

The Byron-Lady Melbourne Correspondence, 1812-1813

Edited by Peter Cochran

Update August 6th 2011.



Elizabeth, Lady Melbourne (née Milbanke: 1752-1818). Leading Whig hostess. Beautiful, graceful, intelligent, and witty. Lover of the Prince of Wales. Mother of five children by three different fathers. Mother of Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister. Mother-in-law of Lady Caroline Lamb. Intimate friend of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. Friend of Fox, Grey and Canning. Friend of Sheridan: perhaps the model for Lady Teazle in *The School for Scandal*. With such a wealth of experience, she might have been a force for the good. But she was the fixer of two disastrous marriages – that between Augusta Byron and Colonel Leigh, and that between Augusta's half-brother, George Gordon, Lord Byron, and her own niece, Annabella Milbanke. The Countess of Airlie writes that it was said of Melbourne that she “could not see a happy marriage without trying to destroy its harmony”:¹ she seems also to have encouraged marriages doomed to disharmony from the outset.²

The protagonist of much of the correspondence edited here is not Byron, nor Melbourne, but Lady Caroline Lamb, whose name (“C”, “C.”, or “C-”) is rarely absent, and whose erotomaniacal fixation on Byron threatens the whole, smooth hypocritical operation of Whig society (“I am convinced she knows perfectly what she is about all the time, but she has no idea of controuling her fury” – Melbourne to Byron, July 7th 1813). Byron's disgust at the behaviour of a woman who loves him with absolute abandon inspires a much greater flow of ink than his pleasure in the more “autumnal” love of Lady Oxford: he isn't prepared to join any club that would have him as a member with so few reservations as Caroline shows. The reason's clear: Caroline would demand total commitment, including elopement and (for her) divorce; and Byron – quite rightly, as we with hindsight can tell – has an instinctive aversion from such a thing. Casual adultery, involving a complaisant husband, or incest with a married half-sister, are much safer.

To carry on a long correspondence with a woman whose son you've been cuckolding may seem extreme; but neither Byron nor Melbourne seems inhibited by the thought. Melbourne is interested in putting Byron and Caroline apart, and Byron seems for most of the time to concur with her intention. But the task is impossible, partly because of Caroline's tenacity, partly because Byron can't stop hating her for loving him. Caroline seems – we can't deny it – a bit frightening: “I must do L^y. B y^e justice to say that her representations of her Violence in these paroxysms was not at all exaggerated, I could not have believed it possible for any one to carry absurdity to such a pitch” (Melbourne to Byron, July 7th 1813). It's clear that the sixty-plus Melbourne's role is by no means disinterested: she is living vicariously through Byron, through Caroline, through Augusta, through Mary Chaworth-Musters, through Frances Wedderburn Webster, and through Lady Oxford. Like all the other women in the scenario, she is in love with Byron herself, and he knows it. All his love-life is a play, which he is

1: Airlie p.xiv.

2: Airlie herself encouraged the marriage between the Duke of York and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

acting out and describing for her benefit. We are surprised that he doesn't give her a description of his honeymoon night. He claims to be at her mercy: "I am quite irresolute – and undecided – if I were sure of myself (not of her) I would go – but I am not – & never can be – and what is still worse I have no judgement – & less common sense than an infant – this is not affected humility – with you I have no affectation ..." (April 29th 1814).

The suspicion that they had briefly been lovers³ adds further piquancy to it. She is to him a sexually-available mother-figure, of whom he claims to be in awe: "... you know very well, & so do I – that you can make me do whatever you please without reluctance – I am sure there exists no one to whom I feel half so much obliged – & for whom (gratitude apart) I entertain a greater regard. – –" (Byron to Melbourne, early 1813). Lady Oxford, mother of even more children, by even more fathers, than Melbourne, is an alter ego for her whom Byron parades, almost reassuringly. With Oxford (as with Webster, Chaworth-Musters, and above all Augusta), crazed, Caroline-style commitment is impossible. Melbourne knows that he will always return to her in spirit, just as, in Venice, Margarita Cogni knows he will always return to her in body.

Byron's letters to Melbourne are not those of an aggressive womanizer. He appears neither a Lothario nor a Lovelace (still less a Valmont, though Melbourne does seem a Madame de Merteuil:⁴ "... if she takes it in the sense I mean it & you don't blunder it in the delivery with one of your wicked laughs, it will do for want of something better": Byron to Melbourne, October 20th 1812). In his *seemingly* bewildered passivity, Byron *seems* closer to his own version of Don Juan – a confused young man, perpetually out of his depth, in need of a wise woman to tell him what to do and thus assume responsibility for his life.

Lady Oxford has been credited with stirring Byron's political ambitions, but there is no evidence that he respects her judgement in anything: "M'amie thinks I agree with her in all her politics, but she will discover that this is a mistake. She insists always upon the P's innocence; but then as she sometimes reads me somewhat a tedious homily upon her own, I look upon it in much the same point of view as I should on Mary Magdalen's vindication of M^{rs}. Joseph, or any other immaculate riddle" (Byron to Melbourne, December 27th 1812; he means "M^{rs}. Potiphar").⁵

Melbourne has a downbeat estimation of Byron, indirectly expressed: "those who believe in C— think falsehood is so easy to you that you prefer it to truth" (January 19th-25th 1814). Byron responds with characteristic equivocation. On the one hand, "after all I am no actor" (February 28th 1813), while on the other, "I think I should make a good Tartuffe" (July 2nd 1814). In one hitherto unpublished letter (February 2nd 1814), she reminds him of how his lifestyle is jeopardising his aristocratic inheritance: "you may marry & have a Son & then you would regret his succeeding to the Peerage & having no property except Money – in this Country where Land gives so much more influence". This thought is unique in all the letters to Byron that I know.

Remarkable are the tall, or embroidered, stories Byron tells Melbourne, about times in his life about which she has only his word – see his account of Constance Spencer Smith on September 15th 1812, or his description of (we assume) Fletcher on September 28th 1812, or of a "youthful engagement" on September 30th 1812.

Woman of the world Melbourne may be, but when it becomes clear that he's having an affair with his half-sister, even she's shocked. He finds it funny: "I have been all my life trying to make some one love me – & never got the sort that I preferred before. – But positively she & I will grow good – & all that – & so we are now and shall be these three weeks & more too. – – –" (April 25th 1814). But Melbourne will not accept the joke: "I should only look upon it as a bad Dream from which the persons concerned are awaken'd" (April 30th 1814).

Though Caroline Lamb suffers a lot, she can't be called an innocent, and brings it upon herself. The one most to feel sorry for is Annabella Milbanke. She has been warned off Melbourne ("tho' she may in some instances exhibit the Appearance of Sincerity, You Must Not forget that she Can deceive, & has been in the habit of deceiving": quoted Gross 47). But Annabella is quickly ensnared in her nets,

³: See the suspicions voiced by Lady Noel, Malcolm Elwin, *Lord Byron's Wife* (Macdonald 1962), pp.387 and 401.

⁴: See Airlie pp.6 and 8.

⁵: And yet see "Baldwin is boring me to present their King's Bench petition. I presented Cartwright's last year; and Stanhope and I stood against the whole House, and mouthed it valiantly—and had some fun and a little abuse for our opposition. But "I am not i' th' vein" for this business. Now, had [*Lady Oxford*] been here, she would have *made* me do it. *There* is a woman, who, amid all her fascination, always urged a man to usefulness or glory. Had she remained, she had been my tutelar genius." or "(Here I cannot stimulate myself to a speech for the sake of these unfortunates, and three words and half a smile of [*Lady Oxford*] had she been here to urge it (and urge it she infallibly would—at least she always pressed me on senatorial duties, and particularly in the cause of weakness), would have made me an advocate, if not an orator". (London Journal, December 1st 1813).

first turning Byron down (or rather, turning down the proposal made by Melbourne on Byron's behalf), then regretting it, then giving the most naïve evaluation of his character – derived from *Childe Harold!* – then sending Melbourne a pompous list of her ideal husband's attributes, then committing the ultimate folly and accepting his circumlocutory proposal (made through the post). Melbourne, whose judgement about her niece is quite accurate, should, as a good aunt and substitute mother, have prevented it all. Instead of which, she arranges their honeymoon at Halnaby, and finds them 13 Piccadilly Terrace as their doomed residence in London.

Byron rarely mentions his poetry to Melbourne ("you know I never hold forth to you on such topics": Byron to Melbourne, January 16th 1814). This makes even more frustrating his hints at private subtexts to *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* (see Byron to Melbourne, November 25th 1813), that only Melbourne can decipher, and which the Melbourne letters now lost might have opened up.

A new note chimes with the (both to Byron and to us) incomprehensible press furore over *Lines to a Lady Weeping*. Byron's reaction is characteristic: "I really begin to think myself a most important personage – what would poor Pope have given to have brought down this upon his "epistle to Augustus"? – –" (Byron to Melbourne, February 11th 1814)

As Byron is in England, he has the Peer's franking privilege, which means the recipient does not have to pay. This means his postage is not charged by weight, and he can afford to use envelopes (though we do not have them).

Byron's letters to Melbourne are written on two sizes of paper: white, wove, and either of a large size (18.5 x 23cm) or of a small (11 x 18.5cm); there are no wax spots, and few envelopes. There are a few manuscript tears. The addresses have only survived when there is text on the reverse.

In fact, we are lucky that Byron's letters to Melbourne survived at all. *Hobhouse's diary, Tuesday June 26th 1827*: "At Whitton sorting Byron's letters to Lady Melbourne, &c. ..." (BL.Add.Mss.56552). At least sixteen of Melbourne's letters are missing. I imagine Lady Cowper, her daughter, removed the more compromising ones.

"A" is Annabella Milbanke (after the marriage, she becomes "Bell." – always with the full stop); "L^y C", "C", or "C–" is Caroline Lamb; "L^y B" is her mother, Lady Bessborough; "———" is Lady Oxford, though she is more often "m'amie" "L^y O"; "+", or "x", or "X", is Augusta. "Ph" is Frances Wedderburn Webster – "Phryne", after the Athenian courtesan.

1922: *Lord Byron's Correspondence Chiefly with Lady Melbourne, Mr Hobhouse, The Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, and P.B.Shelley* (2 vols, John Murray 1922).

Airlie: Mabel, Countess of Airlie. *In Whig Society, 1775-1821*, Hodder and Stoughton 1921.

BLJ: *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 13 vols, John Murray 1973-94.

Douglass: Douglass, Paul. *The Whole Disgraceful Truth: Selected Letters of Lady Caroline Lamb* (Palgrave Macmillan 2006).

Gross: Gross, Jonathan David (ed.) *Byron's "Corbeau Blanc": The Life and Letters of Lady Melbourne* (Rice University Press 1997).

Peach: Peach, Annette: *Portraits of Byron* (Walpole Society reprint) 2000.

Q: Quennell, Peter (ed.) *Byron: A Self-Portrait; Letters and Diaries 1798 to 1824*. (2 vols, John Murray 1950).

1812: On February 27th Byron delivers his first speech in the House of Lords, opposing the death-penalty for industrial sabotage by starving Nottinghamshire workers – the Frame Breakers Bill. He gives two more speeches, then ceases all parliamentary activity. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I & II* is published on March 10th, and he is famous instantly. On March 25th he sees Annabella Milbanke for the first time. Has a brief love affair with Lady Caroline Lamb. Meets Lady Melbourne, who is to become his preceptress and confidante. He tries to sell Newstead Abbey on August 14th, but it fails to reach its reserve price at the auction, and for the next six years his finances remain insecure. He is commissioned by the Drury Lane Committee to write an Address for the opening of their new theatre. He also writes *Waltz*, which is published anonymously. At the end of the year, is deep into an affair with Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford.

February 27th 1812: Byron gives his Framebreakers Speech.

March 10th 1812: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I & II* published.

March 25th 1812: Byron and Annabella Milbanke meet for the first time.

April 21st 1812: Byron gives his Roman Catholic Claims Speech.

May 1812: *The Curse of Minerva* published.

Wednesday July 29th 1812: Byron and Caroline Lamb almost elope. Hobhouse assists Byron to resist temptation. When the correspondence starts, Byron thinks his affair with Caroline Lamb is over, but Caroline doesn't.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, mid-1812:

(Source: text from Morgan Library, photocopy from microfilm; BLJ II 171)

Dear Lady M.

I have just written to you a long note – & will wait on you at ½ past nine exactly
ever y^{rs}

[signature swirl]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, mid-1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43471 f.158; BLJ II 171)

[The Lady Melbourne]

A small hand-delivered note, blank on the reverse.

Dear Lady Melbourne –

At two perhaps a little later I shall have the honour of waiting upon you, as indeed I would have done before had I imagined that you wished it. Believe me respectfully

y^r obliged Serv^t
Byron

Friday

Byron to Lady Melbourne, August 1812 (a):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43471 f.156; BLJ II 184)

Dear L^y. M. – That I am not trifling with you but have sincere business of some consequence the enclosed note from my solicitor will convince you – which though a secret – I would tell you if my life depended on it rather than you should doubt me under the circumstances in which poor L^y.B. is placed. – – The moment I can arrange this, & I will

1:2

not wait in the hope of further or better proposals, I shall leave town. –

y^{rs} ever

/
/ Bn /
/

P.S. – You can have the goodness to state the real fact to L^y. B. & C. – – I do assure you I have L^y. B's comfort more at heart than my own convenience even in this a cast of some moment. – You will return me the note at your own leisure. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, August 1812 (b):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43471 f.154; BLJ II 184-5)

My dear L^y. M.

In answer to L^y. B. I have only to observe that if she will abide by the consequences, I will not see C. at all – & it was with the greatest reluctance & something of disgust that I ever consented with which I beg she may be made acquainted. –

1:2

I regret very much that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you at L^y. Ossulstone's this Evening to whom I must request you to furnish me with a proper excuse. –
The fact is I have made a resolution (weak to the extent of L^y. Blarney's⁶ anathema) not to go anywhere but – <l> no matter you will plead a sudden cold in my behalf which will

1:3

shine in your description. –

Believe me dear L^y. M.

ever y^{rs}.

B

[1:4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, August 1812 (c):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43471 f.153; QI 140; BLJ II 187-8)

Caroline has run away. No date.

Dear Lady M. – I trust that L^y C. has by this time reappeared or that her mother is better acquainted than I am, God knows, where she is. – If this be the case I hope you will favour me with one line, because in the interim my situation is by no means a sinecure, although I did not chuse to add to your perplexities this

1:2

morning by joining in a duet with L^y. B. – As I am one of the principal performers in this unfortunate drama, I should be glad to know what my part requires next? – seriously I am extremely uneasy on account of L^y. C. & others, as for myself – it is of little consequence – I shall bear & forbear as much as I can – but I must not shrink now from anything. –

1:3

6 o'clock

Thus much I had written when I receive yours – not a word of or from her – what is the cause of all this, I mean the immediate circumstance which has led to it? I thought every thing was well & quiet in the morning till the Apparition of L^y. B. – if I see or hear from her L^y. B shall be informed, if you – pray tell me,

1:4

I am apprehensive for her personal safety, for her state of mind, – here I sit alone, & however I might appear to you, in the most painful suspense. –

ever y^{rs}

[swirl signature]

Byron goes to look for Caroline, finds her at a surgeon's house in Kensington, and, claiming to be her brother, takes her back to Cavendish Square and then to Whitehall. The crisis gives Lady Bessborough a stroke (from which she recovers).

Byron to Lady Melbourne, August 14th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43471 f.160; BLJ II 188-9)

6: "Lady Blarney" is Lady Bessborough, Caroline Lamb's mother, whose husband was primarily an Irish peer (the nickname is from *The Vicar of Wakefield*). She was the sister of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire; she referred to Melbourne as "the Thorn" (Airlie p.5).

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing. The P.S. shows this is the day on which Newstead is put up for auction, but withdrawn.

Dear L^y. M. – In justice to L^y. C– I must declare that she mentioned no names nor had I reason to believe that she alluded to you – but I wrote so fast & my ideas were so confused that God knows what I said, or meant, except that she never did nor can deserve a single reproach which must not fall with double justice & truth upon myself, who

1:2

am much much more to blame in every respect, nor shall I in the least hesitate in declaring this to any of her family who may think proper to come forward – no one has a right to interfere with her but yourself & M^t. L.⁷ – with me the case is different – to them I will answer – & if she is to be persecuted for my faults – to be reproached with the consequences of a misplaced affection but too well returned – by any

1:3

but you & yours (who have acted so differently with a kindness which I did not believe to exist in human nature) I cannot & will not bear it, without at least taking my own just share of the consequences. –

In the mean time, command me – & dear L^y. M. comfort & be kind to her, you have been, she owns it with the greatest gratitude, in every thing of this kind the man is – & must be

1:4

most to blame, & I am sure not less {so} in this instance than every other. – –

Act with me as you think proper – I seek no excuse – no evasion – I have given you my word it shall be observed – – & I am sure L^y. C– will be the last to make me break it.

y^{rs}. ever
/
/ Bn /
/

P.S. – Forgive this scrawl – I have been so hurried with Lawyers, auctioneers – buyers & sellers this morn., besides this agreeable accompaniment – that I hardly know what I am about. – –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, later in 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43471 f.155; BLJ II 181-2)

A very small sheet.

Dear Lady Melbourne,

If you would permit me to see you for a very few minutes tomorrow at your own hour I think I could convince you by something like proof how far the “perversion of principle”

1:2

which is indeed the “unkindest cut of all”⁸ has been justly brought forward. – I cannot much boast of my religious or moral code but my opinions in <society> {conversation} I generally keep to myself, & in this instance I cannot plead guilty. – I really feel very sincerely your kindness on this

1:3

occasion, and I will not again intrude upon it, or even now if I trouble you too much. – It is singular enough that one whose whole life has been spent in open opposition to received opinions should be charged with hypocrisy. –

ever y^{rs}.

7: William Lamb (not yet Viscount Melbourne).

8: Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, III ii 183.

B

Saturday Even.

[1:4 blank.]

August 23rd 1812: Byron goes to Cheltenham with the Jerseys.

Early September 1812: Lady Bessborough takes Caroline to Ireland.

September 1812: Byron starts work on *The Giaour*.

September 7th 1812: Battle of Borodino starts.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 10th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 71-3; QI 142-3; BLJ II 192-3)

Cheltenham Sept^r. 10th. 1812

Dear L^y. Melbourne

I presume you have heard & will not be sorry to hear again that they are safely deposited in Ireland & that the sea rolls between you and one of your torments; the other you see is still at your elbow. -- Now (if you are as sincere as I sometimes almost dream) you will not regret to hear that I wish this to end, & it certainly shall not be renewed on my part. -- It is not that I love another, but loving at all is quite out of my way; I am tired of being a fool, & when I look back

1:2

on the waste of time, & the destruction of all my plans last winter by this last romance, I am -- what I ought to have been long ago. -- It is true from early habit, one must make love mechanically as <I/>one <can> swims, I was once very fond of both, but now as I never swim unless I tumble into the water, I don't make love till almost obliged,⁹ though I fear that is not the shortest way out of the troubled waves with which in such accidents we must struggle. -- But I will say no more on this topic, as I am not sure of my ground, and you can easily outwit me as you

1:3

always hitherto have done. -- Today I have had a letter from L^d. Holland wishing me to write for the Opening Theatre,¹⁰ but as all Grubstreet seems engaged in the Contest, I have no ambition to enter the lists, & have thrown my few ideas into the fire -- I never risk rivalry in any thing, you see the very lowest as in this case discourages me from a sort of mixed feeling, I don't know if it be pride, but you will say it certainly is not modesty. -- I suppose your friend Twiss¹¹ will be one -- I hear there are five hundred -- & I wish him success -- I really think he would do it well; but few men who have any cha=

1:4

9: Thomas Moore's Journal, November 10th 1827: [[*Lady Elisabeth Auckland relates that*]] Lord Byron *did* [(as she [[*Caroline Lamb*]] tells in Glenarvon Q.E.E.)] endeavour to make her think that he had murdered some one—never would give her his right hand—wore a glove on it &c. &c. This at first alarmed [Lady Caroline], but when she came to know him better, she saw through his acting—[Very evident from her account (Lady E. Said) that he had no passion—used to keep Lady Caroline off, she, by her own expression, being always making an offer of herself to him—one evening that she did so, he said—“No—no—not this evening—you have been dining at Holland House, and it would not be *beau*.” (what abomination!)—He was continually, too, impressing upon her the great crime it would be—reminding her of her love—L.Lamb &c. &c. The fact is, it was Byron's first liaison with any thing above the common & he wanted to make the most of it—The apparatus with which he surrounded the evening, when at last he yielded to it, seems to have been almost incredibly absurd—her head resting upon a skull, a case of loaded pistols between them, &c. &c.—I must enquire more about this ... (Journal III 1079).

10: Lord Holland has asked B. to write a prologue for the opening night of the new Drury Lane Theatre.

11: Horace Twiss: he is indeed a contestant, but Holland turns to B. after all entries have been rejected.

=racter to lose would risk it in an anonymous scramble, for the sake of their own feelings. – I have written to L^d. H. to thank him & decline the chance. – Betty¹² is performing here, I fear, very ill, his figure is that of a hippopotamus, his face like the Bull and mouth on the pannels of a heavy coach, his arms are fins fattened out of shape, his voice the gargling of an Alderman with the quinsey,¹³ and his acting altogether ought to be natural, for it certainly is like nothing that Art has ever yet exhibited on the stage. – Will you honour me with a line at your leisure? on the most indifferent subject you please & believe me

ever y^{rs} very affect^{ly}

B.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 13th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 73-6; QI 143-6; BLJ II 193-6)

[Cheltenham Sept^r. Thirteenth / 1812 / The Lady Melbourne / Brocket Hall / Welwyn / Herts / Byron]

Cheltenham Sept^r 13th. 1812

My dear Lady M. –

The end of L^y. B's¹⁴ letter shall be the beginning of mine “for Heaven's sake do not lose your hold on him” pray don't – I repeat, – & assure you it is a very firm one “but the yoke is easy & the burthen is light”¹⁵ to use one of my scriptural phrases. –

So far from being ashamed of being governed like Lord Delacour¹⁶ or any other Lord or master, I am always but too happy to find one to regulate or misregulate me, & I am as docile as a Dromedary & can bear almost as much. – Will you undertake me? If you are sincere (which I still a little hesitate in believing) give me but time, let hers retain her in Ireland – the “gayer” the better, I want

1:2

her just to be sufficiently gay that I may have enough to bear me out on my own part, grant me but till Dec^r. & if I do not disenchant the Dulcinea & Don Quichotte both, – then I must attack the Windmills, & leave the land in quest of adventures. – In the mean time I must & do write the greatest absurdities to keep her “gay” & the more so because y^c. last epistle informed me that “8 guineas a mail & a packet could soon bring her to London” a threat which immediately called forth a letter worthy of the Grand Cyrus or the Duke of York, or any other hero of Madame Scudery or M^{rs}. Clarke.¹⁷ . – –
Poor L^y. B! with her hopes & her fears; in fact it is no jest for her – or indeed any

1:3

of us; I must let you into one little secret, her folly half did this, at y^c. commencement she piqued that “vanity” (which it would be the vainest thing on earth to deny) by telling me she was certain “I was not beloved,” that I was only led on for the sake of &^c. &^c.” this raised a devil between us which now will {only} be laid I do really believe in the Red sea, I made no answer, but determined not to pursue, for pursuit it was not – but to sit still, and – in a week after I was convinced – not that ———¹⁸ loved me – for I do not believe in the existence of what is called Love – but that any other man in my situation would have believed that he was loved. – Now my dear L^y. M. you are all out as to my real sentiments – I was, am, & shall be

1:4

I fear attached to another, one to whom I have never said much, but have never lost sight of, & the whole of this interlude has been the result of circumstances which it may be too late to regret. – – Do you suppose that at my time of life, were I so very far gone, that I should not be in Ireland or at least have followed into Wales, as it was hinted was expected – now they have crossed the channel I feel anything but regret, I told you in my two last, that I did not “like any other &^c. &^c.” I deceived you &

12: William Betty, famous child actor (now twenty-one).

13: Tonsillitis.

14: Lady Bessborough. This letter accompanies one of hers.

15: Biblical; Matthew 11:30.

16: In Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*.

17: Mrs Clarke, mistress to the Duke of York, had in 1809 been accused of influencing army patronage.

18: B. employs a low, distinct dash to signify “Caroline”.

myself in saying so, there was & is one whom I wished to marry, had not this affair intervened, or had not some occurrences rather discouraged me. –

When our Drama was “rising” (I’ll be d – d if it falls off I may say with Sir Fretful¹⁹) in the 5th act, it was no time to <tempo> hesitate, I had made up my mind, to bear

2:1

2) y^e. consequences of my own folly; honour pity, & a kind of affection all forbade me to shrink, but now if I can honorably be off, if you are not deceiving me, & if she does not take some accursed step to precipitate her own inevitable fall (if not with me, with some less lucky successor) if these impossibilities can be got over, all will be well. – If not, – she will travel. – – – As I have said so much I may as well say all – the woman I mean is Miss Milbank – I know nothing of her fortune, & I am told that her father is ruined, but my own will when my Rochdale arrangements are closed, be sufficient for both, my debts are not 25000 p^d.s & the deuce is in it, if with

2:2

R. & the surplus of N. I could not contrive to be as independent as half the peerage. – <But> I know little of her, & have not the most distant reason to suppose that I am at all a favourite in that quarter, but I never saw a woman whom I esteemed so much. – But that chance is gone – and there’s an end. – Now – my dear L^y. M. I am completely in your power, I have not deceived you; as to — I hope you will not deem it vanity – when I soberly say – that it would have been want of Gallantry – though the acme of virtue – if I had played the Scipio on this occasion.²⁰ – – If through your means, or any means, I can be free, or at least change my fetters, my regard

2:3

& admiration would not be increased, but my gratitude would, in the mean time it is by no means unfelt for what you have already done. – To L^y. B. I could not say all this, for she would with the best intentions, make the most absurd use of it; what a miserable picture does <their> {her} letter present of this daughter? she seems afraid to know her, & blind herself writes in such a manner as to open the eyes of all others. –

I am still here, in Holland’s house, quiet & alone without any wish to add to my acquaintances, your departure was I assure you much more regretted than that of any of your lineals or collaterals, so do not you go to Ireland

2:4

or I shall follow you oer “flood and fen” a complete Ignis fatuus – that is I the epithet will not apply to you, so we will divide the expression you would be the light & I the fool. –

I send you back the letter, & this fearful ream of my own. – C — is suspicious about our counter plots, & I am obliged to be as treacherous as Talleyrand, but remember that treachery is truth to you; I write as rarely as I can, but when I do, I must lie like George Rose,²¹ your name I never mention when I can help it; & all my amatory tropes & figures are exhausted – I have a glimmering of hope, I had lost it, it is renewed – all depends on it, her worst enemy could not wish her such a fate as now to be thrown back upon me. – y^{rs}. ever most {truly}

BN

[on inside of envelope:]

P.S. – Dear L^y. M. – Dont think me careless, my correspondence since I was sixteen has not been of a nature to allow of any trust except to a Lock & key, & I have of late been doubly guarded – the few letters of y^{rs}. & all others in case of the worst shall be sent back or burnt, surely after returning the one with M^r. L’s message, you will hardly suspect me of wishing to take any advantage, that was the only important one in <my> behalf of my own interests; – think me bad if you please, but not meanly so. <There is my own> L^y. B’s [Ms. *tear*: “under”] another cover accompanies this.

19: Sir Fretful Plagiary at Sheridan, *The Critic*, I i.

20: Scipio Africanus, offered a beautiful woman, restored her untouched to her fiancé.

21: Father of William Stewart Rose; made much money from government sinecures.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 15th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 76-8; QI 146-7; BLJ II 198-9)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.Cheltenham Sept^r. 15th. 1812My dear L^y. M. –

“If I were looking in your face entre les deux Yeux” I know not whether I should find “frankness or truth” – but {certainly} something which looks quite as well if not better than either, & whatever it may be I would not have it changed for any other expression; as it has defied <t/>Time, no wonder it should perplex me. – – “Manage her”! – it is impossible – & as to friendship – no – it must be broken off at once, & all I have left is to take some step which will make her hate me effectually, for she must be in extremes. – What you state however is to be dreaded, besides – she presumes upon the weakness & affection of all about her, and the very confidence & kindness which would break or

1:2

reclaim a good heart, merely lead her own farther from deserving them. – Were this but secure, you would find yourself mistaken in me; I speak from experience; except in one solitary instance, three months have ever cured me, take an example. – In the autumn of 1809 in the Mediterranean I was seized with an everlasting passion considerably more violent on my part than this has ever been²² – every thing was settled – & we (the we's of that day) were to set off for the Friuli; but lo! the Peace spoilt every thing, by putting this in possession of the French, & some particular occurrences in the interim determined me to go on to Constantinople. – However we were to meet next year at a certain time, though I told my amica there was no time like the present, & that I could not answer for the future. – She trusted to her power,

1:3

& I at the moment had certainly much greater doubts of her than myself. – A year sped & on my return <to> downwards, I found at Smyrna & Athens dispatches, requiring the performance of this “bon billet qu’a la Chatre” & telling me that one of us had returned to the spot on purpose. – But things had altered as I foresaw, & I proceeded very leisurely, not arriving till some months after, pretty sure that in the interim my Idol was in no want of Worshippers. – But she was there, & we met – at the Palace & the Governor²³ (y^e. most accomodating of all possible chief Magistrates) was kind enough to leave us to come to the most diabolical of explanations. – It was in the Dogdays, during a Sirocco – (I almost perspire now with the thoughts of it) during the intervals of an intermittent fever (my love had also intermitted with my malady) and

1:4

I certainly feared the Ague & my Passion would both return in full force. – I however got the better of both, & she sailed up the Adriatic & I down to the Straits. – I had certes a great deal to contend against, for the Lady (who was a select friend of the Queen of Naples) had something to gain in a few points, & nothing to lose in <charact> reputation, & was a woman perfectly mistress of herself & every art of intrigue personal or political, not at all in love, but very able to persuade me that she was so, & sure that I should make a most convenient & complaisant fellow traveller. – – She is now I am told writing her Memoirs at Vienna, in which I shall cut a very indifferent figure; & nothing survives of this most ambrosial amour, which made me on one occasion risk my life,²⁴ & on another almost drove me mad, but a few Duke of Yorkish letters, & certain baubles which I dare swear by this time have decorated the hands of half Hungary, & all Bohemia. – Cosi finiva la Musica.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 18th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 78-81; QI 147-50; BLJ II 199-200)

[Cheltenham Sept^r. nineteenth / 1812 / The Viscountess Melbourne / Brocket Hall / Welwyn / Herts / Byron]**Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.**

22: For Constance Spencer Smith (“Florence” in CHP). B. exaggerates the intensity of his feelings.

23: The Governor of Malta, Major-General Hildebrande Oakes.

24: Occasion unidentified.

Cheltenham Sept^r. 18th. 1812My dear L^y. Melbourne

I only wish you thought your influence worth a “boast” I should look upon it as the highest compliment paid to myself. – To you it would be none, for (besides the little value of the thing) you have seen enough to convince you how easily I am governed by anyone’s presence, but you would be obeyed even in absence. – All persons in this situation are so from having too much heart or too little head, one or both, set mine down according to your own calculations. You & yours seem to me much the same as the Ottoman family to the faithful, they frequently change their rulers, but never the reigning race; I am perfectly convinced that if I fell in love with a woman of Thibet she would turn

1:2

out an emigré cousin of some of you. –

You ask “am I sure of myself?” I answer – no – but you are, which I take to be a much better thing. – Miss M. I admire because she is a clever woman, an amiable woman & of high blood, for I have still a few Norman & Scotch inherited prejudices on the last score, were I to marry. – As to Love, that is done in a week, (provided the Lady has a reasonable share) besides marriage goes on better with esteem & confidence than romance, & she is quite pretty enough to be loved by her husband, without being so glaringly beautiful as to attract too many rivals. – She always reminds me of “Emma” in the modern *Griselda*,²⁵ & whomever I may marry, that is the woman I would wish to have married. – It is odd enough that my

1:3

acquaintance with C—— commenced with a confidence on my part about your Niece, C—— herself (as I have often told her) was then not at all to my taste, nor I, (& I may believe her) to hers, & we shall end probably as we begun. – However, if after all “it is decreed on high” that, like James the Fatalist,²⁶ I must be hers, she shall be mine as long as it pleases her, & the circumstances under which she becomes so, will at least make me devote my life to the vain attempt of reconciling her to herself, wretched as it would render me, she should never know it; the sentence once past, I could never restore that which she had lost, but all the reparation I could make should be made, & the cup drained to the very dregs by myself so that it’s bitterness passed from her. –

1:4

In the mean time, till it is irrevocable, I must & may fairly endeavour to extricate both from a situation, which from our total want of all but selfish considerations has brought us to the brink of the gulph, before I sink I will at least have a swim for it, though I wish with all my heart it was the Hellespont instead, or that I could cross this as easily as I did y^e. other. – One reproach I cannot escape, whatever happens hereafter she will charge it on me & so shall I, & I fear that

“The first step of error none e’er could recall
And the woman once fallen forever must fall,
Pursue to the last the career she begun,
And be false unto many, as faithless to one.”

Forgive one stanza of my own sad rhymes, you know I never did inflict any upon you before, nor will again. – What think you of L^y. B’s last? she is losing those brilliant hopes expressed in the former epistle. – I have written 3 letters to Ireland,

2:1

& cannot compass more, the last to L^y. B. herself in which I never mentioned L^y. C’s name nor yours (if I recollect aright) nor alluded to either. – It is an odd thing to say, but I am sure L^y. B. will be a little provoked, if I am the first to change, for like the Governor of Tilbury fort, although “the Countess is resolved” the mother intenerisce un poco,²⁷ & doubtless will expect her daughter to be adored (like

25: By Maria Edgeworth.

26: In the novel by Diderot.

27: Sheridan, *The Critic*, II ii (travestied); compare *The Two Foscari*, epigraph.

an Irish Lease) for a term of 99 years. – I say it again, that happy as she must & will be to have it broken off anyhow, she will hate me if I don't break my heart; now is it not so? – laugh – but answer me truly? – – I am not sorry that C— sends you extracts from my epistles, I deserve it for the passage I shewed once to you, but remember that was in the outset & when every thing said or sung was exculpatory, & innocent & what not – Moreover recol=

2:2

=lect what absurdities a man must write to his Idol, & that “garbled extracts” prove nothing without the context; for my own part I declare that I recollect no such proposal of an epistolary truce, & the Gambols at divers houses of entertainment with y^e. express & c. tend y^e. rather to confirm my statement. But I cannot be sure, or answerable for all I have said or unsaid since “Jove himself (some with M^{rs}. Malaprop would read Job) has forgotten to “laugh at our perjuries”²⁸ I am certain that I tremble for the trunkfuls of my contradictions, since like a Minister or a woman she may one day exhibit them in some magazine or some quartos of villainous memoirs written in her 7000th. love fit. – Now dear L^y. M. my paper spares you – Believe me with great regard yrs ever, BN

[on inside of envelope:]

P.S.

In your last you say you are “surrounded by fools” – why then “Motley’s the only wear”

“Oh that I were a fool a motley fool

“I am ambitious of a motley coat”

well will you answer “thou shalt have one”²⁹

Chi va piano va sano

e chi va sano va lontano³⁰

My progress has been “lontano” but alas y^e “sano” & “piano” are past praying for. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, September 19th 1812:

(Source: Ms. not found; text from Mabel, Countess of Airlie, *In Whig Society*, Hodder and Stoughton 1921, pp.132-3; BLJ II 202, with caveat as to its accuracy)

Sepr. 19th. [1812]

Miss M.³¹ I admire, & as I said in my last could love if she would let me, still I cannot believe what you say, that she is not engaged to E.³² I have been assured of the contrary, by such good authority. Aunts are not trusted on such subjects [M.M. is a clever woman an Amiable Woman, & of high Blood, for I have still a few Norman & Scotch inherited prejudices on that score.] Whatever you may think, I assure you I have a very domestick turn, & should wish to be married to a Woman whom I could love & esteem & in whom I could place the greatest confidence ...

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 21st 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 81-3; BLJ II 202-3)

[Cheltenham Sept^r. twenty first 1812 // The Lady Melbourne / Brocket Hall / Welwyn / Herts // Byron]

Cheltenham. Sept^r. 21st. 1812

Dear Lady M. –

I have had at last a letter offering a kind of release, & demanding an answer to a curious question viz – “whether I could live without her”? I began an answer particularly as I have not written these 3 weeks, but bewildering myself in the course of the first sentence, threw it into the fire, & shall write no more. – They, & she in particular have been extremely gay, to which I can have no objection whatever, the best proof of which is that I have not expressed any; L^y. B. I rather think will encourage some other connection or connections, as a temporary expedient, poor soul, her remedy would yield me eventually ample revenge if I felt any resentment against her which indeed I do not. –

I think my dear L^y. M. you must agree with me

²⁸: Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, II ii 91-2.

²⁹: Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II vii 42-3.

³⁰: “He who goes quietly goes safely, and he who goes safely goes a long way”.

³¹: Annabella Milbanke.

³²: George Eden: Annabella is not engaged to him.

1:2

that —³³ will fulfil y^e. prophecy in my last, & would, had the present object of your fears never existed. – I have not written, because it would only lead to endless recapitulation, recrimination, botheration (take a Kilkenny phrase) accusation, & all – ations but salvation. – Before I become candidate for the distinguished honour of Nepotism to your Ladyship, it will be as well for me to know that your Niece is not already disposed of to a better bidder, if not I should like it of all things, were it only for the pleasure of calling you Aunt! & soliciting your benediction. – My only objection (supposing of course that y^e. Lady's was got over) would be to my Mamma,³⁴ from whom I have already by instinct imbibed a mortal aversion. – I am sadly out of practice in this sort of suit, & shall make

1:3

some villainous blunder; but I will try & if this fails, anything else. – Your letter arrived just in time to prevent me from setting off for Rochdale, where I am going to purchase the great Tythes of 12000 ac^{rs} of waste which <Xx> cannot {be} enclosed without my permission, & as enclosure alone makes the said tithes valuable, & the Archbishop wishes to sell them, & I have hitherto held out against enclosing with the view of obtaining them, my Agent is gone instead, which will do quite as well, & save me a tiresome journey. C—— last letter is full of reproaches, which I don't feel at all disposed to controvert, nor to recriminate; but how could anything of this kind be carried without 10000 perfidies, particularly one so vilely perplexed in all its branches! – I cannot write,

1:4

I would not seem jealous, & it would be under all circumstances, <unf> improper to appear indifferent and – and – Oh I am in a diabolical dilemma – my great hope rests in the Kilkenny theatricals, some hero of the Sock, some Gracioso of the buskin, will perhaps <paralyze> {electrify} poor L^y. B. – & transfer her alarms to an Irish Roscius. – If I marry, positively it must be in three weeks; in the mean time I am falling in love as much as I can with a new Juliet, who sets off for London in the long Coach tomorrow to appear on (not in) Covent Garden, with an Italian songstress, with a Welch Sempstress, with my Agent's wife & daughter, & a picture of Buonaparte's Empress who looks as fair & foolish <&> {as} he is dark & diabolical. – Now my dear L^y. M. if I could not frank my letters I should feel for you, as it is, if they wake you in the morning it is good for y^e. health, & if they make you sleep at night – still better. – ever y^{rs}. most affect^{ly}. & truly

BN

[on inside of envelope:]

P.S.

