

The Works of Aphra Behn

Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister
(1684-7)

Edited by
Janet Todd

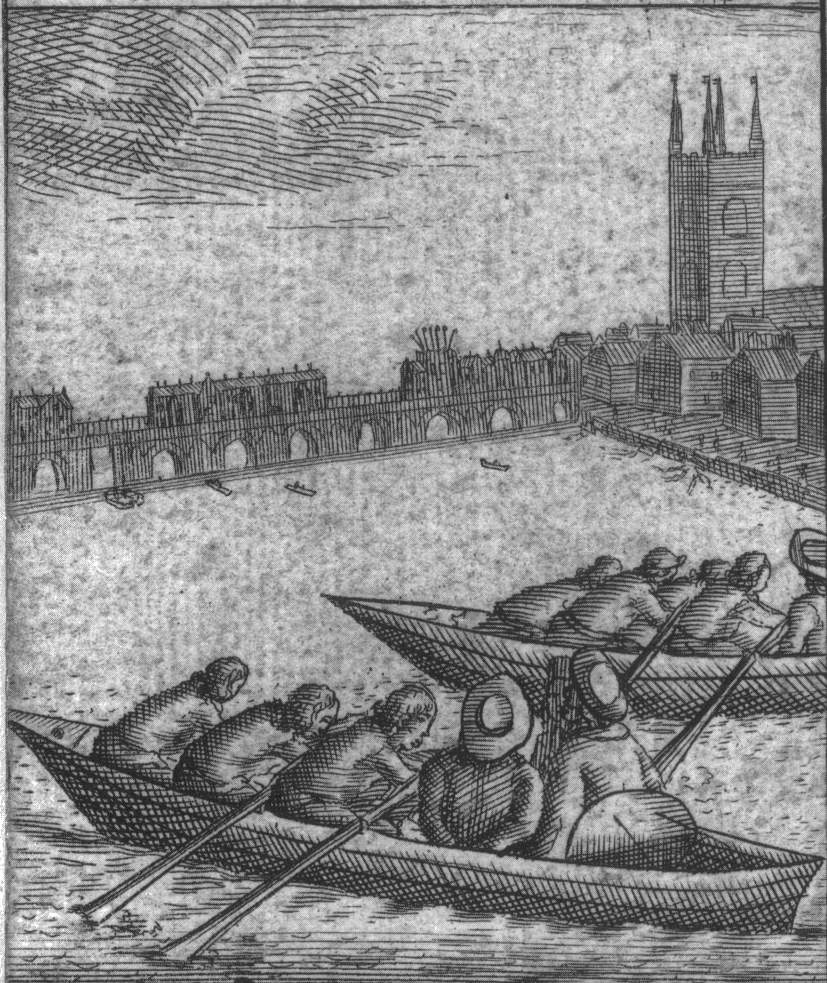
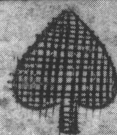


THE PICKERING MASTERS

THE WORKS OF
APHRA BEHN

Volume 2. *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman
and his Sister (1684–7)*

VI



*The late D. of M. L^d Grey & a
German carried to y^e Tower*

The Duke of Monmouth, Ford Lord Grey, and a German soldier being escorted to the Tower of London after the collapse of the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685.

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THE WORKS OF
APHRA BEHN

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JANET TODD

VOLUME
2

LOVE-LETTERS
BETWEEN A NOBLEMAN
AND HIS SISTER
(1684–7)



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TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister, Aphra Behn's first published prose work, was issued in three parts between 1684 and 1687. Its action takes place against the dramatic background of the political events of the 1680s.

The decade had opened with the hysteria of the Popish Plot, followed by the revelation of the Rye House Plot – a Protestant conspiracy to assassinate Charles II and his brother James as they returned from Newmarket in the spring of 1683. In the following months the government discovered plans for a rebellion in London and the rebels, mostly Whig Protestants, were forced to flee to the Continent. On the death of Charles II in 1685 some of the exiles returned under the banner of James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, who hoped to spark off a popular rebellion against his uncle, the Catholic James II, and seize the throne of England for the Protestant cause. The Monmouth Rebellion, which is chronicled in the closing pages of the novel, was quickly smothered by James II's forces and Monmouth was executed in July, 1685. Behn's fiction, especially in its second and third parts, is concerned with the events leading up to the Monmouth Rebellion and represents the duke in the figure of Cesario. Although many of the lesser figures in the novel can similarly be identified with actual historical people, Behn also creates composite characters from political personages of the decade. Tomaso, for example, draws on elements of both Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury and Sir Thomas Armstrong, both supporters of Monmouth.

The more immediate historical impetus for *Love-Letters*, Part I was, however, a scandal involving Ford Lord Grey, a prominent Whig noble whose support was vital to Monmouth's efforts to rally opposition to James II. Behn's novel is a *roman-à-clef* loosely based on Grey's elopement with his sister-in-law, Lady Henrietta Berkeley, shortly before his involvement in the Rye House Plot and the Monmouth Rebellion. In *Love-Letters* Ford Grey and Henrietta Berkeley are depicted as the lovers, Philander and

Silvia. These characters, together with the composite historical ones, are set beside figures deriving in part from romantic fiction and dramatic comedy of the period, such as the triangles of elderly husband and young lovers.

The scandal of Ford Lord Grey's love affair with his sister-in-law created great public interest when he was tried before the King's Bench on the 23rd November, 1682 for the abduction of Lady Henrietta Berkeley. Five accomplices were also tried and all but one were found guilty as charged. Shortly after the trial a transcript of the proceedings was published under the title *The Trial of Ford Lord Grey*. It was not common practice to record all trials verbatim at this time, so the appearance of such a detailed account may have been encouraged by the government, which would have found it opportune that one of the Duke of Monmouth's most powerful supporters had become embroiled in scandal. The public's fascination with the story of Henrietta Berkeley and Ford Grey went far beyond politics, however. Just as Behn's *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* went through many editions in the eighteenth century, a second edition of the *Trial* was published in 1716, thirty-four years after the events had taken place, and in 1765 it was included in a two-volume edition of *Love-Letters*. Those extracts from the *Trial* which appear most to have stimulated Behn's imagination in the writing of the first part of her novel are included in Appendix I of this edition.

The *Trial* confirms many of the details in the first part of *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* and its glimpses of life in Durdans, the Berkeleys' family seat, may have stimulated the initial idea for the novel. The lovers' letters and the constant presence of domestic spies to which references were made during the trial were certainly absorbed into the work.

The use of the lovers' letters as evidence may have suggested to Behn the epistolary form for her fiction. In addition, however, epistolary novels, translated from French and Spanish, were highly popular in England at this time, among the most influential being *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules* (1665) by Roger de Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires de Mme. la Duchesse de Mazarin* (1675) by César Vichard de St.-Réal, and *Lettres portugaises* (1669). The most important of these, *Lettres portugaises*, translated in 1678 by Sir Roger L'Estrange as *Five Love-letters Written by a Cavalier*, influenced the development of the genre in English as an investigation of male and female passion, as

might *The Familiar Epistles of Coll: Henry Martin* (1662) – a collection of a regicide's love letters – popular enough to be reprinted in 1680. Simultaneously, the third-person *La Princesse de Clèves* (1679) by Madame de La Fayette, with its focus on the development of character and its dramatic underpinning of lost and counterfeited letters, may well have suggested to Behn some of the physical uses of letters within narrated fiction.¹

The knowledge that several of the works were thinly disguised accounts of actual events, usually scandalous, can only have added to their popularity. Many of the most influential *romans-à-clef*, however, were not in the epistolary mode, for example *Hattigé* (1676) by Gabriel de Brémond, which referred to contemporary scandals and *Les Désordres de l'amour* (1677) by Madame de Villedieu which drew on sixteenth-century political events for its plot. Similarly, in England Lady Mary Wroth had already made scandal her subject in *The Countesse of Montgomeryes Urania* (1621).

None of these works, however, was on a scale comparable to Behn's novel which varied its form from epistolary to third-person narration, and from present to past tense, and which, in its three parts, ran to over one thousand pages. In addition, it had the extraordinary attraction of dealing with highly incendiary events that were still unfolding as the parts were published. Behn was writing in the wake of the Popish Plot which had fused politics and the erotic in a stream of anti-papist pornography. *Love-Letters* plays on this mixture of politics and sex by focusing on the seduction of the Tory Henrietta Berkeley by the Whig Lord Grey, her brother-in-law, an act which would have been regarded as incest in the late seventeenth century.

When Part I of *Love-Letters* was published, Ford Grey, Henrietta Berkeley and the Duke of Monmouth had all taken refuge on the Continent and the events which inspired the subsequent two volumes had not yet occurred. The ill-fated Monmouth Rebellion took place in the early summer of 1685 and Behn must have been writing at great speed to produce Part II in the same year. She may have made a decision to concentrate on the personal lives of Philander and Silvia in that volume while the events of the Rebellion continued to unfold around her. Part III, *The Amours of Philander and Silvia*, followed in 1687 and it is only then that Behn summarises Monmouth's

preparations in Holland for his invasion of England which must have taken place before the writing of Part II. Although Parts II and III make much use of letters, they are primarily third-person narratives, so allowing a degree of political and psychological placing that was impossible in the epistolary Part I.

During her lifetime, *Love-Letters* was never publicly acknowledged as Aphra Behn's. Sources such as the *Dictionary of National Biography* attribute the work to the government censor Sir Roger L'Estrange who, as the translator of *Lettres portugaises*, would have been a plausible choice for author. However, by 1691 Gerard Langbaine had ascribed the work to Aphra Behn in *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* and several of her later stories and short novels, some not published until after her death, support the ascription; several reveal likenesses in style and content to *Love-Letters*, especially in the development of the sexually manipulative woman and in the creation of a spectating narrator.

The title-pages of each part of the work help to conceal the identity of the author. Part I states that copies were 'Printed, and are to be sold by Randal Taylor'. At that time, Taylor was a trade publisher who distributed works on behalf of other publishers. This method of distribution kept the author and the original publisher at a safe distance from the market place. Parts II and III follow a similar pattern.³ The anonymity of the work may be due to its political content. Probably it was intended as Tory propaganda and it is possible that Behn was persuaded to write the novel by a government concerned by the threat of Monmouth and Grey.

