

Sunday, 20th. Went to my beloved Herdinghen. Was agreeably surprised to find Mademoiselle Dupont of our party.

Sunday, 27th. When the card table appeared, retired to my chamber.

January, 5th, 1777. Sunday. A deep snow. My health has been so poor for some time past, that I am reduced to a very weak state; but I think, if the happiness of my friends were not as dear to me as my own, I should be far from regretting my present indisposition, as it inclines my mind to a serious consideration of those things that are necessary to salvation; a consideration which I might have neglected, had I been in perfect health.

6th. What they call a jovial day! that is noisy mirth, in which I found neither wit nor amusement, and therefore slipped out of the room. During the month before Lent, they have no meagre days.

Sunday, 12th. Boulogne. Arrived, after a most dismal ride. The whole evening occupied in preparing our finery for making visits to-morrow.

13th. All the morning receiving visits of congratulation on our arrival. I must confess all this parade fills my mind with no very pleasing idea of the way in which we are to spend our time. At four o'clock began our toilet; after which, made no less than fifteen visits in two hours. Was much fatigued.

14th. The Frenchmaster came; he is to attend us daily. Went to the play and was heartily tired.

15th. Began the day, as usual, with our studies. After dinner, spent two hours at our toilet, and four hours in visiting; a pretty account this, to give of the manner of spending our time. I am actually discontented with myself; as so many hours employed to no purpose give me no satisfaction. We paid seven visits, and spent the evening with Madame de la Chorce, where there was a large company. Madame Brunet begs we will observe that all the names, preceded by du or de la, are families of distinction; but I have not patience to write them all down.

16th. I spent the evening, after our usual ramble, with Madame Corancon; there is something very pleasing in this lady; she has the remains of fine features, but grief has preyed upon the lilies and roses of her complexion. I find she has had many domestic misfortunes; losing her husband when very young, and lately her only daughter, in whom all her hopes and joys in this life were centred.

17th. Paid seventeen visits. I was so fatigued, and so dissatisfied, that I did not inquire the name or quality of a single person.

18th. Am really ill; prevailed on Madame Brunet and Bingham to make visits without me; employed my time, in my own room, much more to my satisfaction. My brother Charles arrived from Douay.

22nd. Went to a ball; I danced once, for which I have suffered much pain, and am fearful that I shall be ill, as I fainted on our return.

23rd. Very ill, and very hoarse.

24th. Still speak with difficulty; left alone, Madame and Bingham having gone to a concert.

Sunday, February, 2nd. Went to Vespers for the first time, the Nuns sing delightfully; they are unseen, behind a curtain. I was so much affected that it was with difficulty I restrained my tears; some few perverse drops did fall. I was very near the door, and could not see all the ceremonies, but I saw enough to excite surprise. 'My God,' thought I, 'that such a number of persons, seemingly disposed to serve Thee, should imagine that Thou art pleased with the burning of incense, and the lifting up of hands!' The sacrifice of a humble spirit is far more acceptable to our God, who designs that we should worship Him in spirit. But, in answer to all the objections you make to their numerous forms and ceremonies, they tell you that they were instituted by Moses, and commanded by God.

3rd. Madame Brunet received a letter from my Father, with

an account that her son, who went over with my brother, refused to go into any school, &c. I am really vexed about him, as I am sure it must give my friends much trouble and uneasiness.

4th. Had the happiness of seeing Mademoiselle Carnet, our opposite neighbour, return from Church, after having gone through the ceremony of marriage. The bridegroom looked exceedingly gay. In the evening went to the play; was much disgusted with the piece, and amazed that Madame Brunet, who is a woman of sense and delicacy, should be so amused with the productions of their stage; but I really think the French have not the same idea of delicacy that the English have; for if you complain of their improprieties, they reply, 'O! you should appear not to understand them.' But this way of pleading for what is offensive to female decorum is, I fear, a bad indication; for I do not think it possible to deceive the understanding, though the language employed may be the most elegant; therefore I think all company where this kind of conversation abounds ought to be avoided with the greatest circumspection, by those who wish to be truly pure, in thought as well as in appearance. We sat in a box with Lady Newark; she talked much with me, and an English gentleman, who was with her, was kind enough to explain to me the passages in the play, which were worthy of observation.

7th. Spent the evening at our opposite neighbour's, the Mother of the Bride. Received a very serious letter; I must own, I think rather too serious; that is, there is in it a kind of melancholy that I cannot make agree with my ideas of religion; which, in my opinion, one should be careful to exhibit as both simple and pleasing.

