

THE  
VICTIM OF FANCY,

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY A LADY,

Author of the CONQUESTS of the HEART.

VOL. I.

With frames and constitutions weaker than Men have, the passions of Women are warmer; and the rays of their genius concentrate to the object on which they engage themselves more strongly – it absorbs all other considerations.

PROGRESS OF FASHION.<sup>2</sup>

---

LONDON:

Sold by R. BALDWIN, Pater-noster row; and  
G. and T. WILKIE, St. Paul's Church-yard.  
MDCCLXXXVII.

Copyright

## DEDICATION.

*To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.*<sup>3</sup>

HARMONIOUS bard of "Britain's living choir,"<sup>4</sup>  
Whose skilful fingers touch the potent lyre;  
Whose precepts, whilst they charm the soul, improve,  
And point each footstep to the goal you love;  
Say, shall the candour of thy noble line,  
Which says to Woman, "Poesy is thine,"  
And bids, with dauntless aim, the female band<sup>5</sup>  
Pluck the green laurel from the Muses hand –  
Rest all unnotic'd by one grateful lay,  
Unsung by those to whom you point the way?  
And shalt thou, Hayley, whose melodious strain  
Darts emulation thro' each glowing vein,  
And fondly pays to fame and genius true,  
The fair Commena's shade<sup>6</sup>, the tribute due,  
Whilst thy fair pages female worth retrieve,  
Shalt thou no tribute from the sex receive?  
Yes – whilst with homage throb a thousand hearts,  
Lo! from the throng the bold adventurer starts;  
Her cheek yet wet with admiration's tears,  
And awed by genius which her soul reveres,  
From motives, sacred as thy breast might own,  
Her flowers she brings to thy poetic throne:  
Simple and few, whilst at thy feet she strews  
The warm effusions of a female muse,  
She from the raptures of a youthful heart,  
Tho' "not an artist, yet a friend to art,"<sup>7</sup>  
Would mark how woman venerates thy lays,  
And trembling add, ennobled by thy praise,  
A leaf of myrtle to thy wreath of bays!

## ADVERTISEMENT.

*AS those striking traits of originality and spirit, which mark the work called THE SORROWS OF WERTER, have excited attention and admiration almost universal, whilst the dubiousness of its moral has given rise to the severest censure<sup>8</sup>; the writer of the following letters hopes to be excused for endeavouring to bring forward that moral in a more favourable, and, she trusts, a more just light, than it has hitherto appeared. She should esteem herself amply rewarded, might she hope to succeed in her attempt to wipe off the blot which tinges those beautiful pages; and she has only to wish, that, whilst endeavouring to render justice to acknowledged genius, and to regulate the principles of the heart, she may have been able to engage its affections, and to point out to it, as the most desirable of all blessings, Religion and Virtue.*

*She is not without some fears that the dedicating this trifle to such a name may be considered as a presumption; but she begs leave to remark, that the ancients, when they brought their offerings to the altar of Apollo, did not believe their presents in themselves worthy the acceptance of the "master of the lyre," but each, according to his capacity, laid them at his feet as a token of homage due to their inspirer, and of the consciousness they felt of his superiority.*

THE  
VICTIM OF FANCY.

---

LETTER I.

FREDERICK BURELL, *Esq. to Major MORVEN, at Gibraltar.*<sup>10</sup>

My dear Friend,

WHEN I quitted you and embarked for France, you may remember I had no intention of making any stay in that kingdom; but my unexpected meeting with my brother, who was lately arrived there in his return from Italy, detained me longer than I had intended: you cannot, I imagine, have forgotten Vincent<sup>11</sup>; and he bade me assure you that he remembers and respects you as a friend; and congratulates you on the particular, as well as general glory which you have acquired in the service you so gallantly engaged in. It was in tenderness to his mother only, that he relinquished his own predominant desire of being a soldier; and since her decease, warm as I know him to be with loyalty and valour, the peace which prevails in Europe has happily taken from him the possibility of indulging or signalizing the noble fire of his disposition; for the meanest soldier you have commanded there is to him an object of envy. He now intends passing some time at the French Court, where he is respected in a manner peculiarly flattering; but as many affairs called me to England, I quitted him after passing three weeks at Paris, leaving behind me a few grave cautions befitting an elder brother. My first care on my arrival in London was to fulfil the commission with which you had entrusted me; my credentials soon introduced me to your sister, and I have the satisfaction to find from her conversation, that what you so much wish to keep secret, has not yet transpired. You desired, at parting, my opinion of her, supposing she must be much altered in your three years absence, which have been almost wholly devoted by her to improvement. What she was when you left her, just released from a nunnery, where an interested step-mother would have