There is evidence that Behn was in financial difficulties in 1685. A letter to Zachary Baggs, son of a gold merchant, suggests she had been forced to borrow money:

I am indebted to Mr Baggs the sum of six pound for the payment of which Mr Tonson has obliged himself. Now I do hereby empower Mr Zachary Baggs, in case the said debt is not fully discharged before Michaelmas next to stop what money he shall hereafter have in his hands of mine, upon the playing my first play till this aforesaid debt of six pound be discharged. Witness my hand this 1st August, —85

In such straitened circumstances, it is unlikely that Behn could have devoted herself to a long prose trilogy unless she was, in the end, expecting to receive an adequate financial reward.

The role of her novel as Tory propaganda might also explain the relative unimportance of the dedicatees of *Love-Letters*. All three men – Thomas Condon, Lemuel Kingdon and the young Lord Spencer – were on the Tory side but none was in such a public position that the dedication would bring him unwelcome attention. In any case, Behn's dedications to Condon and Lord Spencer make it clear that the honour is somewhat double-edged as both men bear more than a passing resemblance to Philander. In the case of Lord Spencer, it is also possible that Behn was commissioned to write the dedication by his father, Lord Sunderland, who may have intended it as a warning to his errant son.

Love-Letters proved to be an immensely popular novel. A second edition of the full work was printed in 1693 and at least another six editions appeared between 1708 and 1765 before it fell foul of the later eighteenth-century moral arbiters. The novel was also serialised in the *Oxford Journal* in 1736, just a year after a verse edition of *The Amours of Philander and Silvia* had been published. Possibly because of the novel's dubious moral reputation, however, *Love-Letters* was ignored by the Victorians. In this century Part I of the work was reprinted in *The Novel in Letters: Epistolary Fiction in the Early English Novel, 1678–1740* in 1969 and all three parts were reprinted by Virago Press in 1987. No scholarly edition of the work has previously been published.

In this edition, the original texts of 1684, 1685 and 1687 have been set against variant copies and the results have been carefully collated. Spelling and punctuation are usually retained, any emendations to the text being listed in the back of the book. The copy-texts used were taken from University Microfilms Early English Books 1641-1700, 82:10 (Beinecke copies Ij B395 6841 1-3). In the case of *Love-Letters* Part I, there is a variant copy of the text in the University of Texas (Aj B396 6841). The Beinecke copy Ij B395 6841 1 has been set against this text and all variants have been recorded at the back of the book. Both texts state that they were 'Printed, and are to be sold by Randal Taylor, near Stationer's Hall. MDCLXXXIV'. However, it is clear that the text has been reset in the Beinecke copy. There are no major changes to the content of the text but there is a consistent difference in spelling between the two copies. The Texas copy prefers a more old-fashioned spelling, giving 'ownes', 'flowres', 'feable', and 'Heroe', for instance, instead of the Beinecke's 'owns', 'flowers', 'feeble' and 'Hero'. Words

such as 'do' or 'cry' are consistently spelt as 'doe' or 'crie' in the Texas copy. Such evidence suggests that the text was reset by a new compositor but, as both texts contain numerous printer's errors, it is impossible to claim one as an improvement on the other or give either priority. As the Beinecke text is closer to modern spelling standards it was chosen as the copy text.

Part II of *Love-Letters* has been set against a second copy in the British Library (British Library copy: c.135.e.9.) and a comparison of the two suggests that they are both part of the same edition with few differences. Both copies have identical spelling and identical misnumbered pages.

Both copies have similarly disordered lettering at points where the type has slipped in the printer's frames. In severe cases such as p. 215 and p. 229 both copies have identical mistakes in the slippage of lettering. However, in certain instances, the British Library copy has additional errors. On p. 25 l. 16 the 'l' drops one line in the word 'lowing' and on p. 278 the 's' in 'sense' which has faded badly in the Beinecke edition has almost completely disappeared leaving 'sen e'. This slight evidence might suggest that the British Library copy is a later issue of the same edition as the Beinecke. There are only two variants in the British Library copy and they reinforce the idea that it is a later issue. On p. 52 l. 22. The word 'POSTSCRIPT' has been added below 'Your PHILANDER' and on p. 115 l. 22 'affectatio n' in the Beinecke copy has been corrected to read 'affectation'. Both corrections, although small, improve the text and suggest that the printer spotted them during the production of the edition.

Part III, *The Amours of Philander and Silvia*, was also set against a British Library copy (British Library copy: c.135.e.9.) and again a comparison of the two suggests that they are both part of the same edition though the evidence of the variants is too slight for any definite identification of an earlier issue. Both copies have identical spelling variants such as 'Sabastian' on p. 92, 'affraid' on p. 149 and 'etternize' on p. 381. The disorder of lettering is also similar in both copies. On p. 100 both have 'atlast' and on p. 260, p. 336, p. 379, and p. 425 the lettering has slipped identically in exactly the same places. However, the British Library copy has additional slippages on p. 11 where the 't' of the tag-word 'not' has slipped and on p. 474 where the slipped lettering common to both the Beinecke and the British Library copies on this page is continued for another two lines. Furthermore, there are two punctuation changes in the British

TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

Library copy. On p. 159 the tag-word 'there' is not followed by a comma as it is in the Beinecke copy and on p. 192 the comma after the tag-word 'Table' in the Beinecke copy reads as 'Table.' in the British Library copy. Certainly the Beinecke variant of 'Table,' is an improvement in the sense of the passage and the earlier variant on p. 159 could also be seen as a correction in the text. If this is the case, then the Beinecke copy may be a later issue of the same edition as the British Library copy. It is possible to argue that the printer could have made two corrections during the production of the edition and also corrected some of the slippages in the type. The evidence for such an argument is so slight, however, that it is more likely that the British Library copy is the later issue. The additional slippages could indicate the further deterioration of the type in the frames and the loss of a comma on p. 159 and the substitution of a full-stop for a comma on p. 192 could be two further printing errors.

As in Volume I of this edition of Behn's works, dates of performance and publication are given in modern form while dates in quotations will be given in the form in which they originally occurred.

In the preparation of this volume I have had the help of several institutions and the advice of many scholars. Among the institutions to which I owe gratitude are the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the British Library, Cambridge University Library, the National Library of Scotland, the Public Record Office, the Special Collections Department of the University of Glasgow, the Library of the University of Texas, and Dr Williams's Library, London. I wish to express thanks to Louise Atherton, Virginia Crompton, Bernard Dhuicq, Maureen Duffy, Paul Jeffreys-Powell, J. R. Jones, Betty Knott, Robert Letellier, Mary Ann O'Donnell, Elizabeth Spearing, David Weston, and Melinda Zook. My greatest debt is to the Leverhulme Trust which has generously aided the work on this volume through the support of Francis McKee whose scholarship and enthusiasm have been invaluable.

Norwich 1993

JANET TODD

NOTES

1. Bussy-Rabutin's *Histoire* was translated as *Loves Empire; or, The Amours of the French Court* in 1682; St.-Réal's *Mémoires* was translated in 1676 and *La Princesse de Clèves* in 1679.
2. *Hattigé* was published in an English translation in 1676, and Ville-dieu's novel was published in English in 1677 as *The Disorders of Love Truly Expressed in the Unfortunate Amours of Givry with Mademoiselle de Guise*.
3. See Michael Treadwell, 'London Trade Publisher 1675–1750', *The Library*, IV 2(1982), 99–104. The title-page for Part II reads 'Printed for the Author, and are to be sold by the Booksellers of London'; the title-page for Part III, *The Amours of Philander and Silvia* reads 'Printed, and are to be Sold by most Booksellers, 1687'. The title-page of the British Library copy of Part II, however, reads 'Printed for A.B. 1685'. The epistle dedicatory for Parts II and III is also signed A.B.

*Love-Letters
between a Nobleman
and his Sister*



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Love-Letters
Between a
NOBLE-MAN
And his
SISTER.



L O N D O N,
Printed, and are to be sold by
Randal Taylor, near *Stationer's*
Hall. MDCLXXXIV.



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TO
THO. CONDON, Esq;^a

SIR,

Having when I was at *Paris* last Spring, met with a little Book of Letters, call'd *L' Intregue de Philander & Silvia*,^b I had a particular fancy, besides my inclinations to translate 'em into English, which I have done as faithfully as I cou'd, only where he speaks of the ingratitude of *Cæsario*^c to the King, I have added a word or two to his Character that might render it a little more parallel to that of a modern Prince in our Age; for the rest I have kept close to the French.

The Letters art soft and amorous, and besides my esteem and

^a Thomas Condon, a royalist and a firm supporter of James II. He was a Captain in Ferdinando Hastings's regiment in the 1680s. He would become Deputy Lieutenant of the East Riding in 1688 and would stand for parliament for Scarborough in the same year when James II was trying to pack the House of Commons with his supporters.

^b *The Intrigue of Philander and Sylvia*. No such title exists. Behn's claim that *Love-Letters* is merely a translation of a French novel works on several levels. It points to the French influences on the genre of the 'secret history' such as Bussy-Rabutin's *L'Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules* (1665) while it also introduces the notion of decoding, ciphers and the revelation of secrets. On a more practical level, it also provides a degree of protection for the author who can claim the events described have all taken place in France and no slur has been intended on any public figure in England. In fact, the historical characters intended are frequently clear though no comprehensive key to the work was ever published.

