Sylvander and Clarinda

The Love Letters of Robert Burns and Agnes M'Lehose

Edited by Amelia Josephine Burr

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"The sight of human affairs deserves admiration and pity. They are worthy of respect, too. And he is not insensible who pays them the undemonstrative tribute of a sigh which is not a sob, and of a smile which is not a grin."

JOSEPH CONRAD.

INTRODUCTION

In the most forbidding tragic mask one finds lines of mirth, and the loudest laughter has its origin in the pain of somebody—it may be, the laugher's own; for Comedy and Tragedy are like the Siamese Twins, inseparably united and sharing the same springs of life. The representation of them as two distinctly individual sisters is one of the pretty inventions with which we have tried to soften and embellish the stark face of nature. This book is for those who are not afraid to look in that face as it is, and beyond it to the spirit that underlies its beauty and its ugliness, its laughter and its tears. Here is a story on an old theme—"infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn." You may pity the people who enact it, you may despise them,—you may laugh at them, and probably will, at the moments when they take themselves most seriously, for this is a crude draught of reality, not strained through the prejudices of an interpreter. It is for each reader to understand the man and the woman who spread more or less of their hearts

on paper in the letters that follow, as one conjectures about a similar happening among one's acquaintance. Did she have all of him that she cared to take, considering the cost of more? Or was the old resident of Edinburgh right when he said "The puir auld donnert leddy body spoke o' her love for the poet just like a bit hellicat lassie in her teens, an' while exhibitin' to her cronies the faded letters from her Robbie, she would just greet like a bairn. Puir auld creature, she never till the moment of her death jaloused or dooted Robbie's love for her; but sir, you ken he was just makin' a fule o' her, as his letters amply show." Do they show it so amply? or do they show the man whose wooings usually strode so swift and heavy-footed toward one simple brutal goal, for once offering reverently the worship of his mind and spirit, while the body he had so pitifully squandered stands humbly aside, all but silent in its hopeless desire? Do not be discouraged by the grotesqueries of stilted language in Dick Swiveller's vein—remember that these are not puppets of a writer's imagination, veined with verses and with adjectives for blood, but a real man and woman of the eighteenth century, creatures of high-running passion for all the pompous phrases of their time, who lived far

more than they wrote. This strange sudden love of theirs—was it mere fancy, or was it, for one of them at least, that rare apotheosis of sex which comes suddenly from the darkness upon human beings, wrestles with them as did the angel with Jacob, and leaves them transfigured or broken, but never unchanged? Decide for yourself, reader. I know what I believe,—but I will not try to impose my opinion upon you. I will only bring you to the beginning of their story, on a winter night of 1787—

No. Had that been indeed the beginning, the end would have been quite other than it is. Rather did their story begin twenty-eight years before, with the birth of this man and this woman who came toward each other from such different social spheres, trailing not clouds of glory but the rags of sordid experience and ruined hope. Life had already marred them both —and for all that is to follow, let the first stone be cast by the one who is near enough divinity to make into holy stigmata the scars of his own sin and folly. Only, a stone would never come from such a hand.

Let us look at them, then, as they were at their meeting, with a glance at the past which has left its print on them. You will find them in Edin-

burgh. The bleak December sunset is over; twilight has given the grim grey city the rich colouring of old tapestry. The tall gaunt buildings are mellowed to amethyst, and the Castle, high on its rock above them, gathers to itself all the blue of the parting day till it glows like a sapphire under the first stars. With the darkness, Edinburgh becomes a firmament of lighted windows. In one of these little planets of sociability that sends its ray out into the cold street, the estimable spinster Miss Nimmo is giving a tea-party for the special purpose of bringing together two gifted friends of hers, Mrs. Agnes M'Lehose and Mr. Robert Burns. Mrs. M'Lehose has been anxious to meet this astonishing young man who has captured not only the fashionable mind but the popular heart —at once a more difficult and a more enduring conquest—but he has been so extravagantly the fashion that it could not be arranged till this evening, when his stay in town is nearly at an end. Mrs. Cockburn writes to a friend, "The man will be quite spoiled, if he can spoil; but he keeps his simple manners, and is quite sober. No doubt he will be at the Hunters' Ball to-morrow, which has made all women and milliners mad. Not a gauze-cap under two guineas—many ten, twelve."

Even in the face of the gauze-caps, Mr. Burns

holds his own. Although he still has the appearance of a handsome young farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird, he has learned the manners of the world without losing his own. He no longer skirts the edge of the room to avoid treading on the carpets. Socially he is self-possessed and modest, popular among the men as a thoroughly good fellow who can tell a racy story and sing a rattling song, and a great favourite among the ladies in spite of his glaring record as a rural Don Juan. In spite of it? Dante was not the first nor the last poet to appeal with success to "Donne che avete intelletto d'amore." If the gentle creatures are not intelligent in love, they like to think they are. In the case of Burns, the ladies who read "The Lament" and sighed over the pathos of that destroyed marriage certificate, must have accorded him all the prestige of a martyr. Of the ugly consequences of his "éclatant return to Mauchline," society in general probably knew nothing. But as the woman with whom we are concerned certainly did know, and loved him with all her knowledge, she must have seen the matter from his point of view,—a point of view that we must try to get if we are to understand him, or her. It is unquestionable that Burns was very much in love with his Jean, and

that her acquiescence in her father's high handed annulment of their tardy marriage was a harsh blow not only to his pride but to his heart. His pain seems to have festered into resentment, made all the worse by finding that his change in fortunes brought a corresponding change in his treatment by the family. Old Armour preferred his daughter's dishonour to her marriage with Burns? Very well. If these were the terms of father and daughter, Burns would abide by them when he found himself, as the fashionable and successful poet, quite the welcome visitor. There is no passion more cruelly unreasoning than hurt pride. He did not realise that the meek tenderness which made Jean yield to him would make her submit also to the imperious will of her father. Embittered, he saw her patient generosity only as slavish weakness; and strange as it is, we may believe that when he left Mauchline in June of 1787 he actually did feel no moral obligation to the girl who for a second time faced through him the long agonising ordeal of an unsanctioned motherhood. As he saw it, he had not wronged her, this time—he had only accepted the status that had formerly been forced upon him. Doubtless he went his way with his head high, feeling that he had shown himself a man not to be trifled

with—the pity of it! Once back in Edinburgh, little time was given him for thought, or for regret, had he been so inclined. When he went to Miss Nimmo's tea-party, he was surely a little tired, and probably a little dazed, a little intoxicated with his round of city gaieties, although we are told that he had kept his head impeccably. Well, the time is near when he is to lose it—and how much more, I will not try to say. He hardly suspects this, I think—he is so sure of himself as "an old Hawk at the game,"—as he gazes with his usual impressive manner into the eyes of the rosy little beauty whom he had been invited to meet. He has wonderful eyes, this clod of Ayrshire clay shot with fire from—Heaven or Hell? both, maybe—great dark eyes that glow as from an inward consuming flame. An interesting acquaintance for a lady who likes to play with combustibles, but rather dangerous. Mrs. M'Lehose, however, has a right to some confidence in her own skilful handling of high explosives. She is a lady of experience, which she did not get cheaply. Daughter of a comfortable Glasgow doctor, the pretty Miss Nancy was a recognised toast when still only a child. At fifteen, she went up to Edinburgh that six months of metropolitan polish might be applied to a sketchy smattering

of genteel accomplishments that can hardly be called an education even by courtesy. Mr. M'Lehose, a young law agent who had vainly sought an introduction to the little belle, made the bold play of booking all the seats except the one reserved for Miss Craig. Fair lady and heart by no means faint, a day's journey with a long noon halt,—could courtship have a more auspicious beginning? In spite of the dissuasions of her family and friends, who hoped for a more brilliant match, the pretty Miss Nancy celebrated July of 1776 with a little Independence Day of her own —the last she was to know, poor child. This seventeen-year-old bride soon made the not unprecedented discovery that an audacious and charming suitor may develop into an excessively disagreeable husband. The annual babies, poor sickly mites, were no proof of domestic harmony; on the contrary, the M'Lehose household was the scene of such rapidly and constantly increasing incompatibility that a separation took place after four stormy years. Doctor Craig took his daughter home again, but only lived to shelter her two years. He did his canny best for her by leaving her inheritance in the form of an annuity entirely beyond her husband's reach. This, while sufficient for herself, would not provide for the three

surviving children—they were all delicate, and only one lived to manhood. Mr. M'Lehose, whose liberality seems to have exhausted itself in his one monumental extravagance and upon whom responsibilities sat lightly, refused to contribute to their support, and presently sailed for Jamaica at the earnest request of his relatives, who were tired of paying his debts. A small annual subscription was raised for the young pseudo-widow among the Glasgow writers, and another among the surgeons, but even so her establishment in Edinburgh was very largely dependent on the contributions of benevolent friends, chief among whom was her cousin, Lord Craig. She was a very popular little lady, for trouble did not rob her of her beauty nor of her spirits. At twenty-eight, she is even more attractive than the pretty miss for whose bright eyes Mr. M'Lehose bought up the coach. To begin with, she has wisely spent much time in study—of no very profound character, to be sure, but highly ornamental in its results. She has read the best English authors and can quote from them tellingly, for she has a natural taste for letters, and indeed can herself turn a musical verse. With all her brilliancy, a little hard—well, is it strange that she has grown hard, as she has found life to be? Four

children of a worthless husband in as many years tend to do away with a woman's fine generosities as well as with her illusions. When she gave life its full price, it cheated her. She does not mean to be caught that way again; her future bargains with this shifty dealer must be on her own terms. She has arranged the outward circumstances of her little world as nearly to her satisfaction as she can; but she is the type of woman who cannot live on her own resources. She must have stimuli from without. Her poor little heart is lonely in her comfortable, albeit somewhat shaky structure of worldly security. She wants to find a guest who will accommodate himself to its cramped quarters and warm them with the right Promethean fire,—one who will enter ardently, and yet with a tread discreet enough for the none too secure floors to bear. She wants, in short, a lover who will offer his passionate devotions at her shrine in the decent name of a Friendship which shall offend none of her benevolent friends. And it is Robert Burns—of all men!—whom she chooses.

SYLVANDER AND CLARINDA

SYLVANDER AND CLARINDA

ROBERT BURNS TO AGNES M'LEHOSE

December 6, 1787.

MADAM,—I had set no small store by my tea-drinking to-night, and have not often been so disappointed. Saturday evening I shall embrace the opportunity with the greatest pleasure. I leave this town this day se'ennight, and probably I shall not return for a couple of twelvemonths; but I must ever regret that I so lately got an acquaintance I shall ever highly esteem, and in whose welfare I shall ever be warmly interested. Our worthy common friend, Miss Nimmo, in her usual pleasant way, rallied me a great deal on my new acquaintance; and, in the humour of her ideas I wrote some lines, which I enclose you, as I think they have a good deal of poetic merit;*

* It is a pity that these lines of Burns have been lost, as he was not in the habit of praising his own work.

and Miss Nimmo tells me you are not only a critic but a poetess. Fiction, you know, is the native region of poetry; and I hope you will pardon my vanity in sending you the bagatelle as a tolerable offhand *jeu-d'esprit.* I have several poetic trifles which I shall gladly leave with Miss Nimmo, or you, if they were worth house-room; as there are scarcely two people on earth by whom it would mortify me more to be forgotten, though at the distance of nine-score miles. I am, Madam, with the highest respect, your very humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

Thursday Evening.

BURNS TO MRS. M'LEHOSE

December 8, 1787.

I can say with truth, Madam, that I never met with a person in my life whom I more anxiously wished to meet again than yourself. To-night I was to have had that very great pleasure —I was intoxicated with the idea; but an unlucky fall from a coach has so bruised one of my knees, that I can't stir my leg off the cushion: so if I don't see you again, I shall not rest in my grave for chagrin. I was vexed to the soul I had not seen you sooner; I am determined to cultivate your friendship with the enthusiasm of Religion; but thus has Fortune ever served me. I cannot bear the idea of leaving Edinburgh without seeing you. I know not how to account for it—I am strangely taken with some people; nor am I often mistaken. You are a stranger to me; but I am an odd being; some yet unnamed feelings —things, not principles, but better than whims —carry me farther than boasted reason ever did a Philosopher. Farewell! every happiness be yours!

ROBT. BURNS.

Saturday Evening,
St. James Square, No. 2.

MRS. M'LEHOSE TO ROBERT BURNS

Enured as I have been to disappointments, I never felt more, nay, nor half so severely, for one of the same nature! The cruel cause, too, augments my uneasiness. I trust you'll soon recover it; meantime, if my sympathy, my friendship, can alleviate your pain be assured you possess them. I am much flattered at being a favourite of yours. Miss Nimmo can tell you how earnestly I had long pressed her to make us acquainted. I had a presentiment that we should derive pleasure from the society of each other. To-night I had thought of fifty things to say to you; how unfortunate this prevention! Do not accuse Fortune; had I not known she was *blind* before, her ill-usage of *you* had marked it sufficiently. However, she is a fickle, old, envious beldame, and I'd much rather be indebted to *Nature.* You shall *not* leave town without seeing me, if I should come along with good Miss Nimmo and call for you. I am determined to see you; and am ready to exclaim with Yorick, "Tut! are we not all relations?" We are, indeed, *strangers* in one sense; but of near kin in many respects: these "nameless feelings" I perfectly comprehend, tho' the pen of a Locke could

not define them. Perhaps *instinct* comes nearer their description than either "Principles or Whims." Think ye they have any connection with that "heavenly light which leads astray?" One thing I know, that they have a powerful effect upon me; and are delightful when under the check of *reason* and *religion.*

Miss Nimmo was a favourite of mine from the first hour I met her. There is a softness, a nameless something about her that, were I a man, old as she is, I would have chosen her before most women that I know. I fear, however, this liking is not *mutual.* I'll tell you why I think so, at meeting. She was in mere jest when she told you I was a *Poetess.* I have often composed rhyme (if not *reason*), but never one line of *poetry.* The distinction is obvious to every one of the least discernment. Your lines were truly poetical; give me all you can spare. Not one living has a higher relish for poetry than I have; and my reading everything of the kind makes me a tolerable judge. Ten years ago, such lines from such a hand would have half-turned my head. Perhaps you thought it might have done so even *yet,* and wisely premised that "*Fiction* was the native region of poetry." Read the enclosed,

which I scrawled just after reading yours.* Be sincere, and own that, whatever merit it has, it has not a line resembling poetry. Pardon any little freedoms I take with you; if they entertain a heavy hour, they have all the merit I intended. Will you let me know, now and then, how your leg is? If I was your *sister,* I would call and see you; but 'tis a censorious world this, and (in this sense) "you and I are not of this world." Adieu. Keep up your heart, you will soon get well, and we shall *meet.* Farewell. God bless you!

A. M.

* These verses also have been lost.

ROBERT BURNS TO MRS. M'LEHOSE

Dec. 12, 1787.

I stretch a point indeed, my dearest Madam, when I answer your card on the rack of my present agony. Your friendship, Madam! By heavens, I was never so proud before. Your lines, I maintain it, are poetry, and good poetry; mine were indeed partly fiction, and partly a friendship which, had I been so blest as to have met with you *in time,* might have led me—God of love only knows where. Time is too short for ceremonies.

I swear solemnly—in all the tenor of my former oath—to remember you in all the pride and warmth of friendship until—I cease to be!

To-morrow, and every day, till I see you, you shall hear from me.

Farewell! May you enjoy a better night's repose than I am likely to have.

R. B.

MRS. M'LEHOSE TO ROBERT BURNS

Sunday Noon, Dec. 16, 1787.

Miss Nimmo and I had a long conversation last night. Little did I suspect that she was of the party. Gentle, sweet soul! She is accusing herself as the cause of your misfortune. It was in vain I rallied her upon such an excess of sensibility—as I termed it. She is lineally descended from "My Uncle Toby"; has hopes of the devil, and would not hurt a fly. How could you tell me that you were in "agony"? I hope you will swallow laudanum, and procure some ease from sleep. I am glad to hear Mr. Wood attends you. He is a good soul and a safe surgeon. I know him a little. Do as he bids, and I trust your leg will soon be quite well. When I meet you, I must chide you for writing in your romantic style. Do you remember that she whom you address is a married woman? or—Jacob-like—would you wait seven years, and even then perhaps be disappointed, as he was? No; I know you better: you have too much of that impetuosity which generally accompanies noble minds. To be serious, most people would think, by your style, that you were writing to some vain, silly woman to make a fool of her—or worse. I have

too much vanity to ascribe it to the former motive, and too much charity to harbour an idea of the latter; and viewing it as the effusion of a benevolent heart upon meeting one similar to itself, I have promised you my friendship: it will be your own fault if I ever withdraw it. Would to God I had it in my power to give you some solid proofs of it! Were I the Duchess of Gordon, you should be possessed of that independence which every generous mind pants after; but I fear she is "no Duchess at the heart." Obscure as I am (comparatively) I enjoy all the necessaries of life as fully as I desire, and wish for wealth only to procure "the luxury of doing good."

My chief design in writing to you to-day was to beg you would not write me often, lest the exertion should hurt you. Meantime, if my scrawls can amuse you in your confinement, you shall have them occasionally. I shall hear of you every day from my beloved Miss Nimmo. Do you know, the very first time I was in her house, most of our conversation was about a certain (lame) poet? I read her soul in her expressive countenance, and have been attached to her ever since. Adieu! Be patient. Take care of yourself. My best wishes attend you. A. M.

ROBERT BURNS TO MRS. M'LEHOSE

Thursday, Dec. 20, 1787.

Your last, my dear Madam, had the effect on me, that Job's situation had on his friends, when "they sat down seven days and seven nights astonished, and spake not a word." "Pay my addresses to a married woman!" I started as if I had seen the ghost of him I had injured. I recollected my expressions; some of them indeed were, in the law phrase, "habit and repute," which is being half guilty. I cannot possibly say, Madam, whether my heart might not have gone astray a little; but I can declare, upon the honour of a poet, that the vagrant has wandered unknown to me. I have a pretty handsome troop of follies of my own; and, like some other people's, they are but undisciplined blackguards: but the luckless rascals have something like honour in them; they would not do a dishonest thing.

To meet with an unfortunate woman, amiable and young, deserted and widowed by those who were bound by every tie of duty, nature, and gratitude, to protect, comfort, and cherish her; add to all, when she is perhaps one of the first of lovely forms and noble minds—the mind, too, that hits one's taste as the joys of Heaven do a

saint—should a vague idea, the natural child of imagination, thoughtlessly peep over the fence—were you, my friend, to sit in judgment, and the poor, airy straggler brought before you, trembling, self-condemned, with artless eyes, brimful of contrition, looking wistfully on its judge—you would not, my dear Madam, condemn the hapless wretch to death "without benefit of clergy"?

I won't tell you what reply my heart made to your raillery of "seven years," but I will give you what a brother of my trade says on the same allusion:—

"The patriarch to gain a wife
Chaste, beautiful and young,
Serv'd fourteen years a painful life
And never thought it long.

O were you to reward such cares,
And life so long would stay;
Not fourteen but four hundred years
Would seem but as one day!" *

I have written you this scrawl because I have nothing else to do, and you may sit down and find fault with it, if you have no better way of consuming your time; but finding fault with the

* Tom d'Urfey.

vagaries of a poet's fancy is much such another business as Xerxes chastising the waves of Hellespont.

My limb now allows me to sit in some peace; to walk I have yet no prospect of, as I can't mark it to the ground.

I have just now looked over what I have written, and it is such a chaos of nonsense that I dare say you will throw it into the fire, and call me an idle, stupid fellow; but whatever you may think of my brains, believe me to be, with the most sacred respect and heartfelt esteem, My dear Madam, your humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

CLARINDA TO ROBERT BURNS

On Burns Saying He "Had Nothing Else To Do."

When first you saw *Clarinda's* charms
  What rapture in your bosom grew!
Her heart was shut to Love's alarms,
  But then—you'd nothing else to do.

Apollo oft had lent his harp,
  But now 'twas strung from Cupid's bow;
You sung—it reach'd *Clarinda's* heart—
  She wish'd you'd nothing else to do.

Fair Venus smiled, Minerva frowned,
  Cupid observ'd—the arrow flew;
Indifference, ere a week went round,
  Show'd you had nothing else to do.

CLARINDA.

Christmas Eve, 1787.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Dec. 28, 1787.

When dear Clarinda, matchless fair,
  First struck Sylvander's raptured view,
He gaz'd, he listened to despair,
  Alas! 'twas all he dared to do.

Love, from Clarinda's heavenly eyes,
  Transfixed his bosom thro' and thro';
But still in Friendship's guarded guise,
  For more the demon feared to do.

That heart, already more than lost,
  The imp beleaguer'd all perdue;
For frowning Honour kept his post—
  To meet that frown he shrunk to do.

His pangs the bard refused to own,
  Tho' half he wish'd Clarinda knew;
But Anguish wrung the unweeting groan—
  Who blames what frantic Pain must do?

That heart, where motley follies blend,
  Was sternly still to Honour true:
To prove Clarinda's fondest friend,
  Was what a lover sure might do.

The Muse his ready quill employed,
No nearer bliss he could pursue:
That bliss Clarinda cold deny'd—
"Send word by Charles how you do!"

The chill behest disarm'd his muse,
Till passion, all impatient grew:
He wrote, and hinted for excuse,
'Twas 'cause "he'd nothing else to do."

But by those hopes I have above!
And by those faults I dearly rue!
The deed, the boldest mark of love,
For thee, that deed I dare to do!

O could the Fates but name the price
Would bless me with your charms and you!
With frantic joy I'd pay it thrice,
If human art and power could do!

Then take, Clarinda, friendship's hand,
(Friendship, at least, I may avow;)
And lay no more your chill command,
I'll write, whatever I've to do.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I beg your pardon, my dear Clarinda, for the fragment scrawl I sent you yesterday. I really don't know what I wrote. A gentleman, for whose character, abilities, and critical knowledge, I have the highest veneration, called in just as I had begun the second sentence, and I would not make the porter wait. I read to my much-respected friend several of my own bagatelles, and among others, your lines, which I had copied out. He began some criticism on them as on the other pieces, when I informed him they were the work of a young lady in this town; which, I assure you, made him stare. My learned friend seriously protested, that he did not believe any young woman in Edinburgh was capable of such lines; and, if you know anything of Professor Gregory, you will neither doubt of his abilities nor his sincerity. I do love you, if possible, still better for having so fine a taste and turn for poesy. I have again gone wrong in my usual unguarded way, but you may erase the word, and put esteem, respect, or any other tame Dutch expression you please, in its place. I believe there is no holding converse, or carrying on correspondence, with an amiable woman, much less a *gloriously amiable fine wo-*

man, without some mixture of the delicious passion, whose most devoted slave I have more than once had the honour of being—But why be hurt or offended on that account? Can no honest man have a prepossession for a fine woman, but he must run his head against an intrigue? Take a little of the tender witchcraft of love, and add to it the generous, the honourable sentiments of manly friendship; and I know but one more delightful morsel, which few, few in any rank ever taste. Such a composition is like adding cream to strawberries; it not only gives the fruit a more elegant richness, but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.

I enclose you a few lines I composed on a late melancholy occasion. * I will not give above five or six copies of it at all; and I would be hurt if any friend should give any copies without my consent.

You cannot imagine, Clarinda (I like the idea of Arcadian names in a commerce of this kind), how much store I have set by the hopes of your future friendship. I don't know if you have a just idea of my character, but I wish you to see me as I am. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange Will-o'-wisp being; the victim, too

* The lines "On the death of Lord President Dundas."

frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My great constituent elements are pride and passion: the first I have endeavoured to humanise into integrity and honour; the last makes me a devotee, to the warmest degree of enthusiasm, in love, religion, or friendship—either of them or all together, as I happen to be inspired. 'Tis true I never saw you but once; but how much acquaintance did I form with you in that once! Do not think I flatter you, or have a design upon you, Clarinda: I have too much pride for the one, and too little cold contrivance for the other; but of all God's creatures I ever could approach in the beaten way of acquaintance, you struck me with the deepest, the strongest, the most permament impression. I say the most permanent, because I know myself well, and how far I can promise either on my prepossessions or my powers. Why are you unhappy? And why are so many of our fellow-creatures, unworthy to belong to the same species with you, blest with all they can wish? You have a hand all benevolent to give; why were you denied the pleasure? You have a heart formed, gloriously formed for all the most refined luxuries of love; why was that heart ever wrung? O Clarinda! Shall we not meet in a state, some yet unknown state of being,

where the lavish hand of Plenty shall minister to the highest wish of Benevolence; and where the chill north wind of Prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of Enjoyment? If we do not, man was made in vain! I deserved some of the most unhappy hours that have lingered over my head; they were the wages of my labour; but what unprovoked demon, malignant as hell, stole upon the confidence of unmistrusting busy fate, and dashed your cup with undeserved sorrow?