8th. Frost and snow; intolerably cold. Received an invitation from the girls in the Convent, to see two nuns take the veil to-morrow. Called, with Madame Brunet, at the Convent of the Annonciades the Abbess being a near relation of hers.

She took the veil when young and handsome, and forsook friends, fortune, &c. Such a sacrifice must merit a reward; but I think it still more meritorious to support our trials, in the bustle of life, with patience and perseverance.

9th. *Sunday*. Went to the Convent, at the hour fixed; their grand Mass was not over; but in about half an hour, the curtain was taken from the grating, and we saw the nuns arranged on each side of the room; every one had a lighted wax taper in her hand. The intended nuns gave a paper to the Priest, in which I was informed were the four vows of Chastity, Poverty, Obedience and a Cloister. They then received the Sacrament, and went through many mysterious and incomprehensible ceremonies; the concluding one was, that they were extended on the floor as if dead; they were then covered with a black cloth, and two or three pretty little girls, dressed in white, strewed flowers over them. When they rose, they were clothed in the dress of nuns, saluted by the Sisterhood, and received as pure, and unspotted from the world.

10th. Company to dinner! I do detest these dinnerings; one loses more time than it is possible for any reasonable person to imagine. It is really a melancholy consideration that so many beings, with faculties sufficient to render them useful and happy, should content themselves with eating, drinking and playing. I hope these feasting will soon cease, as I should suppose they pass Lent in a more serious and moderate manner. I shall rejoice heartily when we return to the peaceful Herdinghen; for the more I see of the world, the more I am enchanted with solitude, and its lovely train of innocent amusements, that prompt the mind to gratitude and contemplation. Charles received a letter from Jasper containing excellent advice.

Shrove Tuesday. Am very undetermined about attending Madame Brunet and a large party to the play and a masked ball. Had I only my inclination to consult, I should not hesitate a moment in refusing; but my refusal is considered as a stubborn

resolution to be singular; this is a character that I am by no means desirous of, and many ideas rush into my mind, to vindicate a compliance with the wishes of others; but on the other hand, I am, from experience, convinced that these noisy diversions intoxicate the mind, enfeeble it, and render it incapable of performing the duties for which we were born. I presume not to judge for others; but for myself, I find it necessary to guard against the tumultuous joys of the world. Nine o'clock. Not at the ball, which is satisfactory, though the cause gives me pain, as it is the illness of Madame Brunet.

Ash Wednesday. Madame has had a bad night, and is still ill. I think I never heard such a noise as there was in the streets last night; carriages rolling, music and singing, screaming and laughing, &c. I am quite charmed that we have not to accuse ourselves of adding to the number of these thoughtless gangs. My brother Charles, who went for a few hours, assured us that we might think ourselves very happy in being quietly at home; for it was impossible that we could have an idea of the bustle, noise and confusion which he had witnessed, or of the ribaldry and indecorum which were the result of such a mixture of characters, being masked. The Lord and the chimney-sweep were upon equal footing.

We sat all day in Madame Brunet's chamber, and did more work than we have ever done since we came to Boulogne.

13th. Madame is again very ill; poor Monsieur Brunet arrived yesterday and has scarcely left her room. I never saw a man more tender and attentive. She was better in the evening.

14th. Madame Brunet quite free from pain. We have spent some days in peace and tranquillity; no cards, no company.

16th. *Sunday.* Received a pleasing epistle from Mrs. Knowles, containing a few serious directions on the most important object of our lives. My heart melts with the earnestness of my desires to become one of those few that labour after the perfection of holiness.

19th. We began to learn embroidery. Deep snow and very cold.

20th. We are quite pleased with the progress we have made in learning the language, &c. since Madame has kept her room. I am not sorry that Lent has begun, as there are no balls, &c. They are not very strict in this family, as they eat meat once or twice a week; in short, I think it is but a farce their pretending to fast; for though they do not eat flesh, they feast upon delicate fish, swimming in butter, &c. This, in reality, I prefer to their days of Gras; and although they scruple to eat a morsel of meat, they do not scruple to give way to their anger.

26th. Walked round the ramparts; the Castle is an ancient pile of building, now made use of as a prison. Two or three rooms, which look upon the ramparts, are particularly reserved for the confinement of young gentlemen who are extravagant, or any way disobedient to their parents. Every Father or Mother has power to shut up their children for any time they may think proper; for life, if it is thought their crimes deserve it. One of the young officers that we saw on landing, is now in confinement here. His Father is an officer who has lost a considerable fortune by gaming; the son, having a tincture of the same propensity, was informed by his Mother that the first time she heard of his playing in a certain Coffee-house, she would confine him in the Château; notwithstanding this, the young man followed his inclination, and his Mother put her threat in force. I think two months is the time fixed for his punishment.