^c James Scott, Duke of Monmouth. Scott, the illegitimate son of Charles II, became the focus for Whigs worried by the probable succession of James II. In 1669, James had avowed his Catholicism and, during the crisis over popery and arbitrary government in the late 1670s and early '80s, parliament made attempts to pass an Exclusion Bill which would deny James any right to sovereignty. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury, who was leader of the exclusionists, backed Monmouth's claims to legitimacy which were apparently verified by a secret marriage contract between Charles II and Monmouth's mother, Lucy Walters. The contract was supposedly locked in a Black Box and would eventually be revealed to the public. Under Shaftesbury's guidance, Monmouth built up national support for his claims by a series of progresses through the English provinces. By 1682, Monmouth was deep in negotiation with several prominent Whigs who were willing to organise a rebellion which would place him on the throne.

obligation to you, I think it no where so proper to address so much tender passion, as to a man whom Heaven and Nature has so well form'd both for dispensing and receiving of Love as your self, you having all in your person that is acceptable to women and desir'd by men, and when you please can make your self as absolutely the joy of the one as the envy of the other; to this is join'd a Vertue, such as I believe the World has rarely produc'd in a Man of your Youth, Fortune and Advantages; you have all the power of the Debauchery of the Age, without the will, you early saw the Follies of the Town, and the greatness of your mind disdaining that common Road of living, shun'd the foppish practice; your well-judging pride chose rather to be singular, and sullenly retire, than heard with that noisie Crowd, that eternally sit out business enough to stock the Town with Wit and Lampoons, and the Stage with Fops, Fools and Cowards: if I might give my real judgment, you are above flattery, and one can almost say no good or generous thing that one cannot justifie in you, no Vertue you cannot lay a claim to; many your modesty hides from the World, and many more you have which envy will not confess; for that just value you set upon your self by shunning the publick haunts, Cabals and Conversations of the Town, in spite of all your Wit and Goodness gives occasion for malice to revenge it self on you a thousand little ways; witness a late mistaken story of an Amour of yours, so often urg'd with heat, and told so much to your disadvantage, by those who have not the happiness of knowing your true principles of honour, your real good nature, your common justice, or sense of Humanity, to be such, as not to be capable of so base, silly and unmanly a practice, and so needless and poor a design: For my part, Sir, I am vain and proud of the belief that I have the capacity and honour to know and understand your Soul, (did I not too well the story also) and am well assur'd it has not a grain, not a thought of so foolish a principle, so unnecessary and dishonest: and I dare affirm that since the imposition of the late Popish Plot^a upon the Town,

^a In 1678 evidence of a Jesuit-inspired plot to assassinate Charles II was brought to public attention by Israel Tonge and Titus Oates. When Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, the magistrate who took Oates's deposition, was found murdered the plot appeared to have substance. Parliament's subsequent fears that a successful plot could place the Catholic James, Duke of York on the throne led to the introduction of the first Exclusionist Bill which was intended to deny him sovereignty. Constant discoveries of new evidence of the Popish Plot kept the crisis alive until 1681.

there has not so ridiculous and nonsensical a History past for authentick with unthinking man; but you shou'd give 'em leave to rail, since you have so vast advantages above 'em.

Sir, I wou'd fain think that in the Character of *Philander*^a there is a great resemblance of your self as to his Person, and that part of his Soul that was possest with Love: he was a French Whigg, 'tis true, and a most apparent Traytor, and there, I confess, the comparison fails extremely; for sure no man was ever so incorrigible so hardned in Torism as your self, so fearless, so bold, so resolute, and confirm'd in Loyalty; in the height of all dangers and threatnings, in the blessed Age of swearing, and the hopeful Reign of evidences,^b you undaunted held forth for the royal cause, with such force of reason and undeniable sense as those that were not converted, at least were startled; and I shall never forget the happy things I have heard you say on that glorious subject, with a zeal so fervent, yet so modest and gentle your argument, so solid, just, so generous and so very hearty, as has begot you applauses and blessing round the board: a thousand instances, a History I cou'd write of your discourses and acts of Loyalty; but that even your Enemies allow, and I will spare it here, and only say you are an honour and a credit to the Cause that's proud to own you.

In this you are far distant to my amorous Hero; but at least for my own satisfaction, and that I may believe *Silvia*^c truly happy, give me leave to fansie him such a person as your self, and then I cannot fail of fansying him too, speaking at the feet of *Silvia*, pleading his right of love with the same softness in his eyes and voice, as you can do when you design to conquer; whene'er you

^a Ford Lord Grey of Wark or Werk. Grey was a close friend of Monmouth and may have been involved in the Rye House plot to assassinate Charles II in 1683. He was suspected by the authorities of helping to create support for a new rising against the crown and was imprisoned in the Tower of London. He escaped with the help of one of the guards and made his way to Holland, accompanied by Lady Henrietta Berkeley, his sister-in-law. Earlier in the year he had been tried for kidnapping and seducing her. Cf. Appendix I.

^b The restoration of Charles II did not immediately remove fears for the safety of the monarchy. In order to secure the government, a wide network of spies was established across Britain and abroad. The secretaries of state were sent a constant stream of intelligence from correspondents in every city and from 'evidences' or informers eager to prove their loyalty, lessen their own punishment or denigrate their personal enemies. Hence the reign of Charles II was sustained by these 'evidences'.

^c Lady Henrietta Berkeley of Durdans. Her sister, Mary, was married to Lord Grey.

spread your nets for Game, you need but look abroad, fix and resolve, though you, unlike the forward youth of this Age, so nicely pursue the quarry; it is not all, or any Game you fly at, not every Bird that comes to net can please your delicate appetite; though you are young as new desire, as beautiful as light, as amorous as a God, and wanton as a *Cupid*, that smiles, and shoots, and plays, and mischiefs all his fond hours away: Pray Heaven you be not reserv'd like our Hero for some Sister, 'tis an ill sign when so much beauty passes daily unregarded, that your love is reserved to an end as malicious as that of our *Philander's*.

Perhaps you'll be out of humour, and cry, why the Devil did'st thou dedicate the Letters of a Whigg^a to me, but to make you amends, Sir, pray take notice *Silvia* is true Tory^b in every part, if but to love a Whigg be not crime enough in your opinion to pall your appetite, and for which even her youth and beauty cannot make an attonement; commodity, which rarely fails in the Trade of love, though never was so low a Market for beauty of both Sexes, yet he that's fortified and stor'd like happy you, need never fear to find his price; for wit and good humour bear still a rate, and have an intrinsick value, while the other is rated by opinion and is at best but a curious picture, where one and the same dull silent Charms make up the day, while the other is always new, and (to use your own expression) is a Book where one turns over a new leaf every minute, and finds something diverting, in eternal new discoveries; it elevates ones Spirits, charms the Soul, and improves ones stock; for every one has a longer date of hearing than seeing, and the eyes are sooner satiated than the ear; therefore do not depend too much on

^a The Whigs were staunchly Protestant and in favour of a system of constitutional monarchy which would limit the king's prerogative and advance the power of parliament. The name derives from the expression 'Whiggamore raid' which was originally applied to a band of Scottish Covenanters who marched on Edinburgh in 1648. Later the term was used for the 'Exclusioners' who opposed the succession of James, Duke of York to the throne because of his Catholicism.

^b The term covered a wide political spectrum and, like 'Whig', denoted beliefs rather than a party in the modern sense. On the whole, however, someone called a Tory was a royalist and a supporter of the Stuarts in their desire to strengthen the royal prerogative against parliament. A Tory supported the system of absolute monarchy which rested on the belief that the king was God's representative on earth. The name 'Tory' derives from the Irish word 'toraidhe' which was applied to the dispossessed Irish who mounted attacks on English settlers. Later, the term was frequently used to describe anyone who supported the Duke of York's right of succession.

beauty, 'tis but a half conquest you will make when you shew the Man only, you must prove him too; give the soft Sex a sight of your fine Mind as well as your fine Person; but you are a lazy Lover, and ly fallow for want of industry, you rust your stock of hoarded love, while you gaze only and return a single sigher; believe me, Friend, if you continue to fight at that single weapon, there will be no great store of wounds given or taken on either side; you must speak and write if you wou'd be happy, since you can do it so infinitely to purpose; who can be happy without Love? for me, I never numbred those dull days^a amongst those of my life, in which I had not my Soul fill'd with that soft passion; to Love! why 'tis the only secret in nature that restores Life, to all the felicities and charms of living; and to me there seems no thing so strange, as to see people walk about, laugh, do the acts of Life, and impertinently trouble the world without knowing any thing of that soft, that noble passion, or without so much as having an intreague, or an amusement, (as the French call it) with any dear she, no real Love or Cocette;^b perhaps these Letters may have the good fortune to rouse and make you look into your heart, turn o're your store and lavish out a little to divert the toils of life; you us'd to say that even the fatigues of love had a vast pleasure in 'em; *Philander* was of your mind, and I (who advise you like that friend you have honour'd me with the title of) have even preserv'd all the torments of love, before dully living without it; live then and love, thou gay, thou glorious young man, whom Heav'n has blest with all the sweets of life besides; live then and love; and what's an equal blessing, live and be belov'd, by some dear Maid, as nobly born as *Silvia*, as witty and as gay and soft as she, (to you, who know no other want, no other blessing) this is the most advantageous one he can wish you who is,

Sir,

Your obliged and most

humble Servant, &c.

^a Cf. Behn's poem 'To Damon': 'My fancy did no prospect take / Of Conquest's I design'd to make. / But calm and innocent I sate, / Content with my indifferent fate. / (A Medium, I confess, I hate.) / For when the mind so cool is grown / As neither Love nor Hate to own, / The Life but dully lingers on.' [Pickering Masters, *Works of Aphra Behn*, Vol. 1, no. 73, ll.34-43]

^b French: a coquette or flirt.



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The ARGUMENT.

In the time of the Rebellion of the true Protestant Hugonots^a in Paris, under the conduct of the Prince of Condé,^b (whom we will call Caesario) many illustrious persons were drawn into the Association, amongst which there was one, whose Quality and Fortune (join'd with his Youth and Beauty) rendred him more elevated in the esteem of the gay part of the World than most of that Age. In his tender years (unhappily enough) he chanc'd to fall in Love with a Lady, whom we will call Mertilla,^c who had Charms enough to engage any heart, she had all the advantages of Youth and Nature, a Shape excellent, a most agreeable stature, not too tall and far from low, delicately proportion'd, her face a little inclined to round, soft, smooth and white, her Eyes were blew, a little languishing, and full of Love and Wit, a Mouth curiously made, dimpled and full of sweetness; Lips round, soft, plump and red; white teeth, firm and even; her Nose a little Roman; and which gave a noble grace to her lovely Face, her Hair light brown; a Neck and Bosome delicately turn'd, white and rising, her Arms and Hands exactly shap'd; to this a vivacity of Youth ingaging, a Wit quick and flowing, a Humour gay, and an Air irresistably charming, and nothing was wanting to compleat the joys of the young Philander (so we call our amorous Hero) but Mertilla's heart, which the illustrious Cæsario had before possess'd; however, consulting her Honour and her Interest, and knowing all the arts as Women do to feign a tenderness, she yields to marry him: while Philander, who scorn'd to owe his happiness to the commands of Parents, or to chaffer^d for a Beauty, with her consent

^a Protestants forced to flee from France owing to the persecution of Louis XIV. Many of the Huguenots fled to England. Throughout *Love-Letters*, Behn uses France as a cover for her descriptions of English political life. Paris, therefore, can be read as London; the Huguenots, as the Protestant supporters of Monmouth; and the French king, as Charles II.