buried her, it is impossible for me to tell – beautiful she must ever have been, and as soon as I saw her my heart pronounced her the most charming woman I had ever beheld. Can I say more, than, that joined to the most captivating figure, she possesses all the elegant accomplishments in a superior degree, in an age and country where they are almost universal? I shall ever think myself indebted to you for having announced me to her in the favourable light of your friend, since in ten minutes conversation, I found there could be no other half so pleasing to her. To that favour also I owe your aunt's admitting my visits with peculiar complacency, which, since the first, have been pretty frequent. When I told your sister the dangers with which you have been surrounded, the tears which stole through her long and dark eye-lashes, shewed the tender interest which she takes in her brother; and she thanked Heaven for your escape, with an earnestness which moved me so much, that I was scarce able to proceed. I soon found that she acknowledges her obligations to you, with the same nobleness of generosity with which you attempt to conceal them. Tremble for me, Morven, since to the softest appearance of feminine delicacy, she joins an animation and energy, believe me, superior to every thing I have before seen, and I caught myself at first sitting in silent surprise, contemplating the unusual and enchanting combination.

Your aunt doats on her; I find I have recommended myself to the good lady, by the sentiments which have sometimes escaped me in your sister's absence. She has rendered herself mistress of the Italian, and in the learned languages has made a considerable progress, by an assiduity which has distinguished her in all her pursuits. The desire of knowledge in her, your aunt remarks, almost becomes a passion; but a man who loved her, would know there is another much stronger than that in the world, and would hope too, that such a mind as hers was destined some day or other to experience it. Perhaps this letter may make you suspect that there is at least one such man, and that there should be thousands would be no more than justice. I have the happiness of seeing her very often; but, alas! if she should hereafter be as deaf, as she is at present blind to my affection, I shall find no security but in flight. I think you will at least not be my enemy in this affair, and I don't desire any thing further: I know what she thinks of her obligations to her brother, and with all my friendship I would not be indebted even to you, for her acceptance of me as a lover. At present I am received both by her and your aunt with friendship, and admitted into their parties without reserve. I so much dread to forfeit these privileges, that, however painful the effort, I shall impose a long silence on myself, at least to your lovely sister. – I see too plainly an application to study in her which your aunt complains of, and shall make it my endeavour to dissipate her attention a little, if possible. Would to heaven I dare flatter myself, that, in endeavouring to be of service to her, I might advance by imperceptible steps toward my own happiness! – As you desired me

to express freely my sentiments of your sister, and her situation, I will mention to you what strikes me as an error in your aunt's kindness, and which has given me some uneasiness. Your aunt reads but little herself – but she leaves the world of books open to your sister. Her taste and native delicacy, it is true, will prevent her from perusing any work which strikes her as inconsistent with pure morality and virtue; yet I cannot but fear lest her lively imagination should mislead her; since whatever she peruses, she enters into with a warmth of disposition, which from the first I have observed in her. I am strengthened in this opinion by her being charmed with a production which has lately fallen into her hands, concerning the author of which there has been some uncertainty. He has been censured with severity by some, and your sister, who thinks this censure unjust, stands forth as a champion in his cause<sup>12</sup>; entering with such earnestness into the idea of his being injured, that, within these few days, she has expressed a desire of discovering and conversing with him, so earnestly indeed, that I feared lest it should amount to a resolution, and almost offended her by treating the execution of it as a jest. If she should persist, permit me, dear Morven, to supply your presence to her; suffer me to attend and protect this intelligent pupil of fancy, in whose conduct I find myself interested more than equally with yourself. I know your friendship for me will make you excuse the freedom of this confession, and I only offer mine for you, as an apology for it. I intreat you to believe that I remain, more firmly than ever,

Yours sincerely,  
FREDERICK BURELL.