Let me know how long your stay will be out of town: I shall count the hours till you inform me of your return. Cursed etiquette forbids your seeing me just now; and so soon as I can walk, I must bid Edinburgh adieu. Lord! why was I born to see misery, which I cannot relieve; and to meet with friends, whom I can't enjoy? I look back with the pang of unavailing avarice on my loss in not knowing you sooner: all last winter, these three months past, what luxury of intercourse have I not lost! Perhaps, though, 'twas better for my peace. You see I am either above, or incapable of, dissimulation. I believe it is want of that particular genius. I despise design, because I want either coolness or wisdom to be capable of it. I am interrupted. Adieu, my dear Clarinda! SYLVANDER.

Friday Evening.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Probably Written in Answer to His the Same Evening.

I go to the country early to-morrow morning, but will be home by Tuesday—sooner than I expected. I have not time to answer yours as it deserves; nor, had I the age of Methusalem, could I answer it in kind. I shall grow vain. Your praises were enough—but those of a Dr. Gregory superadded! Take care, many a "glorious woman" has been undone by having her head turned. "Know you!" I know you far better than you do me. Like yourself, I am a bit of an enthusiast. In religion and friendship quite a bigot—perhaps I could be so in love too; but everything dear to me in heaven and earth forbids! This is my fixed principle; the person who would dare to endeavour at removing it I would hold as my chief enemy. Like you, I am incapable of dissimulation; nor am I, as you suppose, unhappy. Possessed of fine children, competence, fame, friends kind and attentive—what a monster of ingratitude should I be in the eyes of Heaven were I to style myself unhappy! True, I have met with scenes horrible to recol-

lection, even at six years' distance; but adversity, my friend, is allowed to be the school of Virtue. It oft confers that chastened softness which is unknown among the favourites of Fortune! Even a mind possessed of natural sensibility, without this, never feels that exquisite pleasure which nature has annexed to our sympathetic sorrows. Religion, the only refuge of the unfortunate, has been my balm in every woe. Oh! could I make her appear to you as she has done to me! Instead of ridiculing her tenets, you would fall down and worship her very semblance wherever you found it!

I will write you again at more leisure, and notice other parts of yours. I send you a simile upon a character I don't know if you are acquainted with. I am confounded at your admiring my lines. I shall begin to question your taste—but Dr. G.! When I am low-spirited (which I am at times) I shall think of this as a *restorative.*

Now for the simile:—

The morning sun shines glorious and bright,
And fills the heart with wonder and delight!
He dazzles, in meridian splendour seen,
Without a blackening cloud to intervene.

So, at a distance view'd, your genius bright,
Your wit, your flowing numbers can delight,
But ah! when error's dark'ning clouds arise,
When passion thunders, folly's lightning flies,
More safe we gaze, but admiration dies:
And as the tempting brightness snares the moth,
Sure ruin marks too near approach to both.

Good night; for Clarinda's "heavenly eyes" need the earthly aid of sleep. Adieu.

CLARINDA.

P. S.—I entreat you not to mention our correspondence to one on earth. Though I've conscious innocence, my situation is a delicate one.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

January 1, 1788.

Many happy returns of this day to you, my dear, pleasant friend! May each revolving year find you wiser and happier! I embrace the first spare hour to fulfil my promise; and begin with thanking you for the enclosed lines—they are very pretty: I like the idea of personifying the vices rising in the absence of Justice. It is a constant source of refined pleasure, giving "to airy nothings a local habitation and a name," which people of a luxuriant imagination only can enjoy. Yet, to a mind of a benevolent turn, it is delightful to observe how equal the distribution of happiness is among all ranks! If stupid people are rendered incapable of tasting the refined pleasures of the intelligent and feeling mind, they are likewise exempted from the thousand distractions and disquietudes peculiar to sensibility.

I have been staying with a dear female friend* who has long been an admirer of yours, and was once on the point of meeting with you in the house of a Mrs. Bruce. She would have been a much better "Clarinda." She is comely without

* Mary Peacock.

being beautiful, and has a large share of sense, taste and sensibility; added to all, a violent penchant for poetry. If ever I have an opportunity, I shall make you and her acquainted. No wonder Dr. Gregory criticised my lines. I saw several defects in them myself; but had neither time nor patience (nor ability, perhaps) to correct them. The three last verses were longer than the former; and in the conclusion, I saw a vile tautology which I could not get rid of. But you will not wonder when I tell you that I am not only ignorant of every language except my own, but never so much as knew a syllable of the English grammar. If I can write grammatically, 'tis through mere habit. I rejoice to hear of Dr. Gregory being your particular friend. Though unacquainted, I am no stranger to his character: where worth unites with abilities, it commands our love as well as admiration. Alas! they are too seldom found in one character! Those possessed of great talents would do well to remember that all depends upon the use made of them. Shining abilities improperly applied, only serve to accelerate our destruction in both worlds. I loved you for your fine taste in poetry long before I saw you; so shall not trouble myself erasing the word applied in the same way to me.

You say "there is no corresponding with an agreeable woman without a mixture of the tender passion." I believe there is no friendship between people of sentiment of different sexes, without a *little* softness; but when kept within proper bounds, it only serves to give a higher relish to such intercourse. Love and Friendship are names in every one's mouth; but few, extremely few, understand their meaning. Love (or affection) cannot be genuine if it hesitate a moment to sacrifice every selfish gratification to the happiness of its object. On the contrary, when I would purchase that at the expense of this, it deserves to be styled—not love, but a name too gross to mention. Therefore, I contend that an honest man *may* have a friendly prepossession for a woman, whose soul would abhor the idea of an intrigue with her. These are my sentiments on the subject; I hope they correspond with yours.

'Tis honest in you to wish me to see you "just as you are." I believe I have a tolerably just idea of your character. No wonder; for had I been a man, I should have been you. I am not vain enough to think myself equal in abilities; but I am formed with a liveliness of fancy, and a strength of passion little inferior. Situation

and circumstances have, however, had the effects on each of us that might have been expected. Misfortune has wonderfully contributed to subdue the keenness of my passions, while success and adulation have served to nourish and inflame yours. Both of us are incapable of deceit, because we want coolness and command of our feelings. Art is what I never could attain to, even in situations where a little would have been prudent. Now and then I am favoured with a salutary blast of "the north wind of prudence." The southern zephyrs of kindness too often send up their sultry fogs, and cloud the atmosphere of my understanding. I have thought that Nature threw me off in the same mould, just after you. We were born, I believe, in one year. Madam Nature has some merit by her work that year. Don't you think so? I suppose the carline has had a flying visit of Venus and the Graces; and Minerva has been jealous of her attention, and has sent Apollo with his harp to charm them away.

But why do you accuse Fate for my misfortunes? There is a noble independence of mind which I admire; but, when not checked by Religion, it is apt to degenerate into a criminal arraignment of Providence. No "malignant

demon," as you suppose, was "permitted to dash my cup of life with sorrow": it was the kindness of a wise and tender Father who foresaw that I needed chastisement ere I could be brought to Himself. Ah, my friend, Religion converts our heaviest misfortunes into blessings! I feel it to be so. These passions naturally too violent for my peace, have been broken and moderated by adversity; and if even that has been unable to conquer my vivacity, what lengths might I not have gone, had I been permitted to glide along in the sunshine of prosperity? I should have forgot my future destination, and fixed my happiness on the fleeting shadows below! My hand was denied the bliss of giving, but Heaven accepts of the wish. My heart was formed for love, and I desire to devote it to Him who is the source of love! Yes, we shall surely meet in an "unknown state of being," where there will be full scope for every kind, heartfelt affection—love without alloy and without end. Your paragraph upon this made the tears flow down my face! I will not tell you the reflections which it raised in my mind; but I wished that a heart susceptible of such a sentiment took more pains about its accomplishment. I fancy you will not wish me to write again; you'll think me too seri-

ous and grave. I know not how I have been led to be so; but I make no excuse, because I must be allowed to write you as I feel, or not at all. You say you have "humanised pride into honour and integrity." 'Tis a good endeavour; and could you command your too impetuous passions, it would be a more glorious achievement than his who conquered the world and wept because he had no more worlds to subdue. Forgive my freedom with you: I never trouble myself with the faults of those I don't esteem, and only notice those of friends, to themselves. I am pleased with friends when they tell me mine, and look upon it as a test of real friendship.

I have your Poems in loan just now, I've read them many times, and with new pleasure. Sometime I shall give you my opinion of them severally. Let me have a sight of some more of your "Bagatelles," as you style them. If ever I write any more, you shall have them; and I'll thank you to correct their errors. I wrote lines on Bishop Geddes, by way of blank verse; but they were what Pope describes, "Where ten low words do creep in one dull line." I believe you (being a genius) have inspired me; for I never wrote so well before. Pray, is Dr. Gregory pious? I have heard so. I wish I knew him. Adieu!

You have quantity enough, whatever be the quality. Good night, Believe me your sincere friend.

CLARINDA.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Thursday, 3d Jan., 1788.

I got your lines: * they are "in kind!" I can't but laugh at my presumption in pretending to send my poor ones to you! but it was to amuse myself. At this season, when others are joyous, I am the reverse. I have no near relations; and while others are with theirs I sit alone, musing upon several of mine with whom I used to be—now gone to the land of forgetfulness.

You have put me in a rhyming humour. The moment I read yours, I wrote the following lines:—

Talk not of Love! it gives me pain,
For Love has been my foe;
He bound me in an iron chain,
And plung'd me deep in woe!

But Friendship's pure and lasting joys
My heart was formed to prove;
The worthy object be of those,
But never talk of Love.

The "Hand of Friendship" I accept,
May Honour be our guard!
Virtue our intercourse direct,
Her smiles our dear reward.

* Here again Burns' verses are missing.

But I wish to know (in sober prose) how your leg is? I would have inquired sooner had I known it would have been acceptable. Miss N. informs me now and then; but I have not seen her dear face for some time. Do you think you could venture this length in a coach without hurting yourself? I go out of town the beginning of the week for a few days. I wish you could come to-morrow or Saturday. I long for a conversation with you, and lameness of body won't hinder that. 'Tis really curious—so much fun passing between two persons who saw one another only once! Say if you think you dare venture; only let the coachman be "adorned with sobriety."

Adieu! Believe me (on my simple word) your real friend and well-wisher,

A. M.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

My dear Clarinda,—Your last verses have so delighted me, that I have copied them in among some of my own most valued pieces, which I keep sacred for my own use. Do let me have a few now and then.

Did you, Madam, know what I feel when you talk of your sorrows!

Good God! that one who has so much worth in the sight of heaven, and is so amiable to her fellow-creatures, should be so unhappy! I can't venture out for cold. My limb is vastly better; but I have not any use of it without my crutches. Monday, for the first time, I dine at a neighbour's, next door. As soon as I can go so far, even in a coach, my first visit shall be to you. Write me when you leave town, and immediately when you return; and I earnestly pray your stay may be short. You can't imagine how miserable you made me when you hinted to me not to write. Farewell.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

You are right, my dear Clarinda; a friendly correspondence goes for nothing, except one write their undisguised sentiments. Yours please me for their intrinsic merit, as well as because they are yours, which, I assure you, is to me a high recommendation. Your religious sentiments, Madam, I revere. If you have, on suspicious evidence from some lying oracle, learnt that I despise or ridicule so sacredly important a matter as real religion, you have, my Clarinda, much misconstrued your friend.—"I am not mad, most noble Festus!" Have you ever met a perfect character? Do we not sometimes rather exchange faults than get rid of them? For instance, I am perhaps tired with, and shocked at, a life too much the prey of giddy inconsistencies and thoughtless follies; by degrees I grow sober, prudent, and statedly pious—I say statedly, because the most unaffected devotion is not at all inconsistent with my first character—I join the world in congratulating myself on the happy change. But let me pry more narrowly into this affair. Have I, at bottom, anything of a secret pride in these endowments and emendations? Have I nothing of a presbyterian sourness, a

hypocritical severity, when I survey my less regular neighbours? In a word, have I missed all those nameless and numberless modifications of indistinct selfishness, which are so near our own eyes, that we can scarce bring them within the sphere of our vision, and which the known spotless cambric of our character hides from the ordinary observer?

My definition of worth is short; truth and humanity respecting our fellow-creatures; reverence and humility in the presence of that Being, my Creator and Preserver, and who, I have every reason to believe, will one day be my Judge. The first part of my definition is the creature of unbiased instinct; the last is the child of after reflection. Where I found these two essentials I would gently note and slightly mention any attendant flaws—flaws, the marks, the consequences of human nature.

I can easily enter into the sublime pleasures that your strong imagination and keen sensibility must derive from religion, particularly if a little in the shade of misfortune; but I own I cannot, without a marked grudge, see heaven totally engross so amiable, so charming a woman as my friend Clarinda; and should be very well pleased

at a circumstance that would put it in the power of somebody (happy somebody!) to divide her attention, with all the delicacy and tenderness of an earthly attachment.

You will not easily persuade me that you have not a grammatical knowledge of the English language—so far from being inaccurate, you are elegant beyond any woman of my acquaintance, except one, whom I wish you knew.

Your last verses to me have so delighted me, that I have got an excellent old Scots air that suits the measure, and you shall see them in print in the "Scots Musical Museum," a work publishing by a friend of mine in this town. I want four stanzas; you gave me but three, and one of them alluded to an expression in my former letter; so I have taken your two first verses, with a slight alteration in the second, and have added a third; but you must help me to a fourth. Here they are: the latter half of the first stanza would have been worthy of Sappho; I am in raptures with it.

"Talk not of Love, it gives me pain,
For Love has been my foe;
He bound me with an iron chain
And sunk me deep in woe.

But Friendship's pure and lasting joys
My heart was form'd to prove:
There, welcome, win and wear the prize,
But never talk of Love.

Your friendship much can make me blest,
O, why that bliss destroy?
Why urge the odious (or only) one request
You know I must (or will) deny?"

The alteration in the second stanza is no improvement, but there was a slight inaccuracy in your rhyme. The third I only offer to your choice, and have left two words for your determination. The air is "The Banks of Spey," and is most beautiful.

To-morrow evening I intend taking a chair, and paying a visit at Park Place, to a much-valued old friend. If I could be sure of finding you at home (and I will send one of the chairmen to call), I would spend from five to six o'clock with you as I go past. I cannot do more this time, as I have something on my hand that hurries me much. I propose giving you the first call, my old friend the second, and Miss Nimmo as I return home. Do not break any engagement for me, as I will spend another evening with you, at any rate, before I leave town.

Do not tell me that you are pleased when your friends inform you of your faults. I am ignorant what they are; but I am sure they must be such evanescent trifles compared with your personal and mental accomplishments, that I would despise the ungenerous, narrow soul who would notice any shadow of imperfections you may seem to have, any other way than in the most delicate agreeable raillery. Coarse minds are not aware how much they injure the keenly feeling tie of bosom-friendship, when, in their foolish officiousness, they mention what nobody cares for recollecting. People of nice sensibility and generous minds have a certain intrinsic dignity that fires at being trifled with, or lowered, or even too nearly approached.

You need make no apology for long letters: I am even with you. Many happy New Years to you, charming Clarinda! I can't dissemble, were it to shun perdition. He who sees you as I have done, and does not love you, deserves to be damn'd for his stupidity! He who loves you, and would injure you, deserves to be doubly damn'd for his villainy! Adieu.

SYLVANDER.

P. S.—What would you think of this for a fourth stanza?

The lines that followed were torn from the original MS. but from the published volume we know them to be:

Your thought, if love must harbour there,
Conceal it in that thought,
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Some days, some nights, nay, some hours, like the "ten righteous persons in Sodom," save the rest of the vapid, tiresome, miserable months and years of life. One of these hours my dear Clarinda blest me with yesternight.

"—One well-spent hour
In such a tender circumstance for friends,
Is better than an age of common time."
—Thomson.

My favourite feature in Milton's Satan is his manly fortitude in supporting what cannot be remedied; in short, the wild broken fragments of a noble exalted mind in ruins. I meant no more by saying he was a favourite hero of mine.

I mentioned to you my letter to Dr. Moore, giving an account of my life: it is truth, every word of it, and will give you the just idea of a man whom you have honoured with your friendship. I am afraid you will hardly be able to make sense of so torn a piece. Your verses I shall muse on deliciously, as I gaze on your image in my mind's eye, in my heart's core: they will be in time enough for a week to come. I am

truly happy your headache is better. Oh, how can Pain or Evil be so daringly, unfeelingly, cruelly savage as to wound so noble a mind, so lovely a form!

My little fellow * is all my namesake. Write me soon. My every, strongest good wish attend you, Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

Saturday, Noon.

I know not what I have written. I am pestered with people around me.

* Robert Burns, Jr., Jean Armour's son.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

I cannot delay thanking you for the packet of Saturday; * twice have I read it with close attention. Some parts of it did beguile me of my tears. With Desdemona, I felt " 'twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful." When I reached the paragraph where Lord Glencairn is mentioned, I burst out into tears. 'Twas that delightful swell of the heart which arises from the combination of the most pleasurable feelings. Nothing is so binding to a generous mind as placing confidence in it. I have ever felt it so. You seem to have known this feature in my character intuitively; and therefore entrusted me with all your faults and follies. The description of your first love-scene delighted me. It recalled the idea of some tender circumstances which happened to myself, at the same period of life—only mine did not go so far. Perhaps, in return, I'll tell you the particulars when we meet. Ah, my friend! our early love emotions are surely the most exquisite. In riper years we may acquire more knowledge, sentiment, &c.; but none of these can yield such rapture as the dear delusions of heart-throbbing youth! Like yours, mine was

* Evidently the autobiographical sketch to which he has referred.

a rural scene too, which adds much to the tender meeting. But no more of these recollections.

One thing alone hurt me, though I regretted many—your avowal of being an enemy to Calvinism. I guessed it was so by some of your pieces; but the confirmation of it gave me a shock I could only have felt for one I was interested in. You will not wonder at this when I inform you that I am a strict Calvinist, *one or two* dark tenets excepted, which I never meddle with. Like many others, you are so, either from never having examined it with candour and impartiality, or from having unfortunately met with weak professors, who did not understand it; and hypocritical ones, who made it a cloak for their knavery. Both of these, I am aware, abound in country life; nor am I surprised at their having had this effect upon your more enlightened understanding. I fear your friend, the captain of the ship, was of no advantage to you in this and many other respects.

My dear Sylvander, I flatter myself you have some opinion of Clarinda's understanding. Her belief in Calvinism is not (as you will be apt to suppose) the prejudice of education. I was bred by my father in the Arminian principles.

My mother, who was an angel, died when I was in my tenth year. She was a Calvinist,—was adored in her life,—and died triumphing in the prospect of immortality. I was too young, at that period, to know the difference; but her pious precepts and example often recurred to my mind amidst the giddiness and adulation of Miss in her teens. 'Twas since I came to this town, five years ago, that I imbibed my present principles. They were those of a dear, valued friend in whose judgment and integrity I had entire confidence. I listened to him often, with delight upon the subject. My mind was docile and open to conviction. I resolved to investigate, with deep attention, that scheme of doctrine which had such happy effects upon him. Conviction of understanding, and peace of mind, were the happy consequences. Thus have I given you a true account of my faith. I trust my practice will ever correspond. Were I to narrate my past life as honestly as you have done, you would soon be convinced that neither of us could hope to be justified by our good works.

If you have time and inclination, I should wish to hear your chief objections to Calvinism. They have been often confuted by men of great minds and exemplary lives,—but perhaps you never

inquired into these. Ah, Sylvander! Heaven has not endowed you with such uncommon powers of mind to employ them in the manner you have done. This long, serious subject will, I know, have one of three effects: either to make you laugh in derision—yawn in supine indifference—or set about examining the hitherto-despised subject. Judge of the interest Clarinda takes in you when she affirms, that there are but few events could take place that would afford her the heart-felt pleasure of the latter.

Read this letter attentively, and answer me at leisure. Do not be frightened at its gravity,—believe me, I can be as lively as you please. Though I wish Madam Minerva for my guide, I shall not be hindered from rambling sometimes in the fields of Fancy. I must tell you that I admire your narrative, in point of composition, beyond all your other productions.—One thing I am afraid of; there is not a trace of friendship toward a female: now, in the case of Clarinda, this is the only "consummation devoutly to be wished."

You told me you had never met with a woman who could love as ardently as yourself. I believe it; and would advise you never to tie yourself, till you meet with such a one. Alas! you'll

find many who canna, and some who manna; but to be joined to one of the former description would make you miserable. I think you had almost better resolve against wedlock: for unless a woman were qualified for the companion, the friend, and the mistress, she would not do for you. The last may gain Sylvander, but the others alone can keep him. Sleep, and want of room, prevent my explaining myself upon "infidelity in a husband," which made you stare at me. This, and other things, shall be matter for another letter, if you are not wishing this to be the last. If agreeable to you, I'll keep the narrative till we meet. Adieu! "Charming Clarinda" must e'en resign herself to the arms of Morpheus.

Your true friend,

CLARINDA.

P. S.—Don't detain the porter. Write when convenient.

I am probably to be in your square this afternoon, near two o'clock. If your room be to the street, I shall have the pleasure of giving you a nod. I have paid the porter, and you may do so when you write. I'm sure they have sometimes made us pay double. Adieu!

Tuesday Morning.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I am delighted, charming Clarinda, with your honest enthusiasm for religion. Those of either sex, but particularly the female, who are lukewarm in that most important of all things, "O my soul, come not thou into their secrets!"

I feel myself deeply interested in your good opinion, and will lay before you the outlines of my belief:—He who is our Author and Preserver, and will one day be our Judge, must be,—not for his sake, in the way of duty, but from the native impulse of our hearts,—the object of our reverential awe and grateful adoration. He is almighty and all-bounteous; we are weak and dependent: hence prayer and every other sort of devotion. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to everlasting life": consequently, it must be in every one's power to embrace His offer of "everlasting life"; otherwise he could not in justice condemn those who did not. A mind pervaded, actuated and governed by purity, truth, and charity, though it does not merit heaven, yet is an absolutely-necessary prerequisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed; and by Divine promise, such a mind shall never fail of

attaining "everlasting life": hence the impure, the deceiving and the uncharitable exclude themselves from eternal bliss by their unfitness for enjoying it. The Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this—for wise and good ends known to himself—into the hands of Jesus Christ, a great Personage, whose relation to Him we cannot comprehend, but whose relation to us is a Guide and Saviour; and who, except for our own obstinacy and misconduct, will bring us all, through various ways and by various means, to bliss at last.

These are my tenets, my lovely friend; and which, I think, cannot be well disputed. My creed is pretty nearly expressed in that last clause of Jamie Dean's grace, an honest weaver in Ayrshire:—"Lord, grant that we may lead a gude life! for a gude life maks a gude end: at least it helps weel."

I am flattered by the entertainment you tell me you have found in my packet. You see me as I have been, you know me as I am, and may guess at what I am likely to be. I too may say, "Talk not of Love," &c.; for, indeed, he has "plunged me deep in woe!" Not that I ever saw a woman who pleased unexceptionably, as my Clarinda elegantly says, "in the companion, the

friend, and the mistress." *One* indeed, I could except; one, before passion threw its mists over my discernment, I knew—the first of women! Her name is indelibly written in my heart's core; but I dare not look on it,—a degree of agony would be the consequence. Oh, thou perfidious, cruel, mischief-making demon, who presidest o'er that frantic passion,—thou mayest, thou dost poison my peace, but shalt not taint my honour! I would not for a single moment give an asylum to the most distant imagination that would shadow the faintest outline of a selfish gratification at the expense of *her,* whose happiness is twisted with the threads of my existence. May she be happy, as she deserves! And if my tenderest, faithfulest friendship can add to her bliss, I shall, at least, have one solid mine of enjoyment in my bosom! *Don't guess at these ravings!*

I watched at our front window to-day, but was disappointed. It has been a day of disappointments. I am just risen from a two-hours' bout after supper, with silly or sordid souls who could relish nothing in common with me but the Port. "One!" 'Tis now the "witching time of night," and whatever is out of joint in the foregoing scrawl, impute it to enchantments and

spells; for I can't look over it, but will seal it up directly, as I don't care for to-morrow's criticisms on it.

