THE LETTERS OF A PORTUGUESE NUN

MARIANNA ALCOFORADO

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THE LETTERS OF A PORTUGUESE NUN

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THE LETTERS OF A PORTUGUESE NUN
(MARIANNA ALCOFORADO)

TRANSLATED BY
EDGAR PRESTAGE
BALLIOL COLLEGE
OXFORD

LONDON
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1893

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TO THE AUTHOR OF

‘PORTUGAL CONTEMPORANEO’

J. P. DE OLIVEIRA MARTINS

I DEDICATE

THIS BOOK

PREFACE

Y *attempt at an English rendering of the Letters is, I think, the first since the days of Bowles' 'Letters from a Portuguese Nun to an Officer in the French Army,' London, 1808.*[1] *But during the two centuries which have elapsed since their first publication quite a small literature has grown up around them, and they have been turned into several European tongues, the French editions alone amounting to more than thirty. If the numerous so-called 'Replies' and 'Imitations' were added to this reckoning the number would be nearly doubled, and this without taking into account the critiques and studies which have appeared about them. I do not propose here to enter into a comparison of the Letters with those of Heloïse, as many writers have done, but shall content myself with referring the curious to the excellent work of Senhor Cordeiro, 'Soror Marianna. A Freira Portugueza,' Lisbon, 1888; 2nd edition, 1891. It is from him that I have learnt nearly all that I know about Marianna, and in my Introduction I have made a liberal use of his book, as well as of M. Asse's preface to the edition of the 'Lettres Portuguises avec les Réponses,' Paris, 1889, upon which I have based my rendering.*

If my translation should arouse any interest in things Portuguese, and lead others to read and make versions of such masterpieces of the world's literature as the 'Frei Luiz de Sousa' and the 'Folhas Cahidas' of Garrett, or the poems of João de Deus, I should be more than rewarded for any trouble the present work may have cost me. But who can hope to succeed where Burton has apparently failed? The English public—and the critics too—will probably continue to believe that there is nothing worth reading in Portuguese literature with the exception of the Lusiads. Here too there is perhaps a lesson to be learnt from the Germans, especially from such as Storck, Reinhardstoettner, and Michaëlis de Vasconcellos.

I should like to thank Mr. York Powell of Christ Church for the kind help which he has given me in the difficult task of translation. My aim has been

throughout to keep as close to the French text as possible—seeing that the original Portuguese is lost,—aided by the masterly re-translation of Senhor Cordeiro. L'Estrange's version—'Five Love Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier,' London, 1678,—is somewhat free at times, but it has aided me in the Third Letter. I have followed Cordeiro in his re-arrangement of the order of the Letters, the Second and Fourth changing places.

The historical facts which concern the hero and heroine of these Letters I have given briefly in the Introduction, and a Bibliography and Appendix will be found at the end of the volume. The text of the first French edition of 1669 has been copied in Paris purposely for this work, and will, it is hoped, add much to its interest and value.

And so I deliver poor Marianna's passionate Epistles to the consideration of those who can appreciate them and feel for her.

And weeping then she made her moan,
'The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten and love forlorn.'

EDGAR PRESTAGE.

BOWDON, 1892.

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INTRODUCTION

Fuyd los deleytes, pues non da deleite
Perfecto, nin bueno, nin tan poco sano;
A todos engaña su falsso afeyte,
Sin sentir mata el su gozo vano.
A todos arriedran del bien soberano,
Jamas no aplazen que no den tristeza,
Aforjan cadenas del sotil Volcano,
Con que encarcelan a toda nobleza.

Cancioneiro de Resende.

N 1663,' says Sainte-Beuve, 'it became the policy of Louis XIV. to help Portugal against Spain, but the succour which he gave was indirect; subsidies were secretly furnished, the levying of troops was favoured, and a crowd of volunteers hastened there. Between this small army, commanded by Schomberg, and the feeble Spanish troops which disputed the soil with it, there were each summer many marches and counter-marches with but few results, many skirmishes and small fights, and among the latter, perhaps, one victory. Who troubles himself about it now? The curious reader, however, who only looks to his own pleasure, cannot help saying that all this was good, since the "Letters of the Portuguese Nun" grew from it.

As Sainte-Beuve indicates, the subject of the 'Letters' forms one of the episodes of the war between Spain and Portugal which followed as a consequence of the Restoration of 1640 and the achievement of the latter's independence under the House of Braganza. This war, which lasted for twenty-eight years, until the final peace in 1668, was intermittent, and carried on only at long intervals owing to the state of the two contending

parties. Spain had now entered on the period of her decline, and Portugal was in a hardly better condition after her sixty years' captivity and the exhaustion of her forces which had taken place during the reign of Philip IV. Owing, however, to the aid of France, she had been enabled to hold her own up to 1659; but the news of the Peace of the Pyrenees seemed at first to take from her all hope of preserving her hardly won autonomy. Yet in spite of this, Mazarin, while signing the clause which bound France to abandon the Portuguese cause, determined, with his usual duplicity, that this should not prevent him from secretly aiding an ally whom he had found so useful in the past as a thorn in the side of Spain. Hardly, indeed, had the treaty been made than he began to occupy himself in recruiting for the Portuguese service a number of French officers whom the peace had left without employment. Among these the chief was Schomberg, who went to Lisbon in 1660 as commander-in-chief and to reorganise the Portuguese army. It was not, however, until 1663 that the hero of the Letters, Noel Bouton, afterwards Marquis of Chamilly and St. Leger, arrived in the country, which he was to leave four years later with the betrayal of a poor nun as his title to fame. For at the time when Schomberg was already there, we see Chamilly (as he is generally called) assisting at the marriage of his brother to Catherine le Comte de Nonant, referred to in the text (Letter II.).

Three years afterwards, finding himself without military employment in France, he came to Portugal, attracted probably, like so many others, by the reputation of the great captain, with whom he had doubtless established friendly relations during the campaign in Flanders (1656-8).

Our hero, if hero he may be called, was the eleventh son of Nicholas Bouton, Lord of Chamilly, Charangeroux, and, later on, St. Leger, properties of modest size in Burgundy. His family was good, but its attachment to the Princes of Condé during the Fronde had compromised its position and damaged its fortunes. Noel, the future marquis, was born in 1636, and as soon as his age allowed he entered on a military career. He served through the Flanders campaign under Turenne, and in 1658 was made captain, under the name of the Count of Chamilly, in Mazarin's regiment of cavalry. Reaching Portugal at the end of 1663, or the commencement of 1664, he was given the same rank in a regiment commanded by a French officer of note, Briquemault. Although his name is not mentioned in any of the contemporary notices of the war, we know that

he was present at the Siege of Valença de Alcantara (June 1664), at the battle of Castello Rodrigo (in the same month and year), at that of Montes Claros (June 1665), and at the principal sieges which occupied the next two years. In 1665, he was promoted to the rank of colonel, and two years later a diploma of Louis XIV., issued, perhaps, at the instance of his brother, the Governor of Dijon, gave Chamilly a similar post in the French army, with the evident intention of enabling him to leave the Portuguese service when he liked, even though the war with Spain should not be ended. This, taken together with the fact that in the document the space for the month is left blank, is extremely significant, and, as will be seen later on, certainly connects itself with the episode of the 'Letters,' even if it does not enter into their actual history.[2] The diploma of Louis XIV., it may be added, is dated 1667, and the sudden departure of Chamilly took place at the end of that year, so that it seems probable that the French captain, fearing future annoyance or even danger to himself from his *liaison*, had determined to secure a safe retreat.

But let us look for a moment at the authoress of the famous 'Portuguese Letters.'

Marianna Alcoforado was born of a good family in the city of Beja and province of Alemtejo in the year 1640. Her father appears to us in the first years of the Restoration as a man in an influential position, well related, and discharging important commissions both administrative and political. He possessed a large agricultural property, which he administered with attention and even zeal, and was a Cavalier of the Order of Christ, besides being intimate with some of the principal men of the time. He had six children, of whom Marianna, according to Cordeiro, was the second. Life in Beja at that time seems to have been sufficiently insecure, owing to the fact that the province of which it was one of the chief cities formed the theatre of the war, and Beja itself was the chief garrison town. Tumults were constantly arising from quarrels between the various parts of the heterogeneous mass which then composed the Portuguese army, and hence increased care would be necessary on the part of Francisco Alcoforado in order that the education of his daughters might be conducted in such a manner as their position demanded. Hence, too, probably, the reason why Marianna and her sister Catherine entered the Convent of the Conception at an earlier age than was usual. Their father, occupied with administrative and

military work on the frontier, would be unable to give them the oversight and attention which quieter times would have allowed.

The Convent of the Conception at Beja was founded in 1467 by the parents of King Emanuel the Fortunate, and, favoured successively by royal and private devotion, it had become one of the most important and wealthy institutions of its kind in Portugal. It was situated at the extreme south of the city, near to the ancient walls, and looked on to the gates still called 'of Mertola,' because they are on the side of the city towards Mertola, distant fifty-four kilometres to the south-west on the right bank of the Guadiana. There is still to be seen the remains of the balcony or verandah from which Marianna first caught sight of Chamilly, probably during some military evolutions (cf. Letter II.), and from it a good view may be obtained over the plains of Alemtejo as they stretch away to the south. Curiously enough, the tradition of Marianna and her fatal love has been perpetuated in the convent, in spite of the attempts, natural enough, on the part of monastic chroniclers and such like to hide all traces of it.

In this as in most other convents there were two kinds of cells—the dormitories, divided into cubicles, and rooms forming independent abodes dispersed throughout the edifice. These latter the nuns of the seventeenth century called their 'houses,'—*as suas casas*,—and it was one of these which Marianna possessed. The former were in accordance with the Constitutions, while the latter, though strictly forbidden, nevertheless existed. These separate abodes were, it is true, often necessitated by the growth of the convent population, and generally appertained to nuns of a better position, while the dormitories served for those who were either poorer or of an inferior rank. Many of these *casas*, too, were built by private individuals who had some connection or other with the particular convent, and there are indications that the father of Marianna had caused some to be erected in that of the Conception.[3]

From the year 1665 to 1667, then, Beja was, as we have said, the centre of the various military movements in which Chamilly took part under the leadership of Schomberg, and there is no doubt that he spent much of his time there. Marianna was twenty-five years old. She had been intrusted to the Cloister when a child,[4] as she herself tells us, and her renunciation of the world must have been little more than a form. She had probably made

her ‘profession’ too at the age of sixteen, that provided for by the Constitutions, if not at an earlier date.

The dull routine of her life was suddenly broken in upon by the sight of a man surrounded with all the prestige of military glory—one who was the first to awaken in her a consciousness of her own beauty—the first to tell her that he loved her, one, moreover, who was ready to throw all his greatness, his present and his future, at her feet.

‘I was young; I was trustful. I had been shut up in this convent since my childhood. I had only seen people whom I did not care for. I had never heard the praises which you constantly gave me. Methought I owed you the charms and the beauty which you found in me, and which you were the first to make me perceive. I heard you well talked of; every one spoke in your favour. You did all that was necessary to awaken love in me.’[5] Such is her simple confession, and, comments Cordeiro, nothing more natural.

Their first meeting was probably due to the relations which Chamilly, an officer of rank, had entered into with the Alcoforados, one of the chief families in Beja. There are indications, indeed, that Chamilly and Marianna’s eldest brother had met, doubtless in the field, for the latter also followed the profession of arms; and this brother, named Balthazar Vaz Alcoforado, is probably the same as the ‘brother’ referred to in the Letters as the lovers’ go-between. It was for his benefit that Marianna’s father had striven for years to build up an estate which was to be entailed on his offspring. But in the year 1669, just at the very time of the great sensation caused by the publication of the Letters in Paris, Balthazar abandoned his military career and all his brilliant prospects in the world to enter the priesthood. It is impossible not to hazard a guess, although we know nothing for certain on the point, that his motive for so doing was connected in some way with the almost tragic ending of the *liaison* between his sister and the French captain. But to return:—The customs of the time, curiously enough, allowed a greater relative liberty to nuns as regards the visits which might be paid them than to married women,[6] or, as the Bishop of Gram Para puts it, ‘the liberty of the grating was wide in those miserable times.’[7]

We cannot of course be expected to give an account of the progress of this *liaison*, nor do we wish to indulge in romantic hypotheses.

Chamilly was thirty at the time when he first saw Marianna. Brought up as he had been to war as a trade, a man of small intelligence and few scruples, the intrigue would be a pleasant diversion, a means *pour passer le temps* which he would otherwise have found dull enough in a Portuguese provincial town after the Paris of 'Le Grand Monarque.' The seduction and desertion of a poor nun must have seemed all so perfectly natural to one brought up in contact with the loose morality of camp life and in the France of Louis XIV.

In June 1667 the authorities of Beja received an answer from the new King, Don Pedro, to the complaint which they had made of 'the oppression which the French cavalry continued to exercise on this people.'[8] Already, on account of similar complaints, Schomberg had been ordered to move his cavalry from the town and district, but he had disobeyed these orders for strategic reasons. Now, we have already seen that it was between 1665 and 1667 that Chamilly carried on his intrigue with Marianna, and it is just in 1667 that the scandal must have attained greater proportions, coinciding with and ending, not in the withdrawal of the French cavalry, but in the sudden retirement of Chamilly to France. But what, it may be asked, was the reason for the King's order, and what could those 'oppressions' have been in an important city where presumably there was a regular and well-appointed police administration? Has it not a relation, asks Cordeiro, with the incident in the 'Letters,' which would both afflict and irritate the influential family of the nun and the good burgesses of Beja? The special situation of the French captain, on the other hand—his interest in not aggravating the scandal, and the peril for the religious herself in the adoption of violent means, would all naturally counsel the withdrawal of Chamilly.[9]

The danger of remaining longer in Beja was not in the nature of those which the French colonel could confront with his recognised courage. If he were surprised in the convent, if he were denounced as its violator and as the seducer of a nun, the daughter of a well-known family, and one, too, which was on excellent terms with the new sovereign, neither his own position nor the protection of Schomberg would avail him, since both the

one and the other began to lose their importance with the approach of peace.[10]

However this may be, certain it is that Chamilly's own excuses for departure, referred to in the 'Letters,' were merely empty pretexts, and a reference to the history of the time will show this. If Louis XIV. needed his presence so much for the invasion of Franche Comté, why not, it may be asked, for the important campaign in Flanders in 1667?

He seems to have left Portugal, too, a little clandestinely, for no notice is to be met with, as in the case of other French officers, of his asking and obtaining leave from the Portuguese Government, and he probably did not even embark in Lisbon. Already, in the beginning of February 1668, we find him with Louis XIV. in Dijon, so that he must have quitted Beja and the seat of war quite at the end of the preceding year.

It is now that the 'Letters' enter into the history of the lives of Marianna and Noel Bouton de Chamilly. As is well known, they were all written after the latter's retirement from Portugal, and probably between the December of 1667 and the June of 1668, and they express better than any remarks which we could make the stages of faith, doubt, and despair through which poor Marianna passed. As a piece of unconscious, though self-made, psychological analysis they are unsurpassed; as a product of the Peninsular heart they are unrivalled. If they are not, as Theophilo Braga calls them, the only beautiful work produced by his countrymen in the seventeenth century, they are, at any rate, by far the most beautiful. To compare them, as regards literary form, with those of Heloïse would be manifestly unfair, the situation of the two women was so different.[11] Think of the Abbess of the Paraclete, mistress of all the learning of the time, and surrounded by things to console her, or at least to divert her attention, and then regard poor Marianna, persecuted by her family, and liable to the tender mercies of the Inquisition, with none of the comforts, none of the consolations of the former. But if the 'Letters' of Heloise are superior to those of Marianna from the point of view of correctness of expression and style, they are inferior in all else. The nun's are far more natural, and therefore more beautiful, and the very confusion of feelings and ideas which we should expect from one in her position rather adds to their charm. Finally, the moral character of Heloïse as displayed in her epistles cannot certainly, be placed beside that of the Portuguese nun with any advantage.

Henceforth, we only meet with the name of Marianna at intervals—once in 1668, again in 1676 and 1709, and lastly in an obituary notice in 1723.

She, at any rate, is not an example of the well-known saying of Cervantes —'the Portuguese die of love.' It is true that some words at the end of the Fifth Letter seem to suggest suicide, but there is, on the other hand, throughout the whole of these *ultima verba* an expression of energy and of her determination to tread under foot, if she cannot extinguish, the flames of her passion. Marianna came of a vigorous race, and, in spite of the great infirmities of which her obituary speaks, she lived, as we shall see, to the age of fourscore years and three.

She was made Portress, as mentioned in the Letters, at the beginning of 1668, no doubt to distract her mind by giving her some definite occupation and a sense of responsibility. It is, however, significant, as Cordeiro remarks, that we do not find the name of Marianna, a daughter of one of the principal and most influential families in Beja, filling any more elevated post, whereas her younger sister Peregrina Maria appears in the conventual register as both Amanuensis and Abbess. This sister, before professing in the same convent in 1676, made her will, 'being more than twelve years of age,' and there she spoke of the many obligations which she owed Marianna for having brought her up 'from the age of three years.'[12] Her entering the Conception at such an early age is explained by the fact of the death of her mother, which took place at the end of 1663 or the beginning of 1664. Again, in 1709, Marianna is mentioned as beaten by only ten votes in an election for the office of Abbess by a certain nun of the name of Joanna de Bulhão, of whom nothing is known.

The next time we hear of her is in 1723, the date of her death. The obituary notice speaks for itself and for her life, since the episode which the 'Letters' contain, and needs no comment. 'On the 28th day of the month of July, in the year 1723, died, in this Royal Convent of Our Lady of the Conception, Mother D. Marianna Alcanforada,[13] at the age of eighty-seven years,[14] all of which she spent in the service of God. She was always very regular in the choir and at the confraternities, and withal fulfilled her (other) obligations. She was very exemplary, and none had fault to find with her, for she was very kind to all. For thirty years she did rigid penance and suffered great infirmities with much conformity, desiring to have more to suffer. When she knew that her last hour was come, she asked for all the

sacraments, which she received in a state of perfect consciousness, giving many thanks to God for having received them. Thus she ended her life with all the signs of predestination, speaking up to the last hour, in proof of which I, D. An[ia] Sophia Bap[ta] de Almeida, Amanuensis of the Convent, wrote this, which I signed on the same day, month and year as above.[15]

D. AN[IA] SOPHIA BAP[TA] DE ALM[DA],
Amanuensis.'

No such obscurity as that which hangs over the life of Marianna hides the doings of Chamilly after his return to France. Acts like the famous defence of Grave in 1674 against the Prince of Orange, and that of Oudenarde two years later, marked him out for future distinction. But if he knew how to defend towns he no less could attack and take them. He distinguished himself greatly at the sieges of Gand, Condé, Yprés and Heidelberg, and in 1703 received the recompense of his great services, being made a Marshal of France.