---

LETTER II.

*Miss MORVEN to Colonel MORVEN.*

YOU accuse me of enthusiasm! – you my brother who yet wander with the ardor of a soldier on the rock of Gibraltar, and have dedicated your life to the hero who defended it – you, in short, who have delivered from the devouring gulph of superstition a sister, whom the voice of interest would have sacrificed! – Be the period of that enthusiasm and of my existence but one, and I will never complain. – For twenty years immured from all that the heart pants after, from knowledge and even from nature; like a bird from its prison my soul bursts from confinement: awakened from the darkness of ignorance, I behold the face of creation: I hear the voice of genius, my heart vibrates to its sound: I now first feel that I exist; in the rapture, yet new to my heart, I spring forward; I rejoice in this my happier birth-day, I look on the first moment of being as infinitely less dear:

my mind is no longer benighted; all the rays of intelligence pour in at once upon my soul, and I am happy.

My dear brother, independent of the world as you have made me, why should I blush to avow to that world my passionate admiration of the sublime effusions of science or sensibility? – From that admiration it arises that I have formed a wish which my aunt and your friend Burrell combat in vain – I have read and admired Werter, and I would be ascertained of its author and his principles. I don't know how it is, but my heart answers not to the name of this Dr. Goethé; no, it eagerly looks to some child of liberty, to some son of Britain, for the author of that animated expression, that overwhelming tenderness, that frenzy of sensibility which those interesting pages display: and whoever this author is, he has been misunderstood and abused<sup>13</sup>; he has held out a moral to mankind, and they turn their eyes away, and behold it not. – What would I give to remove the veil that obscures it, to stop the malignancy of that blast which may tarnish even the laurels of the writer of Werter! – The fire of genius, the charms of nature, painted as they are by his hand, even they, had he forgotten the ties of religion and the duties of society, would merit nothing but oblivion. My aunt blames this work which has enchanted me, she blames me also for defending it, and I have, for once, the happiness of being named with its author. Burrell has just now left me; we talked of Werter; unfortunately he has strengthened my aunt's unfavourable opinion of it. Should the day ever come when I can confute them from the mouth of its author, I will not promise to use my triumph with moderation.

---

LETTER III.

FOR fifteen days have I watched incessantly over my dear aunt, she was suddenly seized with a fever, and her recovery was doubted. In the moments when reason ceased to enlighten her mind, in the wildness of that affection, which still throbb'd at her heart, the name of your sister hung on her lips: what did I not before owe to her tenderness? Through her means was it known that I was not the idiot I had been represented. Through her was I brought to the arms of that brother to whom I owe more than existence. Our hearts warm'd with similar affections, our minds glowing with all the ardor of youth, to know and to love each other was the same. Perhaps I ought not to say there is no love which can equal, but can I allow that any can surpass that of a sister? – I knelt by her on the couch of sickness, I poured forth my soul to the Author of Mercies; in him have I trusted, and she is restored to me.

Her fever was contagious; but be not alarmed; I am recovered. The bloom which you flattered is faded, but my heart is unalterable; it still beats for you; it is still open to the impressions of genius and sensibility.

---

LETTER IV.

MY aunt's recovery, thank heaven, is almost perfected: my own is less rapid in its progress, and I am yet debarred that application which has enabled me, in a time comparatively short to the period of education, to store my mind with the seeds of science, and ennoble my heart by the study of virtue. I feel myself much obliged by the interest which Burell has taken in my aunt's indisposition, and my own. His solicitude for those allied to you, has convinced me of that friendship which he has ever professed to bear you, and which he undoubtedly merits should be returned, in the manner of which you are so capable. He has been here, or rather he is never away. I repeated to him the wish that, before this illness attacked me, had arisen in my mind, and which has not yet subsided there; he again rallied me on it. I believe he pities, he talks of admiring me, but there is something about this fantastical brain of mine, which was never dreamt of in his philosophy. He found me alone, and I could not conceal from him the cause of those tears which then wetted my cheek. You will forgive me when I own they fell with impatience. Alas! it will yet be long, my dear brother, before I can read Homer in the original.<sup>14</sup> 'And is the warmth of that heart,' said Burell, 'to be wholly expended on works, though noble, inanimate? And those eyes, expressive of tenderness, shall their rays be directed in search of a being veiled in doubt and obscurity – a being who is perhaps at this minute insensible, while I' – he looked in my face.

