

TOBIAS SMOLLETT

THE EXPEDITION OF
HUMPHRY CLINKER

Tobias Smollett

The Expedition of Humphry Clinker

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T. Smollett
The Expedition of Humphry Clinker
To Mr HENRY DAVIS, Bookseller, in London

ABERGAVENNY, Aug. 4

RESPECTED SIR,

I have received your esteemed favour of the 13th ultimo, whereby it appeareth, that you have perused those same Letters, the which were delivered unto you by my friend, the reverend Mr Hugo Behn; and I am pleased to find you think they may be printed with a good prospect of success; in as much as the objections you mention, I humbly conceive, are such as may be redargued, if not entirely removed—And, first, in the first place, as touching what prosecutions may arise from printing the private correspondence of persons still living, give me leave, with all due submission, to observe, that the Letters in question were not written and sent under the seal of secrecy; that they have no tendency to the mala fama, or prejudice of any person whatsoever; but rather to the information and edification of mankind: so that it becometh a sort of duty to promulgate them in usum publicum. Besides, I have consulted Mr Davy Higgins, an eminent attorney of this place, who, after due inspection and consideration, declareth, That he doth not think the said Letters contain any matter which will be held actionable in the eye of the law. Finally, if you and I should come to a right understanding, I do declare in verbo sacerdotis, that, in case of any such prosecution, I will take the whole upon my own shoulders, even quoad fine and imprisonment, though, I must confess, I should not care to undergo flagellation: Tam ad turpitudinem, quam ad amaritudinem poenae spectans—Secondly, concerning the personal resentment of Mr Justice Lismahago, I may say, non flocci facio—I would not willingly vilipend any Christian, if, peradventure, he deserveth that epithet: albeit, I am much surprised that more care is not taken to exclude from the commission all such vagrant foreigners as may be justly suspected of disaffection to our happy constitution, in church and state—God forbid that I should be so uncharitable, as to affirm, positively, that the said Lismahago is no better than a Jesuit in disguise; but this I will assert and maintain, totis viribus, that, from the day he qualified, he has never been once seen intra templi parietes, that is to say, within the parish church.

Thirdly, with respect to what passed at Mr Kendal's table, when the said Lismahago was so brutal in his reprehensions, I must inform you, my good Sir, that I was obliged to retire, not by fear arising from his minatory reproaches, which, as I said above, I value not of a rush; but from the sudden effect produced, by a barbel's row, which I had eaten at dinner, not knowing, that the said row is at certain seasons violently cathartic, as Galen observeth in his chapter Peri ichtos.

Fourthly, and lastly, with reference to the manner in which I got possession of these Letters, it is a circumstance that concerns my own conscience only; sufficeth it to say, I have fully satisfied the parties in whose custody they were; and, by this time, I hope I have also satisfied you in such ways, that the last hand may be put to our agreement, and the work proceed with all convenient expedition; in which I hope I rest,

Respected Sir, Your very humble servant,
JONATHAN DUSTWICH.

P.S. I propose, Deo volente, to have the pleasure of seeing you in the great city, towards All-hallowtide, when I shall be glad to treat with you concerning a parcel of MS. sermons, of a certain

clergyman deceased; a cake of the right leaven, for the present taste of the public. Verbum sapienti,
&c.

J.D.

To the Revd. Mr JONATHAN DUSTWICH, at—

SIR,

I received yours in course of post, and shall be glad to treat with you for the M.S. which I have delivered to your friend Mr Behn; but can by no means comply with the terms proposed. Those things are so uncertain—Writing is all a lottery—I have been a loser by the works of the greatest men of the age—I could mention particulars, and name names; but don't choose it—The taste of the town is so changeable. Then there have been so many letters upon travels lately published—What between Smollett's, Sharp's, Derrick's, Thicknesse's, Baltimore's, and Baretti's, together with Shandy's Sentimental Travels, the public seems to be cloyed with that kind of entertainment—Nevertheless, I will, if you please, run the risque of printing and publishing, and you shall have half the profits of the impression—You need not take the trouble to bring up your sermons on my account—No body reads sermons but Methodists and Dissenters—Besides, for my own part, I am quite a stranger to that sort of reading; and the two persons, whose judgment I depended upon in those matters, are out of the way; one is gone abroad, carpenter of a man of war; and the other, has been silly enough to abscond, in order to avoid a prosecution for blasphemy—I'm a great loser by his going off—He has left a manual of devotion half finished on my hands, after having received money for the whole copy—He was the soundest divine, and had the most orthodox pen of all my people; and I never knew his judgment fail, but in flying from his bread and butter on this occasion.

By owning you was not put in bodily fear by Lismahago, you preclude yourself from the benefit of a good plea, over and above the advantage of binding him over. In the late war, I inserted in my evening paper, a paragraph that came by the post, reflecting upon the behaviour of a certain regiment in battle. An officer of said regiment came to my shop, and, in the presence of my wife and journeyman, threatened to cut off my ears—As I exhibited marks of bodily fear more ways than one, to the conviction of the bystanders, I bound him over; my action lay, and I recovered. As for flagellation, you have nothing to fear, and nothing to hope, on that head—There has been but one printer flogged at the cart's tail these thirty years; that was Charles Watson; and he assured me it was no more than a flea-bite. C—S— has been threatened several times by the House of L—; but it came to nothing. If an information should be moved for, and granted against you, as the editor of those Letters, I hope you will have honesty and wit enough to appear and take your trial—If you should be sentenced to the pillory, your fortune is made—As times go, that's a sure step to honour and preferment. I shall think myself happy if I can lend you a lift; and am, very sincerely,

Yours,

HENRY DAVIS. LONDON, Aug. 10th.

Please my kind service to your neighbour, my cousin Madoc—I have sent an Almanack and Court-kalendar, directed for him at Mr Sutton's, bookseller, in Gloucester, carriage paid, which he will please to accept as a small token of my regard. My wife, who is very fond of toasted cheese, presents her compliments to him, and begs to know if there's any of that kind, which he was so good as to send us last Christmas, to be sold in London.

H. D.

THE EXPEDITION OF HUMPHRY CLINKER

To Dr LEWIS

DOCTOR,

The pills are good for nothing—I might as well swallow snowballs to cool my reins—I have told you over and over how hard I am to move; and at this time of day, I ought to know something of my own constitution. Why will you be so positive? Prithee send me another prescription—I am as lame and as much tortured in all my limbs as if I was broke upon the wheel: indeed, I am equally distressed in mind and body—As if I had not plagues enough of my own, those children of my sister are left me for a perpetual source of vexation—what business have people to get children to plague their neighbours? A ridiculous incident that happened yesterday to my niece Liddy, has disordered me in such a manner, that I expect to be laid up with another fit of the gout—perhaps, I may explain myself in my next. I shall set out tomorrow morning for the Hot Well at Bristol, where I am afraid I shall stay longer than I could wish. On the receipt of this send Williams thither with my saddle-horse and the demi pique. Tell Barns to thresh out the two old ricks, and send the corn to market, and sell it off to the poor at a shilling a bushel under market price.—I have received a snivelling letter from Griffin, offering to make a public submission and pay costs. I want none of his submissions, neither will I pocket any of his money. The fellow is a bad neighbour, and I desire, to have nothing to do with him: but as he is purse-proud, he shall pay for his insolence: let him give five pounds to the poor of the parish, and I will withdraw my action; and in the mean time you may tell Prig to stop proceedings.—Let Morgan's widow have the Alderney cow, and forty shillings to clothe her children: but don't say a syllable of the matter to any living soul—I'll make her pay when she is able. I desire you will lock up all my drawers, and keep the keys till meeting; and be sure you take the iron chest with my papers into your own custody—Forgive all, this trouble from,

Dear Lewis, Your affectionate M. BRAMBLE GLOUCESTER, April 2.

To Mrs GWYLLIM, house-keeper at Brambleton-hall

MRS GWILLIM,

When this cums to hand, be sure to pack up in the trunk male that stands in my closet; to be sent me in the Bristol waggon without loss of time, the following articles, viz. my rose collard neglejay with green robins, my yellow damask, and my black velvets with the short hoop; my bloo quilted petticot, my green mantel, my laced apron, my French commode, Macklin head and lappets and the litel box with my jowls. Williams may bring over my bum-daffee, and the viol with the easings of Dr Hill's dockwater and Chowder's lacksitif. The poor creature has been terribly stuprated ever since we left huom. Pray take particular care of the house while the family is absent. Let there be a fire constantly kept in my brother's chamber and mine. The maids, having nothing to do, may be sat a spinning. I desire you'll clap a pad-luck on the wind-seller, and let none of the men have excess to the strong bear—don't forget to have the gate shit every evening be dark—The gardnir and the hind may lie below in the landry, to partake the house, with the blunderbuss and the great dog; and hope you'll have a watchful eye over the maids. I know that hussy Mary Jones, loves to be rumping with the men. Let me know Alderney's calf be sould yet, and what he fought—if the ould goose be sitting; and if the cobler has cut Dicky, and how pore anemil bore the operation. No more at present, but rests,

Yours, TABITHA BRAMBLE GLOSTAR, April 2.

TO Mrs MARY JONES, at Brambleton-hall.

DEAR MOLLY,

Heaving this importunity, I send, my love to you and Saul, being in good health, and hoping to hear the same from you; and that you and Saul will take my poor kitten to bed with you this cold weather. We have been all in, a sad taking here at Glostar—Miss Liddy had like to have run away with a player-man, and young master and he would adone themselves a mischief; but the squire applied to the mare, and they were, bound over.—Mistress bid me not speak a word of the matter to any Christian soul—no more I shall; for, we servints should see all and say nothing— But what was worse than all this, Chowder has had the misfortune to be worried by a butcher's dog, and came home in a terrible pickle—Mistress was taken with the asterisks, but they soon went off. The doctor was sent for to Chowder, and he subscribed a repository which did him great service—thank God he's now in a fair way to do well—pray take care of my box and the pillyber and put them under your own bed; for, I do suppose madam, Gwyllim will be a prying into my secrets, now my back is turned. John Thomas is in good health, but sulky. The squire gave away an ould coat to a poor man; and John says as, how 'tis robbing him of his perquisites.—I told him, by his agreement he was to receive no vails; but he says as how there's a difference betwixt vails and perquisites; and so there is for sartain. We are all going to the Hot Well, where I shall drink your health in a glass of water, being,

Dear Molly, Your humble servant to command, W. JENKINS GLOSTAR, April 2nd.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, Bart. of Jesus college, Oxon

DEAR PHILLIPS,

As I have nothing more at heart than to convince you I am incapable of forgetting, or neglecting the friendship I made at college, now begin that correspondence by letters, which you and I agreed, at parting, to cultivate. I begin it sooner than I intended, that you may have it in your power to refute any idle reports which may be circulated to my prejudice at Oxford, touching a foolish quarrel, in which I have been involved on account of my sister, who had been some time settled here in a boarding-school. When I came hither with my uncle and aunt (who are our guardians) to fetch her away, I found her a fine tall girl, of seventeen, with an agreeable person; but remarkably simple, and quite ignorant of the world. This disposition, and want of experience, had exposed her to the addresses of a person—I know not what to call him, who had seen her at a play; and, with a confidence and dexterity peculiar to himself, found means to be recommended to her acquaintance. It was by the greatest accident I intercepted one of his letters; as it was my duty to stifle this correspondence in its birth, I made it my business to find him out, and tell him very freely my sentiments of the matter. The spark did not like the stile I used, and behaved with abundance of mettle. Though his rank in life (which, by the bye, I am ashamed to declare) did not entitle him to much deference; yet as his behaviour was remarkably spirited, I admitted him to the privilege of a gentleman, and something might have happened, had not we been prevented.—In short, the business took air, I know not how, and made abundance of noise—recourse was had to justice—I was obliged to give my word and honour, &c. and to-morrow morning we set out for Bristol Wells, where I expect to hear from you by the return of the post.—I have got into a family of originals, whom I may one day attempt to describe for your amusement. My aunt, Mrs Tabitha Bramble, is a maiden of forty-five, exceedingly starched, vain, and ridiculous.—My uncle is an odd kind of humorist, always on the fret, and so unpleasant in his manner, that rather than be obliged to keep him company, I'd resign all claim to the inheritance of his estate. Indeed his being tortured by the gout may have soured his temper, and, perhaps, I may like him better on further acquaintance; certain it is, all his servants and neighbours in the country are fond of him, even to a degree of enthusiasm, the reason of which I cannot as yet comprehend. Remember me to Griffy Price, Gwyn, Mansel, Basset, and all the rest of my old Cambrian companions.—Salute the bedmaker in my name—give my service to the cook, and pray take care of poor Ponto, for the sake of his old master, who is, and ever will be,

*Dear Phillips, Your affectionate friend, and humble servant, JER. MELFORD
GLOUCESTER, April 2.*

To Mrs JERMYN at her house in Gloucester

DEAR MADAM,

Having no mother of my own, I hope you will give me leave to disburden my poor heart to you, who have always acted the part of a kind parent to me, ever since I was put under your care. Indeed, and indeed, my worthy governess may believe me, when I assure her, that I never harboured a thought that was otherwise than virtuous; and, if God will give me grace, I shall never behave so as to cast a reflection on the care you have taken in my education. I confess I have given just cause of offence by my want of prudence and experience. I ought not to have listened to what the young man said; and it was my duty to have told you all that passed, but I was ashamed to mention it; and then he behaved so modest and respectful, and seemed to be so melancholy and timorous, that I could not find in my heart to do any thing that should make him miserable and desperate. As for familiarities, I do declare, I never once allowed him the favour of a salute; and as to the few letters that passed between us, they are all in my uncle's hands, and I hope they contain nothing contrary to innocence and honour.—I am still persuaded that he is not what he appears to be: but time will discover—mean while I will endeavour to forget a connexion, which is so displeasing to my family. I have cried without ceasing, and have not tasted any thing but tea, since I was hurried away from you; nor did I once close my eyes for three nights running.—My aunt continues to chide me severely when we are by ourselves; but I hope to soften her in time, by humility and submission.—My uncle, who was so dreadfully passionate in the beginning, has been moved by my tears and distress; and is now all tenderness and compassion; and my brother is reconciled to me on my promise to break off all correspondence with that unfortunate youth; but, notwithstanding all their indulgence, I shall have no peace of mind till I know my dear and ever honoured governess has forgiven her poor, disconsolate, forlorn,

Affectionate humble servant, till death, LYDIA MELFORD CLIFTON, April 6.

To Miss LAETITIA WILLIS, at Gloucester

MY DEAREST LETTY,

I am in such a fright, lest this should not come safe to hand by the conveyance of Jarvis the carrier, that I beg you will write me, on the receipt of it, directing to me, under cover, to Mrs Winifred Jenkins, my aunt's maid, who is a good girl, and has been so kind to me in my affliction, that I have made her my confidant; as for Jarvis, he was very shy of taking charge of my letter and the little parcel, because his sister Sally had like to have lost her place on my account: indeed I cannot blame the man for his caution; but I have made it worth his while.—My dear companion and bed-fellow, it is a grievous addition to my other misfortunes, that I am deprived of your agreeable company and conversation, at a time when I need so much the comfort of your good humour and good sense; but, I hope, the friendship we contracted at boarding-school, will last for life—I doubt not but on my side it will daily increase and improve, as I gain experience, and learn to know the value of a true friend. O, my dear Letty! what shall I say about poor Mr Wilson? I have promised to break off all correspondence, and, if possible, to forget him: but, alas! I begin to perceive that will not be in my power. As it is by no means proper that the picture should remain in my hands, lest it should be the occasion of more mischief, I have sent it to you by this opportunity, begging you will either keep it safe till better times, or return it to Mr Wilson himself, who, I suppose, will make it his business to see you at the usual place. If he should be low-spirited at my sending back his picture, you may tell him I have no occasion for a picture, while the original continues engraved on my—But no; I would not have you tell him that neither; because there must be an end of our correspondence—I wish he may forget me, for the sake of his own peace; and yet if he should, he must be a barbarous—But it is impossible—poor Wilson cannot be false and inconstant: I beseech him not to write to me, nor attempt to see me for some time; for, considering the resentment and passionate temper of my brother Jerry, such an attempt might be attended with consequences which would make us all miserable for life—let us trust to time and the chapter of accidents; or rather to that Providence which will not fail, sooner or later, to reward those that walk in the paths of honour and virtue. I would offer my love to the young ladies; but it is not fit that any of them should know you have received this letter.—If we go to Bath, I shall send you my simple remarks upon that famous center of polite amusement, and every other place we may chance to visit; and I flatter myself that my dear Miss Willis will be punctual in answering the letters of her affectionate,

LYDIA MELFORD CLIFTON, April 6.