You are by this time fast asleep, Clarinda; may good angels attend and guard you as constantly and as faithfully as my good wishes do!

"Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces."

John Milton, I wish thy soul better rest than I expect on my pillow to-night! O for a little of the cart-horse part of human nature! Good night, my dearest Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

Tuesday Night.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Wednesday, 10 P. M.

This moment your letter was delivered to me. My boys are asleep. The youngest has been for some time in a crazy state of health, but has been worse these two days past. Partly this and the badness of the day prevented my exchanging a heartfelt Howd'ye, yesterday. Friday, if nothing prevents, I shall have that pleasure about two o'clock or a little before it.

I wonder how you could write so distinctly after two or three hours over a bottle; but they were not congenial whom you sat with, and therefore your spirits remained unexhausted; and when quit of them you fled to a friend who can relish most things in common with you (except Port). 'Tis dreadful what a variety of these "silly sordid souls" one meets with in life! but in scenes of mere sociability these pass. In reading the account you give of your inveterate turn for social pleasure, I smiled at its resemblance to my own. It is so great, that I often think I had been a man but for some mistake of Nature. If you saw me in a merry party, you would suppose me only an enthusiast in fun; but I now avoid such parties. My spirits are sunk for days after; and,

what is worse, there are sometimes dull or malicious souls who censure me loudly for what their sluggish natures cannot comprehend. Were I possessed of an independent fortune, I would scorn their pitiful remarks; but everything in my situation renders prudence necessary.*

I have slept little these two nights. My child was uneasy, and that kept me awake watching him! Sylvander, if I have merit in anything, 'tis in an unremitting attention to my two children; but it cannot be denominated merit, since 'tis as much inclination as duty. A prudent woman (as the world goes) told me she was surprised I loved them, "considering what a father they had." I replied with acrimony, I could not but love my children in any case; but my having given them the misfortune of such a father, endears them doubly to my heart: they are innocent—they depend upon me—and I feel this the most tender of all claims. While I live, my fondest attentions shall be theirs!

All my life I loved the unfortunate, and ever will. Did you ever read Fielding's Amelia? If you have not, I beg you would. There are scenes in it, tender domestic scenes, which I have

* Financial independence might have made a great difference with her. It might even have meant her divorce, and her marriage with Burns.

read over and over, with feelings too delightful to describe! I meant a "Booth," such a one infinitely to be preferred to a brutal, though perhaps constant husband. I can conceive a man fond of his wife, yet, (Sylvander-like) hurried into a momentary deviation, while his heart remained faithful. If he concealed it, it could not hurt me; but if, unable to bear the anguish of self-reproach, he unbosomed it to me, I would not only forgive him, but comfort and speak kindly and in secret only weep. Reconciliation, in such a case, would be exquisite beyond almost anything I can conceive! Do you now understand me on this subject? I was uneasy till it was explained; for all I have said, I know not if I had been an "Amelia," even with a "Booth." My resentments are keen, like all my other feelings: I am exquisitely alive to kindness and to unkindness. The first binds me forever! But I have none of the spaniel in my nature. The last would soon cure me, though I loved to distraction. But all this is not, perhaps, interesting to Sylvander. I have seen nobody to-day; and, like a true egotist, talk away to please myself. I am not in a humour to answer your creed to-night.

I have been puzzling my brain about the fair

one you bid me "not guess at." I first thought it your Jean; but I don't know if she now possesses your "tenderest, faithfulest friendship." I can't understand that bonny lassie: her refusal, after such proofs of love proves her to be either an angel or a dolt. I beg pardon; I know not all the circumstances, and am no judge therefore. I love you for your continued fondness, even after enjoyment: few of your sex have souls in such cases. But I take this to be the test of true love—mere desire is all the bulk of people are susceptible of; and that is soon satiated. "Your good wishes." You had mine, Sylvander, before I saw you. You will have them while I live.. With you, I wish I had a little of the "cart-horse" in me. You and I have some horse properties; but more of the eagle, and too much of the turtle-dove! Goodnight!

Your friend,

CLARINDA.

Thursday Morning.

This day is so good that I'll make out my call to your Square. I am laughing to myself at announcing this for the third time. Were she who "poisons your peace" to intend you a Pisgah view, she could do no more than I have done on

this trivial occasion. Keep a good heart, Sylvander; the eternity of your love-sufferings will be ended before six weeks. Such perjuries the "Laughing gods allow." But remember, there is no such toleration in friendship, and

I am yours,

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I am certain I saw you, Clarinda; but you don't look to the proper story for a poet's lodging.

"Where Speculation roosted near the sky."

I could almost have thrown myself over, for very vexation. Why didn't you look higher? It has spoilt my peace for this day. To be so near my charming Clarinda; to miss her look while it was searching for me. I am sure the soul is capable of disease; for mine has convulsed itself into an inflammatory fever. I am sorry for your little boy: do let me know to-morrow how he is.

You have converted me, Clarinda, (I shall love that name while I live: there is heavenly music in it). Booth and Amelia I know well. Your sentiments on that subject, as they are on every subject, are just and noble. "To be feelingly alive to kindness and to unkindness," is a charming female character.

What I said in my last letter, the powers of fuddling sociality only know for me. By yours, I understand my good star has been partly in my horizon, when I got wild in my reveries. Had that evil planet, which has almost all my life shed

its baleful rays on my devoted head, been as usual in its zenith, I had certainly blabbed something that would have pointed out to you the dear object of my tenderest friendship, and, in spite of me, something more. Had that fatal information escaped me, and it was merely chance or kind stars that it did not, I had been undone! You would never have written me, except, perhaps, once more! O, I could curse circumstances! and the coarse tie of human laws which keeps fast what common sense would loose, and which bars that happiness itself cannot give—happiness which otherwise love and honour would warrant! But hold—I shall make no more "hair-breadth 'scapes."

My friendship, Clarinda, is a life-rent business. My likings are both strong and eternal. I told you I had but one male friend: I have but two female. I should have a third, but she is surrounded by the blandishments of flattery and courtship. Her I register in my heart's core by Peggy Chalmers: Miss Nimmo can tell you how divine she is. She is worthy of a place in the same bosom with my Clarinda. That is the highest compliment I can pay her. Farewell, Clarinda! Remember

SYLVANDER.

Thursday, Noon.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Thursday Eve.

I could not see you, Sylvander, though I had twice traversed the Square. I'm persuaded you saw me not neither. I met the young lady I meant to call for first; and returned to seek another acquaintance, but found her moved. All the time, my eye soared to poetic heights, alias garrets, but not a glimpse of you could I obtain! You surely was within the glass, at least. I returned, finding my intrinsic dignity a good deal hurt, as I missed my friend. Perhaps I shall see you again next week: say how high you are. Thanks for your inquiry about my child; his complaints are of a tedious kind, and require patience and resignation. Religion has taught me both. By nature I inherit as little of them as a certain harum-scarum friend of mine. In what respects has Clarinda "converted you"? Tell me. It were an arduous task indeed.

Your "ravings" last night, and your ambiguous remarks upon them I cannot, perhaps ought not, to comprehend. I am your friend, Sylvander: take care lest virtue demand even friendship as a sacrifice. You need not curse the tie of human laws; since what is the happiness Cla-

rinda would derive from being loosed? At present, she enjoys the hope of having her children provided for. In the other case, she is left, indeed, at liberty, but half dependent on the bounty of a friend,—kind in substantials, but having no feelings of romance: * and who are the generous, the disinterested, who would risk the world's "dread laugh" to protect her and her little ones? Perhaps a Sylvander-like son of whim and fancy might, in a sudden fit of romance: but would not ruin be the consequence? Perhaps one of the former . . . yet if he was not dearer to her than all the world—such are still her romantic ideas —she could not be his.

You see, Sylvander, you have no cause to regret my bondage. The above is a true picture. Have I not reason to rejoice that I have it not in my power to dispose of myself? "I commit myself into thy hands, thou Supreme Disposer of all events! do with me as seemeth to thee good." Who is this one male friend? I know your third female. Ah, Sylvander! many "that are first shall be last," and vice versa! I am proud of being compared to Miss Chalmers: I have heard how amiable she is. She cannot be more so than Miss Nimmo: why do ye not register her also?

* Her cousin, Lord Craig.

She is warmly your friend;—surely you are incapable of ingratitude. She has almost wept to me at mentioning your intimacy with a certain famous or infamous man in town. Do you think Clarinda could anger you just now? I composed lines addressed to you some time ago, containing a hint upon the occasion. I had not courage to send them then: if you say you'll not be angry, I will yet.

I know not how 'tis, but I felt an irresistible impulse to write you the moment I read yours. I have a design in it. Part of your interest in me is owing to mere novelty. You'll be tired of my correspondence ere you leave town, and will never fash to write me from the country. I forgive you in a "state of celibacy." Sylvander, I wish I saw you happily married: you are so formed, you cannot be happy without a tender attachment. Heaven direct you!

When you see Bishop Geddes, ask him if he remembers a lady at Mrs. Kemp's, on a Sunday night, who listened to every word he uttered with a gaze of attention. I saw he observed me, and returned that glance of cordial warmth which assured me he was pleased with my delicate flattery. I wished that night he had been my father, that I might shelter me in his bosom.

You shall have this, as you desired, to-morrow; and, if possible none for four or five days. I say, if possible: for I really can't but write, as if I had nothing else to do. I admire your Epitaph; but while I read it, my heart swells at the sad idea of its realisation. Did you ever read Sancho's Letters? they would hit your taste. My next will be on my favourite theme—religion.

Farewell, Sylvander! Be wise, be prudent, and be happy.

CLARINDA.

Let your next be sent in the morning.

If you were well, I would ask you to meet me to-morrow, at twelve o'clock. I go down in the Leith fly, with poor Willie: what a pleasant chat we might have! But I fancy 'tis impossible. Adieu!

Friday, One o'clock.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Saturday Morning.

Your thoughts on religion, Clarinda, shall be welcome. You may perhaps distrust me when I say 'tis also my favourite topic; but mine is the religion of the bosom. I hate the very idea of controversial divinity; as I firmly believe that every honest, upright man, of whatever sect, will be accepted of the Deity. If your verses, as you seem to hint, contain censure, except you want an occasion to break with me, don't send them. I have a little infirmity in my disposition, that where I fondly love or highly esteem I cannot bear reproach.

"Reverence thyself," is a sacred maxim; and I wish to cherish it. I think I told you Lord Bolingbroke's saying to Swift,—"Adieu, dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee entirely: make an effort to love me with all mine." A glorious sentiment, and without which there can be no friendship! I do highly, very highly, esteem you indeed, Clarinda: you merit it all! Perhaps, too—I scorn dissimulation—I could fondly love you: judge, then, what a maddening sting your reproach would be. "Oh, I have sins to heaven, but none to you." With what pleas-

ure would I meet you to-day, but I cannot walk to meet the Fly. I hope to be able to see you, on foot, about the middle of next week. I am interrupted—perhaps you are not sorry for it. You will tell me: but I won't anticipate blame. O, Clarinda! did you know how dear to me is your look of kindness, your smile of approbation, you would not, either in prose or verse, risk a censorious remark.

"Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe."

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

You talk of weeping, Clarinda: * some involuntary drops wet your lines as I read them. Offend me, my dearest angel! You cannot offend me,—you never offended me. If you had ever given me the least shadow of offence, so pardon me my God as I forgive Clarinda. I have read yours again; it has blotted my paper. Though I find your letter has agitated me into a violent headache, I shall take a chair and be with you about eight. A friend is to be with us at tea, on my account, which hinders me from coming sooner. Forgive, dearest Clarinda, my unguarded expressions! For Heaven's sake, forgive me, or I shall never be able to bear my own mind.

Your unhappy

SYLVANDER.

* Clarinda's missing letter must have been in her most pathetic vein. Evidently she was afraid of having been a shade too didactic for his patience, and, whatever she may have wished, it surely was not to lose him.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Sunday Evening.

I will not deny it, Sylvander, last night was one of the most exquisite I ever experienced. Few such fall to the lot of mortals! Few, extremely few, are formed to relish such refined enjoyment. That it should be so, vindicates the wisdom of Heaven. But, though our enjoyment did not lead beyond the limits of virtue, yet to-day's reflections have not been altogether unmixed with regret. The idea of the pain it would have given, were it known to a friend to whom I am bound by the sacred ties of gratitude, (no more,) the opinion Sylvander may have formed from my unreservedness; and, above all, some secret misgivings that Heaven may not approve, situated as I am—these procured me a sleepless night; and, though at church, I am not at all well.

Sylvander, you saw Clarinda last night, behind the scenes! Now, you'll be convinced she has faults. If she knows herself, her intention is always good; but she is too often the victim of sensibility, and, hence, is seldom pleased with herself. A rencontre to-day I will relate to you, because it will show you I have my own share of pride. I met with a sister of Lord Napier, at

the house of a friend with whom I sat between sermons: I knew who she was, but paid her no other marks of respect than I do to any gentlewoman. She eyed me with minute, supercilious attention, never looking at me, when I spoke, but even half interrupted me, before I had done addressing the lady of the house. I felt my face glow with resentment, and consoled myself with the idea of being her superior in every respect but the accidental, trifling one of birth! I was disgusted at the fawning deference the lady showed her; and when she told me at the door that it was my Lord Napier's sister, I replied, "Is it, indeed? by her ill breeding I should have taken her for the daughter of some upstart tradesman!"

Sylvander, my sentiments as to birth and fortune are truly unfashionable: I despise the persons who pique themselves on either,—the former especially. Something may be allowed to bright talents or even external beauty—these belong to us essentially; but birth in no respect can confer merit, because it is not our own. A person of a vulgar uncultivated mind I would not take to my bosom, in any station; but one possessed of natural genius, improved by education and diligence, such an one I'd take for my friend,

be her extraction ever so mean. These, alone, constitute any real distinction between man and man. Are we not all the offspring of Adam? have we not one God? one Saviour? one Immortality? I have found but one among all my acquaintance who agreed with me—my Mary, whom I mentioned to you. I am to spend tomorrow with her, if I am better. I like her the more that she likes you.

I intended to resume a little upon your favourite topic, the "Religion of the Bosom." Did you ever imagine that I meant any other? Poor were that religion and unprofitable whose seat was merely in the brain. In most points we seem to agree: only I found all my hopes of pardon and acceptance with Heaven upon the merit of Christ's atonement,—whereas you do upon a good life. You think "it helps weel, at least." If anything we could do had been able to atone for the violation of God's Law, where was the need (I speak it with reverence) of such an astonishing Sacrifice? Job was an "upright man." In the dark season of adversity, when other sins were brought to his remembrance, he boasted of his integrity; but no sooner did God reveal Himself to him, than he exclaims: "Behold I am vile, and abhor myself in dust and ashes." Ah! my

friend, 'tis pride that hinders us from embracing Jesus! we would be our own Saviour, and scorn to be indebted even to the "Son of the Most High." But this is the only sure foundation of our hopes. It is said by God Himself, " 'tis to some a stumbling-block: to others foolishness;" but they who believe, feel it to be the "Wisdom of God, and the Power of God."

If my head did not ache, I would continue the subject. I, too, hate controversial religion; but this is the "Religion of the Bosom." My God! Sylvander, why am I so anxious to make you embrace the Gospel? I dare not probe too deep for an answer—let your heart answer: in a word —Benevolence. When I return, I'll finish this. Meantime, adieu! Sylvander, I intended doing you good: if it prove the reverse, I shall never forgive myself. Good night.

Tuesday, Noon.—Just returned from the Dean, where I dined and supped with fourteen of both sexes: all stupid. My Mary and I alone understood each other. However, we were joyous, and I sung in spite of my cold; but no wit. 'Twould have been pearls before swine literalised. I recollect promising to write you. Sylvander, you'll never find me worse than my word. If you have written me, (which I hope,) send it to

me when convenient, either at nine in the morning or evening. I fear your limb may be worse from staying so late. I have other fears too: guess them! Oh! my friend, I wish ardently to maintain your esteem; rather than forfeit one iota of it, I'd be content never to be wiser than now. Our last interview has raised you very high in mine. I have met with few, indeed, of your sex who understood delicacy in such circumstances; yet 'tis that only which gives a relish to such delightful intercourse. Do you wish to preserve my esteem, Sylvander? do not be proud to Clarinda! She deserves it not. I subscribe to Lord B.'s sentiments to Swift; yet some faults I shall still sigh over, though you style it reproach even to hint them. Adieu! You have it much in your power to add to the happiness or unhappiness of

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Monday Evening, 11 o'clock.

Why have I not heard from you, Clarinda? To-day I expected it; and, before supper, when a letter to me was announced, my heart danced with rapture; but behold, 'twas some fool who had taken it into his head to turn poet, and made me an offering of the first fruits of his nonsense. It is not poetry, but "prose run mad."

Did I ever repeat to you an epigram I made on a Mr. Elphinstone, who has given a translation of Martial, a famous Latin poet? The poetry of Elphinstone can only equal his prose notes. I was sitting in a merchant's shop of my acquaintance, waiting somebody; he put Elphinstone into my hand, and asked my opinion of it. I begged leave to write it on a blank leaf, which I did.

TO MR. ELPHINSTONE, &C.

"O thou whom poesy abhors,
Whom prose has turned out of doors,
Heardst thou yon groan? proceed no further,
'Twas laurel'd Martial calling murther."

I am determined to see you, if at all possible, on Saturday evening. Next week I must sing—

"The night is my departing night,
The morn's the day I maun awa;
There's neither friend nor foe of mine,
But wishes that I were awa.

What I hae done for lack of wit,
I never, never can reca';
I hope ye're a' my friends as yet.
Gude night, and joy be wi' you a'."

If I could see you sooner, I would be so much the happier; but I would not purchase the dearest gratification on earth, if it must be at your expense in worldly censure, far less inward peace.

I shall certainly be ashamed of thus scrawling whole sheets of incoherence. The only unity (a sad word with poets and critics) in my ideas, is Clarinda.—There my heart "reigns and revels."

"What art thou, Love? whence are those charms,
That thus thou bear'st an universal rule?
For thee the soldier quite his arms,
The king turns slave, the wise man fool.
In vain we chase thee from the field,
And with cool thoughts resist thy yoke;
Next tide of blood, alas! we yield,
And all those high resolves are broke!"

I like to have quotations ready for every occasion. They give one's ideas so pat, and save one

the trouble of finding expression adequate to one's feelings. I think it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, loves, &c., an embodied form in verse, which, to me, is ever immediate ease. Goldsmith says finely of his muse——

"Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe;
Who found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so."

My limb has been so well to-day, that I have gone up and down stairs often without my staff. To-morrow I hope to walk once again on my own legs to dinner. It is only next street. Adieu!

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Tuesday Evening.

That you have faults, my Clarinda, I never doubted; but I know not where they existed; and Saturday night made me more in the dark than ever. O, Clarinda! why would you wound my soul by hinting that last night must have lessened my opinion of you. True, I was behind the scenes with you; but what did I see? A bosom glowing with honour and benevolence; a mind ennobled by genius, informed and refined by education and reflection, and exalted by native religion, genuine as in the climes of Heaven; a heart formed for all the glorious meltings of friendship, love and pity. These I saw. I saw the noblest immortal soul creation ever showed me.

I looked long, my dear Clarinda, for your letter; and am vexed that you are complaining. I have not caught you so far wrong as in your dea—that the commerce you have with one friend hurts you, if you cannot tell every tittle of it to another. Why have so injurious a suspicion of a good God, Clarinda, as to think that Friendship and Love, on the sacred, inviolate principles of

Truth, Honour and Religion, can be anything else than an object of His divine approbation?

I have mentioned, in some of my former scrawls, Saturday evening next. Do allow me to wait on you that evening. Oh, my angel! how soon must we part!—and when can we meet again? I look forward on the horrid interval with tearful eyes. What have I not lost by not knowing you sooner! I fear, I fear, my acquaintance with you is too short to make that lasting impression on your heart I could wish.

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Wednesday Morning.

Your mother's wish was fully realised. I slept sounder last night than for weeks past—and I had a "blithe wakening": for your letter was the first object my eyes opened on. Sylvander, I fancy you and Vulcan are intimates: he has lent you a key which opens Clarinda's heart at pleasure, shows you what is there, and enables you to adapt yourself to its every feeling! I believe I shall give over writing you. Your letters are too much! my way is, alas! "hedged in"; but had I, like Sylvander, "the world before me," I should bid him, if he had a friend that loved me, tell him to write as he does, and "that would woo me." Seriously, you are the first letter-writer I ever knew. I only wonder how you can be fashed with my scrawls. I impute it to partialities. Either to-morrow or Friday I shall be happy to see you. On Saturday, I am not sure of being alone, or at home. Say which you'll come? Come to tea if you please; but eight will be an hour less liable to intrusions. I hope you'll come afoot even though you take a chair home. A chair is so uncommon a thing in our neighbourhood, it is apt to raise

speculation—but they are all asleep by ten. I am happy to hear of your being able to walk—even to the next street. You are a consummate flatterer; really my cheeks glow while I read your flights of Fancy. I fancy you see I like it, when you peep into the Repository. I know none insensible to that "delightful essence." If I grow affected or conceited, you are alone to blame. Ah, my friend! these are disgusting qualities! but I am not afraid. I know any merit I may have perfectly—but I know many sad counterbalances.

Your lines on Elphinstone were clever, beyond anything I ever saw of the kind; I know the character—the figure is enough to make one cry, Murder! He is a complete pedant in language; but are not you and I pedants in something else? Yes, but in far superior things: Love, Friendship, Poesy, Religion! Ah, Sylvander! you have murdered Humility, and I can say thou didst it. You carry your warmth too far as to Miss Napier, (not Nairn;) yet I am pleased at it. She is sensible, lively, and well-liked they say. She was not to know Clarinda was "divine," and therefore kept her distance. She is comely, but a thick bad figure,—waddles in her pace, and has rosy cheeks.

Wha is that clumsy damsel there?
Whisht! it's the daughter of a Peer,
Right honorably Great!

The daughter of a Peer, I cried,
It doth not yet appear
What we shall be (in t'other world),
God keep us frae this here!
That she has Blude, I'se no dispute,
I see it in her face;
Her honour's in her name, I fear,
And in nae other place.

I hate myself for being satirical—hate me for it too. I'll certainly go to Miers to please you, either with Mary or Miss Nimmo. Sylvander, some interesting parts of yours I cannot enter on at present. I dare not think upon parting—upon the interval; but I am sure both are wisely ordered for our good. A line in return to tell me which night you'll be with me. "Lasting impression!" Your key might have shown you me better. Say, my lover, poet, and my friend, what day next month the Eternity will end? When you use your key, don't rummage too much, lest you find I am half as great a fool in the tender as yourself. Farewell! Sylvander. I may sign, for I am already sealed your friend.

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Sunday Night.

The impertinence of fools has joined with the return of an old indisposition to make me good for nothing to-day. The paper has lain before me all this evening to write to my dear Clarinda; but

"Fools rush'd on fools, as waves succeed to waves."

I cursed them in my soul: they sacrilegiously disturb my meditations on her who holds my heart. What a creature is man! A little alarm last night and to-day that I am mortal, has made such a revolution in my spirits! There is no philosophy, no divinity, comes half so home to the mind. I have no idea of courage that braves Heaven. 'Tis the wild ravings of an imaginary hero in Bedlam. I can no more, Clarinda; I can scarce hold up my head; but I am happy you don't know it, you would be so uneasy.

SYLVANDER.

Monday Morning.

I am, my lovely friend, much better this morning, on the whole; but I have a horrid languor on my spirits.

"Sick of the world and all its joy,
My soul in pining sadness mourns;
Dark scenes of woe my mind employ,
The past and present in their turns."