^b There may be allusion here to two figures: 'Le Grand Condé' (d. 1686), a French noble who led the rebel forces in the Fronde against Cardinal Mazarin in the reign of Louis XIV, and his grandfather, Louis de Bourbon Condé (d. 1569), who led the Huguenots during their persecution in the religious wars of the sixteenth century and whose life featured in *The prince of Conde made English* (1675). Dryden drew on material from the period for his *Duke of Guise* 1683, in which he made political parallels between the England of the 1680s and sixteenth-century France.

^c In *The Trial of Lord Grey*, Lady Arabella Berkeley described to the court how her servant had carried letters between Grey and Henrietta Berkeley. Cf. Appendix I.

^d To bargain.

steals her away, and marries her; but see how transitory is a violent passion, after being satiated, he slights the prize he had so dearly conquer'd; some say the change was occasion'd by her too visibly continued Love to Cæsario; but whatever 'twas, this was most certain, Philander cast his Eyes upon a young Maid, Sister to Mertilla, a Beauty whose early bloom promis'd wonders when come to perfection; but I will spare her Picture here, Philander in the following Epistles will often enough present it to your view: He lov'd and languish'd long before he durst discover his pain; her being Sister to his Wife, nobly born, and of undoubted fame, rendred his passion too criminal to hope for a return, While the young lovely Silvia (so we shall call the noble Maid) sight out her hours in the same pain and languishment for Philander, and knew not that 'twas Love, till she betraying it innocently to the o'erjoy'd Lover and Brother, who soon taught her to understand 'twas Love—he persues it, she permits it, and at last yields; when being discover'd in the criminal intrigue, she flies with him; he absolutely quits Mertilla, lives some time in a Village near Paris, call'd St. Denice,^a with this betray'd unfortunate; till being found out and like to be apprehended, (one for the Rape, the other for the flight) she is forc'd to Marry a Cadet,^b a creature of Philander's to bear the name of Husband only to her, while Philander had the intire possession of her, Soul and Body: Still the League^c went forward, and all things were ready for a War in Paris;^d but 'tis not my business here to mix the rough relation of a War with the soft affairs of Love; let it suffice, the Hugonots were defeated and the King got the day, and every Rebel lay at the mercy of his Sovereign; Philander was taken Prisoner, made his escape to a little Cottage near his own Palace,^e not far from Paris, writes to Silvia to come to him, which she does, and in spite of all the industry to reseize him he got away with Silvia.

After this flight, these Letters were found in their Cabinets, at their house at St. Denice, where they both liv'd together for the space of a year, and they are as exactly as possible plac'd in the order they were sent, and were those supposed to be written towards the latter end of their Amours.

^a Saint-Denis, a suburb to the north of Paris famous for its Gothic Basilica which houses the tombs of many of the French Kings. Behn may also have remembered that Abelard, who fell tragically in love with his pupil, Héloïse, became a monk in Saint-Denis. The letters of Abelard and Héloïse have remained a popular testimony to their love.

^b A younger son or a young man who enters military service.

^c The cabal of Whigs in support of Monmouth.

^d The rebellion which was allegedly fomenting in London in 1682 at the instigation of Grey, Monmouth and their associates.

^e Grey's country house at Up Park in Sussex.

LETTERS

To *Silvia*.

Though I parted from you resolv'd to obey your impossible commands, yet know, oh charming *Silvia*! that after a Thousand conflicts between Love and Honour, I found the God (too mighty for the Idol) reign absolute Monarch in my Soul, and soon banish't that Tyrant thence. That cruel Councillor that would suggest to you a Thousand fond Arguments to hinder my noble pursuits; *Silvia* came in view! her unresistable *Idea*! with all the charmes of blooming youth, with all the Attractions of Heavenly Beauty! loose, wanton, gay, all flowing her bright hair, and languishing her lovely eyes, her dress all negligent as when I saw her last, discovering a Thousand ravishing Graces, round white small Breasts, delicate Neck, and rising Bosome, heav'd with sighs she wou'd in vain conceal; and all besides, that nicest fancy can imagine surprising—Oh I dare not think on, lest my desires grow mad and raving; let it suffice, oh adorable *Silvia*! I think and know enough to justify that flame in me, which our weak alliance of Brother and Sister has render'd so criminal; but he that adores *Silvia*, shou'd do it at an uncommon rate; 'tis not enough to sacrifice a single heart, to give you a simple Passion, your Beauty shou'd like it self produce wondrous effects; it shou'd force all obligations, all laws, all ties even of Natures self: You my lovely Maid, were not born to be obtain'd by the dull methods of ordinary loving; and 'tis in vain to prescribe me measures; and oh much more in vain to urge the nearness of our Relation. What Kin my charming *Silvia* are you to me? No ties of blood forbid my Passion; and what's a Ceremony impos'd on man by custome? what is it to my Divine *Silvia*, that the Priest took my hand and gave it to your Sister? what Alliance can that create? why shou'd a trick devis'd by the wary old, only to make provision for posterity, tie me to an

eternal slavery. No, no my charming Maid, tis nonsense all; let us (born for mightier joys) scorn the dull *beaten road*, but let us love like the first race of men,^a nearest allied to God, promiscuously they lov'd, and possess'st, Father and Daughter, Brother and Sister met, and reap'd the joys of Love without controul, and counted it Religious coupling, and 'twas encourag'd too by Heav'n it self: Therefore start not (too nice and lovely Maid) at shadows of things that can but frighten fools. Put me not off with these delays! rather say you but dissembl'd Love all this while, than now 'tis born, to let it dy again with a poor fright of nonsense. A fit of Honour! a fantome imaginary and no more; no, no represent me to your soul more favourably, think you see me languishing at your feet, breathing out my last in sighs and kind reproaches, on the pityless *Silvia*; reflect when I am dead, which will be the more afflicting object, the Ghost (as you are pleas'd to call it) of your Murder'd Honour, or the pale and bleeding one of

The lost *Philander*.

*I have liv'd a whole day,
and yet no Letter from my Silvia.*

To *Philander*.

Oh why will you make me own (oh too importunate *Philander*!) with what regret I made you promise to prefer my Honour before your Love.

I confess with blushes, which you might then see kindling in my face, that I was not at all pleas'd with the Vows you made me, to endeavour to obey me, and I then even wisht you wou'd obstinately have deny'd obedience to my just commands; have pursu'd your criminal flame, and have left me raving on my

^a The offspring of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. Philander is using the biblical precedent to justify his relationship with his sister-in-law despite the Church's disapproval of such ties.

undoing: For when you were gone, and I had leasure to look into my heart, alas! I found whether you oblig'd or not, whether Love, or Honour were prefer'd, I, unhappy I, was either way inevitably lost. Oh what pityless God, fond of his wondrous power, made us the objects of his Almighty vanity? oh why were we two made the first presidents of his new found revenge? for sure no Brother ever lov'd a Sister with so criminal a flame before: At least my unexperienc'd innocence ne're met with so fatal a story: And 'tis in vain (my too charming Brother) to make me insensible of our Alliance; to perswade me I am a stranger to all but your eyes and Soul.

Alas your fatally kind Industry is all in vain. You grew up a Brother with me; the title was fixt in my heart, when I was too young to understand your subtle distinctions, and there it thriv'd and spread; and 'tis now too late to transplant it, or alter its Native Property: Who can graft a flower on a contrary stalk? The Rose will bear no Tulips, nor the Hyacinth the Poppy; no more will the Brother the name of Lover. O spoil not the natural sweetness and innocence we now retain, by an endeavour fruitless and destructive; no, no *Philander*, dress your self in what Charms you will, be powerfull as Love can make you in your soft argument,—yet, oh yet you are my Brother still,—But why, oh cruel and eternal Powers, was not *Philander* my Lover before you destin'd him a Brother? or why being a Brother did you malicious and spiteful powers destine him a Lover! oh take, either title from him, or from me a life which can render me no satisfaction, since your cruel laws permit it not for *Philander*, nor his to bless the now

Unfortunate *Silvia*.

Wednesday Morning.

To Philander.

After I had dismiss my Page this morning with my Letter, I walk'd (fill'd with sad soft thoughts of my Brother *Philander*) into the Grove, and commanding *Melinda* to retire, who only attended me, I threw my self down on that bank of grass where

we last disputed the dear but fatal business of our souls: Where our prints (that invited me) still remain on the prest greens: There with Ten Thousand sighs, with remembrance of the tender minutes we past then, I drew your last Letter from my Bosome; and often kist and often read it over, but oh, who can conceive my Torment, when I came to that fatal part of it, where you say you gave your hand to my sister, I found my soul agitated with a Thousand different passions, but all insupportable, all mad, and raving; sometimes I threw my self with fury on the ground, and prest my panting heart to the cold earth, then rise in rage and tear my hair, and hardly spare that face that taught you first to love: then fold my wretched Arms to keep down rising Sighs that almost rend my breast, I traverse swiftly the conscious Grove;^a with my distracted show'ring eyes directed in vain to pityless Heaven, the lovely silent shade favouring my complaints, I cry alowd, oh God! *Philander's* Married, the lovely charming thing for whom I languish is Married! – That fatal word's enough, I need not add to whom. Married's enough to make me curse my Birth, my Youth, my Beauty, and my eyes that first betrayed me to the undoing object: Curse on the Charms you've flatter'd, for every fancy'd Grace has help'd my ruine on; now like flowers that wither unseen and unpossess in shades, they must dy and be no more, they were to no end created since *Philander's* Married: Married! oh fate, oh Hell, oh torture and confusion! tell me 'tis to my Sister, that addition's needless, and vain: To make me eternally wretched there needs no more than that *Philander's* Married! than that the Priest gave your hand away from me; to another and not to me; tir'd out with life I need no other passport than this Repetition, *Philander's* Married! 'tis that alone is sufficient to lay in her cold Tomb

The wretched and despairing.