To Dr LEWIS

DEAR LEWIS,

I have followed your directions with some success, and might have been upon my legs by this time, had the weather permitted me to use my saddle-horse. I rode out upon the Downs last Tuesday, in the forenoon, when the sky, as far as the visible horizon, was without a cloud; but before I had gone a full mile, I was overtaken instantaneously by a storm of rain that wet me to the skin in three minutes—whence it came the devil knows; but it has laid me up (I suppose) for one fortnight. It makes me sick to hear people talk of the fine air upon Clifton-downs: How can the air be either agreeable or salutary, where the demon of vapours descends in a perpetual drizzle? My confinement is the more intolerable, as I am surrounded with domestic vexations. My niece has had a dangerous fit of illness, occasioned by that cursed incident at Gloucester, which I mentioned in my last.—She is a poor good-natured simpleton, as soft as butter, and as easily melted—not that she’s a fool—the girl’s parts are not despicable, and her education has not been neglected; that is to say, she can write and spell, and speak French, and play upon the harpsichord; then she dances finely, has a good figure, and is very well inclined; but, she’s deficient in spirit, and so susceptible—and so tender forsooth!—truly, she has got a languishing eye, and reads romances.—Then there’s her brother, ‘squire Jery, a pert jackanapes, full of college-petulance and self-conceit; proud as a German count, and as hot and hasty as a Welch mountaineer. As for that fantastical animal, my sister Tabby, you are no stranger to her qualifications—I vow to God, she is sometimes so intolerable, that I almost think she’s the devil incarnate come to torment me for my sins; and yet I am conscious of no sins that ought to entail such family-plagues upon me—why the devil should not I shake off these torments at once? I an’t married to Tabby, thank Heaven! nor did I beget the other two: let them choose another guardian: for my part I an’t in a condition to take care of myself; much less to superintend the conduct of giddy-headed boys and girls. You earnestly desire to know the particulars of our adventure at Gloucester, which are briefly these, and I hope they will go no further:—Liddy had been so long copped up in a boarding-school, which, next to a nunnery, is the worst kind of seminary that ever was contrived for young women, that she became as inflammable as touch-wood; and going to a play in holiday-time,—‘sdeath, I’m ashamed to tell you! she fell in love with one of the actors—a handsome young fellow that goes by the name of Wilson. The rascal soon perceived the impression he had made, and managed matters so as to see her at a house where she went to drink tea with her governess.—This was the beginning of a correspondence, which they kept up by means of a jade of a milliner, who made and dressed caps for the girls at the boarding-school. When we arrived at Gloucester, Liddy came to stay at lodgings with her aunt, and Wilson bribed the maid to deliver a letter into her own hands; but it seems Jery had already acquired so much credit with the maid (by what means he best knows) that she carried the letter to him, and so the whole plot was discovered. The rash boy, without saying a word of the matter to me, went immediately in search of Wilson; and, I suppose, treated him with insolence enough. The theatrical hero was too far gone in romance to brook such usage: he replied in blank verse, and a formal challenge ensued. They agreed to meet early next morning and decide the dispute with sword and pistol. I heard nothing at all of the affair, till Mr Morley came to my bed-side in the morning, and told me he was afraid my nephew was going to fight, as he had been overheard talking very loud and vehement with Wilson at the young man’s lodgings the night before, and afterwards went and bought powder and ball at a shop in the neighbourhood. I got up immediately, and upon inquiry found he was just going out. I begged Morley to knock up the mayor, that he might interpose as a magistrate, and in the mean time I hobbled after the squire, whom I saw at a distance walking at a great pace towards the city gate—in spite of all my efforts, I could not come up till our two combatants had taken their

ground, and were priming their pistols. An old house luckily screened me from their view; so that I rushed upon them at once, before I was perceived. They were both confounded, and attempted to make their escape different ways; but Morley coming up with constables, at that instant, took Wilson into custody, and Jery followed him quietly to the mayor's house. All this time I was ignorant of what had passed the preceding day; and neither of the parties would discover a tittle of the matter. The mayor observed that it was great presumption in Wilson, who was a stroller, to proceed to such extremities with a gentleman of family and fortune; and threatened to commit him on the vagrant act.—The young fellow bustled up with great spirit, declaring he was a gentleman, and would be treated as such; but he refused to explain himself further. The master of the company being sent for, and examined, touching the said Wilson, said the young man had engaged with him at Birmingham about six months ago; but never would take his salary; that he had behaved so well in his private character, as to acquire the respect and good-will of all his acquaintance, and that the public owned his merit as an actor was altogether extraordinary.—After all, I fancy, he will turn out to be a run-away apprentice from London.—The manager offered to bail him for any sum, provided he would give his word and honour that he would keep the peace; but the young gentleman was on his high ropes, and would by no means lay himself under any restrictions: on the other hand, Hopeful was equally obstinate; till at length the mayor declared, that if they both refused to be bound over, he would immediately commit Wilson as a vagrant to hard labour. I own I was much pleased with Jery's behaviour on this occasion: he said, that rather than Mr Wilson should be treated in such an ignominious manner, he would give his word and honour to prosecute the affair no further while they remained at Gloucester—Wilson thanked him for his generous manner of proceeding, and was discharged. On our return to our lodgings, my nephew explained the whole mystery; and I own I was exceedingly incensed—Liddy being questioned on the subject, and very severely reproached by that wildcat my sister Tabby, first swooned away, then dissolving in a flood of tears, confessed all the particulars of the correspondence, at the same time giving up three letters, which was all she had received from her admirer. The last, which Jery intercepted, I send you inclosed, and when you have read it, I dare say you won't wonder at the progress the writer had made in the heart of a simple girl, utterly unacquainted with the characters of mankind. Thinking it was high time to remove her from such a dangerous connexion, I carried her off the very next day to Bristol; but the poor creature was so frightened and fluttered, by our threats and expostulations, that she fell sick the fourth day after our arrival at Clifton, and continued so ill for a whole week, that her life was despaired of. It was not till yesterday that Dr Rigge declared her out of danger. You cannot imagine what I have suffered, partly from the indiscretion of this poor child, but much more from the fear of losing her entirely. This air is intolerably cold, and the place quite solitary—I never go down to the Well without returning low-spirited; for there I meet with half a dozen poor emaciated creatures, with ghostly looks, in the last stage of a consumption, who have made shift to linger through the winter like so many exotic plants languishing in a hot-house; but in all appearance, will drop into their graves before the sun has warmth enough to mitigate the rigour of this ungenial spring.—If you think the Bath-water will be of any service to me, I will go thither so soon as my niece can bear the motion of the coach. Tell Barns I am obliged to him for his advice; but don't choose to follow it. If Davis voluntarily offers to give up the farm, the other shall have it; but I will not begin at this time of day to distress my tenants, because they are unfortunate, and cannot make regular payments: I wonder that Barns should think me capable of such oppression—As for Higgins, the fellow is a notorious poacher, to be sure; and an impudent rascal to set his snares in my own paddock; but, I suppose, he thought he had some right (especially in my absence) to partake of what nature seems to have intended for common use—you may threaten him in my name, as much as you please, and if he repeats the offence, let me know it before you have recourse to justice.—I know you are a great sportsman, and oblige many of your friends: I need not tell you to make use of my grounds; but it may be necessary to hint, that I am more afraid of my fowling-piece than of my game. When you can spare two or three brace of partridges, send them over by the stagecoach, and

tell Gwyllim that she forgot to pack up my flannel and wide shoes in the trunk-mail—I shall trouble you as usual, from time to time, till at last I suppose you will be tired of corresponding with

Your assured friend, M. BRAMBLE CLIFTON, April 17.

To Miss LYDIA MELFORD

Miss Willis has pronounced my doom—you are going away, dear Miss Melford!—you are going to be removed, I know not whither! what shall I do? which way shall I turn for consolation? I know not what I say—all night long have I been tossed in a sea of doubts and fears, uncertainty and distraction, without being able to connect my thoughts, much less to form any consistent plan of conduct—I was even tempted to wish that I had never seen you; or that you had been less amiable, or less compassionate to your poor Wilson; and yet it would be detestable ingratitude in me to form such a wish, considering how much I am indebted to your goodness, and the ineffable pleasure I have derived from your indulgence and approbation—Good God! I never heard your name mentioned without emotion! the most distant prospect of being admitted to your company, filled my whole soul with a kind of pleasing alarm! as the time approached, my heart beat with redoubled force, and every nerve thrilled with a transport of expectation; but, when I found myself actually in your presence;—when I heard you speak;—when I saw you smile; when I beheld your charming eyes turned favourably upon me; my breast was filled with such tumults of delight, as wholly deprived me of the power of utterance, and wrapt me in a delirium of joy!—encouraged by your sweetness of temper and affability, I ventured to describe the feelings of my heart—even then you did not check my presumption—you pitied my sufferings and gave me leave to hope you put a favourable—perhaps too favourable a construction, on my appearance—certain it is, I am no player in love—I speak the language of my own heart; and have no prompter but nature. Yet there is something in this heart, which I have not yet disclosed.—I flattered myself—But, I will not—I must not proceed. Dear Miss Liddy! for Heaven’s sake, contrive, if possible, some means of letting me speak to you before you leave Gloucester; otherwise, I know not what will—But I begin to rave again.—I will endeavour to bear this trial with fortitude—while I am capable of reflecting upon your tenderness and truth, I surely have no cause to despair—a cloud hangs over me, and there is a dreadful weight upon my spirits! While you stay in this place, I shall continually hover about your lodgings, as the parted soul is said to linger about the grave where its mortal comfort lies.—I know, if it is in your power, you will task your humanity—your compassion—shall I add, your affection?—in order to assuage the almost intolerable disquiet that torments the heart of your afflicted,

WILSON GLOUCESTER, March 31.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon

HOT WELL, April 18

DEAR PHILLIPS,

I give Mansel credit for his invention, in propagating the report that I had a quarrel with a mountebank's merry Andrew at Gloucester: but I have too much respect for every appendage of wit, to quarrel even with the lowest buffoonery; and therefore I hope Mansel and I shall always be good friends. I cannot, however, approve of his drowning my poor dog Ponto, on purpose to convert Ovid's pleonasm into a punning epitaph,—deerant quoque Littora Ponto: for, that he threw him into the Isis, when it was so high and impetuous, with no other view than to kill the fleas, is an excuse that will not hold water—But I leave poor Ponto to his fate, and hope Providence will take care to accommodate Mansel with a drier death.

As there is nothing that can be called company at the Well, I am here in a state of absolute rustication: This, however, gives me leisure to observe the singularities in my uncle's character, which seems to have interested your curiosity. The truth is, his disposition and mine, which, like oil and vinegar, repelled one another at first, have now begun to mix by dint of being beat up together. I was once apt to believe him a complete Cynic; and that nothing but the necessity of his occasions could compel him to get within the pale of society—I am now of another opinion. I think his peevishness arises partly from bodily pain, and partly from a natural excess of mental sensibility; for, I suppose, the mind as well as the body, is in some cases endued with a morbid excess of sensation.

I was t'other day much diverted with a conversation that passed in the Pump-room, betwixt him and the famous Dr L—n, who is come to ply at the Well for patients. My uncle was complaining of the stink, occasioned by the vast quantity of mud and slime which the river leaves at low ebb under the windows of the Pump-room. He observed, that the exhalations arising from such a nuisance, could not but be prejudicial to the weak lungs of many consumptive patients, who came to drink the water. The Doctor overhearing this remark, made up to him, and assured him he was mistaken. He said, people in general were so misled by vulgar prejudices that philosophy was hardly sufficient to undeceive them. Then humming thrice, he assumed a most ridiculous solemnity of aspect, and entered into a learned investigation of the nature of stink. He observed, that stink, or stench, meant no more than a strong impression on the olfactory nerves; and might be applied to substances of the most opposite qualities; that in the Dutch language, stinken signifies the most agreeable perfume, as well as the most fetid odour, as appears in Van Vloudel's translation of Horace, in that beautiful ode, *Quis multa gracilis, &c.*—The words *fiquidis perfusus odoribus*, he translates *van civet & moschata gestinken*: that individuals differed *toto coelo* in their opinion of smells, which, indeed, was altogether as arbitrary as the opinion of beauty; that the French were pleased with the putrid effluvia of animal food; and so were the Hottentots in Africa, and the Savages in Greenland; and that the Negroes on the coast of Senegal would not touch fish till it was rotten; strong presumptions in favour of what is generally called stink, as those nations are in a state of nature, undebauched by luxury, unseduced by whim and caprice: that he had reason to believe the stercoraceous flavour, condemned by prejudice as a stink, was, in fact, most agreeable to the organs of smelling; for, that every person who pretended to nauseate the smell of another's excretions, snuffed up his own with particular complacency; for the truth of which he appealed to all the ladies and gentlemen then present: he said, the inhabitants of Madrid and Edinburgh found particular satisfaction in breathing their own atmosphere, which was always impregnated with stercoraceous effluvia: that the learned Dr B—, in his treatise on the Four Digestions, explains in what manner the volatile effluvia from the intestines stimulate and promote the operations of the animal economy: he affirmed, the last Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Medicis

family, who refined upon sensuality with the spirit of a philosopher, was so delighted with that odour, that he caused the essence of ordure to be extracted, and used it as the most delicious perfume: that he himself (the doctor) when he happened to be low-spirited, or fatigued with business, found immediate relief and uncommon satisfaction from hanging over the stale contents of a close-stool, while his servant stirred it about under his nose; nor was this effect to be wondered at, when we consider that this substance abounds with the self-same volatile salts that are so greedily smelled to by the most delicate invalids, after they have been extracted and sublimed by the chemists.—By this time the company began to hold their noses; but the doctor, without taking the least notice of this signal, proceeded to shew, that many fetid substances were not only agreeable but salutary; such as *assa foetida*, and other medicinal gums, resins, roots, and vegetables, over and above burnt feathers, tan-pits, candle-snuffs, &c. In short, he used many learned arguments to persuade his audience out of their senses; and from stench made a transition to filth, which he affirmed was also a mistaken idea, in as much as objects so called, were no other than certain modifications of matter, consisting of the same principles that enter into the composition of all created essences, whatever they may be: that in the filthiest production of nature, a philosopher considered nothing but the earth, water, salt and air, of which it was compounded; that, for his own part, he had no more objections to drinking the dirtiest ditch-water, than he had to a glass of water from the Hot Well, provided he was assured there was nothing poisonous in the concrete. Then addressing himself to my uncle, ‘Sir (said he) you seem to be of a dropsical habit, and probably will soon have a confirmed ascites: if I should be present when you are tapped, I will give you a convincing proof of what I assert, by drinking without hesitation the water that comes out of your abdomen.’—The ladies made wry faces at this declaration, and my uncle, changing colour, told him he did not desire any such proof of his philosophy: ‘But I should be glad to know (said he) what makes you think I am of a dropsical habit?’ ‘Sir, I beg pardon (replied the Doctor) I perceive your ancles are swelled, and you seem to have the *facies leucophlegmatica*. Perhaps, indeed, your disorder may be oedematous, or gouty, or it may be the *lues venerea*: If you have any reason to flatter yourself it is this last, sir, I will undertake to cure you with three small pills, even if the disease should have attained its utmost inveteracy. Sir, it is an arcanum, which I have discovered, and prepared with infinite labour.—Sir, I have lately cured a woman in Bristol—a common prostitute, sir, who had got all the worst symptoms of the disorder; such as *nodi*, *tophi*, and *gummata*, *verruca*, *cristoe Galli*, and a *serpiginous eruption*, or rather a pocky itch all over her body. By the time she had taken the second pill, sir, by Heaven! she was as smooth as my hand, and the third made her sound and as fresh as a new born infant.’ ‘Sir (cried my uncle peevishly) I have no reason to flatter myself that my disorder comes within the efficacy of your *nostrum*. But this patient you talk of may not be so sound at bottom as you imagine.’ ‘I can’t possibly be mistaken (rejoined the philosopher) for I have had communication with her three times—I always ascertain my cures in that manner.’ At this remark, all the ladies retired to another corner of the room, and some of them began to spit.—As to my uncle, though he was ruffled at first by the doctor’s saying he was dropsical, he could not help smiling at this ridiculous confession and, I suppose, with a view to punish this original, told him there was a wart upon his nose, that looked a little suspicious. ‘I don’t pretend to be a judge of those matters (said he) but I understand that warts are often produced by the distemper; and that one upon your nose seems to have taken possession of the very keystone of the bridge, which I hope is in no danger of falling.’ L—n seemed a little confounded at this remark, and assured him it was nothing but a common excrescence of the *cuticula*, but that the bones were all sound below; for the truth of this assertion he appealed to the touch, desiring he would feel the part. My uncle said it was a matter of such delicacy to meddle with a gentleman’s nose, that he declined the office—upon which, the Doctor turning to me, intreated me to do him that favour. I complied with his request, and handled it so roughly, that he sneezed, and the tears ran down his cheeks, to the no small entertainment of the company, and particularly of my uncle, who burst out a-laughing for the first time since I have

been with him; and took notice, that the part seemed to be very tender. ‘Sir (cried the Doctor) it is naturally a tender part; but to remove all possibility of doubt, I will take off the wart this very night.’