Have you ever met with a saying of the great and likewise good Mr. Locke, author of the famous essay on the Human Understanding? He wrote a letter to a friend, directing it "Not to be delivered till after my decease." It ended thus,—"I know you loved me when living, and will preserve my memory now I am dead. All the use to be made of it is, that this life affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of having done well, and the hopes of another life. Adieu! I leave my best wishes with you.—J. Locke."

Clarinda, may I reckon on your friendship for life? I think I may. Thou Almighty Preserver of men! Thy friendship, which hitherto I have too much neglected, to secure it shall, all the future days and nights of my life, be my steady care. The idea of my Clarinda follows:—

"Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, her lov'd idea lies."

But I fear inconstancy, the consequent imperfection of human weakness. Shall I meet with

a friendship that defies years of absence and the chances and changes of fortune? Perhaps "such things are." One honest man I have great hopes from that way; but who, except a romance writer, would think on a love that could promise for life, in spite of distance, absence, chance and change, and that, too, with slender hopes of fruition?

For my own part, I can say to myself in both requisitions—"Thou art the man." I dare, in cool resolve, I dare declare myself that friend and that lover. If womankind is capable of such things, Clarinda is. I trust that she is; and feel I shall be miserable if she is not. There is not one virtue which gives worth, or one sentiment which does honour to the sex, that she does not possess superior to any woman I ever saw: her exalted mind, aided a little, perhaps, by her situation, is, I think, capable of that nobly-romantic love-enthusiasm. May I see you on Wednesday evening, my dear angel? The next Wednesday again, will, I conjecture, be a hated day to us both. I tremble for censorious remarks, for your sake; but in extraordinary cases, may not usual and useful precaution be a little dispensed with? Three evenings, three swift-winged evenings, with pinions of down, are all the past—I dare not calculate the future. I shall call at Miss Nim-

mo's to-morrow evening; 'twill be a farewell call.

I have written out my last sheet of paper, so I am reduced to my last half-sheet. What a strange, mysterious faculty is that thing called imagination! We have no ideas almost at all, of another world; but I have often amused myself with visionary schemes of what happiness might be enjoyed by small alterations, alterations that we can fully enter to in this present state of existence. For instance: supposing you and I just as we are at present; the same reasoning powers, sentiments, and even desires; the same fond curiosity for knowledge and remarking observation in our minds; and imagine our bodies free from pain, and the necessary supplies for the wants of nature at all times and easily within our reach. Imagine, further, that we were set free from the laws of gravitation, which bind us to this globe, and could at pleasure fly, without inconvenience, through all the yet unconjectured bounds of creation; what a life of bliss should we lead in our mutual pursuit of virtue and knowledge, and our mutual enjoyment of friendship and love!

I see you laughing at my fairy fancies, and calling me a voluptuous Mahometan; but I am certain I should be a happy creature, beyond any-

thing we call bliss here below: nay, it would be a paradise congenial to you too. Don't you see us hand in hand, or rather my arm about your lovely waist, making our remarks on Sirius, the nearest of the fixed stars; or surveying the comet flaming innoxious by us, as we just now would mark the passing pomp of a travelling monarch; or in a shady bower of Mercury or Venus, dedicating the hour to love, in mutual converse, relying honour, and revelling endearment, while the most exalted strains of poesy and harmony would be the ready, spontaneous language of our souls! Devotion is the favourite employment of your heart; so is it of mine: what incentives then to, and powers for reverence, gratitude, faith, and hope, in all the fervour of adoration and praise to that Being, whose unsearchable wisdom, power, and goodness, so pervaded, so inspired, every sense and feeling! By this time, I daresay, you will be blessing the neglect of the maid that leaves me destitute of paper.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Thursday Morning.

"Unlavish Wisdom never works in vain."

I have been tasking my reason, Clarinda, why a woman, who, for native genius, poignant wit, strength of mind, generous sincerity of soul and the sweetest female tenderness, is without a peer; and whose personal charms have few, very few parallels among her sex; why, or how, she should fall to the blessed lot of a poor harum-scarum poet, whom Fortune had kept for her particular use to wreak her temper on, whenever she was in ill-humour.

One time I conjectured that, as Fortune is the most capricious jade ever known, she may have taken, not a fit of remorse, but a paroxysm of whim, to raise the poor devil out of the mire where he had so often, and so conveniently, served her as a stepping-stone, and given him the most glorious boon she ever had in her gift, merely for the maggot's sake, to see how his fool head and his fool heart will bear it.

At other times, I was vain enough to think that Nature, who has a great deal to say with Fortune, had given the coquettish goddess some such hint as—"Here is a paragon of female ex-

cellence, whose equal, in all my former compositions, I never was lucky enough to hit on, and despair of ever doing so again: you have cast her rather in the shades of life. There is a certain poet of my making: among your frolics, it would not be amiss to attach him to this masterpiece of my hand, to give her that immortality among mankind, which no woman of any age ever more deserved, and which few rhymesters of this age are better able to confer."

Evening, Nine O'clock.

I am here—absolutely unfit to finish my letter—pretty hearty after a bowl which has been constantly plied since dinner till this moment. I have been with Mr. Schetki the musician, and he has set the song * finely. I have no distinct

* TO CLARINDA

Clarinda, mistress of my soul,
The measured time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie,
Deprived of thee, his life and light—
The sun of all his joy?

We part—but by those precious drops
That fill thy lovely eyes!

[over]

ideas of anything, but that I have drunk your health twice to-night, and that you are all my soul holds dear in this world.

SYLVANDER.

*To CLARINDA *(Continued)*

No other light shall guide my steps
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Thursday Forenoon.

Sylvander, the moment I waked this morning, I received a summons from Conscience to appear at the Bar of Reason. While I trembled before this sacred throne, I beheld a succession of figures pass before me in awful brightness! Religion, clad in a robe of light, stalked majestically along, her hair dishevelled, and in her hand the Scripture of Truth, held open at these words—"If you love me, keep my commandments." Reputation followed: her eyes darted indignation, while she waved a beautiful wreath of laurel, intermixed with flowers, gathered by Modesty in the Bower of Peace. Consideration held her bright mirror close to my eyes, and made me start at my own image! Love alone appeared as counsel in my behalf. She was adorned with a veil, borrowed from Friendship, which hid her defects and set off her beauties to advantage. She had no plea to offer, but that of being the sister of Friendship, and the offspring of Charity. But Reason refused to listen to her defence, because she brought no certificate from the Temple of Hymen! While I trembled before her, Reason addressed me in the following manner:—"Re-

turn to my paths, which alone are peace; shut your heart against the fascinating intrusion of the passions; take Consideration for your guide, and you will soon arrive at the Bower of Tranquillity."

Sylvander, to drop my metaphor, I am neither well nor happy to-day: my heart reproaches me for last night. If you wish Clarinda to regain her peace, determine against everything but what the strictest delicacy warrants.

I do not blame you, but myself. I must not see you on Saturday, unless I find I can depend on myself acting otherwise. Delicacy, you know, it was which won me to you at once: take care you do not loosen the dearest, most sacred tie that unites us! Remember Clarinda's present and eternal happiness depends upon her adherence to Virtue. Happy Sylvander! that can be attached to Heaven and Clarinda together. Alas! I feel I cannot serve two masters! God pity me!!

Thursday Night.

Why have I not heard from you, Sylvander? Everything in nature seems tinged with gloom to-day. Ah! Sylvander——

"The heart's ay the part ay
That makes us right or wrang!"

How forcibly have these lines recurred to my thoughts! Did I not tell you what a wretch love rendered me? Affection to the strongest height, I am capable of, to a man of my Sylvander's merit—if it did not lead me into weaknesses and follies my heart utterly condemns. I am convinced, without the approbation of Heaven and my own mind, existence would be to me a heavy curse. Sylvander, why do not your Clarinda's repeated levities cure the too passionate fondness you express for her? Perhaps it has a little removed esteem. But I dare not touch this string—it would fill up the cup of my present misery. Oh, Sylvander, may the friendship of that God, you and I have too much neglected to secure, be henceforth our chief study and delight. I cannot live deprived of the consciousness of His favour. I feel something of this awful state all this day. Nay, while I approached God with my lips, my heart was not fully there.

Mr. Locke's posthumous letter ought to be written in letters of gold.—What heartfelt joy does the consciousness of having done well in any one instance confer; and what agony the reverse! Do not be displeased when I tell you I wish our parting was over. At a distance we

shall retain the same heartfelt affection and interestedness in each other's concerns;—but absence will mellow and restrain those violent heart-agitations which, if continued much longer, would unhinge my very soul, and render me unfit for the duties of life. You and I are capable of that ardency of love, for which the wide creation cannot afford an adequate object. Let us seek to repose it in the bosom of our God. Let us next give a place to those dearest on earth—the tender charities of parent, sister, child! I bid you good night with this short prayer of Thomson's——

"Father of Light and Life, thou good Supreme!
Oh teach us what is good—teach us Thyself!
Save us from Folly, Vanity and Vice," &c.

Your letter—I should have liked had it contained a little of the last one's seriousness. Bless me!—You must not flatter so; but it's in a "merry mood," and I make allowances. Part of some of your encomiums, I know I deserve; but you are far out when you enumerate "strength of mind" among them. I have not even an ordinary share of it—every passion does what it will with me; and all my life, I have been guided by

the impulse of the moment—unsteady, and weak. I thank you for the letter, though it stickit my prayer. Why did you tell me you drank away Reason, "that Heaven-lighted lamp in man"? When Sylvander utters a calm, sober sentiment, he is never half so charming.* I have read several of these in your last letter with vast pleasure. Good night!

Friday Morning.

My servant (who is a good soul) will deliver you this. She is going down to Leith, and will return about two or three o'clock. I have ordered her to call then, in case you have aught to say to Clarinda to-day. I am better of that sickness at my heart I had yesterday; but there's a sting remains, which will not be removed till I am at peace with Heaven and myself. Another interview, spent as we ought, will help to procure this. A day when the sun shines gloriously, always makes me devout! I hope 'tis an earnest (to-day) of soon being restored to the "light of His countenance," who is the source of love and standard of perfection. Adieu!

CLARINDA.

* As Wallace remarks with dry humour, "Clarinda's agitation here proved fatal to her correct style. She says exactly the opposite of what she meant."

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Clarinda, my life, you have wounded my soul. Can I think of your being unhappy, even though it be not described in your pathetic elegance of language, without being miserable? Clarinda, can I bear to be told from you that "you will not see me to-morrow night—that you wish the hour of parting were come!" Do not let us impose on ourselves by sounds. If, in the moment of fond endearment and tender dalliance, I perhaps trespassed against the *letter* of Decorum's law, I appeal, even to you, whether I ever sinned, in the very least degree, against the *spirit* of her strictest statute? But why, my love, talk to me in such strong terms; every word of which cuts me to the very soul? You know a hint, the slightest signification of your wish, is to me a sacred command.

Be reconciled, my angel, to your God, yourself, and to me; and I pledge you Sylvander's honour—an oath, I dare say, you will trust without reserve, that you shall never more have reason to complain of his conduct. Now, my love, do not wound our next meeting with any averted looks or restrained caresses. I have marked the line of conduct—a line, I know, exactly to your

taste—and which I will inviolably keep; but do not you show the least inclination to make boundaries. Seeming distrust, where you know you may confide, is a cruel sin against sensibility.

"Delicacy, you know, it was which won me to you at once; take care you do not loosen the dearest, the most sacred tie that unites us." Clarinda, I would not have stung *your* soul—I would not have bruised *your* spirit, as that harsh crucifying "Take care" did *mine;* no, not to have gained heaven! Let me again appeal to your dear self, if Sylvander, even when he seemingly half-transgressed the laws of decorum, if he did not show more chastised, trembling, faltering delicacy, than many of the world do in keeping these laws?

Oh Love and Sensibility, ye have conspired against my peace! I love to madness and I feel to torture! Clarinda, how can I forgive myself that I have ever touched a single chord in your bosom with pain! would I do it willingly? Would any consideration, any gratification, make me do so? Oh, did you love like me, you would not, you could not, deny or put off a meeting with the man who adores you;—who would die a thousand deaths before he would injure you; and who must soon bid you a long farewell!

I had proposed bringing my bosom friend, Mr. Ainslie, to-morrow evening, at his strong request, to see you; as he has only time to stay with us about ten minutes, for an engagement. But I shall hear from you: this afternoon, for mercy's sake!—for, till I hear from you, I am wretched. O Clarinda, the tie that binds me to thee is intwisted, incorporated, with my dearest threads of life!

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I was on my way, my Love, to meet you, (I never do things by halves,) when I got your card. Mr. Ainslie goes out of town to-morrow morning, to see a brother of his who is newly arrived from France. I am determined that he and I shall call on you together. So, look you, lest I should never see to-morrow, I will call on you to-night. Mary and you may put off tea till about seven, at which time, in the Galloway phrase, "an' the beast be to the fore and the branks bide hale," expect the humblest of your humble servants, and his dearest friend. We only propose staying half an hour—"for ought we ken." I could suffer the lash of misery eleven months in the year, were the twelfth to be composed of hours like yester-night. You are the soul of my enjoyment; all else is of the stuff of stocks and stones.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Sunday, Noon.

I have almost given up the Excise idea. I have been just now to wait on a great person, Miss ——'s friend, ——. Why will great people not only deafen us with the din of their equipage, and dazzle us with their fastidious pomp, but they must also be so very dictatorially wise? I have been questioned like a child about my matters, and blamed and schooled for my Inscription on Stirling window. Come, Clarinda!—"Come, curse me, Jacob; come, defy me, Israel!"

Sunday Night.

I have been with Miss Nimmo. She is, indeed, "a good soul," as my Clarinda finely says. She has reconciled me, in a good measure, to the world with her friendly prattle.

Schetki has sent me the song, set to a fine air of his composing. I have called the song Clarinda: I have carried it about in my pocket and thumbed it over all day.

Monday Morning.

If my prayers have any weight in heaven, this morning looks in on you and finds you in the

arms of peace, except where it is charmingly interrupted by the ardours of devotion. I find so much serenity of mind, so much positive pleasure, so much fearless daring toward the world, when I warm in devotion, or feel the glorious sensation—a consciousness of Almighty friendship —that I am sure I shall soon be an honest enthusiast.

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord!
How sure is their defence!
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence."

I am, my dear Madam, yours,

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Sunday, Eighth Evening.

Sylvander, when I think of you as my dearest and most attached friend, I am highly pleased; but when you come across my mind as my lover, something within gives a sting resembling that of guilt. Tell me why is this? It must be from the idea that I am another's. What? another's wife! Oh cruel Fate! I am, indeed, bound in an iron chain. Forgive me, if this should give you pain. You know I must (I told you I must) tell you my genuine feelings, or be silent. Last night we were happy beyond what the bulk of mankind can conceive. Perhaps the "line" you had marked was a little infringed,—it was really; but, though I disapprove, I have not been unhappy about it. I am convinced no less of your discernment, than of your wish to make your Clarinda happy. I know you sincere, when you profess horror at the idea of what would render her miserable forever. Yet we must guard against going to the verge of danger. Ah! my friend, much need had we to "watch and pray!" May those benevolent spirits, whose office it is to save the fall of Virtue struggling on the brink

of Vice, be ever present to protect and guide us in right paths!

I had an hour's conversation to-day with my worthy friend, Mr. Kemp.* You'll attribute, perhaps, to this, the above sentiments. 'Tis true, there's not one on earth has so much influence on me, except—Sylvander; partly it has forced me "to feel along the Mental Intelligence." However, I've broke the ice. I confessed I had received a tender impression of late—that it was mutual, and that I had wished to unbosom myself to him (as I always did), particularly to ask if he thought I should, or not, mention it to my friend? I saw he felt for me, (for I was in tears;) but he bewailed that I had given my heart while in my present state of bondage; wished I had made it friendship only; in short, talked to me in the style of a tender parent, anxious for my happiness. He disapproves altogether of my saying a syllable of the matter to my friend, —says it could only make him uneasy; and that I am in no way bound to do it by any one tie. This has eased me of a load which has lain upon my mind ever since our intimacy. Sylvander, I wish you and Mr. Kemp were acquainted,—such worth and sensibility! If you had his piety and

* Her pastor.

sobriety of manners, united to the shining abilities you possess, you'd be "a faultless monster which the world ne'er saw." He, too, has great talents. His imagination is rich—his feelings delicate—his discernment acute; yet there are shades in his, as in all characters: but these it would ill become Clarinda to point out. Alas! I know too many blots in my own.

Sylvander, I believe nothing were a more impracticable task than to make you feel a little of the genuine gospel humility. Believe me, I wish not to see you deprived of that noble fire of an exalted mind which you eminently possess. Yet a sense of your faults—a feeling sense of them!—were devoutly to be wished. Tell me, did you ever, or how oft have you smote on your breast, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" I fancy, once or twice, when suffering from the effects of your errors. Pardon me if I be hurting your "intrinsic dignity"; it need not—even "divine Clarinda" has been in this mortal predicament.

Pray, what does Mr. Ainslie think of her? Was he not astonished to find her merely human? Three weeks ago, I suppose you would have made him walk into her presence unshod: but one must bury even divinities when they discover

symptoms of mortality!—(Let these be interred in Sylvander's bosom.)

My dearest friend, there are two wishes uppermost in my heart: to see you think alike with Clarinda on religion, and settled in some creditable line of business. The warm interest I take in both these is, perhaps, the best proof of my friendship—as well as earnest of its duration. As to the first, I devolve it over into the hands of the Omniscient! May he raise up friends who will effectuate the other! While I breathe these fervent wishes, think not anything but pure disinterested regard prompts them. They are fond but chimerical ideas. They are never indulged but in the hour of tender endearment, when "Innocence

Looked gaily smiling on, while rosy Pleasure
Hid young Desire amid her flowery wreath,
And poured her cup luxuriant, mantling high
The sparkling, Heavenly vintage—Love and
Bliss."

'Tis past ten—and I please myself with thinking Sylvander will be about to retire and write to Clarinda. I fancy you'll find this stupid enough; but I can't be always bright—the sun

will be sometimes under a cloud. Sylvander, I wish our kind feelings were more moderate; why set one's heart upon impossibilities? Try me merely as your friend (alas, all I ought to be). Believe me, you'll find me most rational. If you'd caress the "mental intelligence" as you do the corporeal frame, indeed, Sylvander, you'd make me a philosopher. I see you fidgeting at this violently blasting rationality. I have a headache which brings home these things to the mind. To-morrow I'll hear from you, I hope. This is Sunday, and not a word on our favourite subject. O fy, "divine Clarinda." I intend giving you my idea of Heaven in opposition to your heathenish description (which, by the by, was elegantly drawn). Mine shall be founded on Reason and supported by Scripture; but it's too late, my head aches, but my heart is affectionately yours.

Monday Morning.

I am almost not sorry at the Excise affair misgiving. You will be better out of Edinburgh —it is full of temptation to one of your social turn.

Providence (if you will be wise in future) will order something better for you. I am half glad

you were schooled about the Inscription; 'twill be a lesson, I hope, in future. Clarinda would have lectured you on it before, "if she dared." Miss Nimmo is a woman after my own heart. You are reconciled to the world by her "friendly prattle!" How can you talk so diminutively of the conversation of a woman of solid sense? what will you say of Clarinda's chit chat? I suppose you would give it a still more insignificant term if you dared; but it is mixed with something that makes it bearable, were it even weaker than it is. Miss Nimmo is right in both her conjectures. Ah, Sylvander! my peace must suffer—yours cannot. You think, in loving Clarinda, you are doing right; all Sylvander's eloquence cannot convince me that it is so! If I were but at liberty—Oh, how I would indulge in all the luxury of innocent love! It is, I fear, too late to talk in this strain, after indulging you and myself so much; but would Sylvander shelter his Love in Friendship's allowed garb, Clarinda would be far happier.

To-morrow, didst thou say? The time is short now—is it not too frequent? do not sweetest dainties cloy soonest? Take your chance—come half-past eight. If anything particular occur to render it improper to-morrow, I'll send you

word, and name another evening. Mr. Kemp is to call to-night, I believe. He, too, trembles for my peace. Two such worthies to be interested about my foolish ladyship! The Apostle Paul, with all his rhetoric, could not reconcile me to the great (little souls) when I think of them and Sylvander together; but I pity them.

"If e'er ambition did my fancy cheat,
With any wish so mean, as to be great,
Continue, Heaven, far from me to remove
The humble blessings of that life I love."

Till we meet, my dear Sylvander, adieu!

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Sunday Morning.

I have just been before the throne of my God, Clarinda. According to my association of ideas, my sentiments of love and friendship, I next devote myself to you. Yesternight I was happy—happiness "that the world cannot give." I kindle at the recollection; but it is a flame where Innocence looks smiling on, and Honour stands by, a sacred guard. Your heart, your fondest wishes, your dearest thoughts, these are yours to bestow: your person is unapproachable, by the laws of your country; and he loves not as I do who would make you miserable.

You are an angel, Clarinda: you are surely no mortal that "the earth owns." To kiss your hand, to live on your smile, is to me far more exquisite bliss than any of the dearest favours that the fairest of the sex, yourself excepted, can bestow.

Sunday Evening.

You are the constant companion of my thoughts. How wretched is the condition of one who is haunted with conscious guilt, and trembling under the idea of dreaded vengeance! And

what a placid calm, what a charming secret enjoyment, is given to one's bosom by the kind feelings of friendship and the fond throes of love! Out upon the tempest of Anger, the acrimonious gall of fretful Impatience, the sullen frost of lowering Resentment, or the corroding poison of withered Envy! They eat up the immortal part of man! If they spent their fury only on the unfortunate objects of them, it would be something in their favour; but these miserable passions, like traitor Iscariot, betray their Lord and Master.

Thou Almighty Author of peace, and goodness, and love! do Thou give me the social heart that kindly tastes of every man's cup! Is it a draught of joy?—warm and open my heart to share it with cordial, unenvying rejoicing! Is it the bitter potion of sorrow?—melt my heart with sincerely sympathetic woe! Above all, do Thou give me the manly mind, that resolutely exemplifies in life and manners those sentiments which I would wish to be thought to possess! The friend of my soul—there may I never deviate from the firmest fidelity and most active kindness! Clarinda, the dear object of my fondest love; there, may the most sacred, inviolate honour, the most faithful, kindling constancy, ever

watch and animate my every thought and imagination!

Did you ever meet the following lines spoken of Religion, your darling topic?——

"'Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright!
'Tis this that gilds the horror of our night!
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis this that wards the blow or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction, or repels its dart:
Within the breast bids purest rapture rise,
Bids smiling Conscience spread her cloudless skies."

I met with these verses very early in life, and was so delighted with them that I have them by me, copied at school.

Good night, and sound rest,

My dearest Clarinda.

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Wednesday Evening, Nine.

There is not a sentiment in your last dear letter but must meet the approbation of every worthy discerning mind—except one—"that my heart, my fondest wishes," are mine to bestow. True, they are not, they cannot be placed upon him who ought to have had them, but whose conduct (I dare not say more against him), has justly forfeited them. But is it not too near an infringement of the sacred obligations of marriage to bestow one's heart, wishes, and thoughts upon another? Something in my soul whispers that it approaches criminality. I obey the voice. Let me cast every kind feeling into the allowed bond of Friendship. If 'tis accompanied with a shadow of a softer feeling, it shall be poured into the bosom of a merciful God! If a confession of my warmest, tenderest friendship does not satisfy you, duty forbids Clarinda should do more! Sylvander, I never expect to be happy here below! Why was I formed so susceptible of emotions I dare not indulge? Never were there two hearts formed so exactly alike as ours! No wonder our friendship is heightened by the "sympathetic glow." In reading your Life, I find

the very first poems that hit your fancy, were those that first engaged mine. While almost a child, the hymn you mentioned, and another of Addison's, "When all thy mercies," &c., were my chief favourites. They are much so to this hour; and I make my boys repeat them every Sabbath day. When about fifteen, I took a great fondness for Pope's "Messiah," which I still reckon one of the sublimest pieces I ever met with.