SILVIA.

Wednesday night,
Bellfont.^b

^a Behn is alluding to the etymology of 'conscious' which is rooted in the Latin 'conscius', meaning 'to know something with other', 'to be privy to' or 'to witness private acts'. Cf. Behn's poem '*The Reflection: A Song*': 'Witness ye Springs, ye Meads and Groves, / Who oft were conscious made / To all our Hours and Vows of Love.' [*Works of Aphra Behn*, Vol. 1, no.32, ll.49–51]

^b Durdans, near Epsom, the family seat of the Berkeleys.

To *Silvia*.

Twice last night, oh unfaithful and unloving Silvia! I sent my Page, to the old place for Letters, but he return'd the object of my rage, because without the least remembrance from my fickle Maid: In this Torment, unable to hide my disorder, I suffer'd my self to be laid in bed; where the restless torments of the night exceeded those of the day, and are not even by the languisher himself to be exprest; but the returning light brought a short slumber on its Wings; which was interrupted by my attoneing Boy, who brought Two Letters from my adorable *Silvia*: He wak'd me from Dreams more agreeable than all my watchful hours cou'd bring, for they are all tortured—And even the softest mixt with a Thousand despairs, difficulties, and disappointments, but these were all love, which gave a loose to joys undeny'd by Honour! and this way my charming *Silvia* you shall be mind, in spite of all the Tyrannies of that cruel hinderer; Honour appears not my *Silvia* within the close drawn Curtains, in shades and gloomy light the fantom frights not, but when one beholds its blushes, when its attended and adorn'd, and the Sun sees its false Beauties; in silent Groves and grotto's, dark Alcoves, and lonely recesses, all its formalities are laid aside; 'twas then, and there, methought my *Silvia* yielded! with a faint struggle and a soft resistance; I heard her broken sighs, her tender whispering Voice that trembling cry'd—Oh can you be so cruel.—Have you the heart—Will you undo a Maid because she loves you? Oh will you ruine me because you may?—My faithless—My unkind, then sigh't and yielded, and made me happier than a Triumphant God! but this was still a Dream, I wak'd and sigh't and found it vanish all! But oh my *Silvia*, your Letters were substantial pleasure, and pardon your Adorer if he tell you, even the disorder you express, is infinitely dear to him, since he knows it all the effects of Love, Love my soul! which you in vain oppose; pursue it, Dear and call it not undoing, or else explain your fear, and tell me what your soft, your trembling heart gives that cruel title to? is it undoing to Love? and love the Man you say has Youth and Beauty to justifie that Love? a man that adores you with so submissive

and perfect a resignation; a man that did not only Love first; but is resolv'd to dy in that agreeable flame; in my Creation I was form'd for Love, and destin'd for my *Silvia*, and she for her *Philander*: And shall we, can we disappoint our Fate, no my soft Charmer, our souls were toucht with the same shafts of Love before they had a being in our Bodies, and can we contradict Divine Decrees?

Or is't undoing, Dear, to bless *Philander* with what you must some time or other sacrifice to some hated loath'd object, (for *Silvia* can never love again) and are those Treasures for the dull conjugal Lover to rifle? was the beauty of Divine shape created for the cold Matrimonial imbrace? and shall the eternal joys that *Silvia* can dispence, be returned by the clumsie Husband's careless forc'd insipid duty's; oh my *Silvia* shall a Husband (whose insensibility will call those Raptures of joy! those Heavenly Blissess! the drudgery of life) shall he I say receive 'em? While your *Philander* with the very thought of the excess of pleasure, the least possession wou'd afford, faints o're the Paper that brings you here his eternal Vows.

Oh where my *Silvia* ly's the undoing then? my Quality and Fortune are of the highest rank amongst men. My youth gay and fond, my Soul all soft, all Love; and all *Silvia*'s! I adore her, I languish for her, I am sick of Love and sick of Life, till she yields she is all mine!

You say my *Silvia* I am Married, and there my happyness is Shipwreck'd; but *Silvia* I deny it, and will not have you think it; no, my Soul was Married to yours in its first Creation; and only *Silvia* is the Wife of my sacred, my everlasting Vows; of my solemn considerate thought, of my ripen'd Judgment, my mature considerations. The rest are all repented and forgot, like the hasty folly's of unsteady Youth, like Vows breath'd in Anger, and dy Perjur'd as soon as vented, and unregarded either of Heav'n or Man. Oh why shou'd my Soul suffer for ever, why eternal pain for the unheedy short-liv'd sin of my unwilling Lips; besides, this fatal thing call'd Wife, this unlucky Sister, this *Mertilla*, this stop to all my Heav'n, that breeds such fatal differences in our soft Affairs, this *Mertilla*^a I say, first broke

^a It was public knowledge that Monmouth had an affair with Grey's wife, Lady Mary Berkeley. Several satires were published on the subject, including *The Hue and Cry after J—Duke of M—*, which states that to find Monmouth 'be sure to search in the Lady G—ys Placket, and 'tis Ten thousand pound to a Nut-shell but you'll take him napping'. Also cf. Appendix III.

her Marriage Vows to me; I blame her not, nor is it reasonable I shou'd, she saw the young *Cesario*, and Lov'd him. *Cesario*, whom the envying World in spight of prejudice must own, has irresistible Charms, that, Godlike form, that sweetness in his face, that softness in his Eyes and delicate Mouth; and every Beauty besides that Women doat on and Men envy: That lovely composition of Man and Angel! with the addition of his eternal Youth and Illustrious Birth, was form'd by Heav'n and Nature for universal Conquest! and who can love the charming Hero at a cheaper rate than being undone: And she that wou'd not venture Fame, Honour, and a Marriage Vow for the Glory of the young *Cesario*'s heart, merits not the noble Victim; oh wou'd I cou'd say so much for the young *Philander*, who wou'd run a Thousand times more hazards of life and Fortune for the Adorable *Silvia*, than that amorous *Hero* ever did for *Mertilla*, though from that Prince I learn't some of my disguises for my thefts of Love, for he like *Jove* courted in several shapes,^a I saw 'em all, and suffer'd the delusion to pass upon me; for I had seen the lovely *Silvia*? yes I had seen her, and I lov'd her too. But Honour kept me yet Master of my Vows; but when I knew her false, when I was once confirm'd,— When by my own Soul I found the dissembl'd Passion of her's, when she cou'd no longer hide the blushes or the paleness that seiz'd at the approaches of my disorder'd Rival, when I saw Love dancing in her eyes and her false heart beat with nimble motions, and soft trembling seize every Limb, at the approach or touch of the Royal Lover, then I thought my self no longer oblig'd to conceal my flame for *Silvia*; nay e're I broke silence, e're I discover'd the hidden Treasure of my heart, I made her falshood plainer yet: Even the time and place of the dear assignations I discover'd; certainty! happy certainty! broke the dull heavy chain, and I with joy submitted to my shameful freedome, and caress'd my generous Rival, nay and by Heav'n I lov'd him for't, pleas'd at the resemblance of our Souls, for we were secret Lovers both, but more pleas'd that he Lov'd *Mertilla*, for that made way to my passion for the adorable *Silvia*!

^a Jove was the ruler of the gods. Constantly unfaithful to his wife Hera, he seduced many of his mistresses by first approaching them disguised as another god, mortal or animal.

Let the dull hot-brain'd jealous fool upbraid me with cold Patience: Let the fond Coxcomb whose Honour depends on the frail Marriage Vow, reproach me, or tell me that my Reputation depends on the feeble constancy of a Wife, perswade me 'tis Honour to fight for an unretrivable and unvalor'd Prize, and that because my Rival has taken leave to Cuckold me, I shall give him leave to kill me too: Unreasonable nonsense grown to custome. No by Heav'n! I had rather *Mertilla* shou'd be false, (as she is) than wish and languish for the happy occasion, the Sin's the same, only the Act's more generous: Believe me my *Silvia*, we have all false notions of Virtue and Honour, and surely this was taken up by some despairing Husband in Love with a fair lilting Wife, and then I Pardon him: I shou'd have done as much for only she that has my Soul, can only ingage my Sword, she that I love, and my self only commands and keeps my stock of Honour: For *Silvia*! the Charming the distracting *Silvia*! I cou'd fight for a glance or smile, expose my heart for her dearer fame, and wish no recompence, but breathing out my last gasp into her soft white delicate bosome. But for a Wife! that stranger to my Soul, and whom we Wed for interest and necessity,—A Wife, a light loose unregarding Property, who for a momentary Appetite will expose her fame, without the noble end of loving on, she that will abuse my Bed, and yet return again to the loath'd conjugal imbrace, back to the Armes so hated, that even strong fancy of the absent Youth belov'd, cannot so much as render supportable. Curse on her, and yet she kisses, fawnes and dissembles on, hangs on his Neck, and makes the Sot believe:—Damn her, Brute; I'll whistle her off, and let her down the Wind, as *Othella*^a says. No I adore the Wife, that when the heart is gone, boldly and nobly pursues the Conqueror, and generously owns the Whore,—Not poorly adds the nautious sin of Jilting to't: That I cou'd have born, at least commended; but this can never Pardon; at worst then the world had said her Passion had undone her, she lov'd and Love at worst is pity. No, no *Mertilla*, I forgive your Love, but never can your poor dissimulation. One drives you but from the heart you value not, but t'other to my eternal contempt. One deprives me but of thee

^a Othello, the moorish hero of Shakespeare's tragedy of the same name. On first hearing of his wife's infidelity he likens her to a hawk, declaring: 'If I do find her haggard, / Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings, / I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind / To pray to fortune....' [III.iii.259–64]

Mertilla, but t'other intitles me to a Beauty more surprising, renders thee no part of me; and so leaves the Lover free to *Silvia*, without the Brother.

Thus my excellent Maid I have sent you the sense and truth of my Soul in an affair you have often hinted to me, and I take no pleasure to remember, I hope you will at least think my aversion reasonable, and that being thus undisputably freed from all obligations to *Mertilla* as a Husband, I may be permitted to lay claim to *Silvia* as a Lover, and marry my self more effectually by my everlasting Vows, than the Priest by his common method cou'd do to any other Woman less belov'd, there being no other way at present left by Heav'n, to render me *Silvia's*

Eternal happy Lover and

PHILANDER.

