' Ægyptian fanes inspir'd,
 All Athens boasted, and all Rome admir'd;
 My merit in its full meridian shone,
 Each rival blushing, and each heart my own.
 Return, ye scenes! ah no, from fancy fly,
 On time's stretch'd wing, till each idea die,

Eternal fly, since all that learning gave
 Too weak to conquer, and too fond to save,
 To love's soft empire every wish betray'd,
 And left my laurels withering in the shade.
 Let me forget, that while deceitful fame
 Grasped her shrill trump, and fill'd it with my name,
 Thy stronger charms, impower'd by heav'n to move
 Each faint, each blest insensible to love,
 At once my soul from bright ambition won,
 I hugg'd the dart, I wish'd to be undone ;
 No more pale science durst my thoughts engage,
 Insipid dulness hung on every page ;
 The midnight lamp no more enjoy'd its blaze,
 No more my spirit flew from maze to maze :
 Thy glancés bade philosophy resign
 Her throne to thee, and every sense was thine.

But what could all the frosts of wisdom do,
 Oppos'd to beauty, when it melts in you ?
 Since these dark, cheerless, solitary caves,
 Death-breathing woods, and daily-opening graves,
 Mis-shapen rocks, wild images of woe,
 For ever howling to the deeps below ;
 Ungenial deserts, where no vernal shower
 Wakes the green herb, or paints th' unfolding flower ;
 Th' imbrowning glooms these holy mansions shed,
 The night-born horrors brooding o'er my bed,
 The dismal scenes black melancholy pours
 O'er the sad visions of enanguish'd hours ;

Lean abstinence, wan grief, low-thoughted care,
 Distracting guilt, and hell's worst fiend, despair,
 Conspire, in vain, with all the aids of art,
 To blot thy dear idea from my heart.

Delusive, fightless god of warm desire!
 Why would'st thou wish to set a wretch on fire?
 Why lives thy soft divinity where woe
 Heaves the pale sigh, and anguish loves to glow?
 Fly to the mead, the daisy-painted vale,
 Breathe in its sweets, and melt along the gale;
 Fly where gay scenes luxurious youths employ,
 Where every moment steals the wing of joy;
 There may'st thou see, low prostrate at thy throne,
 Devoted slaves and victims all thy own:
 Each village-swain the turf-built shrine shall raise,
 And kings command whole hecatombs to blaze.

O memory! ingenious to revive
 Each fleeting hour, and teach the past to live,
 Witness what conflicts this frail bosom tore!
 What griefs I suffer'd! and what pangs I bore!
 How long I struggled, labour'd, strove to save
 An heart that panted to be still a slave!
 When youth, warmth, rapture, spirit, love, and flame,
 Seiz'd every sense, and burnt thro' all my frame;
 From youth, warmth, rapture, to these wilds I fled,
 My food the herbage, and the rock my bed.
 There, while these venerable cloisters rise
 O'er the bleak fudge, and gain upon the skies,

My wounded soul indulg'd the tear to flow
 O'er all her sad vicissitudes of woe;
 Profuse of life, and yet afraid to die,
 Guilt in my heart, and horror in my eye,
 With ceaseless prayers, the whole artillery given
 To win the mercies of offended heaven,
 Each hill, made vocal, eccho'd all around,
 While my torn breast knock'd bleeding on the ground.
 Yet, yet, alas! tho' all my moments fly
 Stain'd by a tear, and darken'd in a sigh;
 Tho' meagre fasts have on my cheek display'd
 The dusk of death, and sunk me to a shade,
 Spite of myself the still-impoisoning dart
 Shoots thro' my blood, and drinks up all my heart;
 My vows and wishes wildly disagree,
 And grace itself mistakes my God for thee.