March 1st. Received an invitation from an English family, named Price, to a ball and concert. Bingham, &c. went, but I was not well enough. Employed the time in reading Thomas à Kempis, and felt more satisfaction than I should have done in their splendid assembly.

Sunday, March 2nd. Went to Vespers; the nuns sang melodiously, and my heart was lifted up in secret to the Lord. Bingham went out in the evening, but as I have told Madame

Brunet that I prefer staying at home on the Sunday, she now seldom proposes any thing else to me.

3rd. A crowd of company. Nicholls and Powell dined with us. The poor girls are much altered. Nicholls has lost her fine colour, and has grown very awkward. I think if I had twenty girls, I would not send them to a Convent for education. I cannot find that they learn anything but to repeat a number of prayers by rote; they speak scarcely a word of French, neither is there much probability of their learning it, as most of the Pensioners are English; and of course, they chatter together in their native language.

5th. At our usual occupations. I worked a rose so prettily that I was quite charmed with it! Spent the evening with Madame la Baronne, whom I admire; she is a woman of learning and of refined wit; and is elegantly polite to every one. Madame Brunet's sister was there, but they did not even look at each other.

6th. At the play; their pieces are by no means to my taste; I think myself fortunate in having health which frequently renders me incapable of complying with the gaieties of this place.

9th. *Sunday*. At Vespers, which I prefer to Mass, as there are fewer ceremonies, and the singing is not so loud. Passed the evening alone.

10th. A great deal of company; among them Madame la Baronne, with her amiable son, a youth about twenty-four, who nets and embroiders as delicately as any lady; visits with Mamma, &c. I cannot help observing how very anxious Madame Brunet is to make us notice that all the grand folks of the town visit her. I must confess it is an ambition that I should not wish to share.

11th. Was exceedingly shocked to hear of the death of Madame Méricœur, the young lady whose wedding we saw, not many weeks since; she was taken ill on Thursday, and died this morning, leaving a distressed husband and mother. Who, that

has any consideration, would be so anxious after the happiness which is so uncertain! These daily instances of the instability of earthly joys should certainly warn us against a reliance upon them. What a melancholy change in this family! the other day, all gay, and flattering themselves with the prospect of many succeeding years! Happy is the mind whose dependence is not upon the fluctuating joys of this world! who can contemplate all with the eye of a passenger that is seeking rest in another!

26th. Called on Monsieur Dupont, who is very ill; my heart bleeds for the distress of his family. Poor Mademoiselle looks terribly; she attends her Father day and night. Went with Madame Brunet to witness a ceremony that takes place during Lent, and that they call Ténèbres. I was quite alarmed at this strange performance. Just before the service finished, the candles which burn before the altar were put out, and the priests, with all the congregation, began to rap with their books and their feet, which made an inconceivable noise. I asked Madame for an explanation of this extraordinary scene, and she informed me that it was to remind them of the darkness and confusion which took place at the death of our Saviour!

27th. Arrived at Herdinghen. All appears so nice, so clean and so quiet, that I am quite delighted.

28th. Retired from table before Monsieur Brunet had finished his dessert; I know this was a breach of good manners; but really I have not patience to sit three or four hours at table, which Monsieur Brunet does.

Easter Sunday. Sincerely wished myself with my friends in England, as I felt a strong desire to be in the assemblies of the faithful.

31st. None of the family do any kind of work but what is absolutely necessary; after dinner, being fatigued with idleness, I went up stairs, and there employed myself as I thought proper.

April 1st. The Brunets are in great affliction, having received

the account of Monsieur Dupont's death. Poor Madame and Mademoiselle Dupont, my heart throbs with pity for their distress; I wish it was in my power to relieve it. Young Brunet arrived from St. Omers, with one of the Directors of L'Ecole Chrétien. Brunet appears good humoured, and a lad of genius.

3rd. The Brother, or Frère, from St. Omers, is a very obliging good kind of a being. Brunet is sensible, and I believe learned; but he talks of nothing but the pleasures of the chase, his dogs, &c.

4th. Read to one of the Frères, with silver locks. They leave us to-morrow; I am really sorry, as they are the only visitors we have had, whose conversation I have found pleasing and instructive.

Sunday, 6th. Went with Madame, in the cabriolet, to Vespers. It was a delightful day, and the road to their church is very pleasant; it was the first time that I had been there.