I dy to see you

To *Silvia*.

When I had seal'd the inclos'd, *Brilljard*^a told me you were this Morning come from *Belfont*, and with infinite impatience have expected seeing you here; which defer'd my sending this to the old place; and I am so vain (oh Adorable *Silvia*!) as to believe my fancy'd silence has given you disquiets, but sure my *Silvia* cou'd not charge me with neglect, no she knows my Soul, and lays it all on chance, or some strange accident, she knows no business cou'd divert me. No were the Nation sinking, the great Senate of the world^b confounded, our Glorious Designs betray'd and ruin'd, and the vast City all in flame; like *Nero*^c unconcern'd I'd

^a William Turner, gentleman servant of Lord Grey. Turner married Henrietta Berkeley in order to free his master from charges of kidnapping her. Cf. Appendix I. He then accompanied Grey to Cleve where he quarrelled with him, apparently over Henrietta. Later, reconciled with his master, he fought for Monmouth in 1685, escaped to Holland after the Battle of Sedgemoor and was pardoned in 1686.

^b Parliament.

^c Roman emperor from AD 54–68. The adopted son of Claudius, Nero was one of the most notorious rulers in history. Popular legend insists that he fiddled while Rome burned, a myth probably inspired by Nero's love of music and poetry. He was responsible for the death of his own mother and later had his wife killed in order to marry his mistress Poppaea Sabina.

sing my everlasting Song of Love to *Silvia*, which no time or Fortune shall untune. I know my Soul and all its strength and how it's fortify'd, the charming Idea of my young *Silvia* will for ever remain there, the original may fade, time may render it less fair, less blooming in my Arms, but never in my Soul, I shall find thee there the same gay glorious creature that first surpris'd and enslav'd me, believe me Ravishing Maid I shall. Why then, oh why my cruel *Silvia*! are my joys delay'd? why am I by your rigorous commands kept from the sight of my Heav'n my eternal bliss? an Age my fair Tormentor's past, Four tedious live long days are number'd o're, since I beheld the object of my lasting Vows, my eternal wishes, how can you think, oh unreasonable *Silvia*! that I cou'd live so long without you, and yet I am live I find it by my pain, by torments of fears and jealousies insupportable, I languish and go downward to the Earth, where you will shortly see me lay'd without your recalling mercy; 'tis true I move about this unregarded world, appear every day in the great Senate House at Clubs, Caballs, and private consultations (for *Silvia* knows all the business of my Soul, even its politicks of State as well as Love) I say I appear indeed, and give my Voice in publick business, but oh my Heart more kindly is imploy'd, that and my thoughts are *Silvia*'s! Ten Thousand times a day I breath that name my busie fingers are eternally tracing out those Six mystick Letters, a Thousand ways on every thing I touch, form words, and make 'em speak a Thousand things, and all are *Silvia* still; my melancholy change is evident to all that see me, which they interpret many mistaken ways, our Party^a fancy I repent my League with 'em, and doubting He betray the Cause, grow jealous of me, till by new Oaths, new Arguments I confirm 'em, then they smile all, and cry I am in Love! and this they would believe, but that they see all Women that I meet or converse with are indifferent to me, and so can fix it no where, for none can guess it *Silvia*, thus while I dare not tell my Soul, no not even to *Cesario*, the stifled flame burns inward and torments me so, that (unlike the thing I was) I fear *Silvia* will lose her Love, and Lover too; for those few Charmes she said I had, will fade, and this fatal distance will destroy both Soul and Body too, my very reason will abandon me and I shall rave to see thee; restore me, oh restore me

^a The cabal of Shaftesbury, Sir Thomas Armstrong, Grey and other supporters of Monmouth.

then to *Bellfont* still blest with *Silvia's* presence permit me, oh permit me into those sacred Shades where I have been so often (too innocently) blest! let me survey again the dear characters of *Silvia* on the smooth Birch; oh when shall I sit beneath those Boughs,^a gazing on the young Goddess of the Grove, hearing her sigh for Love; touching her glowing small white hands, beholding her killing eyes languish, and her Charming bosome rise and fall with short-breath'd uncertain breath; breath as soft and sweet as the restoring breeze that glides or'e the newblown flowers. But oh what is it! what Heav'n of Perfumes, when it inclines to the ravisht *Philander*, and whispers Love, it dares not name aloud!

What power witholds me then from rushing on thee, from pressing thee with Kisses, folding thee in my transported Armes, and following all the dictates of Love without respect of Awe. What is it oh my *Silvia* can obtain a Love so violent and raving, and so wild admit me sacred Maid, admit me again to those soft delights; that I may find if possible, what Devinity (envious of my bliss) checks my eager joys; my raging flame; while you too make an experiment (worth the Tryal) what 'tis makes *Silvia* deny her

Impatient Adorer.

PHILANDER.

My Page is Ill, and I am oblig'd to trust Brilljard with these to the dear Cottage of their Rendevouz, send me your opinion of his fidelity and ah remember I dy to see you.

To Philander.

Not yet?—not yet? oh ye dull tedious Hours when will you glide away? and bring that happy moment on, in which I shall at least hear from my *Philander*; Eight and Forty teadious ones

^a This is a familiar trope in Behn's poetry. Cf. 'Song' and 'On a Juniper-Tree, cut down to make Busks' [*Works of Aphra Behn*, Vol. 1, nos. 2 & 14].

are past, and I am here forgotten still; forlorn, impatient, restless every where; not one of all your little moments (ye undiverting hours) can afford me repose; I drag ye on, a heavy Load; I count ye all; and bless ye when you'r gone; but tremble at the approaching ones, and with a dread expect you; and nothing will divert me now, my Couch is tiresome, and my Glass is vain; my Books are dull, and conversation insupportable, the Grove affords me no relief; nor even those Birds to whom I have so often breath'd *Philander's* name, they sing it on their perching Boughs; no nor the reviewing of his dear Letters, can bring me any ease. Oh what fate's reserv'd for me; for thus I cannot live; nor surely thus I shall not dy. Perhaps *Philander's* making a tryal of Vertue by this silence. Pursue it, call up all your reason my lovely Brother to your aid, let us be wise and silent, let us try what that will do towards the cure of this too infectious flame; let us, oh let us my Brother sit down here, and pursue the crime of Loving on no further. Call me Sister——Swear I am so, and nothing but your Sister: and forbear, oh forbear my charming Brother to pursue me farther with your soft bewitching Passion, let me alone, let me be ruin'd with Honour if I must be ruin'd——For oh! 'twere much happier I were no more than that I shou'd be more than *Philander's* Sister; or he than *Silvia's* Brother: Oh let me ever call you by that cold name, till that of Lover be forgotten: ——Ha!——Methinks on the suddain a fit of Vertue informs my Soul, and bids me ask you for what sin of mine my Charming Brother you still persue a Maid that cannot fly: Ungenerous and unkind! why did you take advantage of those Freedoms I gave you as a Brother, I smil'd on you, and sometimes kist you too;——But for my Sisters sake. I play'd with you, suffer'd your Hands and Lips to wander were I dare not now; all which I thought a Sister might allow a Brother and knew not all the while the Treachery of Love: Oh none, but under that intimate title of Brother, cou'd have had the opportunity to have ruin'd me, that, that betray'd me: I play'd away my Heart at a Game I did not understand, nor knew I when 'twas lost by degrees so subtil, and an authority so lawful, you won me out of all. Nay then too, even when all was left, I wou'd not think it Love. I wonder'd what my sleepless Nights, my waking eternal thoughts, and slumbring Visions of my lovely Brother meant, I wonder'd why my Soul was continually filled with wishes and new desires; and still concluded 'twas for my Sister all: till I discovered the cheat by jealousy, for

when my Sister hung upon your neck; kist and carrest that face that I ador'd, oh how I found my colour change, my Limbs all trembled, and my blood inrag'd, and I cou'd scarce forbear reproaching you: Or crying out, Oh why this fondness Brother. Sometimes you perceiv'd my concern, at which you'd smile, for you who had been before in Love, (a curse upon the fatal time) cou'd guess at my disorder; then wou'd you turn the wanton play on me: When sullen with my jealousy and the cause, I fly your soft imbrace, yet wish you wou'd pursue and overtake me which you ne're fail'd to do, where after a kind quarrel all was pardon'd, and all was well again: While the poor injur'd innocent my Sister, made her self sport at our delusive Wars: Still I was ignorant, till you in a most fatal hour inform'd me I was a Lover. Thus was it with my heart in those blest days of innocence; thus it was won and lost; nor can all my Stars in Heaven prevent, I doubt prevent my ruine. Now you are sure of the fatal conquest you scorn the trifling Glory you are silent now; oh I am inevitably lost, or with you or without you: And I find by this little silence and absence of yours that 'tis most certain I must either dy or be *Philander's*.

SILVIA.

If Dorillus come not with a Letter or that my Page whom I have sent to his Cottage for one bring it not, I cannot support my Life, for oh Philander I have a Thousand wild distracting fears, knowing how you are involv'd in the Interest you have espous'd with the young Cæsario; how danger surrounds you, how your life and Glory depends on the frail secresie of Villains and Rebels: Oh give me leave to fear eternally your fame and life, if not your Love; if Silvia cou'd command, Philander shou'd be Loyal as he's Noble; and what generous Maid wou'd not suspect his Vows to a Mistress who breaks 'em with his Prince and Master, Heav'n preserve you and your Glory.

To Philander.