A letter of mine to you (before the voyage) was found by her <god> {Heaven} knows where, & on this she has again expatiated – n'importe – but who was careless? ma tante – methinks that reproach was somewhat misplaced. – If you left it in y^e. way on purpose – it had a blessed effect – it is but adding another winding to our Labyrinth, – she quotes from it passages which I recollect – how could you Lady M. – how could you “wear a pocket with a hole [*Ms. tear*] —

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 25th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 83-6; QI 150-1; BLJ II 208-9)

The first mention of Byron's Italian opera singer.

Sept^r. 25th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. – It would answer no purpose to write a syllable on any subject whatever & neither accelerate nor retard what we wish to prevent, she must be left to Chance; conjugal affection and the Kilkenny Theatricals are equally in your favour – for my part it is an accursed business towards nor from which I shall not move a single step; if she throws herself upon me “cosi finiva” if not, the sooner it is over the better – from this moment I have done with it, only before she returns allow me to know that I may act accordingly; but there will be nothing to fear before that time, as if a woman & a <sh>

33: Again B. uses a dash rather than write “Caroline”.

34: Lady Noel, his prospective “Mamma”.

selfish woman also, would not fill up the vacancy with the first comer? – As to Annabella she requires time & all the

1:2

cardinal virtues, & in the <meantime> {interim} I am a little verging towards one³⁵ who <reg> demands neither, & saves me besides the trouble of marrying by being married already. – She besides does not speak English, & to me nothing but Italian, a great point, for from certain coincidences the very sound of that language is Music to me,³⁶ & she has black eyes & not a very white skin, & reminds me of many in the Archipelago I wished to forget, & makes me forget what I ought to remember, all which are against me. – I only wish she <ha> did not swallow so much supper, chicken wings – sweetbreads, – custards – peaches & Port wine – a woman should never be seen eating or drinking, unless it be lobster sallad & Champaigne the only truly feminine & becoming viands. – I recollect imploring one Lady not to eat more than a fowl at a sitting without effect, & have never yet made a single proselyte to Pythagoras. ———

1:3

Now a word to yourself – a much more pleasing topic than any of the preceding. – I have no very high opinion of your sex, but when I do see a woman superior not only to all her own but to most of ours I worship her in proportion as I despise the rest. – And when I know that men of the first judgement & the most distinguished abilities have entertained & do entertain an opinion which my own humble observation without any great effort of discernment has enabled me to confirm on the same subject, you will not blame me for following the example of my elders & betters & admiring you certainly as much as you ever were admired. – My only regret is that the very awkward circumstances in which we are placed prevents & will prevent the improvement of an acquaintance which I now almost regret having made – but recollect whatever happens that the loss of it must give me more pain

1:4

than even the precious acquisition (&this is saying much) which will occasion that loss. L^d. Jersey has reinvited me to M.³⁷ for the 4 Oct^f. & I will be there if possible, in the mean time whatever step you take to break off this affair has my full concurrence – but what you wished me to write, would be a little too indifferent; and that now would be an insult, & I am much more unwilling to hurt her feelings now than ever, (not from the mere apprehension of a disclosure in her wrath) but I have always felt that one who has given up <all> {<so> much,} has a claim upon me (at least – whatever she deserve from others) for every respect that she may not feel her own degradation, & this is the reason that I have not written at all lately, lest some expression might be misconstrued by her. – When the Lady herself begins the quarrel & adopts a new “Cortejo”³⁸ then my Conscience is comforted. – She has not written to me for some days, which is either a very bad or very good omen. y^{rs}. ever BN

2:1

I observe that C—— in her late epistles, lays peculiar stress upon her powers of attraction, upon W’s³⁹ attachment &^c. & by way of enhancing the extreme value of her regards, tells me, that she “could make any one in love with her” an amiable accomplishment but unfortunately a little too general to be valuable, for was there ever yet a woman, not absolutely disgusting, who could not say or do the same thing? any woman can make a man in love with her, show me her who can keep him so? – You perhaps can show me such a woman but I have not seen her for these – three weeks. –

[2:2 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 28th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 86-9; BLJ II 216-19)

35: This woman has never been identified.

36: B. means his “Italian” lessons with Niccolo Giraud: a secret to which Lady Melbourne is unlikely to be privy.

37: Middleton Stoney, the Jersey’s estate in Oxfordshire.

38: Compare *Beppo*, 37, 3, and B.’s note.

39: William Lamb, Caroline’s husband.

[Cheltenham Sept^r. twenty eighth 1812 // The Lady Melbourne / <Whitehall / London> Brocket Hall / Welwyn / Herts // Byron]

Sept^r. 28th. 1812

My dear Lady M. –

The non-mention of Miss R certainly looks very suspicious but your correspondent has fallen into a mistake in which I am sure neither y^e. lady nor myself could possibly join. – Since your departure I have hardly entered a single house, the Rawdons & the Oxfords & a family named Macleod are the only persons I know; L^y. C. Rawdon gave me a general retainer to her box at the theatre, where I generally go, which has probably produced the surmise you mention. – Miss R. has always been a mighty favourite with me, because she is unaffected, & very accomplished, & lived amongst the Greeks of Venice & Trieste consequently well versed in many topics which are common to her & me & would be very stupid to any one else; I moreover think her very pretty though not at all in the style of beauty which I most admire; but she waltzes, & is for many reasons the very last woman

1:2

on earth I should covet (unless she were “my neighbor’s wife” & then the breaking a commandment would go far in her behalf) nor do I think that our acquaintance has extended even to a common flirtation, besides her views are in another quarter, & so most assuredly are mine. – I never heard of the report L^y. M starts from, & I am sure you will do me the justice to believe, I never dreamed of such a thing, & had I heard it should have disbelieved such nonsense as I do now; – I am not at all ashamed of my own bias towards your niece, nor should have the least objection to its’ being posted up in Charing Cross, though I should never wish to hazard a refusal. – – I certainly did wish to cultivate her acquaintance, but C– told me she was engaged to Eden, so did several others, M^{rs}. L. her great friend, was of opinion (& upon my honour I believed her) that she neither did could nor

1:3

ought to like me, & was moreover certain that E. would be the best husband in the world & I its’ <Anith> Antithesis, & certainly her word deserved to be taken for one of us. – Under all these circumstances, & others I need not recapitulate, was I to hazard my heart with a woman I was very much inclined to like, but at the same time sure could be nothing to me? – & then you know my unfortunate manner which always leads me to talk too much to some particular person or not at all. – At present as <you> I told you in my last I am rather captivated with a woman not very beautiful, but very much in the style I like, dark & lively, & neither more nor less than “La Pucilta” of the Opera, whom I see sometimes at Col. Macleod’s & whenever Italian is spoken I always strive to repair y^e. inroads want of practice make in my memory of that dearest of all languages. – – She is very fond of her husband, which is all the better, as thus, if a woman is attached to her husband how much

1:4

more will she naturally like one who is not her husband – in the same manner as a woman does not always dislike a man who is violently in love with another, arguing says Fielding in this way, “if M^r. — loves M^{rs}. or Miss + <ha> {so} much, how much more will he love me who am so far the superior {not only} of M^{rs}. or Miss + but of all other Mistresses or Misses whatsoever?” – – You can hardly say I do not trust you when I tell you all these fooleries – – At this moment, another express from Ireland!!! more Scenes! – this woman will never rest till she has made us all – what she & I at least deserve. – I must now write to her – I wrote L^y. B. a letter, which she was fool enough to shew her, though I addressed it under cover to L^d. B. – that she might not – her name was not mentioned in it, but it was easy to discern by the contents, that I was not eager for their return. –

2:1

2) 6. o Clock.

So – having now remanded M^r. OBrien (the Irish Cupid <by> {on} whose wings this despatch was wafted) back to Waterford – I resume merely to say that I see nothing but marriage & a speedy one can save me; if your Niece is attainable I should prefer her – if not – the very first woman who does not look as if she would spit in my face, amongst the variety of spouses provided for me by your correspondents &^c. I am infinitely amused with my Cameriero’s (who has lived with me since I was ten

years old & been over the Mediterranean a prey to all the Mosquitoes & Siroccos in the Levant in my service)⁴⁰ he is eternally sounding the praises of a Dutch Widow⁴¹ now here of great

2:2

riches & rotundity, & very pretty withal; whose Abigail has made a conquest of him (a married man) & they have agreed how infinitely convenient it would be that as they can't marry, their master & mistress should. – We shall meet at Middleton I hope <dear> mia carissima Zia – I wish my Nepotism was well over – I do not care at all about Sir R's involvements, for I think that with the command of floating capital which my late N. Business has put in my power, some arrangements might be made with him that might be advantageous to both – supposing this marriage could be effected. – When they come here I don't see how we are to meet for I go no – where – Does Annabella waltz? – it is an odd question – but a very essential point with me. – I wish somebody would say at once that I wish to propose to her – but I have great doubts of her – it rests with herself entirely. – Believe me

dear L^y. M. ever y^{rs}, most affect^{ly}.

/
/ Bn /
/

3:1

P.S. – I have written you the vilest & most Egotistical letter that ever was scribbled but Caro's courier made me feel selfish & you will pardon my catching the infection. – Your apology for L^y. M's appellation was needless – though all my rhymes have got for me is a villainous nickname. – I know her, but latterly we cut – I suppose upon this most stupid rumour. I don't know how I shall manage this same wooing – I shall be like Comus & the Lady; I am sadly out of practice lately, except for a few sighs to a Gentlewoman at supper who was too much occupied with ye. fourth wing of her second chicken to mind anything that was [*Ms. tear*] material.

[3:2 has the address.]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, from Bocket Hall, Hertfordshire, September 29th 1812:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.ff.43-5: Gross 118-22)

[The Lord Byron / Post Office / Cheltenham]

Lady Melbourne's first surviving letter to Byron. She answers the previous item but one.

[*at top of first side:*] She desires me to tell her whether

B – H – 29th Sep^r. 1812

I have heard from you since I left

C^h perhaps she may have ask'd you

y^e same question – let us be in y^e same story,

I shall give no answer till I hear from you

or see you, therefore decide what we shall say

Dear L^d B.

I am ashamed to think of the number of Letters I have plagued you with Lately, yet instead of reforming, I send you another, and an enclosure. You see how I go on trusting you, & putting myself entirely in y^r. power, treat me generously, & confess that I give you full proof, that I had no secret understanding with L^x B – in my Letter I desired she would {tell} me her real opinion about C – which she says she can not do, – I have no belief in the parts about W^m unless it is, that she can manage him more easily than she can any other person, & she thinks it as well to give it y^e. appearance of fondness, if she determines to remain – You are too suspicious, after all I have said, it makes me half angry – in one of your last Letters you hinted y^r. perhaps I left your Letter in y^e. way on purpose, these are your “wounding flouts” and shew what those persons are to expect “that lye within the mercy of your Wit”

1:2

40: A very approximate description of Fletcher.

41: “Dutch widow” – prostitute.

I can not bear her having got that Letter whether she opened it, or found it, 'tis all one, it will be long before I forgive it, if it was either on my Table or in my Drawer, she has added falsehood to her other iniquities, for in that case she could not think it was for her, – I have not been in right good humour since I heard it. – what high flown compliments you have paid me, for Heavens sake lower me to my proper level, or I shall be quite alarm'd when I see you again, I shall neither dare Speak before you, nor to you, & as to talking my usual nonsense that must be quite out of the question, as I shall soon drop from this Pinnacle where you have placed me do let me down easily, that I may not break my Bones by a sudden fall; what can you have in y^f. Head, “Men of distinguished abilities” ce sont des Hommes, comme les autres, & I am a Woman, comme les autres, Superior in nothing – I happen fortunately to be gifted with a fund of good Nature & cheerfulness, & very great Spirits – & have a little more tact than my Neighbours, & people call me pleasant because I am always inclined in conversation to enter into y^c Subjects that seem most adapted to the taste of those with whom I happen to be – when they are not too high for aspiration (as M^f Ward says) like some

1:3

I have lately been with – You say, “I admire you certainly as much as ever you were admired,” & a great deal more I assure you than ever I was admired, in y^c same way, I may have been beloved – but Love is not admiration – Lovers admire of course without knowing why – Yours therefore is much more flattering as I s^d the other day – but you quite astonished me when I found your usual playfulness chang'd into such a formal tirade – I have hardly yet recover'd my Surprise – now I have told you every thing & have shewn myself truly to you; I can not see why you should wish that you had not known me, – it can not lead to any regrets, unless circumstances should not stop it entirely, our Friendship will be very pleasant to both as any sentiment must be where all is sunshine – &, where love does not introduce itself, there can be no jealousys, torments, & quarrels; – & should this catastrophe take place, it will, at least to me, always be a pleasing recollection, that we should have been good friends (there is something in your expression I like very much) if imperious circumstances had not prevented it, – once you told me you did not understand friendship – I told you I would teach it you, & so I will, if you do not allow C– to take you quite away do you remember some Verses of Voltaire's, {where} after lamenting that he was old – he says

Du Ciel alors daignant descendre,
D'amitié vint a mon secours,
Elle estoit peut etre aussi tendre –
Mais moins vive que les amours –⁴²

1:4

I admire you entirely for your resolutions respecting her but D^f. L^d B you deceive yourself you never will be able to keep them, what, pass your time in endeavouring to put her into good humour, & to satisfy her, & disguise from her that you are unhappy, fine Dreams indeed, This first is much beyond y^f. power and finding how ill you succeed, must inevitably prevent you from perishing in y^c last – do not however mistake me, I would not have you say a harsh sentence to her for the World, or any thing that could be deem'd insulting. I had not y^e least intention of advising you to do it, there is no kindness that I would not have you shew her, but sacrificing yourself to her, would only be romantic,⁴³ & not kind – for supposing y^c Sentiments you express to me, are real, it would be quite y^c contrary for it must lead to unhappiness & misery, if a little trifling expression of coldness at present would prevent this finale, how much more kind, to give a little present pain, & avoid her total ruin; however I do not mean to give any advice, you probably know much better than I do, how to act; You may depend upon my giving you the earliest intelligence in my power of their return. I hear no mention of it yet – & if they come back thro' Scotland which was their intention, we shall hear of their leaving Ireland a long time before they arrive here – I must however add that I think you attach too much blame to yourself – she was no Novice, & tho' I give her credit for being what one must believe, every Heroine of a Romance to be, (except Mad^e Cottins)⁴⁴ yet she knew enough to be upon her guard, & can not be look'd upon as the Victim of a designing Man – all the World are of a very different opinion – she always told me you

42: “Deigning thus to descend from the sky, she comes to my aid out of friendship; she was perhaps as tender, though less lively than love” (Voltaire, *Année 1741*, third verse).

43: “Quixotic” – “foolishly idealistic”.

44: Authoress of *Amélie de Mansfield*, *Elisabeth ou les Exilés de Sibérie*, etc. “Madame Cottin was a plain woman, and might have been virtuous, it may be presumed, without much interruption” – *Observations upon Observations*.

continually s^d – that she had exposed herself so much before she was acquainted with you, y^t. her character could not suffer, as it was already gone – I abused you at the time, for giving it this color

2:1

tho' what you s^d was perfectly true, & in my opinion exculpates you entirely – Poor Annabella, her innocent Eyes will have to contend with the Black & probably experienced ones of y^t Innamorata recollect in y^e mean time how much they will improve if she should be in love with you; y^e others are acquernis⁴⁵ & will be no better; Eyes require y^t sort of inspiration. Many people have fine Eyes who do not know what to do with them & many have nothing behind them, then it is hopeless – Mon cher Neveu, vous etes bien changeant, much like the Man in y^e farce we saw together (the Weathercock) do you recollect it – I thought then it was a character not to be found in nature⁴⁶ – however, the wind that blows one way may blow from y^e contrary point to morrow – So pens [*Ms. tear: “ez”*] but where is all y^t boasted power of forgetting those you have liked – a Sound brings those objects (I put them in y^e plural) back, to y^t recollection & displays all ye charms y^t had captivated you – & you fall in love anew, but not with them – with that sound – something like Vapid⁴⁷ I think, & his Grandmother's picture – I can forgive any thing but the Custom, Post is very bad, & weather too, does she pick the Chicken Bones, like Catilini.⁴⁸ do you think you can manage both her and C – impossible, as a friend I say flirt as much as you please, but do not get into a serious Scrape before you are safe from the present one –

I have been two days at Home Tete a Tete with Mon Mari. he has not been well, & I am in y^e greatest alarm lest he should not think himself sufficiently

2:2 [*above address:*] recover'd to go to M – if this should be y^e case, I will let you know it – Tho' I conclude you will hither at all events if you can tear yourself away – I have no guess whether y^e others have left London y^{rs} D^r L^d B truly EM

As I was folding up this Letter, a Servant arrived f^m town & brought me two Letters f^m C – if I know her, vous n'en etes pas quite, both y^e Letters are written on the same day, one full of Spirits, gayeté, Dinner Parties, &c. &c. y^e other false written to deceive me, talking of her unhappiness & affecting to be perfectly [*below address:*] quiet & resign'd – as this is not in her Nature, you will most likely, know the contrary by this time – she is trying to act upon my feelings, & to make me tell her something about you. This I shall not do, – she says you are angry begs me to tell her why – entreats me to speak openly – & she will not betray me perhaps I have shewn you her last Letter – if so she will forgive me & so on

I am now inclined to think that if you could get her into a quiet state by any means, it would be y^e best chance – you might agree to see her quietly when she returns, provided she makes none of y^e scenes she is so fond of it might possibly go off in that way, but it never can while she is in this consistent state of imbalance, and whilst she thinks all about her wish to put an end to it – if she thought her friends cared less she would be more likely to take some other Fancy – the result of all this seems to me that y^e best thing you can do, is to marry & that in fact you can get out of this Scrape by no other means – – –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, September 30th 1812 (?):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 89; BLJ II 222)

The first sheet of this letter is missing.

2) It is not I who am to be feared now, but her with her Pique; I need not repeat that I lay no stress upon attachment, two balls & one admirer will settle the last to her heart's content. – I do not at all know how to deal with her, because she is unlike every one else. – My letters have not reached her in Ireland, & she complains on that acc^t. the fault is not mine, I have written twice but the Post has been negligent, or L^y. B diligent, & they will make her do some silly thing. – – If we are not enemies before their return, you will inform me when they are expected, & I will be out of the way, unless something occurs to make that unnecessary. – I shall not write any more to Ireland, if I can avoid it, in fact I have said & unsaid & resaid till I am exhausted – & you will think that I have transferred my tediousness & my

45: “acquired”.

46: J.T.Allingham's *The Weathercock* was the play in which B. had acted the leading role of Tristram Fickle at Southwell in 1806.

47: Gross reads “Vassir”.

48: For Angelica *Catalani*, famous soprano.

2:2

letters from her to you.⁴⁹ – I would marry before they return, this would settle it at once, but I am new to that business, never having made a proposal in my life (though I was brought up till sixteen to be married to one who was older than myself & could not wait)⁵⁰ & never married except by the month in the Levant where I was divorced twenty times from those who have been divorced twenty times before & since & are now widowed again I dare say. – Besides I do not know a single gentlewoman who would venture upon me, but that seems the only rational outlet from this adventure. – – I admired your niece, but she is engaged to Eden – – Besides she deserves a better heart than mine. – What shall I do – shall I advertise? – I thank you so much for your letters, on all topics different or indifferent they are most welcome. –

Cheltenham is a desert, nothing but the Waters detain me here. – One word to break the monotony of my days with delight ever y^{as}. most truly

/
/ BN /
/

October 14th 1812: Annabella explains to Lady Melbourne why she cannot accept Byron as a husband. Lady Melbourne forwards the letter to Byron.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, October 17th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 90-2; BLJ II 226-7)

Byron puts no salutation. Melbourne does not want him to address her as “Zia” (“Aunt”).

Cheltenham Oct^r. 17th. 1812

“Cut her!” My dear L^y. M. marry – Mahomet forbid! – I am sure we shall be better friends than before & if I am not embarrassed by all this I cannot see for the soul of me why she should – assure her con tutto rispetto that The subject shall never be renewed in any shape whatever, & assure yourself my carissima (not Zia what then shall it be? chuse your own name) that were it not for this embarras with C. I would much rather remain as I am. – – I have had so very little intercourse with the fair Philosopher that if when we meet I should endeavour to improve our acquaintance she must not mistake me, & assure her I never shall mistake her. – I never did you will allow; – & God knows whether I am right or not, but I do think I am not very apt to think myself encouraged. – She is perfectly right in every point of view, & during the slight suspense I felt

1:2

something very like remorse for sundry reasons not at all connected with C nor with any occurrences since I knew you or her or hers; finding I must marry however on that score, I should have preferred a woman of birth & talents, but such a woman was not at all to blame for not preferring me; my heart never had an opportunity of being much interested in the business, further than that I should have very much liked to be your relation. – And now to conclude like L^d. Foppington,⁵¹ “I have lost a thousand women in my time but never had the ill manners to quarrel with them for such a trifle.” – Talking of addresses put me in mind of my address which has been murdered (I hear) in the delivery & mauled (I see) in the newspapers, & you don’t tell me whether you heard it recited, I almost wish you may not, if this be the case. – I am asked to L^d. O.’s & L^d. Harrowby’s⁵² &

1:3

am wavering between the two. – I cannot sufficiently thank you for all the trouble you have taken on my account, the interest with which you honour me would amply repay for fifty vexations even if I felt any & perhaps I do without knowing it; but I can’t tell how it is, but I think C. may be managed now as well as if the whole had taken place if she has either pride or principle, because she may now be

49: Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, III v 21.

50: A palpable falsehood; there was no such engagement.

51: In Colley Cibber’s *The Careless Husband*.

52: Harrowby was Home Secretary. Compare B. to H., March 29th 1820: “And if they [*the Cato Street Conspirators*] had killed poor Harrowby – in whose house I have been five hundred times – at dinners and parties – his wife is one of “the Exquisites” – and t’other fellows – what end would it have answered? –”

convinced with a little dexterity at her return that I am most anxious to end every thing – added to which the present denial will lessen me in her estimation as an article of value, & her Vanity will help marvellously to her conversion. – –

You talk of my “religion” that rests between Man & {his} Maker & to him only can my feelings be known, for A. it had been sufficient not to find me an “infidel” in anything else. –

1:4

I must now conclude for I am pressed by the post – pray let me hear from you often & believe me ever my dear L^y. M.

y^{rs}. most affect^{ly}.

B.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, October 18th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 92-4; QI 152-4; BLJ II 229-31)

Oct^r. 18th. 1812

My dear Lady M. – – Of A. I have little to add, but I do not regret what has passed; the report alluded to had hurt her feelings, & she has now regained her tranquillity by the refutation to her own satisfaction without disturbing mine. – This was but fair – & was not unexpected by me, all things considered perhaps it could not have been better. –

I think of her nearly as I did, the specimen you send me is more favourable to her talents than her discernment,⁵³ & much too indulgent to the subject she has chosen, in some points the resemblance is very exact, but you have not sent me the whole (I imagine) by the abruptness of both beginning & end. – I am glad that your opinion coincides with mine on the subject of her abilities & her excellent qualities, in both these points she is singularly fortunate. – Still there is something of the woman about her; her preferring that the letter to you should be sent forward to me per esempio appears as if though she would not

1:2

encourage, she was not disgusted with being admired. – I also may hazard a conjecture that an answer addressed to herself might not have been displeasing, but of this you are the best judge from actual observation – I cannot however see the necessity of its' being forwarded unless <it> {I} was either to admire the composition or reply to y^e. contents. – One I certainly do, the other would merely lead to mutual compliments very sincere but somewhat tedious. – By the bye, what two famous letters your own are, I never saw such traits of discernment, observation of character, knowledge of your own sex. & sly concealment of your knowledge of the foibles of ours, than in these epistles, & so that I preserve you always as a friend & sometimes as a correspondent (the oftener the better) believe me my dear L^y. M. I shall regret nothing but – the week we passed at Middleton till I can enjoy such another. –

1:4

Now for C – your name was never mentioned or hinted at – the passage was nearly as follows – “I know from the best authority, your own, that your time has passed in a very different manner, nor do I object to it, amuse yourself, but leave me quiet, what would you have? – I go nowhere, I see no one, I mix with no society – I write when it is proper – these perpetual causeless caprices are equally selfish & absurd.” &^c. &^c. & so on in answer to her description of her lonely lovelorn condition!!! much in the same severer style. – And now, this must end, if she persists I will leave the country, I shall enter into no explanations, write no epistles softening or severe; nor will I meet her if it can be avoided, & certainly never but in society, the sooner she is apprized of this the better, but with one so totally devoid of all conduct it is difficult to decide. –

1:4

I have no objection to her knowing what passed about A. – if it would have any good effect, nor do I wish it to be concealed, even from others or the world in general, my vanity will not be piqued by it's development, & though It was not accepted I am not at all ashamed of my admiration of the amiable

53: Annabella had told Melbourne that B.'s “love of goodness in its chastest form, and his abhorrence of all that degrades human nature, prove the uncorrupted purity of his moral sense” (quoted Q I 152n).

Mathematician. – I did not reproach C for “her behaviour” but the misrepresentation of it, & her suspicions of mine; why tell me she was dying instead of dancing when I had much rather hear she was acting, as she in fact acted? viz – like any {other} person in good health, tolerable society & high spirits. – – In short I am not her lover, & would rather not be her friend, though I never can nor will be her enemy. – If it can be ended let it be without any interference, I will have nothing more to do with it, her letters (all but one about L^d. Clare unanswered & the answer to that strictly confined to his concerns except a hint on vanity at the close) are filled with

2:1

2) the most ridiculous egotism, “how the Duke’s mob observed her, how the boys followed her, the women caressed & the men admired, & how many lovers were all sacrificed to this brilliant fit of constancy. – W</w>ho wants it forsooth or expects it after sixteen? – – Can’t she take example from me, do I embarrass myself about A? – or the fifty B. C. D. E. F. U. H’s &^c. &^c. that have preceded her in cruelty or kindness (the latter always the greatest plague) not I, & really <without> sans phrase I think my loss is the most considerable. – – –

I hear L^y. Holland is ill I hope not seriously. – L^d. O. went today, & I am still here with some idea of proceeding either to Herefordshire or to L^d. Harrowby’s, & one notion of being obliged to go to London to meet my Agent. –

2:2

Pray let me hear from you; I am so provoked at the thought that our acquaintance may be interrupted by the old phantasy. – I had & have twenty thousand things to say & I trust as many to hear, but somehow our conversations never come to a clear conclusion. – I thank you again for your efforts with my Princess of Parallelograms, who has puzzled you more than the Hypothenuse; in her character she has not forgotten “Mathematics” wherein I used to praise her cunning. – Her proceedings are quite rectangular, or rather we are two parallel lines prolonged to infinity side by side but never to meet. – Say what you please for or of me, & I will mean it. – Good Even my dear L^y. M. – ever y^{rs} most affectionately

/
/ BN /
/

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, October 20th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 94-6; BLJ II 232-3)

[Cheltenham Oct^r. twentieth 1812 // The Viscountess Melbourne / Whitehall / London // Byron]

Byron appears to answer a letter in which Melbourne tells him that she has proposed to Annabella for him, and been refused. He has started his affair with Lady Oxford.

Cheltenham Oct^r. 20th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. –

Tell A. that I am more proud of her rejection than I can ever be of another’s acceptance, this sounds rather equivocal, but if she takes it in the sense I mean it & you don’t blunder it in the delivery with one of your wicked laughs, it will do for want of something better. – It merely {means} that the hope of obtaining her (or any body else – but skip this parenthesis) was more pleasing than the possession of S^t. Ursula & the 11000 virgins (being a greater number than have ever since existed at the same time in that capacity) could possibly have been to her “disconsolate & unmathematical admirer, X. Y. Z. – – –

1:2

“Not a word to C!” as you please. – I, who do not write at all am in no danger of betraying our conspiracies. – I am not sorry to hear that she has written to a “Man” or “waltzed” because both were in the Articles, of which I must take advantage at the proper time for the infringement & be angry enough to make a decent quarrel or rather defence when she falls upon me which she shall not if I can keep out of the way. – My terrific projects amount to this – to remain on good terms with L^y Cowper⁵⁴ – & M^{rs}.

54: Emily, Lady Cowper, is Melbourne’s daughter, as it was thought, by Lord Egremont. She became Palmerston’s mistress, finally marrying him.

Lamb – & on the best terms with you being the three pleasantest persons in very different ways with whom I am acquainted, & to be as quiet or cool with C. – as a mere common acquaintance as my wish to retain your intimacy will permit, if not & I must quarrel with one of the

1:3

parties it shall certainly be with her, & indeed I should prefer it at once on every account; I am sick & annoyed with the connection. I fear A. is right that I cannot be indifferent – but change from love “to hate with the bitterest contempt.” –

Believe me I would not give up your friendship & that of three or four rational beings for five thousand Carolines were each five thousand times more perfect than she is the reverse. – What can I say or write to her? it will answer no end, I shall be bored with reproaches exclamation declamation defamation & perhaps she may set off to display a vindication in person. – I mean (entre nous my dear Machiavel) to play off L^y. Q against her, who would have no objection perchance, but she dreads her scenes,

1:4

& has asked me not to mention that we have met to C. – or that I am going to E.⁵⁵ – where by the bye I am not sure that I am going. – – In short if not by yourself – cannot any of your friends intimate or subordinate “varnish this tale of truth” for her, if it was a fiction there would be no difficulty, but certainly truth is an Artichoke particularly to her. – Not a word of L^y. O. for the present to C. & certainly to no one else. – When C. returns she will commence some furious flirtation elsewhere which will give me the opportunity of breaking at once. – Perhaps Dublin has done it already. – Write to me & believe that whatever I am to A. B. C. &c. I am ever yours

most affectionately
& sincerely
/
/ BN /
/

P.S. – My Love to L^d. M.

2:1

P.S. – Thanks for your “Examiner” Hunt is a clever man & I should like to know his opinion – pray send it, it will be very acceptable. – I shall return it faithfully if required. –

[2:2 has the address.]

October 24th 1812: Byron goes to Eywood to visit Lord and Lady Oxford.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Cheltenham, October 24th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 96-8; QI 154-5; BLJ II 235-6)

[Cheltenham Octr. twenty-fifth / 1812 // The Viscountess Melbourne / Whitehall / London // Byron]

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.

Oct^r. 24th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. –

I am just setting off through detestable roads for —⁵⁶ You can make such use of the incident of our acquaintance as you please with C- only do not say that I am there because she will probably write or do some absurd thing in that quarter which will spoil every thing, & I think there are enough of persons embroiled already without the addition of — who has besides enough to manage already without these additions. – This I know also to be her wish, & certainly it is mine. – You may say that we met at C- or elsewhere anything but that we are now together. – – By all means confide

1:2

in L^y. “Blarney” or – the Morning Post, seriously if anything requires a little hyperbole, let her have it – I have left off writing entirely & will have nothing more to do with it. – – “If you write anything to me”

⁵⁵: Eywood, the Oxfords’ Herefordshire estate.

⁵⁶: “Eywood”, disguised in case Caroline sees the letter.

she is sure to have it! – how? – I have not written these two months – but twice – nor was your name mentioned in either. – The last was entirely about L^d. Clare between whom & me she has been intermeddling & conveying notes from L^y. C^c on the subject of a foolish difference between Clare & myself, in which I believe I am wrong as usual. – But that is over. – Her last letters to me are full of complaints against you for I know not what disrespectful expressions about the “letter opened” &^c. &^c. – I have not answered them nor shall. –

1:3

They talk of going to Sicily, on that head I have nothing to say, you & M^f. L. are the best judges, to me it must be a matter of perfect indifference; & though I am written to professedly to be consulted on the subject what possible answer could I give that would not be impertinent? – – It would be the best place for her & the worst for him (in all points of view) on earth, unless he was in some official capacity. – As I have said before do as you will – in my next I will answer your questions as to the 3. persons you speak of at present I have not time though I am tempted by the theme. – As to A– that must take its chance, I mean the acquaintance, for it never will be any thing more – depend upon it –

1:4

even if she revoked – I have still the same opinion – but I never was enamoured – & as I very soon shall be in some other quarter – *cosi finiva*. – Do not fear about C. even if we meet – but allow me to keep out of the way if I can merely for the sake of peace & quietness. – – You never were more groundlessly alarmed, for I am not what you imagine, in one respect; I have gone through the experiment before, more than once, & I never was separated three months without a perfect cure, even though y^c. acquaintance was renewed. – – I have even stood as much violence as could be brought into the field on y^c. present occasion. – In the first vol. of Marmontel’s memoirs towards the end you will find my opinion on the subject of women in general in the mouth of Madame de Tencin⁵⁷ – should you deign to think it worth a moment’s notice. – ever y^{rs} most affectionately

B.

2:1

P.S. – If you write to Cheltenham my letters will be forwarded. – And do write – I have very few correspondents, & none but this which give me much pleasure –

[2:2 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, October 30th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 98-9; BLJ II 235-6)

[Presteign Oct^r thirtieth 1812 // The Lady Melbourne / Whitehall / London // Byron]

Eywood. Presteign. –

Oct^r. 30th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. – Though you have not written to me lately I can account for the prudential silence & do not blame you although one of your epistles anywhere is a great comfort. – Every thing stands as you could wish, & as I wished & nothing more need be said on that subject. – – – I have had an epistle from Ireland, short & full of resignation, so that I trust your cares are nearly wound up in that quarter; at least I must appeal to you if I have not done everything in my power to bring them to a conclusion, & now I have more reasons than ever for wishing them never to be renewed. – – – –

1:2

The Country round this place is wild & beautiful, consequently very delightful: I think altogether preferable even to Middleton (where the beauties certainly did not belong to the landscape) although

57: “gardez-vous bien d’être autre chose que l’amie” [“Talk this evening to your female friend, of some affair which concerns you; next day, as she works at her wheel or her tapestry, she will busy her brain in contriving some means of serving you. But when you think a woman can be useful to you, beware of being any more than her friend; for, if you be her lover, then as soon as a coolness, a quarrel ensues, all is over” – *Memoirs of Marmontel*, 1808 Edinburgh translation, I 360].

the recollection of my visit there will always retain its “proper” preeminence – – I am at present however a little laid up, for a short time ago I received a blow with a stone thrown by accident by one of the children as I was viewing the remains of a Roman encampment. – It struck me – providentially – though near the eye – yet far enough to prevent the slightest injury to that very material organ, & though I was a little stunned & the stone being very sharp the wound bled rather profusely, I have now re=

1:3

=covered all but a slight scar, which will remain I rather think for a considerable time. – It just missed an Artery, which at first from the blood’s flowing in a little spout, was supposed to be cut, but this was a false alarm, indeed I believe it has done me good, for my headachs have since entirely ceased. – This is my old luck, always near something serious, & generally escaping as now with a slight accident. – An inch either way, – the temple – the eye – or eyelid – would have made this no jesting matter – as it is – I thank my good Genius that I have still two eyes left to admire you with, & a head (uncracked) which will derive great benefit from any thing which may spring from your own. – – I suppose you have left

1:4

London, as I see by the papers L^d. & L^y. Cowper are returned to Herts.⁵⁸ – If you hear anything that you think I ought to know, depend upon my seconding you to the utmost, but I believe you will coincide with me in opinion that there is little apprehension now of any scene from C= – & still less occasion even to have recourse to A– as your “forlorn hope” on that account. – – I leave it to you to deal with L^y. B – &^c. – say of me what you please but do not let any other name be taken in vain – particularly to one whom you so well know as that ingenious hyperbolist L^y B. I am sick of scenes & have imbibed a taste for something like quiet. – Do not quite forget me – for everywhere I remember you.

ever d^r. L^y. M. y^r. most affectionate

/
/ BN /
/

2:1

P.S.

Why are you silent? – do you doubt me in the “bowers of Armida”?⁵⁹ –
I certainly am very much enchanted, but your spells will always retain their full force – try them. –

[2:2 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, November 4th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 99-101; BLJ II 239-40)

Eywood. – Presteign.–
Nov^r. 4th. 1812

My dear L^y. M, – Thanks for the notice of which I shall duly avail myself. –
I have throughout the whole of this you are convinced been perfectly sincere with you & surely not less so now than ever. – It must end & I see no purpose which any interview can possibly answer, & I wrote to say as much adding moreover another important truth – that I am deeply & seriously engaged elsewhere. – – All our wishes tend to quiet – & any scene of C’s will merely involve others in very unpleasant circumstances without tending at all to reunion – which is now absolutely impossible even if I wished it. – Besides as there will be more breakings off than one;

1:2

* much precious mischief { will ensue } if her illustrious example (I mean C’s) is to be imitated in all quarters. – – – In my last letter I stated that I was attached – but to whom even in allusion I did not think myself justified in mentioning. – As to L^y B. what would she have? – have I not complied with

⁵⁸: To Brocket Hall, Melbourne’s Hertfordshire estate.