M. Asse tells several anecdotes about him, which *seem* to show that he was a generous man as well as a brave soldier.[16] United in 1671 by a *mariage de convenance* to a lady who, according to S. Simon, was far from being gifted with personal beauty, he was always a most exemplary husband. S. Simon, who knew him well, also tells us that Chamilly was 'the best man in the world, the bravest, and the most honourable.' He says, too, that no one after seeing him or hearing him speak, could understand how he had inspired such an unmeasured love as that revealed in the famous 'Letters.'[17]

How, then, are we to reconcile the Chamilly of the 'Letters' with the man of whom his contemporaries and friends speak so highly? The publication of the Epistles of Marianna was doubtless due to vanity, a fault which we may certainly credit Chamilly with possessing. It was, too, the custom in seventeenth-century France to hand round copies of letters, either received or written, for the admiration of friends, and thus, what now appears to us a brutal and cynical want of confidence, was then the most natural thing in the world.[18] It is not, however, so easy, even if it is possible, to excuse the conduct of the French captain in the betrayal and desertion of poor Marianna. Posterity, as M. Asse says, especially the feminine portion, has

condemned him, and there seems to be no reason why we should seek to reverse the verdict.

It was in 1669 that the first edition of what we know as the 'Portuguese Letters' was published by Claude Barbin, the well-known Parisian bookseller. The translation seems to have been made towards the middle of the year preceding, and shortly after the return of Chamilly to France. The Letters were evidently shown by their possessor as one of those trophies, or at least souvenirs, which persons are accustomed to bring back with them from a foreign country.[19] The incognito, however, was complete, and neither the name of their recipient nor that of their translator was inscribed on this *editio princeps*. That of Marianna, indeed, the authoress, was not known until early in this present century, when in 1810 Boissonade discovered her name written in a copy of the edition of 1669 by a contemporary hand. The veracity of this note has since been placed beyond doubt by the recent researches of Senhor Cordeiro, who has shown the persistence of a tradition in Beja connecting the French captain and the Portuguese nun.

The success of the first edition was rapid and complete. A second by Barbin, and two in foreign countries, one in Amsterdam, the other in Cologne, all in the same year, attest this. The success, indeed, took such proportions, that from the mutual rivalry of authors and publishers there sprung up a new kind of literature, that of 'les Portugaises.' The Five Letters of the nun had followers like most successful romances, and the title of 'Portuguese Letters' became a generic name applying not only to the imitations which amplified subsequent editions, but also to every kind of correspondence where passion was shown *toute nue*.[20]

'Brancas,' says Mme. de Sévigné, 'has written me a letter so excessively tender as to make up for all his past neglect. He speaks to me from his heart in every line; if I were to reply to him in the same tone, *ce seroit une Portugaise*.'[21]

In the same year, 1669, Barbin issued a 'second part' of the Portuguese Letters, which was counterfeited shortly afterwards at Cologne, as the real

ones had been. This was written, we are told in the preface, by a *femme du monde*, and its publication was suggested by the favour with which the letters of the nun had been received.

The publisher counted, as he said, on the difference of style which distinguished these fresh letters from the original ones, to assure a success as great as the first five had obtained.

After the second part came the so-called 'Replies,' all in the same year, and their publisher tells us in the preface that 'he is assured that the gentleman who wrote them has returned to Portugal.' Shortly afterwards appeared the 'New Replies,' but this time they were given for what they were, 'a *jeu d'esprit* for which the example of Aulus Salinus writing replies to the Heroides of Ovid, and, above all, the beauty of the first Portuguese Letters, should serve as an excuse.'[22]

The motive, then, for the production of the second part of the 'Portuguese Letters' as for that of the 'New Replies' is satisfactorily explained, but how about the 'Replies' themselves? Can we not account for them by supposing that it was felt necessary on the part of the friends of Chamilly to attenuate the sympathy expressed on all sides for the unfortunate nun, and the censure which must naturally have followed such a base betrayal? Hence, proceeds Senhor Cordeiro, the author of this suggestion, the publication of these Replies, whose capital idea is to show us the seducer of Marianna under a perfectly different aspect and character from that which readers of the Letters would naturally attribute to him. However this may be, it was not long before the name of their hero came to be printed in editions of the Letters, though, curiously enough, it was first divulged in an edition printed abroad—in Cologne—in 1669, a copy of which is to be found in the British Museum, marked 1085 *b.* 5 (2), containing the following:—

'The name of him to whom they (the Letters) were written is the Chevalier de Chamilly, and the name of him who made the translation is Cuilleraque.'[23]

More strange still, the French editions of the Letters preserved a discreet silence as to the name of the recipient with the exception of the 1671 edition of the Replies, until the year 1690, when a similar notice to that above referred to as being in the Cologne edition was made public; so that even in Chamilly's lifetime his name was appended to editions of the

Letters as their recipient, and as far as we know he never denied the authenticity of the ascription.

The question as to whether the Letters were originally written in French, or whether they are a translation, hardly needs discussion here, for the principal critics, both French and Portuguese—Dorat, Malherbe, Filinto Elysio and Sousa Botelho—have unanimously decided from the text itself that they are a translation, and a bad one. The last-named says:—'A Portuguese, or indeed any one knowing that language, cannot doubt but that the Five Letters of the Nun have been translated almost literally from a Portuguese original. The construction of many of the phrases is such that, if re-translated word for word, they are found to be entirely in harmony with the genius and character of that language.'[24]

But it is just this baldness for which we should all be truly thankful, because we are thus enabled to listen to what Marianna said, and hear how she said it. Had the translation been what the seventeenth century would have called a good one, we should have known M. Guilleragues well enough, it is true, but only seen the nun 'darkly as through a glass.'

As to the present version, the author can only add to what he has already said in the Preface, by confessing that he feels its inadequacy as much as any of his critics will doubtless do. At the same time, however, if its result be to excite competition, and call forth a better one, his labour will not, he thinks, have been in vain.

LETTERS

She only said, ‘My life is dreary,
He cometh not,’ she said;
She said, ‘I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!’

Mariana.—Tennyson.

FIRST LETTER

Meu amigo verdadeiro, quem me vos levou tão longe? ... Como vós vos fostes, tudo se tornou tristeza; nem parece ainda, senão que estava espreitando já que vos fosseis.

Bernardim Ribeiro, *Saudades*, cap. i.

DO but think, my love, how much thou wert wanting in foresight. Ah! unfortunate, thou wert betrayed, and thou didst betray me with illusive hopes. A passion on which thou didst rest so many prospects of pleasure now only causes thee a deadly despair, which is like nothing else but the cruelty of the absence which occasions it. What! must this absence, to which my sorrow, all ingenious though it be, cannot give a sad enough name, deprive me for ever of a sight of those eyes in which I was wont to see so much love, which made me feel so full of joy, which took the place of all else to me, and which, in a word, were all that I desired? Mine eyes, alas! have lost the only light that gave them life, tears alone are left them, and ceaseless weeping is the sole employment I have given them since I learned that you were bent upon a separation so unbearable to me that it must soon bring about my death. But yet it seems to

me that I cling in some sort to the sorrows of which you are the sole cause. I consecrated my life to you from the moment when I first saw you, and I feel a certain pleasure in sacrificing it to you. I send you my sighs a thousand times each day, they seek you everywhere, and as sole recompense of so much disquietude they bring me back a warning too true, alas, of my unhappiness: an unhappiness which is cruel enough to prevent me from flattering myself with hope, and which is ever calling to me—Cease, cease to wear thyself out in vain, ill-fated Marianna, cease looking for a lover whom thou wilt never see again, who has crossed the seas to fly from thee, who is now in France in the midst of pleasures, who is not thinking for one moment on thy sorrows, who would not thank thee for these pangs for which he feels no gratitude. But no, I cannot make up my mind to think so ill of you, and I am too much concerned that you should right yourself. I do not even wish to think that you have forgotten me. Am I not unhappy enough already without torturing myself with false suspicions? And why should I try so hard to forget all the care you took to prove your love for me? I was so enchanted with it all that I should be ungrateful indeed were I not still to love you with the same transports that my passion lent me when I enjoyed the pledges of your love. How can the memory of moments so sweet have become so bitter? And, contrary to their nature, must they serve only to tyrannise over my heart? Alas, poor heart! your last letter brought it into a strange state; it endured such strong pangs that it seemed to be trying to tear itself from me to go and seek for you. I was so overcome by all these violent emotions that I was beside myself for more than three hours.[25] It was as though I refused to come back to a life which I feel bound to lose for you since I cannot preserve it for you. In spite of myself, however, I became myself again; I flattered myself with the feeling that I was dying of love, and besides, I was well pleased at the thought of being no longer obliged to see my heart torn by grief at your absence. Ever since those first symptoms I have suffered much from ill-health, but can I ever be well again until I see you? And yet I am bearing it without a murmur since it comes from you. What! is this the reward you give me for loving you so tenderly? But it matters not; I am resolved to adore you all my life and to care for no one else, and I tell you that you too will do well to love no other. Could you ever content yourself with a love colder than mine? You will perhaps find more beauty elsewhere (yet you told me once that I was very beautiful), but you will never find so much love: and all the rest is nothing. Do not fill any

more of your letters with trifles: and do not write and tell me again to remember you. I cannot forget you, and as little do I forget the hope you gave me that you would come and spend some time with me. Alas! why are you not willing to pass your whole life at my side? Could I leave this unhappy cloister I should not await in Portugal the fulfilment of your promises. I should go fearlessly over the whole world seeking you, following you, and loving you. I dare not flatter myself that this can be. I do not care to feed a hope that would certainly give me some pleasure, while I wish to feel nothing but sorrow. Yet I confess the chance of writing to you which my brother gave me suddenly aroused in me a certain feeling of joy, and checked for a time the despair in which I live. I conjure you to tell me why you set yourself to bewitch me as you did, when you well knew that you would have to forsake me. Why were you so bent on making me unhappy? Why did you not leave me at peace in my cloister? Had I done you any wrong? But I ask your pardon. I am not accusing you. I am not in a state to think on vengeance, and I only blame the harshness of my fate. It seems to me that in separating us it has done us all the harm that we could fear from it. It will not succeed in separating our hearts,—for love, more powerful than it, has united them for ever. If you take any interest in my lot write to me often. I well deserve your taking some pains to let me know the state of your heart and fortune. Above all, come and see me. Good-bye. I cannot make up my mind to part from this letter. It will fall into your hands: would I might have the same happiness! Ah, how foolish I am! I know so well that this is impossible. Good-bye. I can no more. Good-bye. Love me always and make me suffer still more.

SECOND LETTER[26]

Das tristezas, não se pôde contar náda ordenadamente, porque desordenadamente acontescem ellas.

BERNARDIM RIBEIRO, *Saudades*, cap. i.

OUR lieutenant has just told me that a storm has forced you to put into port in the Algarve.[27] I am afraid you have suffered much on the sea, and so much has this fear absorbed me that I have thought no more on all my troubles. Do you think, perchance, that your lieutenant takes more interest in what happens to you than I do? If not, why then is he better informed of it? And then, why have you not written to me? I am unlucky indeed if you have found no time for writing since you left, and still more so if you could have written and would not. Your injustice and ingratitude are too great; but I should be in despair if they were to cause you any harm. I had rather you should remain unpunished than that they should avenge me. I withstand all the appearances which ought to persuade me that you do not love me at all, and I feel much more disposed to yield myself blindly to my passion than to the reasons you give me to complain of your neglect. What mortification you would have spared me, if, in the days when I first saw you, your conduct had been as cold as it has seemed to me for some time now! But who would not have been deceived by such ardour as you then showed, and who would not have thought it sincere? How hard it is to make up one's mind to doubt for any time the sincerity of those one loves! I see clearly that the least excuse is good enough for you; and, without your troubling to make it to me, my love for you serves you so faithfully that I cannot consent to find you guilty, except for the sake of enjoying the infinite pleasure of declaring you guiltless myself. You overcame me by your assiduities, you kindled my passions with your transports, your tenderness fascinated me, your vows persuaded me, but it was the violence of my own love which led me away; and this beginning at once so sweet and so happy, has left nothing behind it but tears, sighs, and a wretched death, without the possibility of my ministering any relief to myself. It is true that in loving you I enjoyed a

pleasure unthought of before, but this very pleasure is now costing me a sorrow, which once I knew nothing of. All the emotions which you cause me run to extremes. If I had shown obstinacy in resisting your love, if I had given you any motive for anger or jealousy in order to draw you on the more, if you had detected any artifice in my conduct, if, in a word, I had wished to oppose my reason to the natural inclination I felt for you, and which you soon made me perceive (though doubtless my efforts would have been useless), you might then have punished me severely and used your power over me with some show of justice. But you seemed to me worthy of my love before you had told me that you loved me: you gave evidence of a great passion for me: I was overjoyed at it, and I gave myself up to love you to distraction. You were not blinded as I was. Why then did you let me fall into the state in which I now am? What did you want with all my raptures, which must have been very troublesome to you? You well knew that you would not stay in Portugal for ever. Then why did you single me out to make me so unhappy? Doubtless you might, in this country, have found some woman more beautiful than I am, one with whom you could have enjoyed as much pleasure,—since in this you only sought the grosser kind—one who would have loved you faithfully as long as you were with her, whom time would have consoled for your absence, and whom you might have left without either treachery or cruelty. You act more like a tyrant bent on persecution than a lover whose only thought should be how to please. Alas! why do you treat so harshly a heart which is yours? I can see very well that you let yourself be turned against me as easily as I let myself be convinced in your favour. Without needing to call on all my love, and without imagining that I had done anything out of the way, I should have resisted much stronger arguments than those can be which have moved you to leave me. They would have seemed to me very weak, and none could have been strong enough to tear me from your side. But you were ready to make use of the first pretexts that you found in order to get back to France. A vessel was sailing. Why did you not let it sail? Your family had written to you. Surely you know all the persecutions which I have suffered from mine? Your honour obliged you to abandon me. Did I take any care of mine? You were forced to go and serve your king. If all they say of him is true he has no need of your help, and would have excused you. I should have been only too happy if we could have passed our whole lives together, but since it was fated that a cruel absence should separate us, I think I ought

to be glad indeed at the thought of not having been faithless, and I would not wish to have committed such a base act for anything in the world. What! you who have known the depths of my heart and affection, could you make up your mind to leave me for ever and expose me to the dread of feeling that you only remember me in order to sacrifice me to some new passion?

I well know that I love you as one distracted. Withal I do not complain of all the violence of my heart's emotions; I am accustoming myself to its tortures, and I could not live without the pleasure which I find and enjoy in loving you in the midst of a thousand sorrows. But a disgust and hatred for everything torments me constantly; I feel my family, my friends, and this convent unbearable. All I am forced to see and everything I am obliged to do is hateful to me. I have grown so jealous of my passion that methinks all my actions and all my duties have regard to you. Yes, I have scruples in not employing every moment of my life for you. Ah! what should I do without the extremities of hate and love which fill my heart? Could I survive that which incessantly fills my thoughts, and lead a quiet cold life? Such a void, and such a lack of feeling, could never suit me. All have noticed how completely I am changed in my humour, my manners, and my person. My mother[28] spoke to me about it, sharply at first, but afterwards more kindly. I know not what I said in reply. I think I confessed all to her. Even the strictest religious pity my condition, and are moved by a certain consideration and regard for me. Every one, in fact, is touched by my love: and you alone remain profoundly indifferent. You write me letters at once cold and full of repetitions; the paper is not half filled, and you make it quite clear that you are dying to finish them.

Dona Brites has been importuning me for several days to get me to leave my room, and thinking to divert me she took me for a walk upon the balcony, from which one sees the gates of Mertola.[29] I went with her, but at once cruel memories assailed me, and these made me weep for the rest of the day. She brought me back to my room, and there I threw myself on the bed and thought a thousand times on the little hope I have of ever being well again. What is done to alleviate only embitters my grief, and I find in the very remedies themselves particular reasons for fresh sorrows. It was from that spot that I often saw you pass by with that air which charmed me so, and I was up on that balcony on the fatal day when I began to feel the

first effects of my unhappy passion. Methought you were wishing to please me, although as yet you did not know me. I persuaded myself that you singled me out among all my companions. When you paused I thought you were pleased for me to see you better and admire your skill and grace whilst you caracoled your horse. A sudden fright came over me when you made it go over some difficult place. In a word, I interested myself secretly in every act of yours. I felt quite sure you were not indifferent to me, and I took as meant for me all that you did. You know too well what came of all this; and although I have nothing to hide, I ought not to write to you so much about it, lest I make you more guilty than you are already, if that be possible, and lest I have to reproach myself with so many useless efforts to oblige you to be faithful. This you will never be. Can I ever hope that my letters and reproaches will have an effect on your ingratitude that my love for you and your desertion of me have not had? I know my sad fate too well: your injustice leaves me not the slightest reason to doubt of it, and I am bound to fear the worst, since you have cast me off. Have you a charm only for me, and do not other eyes find you pleasing? I should not be annoyed, I think, were the feelings of others in some sort to justify mine, and I would wish all the women in France to find you agreeable, but none to love you, none please you. This idea is ridiculous and impossible I well know. I have already, however, found by experience that you are incapable of a great affection, and that you could easily forget me without any help, and without a fresh love obliging you to it. I would, perhaps, wish you to have some reasonable pretext for your desertion of me. It is true that I should then be more unhappy, but you would not be so guilty. You mean to stay in France, I perceive, without great enjoyments, may be, but in the possession of full liberty. The fatigue of a long voyage, some punctilios of good manners, and the fear of not being able to correspond to my ardent passion, keep you there. Oh do not be afraid of me; I will be content with seeing you from time to time, and knowing only that we are in the same country; but perhaps I flatter myself, and may be you will be more touched by the rigour and hardness of another woman than you have been by all my favours. Can it be that cruelty will inflame you more?

But before engaging yourself in any great passion, think well on the excess of my sorrows, on the uncertainty of my purposes, on the contradictions in my emotions, on the extravagance of my letters, on my trustfulness, my despair, my desires, and my jealousy. Oh! you are on the way to make

yourself unhappy. I conjure you to profit by my example, that at least what I am suffering for you may not be useless to you. Five or six months ago you told me a secret which troubled me, and acknowledged, only too frankly, that you had once loved a lady in your own country. If it is she who prevents you from returning here, do not scruple to tell me, that I may fret no more. I am borne up by some remnants of hope still, but I should be well pleased, if it can have no good result, to lose it at a blow, and myself with it. Send me her likeness and some one of her letters, and write me all she says. Perchance I shall find reasons wherewith to console myself, or it may be to afflict myself still more. I cannot remain any longer in my present state, and any change whatsoever must be to my advantage. I should also like to have the portrait of your brother and of your sister-in-law.[30] All that concerns you is very dear to me, and I am wholly given up to what touches you in any way: I have no inclination of my own left. Sometimes, methinks, I could even submit to wait upon her whom you love. Your bad treatment and disdain have broken me down so far that at times I do not dare to think I could be jealous and yet not displease you, and I go so far as to think that I should be doing the greatest wrong in the world were I to upbraid you. I am often convinced that I ought not to let you see, so madly as I do, feelings which you disown. An officer has now been waiting long for this letter. I had resolved to write it in such a way that you might receive it without annoyance, but as it is, it is too extravagant, and I must close it. Alas! I cannot bring myself to this. I seem to be speaking to you whilst I write, and you seem to be more present to me. The next[31] letter shall neither be so long nor so troublesome; you may open and read it assured of this. It is true that I ought not to speak of a passion which displeases you, and I will not speak of it again. In a few days it will be a year since I gave myself up to you without reserve. Your love seemed to me very warm and sincere, and I should never have thought that my favours would so annoy you as to oblige you to voyage five hundred leagues and expose yourself to the risk of shipwreck to escape from them. I have not deserved such treatment as this at any man's hands. You may remember my modesty, my shame, and my confusion, but you do not remember what would make you love me in spite of yourself. The officer who is to carry you this letter sends to me for the fourth time to say that he wishes to be gone. How pressing he is! doubtless he is leaving some unhappy lady in this country.