So saying, he bowed, with great solemnity all round, and retired to his own lodgings, where he applied a caustic to the wart; but it spread in such a manner as to produce a considerable inflammation, attended with an enormous swelling; so that when he next appeared, his whole face was overshadowed by this tremendous nozzle; and the rueful eagerness with which he explained this unlucky accident, was ludicrous beyond all description.—I was much pleased with meeting the original of a character, which you and I have often laughed at in description; and what surprises me very much, I find the features in the picture, which has been drawn for him, rather softened than over-charged.

As I have something else to say; and this letter has run to an unconscionable length, I shall now give you a little respite, and trouble you again by the very first post. I wish you would take it in your head to retaliate these double strokes upon

Yours always, J. MELFORD

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon

HOT WELL, April 20

DEAR KNIGHT,

I now sit down to execute the threat in the tail of my last. The truth is, I am big with the secret, and long to be delivered. It relates to my guardian, who, you know, is at present our principal object in view.

T'other day, I thought I had detected him in such a state of frailty, as would but ill become his years and character. There is a decent sort of woman, not disagreeable in her person, that comes to the Well, with a poor emaciated child, far gone in a consumption. I had caught my uncle's eyes several times directed to this person, with a very suspicious expression in them, and every time he saw himself observed, he hastily withdrew them, with evident marks of confusion—I resolved to watch him more narrowly, and saw him speaking to her privately in a corner of the walk. At length, going down to the Well one day, I met her half way up the hill to Clifton, and could not help suspecting she was going to our lodgings by appointment, as it was about one o'clock, the hour when my sister and I are generally at the Pump-room.—This notion exciting my curiosity, I returned by a back-way, and got unperceived into my own chamber, which is contiguous to my uncle's apartment. Sure enough, the woman was introduced but not into his bedchamber; he gave her audience in a parlour; so that I was obliged to shift my station to another room, where, however, there was a small chink in the partition, through which I could perceive what passed. My uncle, though a little lame, rose up when she came in, and setting a chair for her, desired she would sit down: then he asked if she would take a dish of chocolate, which she declined, with much acknowledgment. After a short pause, he said, in a croaking tone of voice, which confounded me not a little, 'Madam, I am truly concerned for your misfortunes; and if this trifle can be of any service to you, I beg you will accept it without ceremony.' So saying, he put a bit of paper into her hand, which she opening with great trepidation, exclaimed in an extacy, 'Twenty pounds! Oh, sir!' and sinking down upon a settee, fainted away—Frightened at this fit, and, I suppose, afraid of calling for assistance, lest her situation should give rise to unfavourable conjectures, he ran about the room in distraction, making frightful grimaces; and, at length, had recollection enough to throw a little water in her face; by which application she was brought to herself: but, then her feeling took another turn. She shed a flood of tears, and cried aloud, 'I know not who you are: but, sure—worthy sir—generous sir!—the distress of me and my poor dying child—Oh! if the widow's prayers—if the orphan's tears of gratitude can ought avail—gracious Providence—Blessings!—shower down eternal blessings.'—Here she was interrupted by my uncle, who muttered in a voice still more and more discordant, 'For Heaven's sake be quiet, madam—consider—the people of the house—'sdeath! can't you.'—All this time she was struggling to throw herself on her knees, while he seizing her by the wrists, endeavoured to seat her upon the settee, saying, 'Prithee—good now—hold your tongue'—At that instant, who should burst into—the room but our aunt Tabby! of all antiquated maidens the most diabolically capricious—Ever prying into other people's affairs, she had seen the woman enter, and followed her to the door, where she stood listening, but probably could hear nothing distinctly, except my uncle's, last exclamation; at which she bounded into the parlour in a violent rage, that dyed the tip of her nose of a purple hue,—'Fy upon you, Matt! (cried she) what doings are these, to disgrace your own character, and disparage your family?'—Then, snatching the bank note out of the stranger's hand, she went on—'How now, twenty pounds!—here is temptation with a witness!—Good-woman, go about your business—Brother, brother, I know not which most to admire; your concupissins, or your extravagance!'—'Good God (exclaimed the poor woman) shall a worthy gentleman's character suffer for an action that does honour to humanity?' By this time, uncle's indignation was effectually

roused. His face grew pale, his teeth chattered, and his eyes flashed—‘Sister (cried he, in a voice like thunder) I vow to God, your impertinence is exceedingly provoking.’ With these words, he took her by the hand, and, opening the door of communication, thrust her into the chamber where I stood, so affected by the scene, that the tears ran down my cheeks. Observing these marks of emotion, ‘I don’t wonder (said she) to see you concerned at the back-slidings of so near a relation; a man of his years and infirmities: These are fine doings, truly—This is a rare example, set by a guardian, for the benefit of his pupils—Monstrous! incongruous! sophistical!’—I thought it was but an act of justice to set her to rights; and therefore explained the mystery. But she would not be undeceived, ‘What (said she) would you go for to offer for to arguefy me out of my senses? Did’n’t I hear him whispering to her to hold her tongue? Did’n’t I see her in tears? Did’n’t I see him struggling to throw her upon the couch? O filthy! hideous! abominable! Child, child, talk not to me of charity.—Who gives twenty pounds in charity?—But you are a stripling—You know nothing of the world. Besides, charity begins at home—Twenty pounds would buy me a complete suit of flowered silk, trimmings and all—’ In short, I quitted the room, my contempt for her, and my respect for her brother, being increased in the same proportion. I have since been informed, that the person, whom my uncle so generously relieved, is the widow of an ensign, who has nothing to depend upon but the pension of fifteen pounds a year. The people of the Well-house give her an excellent character. She lodges in a garret, and works very hard at plain work, to support her daughter, who is dying of a consumption. I must own, to my shame, I feel a strong inclination to follow my uncle’s example, in relieving this poor widow; but, betwixt friends, I am afraid of being detected in a weakness, that might entail the ridicule of the company, upon,

Dear Phillips, Yours always, J. MELFORD

Direct your next to me at Bath; and remember me to all our fellow-jesuits.

To Dr LEWIS

HOT WELL, April 20

I understand your hint. There are mysteries in physic, as well as in religion; which we of the profane have no right to investigate—A man must not presume to use his reason, unless he has studied the categories, and can chop logic by mode and figure—Between friends, I think every man of tolerable parts ought, at my time of day, to be both physician and lawyer, as far as his own constitution and property are concerned. For my own part, I have had an hospital these fourteen years within myself, and studied my own case with the most painful attention; consequently may be supposed to know something of the matter, although I have not taken regular courses of physiology et cetera et cetera.— In short, I have for some time been of opinion (no offence, dear Doctor) that the sum of all your medical discoveries amounts to this, that the more you study the less you know.—I have read all that has been written on the Hot Wells, and what I can collect from the whole, is, that the water contains nothing but a little salt, and calcarious earth, mixed in such inconsiderable proportion, as can have very little, if any, effect on the animal economy. This being the case, I think the man deserves to be fitted with a cap and bells, who for such a paultry advantage as this spring affords, sacrifices his precious time, which might be employed in taking more effectual remedies, and exposes himself to the dirt, the stench, the chilling blasts, and perpetual rains, that render this place to me intolerable. If these waters, from a small degree of astringency, are of some service in the diabetes, diarrhoea, and night sweats, when the secretions are too much increased, must not they do harm in the same proportion, where the humours are obstructed, as in the asthma, scurvy, gout and dropsy?— Now we talk of the dropsy, here is a strange fantastical oddity, one of your brethren, who harangues every day in the Pump-room, as if he was hired to give lectures on all subjects whatsoever—I know not what to make of him—Sometimes he makes shrewd remarks; at other times he talks like the greatest simpleton in nature—He has read a great deal; but without method or judgment, and digested nothing. He believes every thing he has read; especially if it has any thing of the marvellous in it and his conversation is a surprizing hotch-potch of erudition and extravagance. He told me t'other day, with great confidence, that my case was dropsical; or, as he called it, leucophlegmatic: A sure sign, that his want of experience is equal to his presumption—for, you know, there is nothing analogous to the dropsy in my disorder—I wish those impertinent fellows, with their ricketty understandings, would keep their advice for those that ask it. Dropsy, indeed! Sure I have not lived to the age of fifty-five, and had such experience of my own disorder, and consulted you and other eminent physicians, so often, and so long, to be undeceived by such a—But, without all doubt, the man is mad; and, therefore, what he says is of no consequence. I had, yesterday, a visit from Higgins, who came hither under the terror of your threats, and brought me in a present a brace of hares, which he owned he took in my ground; and I could not persuade the fellow that he did wrong, or that I would ever prosecute him for poaching—I must desire you will wink hard at the practices of this rascallion, otherwise I shall be plagued with his presents, which cost me more than they are worth.—If I could wonder at any thing Fitzowen does, I should be surprized at his assurance in desiring you to solicit my vote for him at the next election for the county: for him, who opposed me, on the like occasion, with the most illiberal competition. You may tell him civilly, that I beg to be excused. Direct your next for me at Bath, whither I propose to remove to-morrow; not only on my own account, but for the sake of my niece, Liddy, who is like to relapse. The poor creature fell into a fit yesterday, while I was cheapening a pair of spectacles, with a Jew-pedlar. I am afraid there is something still lurking in that little heart of hers, which I hope a change of objects will remove. Let me know what you think of this half-witted Doctor's impertinent, ridiculous, and absurd notion of my disorder—So far from

being dropsical, I am as lank in the belly as a grey-hound; and, by measuring my ankle with a pack-thread, I find the swelling subsides every day. From such doctors, good Lord deliver us!—I have not yet taken any lodgings in Bath; because there we can be accommodated at a minute's warning, and I shall choose for myself—I need not say your directions for drinking and bathing will be agreeable to,

Dear Lewis, Yours ever, MAT. BRAMBLE

P.S. I forgot to tell you, that my right ankle pits, a symptom, as I take it, of its being oedematous, not leucophlegmatic.

To Miss LETTY WILLIS, at Gloucester

HOT WELL, April 21

MY DEAR LETTY,

I did not intend to trouble you again, till we should be settled at Bath; but having the occasion of Jarvis, I could not let it slip, especially as I have something extraordinary to communicate. O, my dear companion! What shall I tell you? for several days past there was a Jew-looking man, that plied at the Wells with a box of spectacles; and he always eyed me so earnestly, that I began to be very uneasy. At last, he came to our lodgings at Clifton, and lingered about the door, as if he wanted to speak to somebody—I was seized with an odd kind of fluttering, and begged Win to throw herself in his way: but the poor girl has weak nerves, and was afraid of his beard. My uncle, having occasion for new glasses, called him up stairs, and was trying a pair of spectacles, when the man, advancing to me, said in a whisper—O gracious! what d’ye think he said?—‘I am Wilson!’ His features struck me that very moment it was Wilson, sure enough! but so disguised, that it would have been impossible to know him, if my heart had not assisted in the discovery. I was so surprised, and so frightened that I fainted away, but soon recovered; and found myself supported by him on the chair, while my uncle was running about the room, with the spectacles on his nose, calling for help. I had no opportunity to speak to him; but looks were sufficiently expressive. He was payed for his glasses, and went away. Then I told Win who he was, and sent her after him to the Pump-room; where she spoke to him, and begged him in my name to withdraw from the place, that he might not incur the suspicion of my uncle or my brother, if he did not want to see me die of terror and vexation. The poor youth declared, with tears in his eyes, that he had something extraordinary to communicate; and asked, if she would deliver a letter to me: but this she absolutely refused, by my order.—Finding her obstinate in her refusal, he desired she would tell me that he was no longer a player, but a gentleman; in which character he would very soon avow his passion for me, without fear of censure or reproach—Nay, he even discovered his name and family, which, to my great grief, the simple girl forgot, in the confusion occasioned by her being seen talking to him by my brother, who stopt her on the road, and asked what business she had with that rascally Jew. She pretended she was cheapening a stay-hook, but was thrown into such a quandary, that she forgot the most material part of the information; and when she came home, went into an hysteric fit of laughing. This transaction happened three days ago, during which he has not appeared, so that I suppose he has gone. Dear Letty! you see how Fortune takes pleasure in persecuting your poor friend. If you should see him at Gloucester—or if you have seen him, and know his real name and family, pray keep me no longer in suspense—And yet, if he is under no obligation to keep himself longer concealed, and has a real affection for me, I should hope he will, in a little time, declare himself to my relations. Sure, if there is nothing unsuitable in the match, they won’t be so cruel as to thwart my inclinations—O what happiness would then be my portion! I can’t help indulging the thought, and pleasing my fancy with such agreeable ideas; which after all, perhaps, will never be realized—But, why should I despair? who knows what will happen?—We set out for Bath to-morrow, and I am almost sorry for it; as I begin to be in love with solitude, and this is a charming romantic place. The air is so pure; the Downs are so agreeable; the furz in full blossom; the ground enamelled with daisies, and primroses, and cowslips; all the trees bursting into leaves, and the hedges already clothed with their vernal livery; the mountains covered with flocks of sheep and tender bleating wanton lambkins playing, frisking, and skipping from side to side; the groves resound with the notes of blackbird, thrush, and linnet; and all night long sweet Philomel pours forth her ravishingly delightful song. Then, for variety, we go down to the nymph of Bristol spring, where the company is assembled before dinner; so good natured, so free, so easy; and there we drink the

water so clear, so pure, so mild, so charmingly maukish. There the fun is so chearful and reviving; the weather so soft; the walk so agreeable; the prospect so amusing; and the ships and boats going up and down the river, close under the windows of the Pump-room, afford such an enchanting variety of Moving Pictures, as require a much abler pen than mine to describe. To make this place a perfect paradise to me, nothing is wanting but an agreeable companion and sincere friend; such as my dear miss Willis hath been, and I hope still will be, to her ever faithful.