⁵⁹: Lady Oxford (Armida is the enchantress in Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata*).

her own professed wishes? did I not tell you that end how it would she would never forgive me for not being sufficiently dramatic. -- I am out of all patience with her & hers & come what may will have no explanations, no scenes, no anything, & if necessary I will quit London or the country altogether rather than subject myself to the renewal of the last years harass. -- The sooner, the

1:3

stronger -- the fuller you state this the better -- Good God -- am I to be hunted from place to place like a Russian bear or Emperor? -- do pray -- do what you can for me -- I would not at this time have an éclat for the world. -- This country is very much to my taste, & I have taken a seat of L^d. Oxford's (Kinsham Court about 5 miles off in a delightful situation) for next year, I believe some arrangements relative to it will call me here again at Christmas. -- This is no secret, & need not be one if you think it worth mentioning. -- I leave you full powers to say what you please to C. -- she wont I trust be silly enough to torment any one but me

1:4

or she will find it labour in vain. --

You need not doubt me, by the bye, I am committing myself too much, but let that be a proof that I do not doubt you. -- I am asked to Middleton after the 10th. shall you be there? -- if so I will go. -- I do not know if my letter will reach Ireland in time nor what further good it may do. -- L^y. B. with her foolish prognostics -- she does not wish them fulfilled half so much as I do. -- She always said all went on as she wished -- pray Heaven it may. -- I write in very bad humour -- forgive it -- only manage her -- I am sure of every one else -- even myself; the person least likely to be depended on. --

My next shall be a pleasanter letter -- pardon the peevishness of this. -- ever my dearest friend y^{rs}

/
/ BN /
/

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, November 6th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 101-3; BLJ II 240-1)

Eywood. Presteign. Nov^r. 6th.
1812

My dear L^y. M. -- Not being aware of any amusement which can possibly last four & twenty hours by "Shrewsbury clock"⁶⁰ sans intermission I suppose one may look at a Roman encampment now & then & yet be exceedingly occupied nevertheless with more serious entertainments. -- Your "Coach horse" is admirable but not apropos. -- I am glad you recommend "cupping" I wanted to be so but L^y --⁶¹ says I shant (God knows why) & you know I am too tractable to oppose a negative to anything. -- I believe I mentioned in my last that I have taken Kinsham Court in this vicinity, with the description of which I shall not trouble you. -- I shall be here at Christmas to look after my arrangements. --

1:2

Seriously (and I am very serious) I have so completely rendered a renewal with C--- next to impossible that you will at least give me credit for sincerity; & to mend the matter all this is infinitely more to my taste than the A--- Scheme,⁶² to which my principal inducement was the tie to yourself which I confess would have delighted me -- I have had a tremulous letter from M^{rs}. L.⁶³ who is in a panic about C--- -- this I have answered & announced as a simple piece of information that I have taken a seat in Herefordshire; an intimation which with "L^y. Blarney's"⁶⁴ marginal notes will have a miraculous effect on the arrival of Pandora (& her boxes of evil for all her acquaintance) at Tixal. --

1:3

So -- a new accusation of imposition! -- At M⁶⁵ -- & before -- my memory really fails me -- I never laughed at P -- (by the bye this is an initial which might puzzle posterity when our correspondence

60: Falstaff at Shakespeare, *Henry IV I*, V iv 146.

61: Lady Oxford. B. disguises the name for fear of Caroline seeing the letter.

62: The plan to marry Annabella Milbanke.

63: Mrs George Lamb, Caroline's sister-in-law.

64: "Lady Blarney" is Lady Bessborough.

65: Middleton, the Jersey's Oxfordshire estate.

bursts forth in the 20th century)⁶⁶ nor can I possibly pronounce where all was “proper” who was the “properest” but I am sure no one can regret the general propriety half so much as I do. – Though we are very quiet & wish to remain so as much as C— & others may permit, yet we are also determined to abide by our articles & not to relinquish a single right – (read – “wrong” – instead if you like) – which devolves to the Conquerors on such occasions – As to the L^y. Blarney, though I expected

1:4

some absurd dissatisfaction on her part, I own it provokes me. – “Unfair” who could act fairly with people who were sending couriers & threatening to follow them? – As to C— she will find her in fits for the Winter without me to help her, depend upon it – & unless Providence sends another illness & journey it is all over with my successor – I guess at Webster⁶⁷ (who is now in Parliament & will be in town more) as the first essay, but I doubt the Bart. himself as somewhat of the coldest. – Besides he must sacrifice his senatorial duties, & do nothing else but attend to his perplexities, which will be manifold. – – I presume that I may now have access to the lower regions of

2:1

Melbourne House from which my ascent had long excluded me. – I doubt if C— & I will be on speaking terms, & it is on the whole much better we should not, but I trust the taciturnity is not to be general. – Your threatened visit of C— to this place would have no effect in this quarter, all being secure. I shall go to Middleton shortly after the twelfth Inst. – address your Answer there or to Cheltenham – I hope to find you at M. – You see nothing makes me unmindful of you, & I feel but too much obliged by your reciprocal remembrance. ever my dear L^y. M.

y^{rs} most affect^{ly}.

/

/ BN /

/

[2:2 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, November 9th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 103-4; QI 156-7; BLJ II 242-3)

Nov^r. 9th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. – With y^r. letter I have received an Irish epistle, foolish, headstrong, & vainly threatening herself &^c. &^c. To this I shall return no answer; & though it is of very great importance to me to be in London at this time, I shall if possible delay it till I hear from you that there is no chance of any scenes. –

M^r. D.⁶⁸ could hardly avoid guessing but too correctly, for not a servant in the house but was afraid to awaken me, & he was called home from a club for that purpose, his first & natural question to the man was whence he came from whom & why, the answer to all which is obvious, but D. ought not to have mentioned it & so I shall tell him. – – Why he placed me

1:2

in Notts at this moment I cannot say, except that he knew no better. – M^r. C. may repent of his bargain for aught I know to the contrary, but he has paid part of the money. – If he fails – the Law will decide between us; & if he acts in an ungentlemanly manner, the remedy is still more simple. – – With regard to L^y. B. & L^y. C. – I have little more to say and I hope nothing to do. – – She has hurt & disgusted me by her latter conduct beyond expression; & <if> even if I did not love another, I would never speak to her again while I existed, & this you have my full consent to state to those whom it may concern. – I have passed my time since her departure always quietly & partly delightfully, nor will I submit to

1:3

caprice & injustice. – This was to be broken off, it is broken off; I had neither the hope nor the inclination to satisfy L^y. B. on all points; if it is unfair to comply with her own express wishes, – let her

⁶⁶: “P” signifies “Frances Wedderburn Webster”.

⁶⁷: Godfrey Vassal Webster.

⁶⁸: Mr D. unidentified.

complain till she is tired, but I trust a little reflection will convince even her that she is wrong to be dissatisfied. – C. threatens to revenge herself upon herself, by all kinds of perverseness; – this is her concern – all I desire is to have nothing more to do with them – no explanations – no interviews – in short I neither can nor will bear it any longer. – As long as there was a necessity for supporting her I did not shrink from any consequences, but when all was adjusted – & you agreed

1:4

to overlook the past in the hope of the future; my resolution was taken & to that I have adhered & will adhere. – –

I cannot exist without some object of love – I have found one with whom I am perfectly satisfied, & who as far as I can judge is no less so with me; our mutual wish is quiet – & for this reason I find a double pleasure (after all the ridiculous display of last season) in repose; I have engaged myself too far to recede, nor do I regret it – are you at least satisfied with what I have done to comply with your wishes if L^y. B. is not? If L^y. C. wishes any interview pray explain for me that I will not {meet her,} if she has either pride or feeling this will be sufficient – all letters &^c. &^c. may be easily destroyed without it.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, November 10th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 104-6; BLJ II 243-5)

Caroline has found out about Byron and Lady Oxford.

Nov^r. 10th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. –

Last night my hostess L^y.O. received a long epistle from C. containing a number of unanswerable questions to all which I have persuaded her to give no reply whatever. – Is every one to be embroiled by C? – Is she mad or mischievous only? I was in doubt whether L^d. O (who knew the writer by L^d. B's frank) would not take y^c. alarm but we have foiled her there if that was her intention. – This morning your letter arrives – & really when I compare her letter to me, to L^y. O – & the contents of yours, I must pronounce C to be the most contradictory

1:2

absurd, selfish, & contemptibly wicked of human productions. – What she may say of me, I can only surmise by what she has said of others, but she seems to outdo the usual outdoings of gentlewomen on such occasions. – – Fortunately for me I have <in> her own testimonies in my behalf; but if she will raise a storm, be it so, she will be the first to perish in it. – Her conduct as to M^t. L. is of a piece with the rest; since my first acquaintance with her I have suffered nothing but discomfort of every description, nor can I at all foresee how it will end. – My own resolution is taken. – I do most sincerely wish that she would reflect for one moment, or that she was fully aware of my determination never to

1:3

hold any kind of communication with her in future; I have written till I am tired, I can do no more – most assuredly come what may – she will never be received by me – now it is impossible – I could wish to feel towards her as a friend – but as she herself says she has resolved since she is “not loved to be detested”. – Her letter to me expressed this agreeable sentiment – her letter to L^y. O. was a long German tirade evidently to discover on what terms we were & the information contained in yours I need not comment upon. – The part about M^t. L. is like Don Felix “she would engross all the Violantes in the Creation”⁶⁹ – if she loves him – why not permit me to be at rest, if me – why this affectation? – You may suppose L^y. O. is not very much delighted with her new style of correspondence, besides having a slight embarrass of the same kind on her own hands on the same score. – In short we manage in our infinite love of quiet to disturb Ireland & Scotland besides some part of England & Wales. – In the mean time – the present is at our own disposal – & as no one can answer for the future – ’tis a great consolation to lose as little of it as possible – How you will laugh at all this – so should I were I not one of the Dram. Pers. – Col. P’s⁷⁰ wound is slight – & L^y. B. must make the most of it with C. – It will answer like the illness if she does it as well.

ever y^{rs} my d^r. L^y. M. most affect^{ly}

69: From Susan Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman keeps a Secret*.

70: Colonel P. unidentified.

/
/ BN /
/

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, November 11th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 106; BLJ II 245)

Written the day after the previous item, but with the same date.

Nov^r. 10th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. –

I trouble you again principally to restore through your hands to L^y. B. an Opera ticket with many thanks & proper speeches. – Yesterday I wrote you a longish dullish & testy letter, for a brilliant epistle from the other Isle had put me out of all patience, but I have already pronounced my Amen to that subject. – Amongst other excellent arguments you may make use of – I humbly take the following to be decisive – besides my other manifold imperfections – which I may say with Richard the 3^d. incapacitate me

1:2

“from skipping in a Lady’s chamber”⁷¹ I am grown within these few months much fatter; & have a visible scar under my right eye – quite “balafre”;⁷² and I can’t think of starving myself down to an amatory size. – – This with the A– scheme – properly commented upon – & my present abode with all the concomitants might I think furnish out as pretty a maternal harangue as ever was pronounced in Cavendish Square – – I have written to you so much & so stupidly that I will now have mercy & stop where I never stopped before at the second page

ever y^{rs} my dear friend

/
/ BN /
/

[1:3 and 4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, November 14th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 106-8; BLJ II 245-7)

Nov^r. 14th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. –

This day a further dispatch from C– with letters to me & our hostess – the one to me rational enough but to her only calm at the commencement the conclusion winding up in the old style & threatening if some unexpressed or unintelligible wish (about a picture I believe) is not complied with to visit Eywood in all her terrors. – – They leave Ireland on the 20th. so by this time are safe in England & for aught I know within a few miles of us for the roads are very near my present abode. – The floods have detained me beyond my time; indeed business requires me in town & I shall

1:2

make an attempt for Cheltenham on the 16th. – – — is very anxious that I should not be in town till C. has left it, so am I – & I think you will be of the same opinion – I have just this moment been called to the window of the room where I am writing, & it has been suggested that a longer stay would be better on that account – but I fear that I must go on Monday, if I remain much longer “il Sposo” may be seized with crotchets & as I return at Xmas – & I really have business, I determine on the journey. – My London letters all stop at Cheltenham so I know nothing but by cross posts. – If C. makes her debut here

1:3

we shall have a pretty scene. – She has received my letter avowing a penchant elsewhere, & though I did not specify the idol, <the> {her} subsequent epistles {shew that} the date of my own letter had sufficiently expounded what was not stated & I do think has answered the purpose to a certain extent. – She requires friendship – but you know that with her disposition it is impossible; for some time at least we must come to a total separation. – – Besides — is of that opinion – & whether right or wrong I

71: Shakespeare, *Richard III*, I i 12 (“He capers nimbly in a lady’s chamber”).

72: “gashed”.

have no choice, & I certainly shall not waver an instant between the two. – You will I hope prevent an interview – after all you have more weight with her than

1:4

any one – L^y. Blarney always spoils every thing bad as well as good; never did anyone throw away such excellent experience – she does by accident all that L^y. Holland performs on purpose. If L^d. Jersey is not in town I shall stop at M. in my way according to invitation but why are you absent? I expect to find letters from you at Cheltenham & upon your advice much will depend. – – I am perfectly satisfied with my situation & have no intention of changing it unless others set the example. –

Everything goes on “sans peur & sans reproche” yet very unlike Bayard for all that.⁷³ I congratulate A– & myself on our mutual escape. – That would have been but a cold collation, & I prefer hot suppers.⁷⁴

dear L^y. M. ever y^{rs}

/

/ BN /

/

2:1

P.S. – I open my letter to say that I have just been conversing with —— on y^c. subject of C– & her late strange letters to —— & she wishes me to remain a few days longer – I shall therefore wait for your answer here – one line only to say where they are will reach me by Wednesday – Pray write it & my movements will be accordingly. – –

I thought & fully intended to have finished the subject of C– forever but you perceive that

2:2

it is impossible till she is more tractable. I am however thankful in one instance that she has hitherto made no progress in disturbing our arrangements – – – I shall wait for your answer here – as otherwise I may stumble on them on the road. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, November 16th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 108-9; BLJ II 247-8)

Nov^r. 16th. 1812

My dear L^y. M. –

A letter from Holyhead proves them in England – it is rational & calm though rather plaintive & still presses on the point of seeing for the purpose of vindication from I know not what which her friends & enemies have it seems been about during her absence. – To cut that short at once – a promise has been requested & given that I will not on any account consent to such an interview, & this if possible I must adhere to. She denies ever having abused me &^c. &^c. – now this you know & I know to be most contemptibly false; not only to her mother

1:2

to M^{rs}. L. & to you – but she even forgets a volume of reproaches to myself which I shall remember rather longer {than} I could wish. – – My hope now rests with you & your influence over her, which I know to be great over all who know you & more even with her than she is aware of. –

Recollect whatever may be said that your name has not been mentioned in any letter to her for these last two months; that she at most can only guess at what has passed of our correspondence; you must use your own discretion with L^y. B. who is not the trustiest of her age & country – with her I have had no communication whatever since the letter which puzzled her in October. –

1:3

—— received two letters from C– the most imprudent of her imprudent proceedings – of course she has sense enough to take no notice by answer or otherwise – & if C. does not renew her epistles – I will take care that these do no mischief. – The roads are now impassable – but in a few days I shall attempt my voyage London=ward by Cheltenham. – – –

⁷³: Bayard was the supposed model of medieval chivalry: see CHP I-II, Addition to the Preface.

⁷⁴: Despite this *bon mot*, B. and Annabella are married two years later.

You will now I trust my dear L^y. M. think that I have kept to the tenor of our “bond” that I have done all in my power to render a renewal impracticable – & I can assure you there are now obstacles in the way sufficient to satisfy L^y. B. if anything could satisfy a personage wavering between Nature & Art;

1:4

her own fears for the consequences to C– & her anger that so interesting a heroine should not be adored in the oldest & most tedious fashion of feminine worship; she is doubtless very angry that I should change – I am sure I waited a decent time for y^c. Lady to take the pas – & she may console herself with the reflection that it was nothing {on her part} from y^c. beginning but – original sin – or vanity, which I cannot determine – but the next adventure with the newest Comer will probably shew to better advantage. – – You will tell me if L^y. B. & I are to be on terms & how & why & wherefore & when & but & if & c. & c. down to the very “pourquoi of the pourquoi”. – In the interim I am ever my dear L^y. M. – y^{rs}. most truly

/
/ BN /
/

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, November 18th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 109-10; BLJ II 248-9)

On the smaller paper.

Nov^r. 18th. 1812

My dear L^y. M.

I think it proper to apprise you that I have written by this day’s post to L^y. B. in C. Square. – Conceiving that my possible arrival in town about the same time with herself & hers might awaken her alarms I thought it as well to explain that all was concluded between B. & C. Your name is not even

1:2

hinted at in this epistle (which you will probably see) nor that of any other person save & except their two Ladyships {B. & C. L.} & your humble servant. – –

Since my last I have heard nothing of C. –

I have only to request y^c. continuance of your good offices to cement the breach or rather to widen y^c. separation. –

I have little doubt the task is over, nothing but the spirit of contradiction

1:3

could render it difficult, for love is out of the question. – –

I am still here only sad in the prospect of going; reading, laughing, & playing at Blindman’s buff with y^c. children; a month has slipped away in this & such like innocent recreations; my eye is well, & my person fatter; but I shall soon return to my abstinent system, & grow thin & austere as usual. I have promised not to

1:4

see C (without permission which will not be granted for some time) this you may be sure is not mentioned to L^y. B. – & I think may as well be kept in petto unless it becomes requisite which I trust will not be y^c. case. –

Have not I done well for you? – all to oblige your Ladyship & prove my devotion. – –

I set off on Saturday –

ever y^{rs}. dear L^y. M.
/
/ BN /
/

November 21st 1812: Byron leaves the Oxforas at Eywood to visit the Jerseys at Middleton.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Middleton, Oxfordshire, November 26th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 110-11; BLJ II 250-1)

Middleton Nov^r. 26th. 1812My dear L^y. Melbourne,

I perceive by y^c. arrivals & departures in y^c. papers that you will not object to my being in town (as I must be on Sunday) on business. I shall take my seat on tuesday, & not go to the romantic melodrama of Monday, notwithstanding the attraction of a royal Roscius.⁷⁵ – I have been here these 2 days past in the palace of propriety with a picture of Lucretia in the act of – suicide over my chimney, & a tome of Pamela lying on y^c. table, {y^c. first} as a hint I presume not to covet y^c. mistress of a house, & the last as a defensive treatise in behalf of the Maid. – –

1:2

The decorations of my last apartment were certainly very different – for a print of Rinaldo & Armida was one of the most prominent ornaments. – – On Saturday I left Herefordshire with more regret than need be inflicted in detail upon my correspondents – so no more upon that topic. I begin to think your rhetoric has had its proper effect on C. – I have written twice to the Lady B. to decline an interview. – I found at Cheltenham your letters, & C's & spared you on this eternal subject by a cessation of ink for three days, I trust this is nearly the last to be shed on the same theme. – She charges me with my own letters – I have heard that a man in liquor was sometimes

1:3

responsible for what he may have said, & perhaps the same rule extends to love – if so – pray make the amplest apology for me – The moment I came to myself I was sorry for it. – One thing the Lady forgets – for a very long time (in the Calendar of Asmodeus)⁷⁶ my answers were the subject of endless reproach on account of their coldness – at last I did write to her without restraint but rarely without regret. – I do not mean to deny my attachment – it was – and is not. – It was no great compliment, for I could love anything on earth that appeared to wish it; at the same time I do sometimes like to chuse for myself. – I shall be in town (the post is waiting) at Batts' Hotel⁷⁷ on Sunday – I wrote this to tell you as much as under the

1:4

present circumstances we cannot meet (except perhaps at L^y. H's) for some time, & I heartily acquiesce in your opinion upon the subject. – Believe me ever y^{rs} d^r. L^y. M.

[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Batts' Hotel, Jermyn Street, November 30th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 113-14; BLJ II 252-3)

Byron's handwriting (and underlining) is ferocious.Batts' Hotel. Nov^r. 30th. 1812

Dear Ly. M.

I am just arrived & have received exactly 36 letters notes &^c. (as I write a 37th!) of all descriptions so that I have full employment for y^c. present. – I find amongst them some from C. of yesterday's date (Welwyn)⁷⁸ I believe most incoherent &^c. & to which in the name of all the Saints & martyrs what answer can I give but what has been given already? – – Her letters I have already said of my own accord I will give up to her or destroy in your or her {or any} <an>other's presence, so that the interference of any other person

1:2

will only mar my good intention – I thank you for the hint – an answer to Men always depends upon the temperance & tenor of the question. –

I am extremely glad that I did not receive y^{rs}. of the 27th. till just now & that I had before from Cheltenham stated my intention already as to Letters “sans phrase” from any person – because I much doubt whether I could have given the like answer to a peremptory embassy. –

75: B. thus characterises the Prince Regent addressing Parliament (Roscius – Roman actor).

76: Asmodeus is the devil in Le Sage's *Le Diable Boîteux*. See *Granta: A Medley*, and *TVOJ*.

77: Batt's Hotel was in Jermyn Street, St James's.

78: Caroline's letter was posted from Brocket Hall, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (now a conference centre).

As to Lady B. how many months did she spend in trying to make me believe the whole a joke &^c. on

1:3

C's part? – & now she is angry that I at last believed so. – – I have some trinkets which she wishes restored or rather had for God knows where they are by this time – I wish she would not think of returning mine, as in that case I must search the Country for hers which will take some time & trouble. – – I shall endeavour to wait on you tomorrow – believe me

d^f. L^y. M. ever y^{rs}.
[swirl signature]

P.S. – The Letter of today is the most wild I ever read – I really have not patience for all this. – I cannot please every body – She & I must not meet – not that I dread a past weakness – but it

1:4

must not be – as to others – I have really had so much plague on the subject – & been at so much pains to free you all from these inquietudes that I very much fear my politeness will not carry me much further. L^y. H. has been taunting her it seems – her answer to L^y. O. is stuff – we nor she nor I sent any whatever answer – & I have implored L^y. O. to be silent. – If you knew but ten of the twenty scrapes I am in at this moment you would (& will I hope) pardon my pettishness. – I do not⁷⁹ which are the worst Lawyers, friends, or the fair sect. – I know L^y. O. has not answered her & will not I trust – but who can trust anything or anybody?

Byron to Lady Melbourne, December 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43471 f.152; BLJ II 253)

Tuesday Even. –

Dear L^y. M. – I have received a letter from L^y. C. which has been opened – the contents profess to have accompanied some money which (God knows why) she supposes herself to owe me but (I thank heaven) it has been pilfered by the way. – This is all her own imagination & my only motive in writing this is to vindicate myself from the meanness

1:2

of being supposed to receive or accept that to which really I have no claim. – Will you use your interest to induce her not to torment me with such transactions; the person present when I received the letter saw that it had been opened & contained nothing – at which I rejoice – but do beg sincerely to have no more of this for I most certainly am not one of her Creditors & she talks of

1:3

some further shillings & pence as due to me of which I know nothing & bequeath them to those who may have more right to her bounty. – Believe me dear L^y. M.

y^{rs}. ever
B

P.S. – As the best way to comply with your last request I have (or rather) shall send <> one of the pictures to L^y. B. the other the moment I can extract it from a trunk not at present in my rooms, &

1:4

for the letters I wait the pleasure of any female relative or L^y. C. herself. – I think my own might as well be returned as is usual on such occasions, particularly as on the last similar one in July I destroyed a great number & on requesting my own was refused! – –

[not found] P.S. – Have the goodness to forward these as soon as possible.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, December 9th 1812:

79: B. means "I do not know".

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 114-15; BLJ II 254)

Small paper.

Dec^r. 9th. 1812

Dear L^y. M.

You have long ago forgotten a certain ring which I am still in your debt, & I hope you will not reject the only thing I ever dared to present you, nor violate y^c. conditions on which I accepted your own by refusing this. – – I regret that I lost your party last night but meeting with Hobhouse whom I had not seen for some time I was detained

1:2

too long either to appear or apologize. – – As I shall not see you before I leave town, I most respectfully take my farewell, & assure you that as far as I am concerned the amiable & sincere Phryne⁸⁰ shall never be the cause of further uneasiness. – To yourself I ever am d^r. L^y. M.

most truly y^r. obliged & f^l. S^t.
Byron

[1:3 and 4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, December 14th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 115-17; BLJ II 255-7)

[Presteign Dec^r fourteenth / 1812 // The Lady Melbourne / Whitehall / London // Byron]

Dec^r. fourteenth 1812

My dear L^y. M. – The trinkets are travelling (at least most of them) in all parts of England & Wales, they certainly are not in the possession of — indeed so anxious was I to get rid of them that most of them had disappeared before my acquaintance with her. –

The truth is they were all women's adornments & looked so very out of place in my custody, that lest they should seem not honestly come by, I was too glad to find any one to take them off my hands. – This is all the answer I can give to a species of bullying which I presume the Lady has learned in Ireland. –

1:2

She will not deliver up my letters – very well – I will deliver up hers nevertheless & mine she may make the most of, they are very like the Duke of York's⁸¹ & the Editor of any magazine will treat with her for them on moderate terms – Whatever my motive good or bad may be for resolving not to keep back her brilliant documents, I think it will not be imputed to fear, since by so doing without receiving my own, I leave the story entirely to her own telling; & as she has just acknowledged that her letters would "ruin her" I leave my determination in this respect to her own construction which of course will be the worst possible. –

1:3

This I will do on my return to town, to you & you only or L^y. B. save & except one boxfull which I must for certain reasons burn in your presence, so pray, have a good fire & fireguard on my next visit, I repeat that I never will again request my own – let her keep them or what she pleases. – – I do not exactly understand who my "secret foes" & her ambushed "men in buckram"⁸² are; all this we shall know in due time, I don't know whether I can fight but I presume like the redoubtable Nym "I can wink & hold out my cold iron"⁸³ – as well as another. – This I know that if she does plunge me into a quarrel It will be a serious one, for I am tired of trifling, & if

1:4

any noble blood is to be spilt in her behalf I had as lief the puddle was Irish as any other complexion. – She writes menacingly, & at the same time accuses me of menaces – what menaces have I used? – poor

⁸⁰: Frances Wedderburn Webster. Phryne was a fourth-century Athenian courtesan of great beauty and wealth.

⁸¹: The Duke of York's letters to his mistress Mrs Clarke, subject of parliamentary enquiry in 1809.

⁸²: Shakespeare, *Henry IV* I II iv passim.

⁸³: Shakespeare, *Henry V* II i 5.

little weak thing! – – she says I “concealed” myself in town, that is – I took my seat in the house, & visited all my acquaintance every day. – The comparison of the Rattlesnake, or any other with which Polito⁸⁴ can furnish her are very much at her service, I rejoice that she stopped at Exeter Change being rather apprehensive that she might have driven as far as Billingsgate for a metaphor. Dont interrupt her, & if she wishes you all to quarrel with me – pray indulge her. –

2:1

If I had the trinkets I would not deliver them up to the threat of the “secret brother assistant knights” & I am rather glad that I have them not to deliver, her letters I give up because she has a child – the other things will be of no consequence, but will form pretty subject matter for dispute without hurting her; as I have some guess at her “daring champions” I shall not wait their good pleasure, but explain to them on the very first opportunity my sentiments of them & their conduct; in the mean time I shall not stir to right or left but pursue “the even tenor of my way.”⁸⁵ – This is my answer to her & your letter, tell L^y. B- whatever disturbance arises is

2:2

not of my seeking, I have borne as much as man can bear, & even now I will put it out of my power to rely upon my own resolutions, lest fresh insults should get the better of my temper. – All I desire from you or L^y. B- is to “nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice”⁸⁶ the last part of the quotation is not addressed to you. – To her I have no reply, no observation of any kind “if she will perish let her perish.” – If you hear anything further you will let me know – if not – at any rate write to me – & believe me

ever y^{rs}. most truly
/
/ B /
/

P.S.

I always thought that any thing given to a person became their property & these things were forced upon me as she knows, but once mine I was at liberty to <dispose> <of> {part with} them which I did to different people almost immediately.

3:1

P.S. – She says I abuse her everywhere, & yet conceal myself!!
I do neither one nor the other. –
If I mentioned her at all it would not be with praise – but it is a subject so utterly abhorrent to my feelings that I never do – & as to concealment you can answer that. –

[3:2 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, December 15th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 117; BLJ II 257)

A small piece of paper, being an enclosure.

Dec^r. 15th.
1812

Dear L^y. M. –

Contrary to my first intent I have answered her letter to me & enclose it to you for delivery. –

If she writes to L^d. O. I am almost sure that he will write to M^f. L.⁸⁷ if so – there will be a

1:2

84: Mr Polito owned the menagerie on Exeter Exchange on the north side of the Strand.

85: Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, l.76 (“noiseless tenor”).

86: Shakespeare, *Othello*, V ii 345-6.

87: “Lord Oxford ... Mr. Lamb”.

pretty scene – we had some difficulty to prevent this once before, & I suppose it would not be very desirable now. – He is tolerably obstinate, & it would be as well not to bring it to the proof – of course I should prevent it if possible – because eventually it

1:3

would be unpleasant to all parties. – I should wish you to be present when she receives this letter & tell me the effect. ever y^{rs}.

B.

Always take this with you – you are not mentioned in this letter nor is any name therein.

[1:4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, December 21st 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 117-19; BLJ II 258-9)

[Presteign Dec^r. Twenty first / 1812 // To. / The Lady Melbourne / Broomfield Hall / Welwyn / Hertford. // Byron]

Dec^r. 21st. 1812

My dear L^y. Melbourne.

I have not written to you for some days which must be some wonder & great relief to yourself – I do not presume that my epistle to the most amiable of the Ponsonbys⁸⁸ will have much effect & I fear L^y. B will not deem it sufficiently “soothing.” – As the Lady however seems to have imagined herself extremely terrific in my eyes I could not altogether humour the mistake, & leave it to the inhabitants of Chili (or where is it?) to worship the D — 1. “Soothing!” quotha! I wonder who wants it most! I think at least some portion of that same soothing syrup

1:2

ought to fall to my share. – – –

We have some talk here of a voyage to Sicily &^c. in the Spring – if so – I shall be of the party – but this is merely speculation for the present – Hobhouse & myself have serious thoughts of “Levantiing” once more & I expect to hear from him soon on that & other subjects. – – You will not be sorry to find me once more “on the wings of the wind” & I hope you will send me some English intelligence foreign & domestic. – I shall still retain Kinsham (the place I have taken) even if I go abroad; – if it will be any satisfaction to the respectable C^c to know that she has had

1:3

some share in disgusting me with this country she may enjoy it to the full – if it were not for others I would set sail tomorrow. – My resentment against her is merely passive – I never will degrade myself into her enemy – notwithstanding all the provocatives so plentifully administered. – I shall soon discover if she has been tampering with Clare, but shall not interfere between them further than concerns myself – she will make nothing of him – he has too much sense & too little vanity to be fooled like his friend. – – I wish much to see you on my return to

1:4

London which will not be before the 12th. of next month, – if then – we are all very happy & serene – no scenes – a great deal of music – good cheer – spirits & temper – & every day convinces me of the contrast – by the bye – this travelling scheme as far as regards all except Hobhouse & myself must be a secret – being the first between you & me & if you keep it well – I have ten more for your discreet ear when we meet. – I have not received the letter you mention from L^y. B – & have no great interest in its safe arrival – I do not want any recantations & the old or new excuses – whatever the impression may be on others on my mind it is indelible – but let that pass – it is odd

2:1

88: Caroline’s maiden name was Ponsonby.

2) that her last letter to me (which came with yours) contains nothing but more general menaces of vengeance & professions of not unwelcome hatred – but {no} particular denunciations of a serious description – the closing sentence is awfully amiable & I copy it – “you have told me how foreign women revenge – I will show you how an Englishwoman can” – – very like the style of Miss Matthews in *Amelia* & *Lucy in the Beggar’s Opera* – & by no means having even the merit if Novelty in my ears. – A Namesake of C’s⁸⁹ was much more polite in her expressions though equally angry – & now – if I may trust the

2:2

authority of several reputable <[]> gentlefolks – does me the honour after the interval of several years to speak of me in very gentle terms – & perhaps in the year 1820 your little Medea may relapse into a milder tone. Believe me dear L^y. M.

ever y^{rs}.

Bⁿ.

3:1

P.S. – I think your plan with her not so good as y^r. general plans are – as long as she is in y^c. country & has nothing to do but gallop on the turnpike [*Ms. tear*: “&”] scribble absurdities she will be unmanageable – but a fortnight in town – the 10.th Uniform, the first fool & the last comer will work wonders – commit her to C. Square⁹⁰ & she will forget every thing if not herself into the bargain – but you know best after all. – – –

[3:2 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, December 23rd 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 119-21; BLJ II 260-1)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing, and which described the bonfire Caroline held at Bocket Hall in which *copies of Byron’s letters* were consumed.

Dec^r. 23^d. 1812

My dear Lady M. –

Your last anecdote seems to shew that our friend is actually possessed by “the foul fiend Hibertigibbet who presides over mopping & mowing”⁹¹ & if the provincial literati dont insert it in the St. Alban’s Mercury, the collectors of extraordinaries ought to be dismissed for malversation & omission. – Seriously though all this forms my best justification – I very much fear it will not forward your interests at the next election except amongst y^c. ballad-makers. – What will the Lady B.- say? I fear it will go nigh to the recall of Sir W. Farquhar & the ancient disorder. –

1:2

Was the “odious book” (which has just attained the summit of fame by giving a name to a {very slow} race horse!)⁹² added to the conflagration? & what might be the pretty piece of eloquence delivered by her right trusty Henchman? My letters would have added very appropriately to y^c. combustibles & I regret y^c. omission of such exquisite ingredients. – – –

I wrote to you yesterday (franked & directed to B. H. not having then received y^c. mandate to y^c. contrary) & do not know that I can add anything to my details in that sheet – we are completely out of the world in this place, & have not even a difference to diversify the scene or amuse our correspondents, & you know perhaps that the recapitulation or display of all good things

1:3

89: Caroline Cameron? BLJ suggests Mrs George Lamb.

90: Cavendish Square.

91: Shakespeare, *King Lear*, III iv 113 (“Flibbertigibbet”).

92: Refers to a racehorse named Childe Harold.

is very insipid to auditors or beholders. – I wait the news of the reception of that same ineffable letter now in your hands, though (as I tell her) I have no great hopes of its' doing the least good. – It is written a little gravely but very much nevertheless in the usual tone which L^y. B is pleased to say is not "soothing." – – I am really become very indifferent as to her next proceedings, for what can she do worse than she has already done? – I am much amused with y^e. tale of L^y. Cowper's little girl – her Mamma has always had a great share of my most respectful admiration, but I don't desire to be remembered to any of you as I suppose the best wish you have is to forget me as soon as

1:4

possible; besides which under y^e. impression of C's correspondence L^y. C must conceive me to be a sucking Catiline only less respectable. – Bankes is going abroad, & as I said in my last it is not very unlikely that I may recommence voyaging amongst the Mussulmen. – If so I claim you as a correspondent; since you wont give me up to the reasonable request of the moderate C. & in truth I don't wish you should. – You know I have obeyed you in everything, <from> {in} my suit to y^e. Princess of Parallelograms,⁹³ my breach with little Mania,⁹⁴ & my subsequent acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Armida⁹⁵ – you have been my director & are still for I do not know anything you could not make me do or undo – & <my> m'amie⁹⁶ (but this you wont believe)

2:1

2) has not yet learned the art of managing me, nor superseded your authority. – You would have laughed a little time ago, when I inadvertantly said talking of you that there was nothing you could not make me do or give up (if you thought it worth while) a sentiment which did not meet with the entire approbation of my audience but which I maintained like a Muscovite enamoured of Despotism. – I hear little from London but the lies of the Gazette & will back Buonaparte against the field still. – Pray write – & tell me how your taming goes on – I am all acquiescence to you & as much yours as ever d^r. L^y. M

[swirl signature]

[2:2 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, December 27th 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 121-2; BLJ II 263-4)

Dec^r 27th. 1812.

My dear L^y. M. –

I know very little of the P's party⁹⁷ & less of her publication (if it be hers) & am not at all in y^e. secret, but I am aware that the advice given her by the most judicious of her "little Senate" has been to remain quiet & leave all to the P C^e. – I have heard nothing of the thing you mention except in y^e. papers & did not imagine it to be hers. I by no means consider myself as an attache to her or any party, though I certainly should support her interest in Parliament if brought forward in any shape – & I doubt the possibility of the divorce – firstly – because he would already if he could – 2^{dly}. – unless there is diff=

1:2

=erent law for Sovereign & subject she might recriminate (even were the charge proved) & by the law of the land as in L^d. Grosvenor & Duke C's case there could be no divorce – 3^{dly}. it would hurt the daughter 4^{thly}. if he married again & the Holy Ghost or any other begat him an heir – still there would be a party ready to bastardize the product of the 2^d marriage by maintaining the legality of the first & denying his divorce to be legal – & 5^{thly}. the uproar would be prodigious & injure his nerves – for my part I care not & think this country wants a little "civil buffeting" to bring

1:3

93: Caroline.

94: Annabella.

95: Lady Oxford (Armida is the enchantress from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.)

96: Lady Oxford.

97: Princess Caroline, estranged from her father the Prince Regent, is accumulating a political party.

some of us to our senses. – I shall not mention your name nor what you have said though I fully agree with you that it is much better for her to be quiet. – M'amie thinks I agree with her in{all} her politics, but she will discover that this is a mistake. – She insists always upon the P's innocence but then as she sometimes reads me somewhat a tedious homily upon her own I look upon it in much the same point of view as I should on Mary Magdalen's vindication of M^{rs}. Joseph, or any other immaculate riddle. – I suspect from what you say & what I have heard that there will be a scene. –

1:4

My proposed confidence to you will do for our <[]> meeting & consists merely of one or two slight {domestic} things on which I want to ask your advice, & you know I not only ask but take it when you please. – I am glad C is so quiet – her account of my letter is right – her inference from it wrong – if she knew anything of human nature she would feel that as long as men love they forgive every thing, but the moment it is over they discover fifty things on which to ground a plausible & perpetual implacability. – She could not renew it – & this she knows, but she is quite right to reserve a point for Vanity.

2:1

2.) In her last she says “she shall quit the room or the house the moment I enter it.” I answered that she was to do as she pleased but that my carriage would be always respectful & as friendly as she thought proper to allow – an expression I now regret for she will interpret it into a wish to be again in her trammels which I neither would nor could. – Her letters were still more absurd than ever telling me she had “perjured herself to Lady C^r & M^{rs}. L” &^c. to whom it seems I betrayed her &^c. (I can safely appeal to both as you will or may discover) & all this was my fault & so on. –

2:2

Then comes a long account of the bonfire still more ludicrous than yours, full of Yeomanry, pages, gold chains, basket of flowers<”> – herself – & all other fooleries. – L^d. O. goes to town on Saturday next, & we shall follow him the week or fortnight after – in the mean time write to me – we are very quiet & happy – but I shall certainly attend to what you say on travelling “en famille.” – Believe me dear L^y M

ever y^{rs}
[swirl signature]

P.S. – I just hear that we shall not be in town before the 20th. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, December 31st 1812:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43469; 1922 I 123-5; BLJ II 264-5)

Dec^r. 31st. 1812

My dear L^y. M. – I have received several epistles from C. which I have answered as seemed best at y^c. time – she has at last said that she heard of the proposal but is ignorant to whom I have owned it but not added any names of any parties concerned though by this she probably knows, & it is quite as well she should. – Her letters are as usual full of contradictions & less truth (if possible) than ever, my last answer which was goodnatured enough but rather more facetious than befits her taste has produced a pettish rejoinder, she has again written to L^y. O but quietly & cunningly.