Good-bye. It costs me more to finish this letter than it cost you to quit me, perhaps for ever. Good-bye. I do not dare give you a thousand names of love, nor abandon myself to all my feelings without restraint. I love you a thousand times more than my life, and a thousand times more than I think for. How dear you are to me, and yet how cruel! You do not write to me. I could not help saying this to you again. But I am beginning afresh, and the officer will be gone. What matters it? Let him go. 'Tis not so much for your sake that I write as for my own. I only seek some solace. Besides, the very length of my letter will frighten you, and you will not read it. What have I done to be so unhappy? And why have you poisoned my life? Why was I not born in some other country? Good-bye, and forgive me. I dare not now pray you to love me. See to what my fate has brought me. Good-bye!

THIRD LETTER

> ... Que este pequeno penhor de meus longos suspiros vá ante os seus olhos. Muitas outras cousas desejo, mas esta me seria assaz.'—Bernardim Ribeiro, *Saudades*, cap. i.

HAT will become of me, and what would you have me do? How far I am now from all that I had looked forward to! I hoped that you would write me from every place you passed through, and that your letters would be very long ones,—that you would feed my love by the hope of seeing you again, that full trust in your fidelity would give me some sort of rest, and that I should then remain in a state bearable enough, and without the extremes of sorrow. I had even thought of some poor plans of endeavouring, as far as possible, my own cure, in case I could but once assure myself that you had entirely forgotten me. The distance which you are at, certain impulses of devotion, the fear of entirely destroying the remainder of my health by so many wakeful nights and so many cares, the improbability of your return, the coldness of your love, and your last good-byes, your departure based on such cruel pretexts, and a thousand other reasons which are only too good and too useless, seemed to offer me a safe refuge if I needed one. Having indeed only myself to reckon with, I could never have been on my guard against all my weaknesses, nor foresee all that I now suffer. Ah! how pitiful it is for me,—I that am not able to share with you my sorrows, and must be all alone in my grief! This thought is killing me, and I almost die of horror when I think that you were never really affected by all the bliss that we shared. Yes, I understand now the untruth of all your transports. You betrayed me every time you told me that your supreme delight was to be alone with me. It is to my importunities alone that I owe your warmth and passion. Deliberately and in cold blood you formed a design to kindle my love; you only regarded my passion as your triumph, and your heart was never deeply touched. Are you not very wretched? and have you so little delicacy that you made no other use of my love but this?

How then can it be that with such love I have not been able to make you entirely happy? It is solely for love of you that I regret the infinite pleasures you have lost. Can it be that you did not care to enjoy them? Ah! if you only knew them you would doubtless find them much greater than that of having deceived me, and you would have experienced how much happier it is, and how much more poignant it is to love violently than to be loved. I know not what I am, or what I do, or what I wish for. I am torn asunder by a thousand contrary emotions. Can a more deplorable state be imagined? I love you to distraction, and therefore I spare you sufficiently not to dare to wish that the same emotions should trouble you. I should kill myself or die of grief without were I to be assured that you were never having any rest, that your life was as anxious and disturbed as mine, that you were weeping ceaselessly, and that everything was hateful to you. I cannot bear my own sufferings, how then could I support the sorrow a thousand times more grievous which yours would give me? I cannot, on the other hand, make up my mind to wish that you should think no more of me; and to speak frankly, I am furiously jealous of all that gives you pleasure, and comes near to your heart and fancy in France. I know not why I write to you. I perceive that you will only pity me, and I wish for none of your pity. I hate myself when I look back on all that I have sacrificed for you. I have lost my honour. I have exposed myself to the anger of my parents, to all the severity of the laws of this country against religious, and finally to your ingratitude, which has seemed to me the greatest of all my evils. Withal, I feel that my remorse is not real, and that I would willingly, with all my heart, have run the greatest risks for the love of you, and that I experience a sad pleasure in having risked my life and honour in your service. Ought not all that I hold most dear to be at your disposal? Ought I not to be satisfied at having employed it as I have done? Methinks, even, I am not at all content with my sorrows, or the excess of my love, although I cannot, alas! flatter myself sufficiently to be content with you. I live, unfaithful that I am; I do as much to preserve my life as to lose it. Ah! I am dying of shame. Is my despair then only in my letters? If I loved you, as I have told you a thousand times, should I not have been dead long ago? I have deceived you, and you may rightly complain of me. Alas! why do you not complain of me? I saw you leave, I can never hope to see you come back, and in spite of all I yet breathe! I have deluded you. I ask your pardon, but do not grant it me. Treat me harshly—say my love for you is too weak; be more hard to please; tell me

that you would have me die of love for your sake. Help me thus, I conjure you, to overcome the weakness of my sex, and to put an end to all my wavering in real despair. Doubtless a tragic end would force you to think of me often, my memory would become dear to you, and perhaps you would be really touched by so uncommon a death. Would not death be better than the state to which you have brought me? Good-bye. How I wish that I had never seen you. Ah! I feel how false this phrase is, and I know at the very moment in which I write it that I had far rather be unhappy in my love for you than never have seen you. Willingly, and without a murmur, I consent to my evil fate, since it has not been your wish to make it happier. Good-bye; promise me a few tender regrets if I die of grief, or at least that you will let the violence of my love give you a disgust and repulsion for everything else. This consolation will suffice me, and if I must leave you for ever, I would wish not to leave you to another woman. Would it not be very cruel indeed of you to make use of my despair to render yourself more agreeable, and to let it be seen that you have inspired the greatest passion in the world? Good-bye once again. My letters are too long, and I do not regard you sufficiently. I ask your pardon, and dare hope that you will show some indulgence to a poor mad woman who was not so, as you know, before she loved you. Good-bye. Methinks I too often speak to you of the insufferable state in which I am, yet I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the despair which you cause me, and I hate the peace which I lived in before I knew you.

Good-bye! My love grows stronger each moment. Oh what a world of things I have to tell you of!

FOURTH LETTER[32]

Ai gostos fugitivos!
Ai gloria já acabada e consumida!
Ai males tão esquivos!
Qual me deixais a vida!
Quão cheia de pezar! quão destruida!

CAMÕES, *Ode* iii.

METHINKS I do the greatest possible wrong to the feelings of my heart in trying to make them known to you in writing. How happy should I be could you judge of my passion by the violence of yours! But I must not compare my feelings with yours, though I cannot help telling you, much less strongly than I feel it, it is true, that you ought not to maltreat me as you do by a forgetfulness which thrusts me into despair, and which even for you is dishonourable. It is but fair that you should allow me to complain of the evils which I clearly foresaw when I perceived that you were resolved to forsake me. I well know now that I deluded myself, thinking as I did that you would deal with me in better faith than is usually the case, because the excess of my love put me, it seemed, above all kind of suspicion, and merited more fidelity than is ordinarily met with. But your wish to deceive me overruled the justice you owe me for all that I have done for you. I should still be unhappy even if you only loved me because I love you, and I would wish to owe it all to your inclination alone. But so far is this from being the case that I have not received a single letter from you for the last six months. I put down all my misfortunes to the blindness with which I gave myself up to love of you. Should I not have foreseen that the end of my pleasure would come before that of my love? Could I expect you to stay all your life in Portugal and give up both country and career and think only of me? Nothing can lighten my sorrow, and the remembrance of all that I enjoyed fills me with despair. What! is all my desire then to be in vain? and shall I never see you again in my room with

all the ardour and passion which you once showed? But, alas! I am deceiving myself, and I know too well that all the feelings that filled my head and heart were only excited in you by a few pleasures, and that they both ended at the same time. I ought then in those moments of supreme happiness to have called reason to my aid to moderate the deadly excess of my delight, and to foretell to me all that I am now suffering. But I gave myself up to you entirely, and I was not in a state to think of anything which would have poisoned my pleasure and prevented me from fully enjoying the pledges of your ardent love. I was too much delighted to feel that I was with you to think that you would one day be far from me. I remember, however, having told you sometimes that you would make me unhappy, but these fears were soon dissipated, and I took pleasure in sacrificing them to you, and in giving myself up to the enchantment and the faithlessness of your protests. I see clearly the remedy for all the evils which I suffer, and I should be soon rid of them if I loved you no more. But alas! what a remedy! I had rather suffer still more than forget you. Does that, alas! depend on me? I cannot reproach myself with having for a single moment wished to cease to love you. You are more to be pitied than I am, and all my sufferings are better than the cold pleasures which your French mistresses give you. I do not envy you your indifference, and you make me pity you. I defy you to forget me entirely. I flatter myself that I have put you in a state in which you can enjoy but imperfect pleasures without me, and I am happier than you because I am more occupied. Some little time ago I was made portress of this convent. All who speak to me think that I am mad. I know not what I answer them. The religious must be as mad as myself to have thought me capable of taking care of anything. Oh how I envy the good fortune of Manoel and Francisco![33] Why am I not always with you, as they are? I would have followed you and waited upon you with more goodwill, it is certain. To see you is all that I desire in this world. At least remember me; for you to remember me will content me, but I dare not make sure even of this. I used not to limit my hopes to your remembrance of me when I saw you daily, but you have taught me the necessity of submitting to all that you wish. Withal I do not repent of having adored you; I am glad that you betrayed me, and your absence, cruel though it is, and perhaps eternal, diminishes in no way the violence of my love. I wish everybody to know it; I make no mystery of it; and I pride myself on having done for you all that I did against every kind of decorum. My honour and religion consist but in

loving you to distraction all my life through, since I have begun to love you. I am not telling you all this to oblige you to write to me. Oh do not force yourself; I only wish from you what comes spontaneously, and I reject all the testimonies of your love which you can control. I shall find pleasure in excusing you, because you will perhaps be glad not to have the trouble of writing to me, and I feel deeply disposed to pardon you all your faults. A French officer had the charity to talk to me of you for three hours this morning; he told me that peace was made with France.[34] If this is so could you not come and see me, and take me to France? But I do not deserve it. Do as you please, for my love no longer depends on the way in which you may treat me. I have not been well for a single moment since you left, and my only pleasure has been that of repeating your name a thousand times each day. Some religious who know the deplorable state into which you have plunged me often speak to me of you. I leave my room, where you so often used to come to see me, as little as possible, and I constantly look at your likeness, which is to me a thousand times clearer than life itself. It gives me some pleasure, but also much sorrow, when I consider that I shall perchance never see you again.

Why must it be that I shall possibly never see you again? Have you then left me for ever? I am in despair. Your poor Marianna can no more; she is almost fainting while she finishes this letter. Good-bye, Good-bye. Have pity on me.

FIFTH LETTER

Estou pôsto sem medo
A tudo o que o fatal destino ordene:
Póde ser que cansado,
Ou seja tarde, ou cedo,
Com pena de penar-me, me despene.

CAMÕES, *Canção* ix.

AM writing to you for the last time, and I hope to let you see by the difference in the terms and manner of this letter that you have at last persuaded me that you no longer love me, and that therefore I ought no longer to love you. I will send you on the first opportunity all that I still have of yours. Do not be afraid that I shall write to you; I will not even put your name on the packet. With all these details I have charged Dona Brites,[35] whom I have accustomed to confidences very different from this. Her care will be less suspected than mine. She will take all the necessary precautions, that I may be assured that you have received the portrait and bracelets which you gave me. I wish you to know, however, that for some days I have felt as if I could burn and tear up these tokens of your love, once so dear to me. But I have revealed such weakness to your eyes that you would perhaps never have believed me capable of going to a like extremity. I wish, however, to enjoy all the pain I have experienced in separating from them, and cause you some vexation at least. I confess, to your shame and mine, that I found myself more attached to these trifles than I should like to tell you, and I felt that I had again need of all my reasoning powers to enable me to get rid of each object in spite of my flattering myself that I cared no more for you. But, provided with such good reasons as mine, one always achieves the end one seeks. I have placed them in the hands of Dona Brites. What tears this resolution cost me! After a thousand different emotions and doubts which you know not of, and of which I shall certainly not give you an account, I have conjured her to speak no more to

me of these baubles, and never to give them back to me even though I should beg to see them once again, and, in a word, to send them you without letting me know.

It is only since I have been employing all my efforts to heal myself that I have come to know the excess of my love, and I fear that I should not have dared to take it in hand had I foreseen so many difficulties and such violence. I am persuaded that I should have experienced less disagreeable emotions in loving you, ungrateful though you are, than in quitting you for ever. I have found out that you were less dear to me than my passion; and I have had hard work to fight against it even after your insulting behaviour made you hateful to me. The pride natural to my sex has not helped me to resolve aught against you. Alas! I suffered your scorn, and I could have supported your hate and all the jealousy which the attachment you might have had for another woman could have caused me. I should have had at least some passion to combat, but your indifference is insupportable to me. Your impertinent protestations of friendship, and the ridiculous civilities of your last letter, convince me that you have received all those which I have written to you, that they have stirred no emotions in your heart, and yet that you have read them. O ungrateful man! I am still foolish enough to be in despair at not being able to flatter myself that they have not reached you or been given into your hands. I detest your frankness. Did I ever ask you to tell me the truth sincerely? Why did you not leave me my love? You had only not to write; I did not seek to be enlightened. Am I not unhappy enough with all my inability to make the task of deceiving me difficult to you, and now at not being able to exculpate you. Know that I am convinced that you are unworthy of all my love, and that I understand all your base qualities. If, however, all that I have done for you deserves that you should pay some slight regard to the favours I ask of you, write no more to me, I beg you, and help me to forget you entirely. If you were to show, even slightly, that you had felt some grief at the reading of this letter, perchance I should believe you. Perchance, also, your acknowledgment and assent would vex and anger me, and all that would inflame my love afresh. Do not then take any account of my life, or you would doubtless overthrow all my plans, however you entered into them. I care not to know the result of this letter, and I beg of you not to disturb the peace which I am preparing for myself. Methinks you may content yourself with the harm which you have already caused me, whatever be the intention you formed to make me

miserable. Do not tear me from my state of uncertainty; I hope in time to combine with it something like peace of heart. I promise not to hate you; indeed I distrust any violent feelings too much to adventure that. I am persuaded that I should find, it may be in this country, another lover more faithful and handsomer; but, alas! who could make me feel love? Would a passion for another man fill my thoughts? Has mine had any power over you? Have I not experienced that a tender heart never forgets what first awakened it to feelings it knew not that it was capable of? I have found that all the feelings of such a heart are bound up with the idol it has created for itself—that its first impressions, its first wounds, can neither be healed nor effaced—that all the passions which offer their help and attempt to fill and content it promise it but vainly an emotion which it never feels again—that all the pleasures which it seeks, without any desire of finding them, serve only to convince it that nothing is so dear as the remembrance of its sorrows? Why have you made me feel the imperfection and bitterness of an attachment which cannot endure for ever, and all the evils that result from a violent love, when it is not mutual? Why is it that blind inclination and cruel fate agree as a rule in determining us in favour of those who could only love others? Even if I could hope for some diversion in a new engagement, and could find a man of good faith, I pity myself so much that I should have great scruples in putting the worst man in the world in the condition to which you have brought me; and although I may not be obliged to spare you I could not make up my mind to avenge myself so cruelly, even though it were to depend on me, by a change which I certainly do not foresee. At this very moment I am seeking excuses for you, and I understand that a religious is not as a rule loveable. Methinks, however, if reason guided one's choice one ought to be more attached to them than to other women. Nothing prevents their thinking constantly of their passion, and they are not turned aside by a thousand things which divert and occupy the mind in the world. Surely it cannot be very pleasing to see those whom one loves ever distracted by a thousand trifles, and one must needs have but little delicacy to suffer them (without being in despair at it) to talk of nothing but assemblies, dress, and promenades. One is constantly exposed to fresh jealousies, for they are tied down to attentions, politenesses, and conversations with all. Who can be assured that they find no pleasure in all these occasions, and that they always endure their husbands with extreme disgust and never of their freewill? Ah, how they ought to distrust a lover

who does not make them render an exact account of all, who believes easily and without disquiet what they tell him, who in unruffled trust sees them bound to all these society duties. But I do not seek to prove to you by good reasons that you ought to love me; these are very ill means, and I have made use of much better, without success. Too well do I know my fate to try to rise above it. I shall be miserable all my life. Was I not so even when I saw you daily? I was dying for fear that you would not be faithful. I wished to see you every moment, and I could not. The danger you ran in entering the convent troubled me. I almost died when you were with the army. I was in despair at not being more beautiful and more worthy of you. I used to murmur against my modest rank,[36] and I often thought that the attachment you appeared to cherish for me would be hurtful to you in some way. Methought I did not love you enough. I feared the anger of my parents against you, and I was, in a word, in as lamentable a state then as now. If you had shown me any signs of affection since you left Portugal I should have made every effort to leave it, and I would have disguised myself to go and find you. Ah, what would have became of me if you had troubled no more about me after I had arrived in France?—what confusion, what a false step, what depths of shame for my family which is so dear to me since I have ceased to love you! I quite understand, you see, that I might have been even more wretched than I am. At least for once in my life I am speaking reasonably to you. How delighted you will doubtless be at my moderation, and how pleased with me? But I wish not to know it. I have already prayed you not to write to me again, and I repeat it now. Have you never reflected on the way in which you have treated me? Have you never considered that you owe me more than any one else in the world? I have loved you as a mad woman might. How I despised everything else!

Besides, you have not acted like an honourable man. You must have had a natural aversion for me, since you have not loved me to distraction. I allowed myself to be enchanted by very mediocre qualities. What have you ever done to please me? What sacrifice have you made for me? Did you not always seek a thousand other pleasures? Did you ever give up gaming or the chase? Were you not ever the first to leave for the army, and did you not always come back the last? You exposed yourself rashly, although I had begged you to spare yourself for my sake. You never sought the means of settling down in Portugal, where you were esteemed. A single letter from your brother made you leave without a moment's hesitation. Do I not know

that during the voyage you were in the best of humours? It must be confessed that I ought to hate you with a deadly hatred. Ah, I have brought down all these misfortunes on myself. I accustomed you from the first to a boundless love, and that with too much ingenuousness, while one needs to employ artifice to make one's self loved. One should seek the means of skilfully exciting it, for love of itself does not engender love. You wished me to love you, and since you had formed this design there is nothing that you would not have done to accomplish it. You would even have made up your mind to love me had that been necessary, but you knew that you could succeed in your enterprise without passion, and that you had no need of it. What treachery! did you think that you could deceive me with impunity? If any chance brings you again to this country, I declare that I will hand you over to the vengeance of my kinsfolk. I have lived too long, in an abandonment and idolatry which strikes me with horror, and feelings of remorse persecute me with unbearable severity. I feel a lively shame for the crimes which you have made me commit, and I have no more, alas! the love which prevented me from comprehending their enormity. When will this heart of mine cease to be torn? When shall I be freed from these cruel trammels?