LYDIA MELFORD

Direct for me, still under cover, to Win; and Jarvis will take care to convey it safe. Adieu.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon

BATH, April 24

DEAR PHILLIPS,

You have, indeed, reason to be surprised, that I should have concealed my correspondence with miss Blackerby from you, to whom I disclosed all my other connexions of that nature; but the truth is, I never dreamed of any such commerce, till your last informed me, that it had produced something which could not be much longer concealed. It is a lucky circumstance, however, that her reputation will not suffer any detriment, but rather derive advantage from the discovery; which will prove, at least, that it is not quite so rotten as most people imagined—For my own part, I declare to you, in all the sincerity of friendship, that, far from having any amorous intercourse with the object in question, I never had the least acquaintance with her person; but, if she is really in the condition you describe, I suspect Mansel to be at the bottom of the whole. His visits to that shrine were no secret; and this attachment, added to some good offices, which you know he has done me, since I left Alma-mater, give me a right to believe him capable of saddling me with this scandal, when my back was turned—Nevertheless, if my name can be of any service to him, he is welcome to make use of it; and if the woman should be abandoned enough to swear his banding to me, I must beg the favour of you to compound with the parish: I shall pay the penalty without repining; and you will be so good as to draw upon me immediately for the sum required—On this occasion, I act by the advice of my uncle; who says I shall have good-luck if I pass through life without being obliged to make many more compositions of the same kind. The old gentleman told me last night, with great good-humour, that betwixt the age of twenty and forty, he had been obliged to provide for nine bastards, sworn to him by women whom he never saw—Mr Bramble's character, which seems to interest you greatly, opens and improves upon me every day. His singularities afford a rich mine of entertainment; his understanding, so far as I can judge, is well cultivated; his observations on life are equally just, pertinent, and uncommon. He affects misanthropy, in order to conceal the sensibility of a heart, which is tender, even to a degree of weakness. This delicacy of feeling, or soreness of the mind, makes him timorous and fearful; but then he is afraid of nothing so much as of dishonour; and although he is exceedingly cautious of giving offence, he will fire at the least hint of insolence or ill-breeding.—Respectable as he is, upon the whole, I can't help being sometimes diverted by his little distresses; which provoke him to let fly the shafts of his satire, keen and penetrating as the arrows of Teucer—Our aunt, Tabitha, acts upon him as a perpetual grind-stone—She is, in all respects, a striking contrast to her brother—But I reserve her portrait for another occasion.

Three days ago we came hither from the Hot Well, and took possession of the first floor of a lodging-house, on the South Parade; a situation which my uncle chose, for its being near the Bath, and remote from the noise of carriages. He was scarce warm in the lodgings when he called for his night-cap, his wide shoes, and flannel; and declared himself invested with the gout in his right foot; though, I believe it had as yet reached no farther than his imagination. It was not long before he had reason to repent his premature declaration; for our aunt Tabitha found means to make such a clamour and confusion, before the flannels could be produced from the trunk, that one would have imagined the house was on fire. All this time, uncle sat boiling with impatience, biting his fingers, throwing up his eyes, and muttering ejaculations; at length he burst into a kind of convulsive laugh, after which he hummed a song; and when the hurricane was over, exclaimed 'Blessed be God for all things!' This, however, was but the beginning of his troubles. Mrs Tabitha's favourite dog Chowder, having paid his compliments to a female turnspit of his own species, in the kitchen, involved himself in a quarrel with no fewer than five rivals, who set upon him at once, and drove him up stairs to the dining room door,

with hideous noise: there our aunt and her woman, taking arms in his defence, joined the concert; which became truly diabolical. This fray being with difficulty suppressed, by the intervention of our own footman and the cook-maid of the house, the squire had just opened his mouth, to expostulate with Tabby, when the town-waits, in the passage below, struck up their music (if music it may be called) with such a sudden burst of sound, as made him start and stare, with marks of indignation and disquiet. He had recollection enough to send his servant with some money to silence those noisy intruders; and they were immediately dismissed, though not without some opposition on the part of Tabitha, who thought it but reasonable that he should have more music for his money. Scarce had he settled this knotty point, when a strange kind of thumping and bouncing was heard right over-head, in the second story, so loud and violent, as to shake the whole building. I own I was exceedingly provoked at this new alarm; and before my uncle had time to express himself on the subject, I ran up stairs, to see what was the matter. Finding the room-door open, I entered without ceremony, and perceived an object, which I can not now recollect without laughing to excess—It was a dancing master, with his scholar, in the act of teaching. The master was blind of one eye, and lame of one foot, and led about the room his pupil; who seemed to be about the age of threescore, stooped mortally, was tall, raw-boned, hard-favoured, with a woollen night-cap on his head; and he had stript off his coat, that he might be more nimble in his motions—Finding himself intruded upon, by a person he did not know, he forthwith girded himself with a long iron sword, and advancing to me, with a peremptory air, pronounced, in a true Hibernian accent, ‘Mister What d’ye callum, by my saoul and conscience, I am very glad to sea you, if you are after coming in the way of friendship; and indeed, and indeed now, I believe you are my friend sure enough, gra; though I never had the honour to sea your face before, my dear; for becaase you come like a friend, without any ceremony at all, at all’—I told him the nature of my visit would not admit of ceremony; that I was come to desire he would make less noise, as there was a sick gentleman below, whom he had no right to disturb with such preposterous doings. ‘Why, look-ye now, young gentleman (replied this original) perhaps, upon another occasion, I might shivilly request you to explain the maining of that hard word, prepaasterous: but there’s a time for all things, honey’—So saying, he passed me with great agility, and, running down stairs, found our foot-man at the dining-room door, of whom he demanded admittance, to pay his respects to the stranger. As the fellow did not think proper to refuse the request of such a formidable figure, he was immediately introduced, and addressed himself to my uncle in these words: ‘Your humble servant, good sir,—I’m not so prepaasterous, as your son calls it, but I know the rules of shivility—I’m a poor knight of Ireland, my name is sir Ulic Mackilligut, of the county of Galway; being your fellow-lodger, I’m come to pay my respects, and to welcome you to the South Parade, and to offer my best services to you, and your good lady, and your pretty daughter; and even to the young gentleman your son, though he thinks me a prepaasterous fellow—You must know I am to have the honour to open a ball next door to-morrow with lady Mac Manus; and being rusted in my dancing, I was refreshing my memory with a little exercise; but if I had known there was a sick person below, by Christ! I would have sooner danced a hornpipe upon my own head, than walk the softest minuet over yours.’—My uncle, who was not a little startled at his first appearance, received his compliment with great complacency, insisted upon his being seated, thanked him for the honour of his visit, and reprimanded me for my abrupt expostulation with a gentleman of his rank and character. Thus tutored, I asked pardon of the knight, who, forthwith starting up, embraced me so close, that I could hardly breathe; and assured me, he loved me as his own soul. At length, recollecting his night-cap, he pulled it off in some confusion; and, with his bald-pate uncovered, made a thousand apologies to the ladies, as he retired—At that instant, the Abbey bells, began to ring so loud, that we could not hear one another speak; and this peal, as we afterwards learned, was for the honour of Mr Bullock, an eminent cowkeeper of Tottenham, who had just arrived at Bath, to drink the waters for indigestion. Mr Bramble had not time to make his remarks upon the agreeable nature of this serenade, before his ears were saluted with another concert that interested him more nearly. Two negroes, belonging to a

Creole gentleman, who lodged in the same house, taking their station at a window in the stair-case, about ten feet from our dining-room door, began to practise upon the French-horn; and being in the very first rudiments of execution, produced such discordant sounds, as might have discomposed the organs of an ass. You may guess what effect they had upon the irritable nerves of uncle; who, with the most admirable expression of splenetic surprize in his countenance, sent his man to silence these dreadful blasts, and desire the musicians to practise in some other place, as they had no right to stand there and disturb all the lodgers in the house. Those sable performers, far from taking the hint, and withdrawing, treated the messenger with great insolence; bidding him carry his compliments to their master, colonel Rigworm, who would give him a proper answer, and a good drubbing into the bargain; in the mean time they continued their noise, and even endeavoured to make it more disagreeable; laughing between whiles, at the thoughts of being able to torment their betters with impunity. Our 'squire, incensed at the additional insult, immediately dispatched the servant, with his compliments to colonel Rigworm, requesting that he would order his blacks to be quiet, as the noise they made was altogether intolerable—To this message, the Creole colonel replied, that his horns had a right to sound on a common staircase; that there they should play for his diversion; and that those who did not like the noise, might look for lodgings elsewhere. Mr Bramble no sooner received this reply, than his eyes began to glisten, his face grew pale, and his teeth chattered. After a moment's pause, he slipt on his shoes, without speaking a word, or seeming to feel any further disturbance from the gout in his toes. Then snatching his cane, he opened the door and proceeded to the place where the black trumpeters were posted. There, without further hesitation, he began to belabour them both; and exerted himself with such astonishing vigour and agility, that both their heads and horns were broken in a twinkling, and they ran howling down stairs to their master's parlour-door. The squire, following them half way, called aloud, that the colonel might hear him, 'Go, rascals, and tell your master what I have done; if he thinks himself injured, he knows where to come for satisfaction. As for you, this is but an earnest of what you shall receive, if ever you presume to blow a horn again here, while I stay in the house.' So saying, he retired to his apartment, in expectation of hearing from the West Indian; but the colonel prudently declined any farther prosecution of the dispute. My sister Liddy was frighted into a fit, from which she was no sooner recovered, than Mrs Tabitha began a lecture upon patience; which her brother interrupted with a most significant grin, 'True, sister, God increase my patience and your discretion. I wonder (added he) what sort of sonata we are to expect from this overture, in which the devil, that presides over horrid sounds, hath given us such variations of discord—The trampling of porters, the creaking and crashing of trunks, the snarling of curs, the scolding of women, the squeaking and squalling of fiddles and hautboys out of tune, the bouncing of the Irish baronet over-head, and the bursting, belching, and brattling of the French-horns in the passage (not to mention the harmonious peal that still thunders from the Abbey steeple) succeeding one another without interruption, like the different parts of the same concert, have given me such an idea of what a poor invalid has to expect in this temple, dedicated to Silence and Repose, that I shall certainly shift my quarters to-morrow, and endeavour to effectuate my retreat before Sir Ulic opens the ball with my lady Mac Manus; a conjunction that bodes me no good.' This intimation was by no means agreeable to Mrs Tabitha, whose ears were not quite so delicate as those of her brother—She said it would be great folly to move from such agreeable lodgings, the moment they were comfortably settled. She wondered he should be such an enemy to music and mirth. She heard no noise but of his own making: it was impossible to manage a family in dumb-shew. He might harp as long as he pleased upon her scolding; but she never scolded, except for his advantage; but he would never be satisfied, even tho'f she should sweat blood and water in his service—I have a great notion that our aunt, who is now declining into the most desperate state of celibacy, had formed some design upon the heart of Sir Ulic Mackilligut, which she feared might be frustrated by our abrupt departure from these lodgings. Her brother, eyeing her askance, 'Pardon me, sister (said he) I should be a savage, indeed, were I insensible of my own felicity, in having such a mild, complaisant, good-humoured,

and considerate companion and housekeeper; but as I have got a weak head, and my sense of hearing is painfully acute, before I have recourse to plugs of wool and cotton, I'll try whether I can't find another lodging, where I shall have more quiet and less music.' He accordingly dispatched his man upon this service; and next day he found a small house in Milsham-street, which he hires by the week. Here, at least, we enjoy convenience and quiet within doors, as much as Tabby's temper will allow; but the squire still complains of flying pains in the stomach and head, for which he bathes and drinks the waters. He is not so bad, however, but that he goes in person to the pump, the rooms, and the coffeehouses; where he picks up continual food for ridicule and satire. If I can glean any thing for your amusement, either from his observation or my own, you shall have it freely, though I am afraid it will poorly compensate the trouble of reading these tedious insipid letters of,

Dear Phillips, Yours always, J. MELFORD

To Dr LEWIS. BATH, April 23. DEAR DOCTOR,

If I did not know that the exercise of your profession has habituated you to the hearing of complaints, I should make a conscience of troubling you with my correspondence, which may be truly called the lamentations of Matthew Bramble. Yet I cannot help thinking I have some right to discharge the overflowings of my spleen upon you, whose province it is to remove those disorders that occasioned it; and let me tell you, it is no small alleviation of my grievances, that I have a sensible friend, to whom I can communicate my crusty humours, which, by retention, would grow intolerably acrimonious.

You must know, I find nothing but disappointment at Bath; which is so altered, that I can scarce believe it is the same place that I frequented about thirty years ago. Methinks I hear you say, 'Altered it is, without all doubt: but then it is altered for the better; a truth which, perhaps, you would own without hesitation, if you yourself was not altered for the worse.' The reflection may, for aught I know, be just. The inconveniences which I overlooked in the high-day of health, will naturally strike with exaggerated impression on the irritable nerves of an invalid, surprised by premature old age, and shattered with long-suffering—But, I believe, you will not deny, that this place, which Nature and Providence seem to have intended as a resource from distemper and disquiet, is become the very centre of racket and dissipation. Instead of that peace, tranquillity, and ease, so necessary to those who labour under bad health, weak nerves, and irregular spirits; here we have nothing but noise, tumult, and hurry; with the fatigue and slavery of maintaining a ceremonial, more stiff, formal, and oppressive, than the etiquette of a German elector. A national hospital it may be, but one would imagine that none but lunatics are admitted; and truly, I will give you leave to call me so, if I stay much longer at Bath.—But I shall take another opportunity to explain my sentiments at greater length on this subject—I was impatient to see the boasted improvements in architecture, for which the upper parts of the town have been so much celebrated and t'other day I made a circuit of all the new buildings. The Square, though irregular, is, on the whole, pretty well laid out, spacious, open, and airy; and, in my opinion, by far the most wholesome and agreeable situation in Bath, especially the upper side of it; but the avenues to it are mean, dirty, dangerous, and indirect. Its communication with the Baths, is through the yard of an inn, where the poor trembling valetudinarian is carried in a chair, betwixt the heels of a double row of horses, wincing under the curry-combs of grooms and postilions, over and above the hazard of being obstructed, or overturned by the carriages which are continually making their exit or their entrance—I suppose after some chairmen shall have been maimed, and a few lives lost by those accidents, the corporation will think, in earnest, about providing a more safe and commodious passage. The Circus is a pretty bauble, contrived for shew, and looks like Vespasian's amphitheatre turned outside in. If we consider it in point of magnificence, the great number of small doors belonging to the separate houses, the inconsiderable height of the different orders, the affected ornaments of the architrave, which are both childish and misplaced, and the areas projecting into the street, surrounded with iron rails, destroy a good part of its effect upon the eye; and, perhaps, we shall find it still more defective, if we view it in the light of convenience. The figure of each separate dwelling-house, being the segment of a circle, must spoil the symmetry of the rooms, by contracting them towards the street windows, and leaving a larger sweep in the space behind. If, instead of the areas and iron rails, which seem to be of very little use, there had been a corridore with arcades all round, as in Covent-garden, the appearance of the whole would have been more magnificent and striking; those arcades would have afforded an agreeable covered walk, and sheltered the poor chairmen and their carriages from the rain, which is here almost perpetual. At present, the chairs stand soaking in the open street, from morning to night, till they become so many boxes of wet leather, for the benefit of the gouty and rheumatic, who are transported in them from place to place. Indeed this is a shocking inconvenience that extends over the whole city; and, I am

persuaded, it produces infinite mischief to the delicate and infirm; even the close chairs, contrived for the sick, by standing in the open air, have their frize linings impregnated like so many sponges, with the moisture of the atmosphere, and those cases of cold vapour must give a charming check to the perspiration of a patient, piping hot from the Bath, with all his pores wide open.