Sylvander, I believe our friendship will be lasting; its basis has been virtue, similarity of tastes, feelings, and sentiments. Alas! I shudder at the idea of an hundred miles distance. You'll hardly write me once a-month, and other objects will weaken your affection for Clarinda. Yet I cannot believe so. Oh, let the scenes of Nature remind you of Clarinda! In winter, remember the dark shades of her fate; in summer, the warmth, the cordial warmth, of her friendship; in autumn, her glowing wishes to bestow plenty on all; and let spring animate you with hopes, that your friend may yet live to surmount the wintry blasts of life, and revive to taste a spring-time of happiness! At all events, Sylvander, the storms of life will quickly pass, and "one unbounded spring encircle all." There, Sylvander, I trust we'll meet. Love, there, is not a crime.

I charge you to meet me there—Oh, God!—I must lay down my pen.—I repent, almost, flattering your writing talents so much: I can see you know all the merit you possess. The allusion of the key is true therefore I won't recant it; but I rather was too humble about my own letters. I have met with several who wrote worse than myself, and few, of my own sex, better; so I don't give you great credit for being fashed with them.

Sylvander, I have things with different friends I can't tell to another, yet am not hurt; but I told you of that particular friend: he was, for near four years, the one I confided in. He is very worthy, and answers your description in the "Epistle to J. S." exactly. When I had hardly a friend to care for me in Edinburgh, he befriended me. I saw, too soon, 'twas with him a warmer feeling: perhaps a little infection was the natural effect. I told you the circumstances which helped to eradicate the tender impression in me; but I perceive (though he never tells me so)—I see it in every instance—his prepossession still remains. I esteem him as a faithful friend; but I can never feel more for him. I fear he's not convinced of that. He sees no man with me half so often as himself; and thinks I surely am

at least partial to no other. I cannot bear to deceive one in so tender a point, and am hurt at his harbouring an attachment I never can return. I have thoughts of owning my intimacy with Sylvander; but a thousand things forbid it. I should be tortured with Jealousy, that "green-eyed monster;" and, besides, I fear 'twould wound his peace. 'Tis a delicate affair. I wish your judgment on it. O Sylvander, I cannot bear to give pain to any creature, far less to one who pays me the attention of a brother!

I never met with a man congenial, perfectly congenial to myself but *one*—ask no questions. Is Friday to be the last night? I wish, Sylvander, you'd steal away—I cannot bear farewell! I can hardly relish the idea of meeting—for the idea! but we will meet again, at least in Heaven, I hope. Sylvander, when I survey myself, my returning weaknesses, I am consoled that my hopes, my immortal hopes, are founded in the complete righteousness of a compassionate Saviour. "In all our afflictions, He is afflicted, and the angel of His presence guards us."

I am charmed with the lines on Religion, and with you for relishing them. I only wish the world saw you, as you appear in your letters to me. Why did you send forth to them "The

Holy Fair," &c.? Had Clarinda known you, she would have held you in her arms till she had your promise to suppress them. Do not publish the "Moor Hen." Do not, for your sake, and for mine. I wish you vastly to hear my valued friend, Mr. Kemp. Come to hear him on Sunday afternoon. 'Tis the first favour I have asked you: I expect you'll not refuse me. You'll easily get a seat. Your favourite, Mr. Gould, I admire much. His composition is elegant indeed!—but 'tis like beholding a beautiful superstructure built on a sandy foundation: 'tis fine to look upon; but one dares not abide in it with safety. Mr. Kemp's language is very good,—perhaps not such studied periods as Mr. G's; but he is far more animated. He is pathetic in a degree that touches one's soul! and then, 'tis all built upon a rock.

I could chide you for the Parting Song. It wrings my heart. "You may reca' "—by being wise in future—"your friend as yet." I will be your friend for ever! Good night! God bless you! prays

CLARINDA.

Thursday Noon.

I shall go to-morrow forenoon to Miers * alone: 'tis quite a usual thing I hear. Mary is not in town, and I don't care to ask Miss Nimmo, or anybody else. What size do you want it about? O Sylvander, if you wish my peace, let Friendship be the word between us: I tremble at more. "Talk not of Love," &c. To-morrow I'll expect you. Adieu!

CLARINDA.

* Miers was a miniature painter whose "shades" (silhouettes) were especially popular.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Thursday Night.

I cannot be easy, my Clarinda, while any sentiment respecting me in your bosom gives you pain. If there is no man on earth to whom your heart and affections are justly due, it may savour of imprudence, but never of criminality, to bestow that heart and those affections where you please. The God of love meant and made those delicious attachments to be bestowed on somebody; and even all the imprudence lies in bestowing them on an unworthy object. If this reasoning is conclusive, as it certainly is, I must be allowed to "talk of Love."

It is, perhaps, rather wrong to speak highly to a friend of his letter: it is apt to lay one under a little restraint in their future letters, and restraint is the death of a friendly epistle; but there is one passage in your last charming letter, Thomson nor Shenstone never exceeded it nor often came up to it. I shall certainly steal it, and set it in some future poetic production, and get immortal fame by it. 'Tis when you bid the scenes of nature remind me of Clarinda. Can I forget you, Clarinda? I would detest myself as a tasteless, unfeeling, insipid, infamous, block-

head! I have loved women of ordinary merit, whom I could have loved for ever. You are the first the only unexceptionable individual of the beauteous sex that I ever met with; and never woman more entirely possessed my soul. I know myself, and how far I can depend on passions, well. It has been my peculiar study.

I thank you for going to Miers. Urge him, for necessity calls, to have it done by the middle of next week: Wednesday the latest day. I want it for a breast-pin, to wear next my heart. I propose to keep sacred set times, to wander in the woods and wilds for meditation on you. Then, and only then, your lovely image shall be produced to the day, with a reverence akin to devotion.

* * * * * *

To-morrow night shall not be the last. Good night! I am perfectly stupid, as I supped late yesternight.

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Saturday Evening.

I am wishing, Sylvander, for the power of looking into your heart. It would be but fair—for you have the key of mine. You are possessed of acute discernment. I am not deficient either in that respect. Last night must have shown you Clarinda not "divine"—but as she really is. I can't recollect some things I said without a degree of pain. Nature has been kind to me in several respects; but one essential she has denied me entirely: it is that instantaneous perception of fit and unfit, which is so useful in the conduct of life. No one can discriminate more accurately afterwards than Clarinda. But when her heart is expanded by the influence of kindness, she loses all command of it, and often suffers severely in the recollection of her unguardedness. You must have perceived this; but, at any rate, I wish you to know me as "I really am." I would have given much for society to-day; for I can't bear my own: but no human being has come near me. Well as I like you, Sylvander, I would rather lose your love than your esteem: the first I ought

not to wish; the other I shall ever endeavour to maintain. But no more of this: you prohibit it, and I obey.

For many years, have I sought for a male friend endowed with sentiments like yours; one who could love me with tenderness, yet unmixed with selfishness: who could be my friend, companion, protector, and who would die sooner than injure me. I sought—but I sought in vain! Heaven has, I hope, sent me this blessing in Sylvander! Whatever weaknesses may cleave to Clarinda, her heart is not to blame: whatever it may have been by nature, it is unsullied by art. If she dare dispose of it—last night can leave you at no loss to guess the man:

Then, dear Sylvander, use it weel,
An' row it in your bosom's biel;
You'll find it aye baith kind and leal,
And fou'o' glee;
It wadna wrang the very deil,—
Ah, far less thee!

How do you like this parody on a passage of my favourite poet?—it is extempore—from the heart; and let it be to the heart. I am to enclose

the first fruits of my muse, "To a Blackbird." * It has no poetic merit; but it bespeaks a sweet feminine mind—such a one as I wish mine to be; but my vivacity deprives me of that softness which is, in my opinion, the first female ornament. It was written to soothe an aching heart. I then laboured under a cruel anguish of soul, which I cannot tell you of. If I ever take a walk to the Temple of H——, I'll disclose it; but you and I (were it even possible) would "fall out by the way." The lines on the Soldier were occasioned by reading a book entitled the "Sorrows of the Heart." Miss Nimmo was pleased with them, and sent them to the gentleman. They are not poetry, but they speak what I felt at a survey of so much filial tenderness.

* TO A BLACKBIRD SINGING ON A TREE

Morningside, 1784.

Go on, sweet bird, and soothe my care,
Thy cheerful notes will hush despair;
Thy tuneful warblings, void of art,
Thrill sweetly through my aching heart.
Now choose thy mate and fondly love,
And all the charming transport prove;
Those sweet emotions all enjoy,
Let Love and Song thy hours employ;
Whilst I, a love-lorn exile, live,
And rapture nor receive nor give.
Go on, sweet bird, and soothe my care,
Thy cheerful notes will hush despair.

The other poem of which she speaks is missing.

I agree with you in liking quotations. If they are apt, they often give one's ideas more pleasantly than our own language can at all times. I am stupid to-night. I have a soreness at my heart. I conclude, therefore, with a verse of Goldsmith, which, of late, has become an immense favourite of mine:—

In Nature's simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he;
Genius and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

Good night, "my dear Sylvander;" say this (like Werter) to yourself.

YOUR CLARINDA.

Sunday Evening.

I would have given much, Sylvander, that you had heard Mr. Kemp this afternoon. You would have heard my principles, and the foundation of all my immortal hopes, elegantly delivered. "Let me live the life of the righteous, and my latter end be like his," was the text. Who are the righteous? "Those," says Sylvander, "whose minds are actuated and governed by purity, truth, and charity." But where does such a mind exist? It must be where the "soul is made per-

fect," for I know none such on earth. "The righteous," then, must mean those who believe on Christ, and rely on his perfect righteousness for their salvation. "Everlasting" life, as you observe, is in the power of all to embrace; and this is eternal life, to "believe in Him whom God hath sent." Purity, truth, and charity, will flow from this belief, as naturally as the stream from the fountain. These are, indeed, the only evidences we can have of the reality of our faith, and they must be produced in a degree ere we can be fit for the enjoyment of Heaven. But where is the man who dare plead these before "Infinite Holiness"? Will Inflexible Justice pardon our thousand violations of his laws? Will our imperfect repentance and amendments atone for past guilt? Or, will we presume to present our best services (spotted as they are) as worthy of acceptance before Unerring Rectitude? I am astonished how any intelligent mind, blessed with a divine revelation, can pause a moment on the subject. "Enter not into judgment with me, O Lord! in thy sight no flesh can be justified!" This must be the result of every candid mind, upon surveying its own deserts. If God had not been pleased to reveal His own Son, as our all-sufficient Saviour, what could we have

done but cried for mercy, without any sure hope of obtaining it? But when we have Him clearly announced as our surety, our guide, our blessed advocate with the Father, who, in their senses ought to hesitate, in putting their souls into the hands of this glorious "Prince of Peace"? Without this we may admire the Creator in his works, but we can never approach him with the confidential tenderness of children. "I will arise and go to my father." This is the blessed language of every one who believes and trusts in Jesus. Oh, Sylvander, who would go on fighting with themselves, resolving and resolving, while they can thus fly to their Father's house? But alas! it is not till we tire of these husks of our own, that we recollect that *there,* there is bread enough and to spare. Whenever the wish is sincerely formed in our hearts, our Heavenly Father will have compassion on us—"though a great way off." This is the "religion of the bosom." I believe that there will be many of every sect, nation and people, who will "stand before the throne"; but I believe that it will be the effect of Christ's atonement, conveyed to them by ways too complicated for our finite minds to comprehend. But why should we, who know "the way, the truth, and the life," deprive ourselves of the

comfort it is fitted to yield? Let my earnest wish for your eternal, as well as temporal happiness, excuse the warmth with which I have unfolded what has been my own fixed point of rest. I want no controversy—I hate it; let our only strivings be, who shall be the most constant and attached friend,—which of us shall render our conduct most approved to the other. I am well aware how vain it were (vain in every sense of the expression) to hope to sway a mind so intelligent as yours, by any arguments I could devise. May that God, who spoke worlds into existence, open your eyes to see "the truth, as it is in Jesus!" Forgive me, Sylvander, if I've been tedious upon my favourite theme. You know who it was, who could not stop when his divinity came across him. Even there you see we are congenial.

I'll tell you a pretty apt quotation I made today, warm from my heart. I met the Judges in the morning, as I went into the Parliament Square, among whom was my Lord Dreghorn, in his new robes of purple. He is my mother's cousin-german, the greatest real honour he could ever claim; but used me in a manner unfeeling, harsh beyond description, at one of the darkest periods of my chequered life. I looked stead-

fastly in his sour face; his eyes met mine. I was a female, and therefore he stared; but, when he knew who it was, he averted his eyes suddenly. Instantaneously these lines darted into my mind:

"Would you the purple should your limbs adorn,
Go wash the conscious blemish with a tear."

The man who enjoys more pleasure in the mercenary embrace of a courtezan, than in relieving the unfortunate, is a detestable character, whatever his bright talents may be!

I pity him! Sylvander, all his fortune could not purchase half the luxury of Friday night! Let us be grateful to Heaven, though it has denied us wealth and power, for being endowed with feelings, fitted to yield the most exquisite enjoyments here and hereafter! May I hope you'll read what I have urged on Religion with attention, Sylvander! when Reason resumes her reign? I've none of those future delusive hopes, which you too vainly express as having towards Clarinda. Do not indulge them; my wishes extend to your immortal welfare. Let your first care be to please God: for that, which He delights in, must be happiness. I must conclude, or I'll relapse. I have not a grain of humour

to-night in my composition; so, lest "charming Clarinda" should make you yawn, she'll decently say "good night!" I laugh to myself at the recollection of your earnest asseverations as to your being anti-Platonic! Want of passions is not merit: strong ones, under the control of reason and religion—let these be our glory.

Once more good night.

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Saturday Morning.

There is no time, my Clarinda, when the conscious thrilling chords of Love and Friendship give such delight as in the pensive hours of what our favourite Thomson calls "philosophic melancholy." The sportive insects, who bask in the sunshine of Prosperity, or the worms, that luxuriant crawl amid their ample wealth of earth; they need no Clarinda—they would despise Sylvander, if they dared. The family of Misfortune, a numerous group of brothers and sisters! —they need a resting-place to their souls. Unnoticed, often condemned by the world—in some degree, perhaps, condemned by themselves—they feel the full enjoyment of mutual love, delicate tender endearments, mutual esteem, and mutual reliance.

In this light, I have often admired religion. In proportion as we are wrung with grief, or distracted with anxiety, the ideas of a compassionate Deity, an Almighty Protector, are doubly dear.

" 'Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright;
" 'Tis this that gilds the horrors of our night."

I have this morning been taking a peep through, as Young finely says, "the dark postern of time long elapsed"; and you will easily guess 'twas a rueful prospect: what a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple: what strength, what proportion in some parts!—what unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies, and said, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!" I rose eased and strengthened. I despise the superstition of a fanatic; but I love the religion of a man. "The future," said I to myself, "is still before me: there let me

'On reason build resolve—
That column of true majesty in man!'

I have difficulties many to encounter," said I; "but they are not absolutely insuperable:—and where is firmness of mind shown; but in exertion? Mere declamation is bombast rant. Besides, wherever I am, or in whatever situation I may be,

' 'Tis nought to me
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where he vital breathes, there must be joy.' "

Saturday Night, Half after Ten.

What luxury of bliss I was enjoying this time yesternight! My ever dearest Clarinda, you have stolen away my soul: but you have refined, you have exalted it; you have given it a stronger sense of virtue, and a stronger relish for piety. Clarinda, first of your sex! if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul,

"May I be lost, no eye to weep my end,
And find no earth that's base enough to bury me!"

What trifling silliness is the childish fondness of the every-day children of the world! 'Tis the unmeaning toying of the younglings of the fields and forests; but, where Sentiment and Fancy unite their sweets, where Taste and Delicacy refine, where Wit adds the flavour, and Good Sense gives strength and spirit to all; what a delicious draught is the hour of tender endearment! Beauty and Grace in the arms of Truth and Honour, in all the luxury of mutual love.

Clarinda, have you ever seen the picture realised? not in all its very richest colouring, but

"Hope, thou nurse of young Desire,
Fair promiser of Joy."—

Last night, Clarinda, but for one slight shade, was the glorious picture—

"Innocence
Look'd gaily smiling on; while rosy Pleasure
Hid young Desire amid her flowery wreath,
And pour'd her cup luxuriant, mantling high,
The sparkling, Heavenly vintage—Love and
Bliss!"

Clarinda, when a poet and poetess of Nature's making—two of Nature's noblest productions!—when they drink together of the same cup of Love and Bliss, attempt not, ye coarser stuff of human nature! profanely to measure enjoyment ye never can know.

Good night, my dear Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

. . . I am a discontented ghost, a perturbed spirit. Clarinda, if ever you forget Sylvander, may you be happy, but he will be miserable.

O, what a fool I am in love!—what an extravagant prodigal of affection! Why are your sex called the tender sex, when I have never met with one who can repay me in passion? They are either not so rich in love as I am, or they are niggards where I am lavish.

O Thou, whose I am, and whose are all my ways! Thou see'st me here, the hapless wreck of tides and tempests in my own bosom: do Thou direct to thyself that ardent love, for which I have so often sought a return, in vain, from my fellow-creatures! If Thy goodness has yet such a gift in store for me, as an equal return of affection from her who, Thou knowest, is dearer to me than life, do Thou bless and hallow our band of love and friendship; watch over us, in all our outgoings and incomings, for good; and may the tie that unites our hearts be strong and indissoluble as the thread of man's immortal life!

I am just going to take your Blackbird, the sweetest, I am sure that ever sung, and prune its wings a little. SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I cannot go out to-day, my dearest love, without sending you half a line by way of a sin offering; but, believe me, 'twas the sin of ignorance. Could you think that I intended to hurt you by anything I said yesternight? Nature has been too kind to you for your happiness, your delicacy, your sensibility. O why should such glorious qualifications be the fruitful source of woe! You have "murdered sleep" to me last night. I went to bed impressed with an idea that you were unhappy; and every start I closed my eyes, busy Fancy painted you in such scenes of romantic misery, that I would almost be persuaded you are not well this morning.

"If I unwitting have offended,
Impute it not,"
—"But while we live
But one short hour, perhaps, between us two
Let there be peace."

If Mary is not gone by the time this reaches you, give her my best compliments. She is a charming girl and highly worthy of the noblest love.

I send you a poem to read till I call on you

this night, which will be about nine. I wish I could procure some potent spell, some fairy charm, that would protect from injury, or restore to rest that bosom chord, "tremblingly alive all o'er," on which hangs your peace of mind. I thought, vainly I fear thought, that the devotion of love strong as even you can feel, love guarded, invulnerably guarded by all the purity of virtue and all the pride of honour—I thought such a love might make you happy. Shall I be mistaken? I can no more, for hurry.

Tuesday Morning.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Thursday, Twelve.

I have been giving Mary a convoy; the day is a genial one. Mary is a happy woman to-day. Mrs. Cockburn has seen her "Henry" and admired it vastly. She talked of you, told her she saw you, and that her lines even met your applause! Sylvander, I share in the joy of every one; and am ready to "weep with those who weep," as well,—as "rejoice with those who rejoice." I wish all the human race well my heart throbs with the large ambitious wish to see them blest; yet I seem sometimes as if born to inflict misery. What a cordial evening we had last night! I only tremble at the ardent manner Mary talks of Sylvander! She knows where his affections lie, and is quite unconscious of the eagerness of her expressions. All night I could get no sleep for her admiration. I like her for it, and am proud of it; but I know how much violent admiration is akin to love.

I go out to dinner, and mean to leave this, in case of one from you to-day. Miss Chalmers's letters are charming. Why did not such a woman secure your heart?—O the caprice of human nature, to fix on impossibilities.

I am, however, happy you have such valuable friends. What a pity that those who will be most apt to feel your merit, will probably be among the number who have not the power of serving you! Sylvander, I never was ambitious; but of late I have wished for wealth, with an ardour unfelt before, to be able to say, "Be independent, thou dear friend of my heart!" What exquisite joy! Then "your head would be lifted up above your enemies." Oh, then, what little shuffling, sneaking attentions!—shame upon the world! Wealth and power command its adulation, while real genius and worth, without these, are neglected and contemned.

"In nature's simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he;
Genius and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me."

Forgive my quoting my most favourite lines. You spoke of being here to-morrow evening. I believe you would be the first to tire of our society; but I tremble for censorious remarks: however, we must be sober in our hours. I am flat to-day—so adieu! I was not so cheerful last night as I wished. Forgive me. I am yours,

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Friday Morning, 7 O'clock.

Your fears for Mary are truly laughable. I suppose, my love, you and I showed her a scene which, perhaps, made her wish that she had a swain, and one who could love like me, and 'tis a thousand pities that so good a heart as hers should want an aim, an object. I am miserably stupid this morning. Yesterday I dined with a Baronet, and sat pretty late over the bottle. And "who hath wo—who hath sorrow? they that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Forgive me, likewise, a quotation from my favourite author. Solomon's knowledge of the world is very great. He may be looked upon as the "Spectator" or "Adventurer" of his day: and it is indeed, surprising what a sameness has ever been in human nature. The broken, but strongly characterising hints, that the royal author gives us of the manners of the court of Jerusalem and country of Israel are in their great outlines, the same pictures that London and England, Versailles and France exhibit some three thousand years later. The loves in the "Song of Songs" are all in the spirit of Lady M. W. Montague or Madame Ninon de

l'Enclos; though, for my part, I dislike both the ancient and modern voluptuaries; and will dare to affirm, that such an attachment as mine to Clarinda, and such evenings as she and I have spent, are what these greatly respectable and deeply experienced Judges of Life and Love never dreamed of.

I shall be with you this evening between eight and nine, and shall keep as sober hours as you could wish. I am ever, my dear Madam, yours,

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

These letters of Clarinda are missing. It would seem that Mr. Kemp had scored her rather harshly for continuing the intimacy with Burns in spite of his warnings.

Wednesday.

My ever dearest Clarinda,—I make a numerous dinner-party wait me while I read yours and write this. Do not require that I should cease to love you, to adore you in my soul; 'tis to me impossible: your peace and happiness are to me dearer than my soul. Name the terms on which you wish to see me, to correspond with me, and you have them. I must love, pine, mourn and adore in secret: this you must not deny me. You will ever be to me

"Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart."

I have not patience to read the Puritanic scrawl. Damned sophistry. Ye heavens, thou God of nature, thou Redeemer of mankind! ye look down with approving eyes on a passion inspired by the purest flame, and guarded by truth, delicacy and honour; but the half-inch soul of an unfeeling, cold-blooded, pitiful Presbyterian bigot can-

not forgive anything above his dungeon-bosom and foggy head.

Farewell! I'll be with you to-morrow evening; and be at rest in your mind. I will be yours in the way you think most to your happiness. I dare not proceed. I love, and will love you; and will, with joyous confidence, approach the throne of the Almighty Judge of men with your dear idea; and will despise the scum of sentiment and the mist of sophistry.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Wednesday, Midnight.

MADAM,—After a wretched day, I am preparing for a sleepless night. I am going to address myself to the Almighty Witness of my actions—some time, perhaps very soon, my Almighty Judge. I am not going to be the advocate of Passion: be Thou my inspirer and testimony, O God, as I plead the cause of truth!

I have read over your friend's haughty dictatorial letter: you are only answerable to your God in such a matter. Who gave any fellow-creature of yours (a fellow-creature incapable of being your judge, because not your peer,) a right to catechise, scold, undervalue, abuse, and insult, wantonly and inhumanly to insult you thus? I don't wish, not even wish to deceive you, Madam. The Searcher of hearts is my witness how dear you are to me; but though it were possible you could be still dearer to me, I would not even kiss your hand, at the expense of your conscience. Away with declamation! let us appeal to the bar of common sense. It is not mouthing everything sacred; it is not vague ranting assertions; it is not assuming, haughtily and insultingly assuming, the dictatorial language of a Roman

Pontiff, that must dissolve a union like ours. Tell me, Madam, are you under the least shadow of an obligation to bestow your love, tenderness, caresses, affections, heart and soul, on Mr. M'Lehose—the man who has repeatedly, habitually, and barbarously broken through every tie of duty, nature, or gratitude to you? The laws of your country, indeed, for the most useful reasons of policy and sound government, have made your person inviolate; but are your heart and affections bound to one who gives not the least return of either to you? You cannot do it; it is not in the nature of things that you are bound to do it; the common feelings of humanity forbid it. Have you, then, a heart and affections that are no man's right? You have. It would be highly, ridiculously absurd to suppose the contrary. Tell me then, in the name of common sense, can it be wrong, is such a supposition compatible with the plainest ideas of right and wrong, that it is improper to bestow the heart and these affections on another—while that bestowing is not in the smallest degree hurtful to your duty to God, to your children, to yourself, or to society at large?

