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978-0-521-84894-7 - Samuel Richardson: Pamela in her Exalted Condition

Edited by Albert J. Rivero

Excerpt

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PAMELA;
OR,
VIRTUE Rewarded

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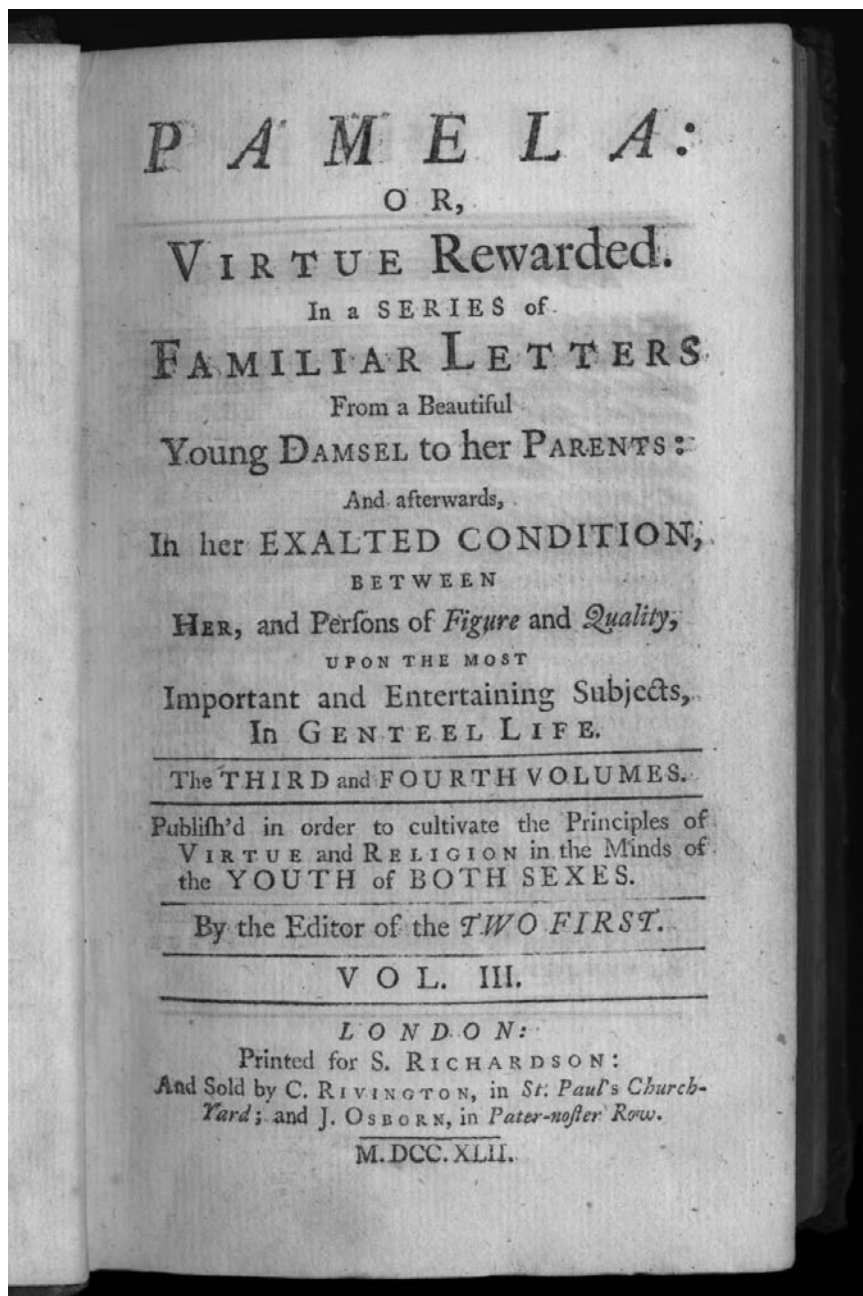
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1 Title page, *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded*, vol. III

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PREFACE.