But, to return to the Circus; it is inconvenient from its situation, at so great a distance from all the markets, baths, and places of public entertainment. The only entrance to it, through Gay-street, is so difficult, steep, and slippery, that in wet weather, it must be exceedingly dangerous, both for those that ride in carriages, and those that walk a-foot; and when the street is covered with snow, as it was for fifteen days successively this very winter, I don't see how any individual could go either up or down, without the most imminent hazard of broken bones. In blowing weather, I am told, most of the houses in this hill are smothered with smoke, forced down the chimneys, by the gusts of wind reverberated from the hill behind, which (I apprehend likewise) must render the atmosphere here more humid and unwholesome than it is in the square below; for the clouds, formed by the constant evaporation from the baths and rivers in the bottom, will, in their ascent this way, be first attracted and detained by the hill that rises close behind the Circus, and load the air with a perpetual succession of vapours: this point, however, may be easily ascertained by means of an hygrometer, or a paper of salt of tartar exposed to the action of the atmosphere. The same artist who planned the Circus, has likewise projected a Crescent; when that is finished, we shall probably have a Star; and those who are living thirty years hence, may, perhaps, see all the signs of the Zodiac exhibited in architecture at Bath. These, however fantastical, are still designs that denote some ingenuity and knowledge in the architect; but the rage of building has laid hold on such a number of adventurers, that one sees new houses starting up in every out-let and every corner of Bath; contrived without judgment, executed without solidity, and stuck together with so little regard to plan and propriety, that the different lines of the new rows and buildings interfere with, and intersect one another in every different angle of conjunction. They look like the wreck of streets and squares disjointed by an earthquake, which hath broken the ground into a variety of holes and hillocks; or as if some Gothic devil had stuffed them altogether in a bag, and left them to stand higgledy piggledy, just as chance directed. What sort of a monster Bath will become in a few years, with those growing excrescences, may be easily conceived: but the want of beauty and proportion is not the worst effect of these new mansions; they are built so slight, with the soft crumbling stone found in this neighbourhood, that I shall never sleep quietly in one of them, when it blowed (as the sailors say) a cap-full of wind; and, I am persuaded, that my hind, Roger Williams, or any man of equal strength, would be able to push his foot through the strongest part of their walls, without any great exertion of his muscles. All these absurdities arise from the general tide of luxury, which hath overspread the nation, and swept away all, even the very dregs of the people. Every upstart of fortune, harnessed in the trappings of the mode, presents himself at Bath, as in the very focus of observation—Clerks and factors from the East Indies, loaded with the spoil of plundered provinces; planters, negro-drivers, and hucksters from our American plantations, enriched they know not how; agents, commissaries, and contractors, who have fattened, in two successive wars, on the blood of the nation; usurers, brokers, and jobbers of every kind; men of low birth, and no breeding, have found themselves suddenly translated into a state of affluence, unknown to former ages; and no wonder that their brains should be intoxicated with pride, vanity, and presumption. Knowing no other criterion of greatness, but the ostentation of wealth, they discharge their affluence without taste or conduct, through every channel of the most absurd extravagance; and all of them hurry to Bath, because here, without any further qualification, they can mingle with the princes and nobles of the land. Even the wives and daughters of low tradesmen, who, like shovel-nosed sharks, prey upon the blubber of those uncouth whales of fortune, are infected with the same rage of displaying their importance; and the slightest indisposition serves them for a pretext to insist upon being conveyed to Bath, where they may hobble country-dances and cotillons among lordlings, squires, counsellors, and clergy. These delicate creatures from Bedfordbury, Butcher-row,

Crutched-friers, and Botolph-lane, cannot breathe in the gross air of the Lower Town, or conform to the vulgar rules of a common lodging-house; the husband, therefore, must provide an entire house, or elegant apartments in the new buildings. Such is the composition of what is called the fashionable company at Bath; where a very inconsiderable proportion of genteel people are lost in a mob of impudent plebeians, who have neither understanding nor judgment, nor the least idea of propriety and decorum; and seem to enjoy nothing so much as an opportunity of insulting their betters.

Thus the number of people, and the number of houses continue to increase; and this will ever be the case, till the streams that swell this irresistible torrent of folly and extravagance, shall either be exhausted, or turned into other channels, by incidents and events which I do not pretend to foresee. This, I own, is a subject on which I cannot write with any degree of patience; for the mob is a monster I never could abide, either in its head, tail, midriff, or members; I detest the whole of it, as a mass of ignorance, presumption, malice and brutality; and, in this term of reprobation, I include, without respect of rank, station, or quality, all those of both sexes, who affect its manners, and court its society.

But I have written till my fingers are cramped, and my nausea begins to return—By your advice, I sent to London a few days ago for half a pound of Gengzeng; though I doubt much, whether that which comes from America is equally efficacious with what is brought from the East Indies. Some years ago a friend of mine paid sixteen guineas for two ounces of it; and, in six months after, it was sold in the same shop for five shillings the pound. In short, we live in a vile world of fraud and sophistication; so that I know nothing of equal value with the genuine friendship of a sensible man; a rare jewel! which I cannot help thinking myself in possession of, while I repeat the old declaration, that I am, as usual,

Dear Lewis, Your affectionate M. BRAMBLE,

After having been agitated in a short hurricane, on my first arrival, I have taken a small house in Milsham-street, where I am tolerably well lodged, for five guineas a week. I was yesterday at the Pump-room, and drank about a pint of water, which seems to agree with my stomach; and to-morrow morning I shall bathe, for the first time; so that in a few posts you may expect farther trouble; mean while, I am glad to find that the inoculation has succeeded so well with poor Joyce, and that her face will be but little marked. If my friend Sir Thomas was a single man, I would not trust such a handsome wench in his family; but as I have recommended her, in a particular manner, to the protection of lady G—, who is one of the best women in the world, she may go thither without hesitation as soon as she is quite recovered and fit for service—Let her mother have money to provide her with necessaries, and she may ride behind her brother on Bucks; but you must lay strong injunctions on Jack, to take particular care of the trusty old veteran, who has faithfully earned his present ease by his past services.

To Miss WILLIS at Gloucester. BATH, April 26. MY DEAREST COMPANION,

The pleasure I received from yours, which came to hand yesterday, is not to be expressed. Love and friendship are, without doubt, charming passions; which absence serves only to heighten and improve. Your kind present of the garnet bracelets, I shall keep as carefully as I preserve my own life; and I beg you will accept, in return, my heart-housewife, with the tortoise-shell memorandum-book, as a trifling pledge of my unalterable affection.

Bath is to me a new world—All is gayety, good-humour, and diversion. The eye is continually entertained with the splendour of dress and equipage; and the ear with the sound of coaches, chairs, and other carriages. The merry bells ring round, from morn till night. Then we are welcomed by the city-waits in our own lodgings; we have music in the Pump-room every morning, cotillons every forenoon in the rooms, balls twice a week, and concerts every other night, besides private assemblies and parties without number—As soon as we were settled in lodgings, we were visited by the Master of the Ceremonies; a pretty little gentleman, so sweet, so fine, so civil, and polite, that in our country he might pass for the prince of Wales; then he talks so charmingly, both in verse and prose, that you would be delighted to hear him discourse; for you must know he is a great writer, and has got five tragedies ready for the stage. He did us the favour to dine with us, by my uncle's invitation; and next day squired my aunt and me to every part of Bath; which, to be sure, is an earthly paradise. The Square, the Circus, and the Parades, put you in mind of the sumptuous palaces represented in prints and pictures; and the new buildings, such as Princes-row, Harlequin's-row, Bladud's-row, and twenty other rows, look like so many enchanted castles, raised on hanging terraces.

At eight in the morning, we go in dishabille to the Pump-room which is crowded like a Welsh fair; and there you see the highest quality, and the lowest trades folks, jostling each other, without ceremony, hail-fellow well-met. The noise of the music playing in the gallery, the heat and flavour of such a crowd, and the hum and buz of their conversation, gave me the head-ach and vertigo the first day; but, afterwards, all these things became familiar, and even agreeable.—Right under the Pump-room windows is the King's Bath; a huge cistern, where you see the patients up to their necks in hot water. The ladies wear jackets and petticoats of brown linen with chip hats, in which they fix their handkerchiefs to wipe the sweat from their faces; but, truly, whether it is owing to the steam that surrounds them, or the heat of the water, or the nature of the dress, or to all these causes together, they look so flushed, and so frightful, that I always turn my eyes another way—My aunt, who says every person of fashion should make her appearance in the bath, as well as in the abbey church, contrived a cap with cherry-coloured ribbons to suit her complexion, and obliged Win to attend her yesterday morning in the water. But, really, her eyes were so red, that they made mine water as I viewed her from the Pump-room; and as for poor Win, who wore a hat trimmed with blue, what betwixt her wan complexion and her fear, she looked like the ghost of some pale maiden, who had drowned herself for love. When she came out of the bath, she took assafoetida drops, and was fluttered all day; so that we could hardly keep her from going into hysterics: but her mistress says it will do her good; and poor Win curtsies, with the tears in her eyes. For my part, I content myself with drinking about half a pint of the water every morning.

The pumper, with his wife and servant, attend within a bar; and the glasses, of different sizes, stand ranged in order before them, so you have nothing to do but to point at that which you choose, and it is filled immediately, hot and sparkling from the pump. It is the only hot water I could ever drink, without being sick—Far from having that effect, it is rather agreeable to the taste, grateful to the stomach, and reviving to the spirits. You cannot imagine what wonderful cures it performs—My uncle began with it the other day; but he made wry faces in drinking, and I'm afraid he will leave it off—The first day we came to Bath, he fell into a violent passion; beat two black-a-moors, and I

was afraid he would have fought with their master; but the stranger proved a peaceable man. To be sure, the gout had got into his head, as my aunt observed; but, I believe, his passion drove it away; for he has been remarkably well ever since. It is a thousand pities he should ever be troubled with that ugly distemper; for, when he is free from pain, he is the best tempered man upon earth; so gentle, so generous, so charitable, that every body loves him; and so good to me, in particular, that I shall never be able to shew the deep sense I have of his tenderness and affection.

Hard by the Pump-room, is a coffee-house for the ladies; but my aunt says, young girls are not admitted, insomuch as the conversation turns upon politics, scandal, philosophy, and other subjects above our capacity; but we are allowed to accompany them to the booksellers' shops, which are charming places of resort; where we read novels, plays, pamphlets, and newspapers, for so small a subscription as a crown a quarter; and in these offices of intelligence (as my brother calls them) all the reports of the day, and all the private transactions of the Bath, are first entered and discussed. From the bookseller's shop, we make a tour through the milliners and toymen; and commonly stop at Mr Gill's, the pastry-cook, to take a jelly, a tart, or a small bason of vermicelli. There is, moreover, another place of entertainment on the other side of the water, opposite to the Grove, to which the company cross over in a boat—It is called Spring-garden; a sweet retreat, laid out in walks and ponds, and parterres of flowers; and there is a long-room for breakfasting and dancing. As the situation is low and damp, and the season has been remarkably wet, my uncle won't suffer me to go thither, lest I should catch cold: but my aunt says it is all a vulgar prejudice; and, to be sure, a great many gentlemen and ladies of Ireland frequent the place, without seeming to be the worse for it. They say, dancing at Spring-gardens, when the air is moist, is recommended to them as an excellent cure for the rheumatism. I have been twice at the play; where, notwithstanding the excellence of the performers, the gayety of the company, and the decorations of the theatre, which are very fine, I could not help reflecting, with a sigh, upon our poor homely representations at Gloucester—But this, in confidence to my dear Willis—You know my heart, and will excuse its weakness.

After all, the great scenes of entertainment at Bath, are the two public rooms; where the company meet alternately every evening. They are spacious, lofty, and, when lighted up, appear very striking. They are generally crowded with well-dressed people, who drink tea in separate parties, play at cards, walk, or sit and chat together, just as they are disposed. Twice a-week there is a ball; the expence of which is defrayed by a voluntary subscription among the gentlemen; and every subscriber has three tickets. I was there Friday last with my aunt, under the care of my brother, who is a subscriber; and Sir Ulic Mackilligut recommended his nephew, captain O Donaghan, to me as a partner; but Jerry excused himself, by saying I had got the head-ach; and, indeed, it was really so, though I can't imagine how he knew it. The place was so hot, and the smell so different from what we are used to in the country, that I was quite feverish when we came away. Aunt says it is the effect of a vulgar constitution, reared among woods and mountains; and, that as I become accustomed to genteel company, it will wear off.—Sir Ulic was very complaisant, made her a great many high-flown compliments; and, when we retired, handed her with great ceremony to her chair. The captain, I believe, would have done me the same favour; but my brother seeing him advance, took me under his arm, and wished him good night. The Captain is a pretty man, to be sure; tall and strait, and well made; with light-grey eyes, and a Roman nose; but there is a certain boldness in his look and manner, that puts one out of countenance—But I am afraid I have put you out of all patience with this long unconnected scrawl; which I shall therefore conclude, with assuring you, that neither Bath, nor London, nor all the diversions of life, shall ever be able to efface the idea of my dear Letty, from the heart of her ever affectionate

LYDIA MELFORD

To Mrs MARY JONES, at Brambleton-hall

DEAR MOLLY JONES,

Heaving got a frank, I now return your fever, which I received by Mr Higgins, at the Hot Well, together with the stockings, which his wife footed for me; but now they are of no survice. No body wears such things in this place—O Molly! you that live in the country have no deception of our doings at Bath. Here is such dressing, and fidling, and dancing, and gadding, and courting and plotting—O gracious! if God had not given me a good stock of discretion, what a power of things might not I reveal, consarning old mistress and young mistress; Jews with beards that were no Jews; but handsome Christians, without a hair upon their sin, strolling with spectacles, to get speech of Miss Liddy. But she's a dear sweet soul, as innocent as the child unborn. She has tould me all her inward thoughts, and disclosed her passion for Mr Wilson; and that's not his name neither; and thof he acted among the player-men, he is meat for their masters; and she has gi'en me her yallow trollopea; which Mrs Drab, the mantymaker, says will look very well when it is scowred and smoaked with silfur—You knows as how, yallow fitts my fizzogmony. God he knows what havock I shall make among the mail sex, when I make my first appearance in this killing collar, with a full soot of gaze, as good as new, that I bought last Friday of madam Friponeau, the French mullaner—Dear girl, I have seen all the fine shews of Bath; the Prades, the Squires, and the Circlis, the Crashit, the Hottogon, and Bloody Buildings, and Harry King's row; and I have been twice in the Bath with mistress, and na'r a smook upon our backs, hussy. The first time I was mortally afraid, and flustered all day; and afterwards made believe that I had got the heddick; but mistress said, if I didn't go I should take a dose of bumtaffy; and so remembering how it worked Mrs Gwyllim a pennorth, I chose rather to go again with her into the Bath, and then I met with an axident. I dropt my petticoat, and could not get it up from the bottom.—But what did that signify; they mought laff but they could see nothing; for I was up to the sin in water. To be sure, it threw me into such a gumbustion, that I know not what I said, nor what I did, nor how they got me out, and rapt me in a blanket—Mrs Tabitha scoulded a little when we got home; but she knows as I know what's what Ah Laud help you!—There is Sir Yury Micligut, of Balnaclinch, in the cunty of Kalloway—I took down the name from his gentleman, Mr O Frizzle, and he has got an estate of fifteen hundred a year—I am sure he is both rich and generous—But you nose, Molly, I was always famous for keeping secrets; and so he was very safe in trusting me with his flegm for mistress; which, to be sure is very honourable; for Mr O Frizzle assures me, he values not her portion a brass varthing—And, indeed, what's poor ten thousand pounds to a Baron Knight of his fortune? and, truly, I told Mr O Frizzle that was all she had trust to—As for John Thomas, he's a morass fellor—I vow, I thought he would a fit with Mr O Frizzle, because he axed me to dance with him at Spring Garden—But God he knows I have no thoughts eyther of wan or t'other.