I knew that he alluded to my wish of discovering the author of a work which has enchanted me, and I interrupted him with that warmth of disposition which I have not yet learnt to subdue. 'I understand you,' said I, 'whilst you can see the passion which hurries me away, and see it in that ridiculous light, which so many will be happy to place it in.' 'It is possible then,' exclaimed he, with a surprise which I can only account for from the difference of our sensations – 'it is then possible that this one idea so wholly possesses that intelligent mind, that no other can find entrance in it.' I again broke in upon him. 'You mistake me, Burell,' said I; 'one idea does not yet possess me wholly, to the exclusion of all others. You mistake me, I am not yet absolutely mad.' He would have denied the inference, and seemed at a loss for words; but some of those visitors coming in whom nature seems to have thrown into the world just to fill up its vacuum, the conversation ended. I fell in, however, with them upon the reigning fashions – I

admired their crapes and their blonds<sup>15</sup>, and before they quitted us, they were all of opinion my judgment in those important affairs, might in time be expected to equal their own.

My aunt, who has just left me, came in while I was writing, and glancing her eye over this letter, 'Alas! my dear child,' said she, 'keep secret this ardent desire of knowledge which possesses you so much, or perhaps even this brother will not love you the more for it.' 'And would you infer, Madam,' said I with emotion, 'that he could love me the less?'

With what a sentence did she interrupt me! Were I capable of believing it, I would not transmit it to you: but the heart formed by nature not ungenerous, remains long shut to those severe dictates which age so often dignifies with the name of prudence.

'Theresa,' says my aunt, 'when women talk of their love of learning, half of the men charge it to affectation only; and, what is worse, when they believe it real, by a paradox I cannot solve, they at once envy and despise us for it. To own the truth, learning is a qualification seldom necessary in our sex; and, without extraordinary humility in its possessor, only disgusting – besides that there are a thousand others more conducive to happiness.' – This turn of reasoning is not very consonant with my ideas; but it hurts me the less, as my aunt's frequent complaints of the diligence I am as incapable of abating as she perhaps of approving, points out to me a motive to which to attribute the severity of her reflections.

---

LETTER V.

I HAVE mentioned to you how much we were indebted to the attention of Burell. Mad as he thinks me, he seems desirous of obliging me, and has shewn it in an instance of which a common mind had been incapable – he has led me to the small grey stone which really covers the ashes of the divine *Milton*<sup>16</sup>, and I have wept over it.

How many are there, my brother, who complain that they are confined to one spot of this earth, and that to few it is given to wander over the surface even of this atom, and to pay their devotions at the tombs of those whose names at the distance of ages are repeated with ardor, and whose works are preserved as immortal! yet how many are there who sigh to visit the grottos of Tivoli<sup>17</sup>, who have yet forgotten to pay that tribute to the more noble manes of our sublime bard! I have kissed the neglected receptacle of the bones of Milton; I have wetted his grave with the enthusiastic tears of admiration. I have before beheld his bust with pleasure, even where so many imaginary heroes and poets have found place; but the spot which really conceals his last venerable remains, seemed for

a moment to infuse his spirit into my breast: I felt superior to the beings which surrounded me, and could almost have fancied that I heard those harps for ever strung, with which he has represented the angels of heaven. I looked on the stone, and my heart felt emotions which I am not able to describe. How often have I lamented, how often hereafter shall I lament, the impossibility of adequately explaining the sensations which arise in my soul! I take the pen in hand; I put my thoughts on paper, and they are nothing. That one idea in Werter, has won me over to admire him, and never may I be an apostate! – So much fire and ease as there is in every line of that work! – Surely we peruse it in its original language, or, like the songs of Ossian<sup>18</sup>, the genius of its first author has inspired the nameless translator.<sup>19</sup> How is it that real merit thus shuns the praise which it excites, and, sublimely conscious of its own superiority, hides from the world those brows for which fame prepares a wreath equally honourable and unfading? I yet flatter myself I shall persuade my aunt to suffer me to seek out this doubtful author. If ever, like the generous painter, I shall be so happy as to exclaim, ‘I have found him!’ how dear will be the spot to my eyes – how sacred the remembrance to my heart!