The Two former Volumes of PAMELA; or, VIRTUE REWARDED, met with a Success greatly exceeding the most sanguine Expectations:¹ And the Editor hopes, that the Letters which compose these, will be found equally written to NATURE, avoiding all romantick Flights, improbable Surprizes, and irrational Machinery;² and that the Passions are touched, where requisite, and Rules, equally New and Practicable, inculcated throughout the Whole, for the General Conduct of Life: And, therefore he flatters himself, that they may expect the good Fortune, which few Continuations have met with, to be judg'd not unworthy the First; nor disproportion'd to the more exalted Condition in which PAMELA was destin'd to shine, as an affectionate Wife, a faithful Friend, a polite and kind Neighbour, an indulgent Mother, and a beneficent Mistress; after having in the Two former Volumes supported the Character of a dutiful Child, a spotless Virgin, and a modest and amiable Bride.³

The Reader will easily see, that, in so great a Choice of Materials, as must arise from a Multitude of important Subjects in a married Life, to such Genius's⁴ and Friendships as those of Mr. and Mrs. B. the Editor's greatest Difficulty was, how to bring them within the Compass which he was determin'd not to exceed. And it having been left to his own Choice, in what manner to digest and publish the Letters, and where to close the Work, he had intended, at first, in regard to his other Avocations, and some Designs of another Nature in which he was engaged, to have carry'd the Piece no farther than the Two former Volumes; as may be gather'd from the Conclusion of the First Five Editions.⁵

It may be expected, therefore, that he should enter into an Explanation of the Reasons whereby he was provok'd into a Necessity of altering his Intention.⁶ But he is willing to decline saying Any-thing upon so well-known a Subject; lest his Interest might appear more concern'd, than the Satisfaction of the Publick.

The Editor has been much press'd with Importunities and Conjectures in relation to the Person and Family of the incomparable Lady, who is the Subject of these Volumes: All that he thinks himself at Liberty to say, or is necessary to

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be said, is only to repeat what has been already hinted, That the Story has its Foundation in Truth: That the most material Incidents (as will be collected from several Passages in the Letters) happen'd between the Years 1717 and 1730: And that there was a Necessity, for obvious Reasons, to vary and disguise some Facts and Circumstances, as also the Names of Persons, Places, &c.¹

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VIRTUE Rewarded.

In a Series of FAMILIAR LETTERS.

VOL. III.

LETTER I.

My dear Father and Mother,

We arrived here last Night, highly pleased with our Journey, and the Occasion of it. May God bless you both with long Life and Health, to enjoy your sweet Farm, and pretty Dwelling, which is just what I wished it to be. And don't make your grateful Hearts too uneasy in the Possession of it, by your modest Diffidence of your own Worthiness: For, at the same time that it is what will do Honour to the best of Gentlemen, it is not so *very* extraordinary, considering his Condition, as that it will give any one Cause to censure it as the Effect of a too partial and injudicious Kindness for the Parents of one whom he *delighteth to honour*.¹

My dear Master (why should I not still call him so, bound to reverence him as I am, in every Light that he can shine in to the most obliged and sensible Heart?) holds his kind Purpose of fitting up the large Parlour and three Apartments in the commodious Dwelling he calls yours, for his Entertainment and mine, when he shall permit me to pay my Duty to you both, for a few happy Days together; and he has actually given Orders for that Purpose; and that the three Apartments be so fitted up, as to be rather suitable to *your* Condition, than his *own*; for, he says, the plain simple Elegance which he will have to be observed in the Rooms as well as the Furniture, will be a Variety in his Retirement to this Place, that will make him return to his own with the greater Pleasure; and at the same time, when we are not there, will be of Use for the Reception of any of your

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Friends; and so he shall not, as he kindly says, rob the good Couple of any of their Accommodations.

