

**LETTERS, ADDRESSED TO THE
DAUGHTER OF A NOBLEMAN,
ON
THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS
AND MORAL PRINCIPLE. VOL. I.**

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Letters, Addressed to the Daughter of a Nobleman, on the Formation of Religious and Moral Principle. Vol. I. by Elizabeth Hamilton

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ELIZABETH HAMILTON

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LETTERS,
ADDRESSED
TO THE DAUGHTER
OF
A Nobleman,

ON THE
FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS AND MORAL
PRINCIPLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

BY ELIZABETH HAMILTON,
AUTHOR OF
LETTERS ON THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF
EDUCATION, &c. &c. &c.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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IN THE STRAND,
By W. Flint, Old Bailey.

1806.

PREFACE.

In submitting the ensuing pages to the ordeal of criticism, the author has no hopes of their passing unscorched through its tremendous flames: nor is she weak enough to expect that any thing she can urge will induce her judges to temper for her the heat of the burning ploughshare. Were she not provided with a talisman, of which she has in many instances proved the efficacy, she would shrink hopeless from the trial; but confident that upon this occasion it will not be found to have lost any of its virtue, she
binds

binds it to her bosom, and proceeds, if not without apprehension, at least without dismay.

It is, indeed, only on the generous and candid, that the talisman of *good intentions* can exert its friendly influence; but it is the approbation of such minds alone, that she feels any solicitude to secure. Of such minds she is anxious to conciliate the esteem, and would spare no pains to purchase their dignified support—their unequivocal suffrage. In order to render her plea availing, she thinks it may be expedient to say a few words in explanation of the motives which induced her to write, and which led her to publish the letters of which these volumes are composed. The motives are extremely simple. She wrote to gratify her feelings, by keeping up this species of intercourse with a family of amiable children, to whose interests she had
 for

for some time devoted her sole attention; and who had greatly endeared themselves to her affections. A hope that she might even in absence continue to be of use to them, induced her to attempt making a fair and striking delineation of those objects to which she had endeavoured imperceptibly to lead their infant steps. The task was delicate as well as difficult. In order to avoid all interference with the peculiar opinions, or accidental prejudices of those, with whom it might be their lot to live, she endeavoured to keep as much as possible to general views; but as the mind must have made considerable progress before it is capable of embracing these, she found it necessary so to manage the chain of argument, as to give interest and importance to every separate link. In this she has not succeeded to her own satisfaction, and cannot hope that others will

will be more easily satisfied; yet still trusts that candour will make some allowance for the peculiar difficulties by which she was embarrassed,

It must be confessed, that whatever consideration may be given to the circumstances under which a book is written, by those who take a peculiar interest in the writer, it is only to the friends of the individual that they can with propriety be offered as an apology for any apparent defect. With the public, an author has, or ought to have, no other existence than as an author. On the present occasion, no other circumstances than those that are connected with such existence, shall therefore be brought forward.

To the writer of the Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education, so much indulgence has been hitherto shewn as to encourage her to hope, that in mentioning that work as the
originating

originating cause of the present, she will do no injury to its interest.

Concerning the truth of the principles upon which that book was written no doubt had ever crossed her mind; but her reliance upon her own judgment has never had sufficient force to render her indifferent to the opinion of her superiors in wisdom and information. By the approbation of those best qualified to decide, her judgment was confirmed. Still, however, an opportunity was wanting for observing the consequences of a practical application of the principles she had endeavoured to unfold. When least expected that opportunity was presented, and presented under circumstances so peculiarly interesting, as promised an ample recompence for every sacrifice which her enthusiasm in the cause of education rendered her willing to make, Nor were her expectations

tations disappointed--for she has now the satisfaction of being able to speak with confidence of the inestimable advantages that result from a strict attention to the early development of the infant faculties. She can now from experience enforce her confirmed opinion of the influence of early association, in forming the disposition and character; and from experience likewise, can assure the timid and the doubtful, that the trouble of watching over these associations, sinks into nothing, when placed in comparison with the delight of which it opens a never failing source. The more her opportunities of observation have been enlarged, the more thoroughly is she persuaded, that the lessons which are given in the common routine of education, give little either of exercise or improvement to any faculty excepting memory: and
that