---

LETTER VI.

BURELL knows my admiration of painting, that more than speaking sister of poetry<sup>20</sup>; and has promised to introduce me to the galleries of those masters whose names are the glory of our kingdom, of Europe, of the world I will say. – Burell, who I believe loves the arts, knows many of the professors; I shall therefore see their private collections. I have said that I think he pities me – it is a pity, believe me, without contempt – a pity worthy of a good heart, which is only mistaken in its object. I told my aunt so this morning; she answered me only by asking why then I had no pity for him? – ‘I!’ said I; ‘I pity no one for a difference of sentiments; for I am well convinced, that the disposer of hearts has so ordered it, that each rests satisfied with his own, and beholds those of another as a delusion: but it is a pleasing one; and the man who plods over his grounds without one idea but of their fertility, is as jealous of his opinions, and perhaps better contented with them, than the first genius of the universe.’ ‘Why, my dear girl,’ said my aunt, ‘you would not have it supposed you neither understand me nor Burell. I am not so easily deceived; I know how penetrating are the eyes of a young woman in such cases.’ I did not understand her meaning; but she only laughed at my saying so. We were interrupted, and what she then said, remains as much a riddle to me as ever.

I have been with her to see some of those relations who so obligingly wished to immure me for life.<sup>21</sup> As I quitted them, I pointed them out to my aunt, as a testimony of what I had before advanced. I regard them as objects of pity, while they look on me as no less so. Whispered sentences, tokens of wonder, the epithet fantastical, and others as harsh, frequently escaped them. My aunt would not allow the cases to be similar, and I gained no argument from her but a smile of good-humour, and a half-pronounced something of blindness.

---

LETTER VII.

WHEN I take up my pen to pour out to you the effusions of my heart, I am most happy; for you, my dear brother, can answer my feelings with that warmth which first enchanted me, and allow for the raptures of a mind new to the pleasures it was formed to taste. The tears, which in these moments wet my paper, will not render me less dear to you: our errors, if they are such, are similar; and those virtues, for which I love you, are reflected, if it be but faintly, in the bosom of your sister.

I have been with Burell, and seen that noble freedom of pencil which marks the works of the British Raphael<sup>22</sup> – the robe flowing to the wind, the animated countenance, the ease, the elegance, the fire, which from the master's hand pervade the warrior panting for battle, or the soft charms of feminine beauty. You, who have delighted to contemplate those enchanting works, and have studied them with an enthusiasm perhaps almost equal to that with which they were at first conceived, will know how to apply my descriptions.

I have seen also, from another pencil – a pencil which speaks to every feeling of the heart – the pale face of the warrior who dies in the arms of his brother heroes. It is imprinted on my memory with a force which no years can efface, and I yet seem to behold the faithful attendant who revenged him. An hour did I contemplate that interesting picture. A lady, who stood near me, kindly directed my attention to the frame, which she assured me cost 150 guineas – the frame, my dear brother, of a picture, and such a picture! – For my part, I had not even seen that it had one.

Do you remember, but I am convinced you do, the works of another son of science sacred to religion and truth. Those faces which ought to be, which, from the hands of the master who undertakes them, are represented as divine. The heart which conceived them, surely, must be filled with ideas of benevolence, of piety, of dignity, and, may I say, of divinity? With what pleasure did my eyes dwell on them! But there is one picture I found in my way which moved and transported me: as I beheld it, my heart melted within me; it addressed itself,

it fell prostrate before the Eternal; and my spirit, like that of the smiling infant represented there, seemed transporting to the kingdom of God.