In spite of all, methinks I do not wish you harm, and could resolve to consent to your being happy. But how could you be so, if you had a true heart? I mean to write you another letter, to show you that I shall perchance be more at peace some day. What pleasure I shall find in being able to reproach you for your injustice when I am no longer so vividly touched by it, in letting you know that I despise you, and that I can speak with indifference of your deceit, that I have forgotten all my pleasures and all my sorrows, and that I only remember you when I wish to do so! I recognise that you have a great advantage over me, and that you have inspired in me a love which has upset my reason; but at the same time you should take little credit to yourself for it. I was young, I was trustful, I had been shut up in this convent since my childhood,[37] I had only seen people whom I did not care for. I had never heard the praises which you constantly gave me. Methought I owed you the charms and the beauty which you found in me, and which you were the first to make me perceive: I heard you well talked of; every one spoke in your favour: you did all that was necessary to awake love in me. But I have at last returned to myself from this enchantment. You yourself helped me greatly, and I confess that I had much need of it. When I

return you your letters I shall take care to keep the last two which you wrote me; and I shall re-read them more often than I have the previous ones, in order that I may not relapse into my former weakness. Ah! how dear they cost me, and how happy I should have been if you had allowed me to love you always. I well know that I am still a little too much taken up with my reproaches and your faithlessness, but remember that I have promised myself a state of greater peace, and that I shall reach it, or take some desperate resolve against myself, which you will learn, without great displeasure. But I wish no more of you, and I am foolish to repeat the same things so often. I must leave you, and think no more on you. I even think that I shall not write to you again. Am I under any obligation to render you an exact account of all I do?

LETTRES PORTVGAISES TRADVITES EN FRANÇOIS

A PARIS,

Chez CLAVDE BARBIN, au

Palais, sur le second Perron

de la sainte Chapelle.

M. DC. LXIX

Avec Privilege du Roy

AV LECTEVR

AY trouué les moyens auec beaucoup de soin & de peine, de recouurer vne copie correcte de la traduction de cinq Lettres Portugaises, qui ont esté écrites a un Gentilhomme de qualité, qui seruoit en Portugal. I'ay veu tous ceux qui se connoissent en sentimens, ou les loüer, ou les chercher auec tant d'empressement, que j'ay crû que ie leur ferois un singulier plaisir de les imprimer. Ie ne sçay point le nom de celuy auquel on les à écrites, ny de celuy qui en a fait la traduction, mais il m'a semblé que ie ne deuois pas leur déplaire en les rendant publiques. Il est difficile quelles n'eussent, enfin, parû auec des fautes d'impression qui les eussent défigurées.

PREMIERE LETTRE

ONSIDERE, mon amour, jusqu'à quel excez tu as manqué de preuoyance. Ah mal-heureux! tu as esté trahy, & tu m'as trahie par des esperances trompeuses. Vne passion sur laquelle tu auois fait tant de projets de plaisirs, ne te cause presentement qu'vn mortel desespoir, qui ne peut estre comparé qu'à la cruauté de l'absence, qui le cause. Quoy? cette absence, à laquelle ma douleur, toute ingenieuse qu'elle est, ne peut donner vn nom assez funeste, me priuera donc pour toujours de regarder ces yeux, dans lesquels je voyois tāt d'amour, & qui me faisoient connoître des mouuemēs, qui me combloient de joye, qui me tenoient lieu de toutes choses, & qui enfin me suffisoient? Helas! les miens sont priuez de la seule lumiere, qui les animoit, il ne leur reste que des larmes & je ne les ay employez à aucun vsage, qu'à pleurer sans cesse, depuis que j'appris que vous estiez enfin resolu à vn éloignement, qui m'est si insupportable, qu'il me fera mourir en peu de temps. Cependant il me semble que j'ay quelque attachement pour des malheurs, dont vous estes la seule cause: Ie vous ay destiné ma vie aussi-tost que je vous ay veu; & je sens quelque plaisir en vous la sacrifiant. I' enuoye mille fois le jour mes soupirs vers vous, ils vous cherchent en tous lieux, & ils ne me rapportent pour toute recompense de tant d'inquietudes, qu'vn aduertissement trop sincere, que me dōne ma mauuaise fortune, qui a la cruauté de ne souffrir pas, que je me flatte, & qui me dit à tous momens; Cesse, cesse Mariane infortunée de te consumer vainement: & de chercher vn Amant que tu ne verras iamais; qui a passé les Mers pour te fuir, qui est en France au milieu des plaisirs, qui ne pense pas vn seul moment à tes douleurs, & qui te dispense de tous ces transports, desquels il ne te sçait aucun gré? mais non, je ne puis me resoudre à juger si injurieusement de vous, & je suis trop interessée à vous justifier: Ie ne veux point m'imaginer que vous m'auez oubliée. Ne fuis-je pas assez malheureuse sans me tourmenter par de faux soupçons? Et pourquoy ferois-je des efforts pour ne me plus souuenir de tous les soins, que vous auez pris de me temoigner de l'amour? I'ay esté si charmée de tous ces soins, que je serois bien ingrate, si je ne vous aymois auec les mesmes emportemens, que ma Passion me donnoit, quand je joüissois des témoignages de la vostre.

Comment se peut-il faire que les souuenirs des momens si agreables, soient deuenus si cruels? & faut-il que contre leur nature, ils ne seruent qu'à tyranniser mon cœur? Helas! vostre derniere lettre le reduisit en vn estrange état: il eut des mouuemens si sensibles qu'il fit, ce semble, des efforts, pour se separer de moy, & pour vous aller trouuer: Ie fus si accablée de toutes ces émotions violentes, que je demeuray plus de trois heures abandonnée de tous mes sens: je me défendis de reuenir à vne vie que je dois perdre pour vous: puis que je ne puis la cōnserver pour vous, je reuis enfin, malgré moy la lumiere, je me flatois de sentir que je mourois d'amour; & d'ailleurs j'estois bien-aise de n'estre plus exposée à voir mon cœur déchiré par la douleur de vostre absence. Apres ces accidens, j'ay eu beaucoup de differētes indispositions: mais, puis-je jamais estre sans maux, tant que je ne vous verray pas? Ie les supporte cependant sans murmurer, puis qu'ils viennent de vous. Quoy? est-ce là la recompēse, que vous me donnez, pour vous auoir si tendrement aymé? Mais il n'importe, je suis resoluë à vous adorer toute ma vie, & à ne voir jamais personne; & je vous asseure que vous ferez bien aussi de n'aymer personne. Pourriez vous estre content d'vne Passion moins ardente que la miēne? Vous trouuerez, peut-estre, plus de beauté (vous m'auez pourtant dit autrefois, que j'estois assez belle) mais vous ne trouuerez jamais tant d'amour, & tout le reste n'est rien. Ne remplissez plus vos lettres de choses inutiles, & ne m'escriuez plus de me souuenir de vous? Ie ne puis vous oublier, & je n'oublie pas aussi, que vous m'auez fait esperer, que vous viēdriez passer quelque temps auec moy. Helas! pourquoy n'y voulez vous pas passer toute vostre vie? S'il m'estoit possible de sortir de ce malheureux Cloistre, je n'attendrois pas en Portugal l'effet de vos promesses: j'irois, sans garder aucune mesure, vous chercher, vous suiure, & vous aymer par tout le monde: je n'ose me flater que cela puisse estre, je ne veux point nourrir vne esperance, qui me donneroit asseurément quelque plaisir, & je ne veux plus estre sensible qu'aux douleurs. I'auouë cependant que l'occasion, que mon frere m'a donnée de vous escrire, a surpris en moy quelques mouuemens de joye, & qu'elle a suspendu pour vn moment le desespoir, où je suis. Ie vous coniure de me dire, pourquoy vous vous estes attaché à m'enchanter, comme vous auez fait, puisque vous sçauiez bien que vous deuiez m'abandonner? Et pourquoy auez vous esté si acharné à me rendre malheureuse? que ne me laissiez vous en repos dans mon Cloistre? vous auois-ie fait quelque iniure? Mais ie vous demande pardon: ie ne vous impute rien: ie ne suis pas en estat

de penser à ma vengeance, & i'accuse seulement la rigueur de mon Destin. Il me semble qu'en nous separant, il nous a fait tout le mal, que nous pouuiōs craindre; il ne sçauroit separer nos cœurs; l'amour qui est plus puissant que luy, les a vnis pour toute nostre vie. Si vous prenez quelque interest à la mienne, escriuez moy souuent. Ie merite bien que vous preniez quelque soin de m'apprendre l'estat de vostre cœur, & de vostre fortune, sur tout venez me voir. Adieu, ie ne puis quitter ce papier, il tombera entre vos mains, ie voudrois bien auoir le mesme bon-heur: Helas! insensée que ie suis, ie m'apperçois bien que cela n'est pas possible. Adieu, ie n'en puis plus. Adieu, aymez moy toûjours; & faites moy souffrir encore plus de maux.

SECONDE LETTRE

IL me semble que je fais le plus grād tort du monde aux sentimēs de mon cœur, de tascher de vous les faire connoistre en les écriuant: que je serois heureuse, si vous en pouuiez biē iuger par la violence des vostres! mais ie ne dois pas m'en rapporter a vous, & ie ne puis m'empescher de vous dire, bien moins vivement, que je ne le sens, que vous ne devriez pas me maltraitter, comme vous faites, par vn oubly, qui me met an desespoir, & qui est mesme honteux pour vous; il est bien iuste au moins, que vous souffriez que ie me plaigne des malheurs, que i'avois bien preveus, quand ie vous vis resolu de me quitter ie connois bien que ie me suis abuseé lorsque i'ay pensé, que vous auriez vn procedé de meilleure foy, qu'on n'a accoustumé d'auoir, parce que l'excez de mon amour me mettoit, ce semble, au dessus de toutes sortes de soupçons, & qu'il meritoit plus de fidelité, qu'on n'en trouue d'ordinaire: mais la dispositiō, que vous auez à me trahir, l'emporte enfin sur la justice, que vous deuez à tout ce que i'ay fait pour vous, ie ne laisserois pas d'estre bien malheureuse, si vous ne m'aymiez, que parce que ie vous ayme, & ie voudrois tout deuoir à vostre seule inclination mais ie suis si éloignée d'estre en cét estat, que ie n'ay pas receu vne seule lettre de vous depuis six mois: j'attribuë tout ce mal-heur à l'aueuglement, auec lequel ie me suis abandonnée à m'attacher a vous: ne deuois-je pas preuoir que mes plaisirs finiroient plûtost que mon amour? pouuois-ie esperer, que vous demeureriez toute vostre vie en Portugal, & que vous renonceriez à vostre fortune & à vostre Pays, pour ne penser qu'à moy? mes douleurs ne peuuent receuoir aucun soulagement, & le souuenir de mes plaisirs me comble de desespoir: Quoy! tous mes desirs seront donc inutiles, & ie ne vous verray iamais en ma chambre avec toute l'ardeur, & tout l'emportement, que vous me faisiez voir? mais helas! je m'abuse, & je ne connois que trop, que tous les mouuemens, qui occupoient ma teste, & mon cœur, n'estoient excitez en vous, que par quelques plaisirs, & qu'ils finissoient aussi-tost qu'eux; il falloit que dans ces momens trop heureux j'appellasse ma raison à mon secours pour moderer l'excez funeste de mes delices, & pour m'annoncer tout ce que ie souffre presentement: mais ie me donnois toute à vous, & ie n'estois pas en estat de penser à ce qui eût pû

empoisonner ma ioye, & m'empescher de ioüyr pleinement des témoignages ardens de vostre passion; ie m'apperceuois trop agreablement que i'estois auec vous pour penser que vous seriez vn iour éloigné de moy: ie me souuiens pourtant de vous auoir dit quelquefois que vous me rendriez malheureuse: mais ces frayeurs estoient bien-tost dissipées, & ie prenois plaisir, à vous les sacrifier, & à m'abandonner à l'enchantement, & à la mauuaise foy de vos protestations: ie voy bien le remede à tous mes maux, & i'en ferois bien-tost déliurée si ie ne vous aymois plus: mais, helas! quel remède; non i'ayme mieux souffrir encore dauantage, que vous oublier. Helas! cela dépend il de moy? Ie ne puis me reprocher d'auoir souhaité vn seul moment de ne vous plus aymer: vous estes plus à plaindre; que je ne suis, & il vaut mieux souffrir tout ce que je souffre, que de ioüir des plaisirs languisans, que vous donnent vos Maitresses de France: ie n'enuie point vostre indifference, & vous me faites pitié: Ie vous défie de m'oublier entierement: Ie me flatte de vous auoir mis en estat de n'auoir sans moy, que des plaisirs imparfaits, & ie suis plus heureuse que vous, puisque ie suis plus occupée. L'on m'a fait depuis peu Portiere en ce Conuent: tous ceux qui me parlent, croyent que ie sois fole, ie ne sçay ce que ie leur répons: Et il faut que les Religieuses soyent aussi insensées que moy, pour m'auoir crû capable de quelque soin. Ah! i'enuie le bon-heur d'Emanuel, & de Francisque; pourquoy ne suis-je pas incessamment auec vous, comme eux? ie vous aurois suiuy, & ie vous aurois asseurément seruy de meilleur cœur, ie ne souhaite rien en ce mōde, que vous voir; au moins souuenez vous de moy? ie me contente de vostre souuenir: mais ie n'ose m'en asseurer; ie no bornois pas mes esperances à vostre souuenir, quād ie vous voyois tous les iours: mais vous m'auez bien apris, qu'il faut que ie me soûmette à tout ce que vous voudrez: cependāt ie no me repēs point de vous auoir adoré, ie suis bien-aise, que vous m'ayez seduite: vostre absence rigoureuse, & peut-estre éternelle, ne diminuë en rien l'emportement de mon amour: ie veux que tout le mond le sçache, ie n'en fais point vn mystere, & ie suis rauie d'auoir fait tout ce que i'ay fait pour vous contre toute sorte de bien-seance: ie ne mets plus mon honneur, & ma religion qu'à vous aymer éperdüement toute ma vie, puisque i'ay commencé à vous aymer: ie ne vous dis point toutes ces choses, pour vous obliger à m'escrire. Ah! ne vous contraignez point; ie ne veux de vous, que ce qui viendra de vostre mouuement, & ie refuse tous les témoignages de vostre amour dont vous pourriez vous empescher: j'auray du plaisir à vous excuser, parce que vous aurez, peut-

estre, du plaisir à ne pas prendre la peine de m'écrire: & ie sens vne profonde disposition à vous pardonner toutes vos fautes. Vn Officier François a eu la charité de me parler ce matin plus de trois heures de vous, il m'a dit que la paix de France estoit faite: si cela est, ne pourriez vous pas me venir voir, & m'emmener en Frāce? Mai's ie ne le merite pas, faites tout ce qu'il vous plaira, mon amour ne depend plus de la maniere, dont vous me traiterez; depuis que vous estes party, je n'ay pas eu vn seul moment de santé, & je n'ay aucun plaisir qu'en nomment vostre nō mille fois le iour; quelques Religieuses, qui sçauent l'estat deplorable, où vous m'auez plongée, me parlent de vous fort souuent: je sors le moins qu'il m'est possible de ma chambre, où vous estes venu tant de fois, & ie regarde sans cesse vôtre portrait, qui m'est mille fois plus cher que ma vie, il me donne quelque plaisir: mais il me donne aussi bien de la douleur, lors que ie pense que ie ne vous reuerray, peut-estre jamais; pourquoy faut-il qu'il soit possible que ie ne vous verray, peut-estre, iamais? M'auez vous pour toûjours abandonnée? Ie suis au desespoir, vostre pauure Mariane n'en peut plus, elle s'éuanoüit en finissant cette Lettre. Adieu, adieu, ayez pitié de moy.

TROISIESME LETTRE

V'est-ce que je deuiendray, & qu'est-ce que vous voulez que ie fasse? Ie me trouue bien éloignée de tout ce que j'auois preueu: I'esperois que vous m'écririez de tous les endroits, où vous passeriez, & que vos lettres seroient fort longues; que vous soustiēdrez ma Passion par l'esperance de vous reuoir, qu'vne entiere confiance en vostre fidelité me donneroit quelque sorte de repos, & que ie demeurerois cependant dans vn estat assez supportable sans d'extrèmes douleurs: j'auois mesme pensé à quelques foibles projets de faire tous les efforts dont ie serois capable, pour me guerir, si ie pouuois connoistre bien certainement que vous m'eussiez tout à fait oubliée; vostre éloignement, quelques mouuemens de deuotiō; la crainte de ruiner entierement le reste de ma santé par tant de veilles, & par tant d'inquietudes; le peu d'apparence de vostre retour: la froideur de vostre Passion, & de vos derniers adieux; vostre depart, fondé sur d'assez meschās pretextes, & mille autres raisons, qui ne sont que trop bonnes, & que trop inutiles, sembloient me promettre vn secours assez asseuré, s'il me deuenoit necessaire: n'ayant enfin à combatre que contre moy mesme, ie ne pouuois jamais me défier de toutes mes foiblesses, ny apprehender tout ce que ie souffre aujourd'huy. Helas! que ie suis à plaindre, de ne partager pas mes douleurs auec vous, & d'estre toute seule malheureuse: cette pensée me tuë, & je meurs de frayeur, que vous n'ayez iamais esté extrémement sensible à tous nos plaisirs: Oüy, ie connois presentement la mauuaise foy de tous vos mouuemens: vous m'auez trahie toutes les fois, que vous m'auez dit, que vous estiez rauy d'estre seul auec moy; ie ne dois qu'a mes importunitez vos empressemens, & vos transports; vous auiez fait de sens froid vn dessein de m'enflamer, vous n'auez regardé ma Passion que comme vne victoire, & vostre cœur n'en a jamais esté profondement touché, n'estes vous pas bien malheureux, & n'auez vous pas bien peu de delicatesse, de n'auoir sçeu profiter qu'en cette maniere de mes emportemens? Et comment est-il possible qu'auec tant d'amour ie n'aye pû vous rendre tout a fait heureux? ie regrette pour l'amour de vous seulement les plaisirs infinis, que vous auez perdus: faut-il que vous n'ayez pas voulu en ioüir? Ah! si vous les cōnoissiez, vous trouueriez sans doute qu'ils sont plus sensibles,