The old Bow-windows¹ he will have preserv'd, but will not have them sash'd, nor the Wood-binds, Jessamines and Vines that run up against them, destroyed; only he will have larger Panes of Glass, and convenienter Casements, to let in more of the sweet Air and Light, to make amends for that obstructed by the Shades of those fragrant Climbers. For he has mention'd three or four times, how gratefully they dispens'd their intermingled Odours to us, when, the last Evening, we stood at the Window in our Bed-chamber, to hear the responsive Songs of two warbling Nightingales, one at a Distance, the other near, which took up our delighted Attention for above two Hours, and charm'd us the more, as we thought their Season had been over. And when they had done, he made *me* sing him one, and called me for it, the sweetest of all Nightingales, saying, How greatly do the innocent Pleasures I now hourly taste, exceed the guilty Tumults that used formerly to agitate my unequal Mind! Never talk, my *Pamela*, as you frequently do, of Obligation to me: One such Hour as I now enjoy, is an ample Reward for all the Benefits I can confer on you and yours in my whole Life!

The Parlour indeed will be more elegant, tho' that is to be rather plain than rich, as well in its Wainscot as Furniture, and to be new floor'd. The dear Gentleman has already given Orders about it, and you will soon have Workmen with you to put them in Execution. The Parlour Doors are to have Brass Hinges and Locks, and to shut as close, he tells them, as a Watch-case: For who knows, said he, my Dear, but we shall have still added Blessings, in two or three charming Boys and Girls, to place there in their Infancy, before they can be of Age to be benefited by your Lessons and Example? And besides, I make no doubt, but I shall entertain there some of my chosen Friends, in their Excursions, for a Day or so.

How am I, every Hour of my Life, overwhelm'd with Instances of God Almighty's Goodness and his!—O spare, blessed Father of Mercies, the precious Life of this excellent Gentleman! and increase my Thankfulness, and my Worthiness; and then—But what shall I say?—Only that then I may *continue* to be what I am; for more bless'd and more happy, in my own Mind, surely I cannot be.

The Beds he will have of Cloth, because he thinks the Situation a little cold, especially when the Wind is Easterly, and because he purposes to be down in the early Spring Season now-and-then, as well as in the latter Autumn; and the Window Curtains of the same, in one Room red, in the other green; but plain, lest you should be afraid to use them occasionally. The Carpets for them will come down with the other Furniture; for he will not alter the old Oaken Floors of the Bed-chamber, nor yet of the little

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Room he intends for my Use, to withdraw to, when I chuse not to join in such Company as may happen to fall in: Which, my Dear, says he, shall be as little as is possible, only particular Friends, who may be disposed once in a Year or two, to see, when I am there, how I live with my *Pamela*, and her Parents, and how I pass my Time in my Retirement, as I shall call this: For otherwise, perhaps, they will be apt to think I am ashamed of Company I shall always be pleased with.—Nor are you, my Dear, continued he, to take this as a Compliment to yourself, but a Piece of requisite Policy in me; for who will offer to reproach me for marrying, as the World thinks, below me, when they shall see, that such a Reproach, as they would intend it, is so far from being so to me, that every Day of my Life, I not only pride myself in my *Pamela*, but take Pleasure in owning her Relations as mine, and visiting them, and receiving Visits from them; and yet offer not to set them up in such a glaring Light, as if I would have the World forget (who in that Case would always take the more Pleasure in remembering) what they were? And how will it anticipate low Reflection, when they shall see, I can bend my Mind to partake with them the Pleasures of their humble, but decent Life?—Ay, continued he, and be rewarded for it too, with better Health, better Spirits, and a better Mind; so that, my Dear, added he, I shall reap more Benefit by what I propose to do, than I shall confer.

In this generous manner does this best of Gentlemen endeavour to disclaim tho' I must be very ungrateful, if, with me, it did not inhanche the proper Merit of a Beneficence that is natural to him; and which indeed, as I tell him, may be in one respect depreciated, inasmuch as (so excellent is his Nature) he cannot help it, if he would.—O that it was in my Power to recompense him for it! But I am poor, as I have often said, in every thing but Will—and that is *wholly* his:—And what a Happiness is it to me, a Happiness I could not so early have hoped for, that I can say so without *Reserve*; since the dear Gentleman requires nothing of me, but what is consistent with my Duty to the supreme Benefactor, the first Mover and Cause of all his own Happiness, of my Happiness, and of that of my dear, my ever dear Parents!