7th. A great Feast-day. At Vespers, could not be so attentive to myself as I wished, for there were a number of ceremonies which I could not help observing. It is strange to me that so many absurdities should be considered an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. I think the priest does little but change his clothes; but I must say that the whole congregation seem to attend with seriousness; much more so than the protestants; and I doubt not the sincere in heart reap the benefit arising from true devotion. After Vespers, there was a grand ceremony of choosing a Queen, who takes care of the church, and is considered as the head of the village; there was a train of young girls, all dressed in their best, with blue ribands across their shoulders; her Majesty was distinguished by the superiority of her dress. This custom is designed as an encouragement to keep the church clean, &c. It is reckoned an honour to be chosen, as the Queen is always looked upon as the superior of the company. She holds a lighted candle, while the priest preaches a long sermon of advice; telling her that she ought to be the light of her companions, by setting them an example of virtue, prudence, industry, &c.

April 10th. A most delightful day! We walked in the wood, and fixed upon a romantic spot, to build a grotto in. Heard of the death of Mr. Charment, a near neighbour, who dined with us soon after our arrival. I think it is remarkable that, out of the families with whom we have dined since we came to this part, three of the principals are dead.

15th. St. Omers. A fine day and pleasant journey.

16th. St. Omers is delightfully situated, and the streets long and spacious. Went to the college where my brother Charles and Brunet are. Le Frère Auventin, who had spent some time with us at Herdinghen was very polite; he attended us to the noble structure of St. Bertin's Abbey. There are a number of very fine paintings, which I examined while Madame Brunet and the Frère repeated their prayers; this they are obliged to do when they enter the church, as they consider it a spot sacred to the Lord; but in my opinion, all places are alike to our God, who dwells not in temples made with hands, but takes up his abode in the hearts of the meek and humble. Round the chapel are hung the arms of the Monks, as they are all descended from grand and ancient families; they have large fortunes, which they give up, and have all things in common, forsaking the allurements of the world. They at least pretend to lead a life of mortification; fasting and praying continually; but how far they may be inwardly detached from the follies of life is best known to themselves.

Christ and his disciples never excluded themselves from the eye of the world; and I should imagine it is not the design of our Creator that each individual should live to himself. After having expressed our thanks to the polite Monks, we made low curtsies and departed. I felt a little chagrin at quitting the very civil Monks; as they were the only conversable men that I have yet met with, in this part of the world. I think there is a little danger in the ladies having such free access; as numbers of this society are men of wit, learning and politeness, both young and handsome.

18th. Made several visits, and then set out to the play; very reluctantly on my part, for I was quite tired, and should have preferred peace and quietness to all the plays in the world; but this would not be hearkened to, so I was compelled to punish myself.

19th. Reached Herdinghen.

23rd. Bingham received a large piece of beef for roasting. English beef is a dainty here, and Monsieur Brunet intends inviting some of his friends to partake of it.

24th. My friend and I were very busy in making a plum-pudding, but unfortunately we forgot the eggs; of course, our cookery gained us but little credit.

26th. St. Mark. A grand feast! I think these people do little else than feast; we went with Madame to Mass; a long and tedious ceremony. I believe they consider the bishop as a being of a superior order; he walks to the church, surrounded by almost all the village, who join in singing psalms, &c. A canopy of crimson, fringed with gold, is supported by four old men; and under this, the great man sits or walks, in state. They say he is a man exemplary for his piety, charity, &c. I hope that all proceeds from the right spring. Education may so far have influenced his mind that the forms and ceremonies may to him appear necessary; but I must acknowledge that I beheld them with an emotion which I cannot describe. The bishop wears a large ring upon his little finger, which the priest kneels to kiss; the servants kneel when they present water to wash his hands. I was so much affected by these strange, and as I thought, presumptuous, ceremonies, that I could not restrain my tears; and how earnestly did I wish that all the world were acquainted with that gentle tranquillity which results from a humble waiting upon the Lord!

Sunday, 28th. Arrived at Boulogne. The country is quite enchanting, and it vexes me to leave it for this odious place, where we do little but visit and play at cards.

29th. Had the mortification to be set to cards. I could not but make the secret comparison between these thoughtless people, who meet for no better purpose than to idle away their time, and those friends whom I have left in England. I daily wish to be again among them; it would then be my own fault if an hour passed unimproved.

Sunday, May 4th. Passed the morning alone. I pity those who are unacquainted with the sweet consolations resulting from serious meditation; and with that peace which the world cannot give nor take away.