Within a few days I have wept on the tomb of Milton; I have since pressed his faithful resemblance to my heart – What would I give, might I but wear it there for ever! “Severe in youthful beauty,”<sup>23</sup> I have seen him, and a century has rolled in vain to prevent me from contemplating his countenance. How frequently do I bow down in thankfulness for my destiny! Had I been used from my infancy to all the treasures of knowledge and all the charms of poetry, I had not known the satisfaction which I now feel. The man who uninterruptedly enjoys the blessings of liberty and peace, feels not that conscious satisfaction which inspires the breast of him who escapes from a dungeon after years of confinement and despair; and what dungeon is there so dark as that of ignorance? – what confinement so drear as that of the mind!

---

LETTER VIII.

AFTER much entreaty, I have at length prevailed with my aunt, and to-morrow we have resolved to begin a journey which may never have a period; to-morrow I may, perhaps, be some steps nearer to the author of *Werter*. At length this research, which I have so earnestly desired to make, will begin. My aunt will not wholly explain herself, but talks of some hints which she has received, and our first search after him is to be at Bath. With what ardor does my mind spring forward to that invisible goal towards which it so impetuously tends! My heart beats high with a thousand inexplicable expectations, and I vainly endeavour to restrain their impetuosity, by reflecting that they may never be fulfilled.

---

LETTER IX.

WE have set out and performed our first stage. My aunt is not yet able to travel far at a time, and would persuade me that I am not.

Ought I to inform you that your friend Burell is not well? He has an air of dejection, a look of wearing sorrow that affects me. Ah! my brother, he is your correspondent – How my heart beat, how was every nerve agitated, when I first observed this alteration in his countenance! I looked at him, I would have enquired after you, but the sound died on my lips. He at length understood me; you are well, and I am happy.

## ENDNOTES

### Volume I

1. *Author of the CONQUESTS of the HEART*: a reference to Tomlins's first novel *The Conquests of the Heart. A novel. By a young lady. In three volumes* (Dublin: printed for Price, S. Watson, Moncrieffe, Jenkin, Walker, et al., 1785), a highly romanticized biography of a Jamaican friend ('R. N.?), the subject of two of Tomlins's poems, 'To R. N.' and 'To the same Friend!'
2. *With frames and constitutions weaker than Men have ... it absorbs all other considerations*: the epigraph is taken from *The Progress of Fashion: exhibiting a view of its influence in all the departments of life* (London: J. Sewell, 1786), pp. 73–4. Tomlins has altered and condensed the text down. The source-text reads: 'The great end of a human being relatively to his fellow-creatures is social happiness. In the union between man and wife, this is almost the sole object. And how shall we expect to attain this end, with a woman given entirely to any one pursuit of science of pleasure? If of science, there is surely little prospect of finding, combined with it, a steady attention to the duties of a wife, a mother, or a friend. The reason is obvious. With frames and constitutions weaker than we have, their passions are warmer, and the rays of their genius concentrate to the object on which they engage themselves more strongly than ours. It absorbs all other considerations. If of pleasure, the danger is greater, because its influence extends beyond the department of œconomy: it is not the arrangement of furniture, nor the disposition of the table, nor the regulation of the family alone, which suffers, but the fame, the fortune, and the happiness – But mark – this is the pleasure which becomes an occupation. It is that alone, which never fails in the end to degenerate into evil. When quoted more fully various themes emerge from this source-text, to which Tomlins sought to respond: the dynamics between man and wife, domestic life, and the constitutions of women.'
3. *Dedication. To William Hayley, Esq.*: William Hayley (1745–1820), a poet and biographer of note. *Triumphs of Temper* (London: J. Dodsley, 1781) has been widely touted as his most accomplished work. This allegorical poem in rhyming couplets sought to 'delineate the more engaging features of Female Excellence', p. ix. It influenced a number of women, most notably Emma Hamilton. Throughout *The Victim of Fancy* Tomlins makes numerous references to a number of Hayley's works.
4. *of Britain's living choir*: from the first epistle of Hayley's *An Essay on Epic Poetry; in five epistles to the Revd. Mr. Mason* (London: J. Dodsley, 1782): 'Say! MASON, Judge and Master of the Lyre! / Harmonious Chief of Britain's living Choir / Say! wilt Thou listen to his weaker strains, / Who pants to range round Fancy's rich domains', ll. 13–16. Hay-

