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REFLECTIONS
UPON THE
CONDUCT
OF

Human Life:

With reference to the Study of
Learning and Knowledge.

In a Letter to the Excellent
Lady, the Lady *Masham.*

By *John Norris*, M. A. Rector of
Newton St. Loe, in *Somersetshire*,
near *Bath*; and late Fellow of
All Souls College in *Oxford.*

To which is annex'd, a
Visitation SERMON,
By the same Author.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *S. Manship*, at the *Black
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MADAM,

THE Affliction your
Ladyship is under for
the loss of your Sight is so
great, and your Complaints
upon that occasion so just, that
I can neither blame you for
the one, nor excuse my self
from pittying you for the other.
And indeed since you have
been so unhappy as to be de-
prived of the use of your Eyes,
I think I owe your Ladyship
so much Compassion, that I
cannot better employ mine,
than in writing you such a

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Con.

Consolation, as the opportunity of my New Retirement, with the serious Reflections I have lately made in it, will suggest.

And that I believe will be such, as is more peculiarly adapted to the Circumstance of your trouble, which tho occasion'd by a Common Accident, yet, I find, proceeds upon an Uncommon Principle. For tho 'tis to be presumed that, notwithstanding your great Contempt of the World, it must be a considerable part of your Affliction to lose the Sight of some delectable Objects in it, since the Wisest of Men (from whom your Ladyship cannot much dissent) after

after a censure of vanity past upon all things under Heaven, is yet forc'd to confess that truly the Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun; yet I perceive the chief reason why your Ladyship is so concern'd for the loss of your Sight, is because you are thereby deprived of Conversation with your Books, and consequently retarded in your earnest pursuit after Learning and Knowledge.

'Tis upon this hinge I know that the main weight of your Sorrow turns, and therefore you will not want a Specific proper for your Malady, if you should chance

to be convinced that our Learning is generally misplaced, and that such an importunate pursuit after Learning and Knowledge is no way agreeable to the present Station and condition of Man. For certainly you will no longer lament the loss of your Eyes, for disabling you from doing that, which perhaps would not be adviseable for you to do, if you had them again. If therefore you once come to be convinc'd of this, one main ground of your discontent is removed; and that you may, is the design of the following Reflections.

The

(1)

The First Reflection.

Wherein the general Conduct of Human Life is tax'd, for placing Learning and Knowledge, in such things as are little or nothing perfective of the understanding.

I.

BEING Naturally more than ordinarily disposed to *Thoughtfulness*, and from the circumstances of my present Solitude and Retirement further invited to it; I began one day to fall into a deep Meditation upon the Conduct of my own, and of *Humane* Life. What Reflections I made upon my