This is the great test; the consequences: let us see them. In a widowed, forlorn, lonely situation, with a bosom glowing with love and ten-

derness, yet so delicately situated that you cannot indulge these nobler feelings except you meet with a man who has a soul capable . . .

The rest of the letter is missing.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan." I have suffered, Clarinda, from your letter. My soul was in arms at the sad perusal. I dreaded that I had acted wrong. If I have wronged you, God forgive me. But, Clarinda, be comforted. Let us raise the tone of our feelings a little higher and bolder. A fellow-creature who leaves us—who spurns us without just cause, though once our bosom-friend—up with a little honest pride: let them go. How shall I comfort you, who am the cause of the injury? Can I wish that I had never seen you—that we had never met? No, I never will. But have I thrown you friendless?—there is almost distraction in the thought. Father of mercies! against Thee often have I sinned: through Thy grace I will endeavour to do so no more. She who Thou knowest is dearer to me than myself,—pour Thou the balm of peace into her past wounds, and hedge her about with Thy peculiar care, all her future days and nights. Strengthen her tender, noble mind firmly to suffer and magnanimously to bear. Make me worthy of that friendship, that love she honours me with. May my attachment to her be as pure as devotion and

as lasting as immortal life. O, Almighty Goodness, hear me! Be to her, at all times, particularly in the hour of distress or trial, a friend and comforter, a guide and guard.

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord,
How sure is their defence!
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence."

Forgive me, Clarinda, the injury I have done you. . To-night I shall be with you, as indeed I shall be ill at ease till I see you.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Two o'clock.

I just now received your first letter of yesterday, by the careless negligence of the penny post. Clarinda, matters are grown very serious with us: then seriously hear me, and hear me, Heaven!

I met you, my dear Clarinda, by far the first of womankind, at least to me. I esteemed, I loved you at first sight, both of which attachments you have done me the honour to return. The longer I am acquainted with you, the more innate amiableness and worth I discover in you. You have suffered a loss, I confess, for my sake; but if the firmest, steadiest, warmest friendship; if every endeavour to be worthy of your friendship; if a love, strong as the ties of nature and holy as the duties of religion; if all these can make anything like a compensation for the evil I have occasioned you; if they be worth your acceptance, or can in the least add to your enjoyments,—so help Sylvander, ye Powers above, in his hour of need, as he freely gives all these to Clarinda!

I esteem you, I love you, as a friend; I admire you, I love you as a woman, beyond any one in

all the circle of creation. I know I shall continue to esteem you, to love you, to pray for you, nay, to pray for myself for your sake.

Expect me at eight; and believe me to be ever, my dearest Madam, yours most entirely,

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

When matters, my love, are desperate, we must put on a desperate face—

"On reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man."

or, as the same author finely says in another place,

"Let thy soul spring up,
And lay strong hold for help on Him that made thee."

I am yours, Clarinda, for life. Never be discouraged at all this. Look forward: in a few weeks I shall be somewhere or other, out of the possibility of seeing you: till then, I shall write you often but visit you seldom. Your fame, your welfare, your happiness, are dearer to me than any gratification whatever. Be comforted, my love! the present moment is the worst; the lenient hand of time is daily and hourly either lightening the burden, or making us insensible to the weight. None of these friends—I mean Mr. —— and the other gentleman—can hurt your worldly support: and of their friendship in a little time you will learn to be easy, and by and

by to be happy without it. A decent means of livelihood in the world, an approving God, a peaceful conscience, and one firm trusty friend —can anybody that has these be said to be unhappy? These are yours.

To-morrow evening I shall be with you about eight, probably for the last time till I return to Edinburgh. In the meantime, should any of these two unlucky friends question you respecting me, whether I am the man, I do not think they are entitled to any information. As to their jealousy and spying, I despise them.

Adieu, my dearest Madam!

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Glasgow, Monday Evening, Nine O'clock.

The attraction of Love, I find, is in an inverse proportion to the attraction of the Newtonian philosophy. In the system of Sir Isaac, the nearer objects were to one another, the stronger was the attractive force. In my system, every milestone that marked my progress from Clarinda, awakened a keener pang of attachment to her. How do you feel, my love? Is your heart ill at ease? I fear it. God forbid that these persecutors should harass that peace which is more precious to me than my own. Be assured I shall ever think on you, muse on you, and, in my moments of devotion, pray for you. The hour that you are not in my thoughts, "be that hour darkness; let the shadows of death cover it; let it not be numbered in the hours of the day!"

"When I forget the darling theme,
Be my tongue mute! my fancy paint no more!
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!"

I have just met with my old friend, the ship Captain—guess my pleasure; to meet you could alone

have given me more. My brother William too, the young saddler, has come to Glasgow to meet me; and here are we three spending the evening.

I arrived here too late to write by post; but I'll wrap half a dozen blank sheets of paper together, and send it by the Fly, under the name of a parcel. You shall hear from me next post town. I would write you a longer letter but for the present circumstances of my friend.

Adieu, my Clarinda! I am just going to propose your health by way of grace-drink.

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Edinburgh, Tuesday Evening, Nine o'clock.

Mr. —— has just left me, after half an hour's most pathetic conversation. I told him of the usage I had met with on Sunday night, which he condemned much, as unmanly and ungenerous. I expressed my thanks for his call; but he told me, it "was merely to hide the change in his friendship from the world." Think how I was mortified: I was indeed; and affected so, as hardly to restrain tears. He did not name you; but spoke in terms that showed plainly he knew. Would to God he knew my Sylvander as I do! then might I hope to retain his friendship still; but I have made my choice, and you alone can ever make me repent it. Yet, while I live, I must regret the loss of such a man's friendship. My dear, generous friend of my soul does so too. I love him for it! Yesterday I thought of you, and went over to Miss Nimmo to have the luxury of talking of you. She was most kind; and praised you more than ever, as a man of worth, honour, genius. Oh, how I could have listened to her for ever! She says, she is afraid our attachment will be lasting. I stayed tea, was asked kindly, and did not choose to refuse, as

I stayed last time when you were of the party. I wish you were here to-night to comfort me. I feel hurt and depressed; but to-morrow I hope for a cordial from your dear hand! I must bid you good night. Remember your Clarinda. Every blessing be yours!

Your letter this moment. Why did you write before to-day? Thank you for it. I figure your heartfelt enjoyment last night. Oh, to have been of the party! Where was it? I'd like to know the very spot. My head aches so I can't write more; but I have kissed your dear lines over and over. Adieu! I'll finish this to-morrow.

YOUR CLARINDA.

Wednesday, Eleven.

Mary was at my bedside by eight this morning. We had much chat about you. She is an affectionate, faithful soul. She tells me her defence of you was so warm, in a large company where you were blamed for some trivial affair, that she left them impressed with the idea of her being in love. She laughs, and says, " 'Tis pity to have the skaith, and nothing for her pains."

My spirits are greatly better to-day. I am a little anxious about Willie: his leg is to be lanced

this day, and I shall be fluttered till the operation is fairly over. Mr. Wood thinks he will soon get well, when the matter lodged in it is discussed. God grant it! Oh, how can I ever be ungrateful to that good Providence, who has blest me with so many undeserved mercies, and saved me often from the ruin I courted! The heart that feels its continual dependence on the Almighty, is bound to keep His laws by a tie stronger and tenderer than any human obligation. The feeling of Honour is a noble and powerful one; but can we be honourable to a fellow-creature, and basely unmindful of our Bountiful Benefactor, to whom we are indebted for life and all its blessings; and even for those very distinguishing qualities, Honour, Genius, and Benevolence?

I am sure you enter into these ideas; did you think with me in all points I should be too happy; but I'll be silent. I may wish and pray, but you shall never again accuse me of presumption. My dear, I write you this to Mauchline, to be waiting you. I hope, nay I am sure, 'twill be welcome.

You are an extravagant prodigal in more essential things than affection. To-day's post would have brought me yours and saved you sixpence. However, it pleased me to know that,

though absent in body, "you were present with me in spirit."

Do you know a Miss Nelly Hamilton in Ayr, daughter to a Captain John H. of the Excise cutter? I stayed with her at Kailzie, and love her. She is a dear, amiable, romantic girl. I wish much to write to her, and will enclose it for you to deliver, personally, if agreeable. She raved about your poems in summer, and wished to be acquainted. Let me know if you have any objections. She is an intimate of Miss Nimmo, too. I think the streets look deserted-like since Monday; and there's a certain insipidity in good kind of folks I once enjoyed not a little. You, who are a casuist, explain these deep enigmas. Miss Wardrobe supped here on Monday. She once named you, which kept me from falling asleep. I drank your health in a glass of ale—as the lasses do at Hallowe'en—"in to mysel'."

Happy Sylvander! to meet with the dear charities of brother, sister, parent! whilst I have none of these and belong to nobody. Yes, I have my children, and my heart's friend, Sylvander—the only one I have ever found capable of that nameless, delicate attachment, which none but noble, romantic minds can comprehend. I envy you the Captain's society. Don't tell him of the

"Iron Chain," lest he call us both fools. I saw the happy trio in my mind's eye. So absence increases your fondness; 'tis ever so in great souls. Let the poor worldlings enjoy (possess, I mean, for they can't enjoy) their golden dish; we have each of us an estate, derived from the Father of the Universe, into whose hands I trust we'll return it, cultivated so as to prove an inexhaustible treasure through the endless ages of eternity!

Afternoon.

Mr. Wood has not come, so the affair is not over. I hesitate about sending this till I hear further; but I think you said you'd be at M. on Thursday: at any rate you'll get this on your arrival.

Farewell! may you ever abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Yours,

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Kilmarnock, Friday.

I wrote you, my dear Madam, the moment I alighted in Glasgow. Since then I have not had opportunity: for in Paisley, where I arrive next day, my worthy, wise friend Mr. Pattison did not allow me a moment's respite. I was there ten hours; during which time I was introduced to nine men worth six thousands; five men worth ten thousands; his brother, richly worth twenty thousands; and a young weaver who will have thirty thousands good when his father, who has no more children than the said weaver, and a Whig-kirk, dies. Mr. P. was bred a zealous anti-burgher; but during his widowerhood, he has found their strictness incompatible with certain compromises he is often obliged to make with the Powers of darkness—the devil, the world, and the flesh: so he, good, merciful man! talked privately to me of the absurdity of eternal torments; the liberality of sentiment in indulging the honest instincts of nature; the mysteries of concubinage, &c. He has a son, however, that, at sixteen, has repeatedly minted at certain privileges, only proper for staid, sober men, who can use the good things of this life without abusing them; but the

father's parental vigilance has hitherto hedged him in, amid a corrupt and evil world.

His only daughter, who, "if the beast be to the fore, and the branks bide hale," will have seven thousand pounds when her old father steps into the dark Factory-office of Eternity with his well-thummed web of life, has put him again and again in a commendable fit of indignation, by requesting a harpsichord. "O! these boarding-schools!" exclaims my prudent friend. "She was a good spinner and sewer, till I was advised by her foes and mine to give her a year of Edinburgh!"

After two bottles more, my much-respected friend opened up to me a project, a legitimate child of Wisdom and Good Sense; 'twas no less than a long thought-on and deeply-matured design, to marry a girl, fully as elegant in her form as the famous priestess whom Saul consulted in his last hours, and who had been second maid of honour to his deceased wife. This, you may be sure, I highly applauded, so I hope for a pair of gloves by and by. I spent the two bypast days at Dunlop house with that worthy family to whom I was deeply indebted early in my poetic career; and in about two hours I shall present your "twa wee sarkies" to the little fellow. My dearest Clarinda, you are ever present with me;

and these hours, that drawl by among the fools and rascals of this world, are only supportable in the idea that they are the forerunners of that happy hour, that ushers me to "the mistress of my soul." Next week I shall visit Dumfries, and next again return to Edinburgh. My letters in these hurrying, dissipated hours will be heavy trash; but you know the writer.

God bless you.

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Edinburgh, Friday Evening.

I wish you had given me a hint, my dear Sylvander, that you were to write to me only once in a week. Yesterday I looked for a letter; to-day, never doubted it; but both days have terminated in disappointment. A thousand conjectures have conspired to make me most unhappy. Often have I suffered much disquiet from forming the idea of such an attention, on such and such an occasion, and experienced quite the reverse. But in you, and you alone, I have ever found my highest demands of kindness accomplished; nay, even my fondest wishes, not gratified only, but anticipated! To what, then, can I attribute your not writing me one line since Monday?

God forbid that your nervous ailment has incapacitated you for that office, from which you derived pleasure singly; as well as that most delicate of all enjoyments, pleasure reflected. To-morrow I shall hope to hear from you. Hope, blessed hope, thou balm of every woe, possess and fill my bosom with thy benign influence.

I have been solitary since the tender farewell till to-night. I was solicited to go to Dr.

Moyes's lecture with Miss Craig and a gallant of hers, a student; one of the many stupid animals, knowing only in the Science of Puppyism, "or the nice conduct of a clouded cane." With what sovereign contempt did I compare his trite, insipid frivolity with the intelligent, manly observation which ever marks the conversation of Sylvander. He is a glorious piece of divine workmanship, Dr. Moyes. The subject to-night was the origin of minerals, springs, lakes, and the ocean. Many parts were far beyond my weak comprehension, and indeed that of most women. What I understood delighted me, and altogether raised my thoughts to the infinite wisdom and boundless goodness of the Deity. The man himself marks both. Presented with a universal blank of Nature's works,* his mind appears to be illuminated with Celestial light. He concluded with some lines of the Essay on Man: "All are but parts of one stupendous whole," &c.; a passage I have often read with sublime pleasure.

Miss Burnet sat just behind me. What an angelic girl! I stared at her, never having seen her so near. I remembered you talking of her, &c. What felicity to witness her "Softly speak and sweetly smile!" How could you celebrate

* Dr. Moyes was blind.

any other Clarinda! Oh, I would have adored you, as Pope of exquisite taste and refinement, had you loved, sighed, and written upon her for ever! breathing your passion only to the woods and streams. But Poets, I find, are not quite incorporeal, more than others. My dear Sylvander, to be serious, I really wonder you ever admired Clarinda, after beholding Miss Burnet's superior charms. If I don't hear to-morrow, I shall form dreadful reasons. God forbid! Bishop Geddes was within a foot of me, too. What field for contemplation—both!

Good night. God bless you, prays

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

This letter was not found among Clarinda's papers, but was published in the *Banffshire Journal,* "as printed from the original," which was described as much mutilated. Its authenticity would seem to be confirmed by the allusions in her reply.

Probably written the day of his arrival at Mossgiel, Feb. 23.

I have just now, my ever dear Madam, delivered your kind present to my sweet little Bobbie, whom I find a very fine fellow. Your letter was waiting me. Your interview with Mr. Kemp opens a wound, ill-closed, in my breast; not that I think his friendship is of so much consequence to you, but because you set such a value on it.

Now for a little news that will please you. I, this morning, as I came home, called for a certain woman. I am disgusted with her—I cannot endure her! I, while my heart smote me for the profanity, tried to compare her with my Clarinda: 'twas setting the expiring glimmer of a farthing taper beside the cloudless glory of the meridian sun. Here was tasteless insipidity,

vulgarity of soul, and mercenary fawning; there polished good sense, Heaven-born genius, and the most generous, the most delicate, the most tender passion. I have done with her, and she with me.

I set off to-morrow for Dumfries-shire. 'Tis merely out of compliment to Mr. Miller; for I know the Indies must be my lot. I will write you from Dumfries, if these horrid postages don't frighten me.

"Whatever place, whatever land I see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee;
Still to 'Clarinda' turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthen'd chain."

I just stay to write you a few lines, before I go to call on my friend, Mr. Gavin Hamilton. I hate myself as an unworthy sinner because these interviews of old dear friends make me, for half a moment, almost forget Clarinda.

Remember to-morrow evening, at eight o'clock, I shall be with the Father of Mercies, at that hour on your own account. Farewell! If the post goes not to-night, I'll finish the other page to-morrow morning.

SYLVANDER.

P. S.—Remember.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Cumnock, 2d March, 1788.

I hope, and am certain, that my generous Clarinda will not think my silence, for now a long week, has been in any degree owing to my forgetfulness. I have been tossed about through the country ever since I wrote you, and am here returning from Dumfries-shire, at an inn, the post-office of the place, with just so long time as my horse eats his corn, to write you. I have been hurried with business and dissipation, almost equal to the insidious decree of the Persian monarch's mandate, when he forbade asking petition of God or man for forty days. Had the venerable prophet been as throng as I, he had not broken the decree; at least not thrice a-day.

I am thinking my farming scheme will yet hold. A worthy intelligent farmer, my father's friend and my own, has been with me on the spot: he thinks the bargain practicable. I am myself, on a more serious review of the lands, much better pleased with them. I won't mention this in writing to anybody but you and Mr. Ainslie. Don't accuse me of being fickle; I have the two plans of life before me, and I wish to adopt the one most likely to procure me independence.

I shall be in Edinburgh next week. I long to see you; your image is omnipresent to me; nay, I am convinced I would soon idolatrise it most seriously; so much do absence and memory improve the medium through which one sees the much-loved object. To-night, at the sacred hour of eight, I expect to meet you, at the Throne of Grace. I hope, as I go home to-night, to find a letter from you at the post-office in Mauchline; I have just once seen that dear hand since I left Edinburgh—a letter, indeed, which much affected me. Tell me, first of womankind, will my warmest attachment, my sincerest friendship, my correspondence,—will they be any compensation for the sacrifices you make for my sake? If they will, they are yours. If I settle on the farm I propose, I am just a day and a half's ride from Edinburgh. We shall meet; don't you say, "Perhaps, too often!"

Farewell, my fair, my charming Poetess! May all good things ever attend you.

I am ever, my dearest Madam,

Yours,

SYLVANDER.

In a letter to Robert Ainslie, written March 3, Burns says: "I got a letter from Clarinda

yesterday, and she tells me she has got no letter of mine but one. Tell her that I wrote to her from Glasgow, from Kilmarnock, from Mauchline, and yesterday from Cumnock as I returned from Dumfries. Indeed, she is the only person in Edinburgh I have written to till this day. How are your soul and body putting up?—a little like man and wife, I suppose."

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Edinburgh, March 5, 1788.

I received yours from Cumnock about an hour ago; and to show you my good-nature, sit down to write to you immediately. I fear, Sylvander, you overvalue my generosity; for, believe me, it will be some time ere I can cordially forgive you the pain your silence has caused me! Did you ever feel that sickness of heart which arises from hope deferred? That, the cruelest of pains, you have inflicted on me for eight days by-past. I hope I can make every reasonable allowance for the hurry of business and dissipation. Yet, had I been ever so engrossed, I should have found one hour out of the twenty-four to write you. No more of it: I accept of your apologies; but am hurt that any should have been necessary between us on such a tender occasion.

I am happy that the farming scheme promises so well. There's no fickleness, my dear sir, in changing for the better. I never liked the Excise for you; and feel a sensible pleasure in the hope of your becoming a sober, industrious farmer. My prayers, in this affair, are heard, I hope, so far: may they be answered completely! The distance is the only thing I regret; but,

whatever tends to your welfare, overweighs all other considerations. I hope ere then to grow wiser, and to lie easy under weeks' silence. I had begun to think that you had fully experienced the truth of Sir Isaac's philosophy.

I have been under unspeakable obligations to your friend, Mr. Ainslie. I had not a mortal to whom I could speak of your name but him. He has called often; and, by sympathy, not a little alleviated my anxiety. I tremble lest you should have devolved, what you used to term your "folly," upon Clarinda: more's the pity. 'Tis never graceful but on the male side; but I shall learn more wisdom in future. Example has often good effects.

I got both your letters from Kilmarnock and Mauchline, and would, perhaps, have written to you unbidden, had I known anything of the geography of the country; but I knew not whether you would return by Mauchline or not, nor could Mr. Ainslie inform me. I have met with several little rubs, that hurt me the more that I had not a bosom to pour them into—

"On some fond breast the feeling soul relies."

Mary I have not once set eyes on, since I wrote to you. Oh, that I should be formed susceptible

of kindness, never, never to be fully, or at least habitually, returned! "Trim," (said my Uncle Toby) "I wish, Trim, I were dead."

Mr. Ainslie called just now to tell me he had heard from you. You would see, by my last, how anxious I was, even then, to hear from you. 'Tis the first time I ever had reason to be so; I hope 'twill be the last. My thoughts were yours both Sunday nights at eight. Why should my letter have affected you? You know I count all things (Heaven excepted) but loss, that I may win and keep you. I supped at Mr. Kemp's on Friday. Had you been an invisible spectator with what perfect ease I acquitted myself, you would have been pleased, highly pleased, with me.

Interrupted by a visit from Miss R ——. She was inquiring kindly for you. I delivered your compliments to her. She means (as you once said) all the kindness in the world, but she wants that "finer chord." Ah! Sylvander, happy, in my mind, are they who are void of it. Alas! it too often thrills with anguish.

I hope you have not forgotten to kiss the little cherub for me. Give him fifty, and think Clarinda blessing him all the while. I pity his mother sincerely, and wish a certain affair hap-

pily over. My Willie is in good health, except his leg, which confines him close since it was opened; and Mr. Wood says it will be a very tedious affair. He has prescribed sea-bathing as soon as the season admits. I never see Miss Nimmo. Her indifference wounds me; but all these things make me fly to the Father of Mercies, who is the inexhaustible Fountain of all kindness. How could you ever mention "postages"? I counted on a crown at least; and have only spent one poor shilling. If I had but a shilling in the world, you should have sixpence; nay, eightpence, if I could contrive to live on a groat. I am avaricious only in your letters; you are so, indeed. Farewell. Yours,

CLARINDA.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I own myself guilty, Clarinda: I should have written you last week. But when you recollect, my dearest Madam, that yours of this night's post is only the third I have from you, and that this is the fifth or sixth I have sent to you, you will not reproach me, with a good grace, for unkindness. I have always some kind of idea, not to sit down to write a letter, except I have time, and possession of my faculties, so as to do some justice to my letter; which at present is rarely my situation. For instance, yesterday I dined at a friend's at some distance: the savage hospitality of this country spent me the most part of the night over the nauseous potion in the bowl. This day—sick—headache—low spirits—miserable—fasting, except for a draught of water or small beer. Now eight o'clock at night; only able to crawl ten minutes' walk into Mauchline, to wait the post in the pleasurable hope of hearing from the mistress of my soul.

But truce with all this. When I sit down to write to you, all is happiness and peace. A hundred times a-day do I figure you before your taper—your book or work laid aside as I get within the room. How happy have I been! and

how little of that scantling portion of time, called the life of man, is sacred to happiness, much less transport.

I could moralise to-night, like a death's-head.

"O what is life, that thoughtless wish of all!
A drop of honey in a draught of gall."

Nothing astonishes me more, when a little sickness clogs the wheels of life, than the thoughtless career we run in the hour of health. "None saith, where is God, my Maker, that giveth songs in the night: who teacheth us more knowledge than the beasts of the field, and more understanding than the fowls of the air?"

Give me, my Maker, to remember thee! Give me, to act up to the dignity of my nature! Give me, to feel "another's woe"; and continue with me that dear-loved friend that feels with mine!

The dignifying and dignified consciousness of an honest man, and the well-grounded trust in approving Heaven, are two most substantial foundations of happiness. . . .

* * * * * *

I could not have written a page to any mortal, except yourself. I'll write you by Sunday's post. Adieu. Good night.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Mossgiel, 7th March, 1788.

Clarinda, I have been so stung with your reproach for unkindness,—a sin so unlike me, a sin I detest more than a breach of the whole decalogue, fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth articles excepted,—that I believe I shall not rest in my grave about it, if I die before I see you. You have often allowed me the head to judge, and the heart to feel the influence of female excellence: was it not blasphemy, then, against your own charms, and against my feelings, to suppose that a short fortnight could abate my passion?