- ley's poem is addressed to William Mason (1725–97), a leading contemporary poet and garden designer. Although he experimented tirelessly with literary form, many critics have characterised Mason as conventional, overly pious, and a dull imitator of Milton and Thomas Gray. Nonetheless, his *Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers* (London: J. Almon, 1773) was one of the best-selling poems of the eighteenth century.
5. *the female band*: various encomia to Hayley penned by prominent literary women, including Hannah More, Helen Maria Williams and Anna Seward, appeared in the 1780s. See Morchard Bishop, *Blake's Hayley: The Life, Works, and Friendships of William Hayley* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1951).
  6. *fair Commena's shade*: Anna Komnene (latinized as Comnena) (1083–1153), a Byzantine princess often considered to be one of the first female historians in the Western world. Her *Alexiad* (c.1148) is an account of the reign of her father, the emperor Alexios I Komnenos (latinized as Alexius I Comnenus). See *Biographium Femininum. The female worthies: or, memoirs of the most illustrious ladies, of all ages and nations* (London: printed for S. Crowder, J. Payne, et al., 1766), vol. 1, pp. 150–1. Hayley references Comnena in *An Essay on History; in three epistles to Edward Gibbon, Esq.* (London: J. Dodsley, 1780), l. 399.
  7. *'not an artist, yet a friend to art'*: from the fifth epistle of Hayley's *Essay on Epic Poetry*: 'If not an Artist yet a friend to Art', l. 420.
  8. *As those striking traits of originality and spirits ... given rise to the severest censure*: Goethe's *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers* (1774) was translated into English as *The Sorrows of Werter: a German Story* (London: J. Dodsley, 1779) in two volumes, and reached more than half a dozen editions by 1786. See my Introduction for a fuller discussion of 'Werteromania'.
  9. *master of the lyre*: The Greek god Apollo. According to the most prominent version of the myth, the infant Hermes stole a number of Apollo's cows and took them to a cave in the woods near Pylos. Here he found a tortoise and killed it, then removed the insides. Using the shell of the tortoise and the intestines of a cow he fashioned the first lyre. Hermes then began to play music on the lyre. Apollo, a god of music, fell in love with the instrument and allowed Hermes to keep the cattle in exchange for it.
  10. *Gibraltar*: The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht awarded Britain sovereignty over Gibraltar. Various fortifications were soon established and occupied by British troops in the area dubbed *'the British Neutral Ground'*. During the American Revolution, the Spanish, who had sided against the British, imposed a stringent blockade against Gibraltar as part of an unsuccessful siege (the so-called Great Siege of Gibraltar) that lasted for more than three years, from 1779 to 1783. On 14 September 1782 the British destroyed the floating batteries of the French and Spanish besiegers and peace preliminaries were finally signed in February 1783. The final siege was frequently alluded to in eighteenth-century fiction, such as in Henry Fielding's *Amelia* (London: A. Millar, 1752) and the anonymous *Edward, a Novel* (London: T. Davies, 1774). Frederick Pilon also produced *The Siege of Gibraltar: a musical farce, in two acts* (London: G. Kearsly, 1780). The siege is also discussed by James Macpherson, author of the Ossian poems, in *The History of Great Britain, from the Restoration, to the Accession of the House of Hannover* (London: W. Strahan, and T. Cadell, 1775), and by a number of contemporary naval historians and travel writers. Catharine Upton wrote an epistolary account: *The Siege of Gibraltar, from the twelfth of April to the twenty-seventh of May, 1781. To which is prefixed, some account of the blockade* (London: printed for the authoress, and sold by J. Fielding, [1781]).
  11. *Vincent*: the later love-interest of the heroine, Vincent Burell, is introduced in the first letter, and indeed on the first page, of the novel. Here his brother Frederick describes him warmly as loyal, valorous and noble. Frederick refers to his own duties as an elder