As for house news, the worst is, Chowder has fallen off greatly from his stomick—He cats nothing but white meats, and not much of that; and wheezes, and seems to be much bloated. The doctors think he is threatened with a dropsy—Parson Marrofat, who has got the same disorder, finds great benefit from the waters; but Chowder seems to like them no better than the squire; and mistress says, if his case don't take a favourable turn, she will sartinly carry him to Aberga'ny, to drink goat's whey—To be sure, the poor dear honymil is lost for want of axercise; for which reason, she intends to give him an airing once a-day upon the Downs, in a post-chaise—I have already made very creditable connexions in this here place; where, to be sure, we have the very squintasense of satiety—Mrs Patcher, my lady Kilmacullock's woman, and I are sworn sisters. She has shewn me all her secrets, and learned me to wash gaze, and reflash rusty silks and bumbeseens, by boiling them with winegar, chamberlye, and stale beer. My short sack and apron luck as good as new from the shop, and my

pumpydoor as fresh as a rose, by the help of turtle-water—But this is all Greek and Latten to you, Molly—If we should come to Aberga'ny, you'll be within a day's ride of us; and then we shall see wan another, please God—If not, remember me in your prayers, as I shall do by you in mine; and take care of my kitten, and give my kind sarvice to Sall; and this is all at present, from your beloved friend and sarvent,

W. JENKINS BATH, April 26.

To Mrs GWYLLIM, house-keeper at Brambleton-hall

I am astonished that Dr Lewis should take upon him to give away Alderney, without my privity and concurrants—What signifies my brother's order? My brother is little better than Noncompush. He would give away the shirt off his back, and the teeth out of his head; nay, as for that matter; he would have ruined the family with his ridiculous charities, if it had not been for my four quarters—What between his willfullness and his waste, his trumps, and his frenzy, I lead the life of an indented slave. Alderney gave four gallons a-day, ever since the calf was sent to market. There is so much milk out of my dairy, and the press must stand still: but I won't loose a cheese pairing; and the milk shall be made good, if the sarvents should go without butter. If they must needs have butter, let them make it of sheep's milk; but then my wool will suffer for want of grace; so that I must be a loser on all sides. Well, patience is like a stout Welsh poney; it bears a great deal, and trots a great way; but it will tire at the long run. Before its long, perhaps I may shew Matt, that I was not born to be the household drudge to my dying day—Gwyn rites from Crickhowel, that the price of flannel is fallen three-farthings an ell; and that's another good penny out of my pocket. When I go to market to sell, my commodity stinks; but when I want to buy the commonest thing, the owner pricks it up under my nose; and it can't be had for love nor money—I think everything runs cross at Brambleton-hall—You say the gander has broke the eggs; which is a phinumenon I don't understand: for when the fox carried off the old goose last year, he took her place, and hatched the eggs, and partected the goslings like a tender parent—Then you tell me the thunder has soured two barrels of beer in the seller. But how the thunder should get there, when the seller was double-locked, I can't comprehend. Howsomever, I won't have the beer thrown out, till I see it with my own eyes. Perhaps, it will recover—At least it will serve for vinegar to the servants.—You may leave off the fires in my brother's chamber and mine, as it is unsartain when we return.—I hope, Gwyllim, you'll take care there is no waste; and have an eye to the maids, and keep them to their spinning. I think they may go very well without beer in hot weather—it serves only to inflame the blood, and set them a-gog after the men. Water will make them fair and keep them cool and tamperit. Don't forget to put up in the portmantel, that cums with Williams, along with my riding-habit, hat, and feather, the viol of purl water, and the tincktur for my stomach; being as how I am much troubled with flutterencies. This is all at present, from

Yours, TABITHA BRAMBLE BATH, April 26.

To Dr LEWIS

DEAR DICK,

I have done with the waters; therefore your advice comes a day too late I grant that physic is no mystery of your making. I know it is a mystery in its own nature; and, like other mysteries, requires a strong gulp of faith to make it go down—Two days ago, I went into the King's Bath, by the advice of our friend Ch—, in order to clear the strainer of the skin, for the benefit of a free perspiration; and the first object that saluted my eye, was a child full of scrophulous ulcers, carried in the arms of one of the guides, under the very noses of the bathers. I was so shocked at the sight, that I retired immediately with indignation and disgust—Suppose the matter of those ulcers, floating on the water, comes in contact with my skin, when the pores are all open, I would ask you what must be the consequence?—Good Heaven, the very thought makes my blood run cold! we know not what sores may be running into the water while we are bathing, and what sort of matter we may thus imbibe; the king's-evil, the scurvy, the cancer, and the pox; and, no doubt, the heat will render the virus the more volatile and penetrating. To purify myself from all such contamination, I went to the duke of Kingston's private Bath, and there I was almost suffocated for want of free air; the place was so small, and the steam so stifling.

After all, if the intention is no more than to wash the skin, I am convinced that simple element is more effectual than any water impregnated with salt and iron; which, being astringent, will certainly contract the pores, and leave a kind of crust upon the surface of the body. But I am now as much afraid of drinking, as of bathing; for, after a long conversation with the Doctor, about the construction of the pump and the cistern, it is very far from being clear with me, that the patients in the Pump-room don't swallow the scourings of the bathers. I can't help suspecting, that there is, or may be, some regurgitation from the bath into the cistern of the pump. In that case, what a delicate beverage is every day quaffed by the drinkers; medicated with the sweat and dirt, and dandriff; and the abominable discharges of various kinds, from twenty different diseased bodies, parboiling in the kettle below. In order to avoid this filthy composition, I had recourse to the spring that supplies the private baths on the Abbey-green; but I at once perceived something extraordinary in the taste and smell; and, upon inquiry, I find that the Roman baths in this quarter, were found covered by an old burying ground, belonging to the Abbey; through which, in all probability, the water drains in its passage; so that as we drink the decoction of living bodies at the Pump-room, we swallow the strainings of rotten bones and carcasses at the private bath. I vow to God, the very idea turns my stomach! Determined, as I am, against any farther use of the Bath waters, this consideration would give me little disturbance, if I could find any thing more pure, or less pernicious, to quench my thirst; but, although the natural springs of excellent water are seen gushing spontaneous on every side, from the hills that surround us, the inhabitants, in general, make use of well-water, so impregnated with nitre, or alum, or some other villainous mineral, that it is equally ungrateful to the taste, and mischievous to the constitution. It must be owned, indeed, that here, in Milsham-street, we have a precarious and scanty supply from the hill; which is collected in an open bason in the Circus, liable to be defiled with dead dogs, cats, rats, and every species of nastiness, which the rascally populace may throw into it, from mere wantonness and brutality. Well, there is no nation that drinks so hoggishly as the English.

What passes for wine among us, is not the juice of the grape. It is an adulterous mixture, brewed up of nauseous ingredients, by dunces, who are bunglers in the art of poison-making; and yet we, and our forefathers, are and have been poisoned by this cursed drench, without taste or flavour—The only genuine and wholesome beverage in England, is London porter, and Dorchester table-beer; but as for your ale and your gin, your cyder and your perry, and all the trashy family of made wines, I

detest them as infernal compositions, contrived for the destruction of the human species—But what have I to do with the human species? except a very few friends, I care not if the whole was—.

Heark ye, Lewis, my misanthropy increases every day—The longer I live, I find the folly and the fraud of mankind grow more and more intolerable—I wish I had not come from Brambletonhall; after having lived in solitude so long, I cannot bear the hurry and impertinence of the multitude; besides, every thing is sophisticated in these crowded places. Snares are laid for our lives in every thing we eat or drink: the very air we breathe, is loaded with contagion. We cannot even sleep, without risque of infection. I say, infection—This place is the rendezvous of the diseased—You won't deny, that many diseases are infectious; even the consumption itself, is highly infectious. When a person dies of it in Italy, the bed and bedding are destroyed; the other furniture is exposed to the weather and the apartment white-washed, before it is occupied by any other living soul. You'll allow, that nothing receives infection sooner, or retains it longer, than blankets, feather-beds, and matrasses—'Sdeath! how do I know what miserable objects have been stewing in the bed where I now lie!—I wonder, Dick, you did not put me in mind of sending for my own matrasses—But, if I had not been an ass, I should not have needed a remembrancer—There is always some plaguy reflection that rises up in judgment against me, and ruffles my spirits—Therefore, let us change the subject.

I have other reasons for abridging my stay at Bath—You know sister Tabby's complexion—If Mrs Tabitha Bramble had been of any other race, I should certainly have considered her as the most—. But, the truth is, she has found means to interest my affection; or, rather, she is beholden to the force of prejudice, commonly called the ties of blood. Well, this amiable maiden has actually commenced a flirting correspondence with an Irish baronet of sixty-five. His name is Sir Ulic Mackilligut. He is said to be much out at elbows; and, I believe, has received false intelligence with respect to her fortune. Be that as it may, the connexion is exceedingly ridiculous, and begins already to excite whispers. For my part, I have no intention to dispute her free-agency; though I shall fall upon some expedient to undeceive her paramour, as to the point which he has principally in view. But I don't think her conduct is a proper example for Liddy, who has also attracted the notice of some coxcombs in the Rooms; and Jerry tells me, he suspects a strapping fellow, the knight's nephew, of some design upon the girl's heart. I shall, therefore, keep a strict eye over her aunt and her, and even shift the scene, if I find the matter grow more serious—You perceive what an agreeable task it must be, to a man of my kidney, to have the cure of such souls as these.—But, hold, You shall not have another peevish word (till the next occasion) from

Yours, MATT. BRAMBLE BATH, April 28.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon

DEAR KNIGHT,

I think those people are unreasonable, who complain that Bath is a contracted circle, in which the same dull scenes perpetually revolve, without variation—I am, on the contrary, amazed to find so small a place so crowded with entertainment and variety. London itself can hardly exhibit one species of diversion, to which we have not something analogous at Bath, over and above those singular advantages that are peculiar to the place. Here, for example, a man has daily opportunities of seeing the most remarkable characters of the community. He sees them in their natural attitudes and true colours; descended from their pedestals, and divested of their formal draperies, undisguised by art and affectation—Here we have ministers of state, judges, generals, bishops, projectors, philosophers, wits, poets, players, chemists, fiddlers, and buffoons. If he makes any considerable stay in the place, he is sure of meeting with some particular friend, whom he did not expect to see; and to me there is nothing more agreeable than such casual reencounters. Another entertainment, peculiar to Bath, arises from the general mixture of all degrees assembled in our public rooms, without distinction of rank or fortune. This is what my uncle reprobates, as a monstrous jumble of heterogeneous principles; a vile mob of noise and impertinence, without decency or subordination. But this chaos is to me a source of infinite amusement.

I was extremely diverted last ball-night to see the Master of the Ceremonies leading, with great solemnity, to the upper end of the room, an antiquated Abigail, dressed in her lady's cast-clothes; whom he (I suppose) mistook for some countess just arrived at the Bath. The ball was opened by a Scotch lord, with a mulatto heiress from St Christopher's; and the gay colonel Tinsel danced all the evening with the daughter of an eminent tinman from the borough of Southwark. Yesterday morning, at the Pump-room, I saw a broken-winded Wapping landlady squeeze through a circle of peers, to salute her brandy-merchant, who stood by the window, propped upon crutches; and a paralytic attorney of Shoe-lane, in shuffling up to the bar, kicked the shins of the chancellor of England, while his lordship, in a cut bob, drank a glass of water at the pump. I cannot account for my being pleased with these incidents, any other way, than by saying they are truly ridiculous in their own nature, and serve to heighten the humour in the farce of life, which I am determined to enjoy as long as I can.

Those follies, that move my uncle's spleen, excite my laughter. He is as tender as a man without a skin; who cannot bear the slightest touch without flinching. What tickles another would give him torment; and yet he has what we may call lucid intervals, when he is remarkably facetious—Indeed, I never knew a hypochondriac so apt to be infected with good-humour. He is the most risible misanthrope I ever met with. A lucky joke, or any ludicrous incident, will set him a-laughing immoderately, even in one of his most gloomy paroxysms; and, when the laugh is over, he will curse his own imbecility. In conversing with strangers, he betrays no marks of disquiet—He is splenetic with his familiars only; and not even with them, while they keep his attention employed; but when his spirits are not exerted externally, they seem to recoil and prey upon himself—He has renounced the waters with execration; but he begins to find a more efficacious, and, certainly, a much more palatable remedy in the pleasures of society. He has discovered some old friends, among the invalids of Bath; and, in particular, renewed his acquaintance with the celebrated James Quin, who certainly did not come here to drink water. You cannot doubt, but that I had the strongest curiosity to know this original; and it was gratified by Mr Bramble, who has had him twice at our house to dinner.

So far as I am able to judge, Quin's character is rather more respectable than it has been generally represented. His bon mots are in every witling's mouth; but many of them have a rank flavour, which one would be apt to think was derived from a natural grossness of idea. I suspect,

however, that justice has not been done the author, by the collectors of those Quiniana; who have let the best of them slip through their fingers, and only retained such as were suited to the taste and organs of the multitude. How far he may relax in his hours of jollity, I cannot pretend to say; but his general conversation is conducted by the nicest rules of Propriety; and Mr James Quin is, certainly, one of the best bred men in the kingdom. He is not only a most agreeable companion but (as I am credibly informed) a very honest man; highly susceptible of friendship, warm, steady, and even generous in his attachments, disdaining flattery, and incapable of meanness and dissimulation. Were I to judge, however, from Quin's eye alone, I should take him to be proud, insolent, and cruel. There is something remarkably severe and forbidding in his aspect; and, I have been told, he was ever disposed to insult his inferiors and dependants.—Perhaps that report has influenced my opinion of his looks—You know we are the fools of prejudice. Howsoever that may be, I have as yet seen nothing but his favourable side, and my uncle, who frequently confers with him, in a corner, declares he is one of the most sensible men he ever knew—He seems to have a reciprocal regard for old Squaretoes, whom he calls by the familiar name of Matthew, and often reminds of their old tavern-adventures: on the other hand, Matthew's eyes sparkle whenever Quin makes his appearance—Let him be never so jarring and discordant, Quin puts him in tune; and, like treble and bass in the same concert, they make excellent music together—. T'other day, the conversation turning upon Shakespeare, I could not help saying, with some emotion, that I would give an hundred guineas to see Mr Quin act the part of Falstaff; upon which, turning to me with a smile, 'And I would give a thousand, young gentleman (said he) that I could gratify your longing.' My uncle and he are perfectly agreed in their estimate of life; which Quin says, would stink in his nostrils, if he did not steep it in claret.

I want to see this phenomenon in his cups; and have almost prevailed upon uncle to give him a small turtle at the Bear. In the mean time, I must entertain you with an incident, that seems to confirm the judgment of those two cynic philosophers. I took the liberty to differ in opinion from Mr Bramble, when he observed, that the mixture of people in the entertainments of this place was destructive of all order and urbanity; that it rendered the plebeians insufferably arrogant and troublesome, and vulgarized the deportment and sentiments of those who moved in the upper spheres of life. He said such a preposterous coalition would bring us into contempt with all our neighbours; and was worse, in fact, than debasing the gold coin of the nation. I argued, on the contrary, that those plebeians who discovered such eagerness to imitate the dress and equipage of their superiors, would likewise, in time, adopt their maxims and their manners, be polished by their conversation, and refined by their example; but when I appealed to Mr Quin, and asked if he did not think that such an unreserved mixture would improve the whole mass? 'Yes (said he) as a plate of marmalade would improve a pan of sirreverence.'

I owned I was not much conversant in high-life, but I had seen what were called polite assemblies in London and elsewhere; that those of Bath seemed to be as decent as any; and that, upon the whole, the individuals that composed it, would not be found deficient in good manners and decorum. 'But let us have recourse to experience (said I)—Jack Holder, who was intended for a parson, has succeeded to an estate of two thousand a year, by the death of his elder brother. He is now at the Bath, driving about in a phaeton and four, with French horns. He has treated with turtle and claret at all the taverns in Bath and Bristol, till his guests are gorged with good cheer: he has bought a dozen suits of fine clothes, by the advice of the Master of the Ceremonies, under whose tuition he has entered himself. He has lost hundreds at billiards to sharpers, and taken one of the nymphs of Avon-street into keeping; but, finding all these channels insufficient to drain him of his current cash, his counsellor has engaged him to give a general tea-drinking to-morrow at Wiltshire's room. In order to give it the more eclat, every table is to be furnished with sweet-meats and nose-gays; which, however, are not to be touched till notice is given by the ringing of a bell, and then the ladies may help themselves without restriction. This will be no bad way of trying the company's breeding.'