Athwart the glooms, that wrap the midnight sky,
 My Eloisa steals upon my eye;
 For ever rises in the solar ray,
 A phantom brighter than the blaze of day:
 Where-e'er I go, the visionary guest
 Pants on my lip, or sinks upon my breast;
 Unfolds her sweets, and, throbbing to destroy,
 Winds round my heart in luxury of joy;
 While loud hosannas shake the shrines around,
 I hear her softer accents in the sound;
 Her idol-beauties on each altar glare,
 And heaven much-injur'd has but half my prayer:

No tears can drive her hence, no pangs controul,
For every object brings her to my soul.

Last night, reclining on yon airy sleep,
My busy eyes hung brooding o'er the deep;
The breathless whirlwinds slept in every cave,
And the soft moon-beam danc'd from wave to wave;
Each former bliss in this bright mirror seen,
With all my glories, dawn'd upon the scene,
Recall'd the dear auspicious hour anew,
When my fond soul to Eloisa flew:
When, with keen speechless ecstasies oppress'd,
Thy frantic lover snatch'd thee to his breast,
Gaz'd on thy blushes arm'd with every grace,
And saw the goddess beaming in thy face;
Saw thy wild, trembling, ardent wishes move
Each pulse to rapture, and each glance to love.
But lo! the winds descend, the billows roar,
Foam to the clouds, and burst upon the shore,
Vast peals of thunder o'er the ocean roll,
The flame-wing'd lightning gleams from pole to pole.
At once the pleasing images withdrew,
And more than horrors croud'd on my view;
Thy uncle's form, in all his ire array'd,
Serenely dreadful stalk'd along the shade,
Pierc'd by his sword, I sunk upon the ground,
The spectre ghastly smil'd upon the wound;
A group of black infernals round me hung,
And tofs'd my infamy from tongue to tongue.

Detested wretch! how impotent thy age!
 How weak thy malice! and how kind thy rage!
 Spite of thyself, inhuman as thou art,
 Thy murdering hand has left me all my heart;
 Left me each tender, fond affection, warm,
 A nerve to tremble, and an eye to charm.
 No, cruel, cruel, exquisite in ill,
 Thou thought'st it dull barbarity to kill;
 My death had robb'd lost vengeance of her toil,
 And scarcely warm'd a Scythian to a smile:
 Sublimer furies taught thy soul to glow
 With all their savage mysteries of woe;
 Taught thy unfeeling poniard to destroy
 The powers of nature, and the source of joy;
 To stretch me on the racks of vain desire,
 Each passion throbbing, and each wish on fire;
 Mad to enjoy, unable to be blest,
 Fiends in my veins, and hell within my breast.

Aid me, fair faith! assist me, grace divine!
 Ye martyrs! bless me, and ye saints! refine,
 Ye sacred groves! ye heaven-devoted walls!
 Where folly sickens, and where virtue calls;
 Ye vows! ye altars! from this bosom tear
 Voluptuous love, and leave no anguish there:
 Oblivion! be thy blackest plume display'd
 O'er all my griefs, and hide me in the shade;
 And thou, too fondly idoliz'd! attend,
 While awful reason whispers in the friend;

Friend,

Friend, did I say? immortals! what a name?
 Can dull, cold friendship, own so wild a flame?
 No; let thy lover, whose enkindling eye
 Shot all his soul between thee and the sky,
 Whose warmth bewitch'd thee, whose unhallow'd song
 Call'd thy rapt ear to die upon his tongue,
 Now strongly rouse, while heaven his zeal inspires
 Diviner transports, and more holy fires;
 Calm all thy passions, all thy peace restore,
 And teach that snowy breast to heave no more.

