

“Go on, [29] my Father, go on; I have finished my speech.” This plain speaking reminds one of the golden Age of old, when nature was clothed in a simplicity more agreeable than all the artifices of the most polished Nations.

While I am on this subject, I will conclude this Chapter with it. Here is a new way of seeking a person in marriage. It has already been stated that, when a Pagan Savage wooed a maiden, he went to see her at night, and asked her in secret if she would accept him. If the maid replied that she did not wish to marry him, the young man went no further. If she replied that he was not to address her about the matter, he pressed his suit. Now, as we have vigorously rebuked such conduct, the Christians disapprove of it, and they apply to us to ask for a maid; but observe how some of them now act. They paint on a piece of bark a young man and a maiden, holding each other by the hand, in the position that they assume in Church when they get married; and the swain sends this picture to his mistress by one of his friends.

Now, although this portrait may not be painted [30] by Apelles, the maiden knows very well what it means. If she accepts the young man, she takes the picture. If she says that she does not at all understand the painting, it means that the young man must look elsewhere, and that he is rejected. Do not fear that he will fight a duel with him whom he sees welcomed. He has more spirit than to let himself be dominated by his passion for a maid; to allow oneself to be vanquished by the tyrant of love or the demon of hatred, is weakness. The rejected suitor will go and congratulate his comrade who shall be welcome to his mistress.