You, my love, may have your cares and anxieties to disturb you; but they are the usual occurrences of life. Your future views are fixed, and your mind in a settled routine. Could not you, my ever dearest Madam, make a little allowance for a man, after long absence, paying a short visit to a country full of friends, relations, and early intimates? Cannot you guess, my Clarinda, what thoughts, what cares, what anxious forebodings, hopes and fears, must crowd the breast of the man of keen sensibility, when no less is on the tapis than his aim, his employment, his very existence through future life?

To be overtopped in anything else, I can bear; but in the tests of generous love, I defy all mankind! not even to the tender, the fond, the loving Clarinda—she whose strength of attachment, whose melting soul, may vie with Eloisa and Sappho, not even she can overpay the affection she owes me!

Now that, not my apology, but my defence is made, I feel my soul respire more easily. I know you will go along with me in my justification: would to Heaven you could in my adoption, too! I mean an adoption beneath the stars—an adoption where I might revel in the immediate beams of

"She the bright sun of all her sex."

I would not have you, my dear Madam, so much hurt at Miss N——'s coldness. 'Tis placing yourself below her, an honour she by no means deserves. We ought, when we wish to be economists in happiness,—we ought, in the first place, to fix the standard of our own character; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand, and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property; and those who seem to doubt, or deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices, or despise their

judgment. I know, my dear, you will say, this is self-conceit; but I call it self-knowledge: the one is the overweening opinion of a fool, who fancies himself to be, what he wishes himself to be thought; the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay, the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.

I urge this, my dear, both to confirm myself in the doctrine, which, I assure you, I sometimes need, and because I know, that this causes you often much disquiet. To return to Miss N——. She is, most certainly, a worthy soul; and equalled by very very few in goodness of heart. But can she boast more goodness of heart than Clarinda? Not even prejudice will dare to say so: for penetration and discernment, Clarinda sees far beyond her. To wit, Miss N—— dare make no pretence: to Clarinda's wit, scarce any of her sex dare make pretence. Personal charms, it would be ridiculous to run the parallel: and for conduct in life, Miss N—— was never called out, either much to do, or to suffer. Clarinda has been both; and has performed her part,

where Miss N—— would have sunk at the bare idea.

Away, then, with these disquietudes! Let us pray with the honest weaver of Kilbarchan, "Lord send us a gude conceit o' oursel'!" or in the words of the auld sang,

"Who does me disdain, I can scorn them again,
And I'll never mind any such foes."

There is an error in the commerce of intimacy . . . which has led me far astray . . . those who, by way of exchange, have not an equivalent to give us; and what is still worse, have no idea of the value of our goods. Happy is our lot, indeed, when we meet with an honest merchant, who is qualified to deal with us on our own terms; but that is a rarity: with almost everybody we must pocket our pearls, less or more; and learn, in the old Scots phrase, "To gie sic like as we get." For this reason, we should try to erect a kind of bank or storehouse in our own mind; or, as the Psalmist says, "We should commune with our own hearts, and be still." This is exactly the . . . if the friend be so peculiarly favoured of Heaven as to have a soul as noble and exalted as yours sooner or later your bosom will ache with disappointment.

I wrote you yesternight, which will reach you long before this can. I may write Mr. Ainslie before I see him, but I am not sure.

Farewell! and remember

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Edinburgh, 8th March, 1788.

I was agreeably surprised by your answer to mine of Wednesday coming this morning. I thought it always took two days, a letter from this to Mauchline, and did not expect yours sooner than Monday. This is the fifth from you, and the fourth time I am now writing you. I hate calculating them: like some things, they don't do to be numbered. I wish you had written from Dumfries, as you promised; but I do not impute it to any cause but hurry of business, &c. I hope I shall never live to reproach you with unkindness. You never ought to put off till you "have time to do justice to your letters." I have sufficient memorials of your abilities in that way; and last week two lines, to have said "How do ye, my Clarinda," would have saved me days and nights of cruel disquietude. "A word to the wise," you know. I know human nature better than to expect always fine flights of fancy, or exertions of genius, and feel in myself the effects of this "crazy mortal coil," upon its glorious inhabitant. To-day I have a clogging headache; but, however stupid, I know (at least I hope) a letter from your heart's friend

will be acceptable. It will reach you to-morrow, I hope. Shocking custom! one can't entertain with hospitality without taxing their guests with the consequences you mention.

Your reflections upon the effects which sickness has on our retrospect of ourselves, are noble. I see my Sylvander will be all I wish him, before he leaves this world. Do you remember what simple eulogium I pronounced on you, when Miss Nimmo asked, what I thought of you:—"He is ane of God's ain; but his time's no come yet." It was like a speech from your worthy mother,—whom I revere. She would have joined me with a heartfelt sigh, which none but mothers know. It is rather a bad picture of us, that we are most prone to call upon God in trouble. Ought not the daily blessings of health, peace, competence, friends,—ought not these to awaken our constant gratitude to the Giver of all? I imagine, that the heart which does not occasionally glow with filial love in the hours of prosperity, can hardly hope to feel much comfort in flying to God in the time of distress. O my dear Sylvander! that we may be enabled to set Him before us, as our witness, benefactor, and judge, at all times, and on all occasions!

In the name of wonder how could you spend

ten hours with such a —— as Mr. Pattison? What a despicable character! Religion! he knows only the name; none of her real votaries ever wished to make any such shameful compromises. But 'tis Scripture verified—the demon of avarice, his original devil, finding him empty, called other seven more impure spirits, and so completely infernalised him. Destitute of discernment to perceive your merit, or taste to relish it, my astonishment at his fondness of you, is only surpassed by your more than Puritanic patience in listening to his shocking nonsense! I hope you renewed his certificate. I was told, it was in a tattered condition some months ago, and that he proposed putting it on parchment, by way of preserving it. Don't call me severe: I hate all who would turn the "Grace of God into licentiousness;" 'tis commonly the weaker part of mankind who attempt it.

"Religion, Thou the soul of happiness."

Yesterday morning in bed I happened to think of you. I said to myself, "My bonnie Lizzie Baillie," &c., and laughed; but I felt a delicious swell of heart, and my eyes swam in tears. I know not if your sex ever feel this burst of affection; 'tis an emotion indescribable. You see I'm

grown a fool since you left me. You know I was rational, when you first knew me, but I always grow more foolish, the farther I am from those I love; by and by I suppose I shall be insane altogether.

I am happy your little lamb is doing so well. Did you execute my commission? You had a great stock on hand; and, if any agreeable customers came in the way, you would dispose of some of them I fancy, hoping soon to be supplied with a fresh assortment. For my part, I can truly say, I have had no demand. I really believe you have taught me dignity, which, partly through good nature, and partly by misfortune, had been too much laid aside; which now I will never part with. Why should I not keep it up? Admired, esteemed, beloved, by one of the first of mankind! Not all the wealth of Peru could have purchased these. Oh, Sylvander, I am great in my own eyes, when I think how high I am, in your esteem! You have shown me the merit I possess; I knew it not before. Even Joseph trembled t'other day in my presence. "Husbands looked mild and savages grew tame!" Love and cherish your friend Mr. Ainslie. He is your friend indeed. I long for next week; happy days, I hope, yet await us. When you meet

young Beauties, think of Clarinda's affection—of her situation—of how much her happiness depends on you.

Farewell, till we meet. God be with you.

CLARINDA.

P. S.—Will you take the trouble to send for a small parcel left at Dunlop and Wilson's, Booksellers, Trongate, Glasgow, for me, and bring it with you in the Fly?

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I will meet you to-morrow, Clarinda, as you appoint. My Excise affair is just concluded, and I have got my order for instructions: so far good. Wednesday night I am engaged to sup among some of the principals of the Excise: so can only make a call for you that evening; but next day, I stay to dine with one of the Commissioners, so cannot go till Friday morning.

Your hopes, your fears, your cares, my love, are mine; so don't mind them. I will take you in my hand through the dreary wilds of this world, and scare away the ravening bird or beast that would annoy you. I saw Mary in town to-day, and asked her if she had seen you. I shall certainly bespeak Mr. Ainslie as you desire.

Excuse me, my dearest angel, this hurried scrawl and miserable paper; circumstances make both. Farewell till to-morrow.

SYLVANDER.

Monday, Noon. (31st March.)

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I am just hurrying away to wait on the Great Man, Clarinda; but I have more respect to my own peace and happiness than to set out without waiting on you; for my imagination, like a child's favourite bird, will fondly flutter along with this scrawl, till it perch on your bosom. I thank you for all the happiness you bestowed on me yesterday. The walk—delightful; the evening—rapture. Do not be uneasy to-day, Clarinda; forgive me. I am in rather better spirits to-day, though I had but an indifferent night. Care, anxiety, sat on my spirits; and all the cheerfulness of this morning is the fruit of some serious, important ideas that lie, in their realities, beyond "the dark and narrow house," as Ossian, prince of poets, says. The Father of Mercies be with you, Clarinda! and every good thing attend you!

SYLVANDER.

Tuesday Morning. (8th April.)

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Wednesday Morning.

Clarinda, will that envious night-cap hinder you from appearing at the window as I pass? "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning; fair as the sun, clear as the moon, terrible as an army with banners?"

Do not accuse me of fond folly for this line; you know I am a cool lover. I mean by these presents greeting, to let you to wit, that arch-rascal Creech,* has not done my business yester-night, which has put off my leaving town till Monday morning. To-morrow, at eleven, I meet with him for the last time; just the hour I should have met far more agreeable company.

You will tell me this evening, whether you can-not make our hour of meeting to-morrow one o'clock. I have just now written Creech such a letter, that the very goose-feather in my hand shrunk back from the line, and seemed to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake!" I am forming ideal schemes of vengeance. O for a little of my

* Creech, the bookseller who published the second edition of Burns' poems, was "a pleasant companion, but of penurious habits, and extremely dilatory in the settling of accounts, though a man of considerable wealth."

will on him! I just wished he loved as I do—as glorious an object as Clarinda—and that he were doomed. Adieu, and think on

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Friday, Nine o'clock, Night.

I am just now come in, and have read your letter. The first think I did, was to thank the Divine Disposer of events, that he has had such happiness in store for me as the connexion I have with you. Life, my Clarinda, is a weary, barren path; and wo be to him or her that ventures on it alone! For me, I have my dearest partner of my soul: Clarinda and I will make out our pilgrimage together. Wherever I am, I shall constantly let her know how I go on, what I observe in the world around me, and what adventures I meet with. Will it please you, my love, to get, every week, or, at least, every fortnight, a packet, two or three sheets, full of remarks, nonsense, news, rhymes, and old songs?

Will you open, with satisfaction and delight, a letter from a man who loves you, who has loved you, and who will love you to death, through death, and for ever? Oh Clarinda! what do I owe to Heaven for blessing me with such a piece of exalted excellence as you! I call over your idea, as a miser counts over his treasure! Tell me, were you studious to please me last night? I am sure you did it to transport. How rich am

I who have such a treasure as you! You know me; you know how to make me happy, and you do it most effectually. God bless you with

"Long life, long youth, long pleasure, and a friend!"

To-morrow night, according to your own direction, I shall watch the window: 'tis the star that guides me to Paradise. The great relish to all is, that Honour, that Innocence, that Religion, are the witnesses and guarantees of our happiness. "The Lord God knoweth" and perhaps, "Israel he shall know" my love and your merit. Adieu, Clarinda! I am going to remember you in my prayers.

SYLVANDER.

"When Burns left Edinburgh in April, 1788," writes Mrs. M'Lehose's grandson, "he presented an elegant pair of drinking glasses to Clarinda, with the following verses. The glasses were carefully preserved by her, and often taken down from the open cupboard in her parlour, to show to strangers."

TO CLARINDA

(With a present of a pair of drinking glasses.)

Fair Empress of the Poet's soul,
And Queen of Poetesses,
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses;

And fill them high with generous juice,
As generous as your mind,
And pledge me in the generous toast,
"The whole of humankind!"

"To those who love us!" second fill,
But not to those whom we love,
Lest we love those who love not us.
A third, "To thee and me, love!"

Burns' marriage followed with astounding haste upon the letters in which he assured Clarinda and Ainslie that he had done with Jean and she with him. This is not so strange, if his feeling for Clarinda were more than a mere passion. The high gods have no pity for self-deceit, and the deeper love strikes into the being of man and woman, the more inexorably are their eyes opened at last to truth. Some new and pitiless clarity of vision forced upon Burns the realisa-

tion of responsibilities to which he had been blind. In the letters that announced his marriage to his friends, we find him doggedly clinging to a certain formula—"I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?" His estimate of marriage was confessedly the Pauline one, but of that Jean never complained. She mothered her own children—and the child of another woman, for Burns married was still Burns—with tender patience; and not the bairns only, but their father too. He was fond of her, kind and considerate in their family life; he gave her, not only some exquisite songs, which alas! came all too cheap, but the first gingham worn in those parts, which really shows some costly thought for her pleasure and dignity. But he says a volume in a few words when he admits, "Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel and highly venerate; but somehow it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion where love is liberty and nature law." Duty lay heavily upon him—the cart-horse part of human nature does not come by wishing!—and in one rather pathetic entry of his commonplace book we find him wearied to death with the prosy business of living.

ENTRY IN BURNS' COMMON-PLACE BOOK

Ellisland, 14th June, 1788. Sunday.

This is now the third day I have been in this country. Lord, what is man! what a bustling little bundle of passions, appetites, ideas and fancies! and what a capricious kind of existence he has here! If legendary stories be true, there is indeed an Elsewhere, where, as Thomson says, "Virtue sole survives."

> "Tell us, ye Dead;
> Will none of you in pity disclose the secret,
> What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?
> ——a little time
> Will make us learned as you are, and as close."

I am such a coward in Life, so tired of the Service, that I would almost at any time with Milton's Adam—

> "gladly lay me in my mother's lap
> And be at peace."

but a wife and children, in poetics, "The fair Partner of my soul and the little dear Pledges of our mutual love," these bind me to struggle with the stream; till some chopping squall overset the

silly vessel, or, in the listless return of years, its own craziness drive it to a wreck. Farewell, now, to those giddy Follies, those varnished Vices, which, though half sanctified by the bewitching levity of Wit and Humour, are at best but thriftless idling with the precious current of existence; nay, often poisoning the whole, that, like the Plains of Jericho, "The water is naught, and the ground barren," and nothing short of a supernaturally gifted Elisha can ever after heal the evils.

Wedlock, the circumstance that buckles me hardest to Care, if Virtue and Religion were to be anything with me but mere names, was what in a few seasons I must have resolved on; in the present case it was unavoidably necessary. Humanity, Generosity, honest vanity of character, Justice to my own happiness for after-life, so far as it could depend, which it surely will a great deal, on internal peace, all these joined their warmest suffrages, their most powerful solicitations, with a rooted Attachment, to urge the step I have taken. Nor have I any reason on her part to rue it. I can fancy how, but I have never seen where, I could have made it better. Come then, let me return to my favourite Motto, that glorious passage in Young—

"On Reason build Resolve,
That column of true majesty in man."

We do not know whether he wrote Clarinda the news of his marriage, or left the knowledge to reach her by indirect ways. The following letter proves that she took it extremely ill. While we may well guess that, setting aside her little preachments, Clarinda did not make self-control any too easy for Burns, it is noteworthy that this is the only occasion when he turns upon her with any suggestion to that effect.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

March 9th, 1789.

MADAM,—The letter you wrote me to Heron's carries its own answer in its bosom; you forbade me to write you, unless I was willing to plead guilty to a certain indictment that you were pleased to bring against me. As I am convinced of my own innocence, and, though conscious of high imprudence and egregious folly, can lay my hand on my breast and attest the rectitude of my heart, you will pardon me, Madam, if I do not carry my complaisance so far, as humbly to acquiesce in the name of Villain, merely out of compliment to your opinion; much as I esteem your judgment, and warmly as I regard your worth.

I have already told you, and I again aver it, that, at the period of time alluded to, I was not under the smallest moral tie to Mrs. Burns; nor did I, nor could I then know, all the powerful circumstances that omnipotent necessity was busy laying in wait for me. When you call over the scenes that have passed between us, you will survey the conduct of an honest man, struggling successfully with temptations, the most powerful that ever beset humanity, and preserving untainted honour, in situations where the austerest

virtue would have forgiven a fall: situations that, I will dare to say, not a single individual of all his kind, even with half his sensibility and passion, could have encountered without ruin; and I leave you to guess, Madam, how such a man is likely to digest an accusation of perfidious treachery.

Was I to blame, Madam, in being the distracted victim of charms which, I affirm it, no man ever approached with impunity? Had I seen the least glimmering of hope that these charms could ever have been mine; or even had not iron necessity—but these are unavailing words.

I would have called on you when I was in town, indeed I could not have resisted it, but that Mr. Ainslie told me, that you were determined to avoid your windows while I was in town, lest even a glance of me should occur in the street.

When I shall have regained your good opinion, perhaps I may venture to solicit your friendship; but, be that as it may, the first of her sex I ever knew shall always be the object of my warmest good wishes.

R. B.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

(About end of January, 1790.)

I have, indeed, been ill, Madam, this whole winter. An incessant headache, depression of spirits, and all the truly miserable consequences of a deranged nervous system have made dreadful havoc of my health and peace. Add to all this, a line of life, into which I have lately entered, obliges me to ride, upon an average, at least two hundred miles every week. Howevcr, thank Heaven I am now greatly better in my health. . . .

I cannot, will not, enter into extenuatory circumstances; else I could show you how my precipitate, headlong, unthinking conduct, leagued with a conjuncture of unlucky events, to thrust me out of a possibility of keeping the path of rectitude; to curse me, by an irreconcileable war between my duty and my nearest wishes, and to damn me with a choice only of different species of error and misconduct.

I dare not trust myself further with this subject. The following song is one of my latest productions; and I send it to you as I would do anything else, because it pleases myself.

MY LOVELY NANCY

Tune: The Quaker's Wife.

Thine am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish:
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away those rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure;
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

The following fragment was found endorsed by Clarinda, "Received Feb. 5, 1790." By some it is supposed to be a part of the preceding letter, but from the allusions it would rather seem to have been written upon receiving her answer.

I could not answer your last letter but one. When you in so many words tell a man that you look on his letters with a smile of contempt, in what language, Madam, can he answer you? Though I were conscious that I had acted wrong —and I am conscious that I have acted wrong— yet would I not be bullied into repentance; but your last letter. . . . Madam, determined as you. . . .

The reverse of the fragment contains the verses "To Mary in Heaven."

In the opera of Julien we have the saddest point of the hero's life marked by a travesty of his most sacred experience,—the high priest of Art burlesqued by a street showman and the Goddess of Beauty by a drunken girl of the gutters. Often in the work of men who have staked much on some principle, we find the terrible moment of reaction where they laugh at that principle and at the fools who champion it, as in Ibsen's "Wild Duck." In the last years of Burns, we find a travesty of his passion for Nancy,—a thin, cheap, trifling affair and deliberate withal, almost as if he thought that belittling the former experience could lessen the pain it had left. Mrs. Whelpdale, the "lassie wi' the lint-white

locks" whom he chose for his Chloris, had made a foolish marriage and was deserted by her reprobate husband, like Clarinda. He carried the dreary play far enough to suggest changing in a later edition the opening line of the foregoing song to read

"Thine am I, my Chloris fair."

He had already altered the second and fourth lines, much to the poem's detriment.

But Chloris was only a poor shadow after all, and he seems to have realised it. He writes to George Thomson, in 1796, the year of his death: "In my bypast songs I dislike one thing—the name Chloris. I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady, but on second thoughts it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scotch pastoral ballad. Of this and of some things else in my next; I have other amendments to propose. What you once mentioned of flaxen locks is just. They cannot enter into an elegant description of beauty."

So much for Chloris.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Probably July, 1791.

I have received both your last letters, Madam, and ought, and would, have answered the first long ago. But on what subject shall I write you? How can you expect a correspondent should write you when you declare that you mean to preserve his letters, with a view sooner or later, to expose them on the pillory of derision, and the rack of criticism? This is gagging me completely, as to speaking the sentiments of my bosom; else, Madam, I could, perhaps, too truly

"Join grief with grief, and echo sighs to thine!"

I have perused your most beautiful, but most pathetic poem: do not ask me how often, or with what emotions. You know that "I dare to sin, but not to lie!" Your verses wring the confession from my inmost soul, that—I will say it, expose it if you please—that I have, more than once in my life, been the victim of a damning conjuncture of circumstances; and that to me you must be ever

"Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes."

I have just, since I had yours, composed the following stanzas. Let me know your opinion of them.

Sensibility, how charming,
Thou, my Friend, canst truly tell;
But Distress, with horrors arming,
Thou, alas! hast known too well!

Fairest Flower, behold the lily,
Blooming in the sunny ray;
Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
See it prostrate in the clay.

Hear the wood-lark charm the forest,
Telling o'er his little joys;
But, alas! a prey the surest
To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure
Finer feelings can bestow:
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

I have one other piece in your taste; but I have just a snatch of time.

R. B.

The following poem would appear to be the one which he speaks of her sending him.

SYMPATHY

Assist me, all ye gentle powers
That sweeten Friendship's happy hours,
Whilst I attempt to sing of thee,
Heav'n-born emotion, Sympathy.

When first I saw my rural swain,
The pride of all the tuneful train,
That hour we lov'd—what could it be
But thy sweet magic, Sympathy?

Nor sordid wealth, nor giddy power,
Could e'er confer one happy hour—
One hour like those I've spent with thee,
In love's endearing sympathy!

All hail! the heav'n-inspired mind,
That glows with love of human-kind;
'Tis thine to feel the ecstasy—
Soul link'd to soul by Sympathy.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

Edinburgh, 2nd August.

Your surely mistake me, Sir—"Expose your letters to criticism!" Nothing could be farther from my intention: read my letters and you will find nothing to justify such an idea. But I suppose they are burned, so you can't have recourse to them. In an impassioned hour I once talked of publishing them, but a little cool reflection showed me its impropriety: the idea has long been abandoned and I wish you to write me with that confidence you would do to a person of whom you entertained a good opinion and who is sincerely interested in your welfare. To the "everyday children of the world" I well know one cannot speak the sentiments of the bosom.

I am pleased with your reception of the Poem and no less so with your beautiful stanzas in consequence. The last I think particularly elegant—

Dearly bought the hidden treasure, &c.

It has procured me a short visit from the Muse, who has been a stranger since the "Golden Dream" of '88. The verses are inaccurate, but

if worth while, pray correct them for me. Here they are—

Yes, Sensibility is charming
  Tho' it may wound the tender mind,
Nature's stores, the bosom warming,
  Yield us pleasures most refined.

See yonder pair of warbling linnets,
  How their music charms the grove;
What else with rapture fills their minutes
  But Sensibility and Love?

Ev'n should the sportsmen (cruel rovers!)
  Rob them of their tuneful breath,
How blest the little life-long lovers,
  Undivided in their death!

A long-loved maid, nipt in the blossom,
  May lie in yonder kirkyard green;
Yet Mem'ry soothes her lover's bosom,
  Recalling many a raptured scene.

Or, musing by the rolling ocean,
  See him sit with visage wan,
As wave succeeding wave in motion,
  Mourns the chequer'd life of Man.

Sensibility! sweet treasure,
  Still I'll sing in praise of thee:
All that mortals know of pleasure
  Flows from Sensibility.*

Let me know what you think of this poor imitation of your style 'Tis metre, but not poetry.

Pray, have you seen Greenfield's Poems? or Miss Carmichael's? The last are very poor, I think.

I have been reading Beattie's *Minstrel* for the first time. What a delicious treat!

Interrupted—adieu!

A. M.

* Mr. Scott Douglas, who first printed this letter, added the note: "We have, for want of space, been compelled to abridge Clarinda's little sentimental poem, but the omitted stanzas are in quality considerably inferior to those here presented."

FROM MRS. M'LEHOSE'S NARRATIVE

In August, 1791, "I had a letter" (from Mr. M'Lehose) "and, soon after, another, inviting me to come out to Jamaica and enclosing a bill for £50, which was meant, I suppose, to equip me; and containing the most flattering directions to give his only surviving son the best education Edinburgh could afford." (Mr. M'Lehose had all this time been prospering in Jamaica, but in spite of strenuous efforts to recall him to his duty, not a farthing had found its way to his family.) "I consulted my friends; they declined giving any advice, and referred me to my own mind. After much agitation, and deep and anxious reflection for my child's sake, for whom he promised such liberal things, and encouraged by flattering accounts of his character and conduct in Jamaica, I resolved to undertake the arduous voyage." (It is not at all unlikely that the marriage of Burns may have counted for something in her decision.)