But whither does the enchanting Subject lead me! I am running on to my usual Length, tho' I have not the same Excuse for it; for heretofore I had nothing to do but to write. Yet, I am sure, if I do exceed a little, *you* will be pleased with it; and you have moreover a Right to rejoice with me in the Days of my Felicity, after your indulgent Hearts had been so much pained by a long Succession of my Fears and my Dangers, which only ought to be remember'd now, as Subjects of thankful Exultation, by

Your dutiful and happy Daughter.

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LETTER II.

My dearest Daughter,

I need not repeat to you the Sense your good Mother and I have of our Happiness, and of our Obligations to your honoured Spouse: You both were pleased Witnesses of it every Hour of the happy Fortnight you passed with us. But still, my Dear, we hardly know how to address ourselves even to *You*, much less to the *'Squire*, with the Freedom he so often invited us to take: For, I don't know how it is, but tho' you are our Daughter, and are so far from being lifted up by your high Condition, that we see no Difference in your Behaviour to us your poor Parents; yet, when we look upon you as the Lady of so fine a Gentleman, we cannot forbear having a kind of Respect, and—I don't know what to call it,—that lays a little Restraint upon us! And yet we would not, methinks, let our Minds be run away with the Admiration of worldly Grandeur, so, as to set too much by it.

But your Merit, and your Prudence, my dear Daughter, is so much above all we could ever have any Notion of:—And to have Gentry come only to behold you, and admire you, not so much for your Genteelness and Amiableness neither, as for your Behaviour, and your Affability to Poor as well as Rich, and to hear every one calling you an Angel, and saying, you *deserve* to be what you are; makes us hardly know how to look upon you but as an Angel indeed! I am sure you have been a good Angel to us!—Since, for your sake, God Almighty has put it into your honour'd Husband's Heart, to make us the happiest Couple in the World: But little less, indeed, we should have been, had we only, in some far distant Land, heard of our dear Child's Happiness, and never partaken of the Benefits of it ourselves. But thus to be provided for!—Thus kindly to be owned, and called Father and Mother by such a brave Gentleman, and thus to be placed, that we have nothing to do, but to bless God, and bless him, and bless you, and hourly pray for you *both*, is such a Providence, my dear Child, as is too mighty to be borne by us, with Equalness of Temper; and we kneel together every Morning, Noon and Night, and weep and rejoice, and rejoice and weep, to think how our Unworthiness is distinguished, and how God has provided for us in our latter Days, when all we had to fear, was, that as we grew older and more infirm, and worn out by hard Labour, we should be troublesome, where, not our Pride, but our industrious Wills, would have made us wish not to be so;—but to be intitled to a happier Lot: For this would have grieved us the more, for the sake of you, my dear

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Child, and your unhappy Brother's Children; for it is well known, that, tho' we pretend not to boast of our Family, and indeed had no Reason, yet none of us were ever sunk so low as I was:—To be sure, partly by my own Fault; for had it been for your poor aged Mother's sake only, I ought not to have done what I did for *John* and *William*; for, so unhappy were they, poor Lads, that what I could do, was but as a Drop of Water to a Bucket.

But yet the Issue has shewn, that (if I may presume to say so) what I did, was not displeasing to God; inasmuch as I have the Comfort to see, that my Reliance on Him, while I was doing what though some thought *imprudent* Things, yet not *wrong* Things, is so abundantly rewarded, beyond Expectation and Desert. Blessed be his holy Name for it!