que celuy de m'auoir abusée, & vous auriez esprouué, qu'on est beaucoup plus heureux, & qu'on sent quelque chose de bien plus touchant, quand on ayme violamment, que lors'qu'on est aymé. Ie ne sçay, ny ce que ie suis, ny ce que ie fais, ny ce que ie desire: ie suis deschirée par mille mouuemens contraires: Peut-on s'imaginer vn estat si deplorable? Ie vous ayme éperduëment, & ie vous mesnage assez pour n'oser, peut-estre, souhaiter que vous soyez agité des mesmes transports: ie me tuërois, ou ie mourrois de douleur sans me tuër, si j'estois asseurée que vous n'auez jamais aucun repos, que vostre vie n'est que trouble, & qu'agitation, que vous pleurez sans cesse, & que tout vous est odieux; je ne puis suffire à mes maux, comment pourrois-je supporter la douleur, que me donneroient les vostres, qui me seroient mille fois plus sensibles? Cependant ie ne puis aussi me resoudre à desirer que vous ne pensiez point à moy; & à vous parler sincerement, ie suis ialouse auec fureur de tout ce qui vous donne de la joye, & qui touche vostre cœur, & vostre goust en France. Ie ne sçay pourquoy ie vous écris, ie voy bien que vous aurez seulement pitié de moy, & ie ne veux point de vostre pitié; j'ay bien du depit cōtre moy-mesme, quand ie sais reflexion sur tout ce que ie vous ay sacrifié: j'ay perdu ma reputation, je me suis exposée a la fureur de mes parens, à la severité des loix de ce Païs contre les Religieuses, & à vostre ingratitude, qui me paroist le plus grand de tous les malheurs: cependant je sens bien que mes remors ne sont pas veritables, que ie voudrois du meilleur de mon cœur, auoir couru pour l'amour de vous de plus grans dangers, & que i'ay vn plaisir funeste d'auoir hazardé ma vie & mō honneur, tout ce que i'ay de plus precieux, ne devoit-il pas estre en vostre disposition? Et ne dois-je pas estre bien aise de l'auoir employé, comme i'ay fait: il me semble mesme que ie ne suis gueres contente ny de mes douleurs, ny de l'excez de mon amour, quoi que ie ne puisse, helas! me flater assez pour étre contente de vous; je vis, infidelle que ie suis, & ie fais autant de choses pour conserver ma vie, que pour la perdre, Ah! j'en meurs de honte: mon desespoir n'est donc que dans mes Lettres? Si je vous aimois autant que ie vous l'ay dit mille fois, ne serois-je pas morte, il y a long-temps? Ie vous ay trompé, c'est à vous à vous plaindre de moy: Helas! pourquoy ne vous en plaignez vous pas? Ie vous ay veu partir, ie ne puis esperer de vous voir iamais de retour, & ie respire cependant: ie vous ay trahy, ie vous en demande pardon: mais ne me l'accordez pas? Traittez moy seueremēt? Ne trouuez point que mes sentimens soient assez violens? Soyez plus difficile à contēter? Mandez

moy que vo’ voulez que ie meure d’amour pour vous? Et ie vous conjure de me donner ce secours, afin que ie surmonte la foiblesse de mon sexe, & que ie finisse toutes mes irresolutions par vn veritable desespoir; vne fin tragique vo’ obligeroit sans doute à penser souuent à moy, ma memoire vous seroit chere, & vous seriez, peut-estre, sensiblement touché d’vne mort extraordinaire, ne vaut-elle pas mieux que l’estat, où vous m’auez reduite? Adieu, ie voudrois bien ne vous auoir iamais veu. Ah! ie sens viuement la fausseté de ce sentiment, & ie connois dans le moment que ie vous écris, que i’aime bien mieux estre malheureuse en vo’ aimant, que de ne vous auoir iamais veu; je consens donc sans murmure à ma mauuaise destinée, puisque vous n’auez pas voulu la rendre meilleure. Adieu, promettez, moy de me regretter tendrement, si ie meurs de douleur, & qu’au moins la violence de ma Passion vous donne du dégoust & de l’éloignement pour toutes choses; cette consolation me suffira, & s’il faut que ie vous abandonne pour toûjours, ie voudrois bien ne vous laisser pas à vne autre. Ne seriez vous pas bien cruel de vous seruir de mon desespoir, pour vous rendre plus aimable, & pour faire voir, que vous auez donné la plus grande Passion du monde? Adieu encore vne fois, ie vous écris des lettres trop longues, je n’ay pas assez d’égard pour vous, ie vous en demande pardon, & j’ose esperer que vous aurez quelque indulgence pour vne pauure insensée, qui ne l’estoit pas, comme vous sçauez, auant qu’elle vous aimât. Adieu, il me semble que ie vous parle trop souuent de l’estat insuportable où ie suis: cependant ie vous remercie dans le fonds de mon cœur du desespoir, que vous me causez, & ie deteste la tranquillité, où j’ay vescu, auant que je vous connusse. Adieu, ma Passion augmente à chaque moment. Ah! que j’ay de choses à vous dire.

QVATRIESME LETTRE

Ostre Lieutenant vient de me dire, qu'vne tempeste vous a obligé de relascher au Royaume d'Algarve: je crains que vous n'ayez beaucoup souffert sur la mer, & cette apprehension m'a tellement occupée; que je n'ay plus pensé à tous mes maux, estes vous bien persuadé que vostre Lieutenant prenne plus de part que moy à tout ce qui vous arriue? Pourquoy en est-il mieux informé, & enfin pourquoi ne m'auez vous point écrit? Ie suis bien malheureuse, si vous n'en aués trouué aucune occasion depuis vostre depart, & ie la suis bien dauantage, si vous en aués trouué sans m'écrire; vostre injustice & vostre ingratitude sont extrémes: mais ie serois au desespoir, si elles vous attiroient quelque malheur, & j'aime beaucoup mieux qu'elles demeurent sans punition, que si j'en estois vangeé: je resiste à toutes les apparences, qui me deuroient persuader, que vous ne m'aimés gueres, & ie sens bien plus de disposition à m'abandonner aueuglement à ma Passion, qu'aux raisons, que vo' me donnez de me plaindre de vostre peu de soin: que vous m'auriés épargné d'inquietudes, si vostre procedé eust esté aussi languissant les premiers jours, que je vous vis, qu'il m'a parû depuis quelque temps! mais qui n'auroit esté abuseé, comme moy, par tant d'empressement, & à qui n'eussent-ils paru sinceres? Qu'on a de peine à se resoudre à soupçonner longtemps la bonne foy de ceux qu'on aime! ie voy bien que la moindre excuse vous suffit, & sans que vous preniez le soin de m'en faire, l'amour que i'ay pour vous, vous sert si fidelemēt, que ie ne puis consentir à vo' trouuer coupable, que pour joüir du sensible plaisir de vous justifier moy-même. Vous m'auez consommée par vos assiduitez, vous m'auez enflamée par vos transports, vo' m'auez charmée par vos complaisances, vous m'auez asseurée par vos sermens, mon inclinatiō violente m'a seduite, & les suites de ces commencemēs si agreables, & si heureux ne sont que des larmes, que des soûpirs, & qu'vne mort funeste, sans que ie puisse y porter aucun remede. Il est vray que i'ay eu des plaisirs bien surprenans en vous aimant: mais ils me coustent d'estranges douleurs, & tous les mouuemēs, que vous me causez, sont extrémes. Si i'auois resisté auec opiniâtreté à vostre amour, si je vous auois donné quelque sujet de chagrin, & de jalousie pour vous enflamer

dauantage, si vous auiez remarqué quelque mesnagement artificieux dans ma conduite, si i'auois enfin voulu opposer ma raison à l'inclination naturelle que j'ay pour vous, dont vo' me fistes bien-tost apperceuoir (quoy que mes efforts eussent esté sans doute inutiles) vous pourriez me punir seuerement, & vous seruir de vostre pouuoir: mais vous me parustes aimable, auant que vous m'eussiez dit, que vous m'aimiez, vous me témoignastes vne grande Passion, j'en fûs rauie, & ie m'abandonnay à vous aimer éperduëment, vous n'estiés point aueuglé, comme moy, pour-quoy aués vo' donc souffert que ie deuinsse en l'estat où ie me trouue? qu'est-ce que vous vouliez faire de tous mes emportemens, qui ne pouuoient vous estre que tres-importuns? Vous sçauiez bien que vous ne seriez pas toûjours en Portugal, & pourquoy m'y aués vous voulu choisir pour me rendre si malheureuse, vous eussiés trouué sans doute en ce Païs quelque femme qui eust esté plus belle, auec laquelle vous eussiés eu autant de plaisir, puisque vous n'en cherchiés que de grossiers, qui vo' eut fidelement aimé aussi long-temps qu'elle vous eut veu, que le temps eust pû consoler de vostre absence, & que vous auriés pû quitter sans perfidie, & sans cruauté: ce procedé est biē plus d'vn Tyran, attaché à persecuter, que d'vn Amant, qui ne doit penser qu'à plaire; Helas! Pourquoy exercés vous tant de rigueur sur vn cœur, qui est à vous? Ie voy bien que vous estes aussi facile à vous laisser persuader contre moy, que ie l'ay esté à me laisser persuader en vostre faueur; j'aurois resisté, sans auoir besoin de tout mon amour, & sans m'apperceuoir que j'eusse rien fait d'extraordinaire, à de plus grandes raisons, que ne peuuēt estre celles, qui vo' ont obligé à me quitter: elles m'eussent parû bien foibles, & il n'y en a point, qui eussent jamais pû m'arracher d'aupres de vous: mais vous aués voulu profiter des pretextes, que vous aués trouués de retourner en Frāce; vn vaisseau partoit, que ne le laissiés vous partir? vostre famille vous auoit escrit, ne sçaués vous pas toutes les persecutions, que j'ay souffertes de la mienne? Vostre hōneur vous engageoit à m'abandonner, ay-je pris quelque soin du mien? Vous estiés obligé d'aller seruir vostre Roy, si tout ce qu'on dit de luy, est vray, il n'a aucun besoin de vostre secours, & il vous auroit excusé; j'eusse esté trop heureuse, si nous auions passé nostre vie ensemble: mais puisqu'il falloit qu'vne absence cruelle nous separât, il me semble que je dois estre bien aise de n'auoir pas esté infidele, & ie ne voudrois pas pour toutes les choses du mōde, auoir commis vne action si noire: Quoy! vous auez connu le fonds de mon cœur, & de ma tendresse, & vous auez pû vous resoudre à

me laisser pour iamais, & à m'exposer aux frayeurs, que ie dois auoir, que vous ne vous souuenez plus de moy, que pour me sacrifier à vne nouuelle Passion? Ie voy bien que ie vous aime, comme vne folle: cependant ie ne me plains point de toute la violence des mouuemens de mō cœur, ie m'accoustume à ses persecutions, & ie ne pourrois viure sans vn plaisir, que ie descouure, & dont ie joüis en vous aimāt au milieu de mille douleurs: mais ie suis sans cesse persecutée auec un extréme desagréemēt par la haine, & par le dégoustt que j'ay pour toutes choses; ma famille, mes amis & ce Conuent me sont insuportables; tout ce que ie suis obligeé de voir, et tout ce qu'il faut que ie fasse de toute necessité, m'est odieux: je suis si jalouse de ma Passion, qu'il me semble que toutes mes actions, & que tous mes deuoirs vous regardent: Oüy, ie fais quelque scrupule, si ie n'employe tous les momens de ma vie pour vous; que ferois-je, helas! sans tant de haine, & sans tant d'amour, qui remplissent mon cœur? Pourrois-je surviure à ce qui m'occupe incessamment, pour mener vne vie tranquille & languissante? Ce vuide & cette insensibilité ne peuuent me conuenir. Tout le monde s'est apperceu du changement entier de mon humeur, de mes manieres, & de ma persōne, ma Mere m'en a parlé auec aigreur, & ensuite auec quelque bonté, ie ne sçay ce que ie luy ay répondu, il me semble que ie luy ay tout auoüé. Les Religieuses les plus seueres ont pitié de l'estat où je suis, il leur donne mesme quelque consideration, & quelque menagemēt pour moy; tout le monde est touché de mon amour. & vo' demeurez dans vne profonde indiference, sans m'escrire, que des lettres froides; pleines de redites; la moitié du papier n'est pas remply, & il paroist grossierement que vous mourez d'enuie de les auoir acheuées. Dona Brites me persecuta ces jours passez pour me faire sortir de ma chambre, & croyant me diuertir, elle me mena promener sur le Balcon, d'où l'on voit Mertola, je la suiuis, & je fûs aussi-tost frapée d'vn souuenir cruel, qui me fit pleurer tout le reste du jour: elle me ramena, & ie me jettay sur mon lict, où ie fis mille réflexions sur le peu d'apparence, que ie voy de guerir jamais: ce qu'on fait pour me soulager, aigrit ma douleur, & ie trouue dans les remedes mesmes des raisons particulieres de m'afliger: je vous ay veu souuent passer en ce lieu auec vn air, qui me charmoit, & j'estois sur ce Balcon le jour fatal, que ie cōmençay à sentir les premiers effets de ma Passion malheureuse: il me sembla que vous vouliez me plaire, quoy que vous ne me connussiez pas: je me persuaday que vous m'auiez remarquée entre toutes celles, qui estoient auec moy, ie m'imaginay que lors que vous vous arrestiez, vous estiez bien

aise, que ie vous visse mieux, & i'admirasse vostre adresse, & vostre bonne grace, lors que vous poussiez vôtre cheual, i'estois surprise de quelque frayeur, lors que vous le faisiez passer dans vn endroit difficile: enfin je m'interessois secrettement à toutes vos actions, je sentois bien que vous ne m'estiez point indifferent, & ie prenois pour moy tout ce que vous faisiez: vous ne connoissez que trop les suites de ces commencemens, & quoy que ie n'aye rien à mesnager, ie ne dois pas vous les escrire, de crainte de vous rendre plus coupable, s'il est possible que vous ne l'estes, & d'auoir à me reprocher tant d'efforts inutiles pour vous obliger à m'estre fidele, vous ne le serez point: Puis-je esperer de mes lettres & de mes reproches ce que mon amour & mon abandonnement n'ont pû sur vostre ingratitude? Ie fuis trop asseurée de mon malheur, vostre procedé injuste ne me laisse pas la moindre raison d'en douter, & ie dois tout apprehender, puisque vous m'auez abandonée. N'aurez vous de charmes que pour moy, & ne paroistrez vous pas agreable à d'autres yeux? Ie croy que ie ne seray pas fâchée que les sentimens des autres iustifient les miens en quelque façon, & ie voudrois que toutes les femmes de France vous trouuassent aimable, qu'aucune ne vous aimât, & qu'aucune ne vous plût: ce projet est ridicule, & impossible: neantmoins j'ay assez éprouué que vous n'estes gueres capable d'vn grand entestement, & que vous pourrez bien m'oublier sans aucun secours, & sans y estre contraint par vne nouuelle Passion: peut-estre, voudrois-je que vous eussiez quelque pretexte raisonnable? Il est vray, que ie serois plus malheureuse, mais vous ne seriez pas si coupable: je voy bien que vovs demeurerez en Frāce sans de grands plaisirs, auec vne entiere liberté; la fatigue d'vn long voyage, quelque petite bien-seance, & la crainte de ne répondre pas à mes transports, vous retiennent: Ah! ne m'apprehendez point? Ie me contenteray de vous voir de temps en temps, & de sçauoir seulement que no' sommes en mesme lieu: mais ie me flatte, peut-estre, & vous serez plus touché de la rigueur & de la seuerité d'vne autre, que vous ne l'auez esté de mes faueurs; est-il possible que vous serez enflammé par de mauuais traittemens? Mais auant que de vous engager dans vne grande Passion, pensez bien à l'excez de mes douleurs, à l'incertitude de mes projets, à la diuersité de mes mouuemens, à l'extrauagance de mes Lettres, à mes confiances, à mes desespoirs, à mes souhaits, à ma jalousie? Ah! vous allez vous rendre malheureux; je vous conjure de profiter de l'estat où ie suis, & qu'au moins ce que ie souffre pour vous, ne vous soit pas inutile? Vous me fites, il y a cinq ou six mois vne fascheuse confidēce, & vo'

m’auoüâtes de trop bonne foy, que vous auiez aimé vne Dame en vostre Païs: si elle vous empesche de reuenir, mādez-le moy sans ménagement? afin que ie ne languisse plus? quelque reste d’esperance me soustiēt encore, & ie seray bien aise (si elle ne doit auoir aucune suite) de la perdre tout à fait, & de me perdre moy-mesme; enuoyez moy son portrait auec quelqu’vne de ses Lettres? Et escriuez moy tout ce qu’elle vous dit? I’y trouuerois, peut-estre, des raisons de me consoler, ou de m’affliger dauantage, ie ne puis demeurer plus long-temps dās l’estat où ie suis, & il n’y a point de chāgement, qui ne me soit fauorable: Ie voudrois aussi auoir le portrait de vostre frere & de vostre Belle-sœur: tout ce qui vous est quelque chose, m’est fort cher, & ie suis entierement deuoüée à ce qui vous touche: je ne me suis laissé aucune disposition de moy-mesme; Il y a des momens, où il me semble que j’aurois affez de soûmission pour seruir celle, que vous aimez; vos mauuais traittemēs, & vos mépris m’ont tellement abatuë, que ie n’ose quelque fois penser seulement, qu’il me semble que ie pourrois estre jalouse sans vous déplaire, & que ie croy auoir le plus grand tort du monde de vous faire des reproches: je suis souuent conuaincuë, que ie ne dois point vous faire voir auec fureur, comme ie fais, des sentimens, que vo’ desauoüez. Il y a long-temps qu’vn Officier attend vostre Lettre, i’auois resolu de l’escrire d’vne maniere à vo’ la faire receuoir sans dégoust: mais elle est trop extrauagante, il faut la finir: Helas! il n’est pas en mon pouuoir de m’y resoudre, il me semble que je vous parle, quand ie vous escris, & que vous m’estes vn peu plus present; La premiere ne sera pas si longue, ny si importune, vous pourrez l’ouurir & la lire sur l’asseurance, que ie vous donne, il est vray que ie ne dois point vous parler d’vne passion, qui vous déplaist, & ie ne vous en parleray plus. Il y aura vn an dans peu de jours que ie m’abandonnay toute à vous sans ménagement: vostre Passion me paroissoit fort ardente, & fort sincere, & ie n’eusse jamais pensé que mes faueurs vo’ eussent assez rebuté, pour vous obliger à faire cinq cens lieuës, & à vous exposer à des naufrages, pour vo’ en éloigner; personne ne m’estoit redeuable d’vn pareil traittement: vous pouuez vous souuenir de ma pudeur, de ma confusion & de mon desordre, mais vous ne vous souuenez pas de ce qui vous engageroit à m’aimer malgré vous. L’Officier, qui doit vous porter cette Lettre, me mande pour la quatrième fois, qu’il veut partir, qu’il est pressant, il abandonne sans doute quelque malheureuse en ce Païs. Adieu, j’ay plus de peine à finir ma Lettre, que vo’ n’en auez eu à me quitter, peut-estre, pour toûjours. Adieu, ie n’ose vous donner mille

noms de tendresse, ny m’abandonner sans cōtrainte à tous mes mouuemens: ie vo’ aime mille fois plus que ma vie, & mille fois plus que ie ne pense; que vous m’estes cher! & que vous m’estes cruel! vous ne m’escriuez point, ie n’ay pû m’empescher de vo’ dire encore cela; je vay recommencer, & l’Officier partira; qu’importe, qu’il parte, j’écris plus pour moy, que pour vous, ie ne cherche qu’à me soulager, aussi bien la longueur de ma lettre vous fera peur, vous ne la lirez point qu’est-ce que j’ay fait pour estre si malheureuse? Et pourquoy auez vous empoisonné ma vie? Que ne suis-je née en vn autre Païs. Adieu, pardonnez moy? Ie n’ose plus vous prier de m’aimer; voyez où mon destin m’a reduite? Adieu.