She wrote as follows to her cousin, Lord Craig. "When I wrote you last, the bidding adieu to my dear boy was my only source of anxiety. I had then no idea whatever of going out to Mr. M'Lehose. Next day I learned from

Mrs. Adair that Captain Liddel told her my husband had the strongest resolution of using me kindly, in case I accepted of his invitation; and that pride alone hindered him acknowledging his faults a second time, still hurt at my not answering his overtures of reconciliation from London. But that, in case I did not choose to come over, I might rest assured I would never hear from him while he existed. Captain Liddel added his opinion, that I ought to go, in the strongest terms. Mrs. Adair joins him; and above all, my poor boy adds his entreaties most earnestly. I thought it prudent to inform him, for the first time, of the disagreement between his parents, and the unhappy jealousy in his father's temper. Still he argues that his father may be incensed at my refusal. If I go I have a terror of the sea, and no less of the climate; above all, the horror of again involving myself in misery in the midst of strangers, and almost without remedy. If I refuse, I must bid my only child (in whom all my affections and hopes are entirely centred) adieu for ever; struggle with a straitened income and the world's censure solitary and unprotected. The bright side of these alternatives is, that if I go, my husband's jealousy of temper may be abated from a better

knowledge of the world; and time and misfortunes, by making alterations both on person and vivacity, will render me less likely to incur his suspicions; and that ill humour, which partly arose from straitened fortune, will be removed by affluence. I will enjoy my son's society, and have him for a friend; and who knows what effect so fine a boy may have on a father long absent from his sight. If I refuse, and stay here, I shall continue to enjoy a circle of kind, respectable friends. Though my income be small, I can never be in want; and I shall maintain that liberty which, after nine years' enjoyment, I shall find it hard to forego, even to the degree to which I am sensible every married woman must submit."

A few days later she wrote again to her cousin. "On Friday last I went down to Leith and had a conversation on board the *Roselle* with Captain Liddel. He told me that Mr. M'Lehose had talked of me and of my coming over, with great tenderness; and said, it would be my fault if we did not enjoy great happiness; and concluded with assuring me, if I were his own child he would advise me to go out. This conversation has tended greatly to decide my accepting my husband's invitation. I have done what you de-

sired me,—weighed coolly (as coolly as a subject so interesting would permit) all I have to suffer or to expect in either situation; and the result is, my going to Jamaica. This appears to me the preferable choice: it is surely the path of duty; and as such, I may look for the blessing of God to attend my endeavours for happiness with him who was the husband of my choice and the father of my children. On Saturday I was agreeably surprised by a call from Mr. Kemp. He had received my letter that morning at Glasgow, and had alighted for a few minutes, on his way to Easter Duddungston, where his family are for summer quarters. He was much affected with my perplexing situation. Like you, he knew not how to decide, and left me, promising to call early this day, which he has done. I told him of the meeting with Mr. Liddel, and enumerated all the arguments which I had thought of on both sides of the question. What Mr. Liddel (who is a man of known worth) said to me weighed much with him; and he, too, is now of opinion my going to Jamaica is advisable. He gave me much good advice as to my conduct towards Mr. M'Lehose, and promised to write him himself. Your letter luckily arrived while he was with me. The assurance of my little in-

come being secured me, not a little adds both to his opinion of the propriety of my going, and to my ease and comfort, in case (after doing all I can) it should prove impossible to enjoy that peace which I so earnestly pant after; and I would fain hope for a tender reception. After ten years' separation, and the sacrifice I make of bidding adieu (probably for ever) to my friends and my country—indeed, I am much depressed in mind—should I escape the sea, the climate may prove fatal to me; but should it happen so, I have the satisfaction to think I shall die in attempting to attain happiness in that path of duty which Providence and a succession of events seem to point out for the best. You, my dear kind benefactor, have had much trouble with me first and last; and though others appear ungrateful, neither time nor absence can ever erase from my heart the remembrance of your past kindness. My prayers shall ascend for the reward of Heaven upon your head! To-morrow I am to write to my husband. Mr. Kemp is to see it on Wednesday. If any person occurs to you as proper to place Andrew with in Edinburgh, let me know—the sooner the better: the hopes of his rejoining me will help to console my mind in the midst of strangers. I am sorry

you are to be so long of coming to town. Meantime I shall be glad to hear from you; for I am, my dear Sir, in every possible situation your affectionate and obliged friend, A. M."

"I accordingly wrote to my husband in October, 1791, acquainting him with my resolution of forgetting past differences, and throwing myself on his protection." As the *Roselle*—which, by a curious coincidence was the ship in which Burns had thought of making his voyage to Jamaica—did not sail till spring, she again wrote to her husband in December. "I had occasion to be in Glasgow lately for two days only. I called for your mother. I felt much for her—bereaved of so many children. They told me you had not written for these three years past; but I assured them (and I hope it is the case) that your letters must have miscarried, as I could not believe you capable of such unkind neglect. I am certain, inclination no less than duty, must ever prompt you to pay attention to your mother. She has met with many and sore afflictions; and I feel for her the most sincere sympathy. . . . I have met with much kindness since I came to Edinburgh, from a set of most agreeable and respectable friends. No ideas of wealth or splendour could compensate for the pain I feel in bidding

them adieu. Nothing could support me but the fond reliance I have of gaining your affections and confidence. To possess these is the dearest wish of my heart; and I trust the Almighty will grant this my ardent desire. I would fain hope to hear from you ere we sail; a kind letter from you would prove a balm to my soul during the anxieties of a tedious voyage."

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

November, 1791.

Sir,—I take the liberty of addressing a few lines in behalf of your old acquaintance, Jenny Clow, who, to all appearance, is at this moment dying. Obliged, from all the symptoms of a rapid decay, to quit her service, she is gone to a room almost without common necessaries, untended and unmourned. In circumstances so distressing, to whom can she so naturally look for aid as to the father of her child, the man for whose sake she has suffered many a sad and anxious night, shut from the world, with no other companions than guilt and solitude? You have now an opportunity to evince you indeed possess those fine feelings you have delineated, so as to claim the just admiration of your country. I am convinced I need add nothing farther to persuade you to act as every consideration of humanity must dictate. I am, Sir, your sincere well-wisher,

A. M.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Dumfries, 23d November, 1791.

It is extremely difficult, my dear Madam, for me to deny a lady anything; but to a lady whom I regard with all the endearing epithets of respectful esteem and old friendship, how shall I find the language of refusal? I have, indeed, a shade * of the lady, which I keep, and shall ever keep in the *sanctum sanctorum* of my most anxious care. That lady, though an unfortunate and irresistible conjuncture of circumstances has lost me her esteem, yet she shall be ever, to me

"Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart."

I am rather anxious for her sake, as to her voyage. I pray God my fears may be groundless. By the way, I have this moment a letter from her, with a paragraph or two conceived in so stately a style, that I would not pardon it in any created being except herself; but, as the subject interests me much, I shall answer it to you, as I do not know her present address. I am sure she must have told you of a girl, a Jenny Clow,

* Not in the breast-pin, however, which enshrined it on his return from Edinburgh. After his marriage, he substituted for Clarinda's silhouette one of Jean, with the motto, "To err is human; to forgive, divine."

who had the misfortune to make me a father, with contrition I own it, contrary to the laws of our most excellent constitution, in our holy Presbyterian hierarchy.

Mrs. M—— tells me a tale of the poor girl's distress that makes my very heart weep blood. I will trust that your goodness will apologise to your delicacy for me, when I beg of you, for Heaven's sake, to send a porter to the poor woman—Mrs. M., it seems, knows where she is to be found—with five shillings in my name; and, as I shall be in Edinburgh on Tuesday first, for certain, make the poor wench leave a line for me, before Tuesday, at Mr. Mackay's, White Hart Inn, Grassmarket, where I shall put up; and, before I am two hours in town, I shall see the poor girl, and try what is to be done for her relief. I would have taken my boy from her long ago, but she would never consent.

I shall do myself the very great pleasure to call for you when I come to town, and repay you the sum your goodness shall have advanced. . . . . and most obedient,

ROBERT BURNS.

Burns was in Edinburgh from the 29th of November to the 6th of December, on which date

he returned to Dumfries, after what was to be the last of all his meetings with Clarinda. It is supposed that it is to this occasion he refers in his poem, "O May, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet as the mirk night of December."

It is evident from the letters and poems that follow that the reconciliation was complete.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

He transcribes in full his Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots, and adds.

Such, my dearest Clarinda, were the words of the amiable but unfortunate Mary. Misfortune seems to take a peculiar pleasure in darting her arrows against "honest men and bonny lasses." Of this you are too, too just a proof; but may your future fate be a bright exception to the remark! In the words of Hamlet,

"Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me."

SYLVANDER.

Leadhills, Thursday, Noon. (11th December, 1791.)

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Dumfries.

I have some merit, my ever dearest of women, in attracting and securing the heart of Clarinda. In her I met with the most accomplished of all womankind, the first of all God's works; and yet I, even I, have had the good fortune to appear amiable in her sight.

By the by, this is the sixth letter that I have written you since I left you; and if you were an ordinary being, as you are a creature very extraordinary—an instance of what God Almighty in the plenitude of his power and the fulness of his goodness, can make! I would never forgive you for not answering my letters.

I have sent in your hair, a part of the parcel you gave me, with a measure, to Mr. Bruce the jeweller in Prince's Street, to get a ring done for me. I have likewise sent in the verses On Sensibility altered to

"Sensibility how charming,
Dearest Nancy, thou canst tell," &c.,

to the Editor of the Scots Songs, of which you have three volumes, set to a most beautiful air;

out of compliment to the first of women, my ever-beloved, my ever-sacred Clarinda. I shall probably write you to-morrow. In the meantime, from a man who is literally drunk, accept and forgive!

R. B.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Dumfries, 27th December, 1791.

I have yours, my ever dearest Madam, this moment. I have just ten minutes before the post goes; and these I shall employ in sending you some songs I have just been composing to different tunes, for the Collection of Songs, of which you have three volumes, and of which you shall have the fourth.

SONG

Tune: Rory Dall's Port.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, and then for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerful twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy:
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly!
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love, and Pleasure!

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

SONG

(To an old Scots Tune)

Behold the hour, the boat, arrive!
  My dearest Nancy, O fareweel!
Sever'd frae thee, can I survive,
  Frae thee whom I hae loved sae weel!

Endless and deep shall be my grief;
  Nae ray o' comfort shall I see;
But this most precious, dear belief!
  That thou wilt still remember me.

Alang the solitary shore,
  Where fleeting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
  I'll westward turn my wistful eye:

Happy, thou Indian grove, I'll say,
  Where now my Nancy's path shall be!
While thro' your sweets she holds her way,
  O tell me, does she muse on me!!!

SONG

To a charming plaintive Scots Air.

Ance mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
  Ance mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
Sad was the parting thou mak'st me remember,
  Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair!

Fond lovers' parting is sweet, painful pleasure,
  Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, oh, farewell for ever!
  Anguish unmingled and agony pure!

The rest of this song is on the wheels.

Adieu. Adieu.

SYLVANDER.

The song was afterward finished as follows:

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown,
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Since my last hope and last comfort is gone!

Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou mak'st me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair!

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER

25th January, 1792.

Agitated, hurried to death, I sit down to write a few lines to you, my ever dear, dear friend! We are ordered aboard on Saturday,—to sail on Sunday. And now, my dearest Sir, I have a few things to say to you, as the last advice of her, who could have lived or died with you! I am happy to know of your applying so steadily to the business you have engaged in; but oh, remember, this life is a short, passing scene! Seek God's favour, —keep His Commandments—be solicitous to prepare for a happy eternity! There, I trust, we will meet, in perfect and never-ending bliss. Read my former letters attentively: let the religious tenets there expressed sink deep into your mind; meditate on them with candour, and your accurate judgment must be convinced that they accord with the words of Eternal Truth! Laugh no more at holy things, or holy men: remember, "without holiness, no man shall see God." Another thing, and I have done: as you value my peace, do not write me to Jamaica, until I let you know you may with safety. Write Mary often. She feels for you! and judges of your present feelings by her own. I am sure you will be happy

to hear of my happiness: and I trust you will—soon. If there is time, you may drop me a line ere I go, to inform me if you get this, and another letter I wrote you, dated the 21st, which I am afraid of having been neglected to be put into the office.

So it was the *Roselle* you were to have gone in! I read your letter to-day, and reflected deeply on the ways of Heaven! To us they oft appear dark and doubtful; but let us do our duty faithfully, and sooner or later we will have our reward, because "the Lord God Omnipotent reigns": every upright mind has here cause to rejoice. And now, adieu. May Almighty God bless you and yours! take you into His blessed favour here, and afterward receive you into His glory!

Farewell! I will ever, ever remain

Your *real* friend,

A. M.

Poor little Clarinda! She probably looked forward to a most romantic correspondence full of noble sentiment enlivened by hopeless passion, when, safely insulated by the sea, she could arrange for receiving her mail without disturbing the conjugal entente. Alas for her hopes, that entente proved far from cordial. Her husband,

weakening in his good resolutions (possibly on the receipt of her letters and Mr. Kemp's), had urged her not to come, alleging that yellow fever was raging in the island and the negroes were in revolt. She had resolved to go, however, and go she did,—only to learn upon her arrival that the warnings were untrue, and the hard fact of the matter was simply that he did not want her. He was both unkind and unfaithful; and her humiliation and distress, combined with the effect of the climate, made it necessary for her health's sake to return to Scotland. Painful as her experience had been, we can hardly doubt her relief in returning to her congenial Edinburgh life, all former compromising circumstances erased by her martyrdom in the name of wifely duty—a martyrdom which it is logical to assume she did not endure in silence. She did not write to Burns that she had come back; that is easy to understand. That mirk night o' December undoubtedly left matters in a status only to be continued with comfort and safety on opposite sides of the ocean. Back in the same little Scotland, she was quite evidently afraid of him. He was not to be dropped so easily, however, and wrote, as she had suggested, to her friend.

BURNS TO MARY PEACOCK

Dumfries, Dec. 6, 1792.

DEAR MADAM—I have written to you so often and have got no answer, that I had resolved never to lift up a pen to you again; but this eventful day, *the sixth of December,* recalls to my memory such a scene! Heaven and earth! when I remember a far-distant person!—but no more of this until I learn from you a proper address and why my letters have lain by you unanswered, as this is the third I have sent you. The opportunities will all be gone now, I fear, of sending over the book I mentioned in my last. Do not write me for a week, as I shall not be at home; but as soon after that as possible.

Ance mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
Ance mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
Dire was the parting thou bidst me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair!

Yours,

R. B.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

I suppose, my dear Madam, that by your neglecting to inform me of your arrival in Europe,—a circumstance that could not be indifferent to me, as, indeed, no occurrence relating to you can,—you meant to leave me to guess and gather that a correspondence I once had the honour and felicity to enjoy, is to be no more. Alas! what heavy-laden sounds are these—"No more!" The wretch who has never tasted pleasure, has never known woe; what drives the soul to madness, is the recollection of joys that are "no more!" But this is not language to the world: they do not understand it. But come, ye few,—the children of Feeling and Sentiment!—ye whose trembling bosom-chords ache to unutterable anguish, as recollection gushes on the heart!—ye who are capable of an attachment, keen as the arrow of Death and strong as the vigour of immortal being,—come! and your ears shall drink a tale—— But, hush! I must not, cannot tell it; agony is in the recollection, and frenzy in the recital!

But, Madam,—to leave the paths that lead to madness,—I congratulate your friends on your return; and I hope that the precious health, which Miss P. tells me is so much injured, is restored,

or restoring. There is a fatality attends Miss Peacock's correspondence and mine. Two of my letters, it seems, she never received; and her last came while I was in Ayrshire, was unfortunately mislaid and only found about ten days or a fortnight ago, on removing a desk of drawers.

I present you a book: may I hope you will accept of it. I daresay you will have brought your books with you. The fourth volume of the Scots Songs is published; I will presume to send it you. Shall I hear from you? But first hear me. No cold language—no prudential documents: I despise advice and scorn control. If you are not to write such language, such sentiments as you know I shall wish, shall delight to receive, I conjure you, by wounded pride! by ruined peace! by frantic, disappointed passion! by all the many ills that constitute that sum of human woes, a broken heart!!!—to me be silent for ever.

The rest of this letter is missing from the letter in Clarinda's collection, but we know how it ran, because Burns included this "composition" as Mr. Chambers aptly characterises it, in the volume of Letters he transcribed for Riddel. It was headed by him, "Letter to a Lady, never scrolled, but copied from the original letter," and

he added this disingenuous comment: "I need scarcely remark that the foregoing was the fustian rant of enthusiastic youth."

If you ever insult me with the unfeeling apophthegms of cold-blooded caution, may all the—but hold! a fiend could not breathe a malevolent wish on the head of my angel! Mind my request—if you send me a page baptised in the font of sanctimonious prudence, by heaven, earth and hell, I will tear it to atoms! Adieu; may all good things attend you!

R. B.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Undated, but conjectured as 1793 in the authorized edition of the Letters.

Before you ask me why I have not written you, first let me be informed by you, how I shall write you? "In friendship," you say; and I have many a time taken up my pen to try an epistle of "friendship" to you; but it will not do: 'tis like Jove grasping a pop-gun, after having yielded his thunder. When I take up the pen, recollection ruins me. Ah! my ever dearest Clarinda! Clarinda! What a host of memory's tenderest offspring crowd on my fancy at that sound! But I must not indulge that subject.—You have forbid it.

I am extremely happy to learn that your precious health is re-established and that you are once more fit to enjoy that satisfaction in existence, which health alone can give us. My old friend Ainslie has indeed been kind to you. Tell him that I envy him the power of serving you. I had a letter from him a while ago, but it was so dry, so distant, so like a card to one of his clients, that I could scarce bear to read it, and have not yet answered it. He is a good honest fellow, and *can* write a friendly letter, which

would do equal honour to his head and his heart, as a whole sheaf of his letters which I have by me will witness; and though Fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach now, as she did then, when he first honoured me with his friendship, yet I am as proud as ever; and when I am laid in my grave, I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground I have a right to.

You would laugh were you to see me where I am just now. Would to Heaven you were here to laugh with me, though I am afraid that crying would be our first employment. Here I am set, a solitary hermit, in the solitary room of a solitary inn, with a solitary bottle of wine by me, as grave and stupid as an owl, but like that owl, still faithful to my old song; in confirmation of which, my dear Mrs. Mac, here is your good health. May the hand-waled benisons o' Heaven bless your bonnie face; and the wratch wha skellies at your welfare, may the auld tinkler deil get him to clout his rotten heart! Amen.

You must know, my dearest Madam, that these now many years, wherever I am, in whatever company, when a married lady is called as a toast, I constantly give you; but, as your name has never passed my lips, even to my most in-

timate friend, I give you by the name of Mrs. Mac. This is so well known among my acquaintances, that when any married lady is called for, the toast-master will say: "Oh, we need not ask him who it is: here's Mrs. Mac!" I have also, among my convivial friends, set on foot a round of toasts, which I call a round of Arcadian Shepherdesses; that is a round of favourite ladies under female names celebrated in ancient song; and then you are my Clarinda. So, my lovely Clarinda, I devote this glass of wine to a most ardent wish for your happiness.

In vain would Prudence, with decorous sneer,
Point out a censuring world, and bid me fear:
Above that world on wings of love I rise,
I know its worst, and can that worst despise.

"Wrong'd, injured, shunned, unpitied, unredrest;
The mock'd quotation of the scorner's jest"——
Let Prudence' direst bodements on me fall,
Clarinda, rich reward! o'erpays them all.

I have been rhyming a little of late, but I do not know if they are worth postage.

Tell me what you think of the following monody.

Here follows the "Monody on a lady famed for her caprice."

The subject of the foregoing is a woman of fashion in this country, with whom at one period I was well acquainted. By some scandalous conduct to me, and two or three other gentlemen here as well as me, she steered so far to the north of my good opinion, that I have made her the theme of several ill-natured things. The following epigram struck me the other day as I passed her carriage.

PINNED TO MRS. R——'S COACH

If you rattle along like your Mistress' tongue,
  Your speed will out-rival the dart;
But, a fly for your load, you'll break down on the road
  If your stuff be as rotten's her heart.

R. B.

We know well enough the story of Burns' last years and of his death. His great fellow-countryman has given us the soul of it in a few words. "To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny—for so in our ignorance we must speak—

his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him, and that spirit which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul, so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things!" . . . As Stevenson briefly phrased it, "He died of being Robert Burns."

It is pitiful enough, that closing scene, beset with little mean cares, half of them goblins of that delirium against the terror of which he begged the comfort of Jean's work-worn hands. But to my mind far more pitiable is the spectacle of "divine Clarinda," a chirpy old lady addicted to snuff, complacently sunning her failing wits in the radiance of her great lover's fame. Consider carefully these extracts from her letters to Mr. Syme, who approached her on the subject of the publication of her correspondence with Burns in a new edition of the poet's works, and compare them with the statement from the preface written for the authorised edition of the correspondence published in 1843, by Mrs. M'Lehose's grandson—a gentleman who is disposed to deal charitably with his ancestress, as is proven by this memorable sentence, also in the preface: "The

visionary hopes entertained by the poet were generally checked by Clarinda with a happy mixture of dignity and mildness bespeaking inward purity."

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS FROM MRS. M'LEHOSE TO MR. JOHN SYME

What can have impressed such an idea upon you, as that I ever conceived the most distant intention to destroy these precious memorials of an acquaintance, the recollection of which would influence me were I to live till fourscore! Be assured I will never suffer one of them to perish. This I give you my solemn word of honour upon; —nay, more, on condition that you send me my letters, I will select such passages from our dear bard's letters as will do honour to his memory and cannot hurt my own fame, even with the most rigid. His letters, however, are really not literary; they are the passionate effusions of an elegant mind—indeed, too tender to be exposed to any but the eye of a partial friend. Were the world composed of minds such as yours, it would be cruel even to bury them; but ah! how very few would understand, much less relish, such compositions! The bulk of mankind are strangers to the delicate refinements of superior minds.

Edinburgh, 9th January, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for the speedy return you made to my last letter. . . .

I am happy that you have consented to return the letters at last, and that my pledge has pleased you. . . . You must pardon me for refusing to send B.'s. I never will. I am determined not to allow them to be out of my house; but it will be quite the same to you, as you shall see them all when you come to Edinburgh next month. Do write me previous to your arrival, and name the day, that I may be at home and guard against our being interrupted in perusing these dear memorials of our lamented friend. I hold them sacred—too sacred for the public eye; and I am sure you will agree they are so when you see them. If any argument could have prevailed on me, the idea of their affording pecuniary assistance was most likely. But I am convinced they would have added little to this effect: for I heard, by a literary conversation here, that it was thought by most people there would be too much intended to be published; and that letters especially it was nonsense to give as few would be interested in them. This I thought strange, and so will a few enthusiastic admirers of our bard; but I fear 'tis the general voice of the public. . . . there are few souls anywhere who understood or could enter into the relish of such a character as B.'s. There was an electricity about him which

could only touch or pervade a few cast in nature's finest mould. . . .

Yours with regard,

CLARINDA.

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE WRITTEN BY MRS. M'LEHOSE'S GRANDSON.

"In reading the correspondence of Burns and Clarinda, the reader will perceive that several of her letters, and perhaps three or four of his, are wanting; and that, in those published, various passages are short-coming. A brief explanation, in relation to their custody, is therefore deemed necessary. Clarinda survived forty-four years; and it is perhaps a matter of surprise that the Letters should have been so well preserved and so few lost in such a long period.

"In some of the Poet's letters, pieces have been cut out, to gratify (it is supposed) collectors of autographs, as it is well known that Mrs. M'Lehose was much harassed with such applications; they are, besides, much torn, which was incidental to the frequent handling of them, for they were exhibited to gratify the curiosity of visitors. These are the sole causes of a few blanks being observable in the letters."

The italics are ours.