1:2

She has sent me a Banker's receipt for some money she swears she owes me, but which I will have nothing to do with, I have returned it, & if the money is not removed from Hoare's & my name withdrawn, I shall most assuredly dispatch it with her compliments {one} half to the Magdalen asylum & the other to S^t. Luke's⁹⁸ as a donation & return in kind for her bonfire – if she will play the fool I rather suspect that I shall be seized with a fit of repartee which will not be very “soothing” – this I beg you will hint as to the disposal of this money, – it is of no use to try “soothing” with so detestable a disposition, & my

98: The Magdalen Asylum was for reformed prostitutes: St. Luke's was a madhouse.

1:3

patience stands marvellously in need of repose. – – If M^r. N.⁹⁹ is one of her confidants I regret it, against him I have no enmity, but through her means I was once before nearly involved in a dispute, & not improbably shall again – I do wish she would consider what the consequences may be of this perpetual system of irritation on my temper – I begin to look upon her as actually mad or it would be impossible for me to bear what I have from her already. – –

We have no scenes here – & you do not know well if you suppose I covet them – I shall not entertain you with

1:4

a long list of attributes, but merely state that I have not been guilty of once yawning in the eternity of two months under the same roof – a phenomenon in my history – we go on admirably in y^c. country – but how Town may suit us I cannot foresee. – I hear L^y. H^d is not pleased with my present place of abode, no bad reason for liking it better myself. – – We shall have no quarrels about my visits to you, for you are a great favourite, though suspected of undue influence (which you deserve) and were it otherwise, after your firm adherence to my cause, I neither would nor could desert your banners unless dismissed by your own express request. –

2:1

2) I sent you so long a letter the other day on y^c. subject of the P.^s that I shall now no further trespass on your Xmas amusements than by wishing they may be pleasantly prolonged for the present, & oftener renewed hereafter. – This is the last day of the year – I shall hope to hear from you soon in the next – & like the Spaniards hope you “may live a thousand.” –

ever y^{rs}. d^r. L^y. M.
[swirl signature]

2:2 blank.

1813: From March to December, *The Giaour* is published in editions of increasing length. At the year's end Byron writes *The Bride of Abydos* and starts *The Corsair*. He is much in Whig society; he meets Madame de Staël. His liaison with his half-sister Augusta starts, he flirts with Frances Wedderburn Webster, and begins marriage overtures to Annabella Milbanke. *The Bride of Abydos* is published on December 2nd.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, early 1813:

(Source: text from 1922 II 302-3; BLJ III 3)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.

Monday.

My dear L^y. M^c, – Your letter is quite a relief & all I hope is, that she may fall into what she calls love at the fete, or into anything that may keep her in some order. When you get the picture I will send her request & you may promise whatever you please or she requires – except a conference.

Blake¹⁰⁰ in the course of [a] month will perform the part of a Gnome better than even your dexterous La—ship.

All these fooleries are very well at the beginning – but I don't understand them at the winding up of these concerns. Her letter is burnt according to order. The seclusion from your society is one and not the least weighty of the 500 reasons I have for wishing her safe in the country or quiet in town. Adieu for the present. I wish you well through *her* & all your approaching fatigues.

Believe me Y^{rs}. ever, Dear L^y. M., B.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, early 1813:

(Source: NLS Ms.43471 f.159; BLJ III 3)

[The Lady Melbourne / Whitehall. –]

⁹⁹: Mr. N. unidentified: could be Richard Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville (Gross 453).

¹⁰⁰: Blake was the foremost London gents' hairdresser: joke obscure.

Dear L^y. M. –

I send you four brace of grouse from my Moors. – just arrived from Rochdale & I hope fresh. – I have been signing the N^d. contracts today, & that business is happily terminated. – ever y^{rs}.
[swirl signature]

[1:3 and 4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, early 1813:

(Source: NLS Ms.43471 f.151; QI 200, dated Nov. 1813; BLJ III 3-4)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.

Monday Even.

A “person of the least consequence”! you wrong yourself there my dear L^y. M – & so far she is right – you know very well, & so do I – that you can make me do whatever you please without reluctance – I am sure there exists no one to whom I feel half so much obliged – & for whom (gratitude apart) I entertain a greater regard. – With regard to her – I certainly love – & in that case it has always been my lot to be entirely at the disposal of “la regnante” their caprices I cannot reason upon – & <can> only obey them. – In favour of my acquaintance with you there is however a special clause –

1:2

& nothing shall make me cancel it I promise you. – I meant to have paid you a visit on Saturday in your box – but I thought it possible C– might be there – from her I find 2 epistles – in the last the old story of the interview to which if she still harps upon it I have no objection – she desires me not to go to L^y. Ossulstone’s – I was not asked – she was there – I presume – for she talks of going away if I came. – But I can’t help laughing at the coincidence of objections in the late & present to my going there – both unnecessary – for the presence of the one or the absence of the other would operate sufficiently as a dissuasive. –

1:3

I am just returned from Harrow – where I managed to get a headache which that I may not communicate I will close this sheet – ever d^f. L^y. M.

y^{rs}. most truly
[swirl signature]

P.S. – C’s letter is half in rhyme – an additional proof that she is not in earnest – at least I know from experience – one may begin with it – or end – when the subject is dead or changed and indifferent – but during the meridian – it is impossible – all is happiness & nonsense –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herfordshire, January 4th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.30; 1922 I 126-8; BLJ III 8-10)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.

January 4th. 1813

My dear L^y. M. – – The passage I allude to contains these words at the end of a long tirade “which – God forgive me – I solemnly denied” – on looking again I find it is “denied with a solemn oath.” – I am now tolerably aware from herself & others of her late proceedings – her last epistle was really not in y^e. language of a Gentlewoman on the subject of my resumption of my picture after however restoring her own. – –

I should esteem it as a great favour if you would once more speak to her from me – again & again I repeat that I have no wish to disturb her, nor am at all conscious of having misrepresented her or in=

1:2

=deed mentioned her name but to those to whom she had already committed herself, once more I beseech her for her own sake to remain quiet, – & having done this for the last time I must add that if this is disregarded it will be out of my power to prevent consequences fatal to her perhaps to others also, & which I must sincerely wish to avoid. – She forgets that all does not depend upon me – & she is not aware that I have done my utmost to silence some whose narratives would not be very pleasing. – Remind her that the same man she is now trying by every serious & petty means to exasperate is the same who received the warmest thanks from herself & L^y. B.

1:3

on the occasion of her Kensington excursion, one with whose conduct she has repeatedly professed herself perfectly satisfied, & who did not give her up till he was assured that he was not abandoning a woman to her fate but restoring her to her family. – I have particular {reasons} for wishing her to be once more warned – if this is not attended to, I shall remain passive – interfere no further between her & her destiny – however disagreeable to myself, the effects I fear will be worse for her. She is perfectly at liberty to dispose of her necklaces &^c. to “Grimaldi”¹⁰¹ if she pleases, & to put whatever motto she <likes> may devise on her “livery buttons” this last she will understand but as

1:4

you probably may not – it is as well to say that one of her amusements by her own account has been engraving on the said “buttons” Ne “Crede Byron” an interesting addition to the motto of my family which thus atones for its degradation in my acquaintance with her. – I however do not think it very creditable to yours to have the above proclaimed to every lacquey who meets her Ladyship’s couriers in their respectable vocations & fear that the appearance of the name may lead to errors in the translation of the learned of the livery. – This is her own account & may therefore probably be false which you will not regret. –

2:1

2) We shall leave this about the 15th, we have had no Sir R^d. any body here (I can’t read the name) but I am glad to hear of C–’s reconciliation with the Bart – his second blunder will not be so lucky as the first I fear – that is their concern. – Her “real good spirits” I rejoice to hear notwithstanding her efforts to spoil mine – her own would have been tolerably dashed very lately had it not been for my interposition – I do not mean here however for the Enchantress looks upon her with great coolness since her late epistles, & I do not believe thinks of C– as anything formidable – besides the contrast is all in her favour. – We all go on with=

2:2

=out any interrogations or disagreeables – very few guests & no inmates – books music &^c. all the amusements without the rigidity of Middleton. – I shall be very qualmish at the thought of returning to town – it is an accursed abode for people who wish to be quiet. – I am not sure that I shall not take a journey into Notts before I proceed to town but this depends on circumstances. So you dislike the Secretary’s definition of “Permanency” pray how does everyone else like it? – Why should I not believe in all sorts of “Innocence?” assure yourself that my creed on that subject is exactly your own. – “Virtue my dear L^y. Blarney Virtue” &^c. &^c. see the Vicar of Wakefield.¹⁰²

ever y^{rs}. B. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, January 5th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.31; 1922 I 128-9; BLJ III 10)

[1813. // Prestign January fifth // The Lady Melbourne / Bocket Hall / Welwyn / Herts // Byron]

Written the day following the previous item.

January 5th. 1813.

My dear L^y. M.

I wrote you a long letter yesterday respecting C– & as I did not quite explain what may appear to you a little singular, I will just write this much in addition. – I have reason to imagine that {since} she IS {<he> has been} making this business so public that it will appear perhaps still more publicly if she is not more prudent – which is the more provoking as the least circumspection on her part would prevent people from thinking of it at all. –

1:2

101: Joseph Grimaldi (his real name), the great clown.

102: “That I know,” cried Miss Skeggs, “by experience. For of the three companions I had this last half year, one of them refused to do plain-work an hour in the day, another thought twenty-five guineas a year too small a salary, and I was obliged to send away the third, because I suspected an intrigue with the chaplain. Virtue, my dear Lady Blarney, virtue is worth any price; but where is that to be found?” – “FUDGE!” – Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Chap 11.

You will easily imagine that this would be most disagreeable to me, but how can I prevent it if she persists in talking on the subject to every one – writing to Sanders the Painter &^c. &^c?¹⁰³ – However unpleasant this is to me it must be more so to the other parties – I believe L^y. B. & C. would hardly survive it – it would distress me beyond every thing – & destroy all done in her favour. – Prevail upon her if possible to consider the probable consequences of her buffooneries. ever y^{rs}.

B

1:3

P.S. Conceive of my having heard of it in this wilderness – L^d. O. had a long sermon upon it from his Mother & maiden Sisters yesterday – who are all as old as Owen Glendower & have lived out of the world since Henry 4th's reign. –

[1:4 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, January 9th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.32; 1922 I 129; BLJ III 11)

[1813 // Presteign January 9th // Lady Melbourne / Brocket Hall / Welwyn / Herts // Byron]

Caroline fools Murray with a forged Byron letter.

January 9th. 1813

Dear L^y. M. –

C– by her own confession has forged a letter in my name (the hand she imitates to perfection)¹⁰⁴ & thus obtained from M^f. Murray in Albemarle Street the picture for which I had restored her own.¹⁰⁵ – –

This fact needs no comment from me – but I wish you could reobtain it for me – otherwise I very much fear an unpleasant exposure will transpire upon this subject. – –
She shall have a copy & all her own gifts if she will restore it to

1:2

you for the present. – This picture I must have again for several weighty reasons – if not – as she has shown an utter disregard for all consequences – I shall follow her example. – I am hurried now as we are all going out but will write tomorrow dear L^y. M.

y^{rs}. ever

B

[1:3 blank; 1: 4 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, January 10th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.33; 1922 I 129-32; BLJ III 11-12)

January 10th. 1813

Dear L^y. M. –

This morning I heard from town (inclosed<,> a letter from C– to the person in A. Street) that it was in person she seized upon the picture. – Why she should herself say that she forged my name &^c. &^c. to obtain it – I cannot tell – but by her letter of yesterday (which I shall keep for the present) she expressly avows this in her wild way and Delphine¹⁰⁶ language – It is singular that she not only calumniates others but even herself, for no earthly purpose.

1:2

I wrote to you yesterday in a perilous passion about it – & am still very anxious to recover the picture with which she will certainly commit some foolery. – – Murray is in amaze at the whole transaction &

103: George Sanders did the famous 1809 painting of B. coming ashore from a boat with Rushton (Peach fig.10).

104: There is a facsimile of this forgery at 1922 I 131-2; Caroline imitates B.'s hand *fairly* well.

105: The stolen portrait was one of George Sanders' miniatures (Peach figs. 17 and 18).

106: In the exaggerated language of de Staël's novel *Delphine*. Later B. would accuse Teresa Guiccioli of sounding like de Staël's *Corinne*.

writes in a laughable consternation¹⁰⁷ – I presume she got it by flinging his own best bound folios at his head. –

I am sure since the days of the Dove in the Ark no animal has had such a time of it as I – no rest any where. – As Dogberry says “this is flat Burglary”¹⁰⁸ will you

1:3

recover my effigy if you can – it is very unfair after the restoration of her own – to be ravished in this way. – I wanted to scribble to you a long letter – but I am called away again – for which you will not be sorry – remember – C– is responsible for any errata in my letter of yesterday – for I sent you her own statement in fewer words. –

Dear L^y. M.
ever y^{rs}.
B

[1:4 is blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, January 11th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.34; 1922 I 132-3; BLJ III 12-13)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.

January 11th. 1813

My dear L^y. M. – So you cannot understand “everybody” – well – I thought anybody would but as somebody can’t – Nobody will be the wiser. – And my “Cheltenham speeches” – blessings on your memory! – what were they? – they were very sincere I will swear – & if not – you have heard I doubt not the ancient & approved saying – viz – that “the most artful man is not a match for the most sincere woman” now we are just the reverse, & I am used accordingly. – I am still in a prodigious pucker about this picture of which I sent you details yesterday & the day before. –

1:2

The worthy C– tells me in her last letter that she has now broken all but the 6th & 9th Commandments¹⁰⁹ & threatens to omit the “Not” in them also unless I submit to her late larceny; – – I have enquired after your Sir R. F. but we know no such person – she has changed her opinion about L^y. B. A. for Annabella but has no idea (at least expresses none) that my proxy succeeded no better than if I had done it in person, nor who this said Proxy was. – – I shall wait your “story about A.” till it suits your pleasure – I suppose it is a good one, & will at all events have the advantage of being well told.

1:3

I dont understand you about “what I find fault with at M. I should have wished at E”. – Your Ladyship is enigmatical – a perfect Sphinx – & I am not Ædipus.¹¹⁰ – It is now snowing perfect Avalanches, & when we shall get away Jove knows – L^d. O. is in town & on the 17th. we mean to attempt it with the permission of the skies & roads. – – C. may think what she pleases – whether I am afraid of her Time may show – but L^y. O. is not I am very certain. – I rejoice to hear you will be in town but you don’t say whether you will patronize me any further – I am sure you have

1:4

found me the most submissive of slaves. Don’t get ill – I see by the papers that poor L^y. C. Rawdon is dead – a pretty encouragement to fall sick – Bessy will be in black, which does not become her, & will add considerably to the dear Soul’s affliction, if she at all resembles the rest of what M^{rs}. Slipslop terms

107: The letter in which Mu. complains about the stolen picture has disappeared – unlike B.’s answer (B. to Mu., January 8th 1813).

108: Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV i 46 (“Flat burglary as ever was committed”).

109: The ones about murder and bearing false witness. H.’s diary, December 30th 1814: Byron told me, that one day at dinner, Lady Caroline Lamb said to George Lamb, “George – what’s the seventh commandment? *Thou shalt not bother.*”

110: Compare DJ XIII, 12, 8: *I’m not Ædipus, and life’s a Sphinx*. “Davus sum, non Ædipus” is a line from Terence, *Andria* (*The Lady of Andros*, or *The Girl from Andros*).

the “frail sect”.¹¹¹ – – We are all in tolerable plight – I have been looking over my Kinsham premises which are close to a church & churchyard full of the most facetious Epitaphs ever read – “Adue!”¹¹² (a new orthography taken from one of them) I commend me to your orisons and am ever Dear L^y. M.
y^{rs}. most truly
B

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, January 13th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.37; 1922 I 135-7, dated February 13th; BLJ III 13-14)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.

J^y 13th. 1813

My dear L^y. M. – Tell her to show you my letters from Cheltenham – if you are once mentioned otherwise than with praise I will not only eat my words but the paper & seal included. – My kind epistle was written before I either heard of her folly or her felony – the Advertisements I have never seen. –

That one so perverted with every wrong feeling should mistake forbearance for fear is to be expected – but if that picture is not restored & speedily too, the mistake will be unravelled. –

I confess I look upon the thing in a more serious light than you do – I have seen the forged billet – the hand very like – now what is to prevent her from the same imitation for any less worthy purpose she may choose to adopt? – <the> M. does not know her name nor have I yet informed him of it – if known she will have the credit of being the authoress of all the letters anonymous & synonimous, written for the next ten years & the last five. – – For aught I know she may have forged 50 such to herself – & I do not feel very much refreshed by the supposition. – I shall not

1:3

write to her again – but I request once more as respectfully as I can that she will restore the picture – if not – as nothing but a scene will satisfy her – she shall have one performed which will be more edifying than entertaining. – You know how anxious I have been to preserve quiet; what I have borne from her – I have done this it should seem in vain – & henceforth be the consequence what it may to me to her & hers I leave no measures to keep with any but yourself. – I am sick of the suspense & one way {or} the other it shall soon be over. My offer to <recover> {recover} the things was in

1:4

consequence of a foolish but conciliatory letter of her own – <which> {this} I now revoke – L^y. B’s letter is very amusing – I had no idea that L^y. O. & suite were of such consequence – but how far the assurer was right – I cannot say – at least more than I did to you already – the voyage does not depend on me. – that they have such an intention is true – how it transpired I know not but “dont know” & “haven’t heard” will make a very pretty response from you on being catechised. – I shall be in town in a few days & hope to see you there – and the picture. –

dear L^y. M. ever y^{rs}.
[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, January 19th (??) 1813:

(Source: Ms. in private hands; this text adapted from BLJ III 15)

Sunday Morn –

I fully intended calling yesterday but business – the consequence of being longer from town than I intended – prevented me. – I am to leave it again for 2 days – but on Tuesday or Wednesday at farthest I hope to find you well – & myself *welcome*. – Any hour that suits you after *two* – I will take my chance and if you are out I shall not be discouraged but try again.

ever y^{rs}. obliged & truly
BYRON

Byron to Lady Melbourne, January 22nd 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.38; 1922 I 137-8 (dated February 22nd; BLJ III 16)

Byron puts his postscript at the top.

¹¹¹: The nearest Mrs Slipslop comes to saying this is, “... it is a sign he knew very little of our *Sect*” or “Few men ever come to *fragrant* punishment, but those nasty Creatures who are a Scandal to our *Sect* (both from Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Chap IV).

¹¹²: “Adue!” underlined three times.

P.S. L^y. B. says you fear a renewal – now this is impossible – & that you should think so – still more incomprehensible. –

J^y. 22^d. 1813

Dear L^y. M. –

I see nothing but the prospect of an endless correspondence in answering L^y. C's letters; – assure her of my good wishes – & let it end. – L^y. B. was at home this morning & after mutually premising that neither “would believe one word the other had to say” much civil upbraiding took place. – She lectured pleasantly upon “Soothing”, complained that I had deceived you & M^{rs}. L. &^c. into

1:2

a belief that I was a “sober quiet Platonic well disposed person” – added that you was “the best & cleverest of all possible women,” which was very lucky, inasmuch if she had said you was y^c. worst, you would probably have heard it again. – She was a good deal horrified at my deficiency <of> {in} Romance – & quite petrified at my behaviour altogether, more especially the affair of that never sufficiently to be confounded necklace, which ought not to have been given away a second time, (for want of precedent I presume)

1:4

& which certainly has been more celebrated than any similar collar since the famous one of the “Cardinal de Rohans”.¹¹³ – – The result of all this is that I shall restore the brilliant epistles, & get back the baubles, which (God knows) I was most unwilling to receive. – To L^y. C's good resolutions I have nothing to say, but my fervent prayer to Asmodeus¹¹⁴ that they may continue. – That my opinion upon her character should alter, is neither to be desired nor expected,

1:4

I will forbear as much as possible, but – – I have already sent her the requested absolutions & remissions – why must I repeat them? – – In short I wish to hear no more of the matter – to be on good terms with “you, by yourself, you” – & to remain as quiet as Medea & her Dragons will allow me. – I wish to see you – but do not let me intrude – I fear I did yesterday – – Today I am twenty five years of age, & yours for as many centuries dear L^y. M.
&^c. &^c.

[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, February 7th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.35; 1922 I 133-4; BLJ III 17-18)

On the smaller paper.

[letter concludes at top of first sheet:] prevented our two seas from uniting. ever d^r. L^y. M. y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

F^y. 7th. 1813

My dear L^y. M. – You perhaps do not know that your amiable charge has at last thought proper to expose herself to Murray – Yesterday to my utter astonishment – in marches Miss W.¹¹⁵ – (I was present) & says in a tone more audible than requisite – “M^r. M. – L^y. C. L. desires you will call tomorrow at – God knows when – ” – The man bowed & promised acquiescence – he did not know that

1:2

113: Cardinal de Rohan was the subject of a famous 1780s Paris scandal involving Marie Antoinette and a huge diamond necklace.

114: Another reference to the devil in Le Sage's *Le Diable Boîteux*.

115: Miss W. unidentified.

she was the picture-woman – What was I to do? – if I said “don’t go” to a person who knew nothing of her – & who dreamed only of an order for books &^c. he would have thought it very singular that I should forbid the banns between him & his anticipated profits – & inevitably have found out the fact twenty four hours before the sight of C– confirmed it. – The room being full I thought it best to say nothing. –

1:3

This morning – he saw her & of course recognized the respectable pilferer. – She gave him some designs for a certain book – the which I have asked him to return – not only because I have no intention of having drawings for the thing – but (though I did not state to him the last reason) because certainly C’s are the performances of all others I would rather decline. This is the statement of her

1:4

last scene. – What a pity s<f>he had no fête nor occupation for this day as well as the three last – ! – I am going out of town for a day – tomorrow – I regret this last{blunder} since she has been so quiet & silent since her arrival that I trusted our cares were over. – I hear also she behaved to admiration last night – pray Heaven it may be permanent. – – You <was/>were at the Opera – tonight – so was I – but the <Its> <Isthmus> Isthmus (curse the word I can’t spell it) of 2 boxes between us was impassable – & [*letter concludes at top of first side*]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, February 12th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.36; 1922 I 134-5; BLJ III 18-19)

Melbourne seems to have set up a meeting between Byron and Annabella Milbanke. There are several undecodable abbreviations here. Who are “the P’s”, “M^{rs}. C”, and “the C. of Cs.”?

F^y. 12th. 1813

My dear L^y. Melbourne – – I shall be very happy to encounter A. in such a manner as to convince her that I feel no pique, nor diminution of the respect I have always felt for her – the latter is perhaps rather increased than otherwise – I do not know whether I really am above the common prejudices which the Animal Man entertains on such occasions but I trust I am above showing them. – All I hope is that whatever my manner may be – she will neither think me cold nor confident – I do not wish to seem piqued at the past, nor as a future aspirant. – With regard

1:2

to the Ps’ – why the thing is to be secret I <do> {can} not see – I have never denied it – if anyone is a sufferer it must be myself – & it is one of those afflictions which made me smile when Banks cried – I shall neither poison nor lampoon her – & am very sure that if she does not misunderstand me nor my views – we shall be very good friends – & “live happy ever after” – in {that} state of life to which it may “please God to call us”. –

So – you have seen M^{rs}. C. – this is excellent. – She sent me an Opera ticket, which I returned, being already engaged – & having paid part of another man’s subscription last year I was the

1:3

less inclined to add my own for this – I was also invited to her house – for which at present I have no pressing occasion – but I dare say her friends will find it (and all its’ furniture) as convenient as ever should circumstances render that respectable mansion a pleasant place of conference. – I only hope it may never cost any one more than the segment of a predecessor’s Opera ticket. – – I saw you last night – but I was literally jammed in between a cursed card-table & an elbow chair – so that I could not rise but in the most ungainly of all possible postures – & you are the last person before whom I would appear more awkward in my devoirs than I natur=

1:4

=ally am. – – I trust that M^{rs}. C. & the C. of Cs will not break – it would be an infinite loss to both – on my account they certainly shall not. – I fear C– will find some further method of exposing herself – I

mean in this last affair – any future one would be too great a blessing for me – & I rather think you will leave the next entirely to herself. –

We have great ideas of going abroad – in which you will heartily concur – I wish I had never left <the> {a} country <of> with more quiet & fewer clouds – Everything is so roundabout here – there every thing is to be got or got rid of sans circumlocution – & – much cheaper. – – Ever my dear L^y. M.
y^{rs} most truly

[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, February 25th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.39; 1922 I 138; BLJ III 21-2)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing. He writes on the smaller paper.

F^y. 25th.

My dear L^y. M – Her letter is “melancholy & gentlemanlike” – you know she does not write like a gentle-woman – & the contents of no great importance – the interview is put off for certain weeks – & I shall not hasten it – however much I may wish to regain my letters & other fooleries. – The idea of meeting you was a great

1:2

temptation to L^y. Cowper’s¹¹⁶ the other night but – I resist temptation better than I used to do which you will be glad to hear. – I am just from the H. of C. where Plunket¹¹⁷ made the best speech I ever heard – & one Master Tomlin the worst which I did not hear – having had recourse (after patiently listening to a very common

1:3

place beginning) to supper for a pleasanter conclusion. – As you are a bitter politician you won’t dislike this parliamentary gossip – Good night

ever y^{rs}. most truly

[swirl signature]

[1:4 is blank.]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, February 27th 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.ff.46-7; Gross 134-5)

[The Lord Byron / Bennett Street]

It’s not clear which letter from Byron Melbourne is answering.

27th Feb^y

1813

Dear L^d B.

I had heard the parts concerning them from a person to whom she had told it, & am very sorry to have it confirm’d by you, y^f determination I must admire, however much, I may lament the consequences of it – I am very glad y^t you are not implicated, for y^c reason y^t probably you could have done them very little good

1:2

& that you would have distressed yourself — Y^t Observation respecting money transactions is too true, nothing so rare as meeting with people who act handsomely on such occasions – in Love you have every claim to be better treated, but I think I know why you have not been so, & I judge by y^c Character you have given me of yourself – You say you are Suspicious, & unreasonable when you are in Love; – when a Man is unreasonable, it is

1:3

quite impossible not to deceive him, because no one will expose themselves to be quarrel’d with, & Scolded when they can avoid it, by some little Subterfuge; altho what they may wish to hide is

116: Lady Cowper (Melbourne’s daughter) holds B.’s letters to Melbourne at B.’s death.

117: William Conyngham, first Baron Plunket (1764-1854), protestant champion of Catholic claims. Lord Chancellor of Ireland under Grey.

perfectly innocent, yet if they are to be found fault with, that is quite reason enough for concealment – & then when in addition a Man is suspicious, there is some little satisfaction in being too cunning for him – I believe much y^c best way is to confide, in the person you love, you have much y^c best chance – if you meet with an honourable person

1:4

she will love you ten times better, for y^c confidence you repose in her – & if a bad one it dont much Signify, she will deceive you do what you will – there is my creed, & it is not entirely Theoretical You know you may come to me whenever you please, & that I am always happy & delighted to see you & really I could never forgive you, if you left England without seeing me more than y^c. once or twice you mention, – L^{dy} B^l. is gone to B.H. when she returns I shall have some Acc't of

2:1

C – & how she is going on. I really think you should give her Notice before you depart, in case she should wish for this interview as it would be hard upon her not to know of it – & she certainly would feel the more Sensibly from having to reproach herself with having behaved so very ill to you – but I conclude y^r departure is not so near at hand as to make any arrangement, of this last, necessary at present, & we can talk about it when I see you, which I hope will be soon
Y^{rs} ever D^r L^d B

[swirl signature]

[2:2, 3 and 4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, February 28th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.40; 1922 I 139-40; BLJ III 23)

On the smaller paper. Byron is already looking at Frances Wedderburn Webster. Melbourne's letter is missing.

Feb^y 28th. 1813

My dear L^y. M. –

I shall probably leave town in less than a fortnight – & in all probability shall not return but for a day or two my purposed voyage. – To you I may say that I see no good that can result from this eternal conference – & – if possible I shall avoid it. I have given up all expectation of the letters – or anything like fair dealing from such a quarter. –

1:2

In my answer – it was hinted that a little reflection might probably induce her to give up the idea – if we are to meet only with indifference or hatred (& I know no other alternative<> at least in our case) why meet at all? – & then my Lady B^l. with her eternal tremors – she is <as> foolish in this respect <as knavish in all others> – The requested “forgiveness” you & I have both said forty times at least – there is something

1:3

to forgive & a little to forget on both sides – I am not very apt at either – but as the remembrance is not very pleasing I shall try to dismiss it – & as for the forgiveness I am willing to say it as often as she pleases – but I have not the wish – & sincerely I may never have the opportunity to put it to the trial – for my feelings are not I fear thoroughly English as to the charities – & I should be loath to trust my mag=

1:4

=nanimity – the least durable of all mortal qualities.¹¹⁸ – –

“Resist the devil & he will flee from you” says some pious person who if he had known more of the world would have found out that we can't “resist him” & that the best way is to anticipate flight by our

118: Compare DJ I, 29, 8: ... *all the World exclaimed, “What Magnanimity!”*

own. – I am not afraid of the charms of the fair Phryne¹¹⁹ – but I do dread by some word or <action> {inadvertency} discovering a dislike (to term it gently) which were better concealed – for after all I am no actor. – ever y^{rs}. d^r. L^y. M.

[swirl signature]

P.S. The Opera box is given up – which I do not much regret – & I go no where – so that you & I are not likely to encounter during the remnant of my sojourn in town. – I shall however pay my parting devoirs at Whitehall – & you will now & then write to me in y^e. country – & perhaps even to one more distant. – If your Son has left Sicily any other branch of the family he may have left to flourish there I shall value in proportion to its lawful or unlawful resemblance to yourself. – – –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, March 13th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.41; 1922 I 140; BLJ III 25-6)

On smaller paper.

March 13th. 1813 –

Dear L^y. M. –

Will you have y^e. goodness to forward the enclosed?¹²⁰ – it contains a request for the picture – & a hint at y^e. letters. – I wish to make this one more effort – which may succeed. – I shall make you blush by asking you if you have read the perjuries in the Morning Post – with the

1:2

immaculate deposition of the Lady Douglas – much good will the publication add to the rising marriageables of this innocent metropolis – & I doubt not that for the rest of y^e. 19th. Century <as> every body will be “satisfied with only Sir John.” –

It is rather hard however on the poor knight that he should be transmitted down to all posterity as the very type of insufficiency – & byword of bad evidence.¹²¹ – “Laud we

1:3

the Gods! these be truths”¹²² as Shakespeare says. – Pray forgive me – or rather the Morning’s Post & Herald. – You are well again – at least I won’t suppose you otherwise

ever Dear L^y. M.

y^r. obliged servitor

[swirl signature]

[1:4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, March 14th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.42; 1922 I 140-1; BLJ III 26)

[at top of first side] P.S. – She wrote to L^y. O desiring to see her – & I thought it as well to lump the interviews into one – & cut you out as the third – for reasons below mentioned. –

March 14th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M. –

It has not been well managed – she wrote a submissive & denying letter to L^y. O. who at first seemed disposed to agree to the interview – but on further consideration – & having in the interim heard more of her abuse (which I think you are not unacquainted with) she answered shortly & not uncivilly in y^e. negative. – –

My wish that L^y. O. should be the third person was to save you a scene – & I confess also – odd as it may seem – that it would have been less awkward for me – you will wonder why – & I can’t tell you more than

1:2

119: Frances Wedderburn Webster.

120: “the enclosed” note to Caroline has not appeared.

121: “Sir John and Lady Douglas had deposed that in 1802 the Princess of Wales had a child by Sir Sidney Smith ... this accusation had just been revived by *The Morning Post*” (BLJ II 25n).

122: “Laud we the gods!” is *Cymbeline* V v 3950; “here [not “these”] be truths” is *Measure for Measure* II i 578 and 583.

that she might make some brilliant harangue to which — — would be a less embarrassed listener than you could possibly be. — The letter you may read & put in the fire or keep as you please — I did & do want the picture — but if she will <keep> {adhere to} her present silence — I shall not tempt her into further scribbling. —

You will at least allow I have gained one point — I shall get away without seeing her at all — no bad thing for the original whatever may become of the copy. — — I have no pretensions to “diplomacy” — possessing only one requisite — viz adhering closely to my instructions. —

You are quite right — as usual — upon y^e.

1:3

subject of being governed — in that respect I consider myself a competent witness. — It will be very cruel if Sir Sidney turns Regent=evidence — after the compliment to his prowess in L^y. D’s deposition —

Poor Sir John seems in a pretty dilemma — as the matter now stands — he is perjured if he publishes such a letter as you describe — methinks he will resemble one {Sir} Pandarus of Troy of convenient memory — except in betraying his trust. — The Smith {family} must also be uneasy — for if Sir Sidney’s head is taken off — it may be doubted how far the remainder may be useful at home or abroad. — — So — you won’t get well — you must — or what is to become of me? I am very selfish about you. —

Ever yrs. dr. Ly. M

[swirl signature]

[1:4 is blank.]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, no date (1813??)

(Source: text from NLS Ms 43472; Gross 136)

A hand-delivered note.

[The / Lord Byron]

Monday, Mor^g

Dr L^d B.

they don’t come till Wed^y. or Thursday I am going to Covent Garden to Miss O’Neill¹²³ will you come? I shall be in L^d Egremonts Box & Emily y^e only Lady¹²⁴ — if this be not agreeable perhaps you will call upon me to morrow, at any time after ½ past four

Y^{rs} ever

EM

[1:2 and 3 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, March 15th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.43; 1922 I 141-2; BLJ III 27)

On smaller paper.

March 15th. 1813

My dear L^y. M.

I read the note (for letter it was not) in which there was no mention nor allusion to any females of any family whatever — I would not have allowed such an epistle to go — besides — whatever L^y. O. may have thought I am certain she entertains no such notions at present. — The last sentence in it I erased — because it expressed

1:2

pity for C.— & I wished to spare her that humiliation. — This assertion then is a gross & malignant falsehood of your correspondents’ to make more mischief. — Pray — burn my letter — at any rate do not send it — I now recall my intention of complying with her request — & will not meet her — <upon> <n> her depositions will rival L^y. D’s. — —

1:3

I am so provoked at this last piece of malice — that I really am not fit to write a line — I will call soon — & hope to find you well — believe me — If L^y. O. entertained or expressed such opinions of you or yours

123: Eliza O’Neill, brilliant tragic actress.

124: Lord Egremont, one of Melbourne’s lovers: Emily Lady Cowper, her daughter (by Egremont).

– we should quickly quarrel – I would not <give up> {hear} those who have treated me with forbearance & kindness traduced even

1:4

by her – & I certainly like her better than anything on earth. – ever y^{rs}. d^f. L^y. M

[swirl signature]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, March 15th 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.ff.49-50; Gross 136-7)

Melbourne answers the previous item.

[The / Lord Byron / Bennett Street]

15th March
1813

Dear L^d B.

I will neither burn, read, nor keep y^f. Letter – but I have written to C– to desire her to decide (as you will not) whether I shall send it to her, or return it to you – You are mistaken when you say “you believe I am not unacquainted with her abuse of L^y O” for I really do not know what she has said

1:2

The only time she has mentioned her {character} in her Letters to me, she certainly did not praise her, but that, I have never told any body, & no other person knows what it was, not even yourself – C– writes me word that L^y O says in her Letters that all the Females of her family as well as herself have spoken of her in a “gross manner” it may be so – I answer for nobody – all I can say is that I have never heard any thing of the Sort from any of those I

1:3

have met, – as to myself I have had no conversation about her with any person except with you – & I do not think you will say I ever abus’d her. – Therefore on the whole I should rather guess that L^y O, has taken up this idea on light grounds – Ladys sometimes hear some trifling thing that has been said & fancy ten times more was meant. I do not at all wonder that you should dislike seeing C– before a 3^d person the only wonder is that you ever agreed to it, but still you did not act with y^f usual judgement in

1:4

preferring L^y O to me – no tirade, declamation or mention of C– could have signify’d if s^d before me, and I know nothing of Lovers if any thing she had s^d before L^y O– would not have subjected you to some reproach at some time or other – besides you might have depended upon my leaving y^c room if she had shewn a disposition to be quiet –& most assuredly in any case should not have been a listener – however I really am very glad that my attendance upon such an occasion has been dispensed with & am most obliged to you

2:1

for having got me off – indeed if you had not desired it, I should not have agreed to it from the first – If it should be possible for me at any future time to obtain y^f picture I certainly will do it – but at present I see no hopes – & if any Letters ever should be in my possession, I will burn them instantly –

have you read the Times of to day – there is an Acc^t of L^d Moira’s having examined two Medical people, which will not redound to his

2:2

kind nor to that of his employer – the remarks before the depositions, are very good. I am told but not on good authority that they are written by M^f Whitbread – I hear it is the fashion amongst Ladies to burn their News papers – that the Servants may not read such improprieties – they had better burn them without reading, when they are first brought, that would really be acting with propriety —
If you leave Town as you intended, the time

2:3

is very near – & I conclude I shall not see you, but if you wish to hear what is going on when you shall have retired, send me y^f directions Many thanks for y^f good Wishes – if they are selfish, they are the more flattering – Y^{rs} ever

[swirl signature]

As you s^d I must get well, I have been out this Mor^e which I was told would do me good, & I have thoughts of going to L^d Hollands this Eve & you see this is doing y^c best I can in obedience to y^f orders

2:4

but if I should catch cold in so doing, & be lay'd up in a Fever – I shall say you made me do this it is all y^f fault

This is y^c. Lord's method of reasoning ———

Lady Melbourne to Byron, March 15th–18th 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.ff.51-2; Gross 138)

This has the appearance of a hand-delivered note.

Dr L^d B – C– wrote to me Yesterday, to desire to have y^f Letter, which I sent last Night, & you will probably hear from her to morrow – & I hope she will send you the Picture – I am sorry you did not come to M^{rs} Hopes

1:2

as it was a very good party – or I might perhaps think so from its being new to me as I had not been out for a fortnight – after all – Novelty has its charms, & you would have thought it pleasant too – I wish'd for you at Supper – tho' we had neither Lobster Sallad nor Champaign¹²⁵ – Ministers & their Wives & their Supporters were very cross & peevish

1:3

at the news from y^c House of Com—s it was quite laughable to see them.

Y^{rs} D^f L^d B ever truly,

[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, March 18th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.44; 1922 I 142-3; BLJ III 27-8)

Byron answers the previous item.