Torn from the world, within dark cells immur'd,
 By angels guarded, and by vows secur'd,
 To all that once awoke thy fondness dead,
 And hope, pale sorrow's last sad refuge, fled;
 Why wilt thou weep, and sigh, and melt in vain,
 Brood o'er false joys, and hug th'ideal chain?
 Say, canst thou wish, that, madly wild to fly
 From yon bright portal opening in the sky,
 Thy Abelard should bid his God adieu,
 Pant at thy feet, and taste thy charms anew?
 Ye heavens! if to this tender bosom woo'd,
 Thy mere idea harrows up my blood;
 If one faint glimpse of Eloise can move
 The fiercest, wildest agonies of love;
 What shall I be, when, dazzling as the light,
 Thy whole effulgence flows upon my sight?
 Look on thyself, consider who thou art,
 And learn to be an abbess in thy heart;

See, while devotion's ever-melting strain
 Pours the loud organ thro' the trembling fane,
 Yon pious maids each earthly wish disown,
 Kiss the dread cross, and croud upon the throne:
 O let thy soul the sacred charge attend,
 Their warmths inspirit, and their virtues mend;
 Teach every breast from every hymn to steal
 The seraph's meekness, and the seraph's zeal;
 To rise to rapture, to dissolve away
 In dreams of heaven, and lead thyself the way,
 Till all the glories of the blest abode
 Blaze on the scene, and every thought is God!
 While thus thy exemplary cares prevail,
 And make each vestal spotless as her veil,
 Th' eternal spirit o'er thy cell shall move
 In the soft image of the mystic dove;
 The long-lost gleams of heavenly comfort bring
 Peace in his smile, and healing on his wing;
 At once remove affliction from thy breast,
 Melt o'er thy soul, and hush her pangs to rest.

O that my soul, from love's curst bondage free,
 Could catch the transports that I urge to thee!
 O that some angel's more than magic art
 Would kindly tear the hermit from his heart!
 Extinguish every guilty sense, and leave
 No pulse to riot, and no sigh to heave.
 Vain fruitless wish! still, still, the vigorous flame
 Bursts, like an earthquake, thro' my shatter'd frame;

Spite

Spite of the joys that truth and virtue prove,
 I feel but thee, and breathe not but to love;
 Repent in vain, scarce wish to be forgiven;
 Thy form my idol, and thy charms my heaven.

Yet, yet, my fair! thy nobler efforts try,
 Lift me from earth, and give me to the sky;
 Let my lost soul thy brighter virtues feel,
 Warm'd with thy hopes, and wing'd with all thy zeal.
 And when, low bending at the hallow'd shrine,
 Thy contrite heart shall Abelard resign;
 When pitying heaven, impatient to forgive,
 Unbars the gates of light, and bids thee live;
 Seize on th' auspicious moment ere it flee,
 And ask the same immortal boon for me.

Then when these black terrific scenes are o'er,
 And rebel nature chills the soul no more;
 When on thy cheek th' expiring roses fade,
 And thy last lustres darken in the shade;
 When arm'd with quick varieties of pain,
 Or creeping dully slow from vein to vein,
 Pale death shall set my kindred spirit free,
 And these dead orbs forget to doat on thee;
 Some pious friend, whose wild affections glow
 Like ours, in sad similitude of woe,
 Shall drop one tender, sympathizing tear,
 Prepare the garland, and adorn the bier;
 Our lifeless reliques in one tomb enshrine,
 And teach thy genial dust to mix with mine.

Mean while, divinely purg'd from every stain,
Our active souls shall climb th'etherial plain,
To each bright cherub's purity aspire,
Catch all his zeal, and pant with all his fire;
There, where no face the glooms of anguish wears,
No uncle murders, and no passion tears,
Enjoy with heaven eternity of rest,
For ever blessing, and for ever blest.



D E A T H :

BY CHARLES EMILY, ESQ.

I.

THE festive roar of laughter, the warm glow
Of brisk-ey'd joy, and friendship's genial bowl,
Wit's season'd converse, and the liberal flow
Of unsuspecting youth, profuse of soul,
Delight not ever; from the boisterous scene
Of riot far, and Comus' wild uproar,
From folly's crowd, whose vacant brow serene
Was never knit to wisdom's frowning lore,
Permit me, ye time-hallow'd domes, ye piles
Of rude magnificence, your solemn rest,
Amid your fretted vaults and length'ning isles,
Lonely to wander; no unholy guest,
That means to break, with sacrilegious tread,
The marble slumbers of your monumented dead.

II. Permit