You command me—Let me, as writing to Mr. *B.*'s Lady, say *command*, tho', as to my dear *Daughter*, I will only say *desire*: And indeed I will not, as you wish'd me not to do, let the one Condition, which was accidental, put the other, which was natural, out of my Thought: You spoke it in better Words, but this was the Sense—But you have the Gift of Utterance; and Education is a fine thing, where it meets with such Talents to improve upon as God has given you.—But let me not forget what I was going to say—You *command*—or, if you please—you *desire* me to write long Letters, and often—And how can I help it, if I would? For when here, in this happy Dwelling, and this well-stock'd Farm, in these rich Meadows, and well-cropt Acres, we look around us, and, which Way soever we turn our Heads, see Blessings upon Blessings, and Plenty upon Plenty; see Barns well-stor'd, Poultry increasing, the Kine lowing and crouding about us, and all fruitful; and are bid to call all these our own—And then think, that all is the Reward of our Child's Virtue!—O my dear Daughter, who can bear these Things!—Excuse me—I must break off a little, for my Eyes are as full as my Heart; and I will retire to bless God and your honoured Husband.

So—my dear Child—I now again take up my Pen—But reading what I had written, in order to carry on the Thread, I can hardly forbear again being in like sort affected.—But do you think I will call all these Things my own!—Do you think I will live Rent-free!—Do you think I would? Can the honoured 'Squire believe, that having such a generous Example before me, if I had no Gratitude in my Temper before, I could help being touched by such an one as he sets me?—If his Goodness makes him know no Mean in giving, shall I be so greedy as to know none in receiving?—Come, come, my dear Child, your poor Father is not so sordid a Wretch neither. He will shew the World, that all these Benefits are not thrown away upon

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one, who will disgrace you as much by his Temper, as by his Condition: What tho' I cannot be as worthy of all these Favours as I wish? I will be as worthy as I can. And let me tell you, my dear Child, if the King and his Royal Family (God bless 'em!) be not ashamed to receive Taxes and Duties from his Subjects; if Dukes and Earls, and all the top Gentry, cannot support their Bravery, without having their Rents paid; I hope I shall not affront the 'Squire, to pay to his Steward, what any other Person would pay for this noble Stock and improving Farm: And I will do it, an' it please God to bless me with Life and Health.—I should not be worthy to crawl on the Earth, if I did not. And what did I say to Mr. *Longman*, the faithful Mr. *Longman*? sure no Gentleman had ever a more worthy Steward than he: It was as we were walking over the Grounds together—and observing in what good Order every thing was; he was praising some little Contrivances of my own, for the Improvement of the Farm, and saying how comfortably he hoped we might live upon it. Ay, Mr. *Longman*, said I, comfortably indeed: But do you think I could be properly said to *live*, if I was not to pay as much Rent for it as another?—I can tell you, said he, the 'Squire will not receive any thing from you, Goodman *Andrews*.—Why, Man, he has no Occasion for it: He's worth a Power of Money,¹ besides a noble and clear Estate in Land.—Adsheartlikins,² you must not affront him, I can tell you that: For he's as generous as a Prince where he takes; but he is hasty, and will have his own way.—Why, for that Reason, Mr. *Longman*, said I, I was thinking to make *you* my Friend.—Make *me* your Friend! You have not a better in the World, to my Power, I can tell you that; nor your Dame neither; for I love such honest Hearts: I wish my own Brother would let me love him as well; but let that pass.—What I can do for you, I will, and here's my Hand upon it.

Well then, said I, it is this: Let me account to you at the Rent Farmer *Dickins* offered, and let me know what the Stock cost, and what the Crops are valued at; and pay the one as I can, and the other Quarterly; and not let the 'Squire know it till you can't chuse; and I shall be as happy as a Prince; for I doubt not, by God's Blessing, to make a comfortable Livelihood of it, besides.—Why, dost believe, Goodman *Andrews*, said he, I would do such a thing?—Would not his Honour think, if I hid one thing from him, I might hide another?—Go to, go to, honest Heart, I love thee dearly: But can the 'Squire do too much for his Lady, think'st thou? Come, come, (and he jeer'd me so, I could not tell what to say to him) I wish at Bottom there is not some Pride in this;—what, I warrant, you would not be too much beholden to his Honour, would you?—No, good Mr. *Longman*, said I,—it is not that, I'm sure. If I have any Pride, it is only in my dear Child—to