CINQVIESME LETTRE

E vous écris pour la derniere fois, & j'espere vous faire connoître par la differance des termes, & de la maniere de cette Lettre, que vous m'auez enfin persuadée que vous ne m'aymiez plus, & qu'ainsi je ne dois plus vous aymer: Ie vous r'enuoyeray donc par la premiere voye tout ce qui me reste encore de vous: Ne craignez pas que je vous écriue; je ne mettray pas mesme vostre nom audessus du pacquet; j'ay chargé de tout ce détail Dona Brites, que j'auois accoustumée à des confidences bien éloignées de celle-cy; ses soins me seront moins suspects que les miens, elle prendra toutes les precautions necessaires, afin de pouuoir m'asseurer que vous auez receu le portrait & les bracelets que vous m'auez donnés: Ie veux cependant que vous sçachiez que je me sens, depuis quelques jours, en estat de brûler, & de déchirer ces gages de vostre Amour, qui m'estoient si chers, mais ie vous ay fait voir tant de foiblesse, que vous n'auriés jamais crû que j'eusse peu deuenir capable d'vne telle extremité, je veux donc joüir de toute la peine que j'ay euë à m'en separer, & vous dormer au moins quelque dépit: Ie vous aduoüe à ma honte & à la vostre, que ie me suis trouuée plus attachée que ie ne veux vous le dire, à ces bagatelles, & que i'ay senty que j'auois vn nouueau besoin de toutes mes reflexions, pour me défaire de chacune en particulier, lors mesme que ie me flattois de n'estre plus attachée à vous: Mais on vient about de tout ce qu'on veut, auec tant de raisons: Ie les ay mises entre les mains de Dona Brites; que cette resolution ma cousté de larmes! Apres mille mouuements & milles incertitudes que vous ne connoissez pas, & dont ie ne vous rendray pas compte assurement. Ie l'ay coniurée de ne m'en parler iamais, de ne me les rēdre iamais, quand mesme ie les demanderois pour les reuoir encore vne fois, & de vous les renuoyer, enfin, sans m'en aduertir.

Ie n'ay bien connû l'excés de mon Amour que depuis que i'ay voulu faire to' mes efforts pour m'en guerir, & ie crains que ie n'eusse osé l'entreprendre, si i'eusse pû préuoir tant de difficultées & tant de violences. Ie suis persuadée que j'eusse senti des mouuemens moins desagreables en vo' aymant tout ingrat qve vous estes, qu'en vous quittant pour tousiours. I'ay éprouué que vous m'estiez moins cher que ma passion, & j'ay eu

d’estranges peines à la combattre, apres que vos procedés iniurieux m’ont rendu vostre personne odieuse.

L’orgueil ordinaire de mon sexe ne m’a point aydé à prendre des resolutions contre vous; Helas! j’ay souffert vos mepris, j’eusse supporté vôtre haisne & toute la jalousie que m’eust dōné l’attachement que vous eussiez peu auoir pour vn autre, j’aurois eu, au moins quelque passion à combattre, mais vostre indifference m’est insupportable; vos impertinantes protestations d’amitié, & les ciuilités ridicules de vostre derniere lettre, m’ōt fait voir que vous auiez receu toutes celles que je vous ay écrites, qu’elles n’ont causé dans vostre cœur aucun mouuement, & que cependant vous les auez luës: Ingrat, je suis encore assez folle pour estre au desespoir de ne pouuoir me flatter qu’elles ne soient pas venuës jusques à vous, & qu’on ne vous les aye pas renduës; Ie deteste vostre bonne foy, vous auois-je prié de me māder sinceremēt la verité, que ne me laissiez vous ma passion; vous n’auiez qu’à ne me point écrire; ie ne cherchois pas à estre éclaircie; ne suis-je pas bien malheureuse de n’auoir pû vous obliger à prēdre quelque soin de me tromper? & de n’estre plus en estat de vous excuser. Sçachez que je m’aperçois que vous estes indigne de tous mes sentimens, & que je connois toutes vous méchantes qualitez: Cependāt (si tout ce que j’ay fait pour vous peut meriter que vous ayez quelque petits égards pour les graces que ie vous demande) je vous coniure de ne m’écrire plus, & de m’ayder à vous oublier entierement, si vous me témoigniez foiblement, mesme, que vous auez eu quelque peine en lisāt cette lettre, je vo’ croirois peut-estre; & peut-estre aussi vostre adueu & vôtre consentement me donneroient du dépit & de la colere, & tout cela pourroit m’enflamer: Ne vous meslez donc point de ma conduite, vous renuerseriez, sans doute, tous mes proiets, de quelque maniere que vous voulussiez y entrer; je ne veux point sçauoir le succés de cette lettre; ne troublés pas l’estat que ie me prepare, il me semble que vous pouuez estre content des maux que vous me causés (quelque dessein que vous eussiez fait de me rendre mal’heureuse): Ne m’ostez point de mon incertitude; i’espere que j’en feray, auec le temps, quelque chose de tranquille: Ie vous promets de ne vous point hayr, ie me défie trop des sentimens violents, pour oser l’entreprendre. Ie suis persuadeé que ie trouuerois peut-estre, en ce pays vn Amant plus fidele & mieux fait; mais helas! qui pourra me donner de l’amour? la passion d’vn autre m’occupera-t’elle? La mienne a t’elle pû quelque chose sur vous? N’éprouue-je pas qu’vn cœur attendry n’oublie jamais ce qui l’a fait apperceuoir des trāsports

qu'il ne connoissoit pas, & dont il estoit capable; que tous ses mouuemens sont attachés à l'Idole qu'il s'est faite; que ses premieres idées & que ses premieres blessures ne peuuent estre ny gueries ny effacées; que toutes les passions qui s'offrent à son secours & qui font des efforts pour le remplir & pour le contenter, luy promettent vainement vne sensibilité qu'il ne retrouue plus, que tous les plaisirs qu'il cherche sans aucune enuie de les rencontrer, ne seruent qu'à luy faire bien connoître que rien ne luy est si cher, que le souuenir de ses douleurs. Pourquoy m'auez vo' fait connoître l'imperfectiō & le desagréement d'vn attachement qui ne doit pas durer eternellement, & les mal-heurs qui suiuent vn amour violent, lors qu'il n'est pas reciproque, & pourquoy vne inclinatiō aueugle & vne cruelle destineé s'attachent-elles, d'ordinaire, à nous déterminer pour ceux qui seroient sensibles pour quelque autre.

Quand mesme je pourrois esperer quelque amusemēt dans vn nouuel engagement, & que je trouuerois quelqu'vn de bonne foy, j'ay tant de pitié de moy-mesme, que je ferois beaucoup de scrupule de mettre le dernier homme du monde en l'estat où vous m'auez reduite, & quoy que je ne sois pas obligée à vous ménager; je ne pourrois me resoudre à exercer sur vous, vne vengeance si cruelle, quand mesme elle dependeroit de moy, par vn changement que je ne preuois pas.

Ie cherche dans ce moment à vous excuser, & je cōprend bien qu'vne Religieuse n'est guere aymable d'ordinaire: Cependant il semble que si on estoit capable de raisons, dans les choix qu'on fait, on deueroit plustost s'attacher à elles qu'aux autres femmes, rien ne les empesche de penser incessāment à leur passion, elles ne sont point détourneés par mille choses qui dissipent & qui occupent dans le monde, il me semble qu'il n'est pas fort agreable de voir celles qu'on ayme, tousiours distraites par mille bagatelles, & il faut auoir bien peu de delicatesse, pour souffrir (sans en estre au desespoir) qu'elles ne parlent que d'assembleés, d'aiustements, & de promenades; on est sans cesse exposé à de nouuelles jalousies; elles sont obligeés à des égards, à des complaisances, à des conuersations: qui peut s'asseurer qu'elles n'ont aucun plaisir dans toutes ces occasions, & qu'elles souffrent tousiours leurs marys auec vn extrême dégoust, & sans aucun consentement; Ah! qu'elles doiuent se défier d'vn Amant qui ne leur fait pas rendre vn compte bien exact là dessus, qui croit aisément & sans inquietude ce qu'elles luy disent, & qui les voit auec beaucoup de confiance

& de tranquilité suietes à tous ces deuoirs: Mais je ne pretens pas vous prouuer par de bonnes raisons, que vous deuiez m'aymer; ce sont de tres-méchans moyens, & j'en ay employé de beaucoup meilleurs qui ne m'ont pas reüssi; je connois trop bien mon destin pour tâcher à le surmonter; je seray mal-heureuse toute ma vie; ne l'éstois-je pas en vous voyāt tous les iours, je mourois de frayeur que vous ne me fussiez pas fidel, je voulois vous voir à tous moments, & cela n'estoit pas possible, j'estois troubleé par le peril que vous couriez en entrant dans ce Conuent; ie ne viuois pas lors que vous estiez à l'armée, i'estois au desespoir de n'estre pas plus belle & plus digne de vous, ie murmurois contre la mediocrité de ma condition, ie croyois souuēt que l'attachement que vous paroissiez auoir pour moy, vous pourroit faire quelque tort, il me sembloit que je ne vous aymois pas assez, j'apprehendois pour vous la colere de mes parents, & j'estois enfin dans vn estat aussi pitoyable qu'est celuy où je suis presentement; si vous m'eussiez donné quelques témoignages de vostre passion depuis que vo' n'estes plus en Portugal; j'aurois fait tous mes efforts pour en sortir, je me fusse déguisée pour vo' aller trouuer; helas! qu'est-ce que je fusse deuenuë, si vous ne vous fussiez plus souciée de moy, apres que j'eusse esté en France; quel desordre? quel égarement? quel cōble de honte pour ma famille, qui m'est fort chere depuis que je ne vous ayme plus. Vous voyez bien que je cōnnois de sens froid qu'il estoit possible que je fusse encore plus à plaindre que ie ne suis; & ie vous parle, au moins, raisonnablement vne fois en ma vie; que ma moderatiō vous plaira, & que vous serez content de moy; je ne veux point le sçauoir, je vous ay desia prié de ne m'écrire plus, & je vous en coniure encore.

N'auez vous jamais fait quelque reflexion sur la maniere dont vous m'auez traitée, ne pensez vous iamais que vous m'auez plus d'obligation qu'à personne du monde; je vous ay aymé comme vne incensée; que de mépris j'ay eu pour toutes choses! vostre procedé n'est point d'vn honneste homme, il faut que vous ayez eu pour moy de l'auersion naturelle, puis que vous ne m'auez pas aymée éperduëment; je me suis laissée enchanter par des qualitez tres-mediocres, qu'auez vous fait qui deust me plaire? quel sacrifice m'auez vous fait? n'auez vous pas cherché mille autres plaisirs? auez vous renoncé au jeu, & à la chasse? n'estes vous pas parti le premier pour aller à l'Armée? n'en estes-vous pas reuenu apres tous les autres, vous vous y estes exposé folement, quoy que je vous eusse prié de vous ménager pour l'amour de moy, vous n'auez point cherché les moyens de vous

establir en Portugal? où vous estiez estimé; vne lettre de vostre frere vous en a fait partir, sans hesiter vn moment, & n'ay-je pas sçeu que durant le voyage vous auez esté de la plus belle humeur du monde. Il faut aduoüer que ie suis obligée à vous haïr mortellement; ah! ie me suis attirée tous mes mal-heurs: je vous ay d'abord accoustumé à vne grande passion, auec trop de bonne foy, & il faut de l'artifice pour se faire aymer, il faut chercher auec quelque adresse les moyens d'enflâmer, & l'amour tout seul ne donne point de l'amour, vous vouliez que ie vous aymasse, & comme vous auiez formé ce dessein, il n'y a rien que vous n'eussiez fait pour y paruenir, vous vous fussiez mesme resolu à m'aymer, s'il eut esté necessaire; mais vous auez connu que vous pouuiez reussir dans vostre entreprise sans passion, & que vous n'en auiez aucun besoin, quelle perfidie? croyés vous auoir pû impunement me tromper, si quelque hazard vous r'amenoit en ce pays, ie vous declare que ie vous liureray à la vengeance de mes parents. I'ay vécu long-temps dans vn abandonnement & dans vne idolatrie qui me donne de l'horreur, & mon remords me persecute auec vne rigueur insupportable, ie sens viuement la honte des crimes que vo' m'auez fait commettre, & ie n'ay plus, helas! la passion qui m'empeschoit d'en connoistre l'énormité; quand est-ce que mon cœur ne sera plus dechiré? quand est-ce que ie seray deliurée de cét embarras, cruel! cependant je croy que ie ne vous souhaitte point de mal, & que je me resouderois à consentir que vous fussiez heureux; mais cōmēt pourrés vous l'estre si vous aués le cœur biē fait; je veux vous écrire vne autre Lettre, pour vous faire voir que ie seray peut-estre plus tranquille dans quelque tēps; que j'auray de plaisir de pouuoir vous reprocher vos procedés iniustes aprés que ie n'en seray plus si viuement touchée, & lors que ie vous seray connoistre que ie vous méprise, que ie parle auec beaucoup d'indifference de vostre trahison; que j'ay oublié tous mes plaisirs, & toutes mes douleurs, & que ie ne me souuiens de vous que lors que ie veux m'en souuenir. Ie demeure d'accord que vous auez de grands aduantages sur moy, & que vous m'auez donné vne passion qui ma fait perdre la raison, mais vous deuez en tirer peu de vanité; j'estois jeune, j'estois credule, on m'auoit enfermée dans ce convēt depuis mon enfance, ie n'auois veu que des gens desagreables, je n'auois jamais entendu les loüanges que vous me donniez incessamment, il me sembloit que je vous deuois les charmes, & la beauté que vo' me trouuiez, & dont vous me faisiez apperceuoir, j'entendois dire du bien de vous, tout le monde me parloit en vostre faueur, vous faisiez tout ce qu'il falloit pour me donner de

l’amour; mais ie suis, enfin, reuenuë de cét enchantement, vous m’auez dōné de grands secours, & j’aduoüe que j’en auois vn extrême besoin: En vous renuoyant vos lettres, je garderay soigneusement les deux dernieres que vous m’auez écrites, & ie les reliray encore plus souuent que ie n’ay leu les premieres, afin de ne retomber plus dans mes foiblesses, Ah! quelles me coûtēt cher, & que i’aurois esté heureuse, si vous eussiez voulu souffrir que ie vous eusse toûjours aimé. Ie connois bien que ie suis encore vn peu trop occupée de mes reproches & de vostre infidelité; mais souuenez-vous que ie me suis promise vn estat plus paisible, & que j’y paruiendray, ou que ie prēdray contre moy quelque resolution extrême, que vous apprendrez sans beaucoup de déplaisir; mais ie ne veux plus rien de vous, ie suis vne folle de redire les mesmes choses si souuent, il faut vous quitter & ne penser plus à vous, ie croy mesme que je ne vous écriray plus, suis-je obligée de vous rendre vn compte exact de to’ mes diuers mouuements.

FIN.

EXTRAIT DV
Priuilege du Roy

Par Grace & Priuilege du Roy, donné à Paris le 28. jour d'Octobre 1668. Signé par le Roy en son Conseïl, MARGERET. Il est permis à CLAVDE BARBIN, Marchand Libraire, de faire imprimer vn Liure intitulé, *Lettres Portugaises*, pendant le temps & espace de *cinq années*; Et deffenses sont faites à tous autres de l'Imprimer, sur peine de quinze cent liures d'amande, de tous dépens, dommages & interests, comme il est plus amplement porté par lesdites Lettres de Priuilege.

Acheué d'imprimer pour la premiere fois le 4. Ianuier, 1669.

Les Exemplaires ont esté fournis.

Registré sur le Liure de la Communauté de Marchands Libraires & Imprimeurs de cette Ville, suiuant & conformement à Arrest de la Cour de Parlement du 8. Avril, 1653, aux charges & conditions portées par le present Priuilege. Fait à Paris le 17 Nouembre 1668.

SOVBRON, Syndic.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following forms the English Bibliography of the Letters:—

> ‘Five | love-letters | from a | Nun | to a | Cavalier | .’ Done out of French into English. (By) Ro L’Estrange. London 1678. pp. 111-117, 12mo.

Here is the Preface:—

> To the Reader. | You are to take this Translation very kind- | ly, for the Authour | of it has ventur’d his | Reputation to oblige | you: Ventur’d it | (I say) even in the very Attempt of Co | pying so Nice an | Original. It is, in French, one of the | most Artificial Pieces | perhaps of the Kind, | that is anywhere Ex- | tant: Beside the Pe- | culiar Graces, and | Felicities of that Lan-| guage; in the matter | of an Amour, which | cannot be adopted | into any other | Tongue without Ex- | tream Force, and Affectation. There was | (it seems) an Intrigue | of Love carry’d on | betwixt a French offi- | cer, and a Nun in | Portugal. The Cava- | lier forsakes his Mis- | tress, and Returns | for France. The La- | dy expostulates the | Business in five Let- | ters of complaint, | which she sends af- | ter him; and those | five Letters are here | at your Service. You | will find in them the | Lively Image of an | Extravagant, and an | Unfortunate Passion; | and that a woman may | be Flesh and Bloud, in a | Cloyster, as well as in a | Palace.
>
> ‘Five love-letters from a Nun to a Cavalier,’ etc., etc., 1693. 16mo. (2nd edition.)
>
> ‘Five love-letters from a Nun to a Cavalier,’ etc. etc., 1701. 16mo. (3rd edition.)
>
> * ‘New Miscellaneous | Poems | with five | Love-Letters | from | a Nun to a Cavalier |. Done into Verse |.’ The Second Edition.

London 1713. With frontispiece. 16mo. The Letters occupy pp. 3-43; the date of the 1st edition is unknown.

‘Letters | from a | Portuguese Nun | to | an Officer | in the | French Army.’ | Translated by | W. R. Bowles, Esqre. London, 1808. 12mo., with frontispiece. pp. xvi-125. This includes the so-called Second Part of the Letters.

‘Letters from a Portuguese Nun,’ etc., etc., 1817. (2nd edition.)

‘Letters from a Portuguese Nun,’ etc., etc., 1828. (3rd edition.)

‘The Love Letters of a | Portuguese Nun | being the letters written by Marianna | Alcaforado to Noël Bouton de Cha-milly, Count of St. Leger (later | Marquis of Chamilly), in | the year 1668.’ | Translated by | R. H. | New York 1890. 12mo. 148 p.

‘Five love-letters written by a Cavalier (the Chevalier Del) in answer to the five love-letters written to him by a Nun.’ London 1694. 12mo.

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* ‘Seven | Portuguese Letters; | being a | second part | to the | Five Love-Letters | from a | Nun | to a | Cavalier | .’ London 1681. pp. iii-78. 8vo.