7th. After an elegant dinner at Madame Dupont's, we walked in a garden belonging to the Monks; it is a rural pretty spot, by the sea. I found it had been a famous place for receiving and harbouring contraband goods, in which the Rev. Fathers had the chief profit; but this has, of late, been prevented by a wall being built, &c. Had a delightful ride to Herdinghen.

16th. Had the inexpressible pleasure of receiving letters from my kind friends in England; an epistle from my dear Jasper betrayed his affectionate partiality.

19th. Dined at Agin; the day was spent agreeably. Was pleased with the moderation of the dinner, which was only frugally hospitable; it really gave me a very favourable opinion of the mistress and family.

23rd. Rained all the day; very unwelcome weather to Madame Brunet's servants, as there is a large wash on hand; twelve women are employed, besides household servants. It is the custom here to wash only four times in the year; and it is, of course, a great undertaking, as they use a vast deal of table-linen, &c.

28th. Boulogne. Arrived in the afternoon. Dressed and sallied forth to spend the evening at an English lady's; when we arrived all the party were at cards, to which we also sat down. While we played, a circumstance occurred which made me feel in a way that I cannot describe. The sacrament which is carried to the sick, and is always announced by the ringing of a hand-bell,

passed by the windows. The company, being mostly French, threw down their cards, knelt and prayed for a few minutes, and then set to cards again. I mean not to censure them; they may act up to their judgment and feelings, but I must confess it would appear to me very presumptuous to address the great Almighty in a form of words, at a time when the mind was interested in affairs so trifling, so inconsistent with that awful sense with which we ought to present ourselves, when disposed to offer prayer.

On our return I found a very affectionate epistle from my honoured Mother; all friends well, and kindly anxious for my health. Dr. Ash, as well as Dr. Knowles, advises my bathing in the sea, which I shall certainly do, but am quite undetermined where to go for that purpose.

31st. Have had a very restless night, and am much indisposed; very unfit to go into company; but I must dress and put on my best looks. We are going to Herdingen in the evening.

June 1st. *Sunday.* The greater part of the day in my chamber, there being company; and I have neither spirits nor inclination to join them. I have the mortification to find that we are no quieter here than at Boulogne.

5th. A pleasant walk, but I could not enjoy it. Objects appear gay or gloomy, according to the state of the mind.

7th. After dinner, the conversation turned on religion; they were very severe upon me, and rallied me unmercifully, giving me the appellation of Quaker or Trembler. Nothing could be more unjust than their censures of this people, whom they conclude to be unworthy of the name of Christian. I heard all with silent patience. After having listened for some time, I declared myself quite in favour of the real principles of Quakerism; and retired, leaving them to make what comments they pleased.

9th. Our grotto is actually begun; Monsieur Dupont is indefatigable in his endeavours to oblige.

12th. The whole day at the grotto; we have lined it with moss, which we employed the poor girls of the village to gather for us.

14th. Received a lively and obliging epistle from Mrs. Capper, of Redland; she speaks seriously of making a visit to this part of the world, before the summer is over.

19th. Exceedingly busy all the day, assisting Monsieur Dupont to paper the breakfast parlour.

22nd. *Sunday.* To-morrow we propose going to Calais.

23rd. Calais. Walked through the principal streets, which are not very numerous, nor elegant.

25th. Near three hours at the glass; at last, satisfied with our outward appearance, we set out to take a view of the Citadel, which with its contents are, I think, all that is worthy of notice at Calais. In the afternoon, we left it and came to Herdingen.

30th. Wet, windy and cold; much more like November than June.

July 2nd. Uncommonly cold. Spent some time in my chamber.

4th. Bingham had a letter from her Father, who says that all our friends are well, and that my brothers Jasper and James are now at Birmingham. My heart beats with affectionate desire to be among them.

8th. Dined at Marquise; never spent a more disagreeable day; the gentlemen drank a great deal, and in consequence were very noisy and troublesome. I was truly glad when the coach was ordered, but we were no sooner seated in it than we perceived that our coachman had made as free with the bottle as his master, and we were obliged to get out and march back, about half a mile to Marquise, where we again arrived at the Curé's. To our great satisfaction we found the company dispersed; beds were ordered, and we soon retired; but my spirits were so agitated by the scenes I had witnessed, that I fainted several times. I wished myself in some secluded spot, where I might never more be in company with those who so shamefully abuse the reason they are blessed with. I am certain that, if others enjoyed these extravagancies no more than I do, they would soon be excluded,