M^h. 18th. 1813

My dear L^y. M. –

If I had gone to M^{rs}. Hope's¹²⁶ I should have found the only “novelty” that would give me any pleasure in yourself – & lately I am sorry to say you have become quite a rarity – even more so than the subsidiary viands which you mention & which are not amiss {in their way} as additions to supper conversation. –

But then I should have been

1:2

checkmated by the L^y. Blarney who ranks next to a breast of Veal, an earwig, & her {own} offspring, amongst my antipathies. – “After all there is a charm in Novelty” is there indeed? – it is very wicked in you to say so to a person who is so bigoted to the opposite system. – – I believe I leave town next week – in the meantime I am in the agonies of three different schemes – the first you know – the 2^d. is Sligo's Persian plan – he

125: Compare DJ I, 135, 8.

126: Wife of Thomas Hope, future author of *Anastasius*.

1:3

wants me to wait till Sept^r.¹²⁷ set off & winter at Athens (our old headquarters) & then in the Spring to Constantinople (as of old) & Bagdad & Tahiran. – This has its charms too & recalls one's predilections for gadding, – then there is Hobhouse with a Muscovite & Eastern proposal also¹²⁸ – so that I am worse off than ever Ass was before to which bundle of hay I shall address myself. – However I am going somewhere though my

1:4

agents want me to stay where I am – an additional reason for desiring to get away. – I am hiring Doctors & painters, and two or three stray Greeks now here and as tired of England as myself, and I have found a trusty vassal in one of Buonaparte's Mamaluke Guard – who will go with Sligo or myself. These I am measuring for uniforms, shoes, and inexpressibles without number,¹²⁹ and quite overwhelmed with preparations of all sorts. As soon as I get me to the country, I shall cherish once more my

2:1

dear mustachios – with whom I parted in tears – & trust they will now have the good manners to grow blacker than they did formerly – & assume the true Ottoman twist – of which your hussars are deplorably ignorant. – –

I now recollect C-'s letter – let it come – if it will come – & let her stay which will be still better. – ever dear L^y. M

y^{rs}.

/

/ Bn /

/

[2:2 blank.]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, March 24th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43472; Gross 138-9)

[The Lord Byron / Bennet Street]

24th March
1813

Dear L^d B –

they are gone this Morning to Roehampton and return Saturday. If you like to call upon me to morrow, You will find me at home & I am the more anxious not to miss this opportunity of seeing you, as I hear nothing of their intention of returning

1:2

even into Hertford^{re} – indeed if she continues to behave quietly, I think he will prefer remaining here – & I wish she may for her Sake, & for Yours – altho the consequences of it promise to be so disagreeable to me – I call'd upon L^y H^d yesterday Morn^g – who complain'd that Your Guardian¹³⁰

127: They will have to wait until at least April, because Sligo is in Newgate until then for abducting sailors in wartime.

128: H. embarks on his long European trip on May 25th.

129: Here are some of B.'s purchases from this period:

March 9	A pr black cloth Trowsers wh Shaps		2.18
13	6 Pair India Nankeen Gaiters	12/-	3.12
23	6 Pair Do. Trowsers	34/-	10.4
	Rep of a Pair Trowss. New Straps &c		5
	6 Fine White Quilting Waistcoats	26/-	7.16
	Rep of 2 Pair Silk Breeches		4
31	6 Pair India Nankeen Trowsers	34/-	10.4
April 7	6 Fine White Quilting Waistcoats	26/-	7.16
10	12 Pair India Nankeen Trowsers	34/-	20.8

130: Lord Carlisle (unlikely to be Hanson).

would not bow to her on Acc^t of her intimacy with you – I said, he bow'd spoke and call'd upon me – which proved y^t he must

1:3

have some other reason for his behaviour to her. She s^d oh No – for he hardly touch'd his Hat to L^d Holland & she ask'd me if I had seen y^c meeting between you {& him} at L^y L– I said I had seen you both in the Same room & was close to you when he came in, & that I afterwards Spoke to him & y^t certainly if he quarrel'd with people for being intimate with you, I should be one of the first to suffer – she appear'd Altogether very much dissatisfied

1:4

as this pass'd before a number of persons, – to whom I guess'd she had been representing herself as a Martyr in your cause before I appear'd – but this did not induce me to give up the argument

Y^{ts} ever [*swirl signature*]

I am busy reading D^f. Gall's book, & find Miss Burney – was quite wrong,¹³¹ it was she who told me y^c Nonsense I was talking to you y^c other Night, so you may come

[*On envelope:*] I see what I have written is so easily read y^t I must put this in another cover

[*On other side of envelope:*] without fear of examination or Shears, or any thing even x x x will, not <see through it> – I am going to a party at L^y Westmoreland to Night & should not be much surprised to see you there.

L^y Heathcote had
a Supper last Night
but I did not stay

Lady Melbourne to Byron, March 25th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43472; Gross 140-1)

Melbourne now answers a letter from Byron which is missing.

25th March
1813

D^r L^d B.

As you say, C certainly prevents my dropping y^f. Acquaintance, tho' I beg once for all to state y^t if there was no Caroline in y^c World – it is y^c very last Acquaintance I should wish to drop – & never will unless I am drop'd –

She writes to me more reasonably to day, reproaches me with wishing to “leave her in the lurch”, as she can depend upon no one but me – this alludes to y^c Picture & the

1:2

Letters which she now says she will give up to me provided I will pledge my Word to have a copy taken of the Miniature – I have ans'd this by y^c post to day, first stating that I never left any one in y^c lurch in my life – (I am very tenacious of my honor – you see) & that if she chuses to give me the Picture on these conditions, they shall be fullfill'd before I trust it out of my possession – I neither ask'd for it nor seem'd anxious to have it, as y^t would certainly have prevented her giving it me – she then bids me recollect the Hair¹³² & this is ye purpose of my writing – do send me some for the little bits, I took by force

1:3

will not Satisfy her – & really when a Lady condescends to make Such a fuss, for such a trifle – it is not for a Gentleman to faire le difficile & really by y^f reluctance to have y^f Hair touched, or to part with any of it, – I am tempted to think there is some particular charm attached to it – & y^t some of y^f powers

131: Gall wrote on phrenology. How Fanny Burney had misled Melbourne is not clear.

132: Caroline wanted a lock of B.'s hair in exchange for the picture; he sent her a lock, twined with one of Lady Oxford's.

will be lessen'd, I will not say lost, if you granted all y^e requests of that sort made to you – something like Sampson She has sent me a copy of part of y^r Letter, you told me she had sent you. What a wicked Man!!!!

13th of August – What is rather odd is, y^t from a

1:4

particular circumstance not connected with you, I know where we were on y^e day – it was y^e Night you had the Spasm at M^r Dicks¹³³ – & I now discover that was a punishment for y^r perjuries – but whether sent from Allah, or another person, – I can not pretend to determine – You must so often have taken them separately as y^t <philosophy>¹³⁴ on Similar Occasions, y^t you may know, which punishes most Severely – next time take <fever>¹³⁵ he'll do you no harm – what a fool I am, but let me have my laugh while I can – & all this nonsense will make me too late for Dinner

Y^{rs} ever E M

Late March 1813: first (private) edition of *The Giaour* published.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, March 26th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 F.45; 1922 I 143-4; BLJ III 31)

Byron answers the previous item (on one of his small sheets).

March 26th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^e – It becomes you wonderfully to reproach me for fussing about trifles – after the lectures of last summer about things of no great importance – I send you nevertheless the precious addition – though I already gave you enough to make a peruque – and now pray let me lay hands upon the picture immediately.

1:2

It is too bad in C– to raise up the Ghosts of my departed vows against me – she made me sign I know not what or how many bonds – & now like a Jew she exacts usurious interest for an illegal transaction – Pray promise anything – & I will promise you every thing – copies – originals – what you please – but let me have the picture forthwith. – I leave town on Sunday – I believe &

1:3

shall not write to her again without some further epistle arrives requiring response. – As I can't go to Lady Spencer's¹³⁶ – would you make some {decent} excuse there for me? but that would not be proper now I think of it – & yet she is one of very few people from whom I don't like to exclude myself altogether – I must say I am ill. – I shall call tomorrow or Saturday to

1:4

take a temporary leave of you – I must return to town on business – perhaps – very soon. – – – – I certainly am indebted to C– for the continuance of your countenance – & this cancels all her libels & larcenies – & makes me even hear L^y. B's name without being very sick – besides making me admire M^{rs}. G. L. all the rest of the family. – ever y^{rs}. dear L^y. M.

/
/ Bn /
/

Some time before April 1813: *Waltz* published.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, April 5th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 F.46; 1922 I 144-6; BLJ III 35-6)

133: B.'s "Spasm at Mr Dicks" otherwise unrecorded.

134: Gross hazards "catastrophe".

135: Gross hazards "fire" or "five".

136: Caroline's maternal grandmother.

The last two sides of this confessional letter are missing.

April 5th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M. – If in town at all I shall only remain a few days – it will not be in my power to see L^y. C. – she has fairly worn out every wish to please or displease her – if she sends you the picture – keep it – but for the love of quiet let me hear no more of or from her – I shall not open any letter from her in future therefore do not send me the Sunday’s dispatch or any future packet – unless from yourself. – The charm of the ring exists only in her own malignant imagination – every ring <I gave> <her> was English – I recollect something of a Combolio or Turkish rosary of amber beads

1:2

which I gave to her, to which she attached some absurd mystery – but the rings (among others a wedding one which she bestowed upon herself & insisted on my placing it on her finger) were all the manufacture of a Bondstreet Artist who certainly was no Conjuror. – – – I cannot break my promise – pray say at once & once for all – that I have nothing more to say or to see or to do on the subject – & nothing but a wish to make her act right in giving up what she ought not to retain would have induced {me} to submit so long to the fragments of her yoke – & hear the clanking of the last links of a chain forever broken. –

1:3

I have I much to do & little time to do it in – certainly not an instant to spare to a person for whom the iron (to use her own metaphor) retains all the heat but none of the flexibility. – I give up pictures letters &^c. to her tender mercies – let that satisfy her – the detestation – the utter abhorrence I feel at part of her conduct – I will neither shock you {with} nor trust myself to express. – That feeling has become a part of my nature – it has poisoned my future existence – I know not whom I may love but to the latest hour of my life I shall hate that woman. – Now you know my sentiments – they will be

1:4

the same on my deathbed. – To her I do not express this because I have no desire to make her uncomfortable – but such is the state of my mind towards her for reasons I shall not recur to & I beg to be spared from meeting her until we may be chained together in Dante’s Inferno. – – – – –
The date ring you shall have if you like it – the others have been transferred to Charlotte Harley whom I should love forever if she could always be {only} eleven years old – & whom I shall probably marry when she is old enough & bad enough to be made into a modern wife. – –

2:1

2) We have had as yet very few fine days & these I have passed on the water & in the woods – scrambling and splashing about with the children – or by myself – I always feel happier here or at Newstead than elsewhere – & all my plagues are at least 150 miles off a distance unfortunately not quite sufficient to exempt me from their persecution. – But I am writing to you at greater length than I ought for your pleasure. – I shall endeavour to get a glimpse of you before I go. – – but for C. you have my ultimatum. – – The thing you mention reminds me of the

2:2

Nun (L^y. Heath</t>cote told me last year I ran away with) & a M^r. Landor’s tragedy – the reputation of which I was obliged to bear this winter –

“And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first lampoon Sir Will or Bubo [makes]¹³⁷

so said the poet whom I resemble in nothing but the destiny expressed in the above couplet. – – Could I have kept such a secret from you? or any secret? – I suppose there is somebody I like abused in it that I am charged with the authorship – & then the character you send is such an inducement to wear his bays – – I presume it is anony=

137: Pope, *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 279-80 (“makes” missing).

[2:3 and 4 torn away and lost.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, April 7th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.47; 1922 I 146-8; BLJ III 36-8)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing, in which she announces that she has the Sanders picture Caroline stole. Byron denies any personal subtext in *The Giaour*.

April 7th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c.

“You have gotten y^c picture”!! now – do not on any account allow it to be taken out of your hands where it will remain very much to the refreshment of the original – copies &^c. I leave to your discretion. The double hair amuses you – she will never discover the difference¹³⁸ – & of course you cannot know it or tell it – it was a lucky coincidence of colour & shape for my purpose – & may never happen again – & surely it is a very

1:2

innocent revenge for some very scurvy behaviour. – It grieves me however that L^y. Blarney will never be able to lift up her eyes & hands on y^c. occasion – as heretofore – it is worthy of her own school – in which had I been earlier initiated I should have been an adept. I believe you are right about C. & the “*Giaour*” but M^{rs}. L. astonishes me – “pale” what has that to do with it?¹³⁹ – it is merely the distinction of all Europeans comparatively speaking from an Asiatic – it is rather hard upon me that all my poetical personages must be identified with the writer – & just as fair

1:3

as if D^r. Moore must be Zeluco – or Milton (begging pardon for mentioning such men in the same <line> sentence with myself) the Devil. – – I have received her letter – & I but for a circumstance not worth relating should have returned it – after a good deal of flattery & something of abuse she concludes by terming me “the greatest villain that ever existed”. – My opinion of her I expressed in my last – & the effect of her conduct upon my feelings – this I cannot revoke – but will not repeat. – – The Duchess of M!!¹⁴⁰ by the blessing of Diana all our

1:4

footmen & Gardeners are frightful. – I write with m’amie very near me – if she looks over my shoulder the foregoing paragraph will be a proper reward {for peeping} – & I scribble it on purpose. – I still adhere to my resolution of not conferring with your “Scorpion” – – but do not let this induce you to part with my property – I am by no means sure that I shall be in town – at all – <&> {but} if so – incog. – to embrace you & L^y. Holland before my voyage. – – Your letters are delightful – particularly the parts not about Caroline but Carolus – <we> I wish he had exchanged heads with your

2:1

Regent Log¹⁴¹ – with all my heart – or that they were stitched together – what an admirable Janus of a fool & a knave! – I take C. 1st. to be the greatest king (that is – villain) that ever lived. – Our family got a peerage & lost every thing else for the Stuarts – & my mother was their lineal descendant (from James 2^d. of Scotland’s daughter) <&> all the bad blood in my own composition I derive from those bastards of Banquo. – – Believe me dear L^y. M. ever y^{rs}. most truly

/
/ Bn /
/

P.S. on the other side

138: Caroline thinks she has a lock of B.’s hair; in fact it is Lady Oxford’s.

139: *How that pale lip will curl and quiver!* (*The Giaour*, 853).

140: B. responds to a lost joke by Melbourne, The Duchess of Manchester had run off with a footman.

141: See Aesop, Fable of the Frogs.

see some mild verses

2:2

To the discoverer of the bodies of
 Charles 1st. & Henry 8th.
 Famed for their civil & domestic quarrels
 See heartless Henry lies by headless Charles!
 Between them stands another sceptred thing
 It lives – it <breathes> {reigns} “aye every inch a king!”
 Charles to his people – Henry to his wife
 The double tyrant starts <again> {at once} to life,
 Justice & Death have mixed their dust in vain
 <The> {Each} royal vampire quits his vault again!
 Curst be the tomb that could so soon disgorge
 Two such to make a Janus or a George”

Will you give L^d. Holland {or anybody you like or dislike} a copy of this – but I suppose you will be tender or afraid – you need not mind any harm it will do me. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Eywood, Herefordshire, April 19th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.48; 1922 I 148-9; BLJ III 40-1)

Byron answers a letter from Lady Melbourne which is currently missing.

April 19th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M.^e

I rejoice to hear for the fiftieth time of C’s reformation & am inclined to think it permanent from the silence in that quarter whence I have not been disturbed for the last fortnight. – In a few weeks I shall be beyond her correspondence & in the mean time shall take care not to renew it. – –

I leave this place in a day or two for London where I shall remain

1:2

in obscurity for a week or two. – We are at present in a slight perplexity owing to an event¹⁴² which certainly did not enter into my calculation – what it is – I leave to your own ingenious imagination which will not let me off for a little I am sure. – I am not quite certain that I shall embark in the same ship – but I shall sail nearly at the same time – & join them – unless the vicinity of Greece should be too tempting for so vagrant a personage. –

1:3

The approbation of your Duchess is very obliging – if she really wants your copy – I will give you another with pleasure. – As to C– I do not know to what she alludes – the thing in question {“the Giaour”} was written some time ago & printed when you had it – lately – I have had neither time nor inclination to scribble – far less publish. – – I asked L^y. O. if she had seen your satire & she tells me she has neither seen nor heard of it – I wonder that any of these young

1:4

ladies you mention should be attacked & still more that I should be presumed the assailant – the mention of any of their names might preserve me from the charge. – If C. gets hold of “the Giaour” she will bring it in wilful murder against the author – & if she discovers that the hair was that of her “dearest Aspasia” I question whether Medusa’s would not be more agreeable. – I have <C> a long arrear of mischief to be even with that amiable daughter of L^y. B’s – & in the long run I shall pay it off – by instalments. – I consider this as payment the first for the bonfire – a debt too heavy to discharge

2:1

142: Lady Oxford thinks she’s pregnant (it’s a false alarm).

2) all at once. – After all – if from this hour I were never to hear her name mentioned – at least from herself – I should be too happy to let her off with all her laurels – but if she recommences hostilities – I have no protection against her madness but my own foolery – & I shall avail myself of my cap & bells accordingly – – –

How is the L- Blarney? – if that sagacious person knew how matters stand just at present I think her alarms would be at rest forever – – if ever I were again smitten in that family it would be with herself & not C. – but hatred is a much more delightful passion – & never cloys – it will make

2:2

us all happy for the rest of our lives.

Believe me dear L^y. M. ever y^{rs}
[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, April 22nd 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.49; 1922 I 149-50; BLJ III 42-3)

April 22^d. 1813 –

My dear Lady M.^e

I thought the silence would not last – it has been broken & in an epistle somewhat longer than a maiden speech or a matron’s letter ought to be. – However the tone is less harsh & consequently it grieves me “who pleads so well should ever plead in vain”. – It is the particular request of “several persons of distinction” that this plaguy conference should not take place – & just at present it is highly expedient that their wishes should meet a ready compliance – & my incli=

1:2

=nation being luckily on the same side I am glad to have this excuse for following it. – “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” says the approved saw – if so – two birds in hand are probably worth more than any given bird in a bush particularly if the said bird has been in hand already & has pecked one’s fingers into the bargain. – – I am directed by C. to send my answer to you – pray – fight off this interview for me if you can – as I am pledged to avoid it – & surely you all agree with me how much better it is to allow me to depart in

1:3

peace. – – C- is coming to town – I am glad of it as far as regards myself – she will immediately take a new turn – & I think there is no chance of our encountering during my stay there. – She tells me they want 90 guineas for copying the picture – the original cost but 7</0/>5 – & that was fifty too much <to> – it is rather hard that you must pay for her pilferings nevertheless. – On Sunday I expect to be in London – but as privately & quietly as I can I have a good deal of business to get through during the ensuing fortnight – The rest of our family go to Cheltenham

1:4

till the vessel is ready – mine will be a separate embarkation. – – – – –

I see no use in answering her letter – having lately lived with commonsensible people – these heroics are too Devonshire for me. – Besides I am very busy educating my future wife¹⁴³ – & look upon the epistle of another’s spouse with a prophetic twinge that makes me feel like Moody in the Country Girl.¹⁴⁴ – I leave you to deal with C- or double-deal with her – she has no right to anything like candour from any one – & from me the most she can desire & more than she deserves is silence. Believe me dear L^y. M^e ever y^{rs}.

/
/ Bn /
/

May 1st 1813: Annabella says she has read *Pride and Prejudice*, and is impressed with Mr Darcy.

143: B. refers jestingly to the twelve-year-old Lady Charlotte Harley, Lady Oxford’s daughter, “Ianthé” in CHP.

144: Moody in Garrick’s *The Country Girl* is a toned-down version of the paranoiacally jealous Pinchwife in Wycherley’s *The Country Wife*.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, from late April to May 2nd 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.50; 1922 I 150-2; BLJ III 44-7)

April – May 2^d.
1813My dear L^y M.^e

The illness of M^f. Hobhouse's stepmother¹⁴⁵ has spoiled our party. – Your invitation is tempting – in various ways – firstly – I never yet dined at M. House – there is novelty – 2^{dly}. – I never expected that Lord M – at all events would be my inviter – there is surprise – & 3^{dly}. the pleasure meeting you which is neither novel nor surprising but something better than both – & 4^{thly}. I am rather hungry having lived on tea & bread & butter ever since I left E^d. (where I was under the

1:2

necessity of conforming to a less Eremitical regimen) & should do justice to your viands. – Yet I must resist all these – though I can't very well say why – unless it be that I am in a very solitary mood & quite unfit for so much good company – will you therefore make my most humble apologies to your lord & master – I wont say excuse me to you – for you will do that very readily. – . – L^y. — at last thinks it as well to allow the conference – for fear I believe of being dragged herself into some scene & put in peril by the scissors or bodkin of the enemy. – And here hath been in the city of London

1:3

a female cousin of mine going for her health (& a husband which is the same thing) to the Bermudas – wanting to have last words with all her relatives – & me amongst the number – which I have declined – it is very odd the fuss people make about partings – when I went abroad last time it was without any of these things – which are much better avoided if they like one another – & if they do not what purpose can they answer? – – Your friend Kolfkovsky¹⁴⁶ was with me yesterday – complaining of the English husbands & the restrictions upon their wives – with whom he appears to have made little progress – but lays it all upon the husbands – I was obliged

1:4

to comfort him with the assurance that the fault was all his own – & that husbands & wives are much the same here as elsewhere – it was impossible to hear them so traduced with patience. – Talking of patience puts me in mind of the thing you asked for which I send but remember you asked me for it this time – & don't accuse me of inflicting my rime upon you without compassion – believe me

ever y^{rs}.

most truly

[half swirl signature, half / Bn /]

Draft of Caroline Lamb to Byron, late April 1813, and covering note from Byron to Lady Melbourne: (Source: Douglass 107, NLS 43470)

one only word. You have rais'd me from despair to the joy we look for in Heaven—your seeing me has undone me forever—you are the same—you love me still—I am sure of it your eyes your looks your manners your words, say so. Oh God can you give me up if I am dear—take me with you take me my Master my friend I will serve you take me with you—who will fight for you serve you in sickness & Health live but for your wishes & die when that can please you who so faithfully as the one you have made yours & bound to your heart of hearts. yet when you read this you will be gone. you Will think of me perhaps too as one who gave you sufferings & trouble—Byron my days are past in remembering what I once was to you—I wish you had never known me or that you had killed me before you went. God Bless & my friend & master

your

Caro

145: H. does not mention in his diary that his stepmother is ill.

146: B. always had difficulty with Russian names. Prince Kozlovsky was a Russian diplomat.

[in Byron's hand, on cover:] Dr. L^y. M – Will you read – wafer – {or} seal – & send the inclosed answer to an epistle of Your Agnus¹⁴⁷ – in which she menaces me with her “ghost” – which I long to see – if she is but half as fractious there (where you please) as here they will be glad to remit her to this world – ever y^{rs}

/
/ Bn /
/

May 2d. 1813

Byron to Lady Caroline Lamb, from 4 Bennet Street London, April 29th 1813:

(Source: text adapted from BLJ III 43-4)

It seems likely that this is the letter to which Byron refers in the previous cover note.

4 Bennet Street April 29th. 1813

If you still persist in your intention of meeting me in opposition to the wishes of your own friends & of mine – it must even be so – I regret it & acquiesce with reluctance. – – – I am not ignorant of the very extraordinary language you have held not only to me but others – & your avowal of your determination to obtain what you are pleased to call “revenge” – nor have I now to learn that an incensed woman is a dangerous enemy. – Undoubtedly those against whom we can make no defence – whatever they say or do – must be formidable – your words & actions have lately been tolerably portentous – & might justify me in avoiding the demanded interview – more especially as I believe you fully capable of performing all your menaces – but as I once hazarded every thing for you – I will not shrink from you – perhaps I deserve punishment – if so – you are quite as proper a person to inflict it as any other. You say you will “ruin me” – I thank you – but I have done that for myself already – you say you will “destroy me” perhaps you will only save me the trouble. – It is useless to reason with you – to repeat what you already know – that I have in reality saved you from utter & impending destruction. – Every one who knows you – knows this also – but they do not know as yet what you may & will tell them as I now tell you – that it is in a great measure owing to this persecution – to the accursed things you have said – to the extravagances you have committed – that I again adopt the resolution of quitting this country – In your assertions – you have either belied or betrayed me – take your choice – in your actions – you have hurt only yourself – but is that nothing to one who wished you well? – – I have only one request to make – which is not to attempt to see L^y. O – on her you have no claim. – You will settle – as you please – the arrangement of this conference – I do not leave England till June – but the sooner it is over the better – I once wished for your own sake L^y. M to be present – but if you are to fulfil any of your threats in word or deed – we had better be alone –

yours ever
[swirl signature]

Early May 1813: Annabella Milbanke sees Byron several times at London parties.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, May 7th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.51; 1922 I 153-4; BLJ III 46-7)

May 7th. 1813 –

Dear L^y. M.^c – I passed your house with y^c. intention of calling – but seeing a carriage I would not disturb you & possibly drive away some of your near & dear relations – as generally happens upon my intrusion. – – It is impossible for me to guess “the long story” about the picture – but it is doubtless some new foolery of C’s – you need not take y^c trouble to tell it – let her amuse herself. I wished to have had it again – because another paramount personage has taken a fancy to have that picture at all events –

1:2

but I meant the one now in their possession for you – indeed it is the best of the two – for it was done some years before. – As to C. she is so far out of the question – that I would rather throw it into the fire & the original after – than leave it in her possession – if it could be avoided. – I must see you at Sir Joshua¹⁴⁸ – though I don’t much like venturing on the sight of seventeen – it is bad enough now – & must have been worse then – the painter was not so much to blame as you seem to imagine by adding

147: “Lamb” as in “Agnus Dei”.

148: Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had painted the famous portrait of Melbourne and one of her children.

1:3

a few years – he foresaw you would lose nothing by them. – On Wednesday I leave town – it is exactly the same to me morning or evening – the less light the better – either for quarrels or reconciliations – but I once more enter my protest against C’s meeting me at all – it will end in some ludicrous scene – you must be present – it will make you laugh which will be some consolation. – – – –
I am asked to L^y. Spencer’s tonight – but have doubts about going – for I have

1:4

an invitation to a city <ball> or rather citizen’s ball where I wish to see the young people unmuzzled – & as Hobhouse is going – who is a Cynic after my own heart – I shall be regaled with his observations – which may be Safely made as we are both mere spectators – I can’t dance – & he wont. – – –
I shall contrive to be at L^y. S’s first if possible – solely & entirely to see you – & not to hear about C – if you can help it – I am sure it is a sickening subject to both. – ever d^f. L^y. M^e. y^{rs}.

/
/ Bn /
/

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, May 9th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.52; 1922 I 154-5; BLJ III 47)

A smaller-sized sheet.

May 9th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^e.

At nine be it then – but I still retain my opinion & act entirely on the judgment of others. – I have been so often the dupe of everyone with whom I ever was connected – – & have so little reason to credit the assertions of L^y. C. – that I hear of her indisposition with some degree of scepticism. – If she really is unwell

1:2

all that L^y. C. has done to destroy my regard will not prevent my feeling much regret – & sincerely wishing her recovery,

Believe me my dear L^y M^e

/
/ Bn /
/

[1:3 and 4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, May 14th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.53; 1922 I 155; BLJ III 47-8)

Another smaller-sized sheet.

May 14th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^e.

Say whatever you please in answer to the letter addressed to us – it is all very well. – – –

–

I am in some anxiety – in consequence of a letter from C^{m149} this morning – she¹⁵⁰ has burst a small bloodvessel – & is weak & ill – all which she

1:2

attributes to “me & my friends in town”!! – I presume it will end in an indisposition which however unpleasant for a time – would eventually be a great relief to both. – It is very odd that all the women of my acquaintance abuse R^{rs} – C’s letter is full of it – & L^y. — ’s fuller. – The malady is perhaps

1:3

149: Cheltenham.

150: Lady Oxford.

a “ruse” but at all events it will probably take me from town next week – very much to the detriment of my temporal & spiritual concerns. –

I shan’t have spirits to tell you my stories this Even – unless seeing you restores them – your conversation is really Champaigne to them. –

1:4

C’s platonie speculations are all nonsense – we began in that way before – & they ended in – all this uproar. – I can’t help being amused at “your permission to see me on my return” – I suppose you trust in the plague – or a tempest – or L^y. O – to sweep me from the earth before that occurs.

ever d^r. L^y. M^c
y^{rs}.
/
/ Bn /
/

Lady Melbourne to Byron, before May 21st 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.ff.53-4; Gross 141)

Dear L^d B I found L^y Bess^b much better than I expected, she had found herself rather unwell, & expressed a wish to be Cupp’d which alarmed them, but she was relieved by putting her feet in warm water and flour of Mustard Seed, & I left her in Bed & very

1:2

comfortable – I told her how anxious you were about her, & she desired me to say how very much obliged to you she was – & wish’d you to be told that the only thing to quiet her mind was to be assured y^t no more meetings will take place at present between you & C– for that is now convinced y^t every one of these that she

1:3

has Witness’d have done incalculable Mischief & that her mind is so Strongly impressed with this idea, that every time she closed her Eyes last Night & to day she fancied she saw you two running away together, & y^t she awaked in the greatest alarm & horror – You will perceive that this has taken entire possession of her Nerves – & they must be quieter.

[1:4 blank.]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, May 21st 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.f.55; Gross 141-2)

[The Lord Byron / Bennett Street]

A small note without a salutation.

21st May
1813

we dine at L^y Cowpers at ½ past five, & she begs you will favour her with y^t company – but if you should prefer fasting – & will come there at a quarter before Seven we can go all together, for as we are allow’d but one Ticket amongst us, you would be requir’d here to gain

1:2

admission separately. – – Your accusation agst me of wishing to prevent your going to L^y Spensers was very unjust, for you are not bound to remain there the whole time, & if I find it dull I may perhaps go there myself our party consists of Six. L^y Jersey Emily & myself – Your Kof^{l51} of – and Augustus Foster –

y^{rs} ever
[swirl signature]

[1:3 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, May 21st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.54; 1922 I 155-6; BLJ III 50)

Byron answers the previous item with a note.May 21st. 1813 –Dear L^y. M^c. –

I shall be with you at L^y. C's (to whom I request you will present my inexcusable excuses) before seven – that we may form a compact body for y^c. expedition. – – I have unfortunately dined for the week yesterday – & if Kovlov. would follow my example – in that respect – we should be less squeezed in our respective positions this Evening. –

ever y^{rs}.
/
/ Bn /
/

[1:2, 3 and 4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, May 24th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.55; 1922 I 156-7; BLJ III 51-2)

May 24th. 1813 –My dear L^y. M^c.–

I had a card for y^c. L^y. S. S^h's¹⁵² this evening – but I was engaged in taking leave of M^r. Hobhouse who quits us for y^c. Continent tomorrow – & whom it is not very probable I shall see again – he is y^c. oldest – indeed – y^c. only friend I have – & my regrets are equally social & selfish – for if I have had attended¹⁵³ to his advice – I should have been anything but what I am – & in parting with him I lose <whom> “a guide philosopher & friend” I neither can nor wish to replace. – –
Now for our everlasting theme. –

1:2

I think terror must be y^c. order of y^c. day – suspicion on your part will maintain discipline – & believe me it will not be misplaced – you know my situation – I have no excuse which could be offered in a court of law or even of honour – but if a woman will force her way in defiance of every thing – even against y^c. remonstrance & request of her fool – the said fool has no chance but running away – which at present – does not happen to suit the springs of her puppet. – I am not y^c. dupe of her pretended passion – I see it is totally selfish – she is a right woman with all the courage to dare but

1:3

not to suffer – the hardihood of guilt united to the fear of shame – the passions of an Oriental without her spirit – in short the oddest antithesis of pipe= & common=clay that ever was compounded since the first husband betook himself to stealing apples – & begetting heirs to his own vexations in this world – and (I hope for his pains & the truth of y^c. Pentateuch) his utter d—mnation in y^c. next. – – –
My own situation at this moment is such that without a boast I may say – that perhaps the present suspense would be alleviated by the worst positive event that could happen – I am utterly ruined

1:4

in fortune – not very brilliant in reputation – sans <hope> {plan} – or prospect of any kind – but of getting out of y^c. country – with nothing to hope – but (by the peculiar patronage of Beelzebub) – with little to fear.

“My greatest comfort is, that now,
My dubbolt fortune is so low,
That either it must quickly end –
Or turn about again & mend –¹⁵⁴

152: BLJ suggests Lady Sarah Shannon.

153: Should be “had attended”.

154: B. adapts *His only solace was, that now / His dog-bolt fortune was so low, / That either it must quickly end / Or turn about again, and mend; / In which he found th' event, no less / Than other times beside his guess.* – *Hudibras*, II 1 39-43.

you will pardon a quotation from Hudibras. If she is at all in her senses – she will now pause – if not – neither the patience of Job nor the wisdom of Solomon (neither very remarkable by y^c. bye) could bear or accomplish more than you have long ago done for y^c. salvation of a thing not worth saving.

I am d^f. L^y. M. y^{rs}.
/
/ Bn /
/

2:1

P.S. All my epistles to y^c. C– must go for nothing – you know there is but one way in which a man can write to ladies afflicted with these phantasies – & to her above all others – I must say yes – yes – yes – (like a crier in a country town) to keep her quiet – & to prove to L^y. B– how admirably her “soothing” system succeeds. – Silence C– for “3 days” – & I am dumb forever. –

[2:2 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, May 26th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.56; 1922 I 157-8; BLJ III 53-4)

May 26th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c. –

By the “worst possible” I doubtless meant the event which for aught I know may be very probable – as to her remaining with me – that were out of the question – I would not stir a furlong – but patiently wait the wrath of the Blarneys – whom I unfortunately detest too cordially – to give them a chance of putting me out of my then misery – without doing my best to obtain a fellow passenger in Charon’s hoy. –

I only expressed the fact – that the difficulties in which I am steeped are

1:2

such as to render any step of hers or any other female or male – a matter next to indifference – believe me the idea of our living together – never entered into my calculation for a moment. – I have no attachment – within these two thousand miles – but I feel some old ones reviving – & I hope I shall yet pray for your prosperity with my face towards Mecca. – –

In the meantime – L^y. O. arrives in town tomorrow – which I regret – when people have once fairly parted – how do I abhor those partings! – I know them to be of no use – & yet as

1:3

painful at the time as the first plunge into purgatory. – – – –

All you say upon Law is Gospel – but I am perdu – I don’t know what you call temporary – Law is eternal. – I shall soon I trust be where there is none – & where even the wreck of my shattered fortunes will be affluence. – I now heartily rejoice in the escape of your niece¹⁵⁵ – at the time I could not foresee this – any more than I could imagine that the means I adopted to <xxxxx> extricate myself would have plunged me into that same morass (to prolong your metaphor) in which I

1:4

am now chin-deep. – I trust you will believe that I did not wish to put the Lady’s philosophy to such a proof – I did not think her wrong then – still less now. – – I believe I shall sell Rochdale – for y^c. <xxxxxxxx> {sake} of another lawsuit – & at a certain loss – it would quite disappoint me to meet with anything like profit – & as to pleasure – that was all over with before I was eighteen. – – I shall be very sorry not to go as soon as you wish – but I assure you – – never did Prudery long more for a lover – than I to be out of a country in which I <xxxx not born I came> {certainly was not born} with my own consent. – If therefore I am here a month beyond your hopes – & an age beyond my own – pardon me. ever y^{rs}.

/
/ Bn /

155: But Annabella Milbanke has not escaped.

2:1

P.S. – C– tells you I said &^c. &^c. &^c! – to be sure I did – & will say as much more – & as much more to that – to any woman whatever who puts the same questions – who would dare to say **No** within arm's-length? – – –

[2:2 is blank.]

June 1st 1813: Byron gives his speech in favour of Major Cartwright's petition. He never speaks in the Lords again.

June 5th 1813: first public edition of *The Giaour* published; 684 lines.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, June 8th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.57; 1922 I 159-60; BLJ III 59-60)

June 8th. 1813 –Dear L^y. M^c. –

On my arrival in town about half an hour ago (which I leave again tomorrow) I found your letter – I was determined not to plague you without. – L^y. — has been in town – & we left it on Thursday for Salthill where she now is on her way to Portsmouth. –
I expect to get away sometime next month – C. has been quiet to a degree of awful calmness – which was fortunate for God knows what I should have done – had she acted otherwise – she does not know that I am in town <of>

1:2

but was equally decorous ever since the arrival of L^y. – a very lucky accident – in that quarter we go on as usual – I do not know when she sails – I shall be with them till they embark – he is I believe with the ship – or in the sea – I saw him but once in town – & then it was to dispute about a stupid blunder on the subject of Kinsham – & other farming concerns. – – – L^y. – agrees with you perfectly that there must be no more interviews – but we have such a turbulent minority to deal with – that you must allow me to set off quietly – & even without weeping over you – for which I had prepared several pocket Handkerchiefs. –

1:3

I shall now be but little in London – as I must see my sister &^c. – & it is not impossible I may embark finally without taking leave of you – if so – I leave everything about pictures & all such frivolities to the entire disposal of C– whom I pray heartily I may not see before my departure – nor after. – If you wish to say anything you would have me do or not do – a line before three tomorrow will reach me here. – I am in the most robust health – have been eating & drinking – & fatten upon ill fortune. ever y^s. my dear L^y. M^c

/
/ Bn /
/

P.S. I have just this moment had letters from the Levant where every thing is going on in the old way – & well enough. –

[1:4 is blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, June 21st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.58; 1922 I 160-1; BLJ III 65-6)

June 21st. 1813My dear L^y. M^c

The Devil – who ought to be civil on such occasions has at last persuaded L^d. – to be so too – for on her threatening to fill up my “carte blanche” in her own way – he quietly ate his own words & intentions – & now they are to “live happy ever after” – & to sail in the pleasing hope of

seeing or not seeing me again. – So that the very letter in which I most committed myself to her – has by Good fortune turned out the most successful of peremptory papers. – –
But on the other hand – your plague & mine has according to her own account been in “excellent fooling”¹⁵⁶ M^r. L. on his

1:2

return found her in tears – & was (no wonder) wroth to a degree – & wanted to know if I (the most inoffensive of men) had affronted her &^c. – now this is really laughable – if I speak to her he is insulted – If I don't speak to her – she is insulted – now if he is to be equally offended at both – I shall not be long in choosing – – I had much rather differ about something than nothing. – All this I only know from her – & probably it is not true – I however must say that it is not to be expected that I shall throw myself in or out of the way of either – let them amuse themselves in their own way –

1:3

I may shut myself out of society for my own pleasure – but I will not be put out of it by any couple in Christendom –
With regard to the miseries of this “correct & animated Waltzer” as the M. Post <calls> entitles her – I wish she would not call in the aid of so many compassionate Countesses – there is L^y. W. (with a tongue too) conceives me to be the greatest Barbarian since the days of Bacchus & Ariadne – and all who hate L^y. O – consisting of one half the world – and all who abominate me – that is the other half – will tear the last rag of my tattered reputation into shreds – threads – filaments & atoms. – – – –

1:4

Where is my ticket? – that I may personify L^d. M – a gentleman whom I should like to have represented for the last – let me see – how <long> {many years} has he been your proprietor? – –
Why wont you go off with me? – I am sure our elopement would have greater effect – cause a “greater sensation” as our Orators say – than any event of the kind – since Eve ran away with the Apple.
Believe me ever y^{rs}. most truly –

/
/ Bn /
/

June 28th 1813: Lady Oxford departs for the Mediterranean.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, June 29th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.59; 1922 I 161; BLJ III 69)

On the small-sized paper. Byron misses Lady Oxford.