* ‘Seven | Love-Letters | from a | Nun | to a | Cavalier,’ | etc., etc., 1693. Small 4to. (2nd edition.)

N.B.—The translations marked with an asterisk are not mentioned by Senhor Cordeiro in his Bibliography.

APPENDIX

URING the passage of the present work through the press, Mr. York Powell was fortunate enough to acquire by purchase in Oxford a book not mentioned in any bibliographical dictionary, nor possessed by any of the chief English libraries, containing a translation into verse of the five Letters of the Portuguese Nun. On account of the rarity of the book, of which this is probably a unique copy, as well as of the curious rendering of the famous Letters, it seemed advisable to transcribe here all that concerned the love-lorn Marianna, which has therefore been done. It should perhaps be mentioned that every inquiry as to the author of this translation and the date of its first edition has proved fruitless.

The following is a description of the book in question—

New Miscellaneous

POEMS

With Five

Love-Letters

FROM

A ***Nun*** to a ***Cavalier***.

Done into Verse.

Nil dulcius est istoc amare aut amari, præter hoc ipsum amare & amari.

The Second Edition.

London, Printed for W. Mears, at the *Lamb* without *Temple-bar*. 1713.

One vol. in 16mo.

First comes the Preface, then a Table of Contents, and the title-page to the Letters, which runs,

Five | Love-Letters | From a | Nun | to | A Cavalier | Done into Verse | London | Printed in the Year 1713. |

The Letters take up pp. 3-43, after which is another title-page to the Miscellaneous Poems, then the Poems themselves follow, occupying pp. 47-129.

The frontispiece to the volume shows the Nun seated at a table in the act of writing; upon the table is a lighted candle, rosary and ink-pot, while the portrait of her lover hangs over some book-shelves. The engraving is unsigned, and seems to be different from any of those hitherto recorded.

LOVE-LETTERS

FROM

A NUN TO A CAVALIER

LETTER I

Oh! the unhappy Joys which Love contains,
How short the Pleasures, and how long the Pains!
Curs'd be the treach'rous Hopes that drew me on,
And made me fondly to my Ruin run.
What I the Blessing of my Life design'd
Is now become the Torment of my Mind:
A Torment! which is equally as great
As is his Absence that doth it create.
Heav'ns! must this Absence then for ever last,
This Absence! which does all my comfort blast?
Must I no more enjoy the pleasing Light
That charm'd my Heart with Rapture and Delight?
Must I no more those lovely Eyes behold
Which have so oft their Master's Passion told?
{Nor was I wanting in the same intent;
{A thousand times my Eyes in Flashes sent
{The Dictates of my Heart, and shew'd you what they meant.
But now they must be other ways employ'd:
When I reflect on what I have enjoy'd
Tears of their own accord in Streams will flow,
To think I 'm scorned, and left by faithless you.

{And yet my Passion does so far exceed
{A vulgar Flame, that I with Pleasure bleed,
{And doat upon the Torments which from you proceed.
From the first moment I beheld your Face,
To you I dedicated all my Days:
Your Eyes at first an easie Conquest gain'd,
Which since they have but too too well maintain'd.
Your Name each Hour I constantly repeat;
But what's (alas!) the Comfort which I meet?
Nought but my wretched Fate's too true Advice,
Which whispers to me in such Words as these:
Ah! Mariane, why do'st hope in vain
To see thy lovely Fugitive again?
The dear, false, cruel Man 's for ever gone,
And thou, unhappy thou! art left alone:

Gone is the Tyrant, slighting all thy Charms,
And longs to languish in another's Arms.
In vain you weep, in vain you sigh and mourn,
For he will never, never more return.
To fly from thee, he left his Downy Ease,
And scorn'd the Dangers of the raging Seas.
In France, dissolv'd in Pleasures, now he lies,
And for new Beauties every moment dies;
{The Joys which once he with such Ardour sought
{Are now (alas!) all vanish'd and forgot;
{Nor art Thou ever present in his Thought.——

But hold! my Passion hurries me too far,
And makes me think you falser than you are.
You've, sure, more Honour than to use me so
For what I have endur'd and done for you,
Forget me! 'tis impossible you shou'd;
Nay, I believe you cannot if you wou'd.
My Case is bad enough without that Curse,
I need not find fresh Plagues to make it worse.
And when I think with how much care you strove
To let me see at first, your dawning Love;
When I reflect upon the Bliss it brought,
The Pleasure is too great to be forgot;
And I shou'd think I were ungrateful grown,
Should I not love you, tho' by you undone.——

Yet oh! the Mem'ry of my former Joys,
So hard's my Fate, my present Ease destroys.
'Tis strange that what gave such delight before,
Shou'd serve to make me now lament the more.——

A Thousand Passions, not to be exprest,
Your Letter rais'd in my distracted Breast;
{My vanquish'd Senses from their Office fled,
{A long time stupid on the ground I laid,
{And since I've often wish'd I had been dead.
But I unhappily reviv'd again

To suffer greater Torment, greater Pain;
A Thousand Evils I each Day endure,
Which nothing but the Sight of you can cure;
Yet I submit, without repining too,
Because the ills I bear proceed from you.——

And ’tis because you know the Pow’r you have,
You use me thus, and make me such a Slave.
Oh! give me leave to speak——
Is this the Recompense you think is due,
To those that sacrifice their Lives for you?
Yet use me as you will, to my last Breath,
Tho’ loath’d by you, I’ll keep my plighted Faith.——

And did you understand what Pleasure lies
In being constant, you wou’d Change despise.
You’ll never meet with one will prove so kind,
Tho’ in another you more Beauty find.
Yet I can tell the time, tho’ now ’tis gone,
(Poor as it is) when mine has pleas’d alone.——

You need not bid me keep you in my Mind,
I’m too much of myself to that inclin’d.
I can’t forget you, nor those Hopes you give
Of your return, in Portugal to live.
Cou’d I from this unhappy Cloister break,
You thro’ the Perils of the World I’d seek.
I’d follow where you went, without Regret,
And constantly upon your Fortune wait,
Think not I keep these Hopes to ease my Grief,
Or bring to my despairing Soul Relief;
No, I’m too well acquainted with my Fate,
And know I’m born to be unfortunate.——

{Yet while I write, some glimmering Hopes appear
{That yield a respite to my wild Despair,
{And some small Ease afford amidst my Care.
Tell me, what made you press my Ruin so?

LETTER II
From a Nun to a Cavalier

Alas! it is impossible to tell
Th' afflicting Pains that injur'd Lovers feel.
And if my Flame, by what I write, you rate,
Then have I made my self unfortunate.
Blest should I be, cou'd your own Breast define
The raging Passion that I feel in mine;
{But I must ne'er enjoy that happy Fate:
{And if I 'm always doom'd to bear your Hate,
{'Tis base to use me at this barb'rous rate.
Oh! it distracts my Soul when I reflect
Upon my slighted Charms, and your Neglect:
And 'twill t' your Honour as destructive be,
As 'tis conducive to my Misery.——

It now is come to pass what then I fear'd,
When you to leave me in such haste prepar'd.
Fool as I was, to think your Flame was true,
True as th' Excessive Love I bear to you!
T' encrease my Torments all your Acts incline;
To make me wretched is your whole Design.

Nor wou'd your Passion any Ease allow,
If only grounded on my Love for you:
But I'm so far ev'n from that poor Pretence,
Six Months are past since you departed hence;
Six tedious Melancholy Months are gone,
And I've not been so much as thought upon:
Blind with the fondness of my own Desire,
Else might have found my Joys wou'd soon expire.
How cou'd I think that you'd contented be
To leave your Friends and Native Place for me?
Alas! Remembrance of my former Joys
Adds to the Number of my Miseries.
Will all my flatt'ring Hopes then prove in vain?
Must I ne'er Live to see you here again?
Why may not I once more behold your Charms,
Once more enfold you in my longing Arms?

Why may not I, as heretofore, receive
Those sweet transporting Joys which none but you can give?——

I find the Flame that set my Soul on Fire
In you was nothing but a loose Desire.
I should have reason'd ere it was too late,
And so prevented my approaching Fate:
My busie Thoughts were all on you bestow'd,
I for my own repose not one allow'd:
So pleas'd was I, whilst in your Lovely Arms,
I thought myself secure from future Harms:
But yet you may remember, oft I've said,
You'd be the Ruin of a harmless Maid;
But those were Notions that abortive dy'd,
And I upon your flatt'ring Oaths rely'd.

Cou'd I cease loving you, I shou'd have Ease,
But that 's a Cure far worse than the Disease;
And 'tis (alas) impossible, I find,
To raze your Image from my tortur'd Mind;
And it 's a thing which I did ne'er design,
For your Condition is far worse than mine;
You 'd better share what my poor soul endures,
Than th' empty Joys you find in new Amours.
So far am I from envying your Fate,
I rather pity your unhappy State.
I all your false dissembling Arts defie:
I know I 'm rooted in your Memory,
And am perhaps the happiest of the Two,
In that I now am more employ'd than you.
They've made me Keeper of the Convent Door,
Which is a Place I ne'er supply'd before;
It is an Office I ne'er thought t' have had;
All who discourse me think that I am mad.
Our Convent too must be as mad as I,
Or they might have perceiv'd my Incapacity.

Oh! how I wish to be as blest as they

Who, as your Servants, your Commands obey.
I shou'd be Proud, like one of them, to wait
On you, tho' 'twere ev'n in the meanest State.
My Love for you I don't at all repent;
That you 've seduced me, I am well content.
Your Rig'rous Absence, tho' 'twill fatal prove,
Yet lessens not the Vigour of my Love.
My Passion I to all the World proclaim,
And make no Secret of my raging Flame.
Some Things I 've done irregular, 'tis true,
And glory'd in them, 'cause they were for you;
My Fame, my Honour, and Religion, are
All made subservient to the Love I bear.

Whilst I am writing, I have no intent
That you shou'd Answer what I now have sent:
Force not your self, I 'll not receive a Word
You send, that comes not of its own accord.
If not by writing you do Ease receive,
So 't too to me shall Satisfaction give,
To Pardon all your Faults I 'm much inclin'd,
And shall be pleas'd to prove you 're not unkind.

{I'm told that France has made a Peace; if so
{A Visit here then sure you might bestow,
{And take me with you wheresoe'er you go,
That must alone at your disposal be,
I fear (alas) it is too good for me.
Since you first left this sad forsaken Place,
I 've not enjoy'd a Moment's Health or Ease:
The Accent of your Name my Cares abate,
Which I a thousand times a Day repeat.
{Within our Convent some there are who know
{From whence the Source of all my Sorrows flow,
{Who strive to Ease me and Discourse of you.

I 'm constant to my Chamber, which is dear
To me, because you 've been so often there:

LETTER III
From a Nun to a Cavalier

What will become of miserable me?
What will th' Event of my Misfortunes be,
How can I hold, now all my hopes retire?
On them I liv'd, and must with them expire.
Where are the cordial Lines to heal my Pain,
T' assure me I shall see you here again?
Where are the Letters that should bring Relief,
Compose my Soul, and mitigate my Grief?

Fool'd with vain Projects, I of late design'd
To strive to calm and heal my tortur'd Mind:
The slender Hopes I have of seeing you,
Joyn'd with the Coldness of your last Adieu;
Th' Improbability of your Return,
The many tedious restless Nights I 've born,
Your frivolous Excuses to be gone,
Encourag'd my Design and urg'd me on;
Nor did I doubt Success till, ah! too soon,
I found I still must love, still doat and be undone.

Wretch that I am! compel'd alone to bear
The heavy Burthen, which you ought to share.
You 're the Offender, and I undergo
The Punishment, which ought to fall on you.
'Tis plain, I never yet enjoy'd your Love,
Since all my Torments can't your Pity move,
Feign'd were the Transports, false the Vows you made,
And only us'd that I might be betray'd.
Your whole Design was to ensnare my Heart
Then cruelly to act a Tyrant's Part.

T' abuse a Love like mine, is highly base,
And cannot but redound to your Disgrace.
Who would have thought, when of my love possest,
'Twas not enough to make you ever blest?
And 'tis for your own sake I 'm troubled most,
When I but think upon the Joys you 've lost:

Nay, did you judge aright,——
The difference soon by you perceiv'd would be,
Betwixt abusing and obliging me;
Betwixt the Pleasures, which you might have prov'd,
Of loving much, and being much belov'd.

Such is the Force of my excessive woe,
I 'm quite insensible of what I do;
Ten Thousand different Thoughts distract my Mind,
My rigid Fate can't be by words defin'd;
To Death I love, yet cannot wish that you
Should share the Miseries I undergo.
To loath, t' have all things odious in your sight,
Receive no Ease by Day, no Rest by Night:
Your Soul o'erloaded with continual Cares,
Your Eyes still flowing with a flood of Tears;
Did you but suffer this my grief for you,
'Twou'd quickly finish what my own can't do.

Why do I write? Shou'd I your Pity move,
What good wou'd Pity do without your Love?
I scorn it; and my self with equal Scorn
I loath, when I reflect on what I 've born:
My Friends I 've lost, and Reputation too,
Have ran the hazard of our Laws for you:
But what 's much worse, now I all this have done,
False as you are, ev'n you 're ingrateful grown.

Yet, oh! I cannot, cannot yet repent,
But rather am with all my Ills content:
I cannot grieve at what I've done for you,
But more for your dear sake wou'd undergo;
To you wou'd sacrifice my Life and Fame;
They 're yours, which you (and only you) can claim.

In short, I 'm vex'd with every thing I do;
Nor can I think I 'm kindly us'd by you.
False as I am, why don't I die with Shame,

And so convince you of my raging Flame?
If I had lov'd so well as oft I 've said,
Your Cruelty ere this had struck me dead.
No, all this while, 'tis you 've deluded been,
And have the greatest Reason to complain.
{How could I see you go, and yet survive,
{ out of Hopes of your Return and Live?
{I 've wrong'd you; but I hope you will forgive.

Yet grant it not, treat me severely still,
Tell me, that I 've abus'd, and us'd you ill.
Be harder still to please, encrease my Care.
And end my Sufferings with a sure Despair.
A Fate that 's Tragical would doubtless be
The Way t' endear me to your Memory.
Perhaps too you 'd be touch'd with such a Death,
When you reflect how I 've resign'd my Breath.
To me I 'm sure, 'twou'd welcome be indeed,
And far to be preferr'd before the Life I lead.——

Farewel, I wish your Eyes I 'd never seen,
But ah! my Heart, now contradicts my Pen.
I find I 'd rather live involv'd in Harms
Than once to wish I ne'er had known your Charms.
And since you think not fit to mend my State,
I 'll cheerfully (tho' hard) embrace my Fate.
Adieu,—but Promise me when I am dead,
Some pitying Tears you 'll o'er my Ashes shed.
At least, let my too-sad Example prove
The means to hinder any other Love.
'Twill yield some Ease, since I must lose your Charms,
That you 'll not revel in another's Arms.
Neither can you be so inhumane sure
To make my Fate assist a new Amour.
I fear my Lines are troublesome to you;
But you 'll forgive my foolery—adieu,
Ah me! methinks too often I repeat
The Story of my too unhappy Fate;

LETTER IV
From a Nun to a Cavalier

Ye Gods! the Torments that from Love arise
When the dear Object's absent from our Eyes!
I 'm told you 've been by raging Tempests toss'd,
And forc'd to seek some Hospitable Coast,
The Sea, that is the faithless Lover's Foe,
I doubt will hardly e'er agree with you.
And oh! my Fears for th' Dangers you may meet,
Make me my own Tormenting Pains forget.

But is your Friend then more concern'd to know
Than I, the Perils that you undergo?
If not, how comes it that you cou'd afford
To write to him, whilst I have not a Word?——

Why do I talk? what cou'd I else expect?
But base Ingratitude, and cold Neglect?
From one who slighting all which once he swore
Now seeks new Beauties on a Foreign Shore.——
Yet Heav'n avert its Wrath, nor may'st thou be
E'er punished for thy Treachery to me,
For faithless as you are, I 'm still inclin'd
Not to revenge, but rather to be kind.——

Tis plain, I 'm now the least of all your Care,
Else you 'd have some regard to My Despair.
But I, tho' wrack'd and torn with endless Pain,
To one relentless as the grave complain.
Yet I, fond I! regardless of my Fame,
Still Cherish, and Indulge this fatal Flame;
{In vain my Reason offers to perswade,
{I scorn its Counsel, and contemn its Aid,
{And find a Pleasure in my being mad.
Had you but with this Coldness been possest,
When first you rais'd those Tumults in my Breast:
How many plagues had it from me detain'd!
How calm! how easie had I now remain'd!

But where's the Woman wou'd not have believ'd
Your Arts, and not have been (like me) deceiv'd?
Who cou'd your num'rous Oaths and Vows mistrust?
Who cou'd have thought that you shou'd prove unjust?
The frequent Protestations that you made
Wou'd have a Heart more firm than mine betray'd.
'Tis hard to think the Man whom once we love,
Shou'd false, shou'd cruel, and ingrateful prove.
{Nay, I 'm so easie, I 've already made
{Excuses for you, and wou'd fain perswade
{My too too cred'lous Heart, that I am not betray'd.
It was your Converse that at first refin'd
My Ignorance, and till then, unpolish'd Mind.

'Twas from your Passion that I caught this Flame
That is destructive to my Ease and Fame.
In vain 'gainst you I strove my Heart to arm,
For you in ev'ry Action had a Charm.
Your pleasing Humour, and the Oaths you swore,
Made me believe you ever wou'd adore.
But now (alas!) those grateful Thoughts are fled,
And all my Hopes are with my Pleasures dead:
I sigh and weep, a thousand Plagues possess
My Soul, and give me not a moment's Ease.
{Great were my past Delights, I must confess,
{Excessive were the Joys, and vast the Bliss,
{But then, oh, cruel Fate! my Miseries were not less.——
Had I with Artifice e'er drawn you on,
And what I most desir'd have seem'd to shun;
Had I the cunning Arts of Women us'd,
And with feign'd Scorn your gen'rous Love abus'd;
Had I my growing Flame with Care supprest
When first I felt it rising in my Breast;
Nay, when I found I lov'd, had I conceal'd
My Passion, nor to you my Soul reveal'd,
That for your Hate had been some small Pretence,
Which you might now have urg'd in your defence;
But——

So far was I from using such Deceit,
My Heart was never conscious of a Cheat:
And I no sooner of your Passion knew,
But frankly I return'd the like to you.——

Yet you, tho' I was fondly blind, cou'd see,
Not ign'rant what the Consequence wou'd be.
Why with such Wiles then did you draw me on,
To leave me wretched, hopeless, and undone?
You knew you shou'd not long continue here,
And so did make me love but to despair.
Why was I singl'd out alone to be
Th' unhappy Object of your Cruelty?——
Sure in this Country you might those have met
Who were for your cross Purposes more fit;
Such, who by frequent Use had got the Pow'r
To give their Hearts but for the present Hour;
Who of your Falshood never wou'd complain,
Nor give themselves for you a moment's Pain.
Is 't like a Lover then to use me so,
Me, who 'd give up all I have for you?
Is it not rather like a Tyrant done,
To ruine and destroy what is your own?