‘I will abide by that experiment (cried my uncle) and if I could find a place to stand secure, without the vortex of the tumult, which I know will ensue, I would certainly go thither and enjoy the scene.’ Quin proposed that we should take our station in the music-gallery, and we took his advice. Holder had got thither before us, with his horns perdue, but we were admitted. The tea-drinking passed as usual, and the company having risen from the tables, were sauntering in groupes, in expectation of the signal for attack, when the bell beginning to ring, they flew with eagerness to the dessert, and the whole place was instantly in commotion. There was nothing but justling, scrambling, pulling, snatching, struggling, scolding, and screaming. The nosegays were torn from one another’s hands and bosoms; the glasses and china went to wreck; the tables and floors were strewed with comfits. Some cried; some swore; and the tropes and figures of Billingsgate were used without reserve in all their native zest and flavour; nor were those flowers of rhetoric unattended with significant gesticulation. Some snapped their fingers; some forked them out; some clapped their hands, and some their back-sides; at length, they fairly proceeded to pulling caps, and every thing seemed to presage a general battle; when Holder ordered his horns to sound a charge, with a view to animate the combatants, and inflame the contest; but this manoeuvre produced an effect quite contrary to what he expected. It was a note of reproach that roused them to an immediate sense of their disgraceful situation. They were ashamed of their absurd deportment, and suddenly desisted. They gathered up their caps, ruffles, and handkerchiefs; and great part of them retired in silent mortification.

Quin laughed at this adventure; but my uncle’s delicacy was hurt. He hung his head in manifest chagrin, and seemed to repine at the triumph of his judgment—Indeed, his victory was more complete than he imagined; for, as we afterwards learned, the two amazons who singularized themselves most in the action, did not come from the purlieu of Puddle-dock, but from the courtly neighbourhood of St James’s palace. One was a baroness, and the other, a wealthy knight’s dowager—My uncle spoke not a word, till we had made our retreat good to the coffee-house; where, taking off his hat and wiping his forehead, ‘I bless God (said he) that Mrs Tabitha Bramble did not take the field today!’ ‘I would pit her for a cool hundred (cried Quin) against the best shake-bag of the whole main.’ The truth is, nothing could have kept her at home but the accident of her having taken physic before she knew the nature of the entertainment. She has been for some days furbishing up an old suit of black velvet, to make her appearance as Sir Ulic’s partner at the next ball.

I have much to say of this amiable kinswoman; but she has not been properly introduced to your acquaintance. She is remarkably civil to Mr Quin; of whose sarcastic humour she seems to stand in awe; but her caution is no match for her impertinence. ‘Mr Gwynn (said she the other day) I was once vastly entertained with your playing the Ghost of Gimlet at Drury-lane, when you rose up through the stage, with a white face and red eyes, and spoke of quails upon the frightful porcofine—Do, pray, spout a little the Ghost of Gimlet.’ ‘Madam (said Quin, with a glance of ineffable disdain) the Ghost of Gimlet is laid, never to rise again’—Insensible of this check, she proceeded: ‘Well, to be sure, you looked and talked so like a real ghost; and then the cock crowed so natural. I wonder how you could teach him to crow so exact, in the very nick of time; but, I suppose, he’s game—An’t he game, Mr Gwynn?’ ‘Dunghill, madam.’—‘Well, dunghill, or not dunghill, he has got such a clear counter-tenor, that I wish I had such another at Brambleton-hall, to wake the maids of a morning. Do you know where I could find one of his brood?’ ‘Probably in the work-house at St Giles’s parish, madam; but I protest I know not his particular mew!’ My uncle, frying with vexation, cried, ‘Good God, sister, how you talk! I have told you twenty times, that this gentleman’s name is not Gwynn.’—‘Hoity toity, brother mine (she replied) no offence, I hope—Gwynn is an honorable name, of true old British extraction—I thought the gentleman had been come of Mrs Helen Gwynn, who was of his own profession; and if so be that were the case, he might be of king Charles’s breed, and have royal blood in his veins.’—‘No, madam (answered Quin, with great solemnity) my mother was not a whore of such distinction—True it is, I am sometimes tempted to believe myself of royal descent; for my inclinations are often arbitrary—If I was an absolute prince, at this instant, I believe I should send for the head of your

cook in a charger—She has committed felony, on the person of that John Dory, which is mangled in a cruel manner, and even presented without sauce—O tempora! O mores!'

This good-humoured sally turned the conversation into a less disagreeable channel—But, lest you should think my scribble as tedious as Mrs Tabby's clack, I shall not add another word, but that I am as usual

Yours, J. MELFORD BATH, April 30.

To Dr LEWIS

DEAR LEWIS,

I received your bill upon Wiltshire, which was punctually honoured; but as I don't choose to keep so much cash by me, in a common lodging house, I have deposited 250l. in the bank of Bath, and shall take their bills for it in London, when I leave this place, where the season draws to an end—You must know, that now being a-foot, I am resolved to give Liddy a glimpse of London. She is one of the best hearted creatures I ever knew, and gains upon my affection every day—As for Tabby, I have dropt such hints to the Irish baronet, concerning her fortune, as, I make no doubt, will cool the ardour of his addresses. Then her pride will take the alarm; and the rancour of stale maidenhood being chafed, we shall hear nothing but slander and abuse of Sir Ulic Mackilligut—This rupture, I foresee, will facilitate our departure from Bath; where, at present, Tabby seems to enjoy herself with peculiar satisfaction. For my part, I detest it so much, that I should not have been able to stay so long in the place if I had not discovered some old friends; whose conversation alleviates my disgust—Going to the coffeehouse one forenoon, I could not help contemplating the company, with equal surprize and compassion—We consisted of thirteen individuals; seven lamed by the gout, rheumatism, or palsy; three maimed by accident; and the rest either deaf or blind. One hobbled, another hopped, a third dragged his legs after him like a wounded snake, a fourth straddled betwixt a pair of long crutches, like the mummy of a felon hanging in chains; a fifth was bent into a horizontal position, like a mounted telescope, shoved in by a couple of chairmen; and a sixth was the bust of a man, set upright in a wheel machine, which the waiter moved from place to place.

Being struck with some of their faces, I consulted the subscription-book; and, perceiving the names of several old friends, began to consider the groupe with more attention. At length I discovered rear-admiral Balderick, the companion of my youth, whom I had not seen since he was appointed lieutenant of the Severn. He was metamorphosed into an old man, with a wooden leg and a weatherbeaten face, which appeared the more ancient from his grey locks, that were truly venerable—Sitting down at the table, where he was reading a news-paper, I gazed at him for some minutes, with a mixture of pleasure and regret, which made my heart gush with tenderness; then, taking him by the hand, 'Ah, Sam (said I) forty years ago I little thought'—I was too much moved to proceed. 'An old friend, sure enough! (cried he, squeezing my hand, and surveying me eagerly through his glasses) I know the looming of the vessel, though she has been hard strained since we parted; but I can't heave up the name'—The moment I told him who I was, he exclaimed, 'Ha! Matt, my old fellow cruizer, still afloat!' And, starting up, hugged me in his arms. His transport, however, boded me no good; for, in saluting me, he thrust the spring of his spectacles into my eye, and, at the same time, set his wooden stump upon my gouty toe; an attack that made me shed tears in sad earnest—After the hurry of our recognition was over, he pointed out two of our common friends in the room: the bust was what remained of colonel Cockril, who had lost the use of his limbs in making an American campaign; and the telescope proved to be my college chum, sir Reginald Bently; who, with his new title, and unexpected inheritance, commenced fox-hunter, without having served his apprenticeship to the mystery; and, in consequence of following the hounds through a river, was seized with an inflammation of his bowels, which has contracted him into his present attitude.

Our former correspondence was forthwith renewed, with the most hearty expressions of mutual good-will, and as we had met so unexpectedly, we agreed to dine together that very day at the tavern. My friend Quin, being luckily unengaged, obliged us with his company; and, truly, this the most happy day I have passed these twenty years. You and I, Lewis, having been always together, never tasted friendship in this high gout, contracted from long absence. I cannot express the half of what I felt

at this casual meeting of three or four companions, who had been so long separated, and so roughly treated by the storms of life. It was a renovation of youth; a kind of resuscitation of the dead, that realized those interesting dreams, in which we sometimes retrieve our ancient friends from the grave. Perhaps my enjoyment was not the less pleasing for being mixed with a strain of melancholy, produced by the remembrance of past scenes, that conjured up the ideas of some endearing connexions, which the hand of Death has actually dissolved.

The spirits and good humour of the company seemed to triumph over the wreck of their constitutions. They had even philosophy enough to joke upon their own calamities; such is the power of friendship, the sovereign cordial of life—I afterwards found, however, that they were not without their moments, and even hours of disquiet. Each of them apart, in succeeding conferences, expatiated upon his own particular grievances; and they were all malcontents at bottom—Over and above their personal disasters, they thought themselves unfortunate in the lottery of life. Balderick complained, that all the recompence he had received for his long and hard service, was the half-pay of a rear-admiral. The colonel was mortified to see himself over-topped by upstart generals, some of whom he had once commanded; and, being a man of a liberal turn, could ill put up with a moderate annuity, for which he had sold his commission. As for the baronet, having run himself considerably in debt, on a contested election, he has been obliged to relinquish his seat in parliament, and his seat in the country at the same time, and put his estate to nurse; but his chagrin, which is the effect of his own misconduct, does not affect me half so much as that of the other two, who have acted honourable and distinguished parts on the great theatre, and are now reduced to lead a weary life in this stewpan of idleness and insignificance. They have long left off using the waters, after having experienced their inefficacy. The diversions of the place they are not in a condition to enjoy. How then do they make shift to pass their time? In the forenoon they crawl out to the Rooms or the coffeehouse, where they take a hand at whist, or descant upon the General Advertiser; and their evenings they murder in private parties, among peevish invalids, and insipid old women—This is the case with a good number of individuals, whom nature seems to have intended for better purposes.

About a dozen years ago, many decent families, restricted to small fortunes, besides those that came hither on the score of health, were tempted to settle at Bath, where they could then live comfortably, and even make a genteel appearance, at a small expence: but the madness of the times has made the place too hot for them, and they are now obliged to think of other migrations—Some have already fled to the mountains of Wales, and others have retired to Exeter. Thither, no doubt, they will be followed by the flood of luxury and extravagance, which will drive them from place to place to the very Land's End; and there, I suppose, they will be obliged to ship themselves to some other country. Bath is become a mere sink of profligacy and extortion. Every article of house-keeping is raised to an enormous price; a circumstance no longer to be wondered at, when we know that every petty retainer of fortune piques himself upon keeping a table, and thinks it is for the honour of his character to wink at the knavery of his servants, who are in a confederacy with the market-people; and, of consequence, pay whatever they demand. Here is now a mushroom of opulence, who pays a cook seventy guineas a week for furnishing him with one meal a day. This portentous frenzy is become so contagious, that the very rabble and refuse of mankind are infected. I have known a negro-driver, from Jamaica, pay over-night, to the master of one of the rooms, sixty-five guineas for tea and coffee to the company, and leave Bath next morning, in such obscurity, that not one of his guests had the slightest idea of his person, or even made the least inquiry about his name. Incidents of this kind are frequent; and every day teems with fresh absurdities, which are too gross to make a thinking man merry.

—But I feel the spleen creeping on me apace; and therefore will indulge you with a cessation, that you may have no unnecessary cause to curse your correspondence with,

Dear Dick, Yours ever, MAT. BRAMBLE BATH, May 5.

To Miss LAETITIA WILLIS, at Gloucester

MY DEAR LETTY,

I wrote you at great length by the post, the twenty-sixth of last month, to which I refer you for an account of our proceedings at Bath; and I expect your answer with impatience. But, having this opportunity of a private hand, I send you two dozen of Bath rings; six of the best of which I desire you will keep for yourself, and distribute the rest among the young ladies, our common friends, as you shall think proper—I don't know how you will approve of the mottoes; some of them are not much to my own liking; but I was obliged to take such as I could find ready manufactured—I am vexed, that neither you nor I have received any further information of a certain person—Sure it cannot be wilful neglect!—O my dear Willis! I begin to be visited by strange fancies, and to have some melancholy doubts; which, however, it would be ungenerous to harbour without further inquiry—My uncle, who has made me a present of a very fine set of garnets, talks of treating us with a jaunt to London; which, you may imagine, will be highly agreeable; but I like Bath so well, that I hope he won't think of leaving it till the season is quite over; and yet, betwixt friends, something has happened to my aunt, which will probably shorten our stay in this place.

Yesterday, in the forenoon, she went by herself to a breakfasting in one of the rooms; and, in half an hour, returned in great agitation, having Chowder along with her in the chair. I believe some accident must have happened to that unlucky animal, which is the great source of all her troubles. Dear Letty! what a pity it is, that a woman of her years and discretion, should place her affection upon such an ugly, ill-conditioned cur, that snarls and snaps at every body. I asked John Thomas, the footman who attended her, what was the matter? and he did nothing but grin. A famous dog-doctor was sent for, and undertook to cure the patient, provided he might carry him home to his own house; but his mistress would not part with him out of her own sight—She ordered the cook to warm cloths, which she applied to his bowels, with her own hand. She gave up all thoughts of going to the ball in the evening; and when Sir Ulic came to drink tea, refused to be seen; so that he went away to look for another partner. My brother Jerry whistles and dances. My uncle sometimes shrugs up his shoulders, and sometimes bursts out a-laughing. My aunt sobs and scolds by turns; and her woman, Win. Jenkins, stares and wonders with a foolish face of curiosity; and, for my part, I am as curious as she, but ashamed to ask questions.

Perhaps time will discover the mystery; for if it was any thing that happened in the Rooms, it cannot be long concealed—All I know is, that last night at supper, miss Bramble spoke very disdainfully of Sir Ulic Mackilligut, and asked her brother if he intended to keep us sweltering all the summer at Bath? 'No, sister Tabitha (said he, with an arch smile) we shall retreat before the Dog-days begin; though I make no doubt, that with a little temperance and discretion, our constitutions might be kept cool enough all the year, even at Bath.' As I don't know the meaning of this insinuation, I won't pretend to make any remarks upon it at present: hereafter, perhaps, I may be able to explain it more to your satisfaction—In the mean time, I beg you will be punctual in your correspondence, and continue to love your ever faithful

LYDIA MELFORD BATH, May 6.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon

So then Mrs Blackerby's affair has proved a false alarm, and I have saved my money? I wish, however, her declaration had not been so premature; for though my being thought capable of making her a mother, might have given me some credit, the reputation of an intrigue with such a cracked pitcher does me no honour at all. In my last I told you I had hopes of seeing Quin, in his hours of elevation at the tavern which is the temple of mirth and good fellowship; where he, as priest of Comus, utters the inspirations of wit and humour—I have had that satisfaction. I have dined with his club at the Three Tuns, and had the honour to sit him out. At half an hour past eight in the evening, he was carried home with six good bottles of claret under his belt; and it being then Friday, he gave orders that he should not be disturbed till Sunday at noon—You must not imagine that this dose had any other effect upon his conversation, but that of making it more extravagantly entertaining—He had lost the use of his limbs, indeed, several hours before we parted, but he retained all his other faculties in perfection; and as he gave vent to every whimsical idea as it rose, I was really astonished at the brilliancy of his thoughts, and the force of his expression. Quin is a real voluptuary in the articles of eating and drinking; and so confirmed an epicure, in the common acceptance of the term, that he cannot put up with ordinary fare. This is a point of such importance with him, that he always takes upon himself the charge of catering; and a man admitted to his mess, is always sure of eating delicate victuals, and drinking excellent wine—He owns himself addicted to the delights of the stomach, and often jokes upon his own sensuality; but there is nothing selfish in this appetite—He finds that good cheer unites good company, exhilarates the spirits, opens the heart, banishes all restraint from conversation, and promotes the happiest purposes of social life. But Mr James Quin is not a subject to be discussed in the compass of one letter; I shall therefore, at present, leave him to his repose, and call another of a very different complexion.