June 29th. 1813

Dear L^y. M^e.

I am just returned from L^d. Eardley's whence seeing nobody – I came away without entering – which is quite as well – if C. & her mamma are there – I never look upon the latter without an idea of hartshorn. –

My lacquey I believe announced me which is

1:2

aukward – but no matter – here I am safe & solitary. – –
L^y. — sailed yesterday – & now my dear L^y. M^e. without pretending to affect or effect – will you not mention her name to me for the remainder of my weeks in England? to tell you the truth – I feel more Carolinish about her than I expected – they went

1:3

at last so suddenly the very day I was to have met her on the coast – all the fault of my Sister's arrival – the last letter was written on board the diabolical ship. – – I am doing all I can to be ready to go with

156: Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, faultily remembered: “good fooling” (I v 323), “very gracious fooling” (II iii 720), “the best fooling” (II iii 731), or “admirable fooling” (II iii 781).

your Russian,¹⁵⁷ depend upon it I shall be either out of the country or nothing – very soon – all I like is now gone – & all I abhor (with some few

1:4

exceptions) remains – viz – the R – his government – & most of his subjects – what a fool I was to come back – I shall be wiser next time – unless there is a prospect of alteration in the whole system. – – – I shall see you somewhere soon I trust – & in the meantime if you could convince L^y. B– that – whatever may happen – neither love of her nor hers will have any thing to do with it you will set the poor soul at ease. – ever y^{rs}.

/
/ Bn /
/

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, July 1st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.60; 1922 I 162-3; BLJ III 70)

July 1st. 1813 –

Dear L^y. M^e.

I will endeavour to be precise as if I were to meet a more than friend or an enemy. – – At last (at a pretty time you will say) I declared to C— my real sentiments about L^y.—¹⁵⁸ & I think they had a good effect. – Do you know I am Constancy in the abstract – & am much more faithful to people on the “high seas” than if they were on shore – I suppose from my natural love of contradiction & paradox. – Tomorrow the Newstead Cause comes on in Chancery –

1:2

but I shall not embarrass myself about such trifles – for I have got to stand for my picture¹⁵⁹ – & to sit with my Sister – & to drive to you – all which are matters more to my taste & equally to my profit. – – I missed you last night – our party had all the refuse of the Regent & the Red book – – – Bedfords – Jerseys – Ossulstones – Greys & the like – but the sexes separated – the women were tied back to back upon half a dozen wooolsacks in the middle of the room hating each other & talking – & the Men were sprinkled round the corners in dull duets – Rogers fell

1:3

to my share – & we abused every body – Your Frederick¹⁶⁰ (by the bye your introduction has done wonders for we never speak) followed the degenerate example – every body seemed to have lost an acquaintance – I never saw anything like it but a print from a scene in Dante’s Inferno – which I leave you to guess. – – – –

I want a she voucher for a ticket to the A. Masque¹⁶¹ – tomorrow – it is for my Sister who I hope will go with me – I wish she were not married for – (now I have no house to keep) she would {have} been so good a housekeeper. Poor soul – she likes her husband – I think her thanking you for your

1:4

abetment of her abominable marriage (7 years after the <event> {event}!!) is the only instance of similar gratitude upon record. – However now she is married I trust she will remain so. –

ever y^{rs}. dear L^y. M^e

BN

July 6th 1813: Caroline cuts herself at Lady Heathcote’s ball.

157: Koslovsky to B: “My dear Lord, / As it seems that the Admiralty wants a direct application from your Lordship for the permission of going on board of the Boyne, Let me intreat you not to delay to make the necessary steps for obtaining {it}, because I am peculiarly concerned not in the pleasure, but if I may safely say, the happiness of your society. / Your Lordship’s / Most Obnt servant / Prince Peter Kozlovsky. / London / This 13. July 1813” – NLS Acc 12604 / 4247G.

158: Lady Oxford.

159: B. is sitting for his “Albanian” portrait by Thomas Phillips (Peach fig.38).

160: Frederick Lamb, Melbourne’s third son.

161: The masque at Almack’s.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, July 6th 1813 (i):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.61; 1922 I 164-5; QI 164-5; BLJ III 71)

Byron writes on his small paper, and shrinks his handwriting to accommodate.July 6th. 1813 –My dear L^y. M^c –

God knows what has happened – but at 4 in the morning L^y. Ossulstone looking angry (& at that moment ugly) delivered to me a confused kind of message from you of some scene – this is all I know – except that with laudable logic she drew the usual feminine deduction that I “must have behaved very ill”. – – –

If L^y. C is offended it really must be anger at my not affronting her – for one of the few things I said was a request to know her will & pleasure – if

1:2

there was anything I could say do or not do to give her the least gratification – she walked away without answering – & after leaving me in this not very dignified situation – & showing her independence to twenty people near – I only saw her dancing – & in the doorway for a moment – where she said something so very violent – that I was in distress lest L^d. Y.¹⁶² or L^y. Rancliffe overheard her – I went to Supper – & saw & heard no more till L^y. Ossulstone told me your words & her own opinion – & here I am in stupid

1:3

innocence & ignorance of my offence or her proceedings. – –

If I am to {be} haunted with hysterics wherever I go – & whatever I do – I think she is not the only person to be pitied. – I should have returned to her after her doorway whisper – but I could not with any kind of politeness leave L^y. Rancliffe to drown herself in wine & water or be suffocated in a Jelly=dish – without a spoon or a hand to help her – besides – if there was & I foresaw there would be something ridiculous – surely I was better absent than present. –

1:4

This is really insanity – & every body seems inoculated with the same distemper – L^y. W—¹⁶³ says “you must have done something – you know between people in your situation – a word or a look goes a great way” &^c. &^c. – so it seems indeed – but I never knew that neither words nor looks – in short – downright – innocent – vacant – indefinable Nothing had the same precious power of producing this perpetual worry. I wait to hear from you – in case I have to answer you – I trust nothing has occurred to spoil your breakfast – for which the Regent has got a fine day. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, July 6th 1813 (ii):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.61; 1922 I 164-5; QI 164-5; BLJ III 73)

This letter encloses the previous one.

[*letter concludes at top of first sheet:*] I really remained at L^y. H’s till 5 totally ignorant of all that passed – nor do I now know where this cursed scarification took place – nor when – I mean the room – & the hour. – – –

Dear L^y. M.^c

Since I wrote y^c. enclosed I have heard a strange story of C’s scratching herself with glass – & I know not what besides – of all this I was ignorant till this Evening. – What I did or said to provoke her – I know not – I told her it was better to waltze – “because she danced well – & it would be imputed to me – if she did not” – but I see nothing in this to produce cutting & maiming – besides before supper I saw her – & though she said & did even then a foolish thing – I could not suppose her so frantic as to be in earnest. – She took hold of my hand as I passed & pressed it against some sharp instrument –

1:2

162: Lord Yarmouth.

163: Lady Westmoreland.

& said – “I mean to use this –” I answered against me I presume – & passed on with L^y. R. trembling lest L^d. Y. & L^y. R. should overhear her – though not believing it possible that this was more than one of her not uncommon bravadoes – for real feeling does not disclose its intentions – & always shuns display. – I thought little more of this – & leaving the table in search of her would have appeared more particular than proper – though of course had I guessed her to be serious or had I been conscious of offending I should have done every thing to pacify or prevent her. – – I know not what to say or do – I am quite unaware of what I did to displease – & useless regret is all I can feel on the subject – Can she be in her senses? – yet – I would rather think myself to blame – than that she were so silly without cause. – [*letter concludes at top of first sheet*]

Early July 1813: second edition of *The Giaour* published; 816 lines.

Lady Melbourne to Byron, July 7th 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547 ff.57-8; Airlie 155; Gross 142-3)

Answering the previous item, Melbourne tells of how Caroline cut herself.

7th July 1813.

D^r. L^d. B.

She is what she calls calm this mor^e – & I was in hopes I might have read some parts of y^f. Letter to her – & in that intention told her I had heard & that you wish'd to know how she was, but I soon found, that the less I s^d the better. – I ask'd her if she had any Message to send, she s^d tell him I have been ill, that I am now calm, but not very well but don't tell him what pass'd y^e other night – I then s^d probably you have told him y^f own story, have you written? after an awkward attempt at equivocation, she confess'd she had, but denied your having sent an answer – however this I do nt

1:2

believe, as I do not see how you could avoid answering her – she then s^d – she should not abuse you she should keep her thoughts to herself – & to y^e World she should praise y^f behaviour – & upon my just hinting that she had s^d shameful things y^e other night & that I was glad she had made this determination she went into a rage, saying y^f she would expose you & clear herself & so on – she is now like a Barrel of Gunpowder & takes fire with y^e most trifling Spark – she has been in a dreadfull – I was interrupted & obliged to put my paper into my drawer, & now I can not for my life recollect what I was going to say – oh now I have it – I was stating y^f she had been in a dreadful bad humour this last Week with her, when y^e fermentation begins there is no Stopping it – till it bursts forth, she must have gone to L^y H determin'd to pique you by her Waltzing & when she found that fail'd, in her passion, she wish'd to expose you, not feeling how much worse it was for herself – now she seems ashamed – for y^e first

1:3

time I ever saw y^e least mark of that feeling – it might have been kept secret but for L^y. O^{ss} & L^y. H – the first from folly – the other from being entirely ignorant how to be good natur'd – & from a wish to display her fine feelings – that is the reason why all these Women abuse you, how I hate that affectation of Sentiment – I know they would talk & thought if it reach'd you it must make you uncomfortable & therefore desired L^y O¹⁶⁴ to say to you there had been a scene – but y^f. she was calm'd & I would write to you next mor^e ——— at present I am trying to get her out of Town & hope I shall Succeed – I was able to send for Fre^d ¹⁶⁵ whom I knew could hold her & I could not by myself & indeed I must do L^y. B y^e justice to say that her representations of her Violence in these paroxysms was not at all exaggerated, I could not have believed it possible for any

1:4

one to carry absurdity to such a pitch – I call it so, for I am convinced she knows perfectly what she is about all the time, but she has no idea of controuling her fury – She broke a Glass, & Scratched herself as you call it, with the broken pieces – L^y O & L^y H – screamed¹⁶⁶ instead of taking it from her, & I

164: Not Lady Ossultone but Lady Oxford.

165: Frederick Ponsonby, Caroline's brother.

166: Gross has “discussed”.

had just left off holding her for 2 Minutes – she had a pair of Scissors in her hand when I went up with which she was Wounding herself but not deeply – pray if you answer her Letters do not let her find out I have written you word of all this – I shall perhaps meet you somewhere but if I do not, you shall hear how we go on, – I can not describe how fatigued I was yesterday – I must finish

Y^{rs}. ever [*swirl signature*]

Summer 1813: Annabella sees Byron sitting on a sofa with Augusta, and is impressed by his playful and affectionate manner towards her.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, July 9th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.62; 1922 I 165-6; BLJ III 74)

The salutation and signature are unusual in this correspondence.

July 13th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. Melbourne –

I do not know how she will make out any duplicity on my part towards you – for she is eternally asking if I am not in love with you – which at least shows that no abuse can have fallen from me on y^c. subject. – – Who or what the persons may be who suppose me to blame – because a woman falls into a fury in public – I know not nor am anxious to know – they <ha> may as well be quiet – for although I neither have nor shall attempt to vindicate myself {to any but you & her} from the truly absurd reasons

1:2

she has adduced for her conduct – I have borne too much already to submit even to explanation, – I shall be under way in a few weeks – having nearly indeed quite arranged my business – & in the mean time – they shall not have far to hunt for me. – Do you know that I look upon myself as the aggrieved person in this instance – as far as regards her & her own family – (not yours of course for they cannot be blamed do what they will) & with this conviction I defy them in any & every manner. – I do not understand her “sometimes cruel” & “sometimes kind” but her notions of

1:3

kindness are not very well adapted for a public display – was it not in complying with the request of all her connections that I incurred this ebullition of selfish anger & distempered vanity? – I have never from the moment the connection ended last year – encouraged her in any of her absurdities – but if she absolutely of her own accord committed herself at any time – how could I betray or ill-treat her? you see what my not objecting to her waltzing (for I did & said nothing more) has produced. – Let them begin at once instead of talking about it – do they suppose there is anything so terrific in the Devonshire hive – bees or drones? – they shall find me a wasp. – – –

1:4

As to taking care of myself – that I must leave to Providence – there is no guarding against her – I have done my best. – To you I have now & ever to return my best thanks – if I am either angry or ungrateful it neither is nor shall be to yourself.

ever y^{rs}.

most affectionately,

Byron

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, July 18th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.63; 1922 I 166-7; BLJ III 83)

July 18th. 1813

My dear L^y. M^c.

The purchaser of Newstead is not a young Man – it was supposed that the purchase was for a M^r. Leigh – & I wish it were – for that Gentleman could make 50 such without injury to himself. – – Of M^r. Cloughton’s circumstances I know little or nothing – he bought the estate not at the public auction – but after a fortnight’s deliberation after the public biddings – the price was certainly his own offer. –

He himself has never made such a

1:2

representation to me or my agents – & till this moment I never heard the report – he declared & declares himself willing to complete when a title is made out – this we of course are prepared to provide – I do not it is true consider him a willing purchaser – he evaded & at last drove me into Chancery – but if he is ruined by this contract or has been illtreated by me or mine – on that subject he has hitherto been silent – {at least to me. –} If any one is injured in this transaction in circumstances or un=

1:3

=fair treatment – it is myself – the title to my estate (of 300 years standing) has been <called in question> {doubted} – my hopes & my arrangements overthrown & confused – & it should now seem – my character called in question. – I have no time now to expatiate further on a subject which I feel persuaded will not require explanation to those who know me – besides I am not very fond of defending myself – I shall however have an immediate explanation with the interesting youth (a lawyer of forty five years) who is so much overreached by the dreadful chicane & wily experience of that

1:4

mercenary & litigious person who is
y^{rs}. most truly

/
/ Bn /
/

P.S. You will make my best acknowledgements to Miss M – & say what is most proper – I have not the skill – you are an adept – you may defend me if it amuses you – not else – let them say anything but what is true & I forgive your prattlers against me. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, July 30th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.64; 1922 I 167; BLJ III 83)

The small paper. Byron is now having an affair with his half-sister.

My dear L^y. M^c.

There is Kharlovsky's farewell for you. – She charges me with making my valet read her letters to me when in a hurry – (as if that would not be the time for a man to read them himself) on the report of somebody whom I suspect by the brilliancy

1:2

of the invention to be some of the she-Blarneys – pray tell her that it is false (now let me beg you to do so or she will never be quiet) & that I don't think the man could if I wished him decypher her dispatches – but would resign rather undertake¹⁶⁷ unravelling her hieroglyphics. – “I dont tell you anything!” – very good – every body rates me about my confidences

1:3

with you – Augusta for example writes today & the last thing she says – is “this must not go to L^y. M^c” – & to punish you it shant. – –

I commit you to the care of Providence – & am ever my dear L^y. M.

most affectionately

y^r. obliged S^t.

Byron

[1:4 has the date (“July 30th 1813”) in someone else's hand.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 5th 1813:

167: B. means “rather than undertake”.

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.65; 1922 I 168; BLJ III 85)

Small paper.

August 5th.
1813

My dear L^y. M^c.

My sister who is going abroad with me is now in town where she returned with me from New^{ket} – under the existing circumstances of her lords' embarrassments – she could not well do otherwise – & she appears to have still less reluctance at leaving this country than even myself. – L^y. C – may do as she pleases – if <my> Augusta likes to take her she may – but in that

1:2

case she will travel by herself. – Nugent¹⁶⁸ does not know I am in town – & if he did – I could not at present accept his invitation – though your presence is a strong temptation – indeed much stronger for not being a new one. – –

So M^c. de Stael says my visit was “justificatory” – this is not very justifiable in her – if she asserts that I said what I really did not – I shall revenge my=

1:3

=self by repeating what she really did say – this she would not like – although our conversation was neither amatory nor political. – I called <on her> because she said by not visiting <her> “I treated her with contempt” – an impression of which Common Politeness required the removal – I am always delighted to visit you at your own hour – but I am never myself in a morning –

1:4

or rather I am myself or Lord Stair (I doubt which very often) my dullness is so very ineffable. – We have an event in our family – a female cousin going to Mouros for religion¹⁶⁹ – could not you <spare> {send} one of your family to join her – she is to have a spare waistcoat – that will fit the other I dare say. – If not I believe I must try it myself. –

ever y^{rs}. d^r. L^y. M.

[swirl signature]

Mid-August 1813: third edition of *The Giaour* published, two states; 950-1014 lines.

Annabella Milbanke, to Lady Melbourne, no date:

(Source: Airlie pp.161-2)

Annabella's reaction to the enlarged *Giaour*.

1813

I have just been reading the *enlarged* Edition of *Giaour*, and think the additions very beautiful. The description of Love almost makes me in love. Certainly he excels in the language of Passion, whilst the power of delineating inanimate nature appears more copiously bestowed on other poets. Perhaps he has not displayed his excellence in that line only because it has not so much occupied his attention. In the *intellectual* he is truly sublime, yet I cannot believe that his Genius has yet attained its maturity. There is a progressive improvement in his writings. I shall be glad of his stay in England as I may hope to have some share of his agreeable society next year in London. After the lapse of nearly two years since the declaration of his wishes, it is not probable that they should continue in a sufficient degree to occasion mutual embarrassment. I consider his acquaintance as so desirable that I would incur the risk of being called a Flirt for the sake of enjoying it, provided I may do so without detriment to himself-for you know that his welfare has been as much the object of my consideration as if it were connected with my own. To shew you that Invention does not languish in this country I was told a few days since that Lord Byron had gone to establish himself in some remote island with a younger daughter of Lady Oxford's, whom he was to educate & ultimately to marry ...

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 8th 1813:

168: Nugent is a friend of Henry Luttrell, who will be present at the burning of the Memoirs in 1824.

169: Compare “a female cousin of mine going for her health (& a husband which is the same thing) to the Bermudas” (B. to Melbourne, late April to May 2nd 1813).

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.66; 1922 I 168-9; BLJ III 86-7)

Another letter on the small paper.

August 8th. 1813

My dear L^y. M^e.

I wrote <you> y^e. annexed note 3 days ago – & as it contains a “direct” answer to some of your queries – I shall even let it go as it is – I put it in my drawer & forgot it – for I have been occupied to weariness with various somethings & nothings ever since – amongst others in preventing two men (one an old friend)¹⁷⁰ from cutting one another’s throats after a quarrel in which I was called in to mediate & succeeded in

1:2

reserving them for a different fate – & I humbly hope a better. – – I rather plume myself upon this – being the first decent deed I have done since my acquaintance with the most celebrated personage of your illustrious house – whose fault it is not – that I have not had the obligation returned. – I have not broken in upon your grief for the departure of your diplomatic progeny to cope with Buonaparte – I think L^y. A^y. might be

1:3

an useful appendage to his suite – as by all late accounts the Emperor is rather more frail than becomes a hero. – –

M^e. de Stael’s favourite son has had his head cleft by a vile Adjutant who knew the broadsword exercise better than piquet¹⁷¹ – for that was y^e. cause of carnage. I thought that game had been only dangerous to your sex. – Corinne is doubtless very much affected – yet methinks – I should conjec=

1:4

=ture – she will want some spectators to testify how graceful her grief will be – & to relate what fine things she can say on a subject where common-place mourners would be silent. – – Do I err in my judgement of the woman think you? – She is in many things – a sort of C^e. in her senses – for she is sane. – ever y^{rs} truly

[swirl signature]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, August 8th 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.ff.59-60; Gross 144)

Melbourne answers the previous item on the same day.

Augst 8th
1813

Dr L^d B.

very mysterious without doubt, but quite right in looking upon me as true friend <to you> If you have any secret you wish to confide to me you may do it Safely, but I shall not plague you to tell me – do what is most pleasant to yourself – I am not given to make professions

1:2

but so far I will say that you will never find me either deceive or betray you , – come & see me if you can Monday about ½ past Three I mention y^l time, as I must go out late, or if that should not suit you come Tuesday at any time you please, I think I shall be gone towards y^e end of y^e Week which makes me anxious to see you as soon as I can, but to day both Emily and Frederic

1:3

leave London & my time must be given up to them – I am very sorry for Mad^e de Stael tho’ I think her so disagreeable, you judge her quite truly, about her wish shew off the D^{ss} of D¹⁷² came to Town to see

170: Scrope Davies and Lord Foley.

171: Madame de Staël’s son was killed in a duel over gambling in Mecklenburg-Schwerin. On October 1st 1816 B. and H. dine with her at Coppet in the presence of the Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

her [*blot*: “*Yester*”]day, & Adair¹⁷³ has been with her every day – Nugent was ill & put off his Supper, Ward took it, & Nugent got well & was one of Wards guests. – who was very Cross, thought he had

1:4

been played upon & received us all a contre Coeur & gave himself all sorts of Airs & shewed us all plainly he would have prefer'd our absence¹⁷⁴ to our presence – & in this humour he chose to sit by me at Supper, which did not answer, for we began a dispute upon Politiks, & he heard several truths, that did not add to y^e sweetness of his Temper., – Yesterday I was all day in a Water party, & feel quite weary to day, at y^e recollection of y^e length of time we

2:1 [sheet 2 is a scrap torn from a larger sheet and mounted]

were confined to a Boat only Nine H^{rs}, as we continued to have y^e tide agst us both going & coming – not a [*remainder of letter lost.*]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 11th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.67; 1922 I 169-71; BLJ III 87-8)

[To / Lady Melbourne / Whitehall]

Another letter on the small paper.

[*letter concludes at top of first sheet:*] merely defensive. –

ever y^{rs}.

[*swirl signature*]

August 11th. 1813

My dear L^y. M^c

I ought to have called on you – & I ought – all kinds of oughts – for {omitting} which I can only plead many excuses which will not amount to one apology. – As this is the case I shall omit them altogether – having already written & destroyed two ineffectual notes upon that & other subjects. – –

From C– after a long (for her)

1:2

interval of silence – I have received a most rational letter full of good resolves – & a most tempting basket full of excellent fruit – the grapes & gooseberries I have returned having no great appetite that way – but I keep the letter – which might <be> do me more good – were it written by a grave character & signed by the Abbess of Quedlinburg.¹⁷⁵ – – – – –

C– I assure you – I have not seen – & I do really

1:3

believe she has <d> determined to leave me in quiet – God knows I want it. – The few things – I wished to have said to you – did not at all concern her nor hers – nor you nor yours daughters nor nieces – –

I should have been glad of your advice how to untie two or three “Gordion knots” tied round me – I shall cut them without consulting anyone – though some are rather closely twisted round my heart (if you will allow

1:4

me to wear one). – – –

172: Elizabeth Foster, successor to and lover of the famous Georgiana: B. rents 13 Piccadilly Terrace from her in 1815, and never pays for it.

173: Gross has “Ward”.

174: Looks like “hpsense”.

175: In *Tristram Shandy*.

I suppose you will think I shall never go – I almost think so myself – though every day renders it more necessary in all but a worldly point of view – I don't know whether to be glad or sorry that I separated from the O. party – though I have no great disposition to rejoin them. – – – –
Perhaps I shall not see you again – if not – forgive my follies & like as much of me as you can – it is odd that I should begin by liking all of your house but you & end by the reverse – with one exception. – But you must recollect that I thought you my enemy – & my dislike was [*letter concludes at top of first side*]

2:1

P.S. I had a passage in y^c. Boyne – but it was for one servant only & myself – this would not do – I am now casting throws for a storeship – I have since I last saw you found out about 50 better reasons than ever for migrating – “he says farewell & yet he goes not” so say I – but I will go nevertheless. –

[2:2 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 18th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.68; 1922 I 171-2; BLJ III 90-1)

Melbourne has told Byron that he is a very weak person. He answers a letter from her which is currently missing.

August 18th. 1813

My dear L^y. M^c. –

I am “a very weak person” & can only answer – your letter – I have already written & to three to you – & probably may finish in the same way with y^c. present. ———
L^d. S.¹⁷⁶ is in town & we are much embarrassed with y^c. plague which is it seems all over y^c. Levant – but having been both at a prodigious expenditure in large trunks – small clothes – & small arms for ourselves – snuff boxes & Telescopes for the Mussulman gentry – & gew=

1:2

=gaws for such of the Pagan women as may be inclined to give us trinkets in exchange – why – lest so much good preparation should be thrown away – we are determined to go – God knows where – for he is bewildered & so am I. – His Balarina has presented him with a babe¹⁷⁷ – & Malice says that he divides the honours of paternity with the Editor of the Courier – who – I suppose – published his trial & tried his fortune with the Lady – much about the time that Sir W^m. Scott passed sentence of matrimony upon his mother¹⁷⁸ – He is going to part with her – & is

1:3

right – those Opera house connections are not very creditable – besides the eternal chaldron of boiling suspicion into which a man must be plunged if he likes one of those women must be insufferable – at least for a permanency. – – –

Who is your pencil correspondent? – her query (for it looks like a female's) is too lively for M^{rs} George – has too few words for L^y. Jersey – is not starch enough for your niece – nor patient enough for C – it is not L^y. Blarney's for it is legible – it is <too> not ill=natured – so it can't be L^y. Holland's – I have already named more people than I believe care where I am or what I am doing – or at any rate that would ask you the question – tell me & in re=

1:4

=turn I will tell – no I wont. – Of C – I know nothing – I hear very seldom from her – & then she sends me sermons – & fruit – that if one don't make me sick the other may – I have a letter (not from her) today – in which there is an enquiry – “tell me when did you see L^y. M” – I will answer it – when my correspondent can reply to me “when I shall see L^y. M.” – – I have scribbled on without saying a single thing I wished to say – this victory! – sad work – nothing but Conquest abroad & High health at home

176: The Marquis of Sligo.

177: Sligo impregnated his ballerina while in jail.

178: Scott, who sentenced Sligo to Newgate, then married Sligo's mother.

– only think what a disappointment – the Wapping <has tu> Plague – has turned out to be merely a vulgar <comft> low – common place Typhus fever & wont

1:3

kill one of our acquaintance unless they go to Gravesend to smuggle. – Then the Congress – L^d. A¹⁷⁹ – is to my conception as empty a piece of Caledonian Coxcomby as ever wore a Thistle – & as fit to negotiate as I to dance a Bolero – or C– to sit still – or L^y. O. to lie still – or L^y. Anybody to be still – I don't know him but merely judge from an air of <put> pretension about him which is generally the solemn cloak of Shallowness – I have heard him speak badly – on Spanish affairs – very likely he may do better with our own. – –

Write to me soon – & believe me ever

y^{rs}. most explicitly

[swirl signature]

[1:4 is blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 20th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.69; 1922 I 172-4; BLJ III 91-2)

August 20th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c.

When I don't write to you or see you for some time you may be very certain I am about no good – & vice versa – I have sent you a long scrawl & here be a second – which may convince you that I am not ashamed of myself – or else I should keep out of the way of one for whom I have so much regard. – C– has been a perfect Lake – a mirror of quiet – & I have answered her last 2 letters. – I hope they will neither ruffle the Lake nor crack the Mirror – but when she really & truly

1:2

{has} been behaving prettily – I could not write ferociously – besides I happened just then to be in exquisite good humour with myself and two or three other people. –

“Perhaps Prosperity becalmed his breast
Perhaps the Wind just shifted from the East.”¹⁸⁰

Everything in this life depends upon the weather & the state of one's digestion – I have been eating & drinking – which I always do when wretched for then I grow fat & don't show it – & now that I am in very good plight & Spirits – I can't leave off the custom though I have no further occasion for it – & shan't have till – the next change of Weather. –

1:3

I suppose or some other atmospherical reason. – – And now what are you doing? in this place we can only say what we are not doing – Town is empty but not the worse for that – it is a delight of a place now there's no one in it – I am totally & unutterably possessed by the ineffable power of Indolence – I see no one – I say nothing – I do nothing – and I wish for noth – oh yes – I wish to see you – & next to that – to hear from you – I have great hopes of sailing soon – for Cadiz I believe first – & thence wherever the Gods permit – I shan't be sorry to {see that} best & whitest of Sea port towns again – but all this depends upon the

1:4

weather – or my own caprices which are much more whimsical. – – –

How is your sole companion the Countess of Panshanger?¹⁸¹ – I have <been> now been a retainer of your house one year & sundry months & I know rather less of that illustrious Lady than I did the first moment of my introduction – yet I have thought as much about her as any of you – not the Gods know with any but the most profound reverence – but she puzzled me – (which is very easy) & furnished me

179: Lord Aberdeen.

180: Pope, *Epistle to Cobham*, 111-12.

181: B.'s nickname for Melbourne's daughter, Lady Cowper.

with many an entertaining soliloquy upon a variety of topics – do you know I am an observer but my observations upon man – or rather womankind like deep, metaphysical researches lead only to doubt – & then I leave them – – or they me. –

Is not this a laudable spirit of enquiry into things that don't concern myself? make my

2:1

2) best respects – & don't be angry with me – which you will however – first for some things I have said – & then for others I have not said – you would not have me always talking Egotism though it is said to be allowable in a letter & only in a letter. –

I am now going to dine – where I shall be obliged to drink more than is prudent – & I congratulate myself & you on having written this before dinner instead of after – though it is stupid enough to make you believe that I have anticipated my Claret – yours ever my dear L^y. M. in sober sadness – or as a winebibber ought to say – in sad sobriety –

[swirl signature]

Late August 1813: fourth edition of *The Giaour* published; 1048 lines.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 21st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.70; 1922 I 174-6; BLJ III 92-3)

[1813 / London August twenty first / The Lady Melbourne / Cheltenham / Byron]

August 21st. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c –

We are sadly bewildered – I ask you who was so good as to enquire after me – & you send me in reply some speculations upon a note in pencil you once saw – which came from a person you certainly never saw in your life – & who I am almost sure was never in London but once & then only for two months. – From or of that personage I have not heard since last March. – I do not know that anyone ever reproached me for illtreating C – as far as regarded my acquaintance with you – – Oh yes – there was one – but I know as little where she is as I do of the other – & we never were nor – I dare swear – ever will be in the least intimate. I have not said that any person objected at

1:2

present to the magical influence I will not deny that you possess not only over me but any one on whom you please to exert it – I never knew but three people who did object to it – & much good it did them. – – –

I am “sick & serious” am I? – then you must cure the one & laugh away the other – but I equally deny the malady & the melancholy. – Of C's parcel & it's contents I am in utter ignorance – to the picture I plead guilty – I thought I had already said to you as I did to C – that it was for Augusta – who took it with her I believe into the country. – She wants to go with me to Sicily or elsewhere – & I wish it also – but the intelligence of the

1:3

progress of the plague is really too serious – & she would take one of the children – now L^y. O. sickened me of every body's children – besides it is so superfluous to carry such things with people – if they want them can't they get them on the Spot? – After all I shall probably go alone – S.¹⁸² wants to go to Russia – only to see a worse London at St. Petersburg – he prefers (as anyone in their senses would) the Mediterranean but is staggered by the pestilence. – – He is not I believe the least jealous of his precious appendage but tired of her – & I don't much wonder – poor fellow – why should his “figure”¹⁸³ prevent him from jealousy – I think it would

1:4

be a very good cause – though he is less than the Prince – who I fancy did not find his figure in his way – Heaven knows what is to become of any <of us> or at least most of our Sex – if our masculine

182: Sligo.

183: “figurante” (ballerina).

ugliness is to be an obstacle – it is fortunate that the caprice of your gender generally gets the better of their taste<?>. – – –

I am delighted to hear of your return to town – I shall then see you – you don't know how much good your conversation does me – you must promise me – if I stay away two years – to send me an invitation to Brocket on my return – I hope there will then be no alarm – it is very hard to live in perpetual Quarantine —

ever dear L^y. M^e
[swirl signature]

2:1

P.S.

Scrope Davies & L^d. Foley were the Quarrelers you mention – & I was called in by the former – a second's is a most inglorious & ungrateful office – & having as little desire to make others play the fool – as to quarrel myself – with a little management I made it up between them – as might be done nine times in ten if the <Combat> Mediator is not a bully or a butcher. – [inverted at top of sheet:] You say my handwriting is altered – I fear not for the better – it depends upon my pens & my humours – both as you know none of the best.

[2:2 has the address.]

Lady Melbourne to Byron, from Cheltenham, August 23rd 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.f.61; Gross 145-6)

[The Lord Byron / Bennet St. St. James's / London; to be kept / My Mother / to L^d Byron]

Melbourne answers the previous item.

Cheltenham
23^d Augst
1813

D^r L^d B –

my Stupidity was not at all exaggerated Yesterday, as you well know for on reading y^r Letter once again, I find I had mistaken several things in it, & as there were people in y^e room whom I did not wish should partake of y^e amusement I always receive from y^r Letters I put it in my pocket in a hurry – You forget y^t mine <up>

1:2

upon which your comment was in answer to a very deplorable one I had from you, that I had received two or three in y^e same Stile & that your merry one, had not reach'd me, and pleas'd me, as it has Since. You can not expect me with my head full of these Waters, (which make even Nugent twirl about, strange as it appears) – to understand & unravel y^e confusion y^t exists amongst all y^e different Ladies you allude to – You are accustom'd to it, therefore to you I have no doubt it is clear – my Magical

1:3

influence, you make me Laugh – I won't say, as the Marechalle D'anise¹⁸⁴ (I think it was) when she was going to be executed, {for witchcraft} & was ask'd by what means she obtain'd her power over some person, whom I have forgot – par le pouvoir qu'ont les Esprits forts sur les ames faibles – for I have no pretensions to strength of Mind, & I always think that when people talk of my power they are laughing at me and you more than any one I have ever met with, – & I have no objection to it, for I like a Joke even when against myself

1:4

& it always appears to me that when you are describing my influence over you, you mean yours over me – I am entertained at y^r taking up the Cudgels in defence of L^d S⁻¹⁸⁵ beauty. 'tis a bad cause, depend upon it, – after all I don't know him & have never seen him nearer than across y^e Opera House – were we to come closer to one perhaps I might alter my Opinion but at y^t distance he is hideous, it

184: Airlie (p.165) has “d'Ancre”.

185: Lord Sligo. He had a weight problem, but had been co-lover (with Michael Bruce) of Lady Hester Stanhope.

may not be positive ugliness, but it is something indescribably disagreeable – & according to my opinion if any Woman Suffers him, he is a fortunate person, you think I mean only his Size, which after all is no advantage either

2:1

to a Marquis or a Prince altho' their rank may be with some description of persons, as to y^e P. I don't believe any Man in that Situation ever met with so little Success; & as to being really liked (for himself) I believe he is to this day ignorant of y^e delight and Witching of such a feeling – this may astonish you from me, if you meant as I thought, <the/a> Sarcastic reflection upon me. – – however when ever you may think it worth Your while to gain any information on that Subject, I will Satisfy you fully – recollect in y^e mean time y^t the Picture was not a likeness of his R H – I am glad you deny both y^e Malady

2:2

and y^e Melancholy, & I hope you will convince me of it and of y^e truth of what you say, y^t you wish to see me by calling upon me on Friday in Town, you see I don't intend to be Satisfy'd by mere words – about four is y^e best time but you will find me at any other Hour, if that should not be convenient to you.

Ever y^{rs} D^r L^d B
[swirl signature]

an invitation to B. why – I invited you last Year – oh but, I forgot, you were then obeying my Commands in this place

2:3

however there are few things I should like so well as to have you Visit me there – but two y^{rs} hence! – I shall be in my dotage – & yet perhaps it may still be prevented by C– how provoking that is to me is impossible to be confess'd

[2:4 blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 23rd 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.71; 1922 I 176-7; BLJ III 97-8)

August 23^d. 1813

My dear L^y. M^e.

Would that Luttrell¹⁸⁶ had travelled – or that one could provide him with a mattress stuffed with peachstones to teach him more philosophy in such petty calamities – I remember my friend Hobhouse used to say in Turkey that I had no notion of comfort because I could sleep where none but a brute could – & certainly where brutes did for often have the Cows turned out of their apartment buted at the door all night extremely discomposed with the unaccountable ejection. – Thus we lived – one day in the palace of the Pacha & the next perhaps in the most miserable hut of the Mountains – I confess I preferred the former but never quarrelled with

1:2

the latter – & as to eating (by the bye I have lately stuffed like Count Staremberg)¹⁸⁷ you know I am easily victualled. – – – – –

A pretty panegyric you have passed upon the Countess – “honourable & amiable” – God knows I have no reason to doubt either & never did – but methinks this is a marvellous insipid eulogium – “amiable” she must be because she reminds us very much of yourself – & “honourable” because she reminds one of nobody else – the fact is you love her better than anything in existence – & for that reason you don't know how to praise her properly – so you must confine yourself to abusing me in which if you don't succeed it is no fault of mine. – – You tell me I don't know women – did I ever pretend to be an unraveller of riddles? – & was there ever any one more easily deceived & led by anyone who

186: Henry Luttrell, Irish wit and poetaster. Present in 1824 at the burning of the Memoirs.

187: Austrian Ambassador in London.

1:3

will take the trouble than myself? “Know them” – not I indeed – & I heartily hope I never may. – “Was my good humour from deceiving or being duped” the last of course – or how could I be so happy as you seem to think me. – My head is a little disturbed today – I have to write – first – a soothing letter to C – a sentimental one to X Y Z. – a sincere one to T. Moore – and one a mixture of all three to yourself with as much of the ludicrous as you like to find {in} it. – I ought to have said this in y^e. beginning for now I must end it. – Adieu ever y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

[1:4 is blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, August 31st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.72; 1922 I 177; BLJ III 102)

Byron sends Sligo’s letter to Lady Melbourne at once. This very important document is on the smaller paper. Byron shrinks his hand accordingly.August 31st. 1813My dear L^y. M^e.