Had you but lov'd so truly as you said,
You never from me in such haste had fled.
But you! how easie did you go away!
Nay, e'en seem'd pleas'd you cou'd no longer stay
The few Excuses that you made to go,
How slight they were! but any thing wou'd do,
To fly from one already nauseous grown,
That lov'd you but too well, and trusted you too soon.——

'My Friends (you cry) and Honour call me hence,
'And I must now be gone, to serve my Prince,'
Why was not that nice Honour thought on then,
When you deluded me to give up mine?
This was all Fiction, which you did devise

To seem less guilty, and to blind my Eyes.
But, ah! should I have too much Bliss enjoy'd,
Might I with you have liv'd, with you have dy'd.——
My only Comfort is, I 've been to you,
Spite of this Absence, constant, just, and true;
And can you then, who all my Thoughts controul,
And know the earnest Secrets of my Soul,
Can you be so regardless of my Pray'r,
T' abandon me for ever to Despair?
{You see I 'm mad, but yet I 'll not complain,
{For I 'm so us'd to suffer your Disdain,
{That now I find a Pleasure in my Pain.——

But what 's my greatest Curse, those things no more
Can please me now, which I have lik'd before.
{My Friends, Relations, and my Convent too,
{Are odious all, and all detested grow,
{Nay, ev'ry thing that not relates to you.
The flitting Hours of each succeeding Day,
If not on you bestow'd, I think they 're thrown away.——

So great 's my Love, and with such pow'r does rule,
It takes up the whole Business of my Soul.
{Why then t' expel this Passion shou'd I strive?
{For 'tis impossible I shou'd survive
{This restless state, and with Indiff'rence live.

So much I now am chang'd from what I was,
That all observe and wonder what 's the Cause:
My Mother chides, and urges me to tell
What 'tis creates my Grief, and what I ail,
I hardly know what Answers I have made,
But I believe that I have all betray'd.
The most severe and hardest Hearts relent,
And are with Pity touch'd at my Complaint.
To cruel Thee alone I sigh in vain,
For all the World beside compassionates my Pain.

’Tis seldom that you write, and when you do,
Your Lukewarmness each Line does plainly shew.
’Tis all but Repetition and Constraint,
Dull is each Word, and each Expression faint.——

My kind Companion took me t’ other day
To the Balcon’ that looks tow’rds Mertola;
The Sight so struck my Heart that, while I stood,
Strait from my Eyes a briny Deluge flow’d.
I then return’d, and strove to ease my Care,
For all my Thoughts brought nothing but Despair.
What others do to help me in my Grief,
Adds only to my Pains, and brings me no Relief.——

From that Balcon’ I often took delight
To see you pass, and languish’d for the Sight.
’Twas there that fatal Day I chanc’d to be
When first my Heart resign’d its Liberty:
’Twas there I drew the Poison from your Eyes,
’Twas there this raging Passion had its rise.
Methought on me alone you seem’d to gaze,
And careless look’d on every other Face;
And when you stopt, I fondly thought to me
’Twas meant that I your lovely Shape might see.

I call to mind what Trembling seiz’d my Breast,
Caus’d by a Leap given by your prancing Beast.
I near concern’d in all your Actions was,
Flatter’d my self I was of some the cause.
What follow’d, to relate I ’ll now forbear,
Lest you appear more cruel than you are;
And ’twill perhaps your Vanity encrease
To find my Labours have no more Success.
Fool as I am! to think to move you more
By Threats than all my Love cou’d do before!
Too well (alas!) I know my Fate to come,
And you ’re too too unjust to make me doubt my Doom.

Since I am not allow'd your Love to share,
All ills in Nature I have cause to fear.
I shou'd be pleas'd did all our Sex admire
Your Charms, if you did not return the Fire;
But there 's no fear, I by Experience know
None ever long will be ador'd by you.
You 'll easily enough forget my Charms
Without the taking others to your Arms.
By Heav'ns, I love, I doat to that degree,
That since I find you 're ever lost to me,
I wish you 'ad some Excuse to hide your Crime,
That to the World you might less guilty seem.
'Tis true, 'twould make my Case but so much worse,
But then 'twould advantageous be to yours.——

While you are free, in France, perhaps the fear
Of not returning Love for Love may keep you there.
{But mind not that, if you I sometimes see,
{I shall contented with my Fortune be,
{To know one country holds my Love and me.

Why with vain Hopes do I my Reason blind?
To one less doting you may prove more kind.
Pride in another may a Conquest gain
Greater than mine, with all the endless Pain
Of constant Love, which I 've endur'd for you:
But, oh! from me take Warning what you do;
Retract your Heart ere yet (it) is too late,
And think upon my too too wretched Fate,
Reflect upon my endless Miseries,
Despairs, Distractions, and my Jealousies;
Think on the Trust that I 've repos'd in you,
Th' Extravagance which all my Letters shew.

I well remember you in Earnest said,
For one in France you once a Passion had.
If she 's the Reason why you don't return,
Be free, and let me thus no longer mourn;

For if my Hopes and Wishes are but vain,
Tell me the Truth——
And end at once my wretched Life and Pain.——
To me her Picture and her Letters send,
They ’ll make me worse, or else my Fate amend;
Such is the State of miserable me,
That any change would advantageous be
Your Brother’s and your Sister’s send me too,
All will be dear to me that ’s so to you.——
Methinks I cou’d submit to wait upon
The happy Woman that your Heart has won,
So humble am I made by all your Scorn,
And the ill Usage that from you I ’ve born;
Scarce dare I say, I may myself allow
To Jealous be, without displeasing you,
Fain wou’d I think that I mistaken am,
And fain perswaded be, that you are not to blame.

The Person that ’s to bear these Lines to you,
Wants to be gone, and does impatient grow.
I thought in this not to have giv’n Offence,
But yet I ’m fall’n into Extravagance.
And now methinks ’tis time that I had done,
But I ’ve no Pow’r to end these Lines so soon,
Nor force the pleasing Vision from my Sight;
My lovely Charmer’s present while I write.
{Twelve solitary Months are almost past
{Since in your trembling Arms you held me last,
{And fondly, to my Ruin, me embrac’d.
Fierce, and true as mine, I thought your Flame,
And, oh! believ’d ’twould always be the same.
Ne’er cou’d I think, that when you had enjoy’d
My Favours, with them you ’d so soon be cloy’d:
{Or that the Dangers of the Sea you ’d run,
{Scorn Rocks and Pirates too, that you might shun
{A Maid that lov’d like me, and is by you undone.
{Reflect, thou faithless Man! and call to mind
{What I ’ve endur’d for you, yet not repin’d

LETTER V
From a Nun to a Cavalier

I hope, by th' different Ayre of this, you 'll find
That as I 've chang'd my Stile, I 've chang'd my Mind.
The Substance of these Lines will let you know
That you 're to take them for my last Adieu:
For since your Love is past redemption gone,
I 've no Pretence to justifie my own.
All that I have of yours shall be convey'd
To you, without so much as mention made
Of your loath'd Name; the Pacquet shall not bear
Those Letters which I now detest to hear.

In Donna Brites I can well confide,
And whom, you know, I 've other ways imploy'd;
Your Picture she 'll (and all that 's yours) remove,
Those once-endearing Pledges of your Love:
A thousand Times I 've had a strong Desire
To tear and throw them in the flaming Fire;
But I 'm a Fool too easie in my Pain,
And such a generous Rage can't entertain.

Wou'd but the Story of my Cares create
The like to you, methinks 'twou'd mine abate.
Your Trifles, I must own, went near my Heart,
With them I found it difficult to part.
To what was yours I bore such mortal Love,
Tho' you yourself did quite indiff'rent prove,
They 've cost me many a Sigh, and many a Tear,
And more Distraction than you e'er shall hear.
My Friend, I say, now keeps them in her Pow'r,
And I am never to behold 'em more;
She them will secretly to you convey,
Without my Knowledge hasten them away:
Tho' for a sight I on my Knees shou'd lie,
The more I pray, she must the more deny.

Ne'er had I known the Fury of my Flame
Had I not try'd my Passion to reclaim;

Nay, to attempt a Cure I ’d ne’er begun,
Cou’d I ’ve foreseen the Hazards I must run:
For sure I am, I cou’d with greater Ease
Support your Scorn, as rig’rous as it is,
Rather than to retain the dreadful Thought,
That Absence must for ever be my Lot.

I shou’d be happy if I cou’d be Proud,
And with the Nature of our Sex endow’d:
Cou’d I despise you, and your Actions scorn,
And be reveng’d for all the Ills I ’ve born.

Fool as I am, to let my hopes rely
On one who strives t’ encrease my Misery!
You talk of Truth and Sincerity;
They both are what you never shew’d to me.
To tell you what I ’ve born ’tis now too late,
(For th’ most obliged, and yet the most ingrate)
Let it suffice I all your Falsehood know;
And all I ask for what I ’ve done for you,
Is, Write no more, but some Invention find
To tear your Image from my Tortur’d Mind.

{I too must now forbear to write to you,
{Lest a Relapse shou’d by that means ensue;
{And the Event of this I ’ve no Desire to know.
Methinks you shou’d enough contented be
With th’ Ills you have already brought on me:
Sure now you need no more molest my Ease,
Or shake the Structure of my future Peace.
Do you but leave me in Uncertainty,
I hope in time I shall at quiet be:
’Tis not impossible but I may find
A Love as true as you have been unkind.
But what will Love that any Man shall shew
Afford to me, without I love him too?
Why shou’d his Am’rous Passion more incline
To move my Heart, than yours was mov’d by mine?

And I perceive by what I now endure,
That the first Wounds of Love admits no Cure;
All sorts of Remedies then prove in vain,
W' are ne'er recover'd to our selves again;
So fixt, and so immutable is Fate,
We 're doomed to Love, though w' are repaid with Hate.

I 'm sure I cou'd not so hard-hearted be,
To treat another as you 've treated me:
Provided you was to another chang'd,
Of you I cou'd not that way take revenge.
I 'd fain perswade my self a Nun shou'd ne'er
Confine the Passions of a Cavalier;
But if a man wou'd by his Reason move,
A Mistress in a Convent is most fit for Love;
Those in the World do all their Thoughts employ
On Balls, on Visits, and their Finery,
Encrease their Husbands' Jealousies and Cares,
Whilst those who favour us have no such Fears.
Alas! we 've nothing here to change Desire,
But by Reflection daily fan the Fire.

I wou'd not have you think that I maintain
These Arguments, in hopes I may regain
Your Love; too well I know my Destiny;
I always was, and still must wretched be.
{When you was here I did no Rest enjoy:
{Present, for fear of infidelity;
{When distant, Absence did my ease destroy.
I always trembled while you was with me,
Lest you shou'd be found, and come to Injury:
While in the Field, both Lives in Danger were;
Fear of my parents did encrease my Care.
So that 'tis plain, ev'n at the best, my Mind
Was as disturb'd as I at present find:
Since you left me, had you but once seem'd kind,
I shou'd have follow'd, and not been confin'd.
Alas! what wou'd have then become of me,

T' have brought a Scandal on my Family;
T' have lost my Parents and my Honour too,
And, after all, to be despis'd by you?
What Thoughts soever you of me retain,
I reconjure you ne'er to write again:
Methinks you shou'd sometimes reflect upon
The base ungen'rous Injuries you 've done.

No woman sure did e'er so easy prove;
What did you ever do to gain my Love?
You was the first that to the Army went;
To stay the longest there, the best content.
Did you more careful of your Person grow,
Altho' upon my knees I begg'd you wou'd do so?
Did you e'er strive to fix in Portugal,
A Place where you was well belov'd of all?
Your Brother's Letter hurry'd you away,
On the receipt of it you 'd not a moment stay;
And I 'm inform'd you ne'er was pleased more
Than when on board a making from our Shore.
You can't deny but you deserve my Hate,
And I may thank my self for all my Fate;
I was too free, and gave my Heart too soon,
And brought upon my self the Ills I 've undergone.
Alas! from Love alone Love ne'er will rise,
It must be rais'd by Skill and Artifice.
Your first Design was to ensnare my Love,
And nothing wou'd have spar'd that might successful prove:
Nay, I believe, if it had needful been,
Rather than failed, you wou'd have lov'd again;
But you found easier ways to work upon,
And thought it best to let the Love alone.——

Perfidious Man! which way can you atone
For th' base and treach'rous Affronts you 've done?
The blinding Passion now is vanquished quite,
That kept the foulness of them from my sight:
Must my tormented Soul never have Ease?

Must my tormented Soul never have Ease?
When shall I be, thou cruel Man, at Peace?

Within a while you yet perhaps may hear,
Or have a Letter, from your injur'd Fair,
To let you know that she is at repose,
Freed of the Torments that from you arose.
Oh! what a Pleasure it will be to me,
Without concern t' accuse you of your Treachery!
When I 've forgot the wracking Pains I 've born,
And able am to talk of you with Scorn!

You 've had the better, it is plainly prov'd,
Because I you have out of Reason lov'd;
But by the Conquest you small Honour won,
For I was young, and easily undone.
I, whilst a Child, was cloister'd, knew no hurt,
Discours'd with none but of the vulgar Sort,
And what belonged to Flatt'ry never knew,
Till I unhappily was taught by you:
You 'd a good Character of every one,
Which you made use of to entice me on.

My Indignation, and your Falsehood too,
Makes me at present much disorder'd grow;
But, I assure you, I will shortly find
Some Means or other for to ease my Mind.
Perhaps may take a way to quit my Care
Which, when 'tis acted, you 'll be pleas'd to hear.

Fool as I am, to say thus o'er and o'er
The same that I 've so often said before!
Of you a Thought I must not entertain,
And fancy too I ne'er shall write again?
For what occasion 's there that I to you
Shou'd be accountable for all I do?

THE END OF THE NUN'S LETTERS.

Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable
Printers to Her Majesty

FOOTNOTES

[1] An American translation was published in 1890. *Vide* Bibliography.

[2] Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 131, 1st ed.

[3] Cf. Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-8 and 300, 1st ed.

[4] This was partly owing to the ideas of the time, and partly for reasons already mentioned, and also because her father wished to build up an estate, to be entailed on heirs-male.

[5] Letter v.

[6] Asse, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. vi. For an account of the somewhat relaxed character of convent discipline at the time *vide* Cordeiro, pp. 156-164, 1st ed.

[7] 'Muita era a liberdade das grades naquelle miseravel tempo.'

[8] Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-7, 1st ed.

[9] Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40, 1st. ed.

[10] Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 182, 1st ed.

[11] For a good comparison of the Letters of Marianna and Heloïse see an article entitled 'La Eloísa Portuguesa' in the June number of the review *España Moderna*, 1889, written by Emilio Pardo Bazán.

[12] Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 299, 1st ed.

[13] This syntactical extension of the sex to the patronymic was general in the seventeenth century. *Vide* Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 91, 1st ed.

[14] This should be 83. Cf. the extract from the Baptismal Register in Cordeiro, p. 285, 1st ed.

[15] This document was found and transcribed by Cordeiro on pp. 328-9 of his oft-referred-to work, 1st ed.

[16] *Op. cit.*, Preface, p. xi.

[17] *Memoires*, vol. iii. pp. 372-3; Paris, 1873.

[18] Observation of Senhor Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 6, 1st ed.

[19] Observation of M. Asse.

[20] Asse, *op. cit.*, Preface, pp. xiii, xiv.

[21] Letter to Mme. de Grignan in vol. ii., page 284, of the edition of *Paris* 1862.

[22] Asse, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. xv.

[23] Director for a time of the *Gazette de France*, and a friend of Mme. de Sévigné and Racine. Boileau described him as

> 'Esprit né pour la cour et maitre en l'art de plaire
> Guilleragues qui sais et parler et se taire.'

[24] Quoted by Cordeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 21, 1st ed.

[25] One of those ecstasies so common in conventual annals is here meant.

[26] No. 4 in all editions and translations except that of Cordeiro.

[27] A province in the extreme south of Portugal.

[28] The Mother Superior of the convent.

[29] Gates in the city of Beja: so called because they are on the side which looks toward Mertola, 54 kilometres distant. Both Beja and Mertola are in the province of the Alemtejo.

[30] Hérard Bouton and Catherine Lecomte de Nonant.

[31] Both Cordeiro and the French texts read ‘first,’ which does not make sense.

[32] No. 2 in all editions and translations except that of Cordeiro.

[33] Two of Chamilly’s servants.

[34] The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was signed May 2nd, 1668, ratified this peace and put an end to the war called ‘of Devolution.’

[35] D. Brites de Noronha was a professed nun and a companion of Marianna in the convent of the Conception at Beja.

[36] Marianna refers to her condition as a Franciscan nun in a small provincial town, not to the rank of her family, which was as good as that of her lover.

[37] Marianna was about twenty-six years of age when she first met Chamilly. She had naturally made her profession at sixteen and had been confided to the care of the convent at twelve, or even much earlier, like her sister.

Transcriber's Note

Duplicate headings have been removed.

The following errata were printed before the preface and have been incorporated into the text:

Page 33, line 12, *read* Guilleragues *for* Guilleraque.
„ 37, „ 1 (heading), *read* Meu *for* Men.
„ 47, „ 16, *read* appearances *for* proofs.
„ 49, „ 6, *read* this beginning *for* this, beginning.
„ 54, „ 20, *omit* ought to.
„ 57, „ 18, *read* paused *for* passed.
„ 62, „ 8, *insert* one *after* some.
„ 63, „ 9, *read* at times I do not dare to think I could be jealous and yet not displease you.
„ 69, „ 20, *read* your departure based on such cruel pretexts.
„ 70, „ 6, *read* I could never have been on my guard against all my weaknesses.
„ 71, „ 16, *read* Can it be that you did not care to enjoy them?
„ 74, „ 11, *read* Methinks, even, I am not at all content.
„ 77, „ 3, *read* Would it not be very cruel indeed of you to make.
„ 82, „ 3, *read* What! is all my desire then to be in vain?
„ 93, „ 12, *read* the attachment you might have had for another woman could have caused me.
„ 96, „ 19, *read* never forgets what first awakened it to feelings.
„ 100, „ 4, *read* who does not make them render an exact.
„ 102, „ 5, *read* what confusion, what a false step, what depths.

In addition, the following apparent errors have been corrected:

p. 119 "qu’ il" changed to "qu’il"
p. 120 "autresois" changed to "autrefois"
p. 122 "quen" changed to "qu’en"
p. 122 "venez," changed to "venez"
p. 124 "qu’ à" changed to "qu’à"
p. 128 "France," changed to "France"
p. 130 "tout a" changed to "tout à"
p. 153 "soussert" changed to "souffert"
p. 153 "euffiez" changed to "eussiez"
P. 154 "quelles" changed to "qu’elles"
p. 155 "mal’heureuse" changed to "mal’heureuse)"
p. 158 "Ah" changed to "Ah!"
p. 161 "persidie" changed to "perfidie"
P. 165 "anneés" changed to "années"
p. 201 "ar" changed to "are"
p. 205 "I’ m" changed to "I ’m"

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LETTERS OF A PORTUGUESE NUN ***

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