Another Night oh Heav'ns and yet no Letter come! Where are you my *Philander*? What happy place contains you! if in Heav'n, why do's not some posting Angel bid me hast after you? if on

Earth, why do's not some little God of Love bring the grateful tidings on his painted Wings! if sick, why does not my own fond heart by sympathy inform me, but that's all active, vigorous, wishing, impatient of delaying silence, and busie in imagination; if you are false, if you have forgotten your poor believing and distracted *Silvia*, why do's not that kind Tyrant Death, that meager welcome Vision of the despairing, old, and wretched, approach in dead of Night, approach my restless Bed, and tole the dismal tidings in my frighted listning ears, and strike me for ever silent; lay me for ever quiet, lost to the world, lost to my faithless Charmer: But if a sense of Honour in you, has made you resolve to prefer mine before your Love, made you take up a noble fatal resolution never to tell me more of your Passion, this were a Trial I fear my fond heart wants courage to bear; or is't a trick, a cold fit only assum'd to try how much I Love you? I have no Arts Heav'n knows, no guile or double meaning in my soul, 'tis all plain native simplicity, fearful and timerous as Children in the Night, trembling as Doves pursu'd; born soft by Nature, and made tender by Love; what, oh! what will become of me then! Yet wou'd I were confirm'd in all my fears: For as I am my condition is yet more deplorable, for I'm in doubt, and doubt is the worst torment of the mind: Oh *Philander* be merciful, and let me know the worst, do not be cruel while you kill, do it with pity to the wretched *Silvia*, oh let me quickly know whether you are at all, or are the most impatient and unfortunate

SILVIA'S.

*I rave, I dy for
some Relief.*

To Philander.

As I was going to send away this enclos'd: *Dorillus* came with Two Letters; oh you cannot think *Philander* with how much reason you call me fickle Maid, for cou'd you but imagine how I am tormentingly divided, how unresolv'd between violent

Love, and cruel Honour: You would say 'twere impossible to fix me any where; or be the same thing for a moment together, There is not a short hour past through the swift hand of time, since I was all despairing raging Love, jealous, fearful, and impatient; and now, now that your fond Letters have dispers'd those Damons, those tormenting Councillors, and given a little respite, a little tranquility to my Soul; like States luxurious grown with ease, it ungratefully rebels against the Sovereign power that made it great and happy; and now that Traytor Honour heads the mutiners within; Honour whom my late mighty fears had almost famisht and brought to nothing, warm'd and reviv'd by thy new protested flame, makes War against Almighty Love! and I, who but now nobly resolved for Love! by an inconstancy natural to my Sex, or rather my fears, am turn'd over to Honour's side: So the despairing man stands on the Rivers Bank, design'd to plunge into the rapid stream, till coward fear seizing his timorous soul, he views around once more the flow'ry Plains, and looks with wishing eyes back to the Groves, then sighing stops, and cry's I was too rash, forsakes the dangerous shore, and hasts away. Thus indiscreet was I; was all for Love,^a fond and undoing love! but when I saw it with full Tide flow in upon me, one glance of Glorious Honour, makes me again retreat. I will—I am resolv'd——And must be brave! I can't forget I'm Daughter to the great *Beralti*,^b and Sister to *Mertilla*, a yet unspotted Maid, fit to produce a race of Glorious Hero's! and can *Philander*'s Love set no higher value on me than base poor prostitution! is that the price of his heart?—Oh how I hate thee now! or wou'd to Heav'n I cou'd.—Tell me not thou charming Beguiler, that *Mertilla* was to blame, was it a fault in her, and will it be vertue in me; and can I believe the crime that made her lose your heart, will make me Mistress of it: No, if by any action of her's, the noble House of the *Beralti* be dishonour'd by all the Actions of my Life it shall receive Additions of Luster and Glory! nor will I think *Mertilla*'s vertue

^a Dryden's play, *All for Love*, was first performed in 1678 and was an immediate success. Based on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, the play explores the conflict of Anthony's love for Cleopatra and his desire for political power. Behn must have noticed the parallels not only with the lives of Ford Grey and Henrietta Berkeley, but also with the relationship between Monmouth and Henrietta Wentworth.

^b Behn seems to created the name from *Ber-* the first part of Berkeley and *alti*, the Italian word meaning high or high-ranking.

lessen'd for your mistaken opinion of it, and she may be as much in vain pursu'd perhaps, by the Prince *Cæsario* as *Silvia* shall be by the young *Philander*; the envying world talks loud 'tis true, but oh if all were true that busie babler says, what Lady has her fame? What Husband is not Cuckold? Nay and a friend to him that made him so; and 'tis in vain my too subtil Brother, you think to build the trophies of your Conquests on the ruine of both *Mertilla*'s fame and mine; oh how dear wou'd your inglorious passion cost the great unfortunate house of the *Beralti*, while you poorly ruine the fame of *Mertilla* to make way to the heart of *Silvia*; Remember, oh remember once your Passion was as violent for *Mertilla*, and all the Vows, Oaths, protestations, tears and Prayers you make and pay at my feet, are but the faint repetitions, the feeble eccho's of what you sigh't, out at hers. Nay like young *Paris*,^a fled with the fair Prize; your fond, your eager Passion made it a Rape: oh perfidious!—Let me not call it back to my remembrance.—Oh let me dy rather than call to mind a time so fatal; when the lovely false *Philander* vow'd his heart, his faithless heart away to any Maid but *Silvia*:—Oh let it not be possible for me to imagine his dear Arms ever grasp'd any body with joy but—*Silvia*'s!—And yet they did, with transports of Love! yes, yes you lov'd! by Heav'n you lov'd this false, this perfidious *Mertilla*; for false she is; you lov'd her, and I'll have it so; nor shall the Sister in me plead her Cause. She's false beyond all Pardon; for you are beautiful as Heav'n it self can render you, a shape exactly form'd, not too low nor too tall, but made to beget soft desire and everlasting wishes in all that look on you; but your face! your lovely face! inclining to round, large piercing languishing black eyes, delicate proportion'd Nose, charming dimpl'd Mouth, plump red Lips, inviting and swelling white Teeth, small and even, fine complexion, and a beautiful turn! all which you had an Art to order in so ingaging a manner that it charm'd all the beholders, both Sexes were undone with looking on you; and I have heard a witty man of your Party swear your face gain'd more to the League and Association than the Cause, and has curst a Thousand times the false *Mertilla* for preferring *Cæsario* (less beautiful) to the adorable

^a In the Greek myth of the Judgment of Paris, Aphrodite offered Helen to Paris as his wife, Athena offered him wisdom and glory, and Hera promised him riches and power. He chose Helen who was already married to Menelaus of Sparta, and by bringing her to Troy he sparked off the Trojan War.

Philander; to add to this, Heav'n! how you spoke, when e're you spoke of Love! in that you far surpass the young *Cæsario*! as young as he, almost as great and Glorious; Oh perfidious *Mertilla*. Oh false, oh foolish and ingrate!—that you abandon'd her was just, she was not worth retaining in your heart, nor cou'd be worth defending with your Sword;—But grant her false; Oh *Philander*! how does her perfidy intitle you to me? false as she is, you still are Married to her; inconstant as she is, she's still your Wife; and no breach of the Nuptial Vow can untie the fatal knot; and that's a Mystery to common sense; sure she was Born for mischief, and Fortune when she gave her you, design'd the ruine of us all, but most particularly

The Unfortunate

SILVIA.

To *Silvia*.

My Souls eternal joy, my *Silvia*! what have you done, and oh how durst you knowing my fond Heart try it with so fatal a stroke; what means this severe Letter? and why so eagerly at this time o'th' day, is *Mertilla*'s Vertue so defended; is it a question now whether she is false or not? oh poor, oh frivolous excuse! you love me not, by all that's good you love me not! to try your power you have flatter'd and feign'd, oh Woman! false Charming Woman! you have undone me! I rave, and shall commit such extravagance that will ruine both: I must upbraid you, fickle and inconstant, I must, and this distance will not serve, 'tis too great, my reproaches lose their force, I burst with resentment with injur'd Love, and you are either the most faithless of your Sex, or the most malicious and tormenting: Oh I am past tricks my *Silvia*, your little arts might do well in a beginning flame; but to a settled Fire that is arriv'd to the highest degree, it does but damp its fierceness, and instead of drawing me on, wou'd lessen my esteem, if any such deceit were capable to harbour in the Heart of *Silvia*, but she is all Divine, and I am mistaken in the meaning of what she says: Oh my adorable think no more on that dull false thing a Wife, let

her be banisht thy thoughts, as she is my Soul; let her never appear though but in a Dream to fright our solid joys, our true happiness; no, let us look forward to Pleasures vast and unconfin'd, to coming transports: and leave all behind us that contributes not to that Heav'n of Bliss: Remember, oh *Silvia*, that five tedious days are past since I sigh't at your dear feet; and five days to a Man so madly in Love as your *Philander*, is a tedious Age; 'tis now six a Clock in the Morning, *Brilljard* will be with you by Eight, and by Ten I may have your permission to see you, and then I need not say how soon I will present my self before you, at *Bellfont*; for Heaven's sake my eternal Blessing, if you design me this happiness, contrive it so, that I may see no body that belongs to *Bellfont*, but the fair, the lovely *Silvia*; for I must be more moments with you, than will convenient to be taken notice of, lest they suspect our business to be Love, and that discovery, yet, may ruine us. Oh I will delay no longer, my Soul's impatient to see you, I cannot live another Night without it, I dy, by Heav'n! I languish for the appointed hour; you will believe when you see my languid Face and dying Eyes, how much and great a sufferer in Love I am.

My Soul's Delight, You may perhaps deny me from your fear, but oh! do not, though I ask a mighty blessing; *Silvia's* Company, alone, silent, and perhaps by Dark,—Oh though I faint with the thought only of so blest an opportunity, yet you shall secure me, by what Vows, what imprecations or ty's you please; bind my busie hands; blind my ravish't eyes; command my Tongue, do what you will; but let me hear your Angels Voice, and have the transported joy of throwing my self at your feet; and if you please give me leave (a man condemn'd eternally to Love) to plead a little for my Life and passion; let me remove your fears, and though that mighty Task never make me intirely happy, at least 'twill be a great satisfaction to me to know, that 'tis not through my own fault that I am the

Most Wretched

PHILANDER.

I have order'd Brilljard to wait your Commands at Dorillos his Cottage, that he may not be seen at Bellfont: resolve to see me to Night, or I shall come without order and injure both: My dear Damn'd

Wife is dispos'd of at a Ball Cæsario makes to Night; the opportunity will be lucky, not that I fear her jealousy, but the effects of it.

To Philander.