Your kind letter is unanswerable – no one but yourself would have taken the trouble – no one but me would have been in a situation to require it. – –

I am still in town so that it has as yet had all the effect you wish. – – – –

I enclose you a letter from Sligo with his Giaour – which differs from our friend C’s as much as from mine – for that reason I send it you. – The part I have erased merely contained

1:2

some barbarous Turkish names of no consequence – & **<one line blotted out>**
some circumstances not immediately relevant to the story.¹⁸⁸ – –

When you have read it I will thank you for it again – I think it will make you laugh when you consider all the poetry & prose which has grown out of it. – – ever my dear L^y. M. y^{rs}.

B –

P.S.

Do you go to L^y. Le D^e.’s¹⁸⁹ tonight – I am asked.

[1:3 and 4 are blank.]

Early September 1813: fifth edition of *The Giaour* published, at 1215 lines.**Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, September 5th 1813:**

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.73; 1922 I 177-8; Q I 172; BLJ III 108)

Another small sheet, with half torn away, being now only 11 x 18.5 cm.Sept^r. 5th. 1813 –

Dear Lady Melbourne –

I return you the plan of A’s spouse elect of which I shall say nothing because I do not understand it – though I dare say it is exactly what it ought to be. – Neither do I know why I am writing this note as I mean to call on you – unless it be to try your “new patent pens” which delight me infinitely with their colours – I have pitched upon a yellow one to begin with –

1:2

Very likely you will be out – & I must return you the annexed epistles – I would rather have seen your answer – she seems to have been spoiled – not as children usually are – but systematically Clarissa Harlowed into an awkward kind of correctness – with a dependence upon her own infallibility which will or may lead her into some egregious blunder – I don’t mean the usual error of young gentlewomen – but she will find exactly what she wants – & then discover that it is much more dignified than

188: See Sligo’s letter to B., August 31st 1813. The decoding of this erasure might reveal much.

189: Lady Despenser’s.

1:3

entertaining. –

[the rest of 1:3 and all of 1:4 except for “... in town –” are torn out.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, September 7th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.74; 1922 I 178-9; BLJ III 110-12)

Another small sheet.Sept^r. 7th. 1813 –My dear L^y. M^c

A letter from A. – from you – & from Ali Pacha by D^r. Holland just arrived in which that amiable potentate styles me his “most excellent & dearest friend.” – What do you think was “dearest friend’s” last exploit? – Forty two years ago the inhabitants of a hostile city seized his mother & 2 sisters & treated them as Miss Cunegonde was used by the Bulgarian cavalry. Well – this year he at last becomes master of the a=

1:2

=foresaid city – selects all the persons {living} in the remotest degree akin to this outrage (in Turkey these are affronts) their children grand children – cousins &^c. to the amount of 600 – & has them put to death in his presence. – I don’t wonder at it – but the interval of 42 years is rather singular. – this H^d tells me occurred in the present spring. – He writes to me to get him a gun made – & assures me of his tender remembrance & profound respect. – I dine out & am afraid I shall

1:3

hardly be in time – but I will doubtless endeavour to have the pleasure of seeing you – I have a great many things to say – & some very good things to hear at any rate –
 ever y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

[1:4 is blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, September 8th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.75; 1922 I 179; BLJ III 112)

Another small sheet, 22.5 x 18.5 cm.Sept^r. 8th. 1813My dear L^y. M^c

I leave town tomorrow for a few days – come what may – and as I am sure you would get the better of my resolution – I shall not venture to encounter you. – If nothing very particular occurs you will allow me to write as usual – if there does – you will probably hear of but

1:2

not from me (of course) again. – Adieu – whatever I am – whatever & wherever I may be – believe me most truly your obliged

& faithful

[swirl signature]

[1:3 and 4 are blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, September 9th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.76; 1922 I 179-80; BLJ III 112-13)

Another small sheet, 22.5 x 18.5 cm.Sept^r. 9th. 1813My dear L^y. M^c

I did not receive your note till Midnight – having gone out immediately on writing my own – or you may feel assured that I could have as little resisted your conjunction – as any other spell you may think proper to cast over me. – Something has occurred which prevents my leaving town

till Saturday perhaps till Sunday – later than that day I cannot well remain. – Without as A. says being in a state

1:2

of despondency – I am nevertheless very much perplexed – however that must end one way or the other – You say “write to me at all events” depend upon it I will – till the moment arrives <when> (if it does arrive) when I feel that you ought not to acknowledge me as a correspondent – in that case a sense of what is due to yourself – & a very grateful remembrance of all you have done to save one not worth preserving – will of course close our correspondence and acquaintance at once – the sincerest & only proof I could then afford

1:3

of the value I set upon your friendship. – –
ever y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

[1:4 is blank.]

From September 21st to October 5th 1813, Byron is with the Wedderburn Websters at Aston Hall, Yorkshire, *thinking about seducing Frances but never doing so.*

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Aston Hall, Yorkshire, September 21st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.77; 1922 I 180-2; QI 174-6; BLJ III 115-18)

Aston Hall Rotherham –
Sept^r. 21st. 1813

My dear L^y. M^e –

My stay at Cambridge was very short – but feeling feverish & restless in town I flew off & here I am on a visit to my friend Webster now married – & (according to y^e. Duke of Buckingham’s curse –) “settled in y^e. country.” – His bride Lady Frances is a pretty pleasing woman – but in delicate health & I fear going – if not gone – into a decline – Stanhope & his wife – pretty & pleasant too but not at all consumptive – left us to day – leaving only y^e. family – another single gentleman & your slave. – The sister L^y. Catherine is here too – & looks very pale from a cross in her love for Lord Bury (L^d. Albe’s son) in short we are a society of happy wives &

1:2

unfortunate maidens. – The place is very well & quiet & the children only scream in a low voice – so that I am not much disturbed & shall stay a few days in tolerable repose. – W. don’t want sense nor good nature but both are occasionally obscured by his suspicions & absurdities of all descriptions – he is passionately fond of having his wife admired – & at the same time jealous to jaundice of every thing & every body – I have hit upon the medium of praising her to him perpetually behind her back – & never looking at her before his face – as for her I believe she is <inclined> {disposed} to be very faithful – & I don’t think any one now here is inclined to put her to the test. – W. himself is with all his jealousy & admiration a little

1:3

tired – he has been lately at Newstead – & wants to go again – I suspected this sudden penchant & soon discovered that a foolish nymph of the Abbey – about whom fortunately I care not – was the attraction – now if I wanted to make mischief – I could extract much good perplexity from a proper management of such events – but I am grown so good or so indolent – that I shall not avail myself of so pleasant an opportunity of tormenting mine host – though he deserves it for poaching. – I believe he has hitherto been unsuccessful – or rather it is too astonishing to be believed. – He proposed to me with great gravity to carry him over there – & I replied with equal candour that he might

1:4

set out when he pleased but that I should remain here to take care of his household in the interim – a proposition which I thought very much to the purpose – but which did not seem at all to his satisfaction

– by way of opiate he preached me a sermon on his wife’s good qualities concluding by an assertion that in all moral & mortal qualities she was very like “Christ!!! I think the virgin Mary would have been a more appropriate typification – but it <is> was the first comparison of the kind I ever heard & made me laugh till he was angry – & then I got out of humour too – which pacified him & shortened his panegyric – L^d. Petersham is coming here in

2:1

2) a day or two – who will certainly flirt furiously with L^y. F – & I shall have some comic Iagoism with our little Othello – I should have no chance with his Desdemona myself – but a more lively & better dressed & formed personage might in an innocent way – for I really believe the girl is a very good well disposed wife & will do very well if she lives & he himself don’t tease her into some dislike of her lawful owner. – –

I passed through Hatfield the night of your ball – suppose we had jostled at a turnpike!! – At Bugden I blundered on a Bishop – the Bishop put me in mind of y^e Government – the

2:2

Government of the Governed – & the governed of their indifference towards their governors which you must have remarked as to all parties – these reflections expectorated as follows – you know I never send you my scribblings & when you read these you will wish I never may. –

Tis said – Indifference marks the present time
Then hear the reason – though ’tis told in rhyme –
A King who can’t – a Prince of Wales who don’t –
Patriots who shan’t – Ministers who won’t –
What matters who are in or out of place
The Mad – the Bad – the Useless – or the Base?

—————
you may read the 2^d. couplet so if you like –

“A King who cannot – & a Prince who don’t –
Patriots who would not – ministers who won’t –”

2:3

I am asked to stay for the Doncaster races but I am not in plight – & am a miserable beau at the best of times – so I shall even return to town or elsewhere – and in the mean time ever am

y^{rs}. dear L^y. M^e
[swirl signature]

P.S.

If you write address to B^t Street. were I once gone – I should not wish my letters to travel here after me for fear of accidents. – – – –

[there is plenty of space left on 2:2, but Byron turns the page:]

There is a delightful epitaph on Voltaire in Grimm – I read it coming down – the French I should probably mis{s}pell so take it only in bad English – “Here lies the spoilt child of the {a} world which he spoiled.” –

It is good short & true. — — —

Byron to Lady Melbourne, September 28th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.78; 1922 I 182-4; BLJ III 123-5)

Sept^r. 28th. 1813 –

My dear Lady Melbourne –

I sent you a long letter from Aston last week which I hope has been received at Brocket. – The Doncaster races (as I foretold you) drove me to town but I have an invitation to go down again this week upon which I am pondering – I had reasons of my own some bad & others good for not accompanying the party to D^f – my time was passed pleasantly enough – & as innocently at Aston – as during the “week” of immaculate memory last autumn at Middleton. – If you received my letter you will remember

1:2

my sketch of the Astonian family – when I return I shall complete it – at present I doubt about the colours – I have been observing & have made out one conclusion which is that my friend W.¹⁹⁰ will run his head against a wall of his own building. – There <is/>are a Count & Countess – somebody – (I forget the name of the exiles) – the last of whom made a desperate attack on W. at L^d. Waterpark’s¹⁹¹ a few weeks ago – & W. in gratitude invited them to his house – there I suppose they now are – (they had not arrived when I set out) to me it appears from W’s own narrative – that he will be detected & bullied by the husband into some infernal compromise – & I told

1:3

him as much – but like others of our acquaintance he is deaf as an adder. – – I have known him several years & really wish him well – for which reason I overlooked his interference in some concerns of my own where he had no business – perhaps because also they had ceased to interest me – (for we are all selfish & I no more trust myself than others with a good motive) but be that as it may – I wish he would not indulge in such freaks – for which he can have no excuse – & the example will turn out none of the best for L^y. F^y. – She seems pretty & intelligent – as far as I observed which was very little – I had & have other things to reflect upon. –

1:4

Your opinion of y^e. Giaour or rather y^e. additions honours me highly – you who know how my thoughts were occupied when these last were written – will perhaps perceive in parts a coincidence <with> {in} my own state of mind with that of my hero – if so you will give me credit for feeling – though on the other hand I lose in your esteem. – I have tried & hardly too to vanquish my demon – but to very little purpose – for a resource that seldom failed me before – did in this instance – I mean transferring my regards to another – of which I had a very fair & not discouraging opportunity at one time – I willingly would – but the feeling that it

2:1

2) was an effort spoiled all again – & here I am – what I am you know already. – As I have never been accustomed to parade my thoughts before you in a larmoyante strain I shall not begin now. <Axxx>
<xxxxxx>¹⁹² –

The epistles of your mathematician (A would now be ambiguous) continue – & the last concludes with a repetition of a desire that none but Papa & Mamma should know it – why you should not seems to me quite ludicrous & is now past praying for – but – observe – here is the strictest of S^t. Ursula’s 11000 what do you call ‘ems?¹⁹³ – a wit – a moralist – & religionist – enters into a clandestine correspondence with a personage

2:2

generally presumed a great Roué – & drags her aged parents into this secret treaty – it is I believe not usual for single ladies to risk such brilliant adventures – but this comes of infallibility – not that she ever says anything that might not be said by the Town cryer – still it is imprudent – if I were rascal enough to take an unfair advantage. – Alas! poor human nature – here is your niece writing – & doing a foolish thing – I lecturing Webster! – & forgetting the tremendous “beam in my own eye” no – I do

190: James Wedderburn Webster.

191: An Irish peer.

192: The second erased word may be “subject”.

193: “Virgins”.

feel <it> but cannot pluck it out.¹⁹⁴ – These various absurdities & inconsistencies may amuse you – but there is a fate in such small as well as great concerns or how came Moreau by his loss of legs?¹⁹⁵ I saw an extract from his last letter to his wife (in M.S not published) he says – that “Coquin de Bonaparte est toujours heureux!” Good night. ever y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

[Sheet 2 has only two sides.]

Late September 1813: sixth edition of *The Giaour* published.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, September 29th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.79; 1922 I 184-5; BLJ III 125-6)

Sept^r. 29th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c

I have written you a long letter which I don't know whether to send or not – since I came to town – which I leave again on Sunday. – C's communication to y^c. Lady who inherits your eyes is quite a mistake – or what do I here? – in my way through Southwell (where I passed a year when eighteen –) I might have been liable to what she calls a “new attachment” or at any rate an old one or two – but the letter I have written you will not please you – as I think you will perceive from it's tone that I have no newer attachment. – – – –

I am asked again to Aston – & I think I shall go because – you shan't have the

1:2

real because (though it has nothing to do with W.'s family) but instead of it because – they gave me a poodle dog which I left there & want to bring away with me – L^y. Blarney's anomaly delights me beyond every thing – I think I can guess C's question – might it not be how far such a production was independent of “new attachments” – depend upon it she will never rest till she has obtained in a philosophical way all the information which can be seen or heard of such a phenomenon. – How Lady B– must delight in <be> my being in the secret – though I really don't see any thing so astonishing – in C's telling it to me – unless

1:3

her Ladyship – but no matter – and Grandmamma too – I suppose she will certainly find an hospital for the species – & appoint C– Canoness thereof. – If I write much more I shall run into repetition of my last letter – many thanks for all your own – I suppose the Sultan's communication was about the L.'s & G. L.'s¹⁹⁶ embarrassments – I don't think Ward is the reviewer of Fox¹⁹⁷ – though he was certain to be suspected – Rogers will never recover his – he harps on {it} yet. ———
Heigh ho – I have been signing my will today – & must do the same for this letter – ever y^{rs}. most affect^y.

[swirl signature]

[1:4 is blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from London, October 1st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.80; 1922 I 195-8; QI 176-9; BLJ III 185-8)

[1813 / London October first / The Lady Melbourne / Broomfield Hall / Welwyn / Hertfordshire]

Sept^r. – Oct^r. 1st. 1813

My dear L^y. M^c.

You will have received two letters of mine to atone for my late portentous silence & this is intended as a further expiation – I have just been dining at Holland house – the Queen is grown thin & gracious both of which become her royalty – I met Curran¹⁹⁸ there who electrified me <by>

194: Biblical: Matthew 7:5.

195: The French general Moreau died at the battle of Dresden after his legs had been amputated.

196: Caroline and George Lamb.

197: Refers to a review of Wakefield's correspondence with Fox in the *Quarterly* (July 1813).

198: John Philpot Curran, Irish lawyer and wit.

{with} his imagination – & delighted me with his humour – he is a man of a million – the Irish when good are perfect – the little I have seen of him has less leaven than any mortal com=

1:2

=pound I have lately looked into. – Today I heard from my friend W. again – his Countess is he says “inexorable” what a lucky fellow! happy in his obstacles – in his case I should think them very pleasant – but I don’t lay this down as a general proposition. – – All my prospect of amusement is clouded – for Petersham has sent an excuse – & there will be no one to make him jealous of but the Curate & the Butler – & I have no thoughts of setting up for myself – I am not exactly cut out for the Lady of the mansion – but I think a stray Dandy would have a chance of preferment –

1:3

she evidently expects to be attacked – & seems prepared for a brilliant defence – my character as a Roué had gone before me – & my careless & quiet behaviour astonished her so much that I believe she began to think herself ugly – or me blind – if not worse. – They seemed surprised at my declining the races in particular – but for this I had good reasons – firstly – I wanted to go elsewhere – secondly – if I had gone I must have paid some attention to some of them – which is troublesome unless one has something in memory or hope to induce it – & then mine host is so marvelous greeneyed that he might have included me in his Calenture¹⁹⁹ – which

1:4

I don’t deserve – & probably should not like it a bit the better if I did – I have also reason for returning there on Sunday – with which they have nothing to do – but if C– takes a suspicious twist that way – let her – it will keep her in darkness – but I hope however she won’t take a fit of scribbling as she did to L^y. Oxford last year – though Webster’s face on the occasion would be quite a Comet – & delight me infinitely more than O.’s which was comic enough. –

Friday Morn –

Yours arrived I will answer on the next page. —

2:1

2) So L^y. H^d. says I am fattening – & you say I talk “nonsense” well – I must fast & unfool again if possible. But as Curran <assured> {told} me last night that he had been assured upon oath by half the Court that “the Prince was not at all corpulent – that he was stout certainly but by no means protuberant – or obese “there’s comfort yet”²⁰⁰ as to folly – that’s incurable. – – “See C! – if I should see C!” – I hope not – though I am not sure a visit would be so disagreeable as it ought to be – “I pique myself on Constancy” – but it is but a sensitive plant & thrives best by itself. – – Then there is the

2:2

story of L^y. B.’s²⁰¹ novelty – which I am sure she longs to unravel – how your passage on “the kneeling in the middle of the room” made me laugh this morning – it certainly was not the centre of gravity – pardon a wretched quibble which I don’t often hazard. – I did not kneel in the middle of the room – but the first time I saw her this year – she thought proper to fix herself there & turn away her head – & as one does not kneel exactly for one’s own convenience – my genuflexions would have been all lost upon her if she did not perceive them. – – To return to the W’s – I am glad they amuse you – anything that confirms {or extends} one’s observations on life & character delights me even when I don’t know people –

2:3

199: Nautical disease in which the sea is imagined to be a green field; see *The Two Focari*, III i 172-6.

200: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, III ii 39.

201: Lady Bessborough.

for this reason – I would give the world to pass a month with Sheridan or any lady or gentleman of the old school – & hear them talk every day & all day of themselves & acquaintance – & all they have heard & seen in their lives. – – – W. seems in no present peril – I believe the woman is mercenary – & I happen to know that he can't at present bribe her – – I told him that it would be known – & that he must expect reprisals – & what do you think was his answer? – “I think any woman fair game – because I can depend upon L^y. F's principles – she can't go wrong – & therefore I may – then why are you jealous of her? – – because – because – zounds I am not jealous – why the devil do you suppose I am? – I then enumerated some very gross symptoms which he

2:4

had displayed even before her face – & his servants – which he could not deny – but persisted in his determination to add to his “bonnes fortunes” – it is a strange being – when I came home in 1811 – he was always saying – B – do marry – it is the happiest &^c. – the first thing he said on my arrival at A. was “B – whatever you do don't marry” which considering he had an unmarried sister in law in the house was a very unnecessary precaution. – – –
Every now & then he has a fit of fondness – & kisses her hand before his guests – which she receives with the most lifeless indifference – which struck me more than if she had appeared pleased or annoyed – her brother told me last year that she married to get rid of her family – (who are ill tempered) – & had not been out two months so that to use a foxhunting phrase she was “killed in covert”. –
You have enough of them & me for y^e present.

y^{rs}. ever

[swirl signature]

3:1 [*vertically*:] P.S. – I do not wish to know y^r. person's name – but to whom is the likeness – to me or to her? –

[3:2 has the address.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Aston Hall, Yorkshire, October 5th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.81; 1922 I 188-90; QI 180-1; BLJ 132-3)

Aston Hall, Rotherham
Oct^r. 5th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c –

W. has lost his Countess – his time – & his temper – (I would advise anyone who finds the last to <advertise> {return} it immediately – it is of no use to any but the owner –) L^y. F^s. has lost Petersham for the present at least – the other sister as I said before has lost L^d. Bury – & I – have nobody to lose – here at least – & am not very anxious to find one. – Here be two friends of the family – besides your slave – a M^r. Westcombe very handsome but silly – & a M^r. Agar frightful but facetious – the whole party are out in carriages – a species of amusement from which I always avert & consequently

1:2

declined it today – it is very well with two – but {not} beyond a duet – I think being bumped about between two or more of one's acquaintance intolerable. – W. grows rather intolerable too – he is out of humour with my Italian books – (Dante & Alfieri²⁰² & some others as harmless as ever wrote) & requests that sa femme may not see them – because forsooth it is a language which doth infinite damage!! & because I enquired after the Stanhopes our mutual acquaintance – he answers me by another question – “pray do you enquire after my wife of others in the same way? – so that you see my Virtue is its' own reward – for never in word or deed – did I speculate upon his spouse – nor did I ever see much in her to encourage either hope or much fulfilment of hope – supposing I had any. – She is pretty but not surpassing –

1:4

202: Evidence that B. is studying Italian; yet no titles by Alfieri occur in his library sale catalogues.

too thin – & not very animated – but good tempered – & a something interesting enough in her manner & figure – but I never should think of her nor anyone else – if left to my own cogitations – as I have neither the patience nor presumption to advance till met halfway. – The other two pay her ten times more attention – & of course are more attended to – I really believe he is bilious & suspects something extraordinary from my nonchalance – at all events he has hit upon the wrong person. – I can't help laughing {to you} – but he will soon make me very serious with him – & then he will come to his senses again – the oddest thing is that he wants me to stay with him some time – which I am not much inclined to do – unless the gentleman transfers his fretfulness to some one else. – I have written to you so much lately – you will be glad to be spared from any further account of the “Blunderhead family”.
 ever ^{rs} my dear L^y. M^c.
 [swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Aston Hall, Yorkshire, October 8th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.82; 1922 I 190-3; QI 181-3; BLJ III 133-6)

Oct^r. 8th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c – I have volumes – but neither time nor space – I have already trusted too deeply to hesitate now – besides for certain reasons you will not be sorry to hear that I am anything but what I was. – Well then – to begin – & first a word of mine host – he has lately been talking at rather than to me before the party (with the exception of the women) in a tone – which as I never use it myself I am not particularly disposed to tolerate in others – what he may do with impunity – it seems – but not suffer – till at last I told him that the whole of his argument involved the interesting contradiction that “he might love where he liked but that no one else might like what he ever thought proper to love” a doctrine <with> which as the learned Partridge observed – contains a “non sequitur”²⁰³ from which I for one begged leave as a general proposition to dissent. – This nearly produced a scene – with me as well as another guest who seemed to admire my sophistry the most of the two – & as it was after dinner & debating time – might have ended in more than wine shed –

1:2

but that the Devil for some wise purpose of his own thought proper to restore good humour – which has not as yet been further infringed. – – – – –

In these last few days I have had a good deal of conversation with an amiable person – whom (as we deal in letters – & initials only) we will denominate P.²⁰⁴ – – well – these things are dull in detail – take it once – I have made love – & if I am to believe mere words (for there we have hitherto stopped) it is returned. – I must tell you the place of declaration however – a billiard room! – I did not as C— says “kneel in the middle of the room” but like Corporal Trim to the Nun – “I made a speech”²⁰⁵ – which as you might not listen to it with the same patience – I shall not transcribe. – We were before on very amiable terms – & I remembered being asked an odd question – “how a woman who liked a man could inform him of it – when he did not perceive it – “ I also observed that we went

1:3

on with our game (of billiards) without counting the hazards – & supposed that – as mine certainly were {not} – the thoughts of the other party {also} were not exactly occupied by what was our ostensible pursuit. – Not quite though pretty well satisfied with my progress – I took a very imprudent step – with pen & paper – in tender & tolerably turned prose periods (no poetry even when in earnest) here were risks certainly – first how to convey – then how it would be received – it was received however & deposited not very far from the heart which I wished it to reach – when who should enter the room but the person who ought at that moment {to have been} in the Red sea if Satan had any civility – but she kept her countenance & the paper – & I my composure as well as I could. – It was a risk – & all had been lost by failure – but then recollect – how much more I had to gain by the reception – if not declined – – & how much one always hazards to obtain anything worth having. – My billet prospered – it did more – it even <lost>

1:4

203: Fielding, *Tom Jones*, IX 6.

204: “Ph.” – “F” – Frances Wedderburn Webster, wife to his host.

205: Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, VIII 22.

(I am this moment interrupted by the Marito²⁰⁶ – & write this before him – he has brought me a political pamphlet in M.S. to decypher & applaud – I shall content myself with the last – Oh – he is gone again) – my billet produced an answer – a very unequivocal one too – but a little too much about virtue – & indulgence of attachment in some sort of ethereal process in which the soul is principally concerned – which I don't very well understand – being a bad metaphysician – but one generally ends & begins with Platonism – & as my proselyte is only twenty – there is time enough to materialize – I hope nevertheless this spiritual system won't last long – & at any rate must make the experiment. – I remember my last case was the reverse – as Major O'Flaherty recommends “we fought first & explained afterwards.”²⁰⁷ – This is the present state of things – much mutual profession – a good deal of melancholy – which I am sorry to say was remarked by “the Moor” & as much love as could well be made considering the time place & circumstances. – –

2:1

I need not say that the folly & petulance of have tended to all this – if a man is not contented with a pretty woman & not <let> only runs after any little country girl he meets with but absolutely boasts of it – he must not be surprised if others admire that which he knows not how to value – besides he literally provoked & goaded me into it – by something not unlike bullying – indirect to be sure – but tolerably obvious – “he would do this – & he would do that – if any man &^c. &^c. – & he thought that every woman “was his lawful prize nevertheless – Oons! who is this strange monopolist? – it is odd enough but on other subjects he is like other people but on this he seems infatuated – if he had been rational – & not prated of his pursuits – I should have gone on very well – as I did at Middleton – even now I shan't quarrel with him – if I can help it – but one or two of his speeches has blackened the blood about my heart – & curdled the milk of kindness – if put to the proof – I shall behave like other people I presume. –

2:2

I have heard from A²⁰⁸ – but her letter to me is melancholy – about her old friend Miss M^y.^s²⁰⁹ departure &^c. – &^c. – I wonder who will have her at last – her letter to you is gay – you say – that to me must have been written at the same time – the little demure Nonjuror! – – – –
I wrote to C— the other day – for I was afraid she might repeat the last year's epistle – & make it circular among my friends. – – –
Good evening – I am now going to billiards. –

ever y^{rs}
[swirl signature]

P.S. – 6 o'clock –

This business is growing serious – & I think Platonism in some peril – There has been very nearly a scene – almost an hysteric & really without cause for I was conducting myself with (to me) very irksome decorum – her expressions astonish me – so young & cold as she appeared – but these professions must end as usual – & would – I think – now – had “l'occasion” been not wanting – had any one come in during the tears & consequent consolation all had been spoiled – we must be more cautious or less larmoyante. – – –

3:1

P.S. second – 10 o'clock –

I write to you just escaped from Claret & vociferation – on G – d knows what paper – my <Landf> Landlord is a rare gentleman – he has just proposed to me a bet “that he for a certain sum wins any given woman – against any given homme including all friends present – which I declined with becoming deference to him & the rest of the company – is not this at this moment a perfect comedy? – I forgot to mention that on his entrance yesterday during the letter scene – it reminded me so much of an awkward passage in “the Way to keep him”²¹⁰ between Lovemore – Sir Bashful – & my Lady – that

206: James Wedderburn Webster arrives conveniently at the page turn. B.'s pen really is “at the bottom of the page”.

207: Quotation untraced.

208: Annabella.

209: Mary Millicent Montgomery, a friend of Annabella.

210: 1760 comedy by Arthur Murphy.

embarrassing as it was I could hardly help laughing – I hear his voice in the passage – he wants me to go to a ball at Sheffield – & is talking to me as I write – Good Night. I am in the act of praising his pamphlet. —

I don't half like your story of Corinne – some day I will tell you why – If I can – but at present – Good Night. –

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Newstead Abbey, October 10th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.83; 1922 I 193-5; QI 184-6; BLJ III 136-8)

Newstead Abbey – Oct^r. 10th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c.

I write to you from the melancholy mansion of my fathers – where I am dull as the longest deceased of my progenitors – I hate reflection on irrevocable things & won't now turn sentimentalist. <W> alone accompanied me here (I return tomorrow to <Aston>) he is now sitting opposite – & between us are Red & white Champ^e. – Burgundy – two sorts of Claret – & lighter vintages – the relics of my youthful cellar which is yet in formidable number & famous order – but I leave the wine to him – & prefer conversing soberly with you. – Ah! if you knew what a quiet Mussulman life {(except in wine)} I led here for a few years – but no matter. – Yesterday I sent you a long letter & must now recur to the same subject which is uppermost in my thoughts, – I am as much astonished but I hope not so much mistaken <I hope> as Lord Ogleby²¹¹ at the denouement

1:2

or rather commencement of the last week – it has changed my views – my wishes – my hopes – my everything – & will furnish you with additional proof of my weakness. – Mine guest (late host) has just been congratulating himself on possessing a partner without passion – I don't know – & cannot yet speak with certainty – but I never yet saw more decisive preliminary symptoms. – – –

As I am apt to take people at their word – on receiving my answer – that whatever the weakness of her heart might be – I should never derive further proof of it than the confession – instead of pressing the point – I told her that I was willing to be hers on her own terms & should never attempt to infringe upon the conditions – I said this without pique – & believing her perfectly in earnest for the time – but in the midst of our mutual professions or to use her own expression “more than mutual”

1:3

she burst into an agony of crying – & at such a time & in such a place as rendered such a scene particularly perilous to both – her sister in the next room – & □□□ not far off – of course I said & did {almost} everything proper on the occasion – & fortunately we restored sunshine in time to prevent anyone from perceiving the cloud that had darkened our horizon. – She says – she is convinced that my own declaration was produced solely because I perceived her previous penchant – which by the bye – as I think I said to you before – I neither perceived nor expected – I really did not suspect her of a predilection for anyone – & even now in public with the exception of those little indirect yet mutually understood – I don't know how & it is unnecessary to name or describe them – her conduct is as coldly correct as her still – fair – M^{rs}. L. like aspect. – She however managed to give me a note – & to receive another & a

1:4

ring before □□□'s very face – & yet she is a thorough devotee – & takes <f/>prayers morning and evening – besides being measured for a new bible once a quarter. – The only alarming thing – is that — — complains of her aversion from being beneficial to population & posterity – if this is an invariable maxim – I shall lose my labour. – Be this as it may – she owns to more – than I ever heard from any woman within the time – & I shan't take □□□'s word any more for her feelings than I did for that celestial comparison which I once mentioned. – I think her eye – her change of colour – & the trembling of her hand – & above all her devotion tell a different tale. – Good night – we return tomorrow – & now I drink your health – you are my only correspondent & I believe friend

ever y^{rs}.
[swirl signature]

211: In Colman and Garrick's *The Clandestine Marriage*.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Aston Hall, Yorkshire, October 11th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.84; 1922 I 195-8; QI 186-8; BLJ III 139-41)

Oct. 11th. 1813My dear L^y. M^e –

C– is angry with me for having written by the post not a very cold letter – but below (it seems) her freezing point – pray – say something – anything to prevent any of the old absurdities – her letter arrived during my absence at N²¹² – with a never sufficiently to be confounded seal – with C– at full length on the malignant wax – this must have been to answer the purpose it effected – at any rate – the person who opened the bag was the last I wished to see the impression – and it is not yet effaced – but it shall be – this is not to be endured – that my “chienne of a Star” as Captain Ragaddo²¹³ says – should have produced such an incident – & at such a time! – – – –

I have written to you so much – & so frequently that you must be sick of the sight of my scrawls – –

1:2

I believe all the Stars are no better than they should be — is on the verge of a precious scrape – his quondam tutor! & ally who has done him some not very reputable services since his marriage – writing I believe his billets – & assisting him to those to whom they were addressed – being now discarded – threatens a development &^c. – <&> — consults me on the subject! – of this I shall take no advantage in another quarter however convenient – if I gain my point it shall be as fairly as such things will admit – it is odd enough that his name has never hitherto been taken in vain by her or me. – – I have told him that if the discovery is inevitable – his best way is to anticipate it & sue for an act of indemnity – if she likes him she will forgive – & if she don’t like him it don’t matter whether she does or no. – – –

From me she shall never hear of it. – –

1:3

It is three in the morning – & I cannot rest but I must try – I have been at N– & between that & this – my mind is in a state of chaotic inaction – but you wont pity & I don’t deserve it – was there ever such a slave to impulse? as

y^{rs}. ever

[swirl signature]

Monday – Afternoon –

I am better today – but not much advanced – I began the week so well that I thought the conclusion would have been more decisive – but the topography of this house is not the most favourable – I wonder how my father managed²¹⁴ – but he had it not till L^y. Carmarthen came with it too – we shall be at N. again the whole party for a week in a few days and there the Genii of the place will be perhaps more propitious – he haunts me – here he is again – and here are a party of purple stockings come to dine – Oh that accursed pamphlet! I have not read it what

1:4

shall I say to the author now in the room? thank the Stars which I yesterday abused he is diverted by the <m/>Mirror opposite – & is now surveying himself with great complacency – he is gone – Your letter has arrived – but is evidently written before my last three have been delivered. – Adieu for the present – I must dress – & have got to sheer one of those precious curls on which you say I set so high a value – & I cannot & would not play the same pass you may laughingly remember on a similar occasion with C. – My proselyte is so young a beginner – that you must wonder at these exchanges & mummeries – you are right – she is “very pretty” – & not so inanimate as I imagined – & must at least be allowed an excellent taste!! – – – –

2:1

10 o’clock –

212: Newstead.**213:** The only reference on Google to “Captain Ragaddo” is to this letter.**214:** It was at Aston Hall that B.’s father committed adultery with Augusta’s mother.

Nearly a scene – (always nearly) at dinner – there is a Lady Sitwell a wit – & blue – & what is more to the purpose a dark tall fine looking conversable personage – as it is usual to separate the women at table I was under the necessity of placing myself between her & the sister – & was seated & in the <note> {agonies} of conjecture whether the dish before me required carving – when my little Platonist exclaimed “L^d. B. – this is your place” I stared – & before I had time to reply she repeated looking like C– when gentle (for she is very unlike that fair creature when angry) “L^d. B – change places with Catherine” I did & very willingly – though awkwardly – but “the Moor” (mine host) roared out “B – that is the most ungallant thing I ever beheld” – and

2:2

Lady Catherine by way of mending matters answered – did not you hear Frances ask him?” – he has looked like the Board of Green Cloth ever since – & is now mustering wine & spirits for a lecture to her – & a squabble with me – he had better let it alone – for I am in a pestilent humour at this present writing – & shall certainly disparage his eternal “pamphlet”. ———
Good Even – I solicit your good wishes in all good deeds – & your occasional remembrance. –

[Sheet 2 has only two sides.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Aston Hall, Yorkshire, October 13th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.86; 1922 I 198-201; QI 188-91; BLJ III 141-4)

Oct. 13th. 1813 –My dear L^y. M^c –

You must pardon the quantity of my letters & much of the quality also – but I have really no other confidential correspondent on earth – & – much to say which may call forth that advice which has so often been to me of essential service. – Any thing you will allow is better than the last – & I cannot exist without some object of attachment – you will laugh at my perpetual changes – but recollect the circumstances which have broken off the last three²¹⁵ – & don’t exactly attribute their conclusion to caprice – I think you will at least admit whatever C– may assert that I did not use her ill – though I find her own story even in this part of the world to be

1:2

the genuine narrative – as to L^y. O. that I did to please you – & luckily finding it pleasant to myself also & very useful to C– it might have lasted longer but for the voyage – I spare you the third. – I am so spoilt by intellectual drams – that I begin to believe that danger & difficulty render these things more piquant to my taste – as far as the former goes – C– might have suited me very well – but though we may admire drams – nobody is particularly fond of Aqua fortis – at least I should {have} liked it a little diluted – the liquid I believe which is now slowly mingling in my cup. – In the mean time let us laugh while we can – for I see no reason why you should

1:3

be tormented with sentimental or solid sorrows of your acquaintance – I think you will allow that I have as little of that affectation as any person of similar pursuits. – – – –
I mentioned to you yesterday a laughable occurrence at dinner – this morning he burst forth with a homily upon the subject to the two – & myself – instead of taking us separately (like the last of the Horatii with the Curiatii)²¹⁶ you will easily suppose with such odds he had the worst of it – and the satisfaction <with> {of} being laughed at into the bargain. – Serious as I am – or seem – I really cannot frequently keep my countenance – yesterday – before my face – they disputed about their apartments at N– – she insisting that her sister should share her room – & he

1:4

very properly – but heinously out of place – maintaining & proving to his own satisfaction that none but husbands have any legal claim to divide their spouses’ pillow – you may suppose notwithstanding the ludicrous effect of the scene I felt & looked a little uncomfortable – this she must have seen for of

215: With Caroline Lamb, Lady Oxford, and Augusta.

216: In Livy (Bk I 24-6), the Horatii killed the Curiatii, despite being linked to them by marriage.

course I said <nothing> {not a word} & turning round at the close of the dialogue – {she} whispered “N’importe – this is all nothing” an ambiguous sentence which I am puzzled to translate – but as it was meant to console me I was very glad to hear it, though quite unintelligible. – –
As far as I can pretend to judge of her disposition & character – I will say – of course I am partial. –
She is – you know – very handsome – & very gentle though sometimes decisive – fearfully romantic –
– & singularly warm in her affections

2:1

2) but I should think – of a cold temperament – yet I have my doubts on that point too – accomplished (as all decently educated women are) & clever though her style a little too German – no dashing nor desperate talker – but never – and I have watched in mixed conversation – saying a silly thing – (duet dialogues in course between young & Platonic people must be varied with a little checkered absurdity) good tempered – (always excepting L^y O.’s – which was outwardly the best I ever beheld –) and jealous as myself – the ne plus ultra of green eyed Monstrosity – seldom abusing other people but listening to it with great patience – these qualifications with an unassuming <manner> and <very particularly unexpected> sweet voice & very soft manner constitute the bust (all I can yet pretend to model) of my present Idol. – – You who know me & my weakness so well – will not be surprised when

2:2

I say that I am totally absorbed in this passion – that I am even ready to take a flight if necessary – & as she says – “we cannot part –” it is no impossible denouement – though as yet one of us at least does not think of it – W. will probably want to cut my throat – which would not be a difficult task – for I trust I should not return the fire of a man I had injured though I could not refuse him the pleasure of trying me as a target. – But I am not sure I shall not have more work in that way – there is a friend in the house – who looks a little suspicious – he can only conjecture – but if he lagonizes or finds or makes mischief – let him look

2:3

to it. – – To W. I am decidedly wrong – yet – he almost provoked me into it – he loves other women – at least he follows them – she evidently did not love him even before – I came here with no plan – no intention of the kind – (as my former letters will prove to you the only person {to whom} I care about proving it) <to (> & I have not yet been here ten days – a week yesterday on recollection – you cannot be more astonished than I am how & why all this has happened. – – – All my correspondences – & every other business are at a stand still – I have not answered A. – no – nor B – nor C – nor any initial except your own – you will wish me to be less troublesome to that one – & I shall now begin to draw at longer dates upon y^r. patience

ever^{yrs}.

[swirl signature]

2:4

P.S. – Always P.S. –

I begged you to pacify C– who is pettish about what she calls a cold letter – it was not so – but she evidently has been too long quiet – she threatens me with growing very bad – & says that if so “I am the sole cause” this I should regret but she is in no danger – no one in his senses will run the risk till her late exploits are forgotten. Her last I shall not answer – it was very silly in me to write at all – but I did it with the best intention like the Wiseacre in “the Rovers” – “let us by a song conceal our purposes” you remember it in “the Antijacobin”.²¹⁷ – – –

I have gone through a catechism about her without abusing or betraying her – which is not exactly the way to recommend myself – I have generally found that the successor likes to hear both of the last regnante. But I really did not – notwithstanding the temptation. – –

Lady Melbourne to Byron, October 13th 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.ff.65-7; Gross 146-8)

[The / Lord Byron / Ashton Hall / Rotherham / Yorkshire]

Mad^c de Stael says she has work'd two Miracles upon M^f. Ward – She has taught him to be civil to Women & to be devout ——

13th Oct 1813 /

Dear L^d B

L^y Holland call'd upon me this Mor^G to ask me if I knew the name of a Physician, whom you had engaged to go abroad with you, & on my saying I was quite ignorant about it, she beg'd me to write, or communicate with you by any means I might have, that if you had given up all thoughts of leaving England, she wish'd to know something about this person, & where he could be found, as some friends of hers were in distress – I suspect it was for the D^e & D^k of Bedford, but she would not tell – pray either let me know what to say, or write to her yourself – I was happy to find you seated over a Table &c. with him, for when I saw the date of your Letter, I began to fear some catastrophe, as I did not expect you would have left A– just at that time, however it was perfectly right, – I have no doubt what he says about Ph– is quite true, but what of that

1:2

it only tells against himself – & y^c probability is, that S^t Brilliant may have the power to say to him some day, – Mon Ami – tout cela est changè, – for in so many words it is only saying, she does not like me. – Poor Soul, she seems very interesting {with} great Susceptibilities and quietness of feeling – I am very sorry for her, she must be so unhappy, yet still, I believe that that state when the mind is fully engross'd is preferable to the one of distaste and Nausea in which she has hitherto existed. – she must enjoy those petit soirs, which you will not detail & which I should say were indescribable if I did not recollect some lines I think so beautiful, perhaps you never read them

Pass too the glance none saw beside
The smile none else could understand,²¹⁸
&c &c &c &c &c &c

The exchange of papers seems to me what You would call the best Sign were it not for that circumstance I should think, she was what I once s^d C– was not – I ought to be able to form some judgment, for I was once in y^c same Situation – the same things said, the same resolutions taken, – You are inclined to laugh, & I don't wonder at it,

1:3

but were I to tell you how long it lasted, your Laughter would change into Sorrow – but no writing pass'd & it was a person not “fram'd to make Woman false”²¹⁹ – like the present pretendant – that's for your comfort, – what a Strange thing altogether, as you s^d of A–, these things happen when people think themselves infallible, where is it that someone says – “Villainous thoughts when these Mutualities marshal the way”²²⁰ I could laugh – but I do not, it is too serious to indulge in that, – & I will just make one observation which prudence Suggests – it appears to me that the turn this must take is Serious, is Sir Brilliant prepared to go all lengths, if necessary? is he sure it is what he should like entirely? then proceed. – you can not misunderstand me – I think; I do not allude to the sorts of thing that might have arisen from a conversation you related to me, – it is always necessary to be prepared for what may happen –
I have turned your Likeness into y^c Garden till I have finish'd my Letter, & he disturbs me every few Minutes to know if it is done so y^t I hardly know what I write, & it will

1:4

Shorten my Letter, so much the better for you :C– told me you had written very crossly, & wishing her much domestic happiness – I answer'd I supposed she had mention'd her feelings about her Husband She s^d Oh no, not a Word I thought you had! – no indeed I answer'd, if I write I say as little as possible about you, in fact I had not told you then, – she then s^d no Matter, once I should have been in fits, but now I shall take no Notice of it / I did not reply, & she really seems so much more at her ease, that I

²¹⁸: Byron, *To Thyrsa*, l.30 (“might understand”).

²¹⁹: Shakespeare, *Othello*, I iii 392.

²²⁰: *Ibid.*, II i 258.

hope there is no danger of any of y^c Epistles you apprehended – though there is no answering for her, – if she hears any thing, which I hope she will not –
 I went last Night to Drury Lane to see a New Operatic Drama,²²¹ very Stupid – by a M^r. Thompson,²²² they say, I see it is given out for to Night but so much dissatisfaction was shewn I think it will not be allowed to go on – the Jokes in y^c comic part worse than Lewis's The Ale Boy's patience quite exhausted and y^{rs} pretty well tried – So adieu Ever y^{rs} [*swirl signature*]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Aston Hall, Yorkshire, October 14th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.86; 1922 I 201-3; QI 191-2; BLJ III 144-5)

Byron puts no salutation.

Oct^r. 14th. 1813

But this is “le premier pas” my dear L^y. M^c. at least I think so & perhaps you will be of my opinion – when you consider the age – the country – & the short time since such a pas became probable. – I believe little but “1'occasion manque” & to that many things are tending. – He is a little indirect blunderer – who neither knows what he would have nor what he deserves – today at breakfast (I was too late for the scene) <but> he attacked both the girls in such a manner – no one knew why or wherefore – that on my arrival I found one had left the room – & the other had half a mind to leave the house – this too before servants & the other guest! – on my appearance the storm blew over – but the narrative was detailed to me subsequently by one of the sufferers. – You may

1:2

be sure that I shall not “consider self” nor create a squabble while it can be avoided – on the contrary I have been endeavouring to serve him essentially – (except on the one point & there I was goaded into it by his own absurdity) & extricate him from some difficulties of various descriptions – of course all obligations are cancelled between two persons in our circumstances – but that I shall not dwell upon – of the other I shall try to make an “affaire reglee” if that don't succeed we shall probably go off together – but she only shall make me resign the hope – as for him he may convert his Antlers into powder=horns – & welcome – & such he has announced as his intention when “any man – at any time – &^c. &^c. “he would not give him a chance

1:3

“but exterminate him without suffering defence do you know – I was fool enough to lose my temper at this circuitous specimen of Bobadil jealousy²²³ – & tell him & the other (there are a brace – Lion & Jackall) that I {– not their roundabout he –} desired no better than to put these “epithets of war” with which their sentences were “horribly stuffed”²²⁴ to the proof – this was silly & suspicious but my liver could bear it no longer. My poor little Helen tells me that there never was such a temper & talents – that the marriage was not one of attachment – that – in short my descriptions fade before hers – all foolish fellows are alike – but this has a patent for his cap & bells. – – The scene between Sir B– & Lovemore I remember – but the one I alluded to was the letter of Lovemore to L^y. Constant²²⁵ – there is no comedy after all like real life. –

1:4

We have progressively improved into a less spiritual species of tenderness – but the seal is not yet fixed though the wax is preparing for the impression. – There ought to be an excellent occasion tomorrow – but who can command circumstances? the most we can do is to avail ourselves of them. – – – Publicly I have been cautious enough – & actually declined a dinner where they went – because I thought something intelligible might be seen or suspected – I regretted but regret it less for I hear one of the Fosters was there – & they be cousins & Gossips of our good friends the D's²²⁶ – Good Night – do you fear to write to me? are these epistles or your answers in any peril here – I must remember {however} the advice of <an xxxxt> {a sage} personage to me while abroad – take it in their English – “remember – milor – that delicaci ensure every succés” y^{rs}. ever

²²¹: Gross identifies *Godolphin, The Lion of the North*, an “operatic drama”.

²²²: Could be “Thimton” or “Shrimpton”.

²²³: Bobadil is from Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*; but he is not jealous, Kately being the jealous character.

²²⁴: Shakespeare, *Othello*, I i 14.

²²⁵: Characters in the 1760 comedy *The Way to Keep Him* by Arthur Murphy.

²²⁶: Elizabeth Foster was the successor to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

[swirl signature]

The Battle of Leipzig, October 16th-19th 1813, temporarily eclipses Bonaparte.**Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Newstead, October 17th 1813:**

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.87; 1922 I 203-5; Q I 192-5; BLJ III 145-8)

Byron answers Melbourne's of October 13th.Newstead Abbey – Oct^r. 17th. 1813 –My dear L^y. M^c. –

The whole party are here – and now to my narrative. – But first I must tell you that I am rather unwell owing to a folly of last night – About midnight after deep and drowsy potations²²⁷ I took it into my head to empty my skull cup which holds rather better than a bottle of Claret at one draught – and nearly died the death of Alexander – which I shall be content to do when I have achieved his conquests – I had just sense enough left to feel that I was not fit to join the ladies – & went to bed – where my Valet tells me that I was first convulsed & afterwards so motionless that he thought “Good Night to Marmion.”²²⁸ – I don't know how I came to do so very silly a thing – but I believe

1:2

my guests were boasting – & “company villainous company hath been the spoil of me”²²⁹ I detest drinking in general – & beg your pardon for this excess – I can't do so any more. – – To my theme – you were right – I have been a little too sanguine – as to the conclusion – but hear. – One day left entirely to ourselves was nearly fatal – another such victory & with Pyrrhus we were lost – it came to this – “I am entirely at your mercy – I own it – I give myself up to you – I am not cold – whatever I seem to others – but I know that I cannot bear the reflection hereafter – do not imagine that these are mere words – I tell you the truth – now act as you will – was I wrong? – I spared her. –

1:3

There was a something so very peculiar in her manner – a kind of mild decision – no scene – not even a struggle – but still I know not what that convinced me she was serious – it was not the mere “No” which one has heard forty times before – & always with the same event [BLJ has “accent”] – but the tone – and the aspect – yet I sacrificed much – the hour two in the morning – – away – the Devil whispering that it was mere verbiage &^c. – & yet I know not whether I can regret it – she seems so very thankful for my forbearance – a proof at least that she was not playing merely the usual decorous reluctance which is sometimes so tiresome on these occasions. – – You ask if I am prepared to go “all lengths” if you mean by “all lengths” any

1:4

thing including duel or divorce – I answer yes – I love her – if I did not and much too – I should have been more selfish on the occasion before mentioned – I have offered to go away with her – & her answer whether sincere or not is “that on my account she declines it” – in the mean time we are all as wretched as possible – he scolding on account of unaccountable melancholy – the sister very suspicious but rather amused – the friend very suspicious too but (why I know not) not at all amused – il Marito something like Lord Chesterfield in De Grammont²³⁰ – putting on a martial physionomy – prating with his worthy ally – swearing at servants – sermonizing both sisters – & buying sheep – but never quitting her side now – so that we are in despair –

2:1

2) I very feverish – restless – and silent – as indeed seems to be the tacit agreement of every one else – in short I can foresee nothing – it may end in nothing – but here are half a dozen persons very much occupied – & two if not three in great perplexity – & as far as I can judge – so we must continue. – –

227: Shakespeare, *Othello*, II iii 54.

228: Scott, *Marmion*, XXVIII, 26.

229: Shakespeare, *Henry IV I*, III iii 10.

230: De Grammont's Memoirs picture the Earl of Chesterfield as insanely jealous.

She don't & won't live with him & they have been so far separate for a long time – therefore – I have nothing to answer for on that point – poor thing – she is either the most artful or artless of her age (20) I ever encountered – she owns to so much – and perpetually says – “rather than you should be angry” – or – “rather than you should like anyone else I will do whatever you please” I won't speak to this that or the other if you

2:2

dislike it – & throws or seems to throw herself so entirely upon my direction in every respect – that it disarms me quite – but I am really <with> wretched with the perpetual conflict {with myself.} – Her health is so very delicate – she is so thin & pale – & seems to have lost her appetite so entirely – that I doubt her being much longer – this is also her own opinion – but these fancies are common to all who are not very happy – – if she were once my wife or likely to be so – a warm climate should be the first resort nevertheless for her recovery. – The most perplexing – & yet I can't prevail on myself to give it up – is the caressing system – in her it appears perfectly childish – and I do think innocent – but it really puzzles {all} the Scipio about me to confine myself to the

2:3

laudable portion of these endearments. – – –

What a cursed situation I have thrust myself into – Potiphar (it used to be O.'s name)²³¹ putting some stupid question to me the other day – I told him that I rather admired the sister – & what does he? <too> but tell her this & his wife too – who a little too hastily asked him “if he was mad”? which put him to demonstration that a man ought not to be asked if he was mad – for relating that a friend thought his wife's sister a pretty woman – upon this topic he held forth with great fervour for a customary period – I wish he had a quincey. – – – –

Tell L^y. H. that Clarke²³² is the name – & Craven Street (N^o. forgotten) the residence – may be heard of at Trin. Coll. – excellent

2:4

man – able physician – shot a friend in a duel (about his sister) & I believe killed him professionally afterwards – L^y. H. may have him for self or friends – I don't know where I am going – my mind is a chaos – I always am setting all upon single stakes – & this is one – your story of the Frenchman is Matta in Grammont & the Marquis²³³ – Heigh ho! – Good Night – address to Aston. –

ever y^{rs}.
[swirl signature]

P.S. –

My stay is quite uncertain – a moment may overturn every thing – but you shall hear – happen what may – nothing or something.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Aston Hall, Yorkshire, October 19th 1813 (a):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.88; 1922 I 206; BLJ III 148)

Byron is using the smaller paper.

Oct. 19th. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^e –

In a day or two – probably before you receive this letter I shall be in town – so that if you write let it be to Bennet Street. –

This may perhaps surprize you after my yesterday's epistle – but nevertheless nothing particular has occurred – at least sufficient

1:2

to alarm you – or disturb me – everything is nearly as it was – except our hopes & our spirits – many things interrupted – but nothing terminated. – –

231: Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph (Genesis 39); “O” is Lord Oxford.

232: Dr William Clarke (not Edward Daniel Clarke). B. is answering Melbourne's query of October 13th.

233:

Do you remember Matta's complaint of the court of Turin – where a man could not be in love with the wife – without making love to the husband too – or do you rather recollect Hamilton's expedition

1:3

to L^d. Chesterfield's – with the result? mine is not exactly the same – for I have incurred no disgrace & encountered no peril – but I have thrown away the best opportunity that ever was wasted upon a spoiled child – & when it may occur again is not in my calculation. – – You shall hear more when we meet – at present I shall only say – that Matta & the Marquis de Senantes will

1:4

furnish you with a lively idea of me & my guest (late host) – I really can bear his humours no longer – no not for — with her I am ready & willing {to fly} to the “Green earth's end” but of that anon. – – We are in despair – & he & I without coming to a downright quarrel – have yet subsided into a mortal coldness – for which he will be the first to be sorry – I hope to see you

ever y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from Northampton, October 19th 1813 (b):

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.89; 1922 I 206-7; QI 195-6; BLJ III 148-9)

Northampton – Oct^r. 19th. 1813

My dear L^y. M^c –

— & I am thus far on my way to town – he was seized with a sudden fit of friendship & would accompany me – rather finding that some business could not conveniently be done without me – he thought proper to assume y^c. appearance of it. – – He is not exactly the companion I wished to take – it is really laughable when you think of the other – a kind of pig in a poke. – Nothing but squabbles between them – for the last three days – and at last he rose up with a solemn & mysterious air – & spake – “L^y. ———

1:2

you have at last rendered an explanation necessary between me & L^d. B. which must take place – I stared – & knowing that it is the custom of country gentlemen (if Farquhar is correct) to apprise their moieties of such intentions – & being also a little out of humour & conscience – I thought a crisis must ensue – and announced very quietly that “he would find me in such a room at his leisure ready to hear & reply” “Oh! says he I shall choose my own time” I wondered that he did not choose his own house too – but – walked away – & waited for him. – All this mighty pickle led only to what he called an explanation for my satisfaction that whatever appearances were – he & she were on the very best terms – that she loved him so much – & he her – it was impossible not to

1:3

disagree upon tender points – & for fear a man who &^c. &^c. should suppose that marriage was not the happiest of all possible estates – he had taken this resolution of never quarrelling without letting me know that he was the best husband & most fortunate person in existence. – – I told him he had fully convinced me – that it was utterly impossible people who liked each other could behave with more interesting suavity – and so on – yesterday morning – on our going – (I pass over the scene which shook me I assure you) “B – quoth he I owe to you the most unhappy moments of my life” I begged him to tell me how that I might either sympathize or put him out of his pain – “Don't you see how the poor girl doats on me – (he replied) when

1:4

I quit her but for a week as you perceive she is absolutely overwhelmed – & you staid so long & I necessarily for you – that she is in a worse state than I ever saw her in before – even before we married! – – – –

Here we are – I could not return to A– unless he had asked me – it is true he did – but in such a manner – as I could not accept – what will be the end – I know not – I have left every thing to her – and would

have rendered all further plots superfluous by the most conclusive step – but she wavered – & escaped – perhaps so have I – at least it is as well to think so – yet it is not over. – – – Whatever I may feel – you know me too well to think I shall plague my friends with long faces – or elegies. –

My dear L^y. M^c. ever y^{rs}.
[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from 4, Bennet Street, London, October 21st 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.90; 1922 I 209-10; QI 196-8; BLJ III 151-2)

A long dash usually signifies “James Wedderburn Webster”.

“Ph.” Is Frances Wedderburn Webster.

[letter concludes at top of first sheet:] none will ever be so valued – & none ever was so trusted by y^{rs}. ever. [swirl signature]

Oct^r. 21st. 1813

My dear L^y. M^c –

You may well be surprised – but I had more reasons than one or two either – — had taken it into his notable head or wished to put it into mine – aye & worse still into y^c. girls also – that I was a pretendant to the hand of the sister of “the Lady whom I had nearly – but no matter (to continue Archer’s speech with the variation of one word) tis a cursed fortnight’s piece of work – & there’s an end.”²³⁴ – This brilliant notion besides widening y^c. breach between him & me – did not add to the harmony of the two females – at least my idol was not pleased with the prospect of any transfer of incense to another altar. – – – –

1:2

She was so unguarded – after telling me too fifty times to “take care of Cate” “that she could conceal nothing &^c. &^c.” as to give me <the most> {a very} unequivocal proof of her own imprudence – in a carriage – (dusk to be sure) before her face – and yet with all this – & much more – she was the most tenacious personage – either from fear or weakness – or delicate health – or G – d knows what – that with the vigilance of no less than three Arguses in addition – it was utterly impossible save once – to be decisive – and then – tears & tremors & prayers – which I am not yet old enough to find piquant in such cases – prevented me from making her wretched – I do detest everything which is not perfectly mutual – and any subsequent reproaches – (as I know by one former long ago bitter experience) would heap

1:3

coals of fire upon my head. – – Do you remember what Rousseau says to somebody – “if you would know that you are beloved – watch your lover when he leaves you²³⁵ – to me – the most pleasing moments have generally been – when there is nothing more to be required – in short the subsequent repose without satiety – which Lewis never dreamed of in that poem of his “Desire & Pleasure²³⁶ when you are secure of the past yet without regret or disappointment – – of this there was no prospect with her – she had so much more dread of the **D — I** – than gratitude for his kindness – and I am not yet sufficiently in his good graces to indulge my own passions at the certain misery of another. – – Perhaps after all – I was her dupe – if so – I am the dupe also of the few good feelings I could ever boast of – but here perhaps I am my own dupe too in attributing to a good motive what may be quite otherwise.

1:4

— is a most extraordinary person – he has just left me & a snuff box with a flaming inscription – after squabbling with me for these last ten days! & I too – have been of some real service to him which I merely mention to mark the inconsistency of human nature! – I have brought off a variety of foolish trophies (foolish indeed without victory) such as epistles – & lockets – which look as if she were in earnest – but she would not go off now²³⁷ – nor render going off unnecessary – am I not candid to own my want of success – when I might have assumed the airs of an “aimable Vainquer” but that is so

234: Farquhar, *The Beaux Stratagem*, V.

235: Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, I, Lettre Iv.

236: Matthew Lewis, *Pleasure and Desire*, last two lines.

237: Shakespeare, *Henry IV* II, II iv 128.

paltry & so common without cause too – and what I hear & see every day – that I would not – even to gain the point I have missed. I assure you not one knows but you one particle of this business – & you always must know everything concerning me – it is hard if I may not have one friend – believe me
[letter concludes at top of first sheet]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from 4, Bennet Street, London, October 23rd 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.91; 1922 I 21013; QI 198-200; BLJ III 152-4)

Oct^r. 23rd. 1813 –

My dear L^y. M^c. –

C– again! – will you pray tell her that I was only in town a day before she left it – & that if it were otherwise it must be long ago perfectly understood between her & me & everyone else – that it could have made no difference – I wrote to her a kind & a friendly letter – & regret that it has displeased her – I know no more & can say no further – but do most humbly hope she will leave me to my own reflections – & as a further inducement she may rest assured that they are by no means agreeable enough to make their disturbance a temptation. One of your A– letters has arrived – & the other I doubt not will follow – I wish he would open a letter of mine – but he dare not – I am not sorry for this business – were it only on account of your epistles – which I do think the most

1:2

amusing – the most developing – and tactiques in the world – come what may – I can hardly regret the untoward events which led to an intimacy productive to me of much instruction – & not less intellectual pleasure – you have preserved me from two – one eventually & the other had been immediately fatal – I cannot repay the obligation but I may at least acknowledge it – & as the world goes it is something not to hate you for having done me so much service. – If — is playing a part – he cannot I know long keep it up – his marrying scheme if premeditated had been an excellent way of turning the tables – but it was done too abruptly & awkwardly to succeed – there was no foundation for his edifice – & if there had I would have blown it up about his ears – I prefer – if in the regular way – – chusing my own moiety

1:3

though truth to tell he recommended a woman of Virtue – for I heard her say “that she never was in a warm bath in her life” a certain sign – the care of your truly good woman is always confined to her soul. – I don’t know if you ever saw her – she is very pretty – but petite – perhaps handsomer than the other – and I think – more mechante – but in all other respects like all other young ladies of the market. – My Seaham correspondence has ceased on both sides – & I shall not renew it – I am in great suspence – Marquis Tweedale²³⁸ wants me to go with him to the army – like Corporal Nym “to wink & hold out mine iron”²³⁹ I suppose – Madrid hath charms more than Glory – or mere curiosity – and a fit of ill humour or vanity might or may lead

1:4

me where “Honour comes unlooked for”²⁴⁰ but unless when in love or out of temper – my chivalry is not the most Gothic – though a box on the ear from one sex – or a frown from the other might possibly call it into action. – – – A more pleasing expedition would be to Middleton²⁴¹ – I am asked next month – so are you – shall we go? we – at {least I} shall have nothing to do – but probably something to observe & communicate. –

I send you (return it) the only notice since my departure – will you judge – & augur from it for me? it puzzles me – you have more insight – & are besides impartial – I have just sense enough left to know that I cannot be so myself. –

2:1

238: The Marquis of Tweeddale is the future father-in-law of J.C.Hobhouse.

239: Shakespeare, *Henry V*, II i 5.

240: Shakespeare, *Henry IV* I,V ii, final line.

241: The Jerseys’ country seat at Middleton Park, near Leeds.

Your approbation of my Ethic on the subject gratifies me much – when we are happy we are too much occupied to be aware of its extent – it is {only} during the subsequent repose – the “abandon” that you can discover even to yourself if you have really loved – if your thoughts recur to your own {exclusive} situation – it is all over – but if still occupied by the other – I do not know whether the memory & the hope are not worth all the rest. – It is difficult & I have failed in expressing what I mean – no matter – let it go – You will be in town on Wednesday – a great consolation to me – I am in the horrors of a hundred schemes – of which I shall say nothing – till they are accomplished or useless. – <ever y^{rs}.> Perhaps you will write on Monday – ever y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

[2:2 is blank.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from 4, Bennet Street, London, October 25th [??] 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.92; 1922 I 212-13; BLJ III 154-5)

Byron is again using the smaller paper.

Monday –

I had finished my letter – but tear half of it – today’s Post has been hard in bringing me more than I have yet had time to read twice – & your last Aston Letter safe – but your Brocket one is a little savage – you hint at my presumption – but after all the “vielle cour” when once people understand each other – is {it} not as well to come to the point? – yet you see (& I am glad you approved it) I did (and it is no trifle) sacrifice the selfish consideration to spare her self reproach. – I am going to be guilty of a breach of confidence in sending you the inclosed – though I cannot consider my trust in you as betraying her – if she is serious so am I – and as willing as ever to go through with

1:2

the business – the letter merely says – what you already know – and all women (except L^y. O & M^{rs}. S^t Sm^h)²⁴² in that situation seem to have <been> much the same style – except that my little white penitent appears rather more bewildered & uses two words – “effusions” & “soul” rather oftener than befits out of the circulating library. – – You are not perhaps so just as usual in prophesying “not to the purpose” every thing a woman writes must be to the purpose – no – as much as yes – once put a pen into their hands – and then tell me when they will lay it down again? – – She mentions C – – but not one word of you – a proof at least – that she knows nothing of my extreme reliance & confidence in you – Perhaps you

1:3

will think worse of me for sending this – if I were not in earnest I should not – but I want your judgement about her – I can’t be impartial – & I again repeat but to you – her name is never breathed. – You are with “the illustrious” which makes me tremble – I know she thinks ill of me – & if you betray me she will think worse – I can possibly have no anxiety about her good opinion further than as I am aware of her natural & unbounded influence over your own. – I am wrong – but you really wrong me too – if you do not suppose that I would sacrifice every thing for Ph. – I hate sentiment – & in consequence my epistolary levity – makes you believe me as hollow & heartless as my letters are light. – Indeed it is not so – and I think

1:4

my unbounded reliance on you (my natural enemy) may prove it – I don’t fear you – no – notwithstanding all – & yet if I were reduced to the alternative of losing your friendship or any other person’s love – our Platonics would triumph. – ever y^{rs}.

[swirl signature]

2:1

P.S –

Poor Robinson! it must be very ill=convenient to you – this fracture. – In your Aston Letter – you say the Jackall must be in love too – I did not think so – but nevertheless gave W. a hint about

242: Lady Oxford and Constance Spencer Smith.

those “Joseph Surface gentlemen” and asked him what he should have thought of me – if after our long acquaintance – I had suddenly commenced talking moralist? –

W. at last almost went down on his knees to prevent an <new> explanation between us – and now this odd expression – “if not for my sake for that of L^y. F. do not quarrel <with her> – I never will forgive you – nor will she if

2:1

there is any scene on what passed at N.²⁴³ – these were nearly his last words – but if he renews his tricks or has views of his own – I will revenge or perish in the attempt. – “In love” how came I not to think so before? – but he has left A – if I am not even with him never trust me – a man too whom I did much to conciliate – & who dissembled to me with some success. –

November 1st-8th 1813: Byron drafts *The Bride of Abydos*, which is fair-copied by November 11th.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from 4, Bennet Street, London, November 4th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.93; 1922 I 214-; BLJ III 157-8)

Byron is using the smaller paper.

Nov^r. 4th. 1813

My dear friend –

I lose no time in assuring you that I not only am not – but never have been for {an} instant – in the least pettish about you – the other night at the play – I was merely “buffooning” & I really thought you knew me well enough to perceive this. – Angry – quotha! I am a pretty fellow to be angry with anybody – & least of all with you. –

In the last three days I have been quite shut up – my mind has been from late and later events

1:2

in such a state of fermentation that as usual I have been obliged to empty it in rhyme – & am in the very heart of another Eastern tale²⁴⁴ – something of the Giaour cast – but not so sombre though rather more villanious²⁴⁵ – this is my usual resource – if it were not for some such occupation to dispel reflection during inaction – I verily believe I should very often go mad. –

I have heard from Ph – she is very angry at me for not writing – (after telling me it was impossible without ruining her)

1:3

& supposes that I must have told everybody her adventures – {& is} particularly afraid that I I by myself I should confide it to W. W.!! – Was there ever such a fancy? – tell a man that I wanted it is really laughable. –

C– has been playing the devil about some engravings & fooleries – will she never be quiet till she is in the roundhouse with the Sieur Henri – who it seems is a great villain & her particular protege – at least so you said to me. –

1:4

Good night – my dear L^y. M^c. – Buonaparte has lost all his allies but me & the King of Wirtemberg – do you remember Wolsey – “I and my king”²⁴⁶ no matter my alliance is quite as useful as that of Bavaria.

ever y^s.

[swirl signature]

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from 4, Bennet Street, London, November 22nd 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.94; 1922 I 214-17; QI 198-200; BLJ III 170-2)

243: “Newstead”.

244: BoA.

245: Byron reverses the “i” and the “n”.

246: “Ego et rex meus”.

Nov^r. 22^d. 1813 –My dear Lady M^c –

C. has at last done a very goodnatured thing – she sent me Holmes’s picture for a friend leaving England – to which friend it is now making the best of its way. – You do not go to M.²⁴⁷ till 28th. and I shall procrastinate accordingly. – Yesterday the Lady Ossulstone sent for me to complain of you all – we had met at L^d. Hollands’ the night before – and she asserted that the “extreme gravity of my countenance” made her & L^d. O. believe that I had some whim about that slip of the pen=knife of C’s and the consequent rumours &^c. &^c. – and some resentment about her in particular – to all which I pleaded ignorance & innocence. –

1:2

She says Lady Blarney is a very noxious person & hates her – and that none of you have taken the least notice of her since – that she is the most discreet of women – to prove which she produced an epistle of L^y. Somebody’s wondering (it was but three hours after) she had not already written a full & true account of it to her – !! I thought I should have laughed in her pretty black face – and – in short we are all very repulsive sort of persons and have not behaved well to her nor any body else. – Remember all this (like all our thises) is entre Nous – and so there is an end of the matter. – We had had a kind of squabble at the Argyle – which I could not help tormenting her a little by reminding her not of that but that Evening – when we were

1:3

all wrong-paired – she wanted to sit by Mildmay at Supper – and I wanted to have been next that Kashmeer Butterfly of the “Blues” L^y. Charlemont – or in short any body but a person who had serious concerns to think of – every body else was coupled much in the same way – in short Noah’s Ark upset had been but a type of the pairing of our supper table. – – L^y. Holland & I go on very well – her unqualified praises of you proving their sincerity! – she is the first woman I ever heard praise another entirely. – L^y. B. had better let us remain undisturbed – for if L^y. H. thinks that it annoys her there will be no end to y^c. intimacy. – I have taken the half weeks (3 days in each) of Lord Salisbury’s box at Covent Garden – and there when C– is in town we can always talk for an hour on Emergency. –

1:4

The occasional oddity of Ph’s letters have amused me much – the simplicity of her cunning – & her exquisite reasons²⁴⁸ – she vindicates her treachery to — thus – after condemning deceit in general & hers in particular – she says – “but then remember it is <but> to deceive “un Marito” and to prevent all the unpleasant consequences &^c. &^c. and she says this in perfect persuasion that she has a full conception of the “fitness of things” & the “beauty of virtue” and “the social compact” as Philosopher Square has it²⁴⁹ – Again – she desires me to write to him kindly – for – she believes he cares for nobody but me! besides – she will then hear of when she can’t from me. – Is not all this a comedy? – next to L^y. Ossuls.’s voucher for her discretion – it has enlivened my ethical studies on the human mind beyond 50 volumes – how admirably we accommodate our reasons to our wishes!²⁵⁰ – – –

2:1

She concludes by denominating that respectable man “Argus” a very irreverent appellation – if we can both hold out till Spring – perhaps he may have occasion for his Optics. – After all – “it is <but> to deceive un Marito” does not this expression convey to you the strangest mixture of right & wrong? – a really guilty person could not have used it – or rather they would but in different words – I find she has not the but and that makes much difference – if you consider it – the experienced would have said it is “only deceiving him” – thinking of themselves – she makes a merit of it on his account & mine. – – The Dutch have taken Holland & got Bernadotte & Orange – the Stork & King Log at once²⁵¹ – in their Froggergy

247: The Jerseys’ country seat at Middleton Park, near Leeds.

248: Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, II iii 134.

249: In Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, III 3.

250: Compare Donna Julia in D.J. I (written five years later).

251: In Aesop’s fable, the frogs asked Zeus for a king; they were dissatisfied with the log which he sent, so he sent them a stork, who ate them all.

ever y^{rs}.
[swirl signature]

[2:2 is blank.]

[BLJ gives this P.S.; not yet found:]

I must quote to you correctly –

“– how easily mankind are deceived – May he be always deceived! and I – alas – am the base instrument of deception – but in this instance concealment is not a crime – for it preserves the peace ‘d’un marito’ the contrary would &^c. I have been arguing on wrong premises – but no matter – the marked lines are quite as good.

Byron to Lady Melbourne, from 4, Bennet Street, London, November 25th 1813:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43470 f.95; 1922 I 217-19; BLJ III 173-5)

[letter concludes at top of first sheet:] people – and are the only person who can trace & I want to see whether you think my writings are me or not.²⁵²

y^{rs}. ever
[swirl signature]

Nov^r. 25th. 1813

My dear L^y. M^c.

Thanks by the thousand for y^r. letter. – I have lately been leading a whimsical life – Tuesday I dined with Ward & met Canning & all the Wits – and yesterday I dined with <all> the Patrons of Pugilism & some of the professors – who amused me about as much. – – – I wrote to C– a very earnest but not savage letter – I believe the obnoxious sentence was – “if after this you refuse I hope you will forgive yourself for I fear I cannot – all the rest was merely entreaty <if> – The Picture is however – God knows where – they have now that is four (the Mussulman legal allotment)²⁵³ one picture apiece – and as many Originals of other people as they please in the interim. – I had no idea C– would have restored it but it was very kind and I am very much obliged to her. – It is strange that Ph.’s greatest dread appears to be discovery – & yet she is perpetually as it were contriving everything to lead to it – she writes – makes me answer through an address to a 3^d person – whom she has not trusted – – of course their curiosity will not be the least excited by being made an involuntary Post-office! –

1:2

Then she would not rest till she had this picture sent – in the same way – and the odds are – particularly with such a person as — that he has – or will in some manner stumble on something incontrovertible – & out of which she cant “conceal” herself (as she calls it) that is in other words invent an excuse. – – – To say the truth I am not very unwilling that this should be the case – as it will hasten a crisis of some kind or other. – His first impulse will be probably Martial – but if I have a motive <and> {I} don’t mind <xxxx/>that – it will at least leave her for the Survivor – & the Survived won’t feel the want of her – besides in my case it would be so dramatic a conclusion – all the sex would be enamoured of my Memory – all the Wits would have their jest – & the Moralists their sermon – C– would go wild with grief that – it did not happen about her – L^y. O^d.²⁵⁴ would say I deserved it for not coming to Cagliari – and — poor ———²⁵⁵ she would be really uncomfortable – do you know? I am much afraid that that perverse passion was my

1:3

deepest after all. – Well – suppose he should not take the angry road – at least with me – it then comes to a point between her & him – “Give him up or part with me” – – no one wants’ spirit – particularly the spirit of contradiction with that they dislike – (she swore to me she never would give me up – but

252: Melbourne would indeed be able to trace the autobiographical aspects of B.’s Turkish Tales. It is to be regretted that if she did so the letters are lost.

253: Compare *Beppo*, 70, 7-8.

254: “Lady Oxford”.

255: Augusta.

that is nothing –) <&> {yet} I don't know that she would not take him at his word – & send to me; but at all events the superiority this advantage would give him – and the additional distrust & ill agreement between them must increase soon so far that our union must be the Event. – The 3^d. course is her getting the better – & his finding (as he has partly found) that my friendship is not inconvenient – and our all “being happy ever after” to one of these conclusions we must come sooner or later – & why not now? – We shall have forty other things to think of before Spring – merely from the irritation of Hope deferred – the most annoying of discordant feelings – “Have patience” in the mean time – you say – so

1:4

I will – if I can have nothing else. – – –

The Duchess's²⁵⁶ verses are beautiful – but I don't like her a bit the better – I send you in return some, not of mine as you will see by the hand – but I am not certain they are hers (Ph.'s) though from the cast of thought – it is very like her. – I hope I am not doing what Lord Grey did – He showed some letters of a woman as the most exquisite &^c. &^c. till some sagacious person pointed them out either in Rousseau's Eloise – or the Portuguese letters! – I received these this morning – & think them pretty – pray tell me if they are – for seriously I am a very erring Critic – one may write – and yet not be able to judge – and the reverse. – return them on your return to town. – My new Turkish tale²⁵⁷ will be out directly – I shall of course send you a copy – Frere & Canning & the Hollands have seen & like it – the public is another question – but it will for some reasons interest you more than anybody – these I leave you to discover – (I mean totally independent of Criticism – for you may not like it a bit the better) – you know me better than most [*letter concludes at top of first sheet*]

[*small, separate sheet:*]

When I speak of this tale & the author – I merely mean feelings – the characters & the costume & the tale itself (at least are very like it I heard) are Mussulman. – This no one but you can tell. –

December 1813: seventh edition of *The Giaour* published; the poem is now complete at 1334 lines. *The Bride of Abydos* published.

Lady Melbourne to Byron, after November 25th 1813:

(Source: text from BL.Add.Mss.45547.f.68; Gross 149)

[The / Lord Byron / Bennett Street]

The first sheet of this letter, with the date, is missing. Melbourne answers the previous item.

[*Ms. tear removes a phrase*] – Canning is not pleasant in my Eyes – his countenance is false & he always looks Suspicious, & a sort of imitation of Sheridan, but so inferior, that with me it loses all its effect – I long to see y^r Tale,²⁵⁸ I make no doubt it is beautiful not from y^c opinion of L^d & L^y H^d have given for I think neither of them have any taste in Poetry – she never judges for herself – but is guided by the opinions of some one whom she thinks good authority – Canning & Frere's judgment is not to be disputed – & tho' they write themselves they will not abuse what they think is really good – I hope you'll come very soon, do you hear? Or rather do you heed? Y^{rs} Ever [*swirl signature*]

Augusta Leigh to Byron, November 29th 1813:

(Text from printed sources)

Partager tous vos sentimens
ne voir que par vos yeux
n'agir que par vos conseils, ne
vivre que pour vous, voila mes
vœux, mes projets, & le seul
destin qui peut me rendre
heureuse.

[lock of hair, with signature on paper « Augusta »]

256: BLJ says this is the Duchess of Devonshire: the “verses” are unidentified.

257: *The Bride of Abydos*.

258: *The Bride of Abydos*.

Byron writes:

**La Chevelure of
the one whom i
most loved +**