I tremble with the apprehension of what you ask, how shall I comply with your fond desires? My Soul bodes some dire effect of this bold enterprise, for I must own (and blush while I do own it) that my Soul yields obedience to your soft request, and even whilst I read your Letter, was diverted with the contrivance of seeing you: For though as my Brother you have all the freedoms imaginable at *Bellfont* to entertain and walk with me, yet 'twould be difficult and prejudicial to my Honour, to receive you alone any where without my Sister: and cause a suspicion, which all about me now are very far from conceiving, except *Melinda* my faithful confident, and too fatal Councillor: and but for this fear, I know my charming Brother, three little Leagues shou'd not five long days separate *Philander* from his *Silvia*. But my lovely Brother, since you beg it so earnestly, and my heart consents so easily, I must pronounce my own Doom and say, Come my *Philander*, whither Love and soft desire invites you, and take this direction in the management of this mighty affair; I wou'd have you as soon as this comes to your hands, to hast to *Dorillus's* Cottage, without your Equipage, only *Brilljard*, whom I believe you may trust both from his own discretion and your vast bounty's to him; wait there till you receive my commands: and I will retire betimes to my Apartment pretending not to be well, and as soon as the Evenings obscurity will permit, *Melinda* shall let you in at the Garden Gate that is next the Grove, unseen and unsuspected, but oh thou powerful Charmer have a care, I trust you with my all: my dear, dear, my precious Honour, guard it well, for oh I fear my forces are too weak to stand your shock of Beauties; you have Charms enough to justify my yielding, but yet by Heav'n I wou'd not for an Empire: but what's dull Empire to Almighty Love! the God subdues the Monarch! 'tis to your strength I trust, for I am a feeble Woman, a Virgin quite disarm'd by two fair eyes, an Angels Voice and form, but yet I'll dy before I'll yield my Honour; no though our unhappy Family have met reproach

from the imagin'd levity of my Sister; 'tis I'll redeem the bleeding Honour of our Family, and my great Parents Vertues shall shine in me; I know it, for if it passes this Test, if I can stand this Temptation, I'm proof against all the World; but I conjure you aid me if I need it: If I incline but in a Languishing look, if but a wish appear in my eyes, or I betray consent but in a Sigh; take not, oh take not the opportunity, lest when you've done I grow raging mad, and discover all in the wild fit; oh who wou'd venture on an enemy with such unequal force; what hardy fool wou'd hazard all at Sea that sees the rising Storm come rousing on; who but fond Woman, giddy heedless Woman! wou'd thus expose her Vertue to Temptation, I see, I know my danger, yet I must permit it; Love soft bewitching Love will have it so, that cannot deny what my feeble Honour forbids; and though I tremble with fear, yet Love suggests, 'twill be an Age to Night; I long for my undoing; for oh I cannot stand the batteries of your eyes and tongue, these fears, these conflicts I have a Thousand times a day, 'tis pitiful sometimes to see me, on one hand a Thousand *Cupids* all gay and smiling present *Philander* with all the Beauties of his sex, with all the softness in his looks and Language those Gods of Love can inspire, with all the Charms of youth adorn'd, bewitching all, and all transporting; on the other hand, a poor lost Virgin languishing and undone; sighing her willing rape to the deaf shades and fountains; filling the Woods with cry's, swelling the Murmuring Rivolets with tears, her noble Parents with a generous Rage reviling her, and her betray'd Sister loading her bow'd head with curses and reproaches; and all about her looking forlorn and sad: Judg, oh Judg my adorable Brother, of the vastness of my courage and passion, when even this deplorable prospect cannot defend me from the resolution of giving you admittance into my Apartment this Night, nor shall ever drive you from the Soul of your

SILVIA.

To *Silvia*.

I have obey'd my *Silvia's* dear commands, and the dictates of my own impatient Soul, as soon as I receiv'd 'em, I immediately took Horse for *Bellfont*, though I knew I shou'd not see my

Adorable *Silvia* till Eight or Nine at Night; but oh 'tis wondrous pleasure to be so much more near my eternal joy; I wait at *Dorillus* his Cottage the tedious approaching Night that must shelter me in its kind shades, and conduct me to a pleasure I faint but with imagining; 'tis now my Lovely Charmer Three a Clock, and oh how many tedious hours I am to languish here before the blessed one arrive; I know you Love, my *Silvia*, and therefore must guess at some part of my torment, which yet is mixt with a certain trembling joy not to be imagin'd by any but *Silvia*, who surely loves *Philander*, if there be truth in Beauty, Faith in Youth, she surely loves him much, and much more above her Sex she's capable of Love; by how much more her Soul's form'd of a softer and more delicate composition, by how much more her Wits refin'd and elevated above her duller Sex; and by how much more she is oblig'd if Passion can claim Passion in return, sure no Beauty was ever so much indebted to a slave, as *Silvia* to *Philander*, none ever Lov'd like me! Judg then my pains of Love, my Joys, my fears, my impatience, and desires, and call me to your sacred presence with all the speed of Love; and as soon as 'tis duskish, imagine me in the Meadow behind the Grove, 'till when think me imploy'd in eternal thoughts of *Silvia*; restless, and talking to the Trees of *Silvia*, sighing her charming Name, circling with folded Arms my panting heart, (that beats and trembles the more, the nearer it approaches the happy *Bellfont*) and fortifying the feeble trembler against a sight too Ravishing and surprising. I fear to be sustain'd with Life; but if I faint in *Silvia's* Arms, it will be happier far than all the Glories of Life without her.

Send my Angel something from you to make the Hours less tedious, consider me, Love me, and be as impatient as I; that you may the sooner find at your feet your everlasting Lover

PHILANDER.

From *Dorillus's* Cottage.

To *Philander*.

I have at last recover'd sense enough to tell you, I have receiv'd your Letter by *Dorillus*, and which had like to have been discover'd, for he prudently enough put it under the Strawberys

he brought me in a Basket, fearing he shou'd get no other opportunity to have given it me; and my Mother seeing 'em look so fair and fresh, snatcht the Basket with a greediness I have not seen in her before; while she was calling to her Page for a Porcellane Dish to put 'em out, *Dorillus* had opportunity to hint to me what lay at the bottom; Heaven's had you seen my disorder and confusion! what shou'd I do; Love had not one invention in store, and there it was that all the subtilty of Women abandon'd me. Oh Heaven's how cold and pale I grew lest the most important business of my Life shou'd be betray'd and ruin'd, but not to terrify you longer with fears of my danger, the Dish came, and out the Strawberries were powr'd, and the Basket thrown, aside on the Bank where my Mother sat, (for we were in the Garden when we met accidentally *Dorillus* first with the Basket), there were some Leaves of Fern put at the bottom between the Basket and Letter, which by good fortune came not out with the Strawberries, and after a Minute or two I took up the Basket and walking carelessly up and down the Garden, Gather'd her and there a flower, Pinks and Jessamine, and filling my Basket sat down again till my Mother had eat her fill of the Fruit, and gave me an opportunity to retire to my apartment, where opening the Letter, and finding you so near and waiting to see me. I had certainly sunk down on the floor had not *Melinda* supported me, who was only by, something so new, and till now so strange, seiz'd me at the thought of so secret an interview, that I lost all my senses, and Life wholly departing, I rested on *Melinda* without breath or motion, the violent effects of Love and Honour, the impetuous meeting tides of the extreame of joy and fear, rushing on too suddainly, over-whelm'd my senses; and 'twas a pretty while before I recover'd strength to get to my Cabinet, where a second time I open'd your Letter, and read it again with a Thousand changes of Countenance, my whole mass of Blood was in that moment so discompos'd, that I chang'd from Ague to Feaver, several times in a Minute; oh what will all this bring me to? and where will the raging fit end? I dy with that thought, my guilty pen slackens in my trembling hand, and I Languish and fall over the unemploy'd Paper;—Oh help me some Divinity—Or if you did,—I fear I shou'd be angry! Oh *Philander*! a Thousand Passions and distracted thoughts crowd to get out, and make their soft complaints to thee, but oh they lose themselves with Mixing; they are blended in a confusion together,

and Love nor Art can divide 'em, to deal 'em out in order; sometimes I wou'd tell you of my Joy at your Arrival, and my unspeakable transports at the thought of seeing you so soon, that I shall hear your charming Voice, and find you at my feet making soft Vows a new, with all the Passion of an impatient Lover, with all the eloquence that sighs and Cryes and tears from those lovely eyes can express; and sure that's enough to conquer any where; and to which, course vulgar words are dull: The Rhetorick of Love is half-breath'd, interrupted words, languishing Eyes, flattering Speeches, broken Sighs, pressing the hand, and falling Tears: Ah how do they not perswade; how do they not charm and conquer; 'twas thus with these soft easie Arts, that *Silvia* first was won! for sure no Arts of speaking cou'd have talk'd my heart away, though you can speak like any God! oh whether am I driven, what do I say 'twas not my purpose nor my business here, to give a character of *Philander* no not to speak of Love! but oh like *Cowley's* Lute,^a my Soul will sound to nothing but to Love! talk what you will, begin what discourse you please, I end it all in Love! because my Soul is ever fixt on *Philander*; and insensibly its byas leads to that Subject; no, I did not when I began to Write, think of speaking one word of my own weakness; but to have told you with what resolv'd Courage, Honour, and Vertue, I expect your coming; and sure so sacred a thing as Love was not made to ruine these, and therefore in vain my lovely Brother you will attempt it; and yet (oh Heaven's! I give a private Assignment, in my Apartment, alone and at Night; where silence, Love, and shades are all your friends, where opportunity obliges your Passion, while Heav'n knows, not one of all these, nor any kind power is friend to me, I shall be left to you, and all these Tyrants, expos'd without other Guards than this boasted Vertue, which had need be wonderous to resist all these powerful enemies of its purity and repose: Alas I know not its strength, I never try'd it yet; and this will be the first time it has ever been expos'd to your Power; the first time I ever had courage to meet you as a Lover, and let you in by stealth, and put my self unguarded into

^a An allusion to lines from Abraham Cowley's 'Anacreontiques: Or Some Copies of Verses Translated Paraphrastically out of *Anacreon*': 'I'll sing of *Heroes*, and of *Kings*; / In mighty Numbers, mighty things, / Begin, my *Muse*; but lo, the strings / To my great *Song* rebellious prove; / The strings will sound of nought but *Love*... / Farewel then *Heroes*, farewell *Kings*, / And mighty *Numbers*, mighty *Things*; / Love tunes my *Heart* just to my *strings*.' [*Love*, ll.1–17].