You desire to have further acquaintance with the person of our aunt, and promise yourself much entertainment from her connexion with Sir Ulic Mackilligut: but in this hope you are baulked already; that connexion is dissolved. The Irish baronet is an old hound, that, finding her carrion, has quitted the scent—I have already told you, that Mrs Tabitha Bramble is a maiden of forty-five. In her person, she is tall, raw-boned, awkward, flat-chested, and stooping; her complexion is sallow and freckled; her eyes are not grey, but greenish, like those of a cat, and generally inflamed; her hair is of a sandy, or rather dusty hue; her forehead low; her nose long, sharp, and, towards the extremity, always red in cool weather; her lips skinny, her mouth extensive, her teeth straggling and loose, of various colours and conformation; and her long neck shrivelled into a thousand wrinkles—In her temper, she is proud, stiff, vain, imperious, prying, malicious, greedy, and uncharitable. In all likelihood, her natural austerity has been soured by disappointment in love; for her long celibacy is by no means owing to her dislike of matrimony: on the contrary, she has left no stone unturned to avoid the reproachful epithet of old maid.

Before I was born, she had gone such lengths in the way of flirting with a recruiting officer, that her reputation was a little singed. She afterwards made advances to the curate of the parish, who dropped some distant hints about the next presentation to the living, which was in her brother's gift; but finding that was already promised to another, he flew off at a tangent; and Mrs Tabby, in revenge, found means to deprive him of his cure. Her next lover was lieutenant of a man of war, a relation of the family, who did not understand the refinements of the passion, and expressed no aversion to grapple with cousin Tabby in the way of marriage; but before matters could be properly adjusted, he went out on a cruise, and was killed in an engagement with a French frigate. Our aunt, though baffled so often, did not yet despair. She layed all her snares for Dr Lewis, who is the fidus Achates of my uncle. She even fell sick upon the occasion, and prevailed with Matt to interpose in her behalf with his friend; but the Doctor, being a shy cock, would not be caught with chaff, and flatly rejected the

proposal: so that Mrs Tabitha was content to exert her patience once more, after having endeavoured in vain to effect a rupture betwixt the two friends; and now she thinks proper to be very civil to Lewis, who is become necessary to her in the way of his profession.

These, however, are not the only efforts she has made towards a nearer conjunction with our sex. Her fortune was originally no more than a thousand pounds; but she gained an accession of five hundred by the death of a sister, and the lieutenant left her three hundred in his will. These sums she has more than doubled, by living free of all expence, in her brother's house; and dealing in cheese and Welsh flannel, the produce of his flocks and dairy. At present her capital is increased to about four thousand pounds; and her avarice seems to grow every day more and more rapacious: but even this is not so intolerable as the perverseness of her nature, which keeps the whole family in disquiet and uproar. She is one of those geniuses who find some diabolical enjoyment in being dreaded and detested by their fellow-creatures.

I once told my uncle, I was surprised that a man of his disposition could bear such a domestic plague, when it could be so easily removed. The remark made him sore, because it seemed to tax him with want of resolution—Wrinkling up his nose, and drawing down his eye-brows, 'A young fellow (said he) when he first thrusts his snout into the world, is apt to be surprised at many things which a man of experience knows to be ordinary and unavoidable—This precious aunt of yours is become insensibly a part of my constitution—Damn her! She's a *noli me tangere* in my flesh, which I cannot bear to be touched or tampered with.' I made no reply; but shifted the conversation. He really has an affection for this original; which maintains its ground in defiance of common sense, and in despite of that contempt which he must certainly feel for her character and understanding. Nay, I am convinced, that she has likewise a most virulent attachment to his person; though her love never shews itself but in the shape of discontent; and she persists in tormenting him out of pure tenderness—The only object within doors upon which she bestows any marks of affection, in the usual stile, is her dog Chowder; a filthy cur from Newfoundland, which she had in a present from the wife of a skipper in Swansea. One would imagine she had distinguished this beast with her favour on account of his ugliness and ill-nature, if it was not, indeed, an instinctive sympathy, between his disposition and her own. Certain it is, she caresses him without ceasing; and even harasses the family in the service of this cursed animal, which, indeed, has proved the proximate cause of her breach with Sir Ulic Mackilligut.

You must know, she yesterday wanted to steal a march of poor Liddy, and went to breakfast in the Room without any other companion than her dog, in expectation of meeting with the Baronet, who had agreed to dance with her in the evening—Chowder no sooner made his appearance in the Room, than the Master of the Ceremonies, incensed at his presumption, ran up to drive him away, and threatened him with his foot; but the other seemed to despise his authority, and displaying a formidable case of long, white, sharp teeth, kept the puny monarch at bay—While he stood under some trepidation, fronting his antagonist, and bawling to the waiter, Sir Ulic Mackilligut came to his assistance; and seeming ignorant of the connexion between this intruder and his mistress, gave the former such a kick in the jaws, as sent him howling to the door—Mrs Tabitha, incensed at this outrage, ran after him, squalling in a tone equally disagreeable; while the Baronet followed her on one side, making apologies for his mistake; and Derrick on the other, making remonstrances upon the rules and regulations of the place.

Far from being satisfied with the Knight's excuses, she said she was sure he was no gentleman; and when the Master of the Ceremonies offered to hand her into the chair, she rapped him over the knuckles with her fan. My uncle's footman being still at the door, she and Chowder got into the same vehicle, and were carried off amidst the jokes of the chairmen and other populace—I had been riding out on Clerkendown, and happened to enter just as the fracas was over—The Baronet, coming up to me with an affected air of chagrin, recounted the adventure; at which I laughed heartily, and then his countenance cleared up. 'My dear soul (said he) when I saw a sort of a wild baist, snarling with open mouth at the Master of the Ceremonies, like the red cow going to devour Tom Thumb, I could

do no less than go to the assistance of the little man; but I never dreamt the baist was one of Mrs Bramble's attendants—O! if I had, he might have made his breakfast upon Derrick and welcome—But you know, my dear friend, how natural it is for us Irishmen to blunder, and to take the wrong sow by the ear—However, I will confess judgment, and cry her mercy; and it is to be hoped, a penitent sinner may be forgiven.' I told him, that as the offence was not voluntary of his side, it was to be hoped he would not find her implacable.

But, in truth, all this concern was dissembled. In his approaches of gallantry to Mrs Tabitha, he had been misled by a mistake of at least six thousand pounds, in the calculation of her fortune; and in this particular he was just undeceived. He, therefore, seized the first opportunity of incurring her displeasure decently, in such a manner as would certainly annihilate the correspondence; and he could not have taken a more effectual method, than that of beating her dog. When he presented himself at our door, to pay his respects to the offended fair, he was refused admittance, and given to understand that he should never find her at home for the future. She was not so inaccessible to Derrick, who came to demand satisfaction for the insult she had offered to him, even in the verge of his own court. She knew it was convenient to be well with the Master of the Ceremonies, while she continued to frequent the Rooms; and, having heard he was a poet, began to be afraid of making her appearance in a ballad or lampoon.—She therefore made excuses for what she had done, imputing it to the flutter of her spirits; and subscribed handsomely for his poems: so that he was perfectly appeased, and overwhelmed her with a profusion of compliment. He even solicited a reconciliation with Chowder; which, however, the latter declined; and he declared, that if he could find a precedent in the annals of the Bath, which he would carefully examine for that purpose, her favourite should be admitted to the next public breakfasting—But, I, believe, she will not expose herself or him to the risque of a second disgrace—Who will supply the place of Mackilligut in her affections, I cannot foresee; but nothing in the shape of man can come amiss. Though she is a violent church-woman, of the most intolerant zeal, I believe in my conscience she would have no objection, at present, to treat on the score of matrimony with an Anabaptist, Quaker, or Jew; and even ratify the treaty at the expense of her own conversion. But, perhaps, I think too hardly of this kinswoman; who, I must own, is very little beholden to the good opinion of

Yours, J. MELFORD BATH, May 6.

To Dr LEWIS

You ask me, why I don't take the air a-horseback, during this fine weather?—In which of the avenues of this paradise would you have me take that exercise? Shall I commit myself to the high-roads of London or Bristol, to be stifled with dust, or pressed to death in the midst of post-chaises, flying-machines, waggons, and coal-horses; besides the troops of fine gentlemen that take to the highway, to shew their horsemanship; and the coaches of fine ladies, who go thither to shew their equipages? Shall I attempt the Downs, and fatigue myself to death in climbing up an eternal ascent, without any hopes of reaching the summit? Know then, I have made divers desperate leaps at those upper regions; but always fell backward into this vapour-pit, exhausted and dispirited by those ineffectual efforts; and here we poor valetudinarians pant and struggle, like so many Chinese gudgeons, gasping in the bottom of a punch-bowl. By Heaven it is a kind of enchantment! If I do not speedily break the spell, and escape, I may chance to give up the ghost in this nauseous stew of corruption—It was but two nights ago, that I had like to have made my public exit, at a minute's warning. One of my greatest weaknesses is that of suffering myself to be over-ruled by the opinion of people, whose judgment I despise—I own, with shame and confusion of face, that importunity of any kind I cannot resist. This want of courage and constancy is an original flaw in my nature, which you must have often observed with compassion, if not with contempt. I am afraid some of our boasted virtues maybe traced up to this defect.

Without further preamble, I was persuaded to go to a ball, on purpose to see Liddy dance a minuet with a young petulant jackanapes, the only son of a wealthy undertaker from London, whose mother lodges in our neighbourhood, and has contracted an acquaintance with Tabby. I sat a couple of long hours, half stifled, in the midst of a noisome crowd; and could not help wondering that so many hundreds of those that rank as rational creatures, could find entertainment in seeing a succession of insipid animals, describing the same dull figure for a whole evening, on an area, not much bigger than a taylor's shop-board. If there had been any beauty, grace, activity, magnificent dress, or variety of any kind howsoever absurd, to engage the attention, and amuse the fancy, I should not have been surprised; but there was no such object: it was a tiresome repetition of the same languid, frivolous scene, performed by actors that seemed to sleep in all their motions. The continual swimming of these phantoms before my eyes, gave me a swimming of the head; which was also affected by the fouled air, circulating through such a number of rotten human bellows. I therefore retreated towards the door, and stood in the passage to the next room, talking to my friend Quin; when an end being put to the minuets, the benches were removed to make way for the country-dances; and the multitude rising at once, the whole atmosphere was put in commotion. Then, all of a sudden, came rushing upon me an Egyptian gale, so impregnated with pestilential vapours, that my nerves were overpowered, and I dropt senseless upon the floor.

You may easily conceive what a clamour and confusion this accident must have produced, in such an assembly—I soon recovered, however, and found myself in an easy chair, supported by my own people—Sister Tabby, in her great tenderness, had put me to the torture, squeezing my hand under her arm, and stuffing my nose with spirit of hartshorn, till the whole inside was excoriated. I no sooner got home, than I sent for Doctor Ch—, who assured me I needed not be alarmed, for my swooning was entirely occasioned by an accidental impression of fetid effluvia upon nerves of uncommon sensibility. I know not how other people's nerves are constructed; but one would imagine they must be made of very coarse materials, to stand the shock of such a torrid assault. It was, indeed, a compound of villainous smells, in which the most violent stinks, and the most powerful perfumes, contended for the mastery. Imagine to yourself a high exalted essence of mingled odours, arising from putrid gums, imposthumated lungs, sour flatulencies, rank armpits, sweating feet, running sores and issues, plasters, ointments, and embrocations, hungary-water, spirit of lavender, assafoetida drops,

musk, hartshorn, and sal volatile; besides a thousand frowzy steams, which I could not analyse. Such, O Dick! is the fragrant aether we breathe in the polite assemblies of Bath—Such is the atmosphere I have exchanged for the pure, elastic, animating air of the Welsh mountains—O Rus, quando te aspiciam!—I wonder what the devil possessed me—

But few words are best: I have taken my resolution—You may well suppose I don't intend to entertain the company with a second exhibition—I have promised, in an evil hour, to proceed to London, and that promise shall be performed, but my stay in the metropolis shall be brief. I have, for the benefit of my health, projected an expedition to the North, which, I hope, will afford some agreeable pastime. I have never travelled farther that way than Scarborough; and, I think, it is a reproach upon me, as a British freeholder, to have lived so long without making an excursion to the other side of the Tweed. Besides, I have some relations settled in Yorkshire, to whom it may not be improper to introduce my nephew and his sister—At present, I have nothing to add, but that Tabby is happily disentangled from the Irish Baronet; and that I will not fail to make you acquainted, from time to time, with the sequel of our adventures: a mark of consideration, which, perhaps, you would willingly dispense with in

Your humble servant, M. BRAMBLE BATH, May 8.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon

DEAR PHILLIPS,

A few days ago we were terribly alarmed by my uncle's fainting at the ball—He has been ever since cursing his own folly, for going thither at the request of an impertinent woman. He declares, he will sooner visit a house infected with the plague, than trust himself in such a nauseous spital for the future, for he swears the accident was occasioned by the stench of the crowd; and that he would never desire a stronger proof of our being made of very gross materials, than our having withstood the annoyance, by which he was so much discomposed. For my part, I am very thankful for the coarseness of my organs, being in no danger of ever falling a sacrifice to the delicacy of my nose. Mr Bramble is extravagantly delicate in all his sensations, both of soul and body. I was informed by Dr Lewis, that he once fought a duel with an officer of the horseguards, for turning aside to the Park-wall, on a necessary occasion, when he was passing with a lady under his protection. His blood rises at every instance of insolence and cruelty, even where he himself is no way concerned; and ingratitude makes his teeth chatter. On the other hand, the recital of a generous, humane, or grateful action, never fails to draw from him tears of approbation, which he is often greatly distressed to conceal.

Yesterday, one Paunceford gave tea, on particular invitation—This man, after having been long buffeted by adversity, went abroad; and Fortune, resolved to make him amends for her former coyness, set him all at once up to the very ears in affluence. He has now emerged from obscurity, and blazes out in all the tinsel of the times. I don't find that he is charged with any practices that the law deems dishonest, or that his wealth has made him arrogant and inaccessible; on the contrary, he takes great pains to appear affable and gracious. But, they say, he is remarkable for shrinking from his former friendships, which were generally too plain and home-spun to appear amidst his present brilliant connexions; and that he seems uneasy at sight of some old benefactors, whom a man of honour would take pleasure to acknowledge—Be that as it may, he had so effectually engaged the company at Bath, that when I went with my uncle to the coffeehouse in the evening, there was not a soul in the room but one person, seemingly in years, who sat by the fire, reading one of the papers. Mr Bramble, taking his station close by him, 'There is such a crowd and confusion of chairs in the passage to Simpson's (said he) that we could hardly get along—I wish those minions of fortune would fall upon more laudable ways of spending their money.—I suppose, Sir, you like this kind of entertainment as little as I do?' 'I cannot say I have any great relish for such entertainments,' answered the other, without taking his eyes off the paper—'Mr Serle (resumed my uncle) I beg pardon for interrupting you; but I can't resist the curiosity I have to know if you received a card on this occasion?'

The man seemed surprised at this address, and made some pause, as doubtful what answer he should make. 'I know my curiosity is impertinent (added my uncle) but I have a particular reason for asking the favour.' 'If that be the case (replied Mr Serle) I shall gratify you without hesitation, by owning that I have had no card. But, give me leave, Sir, to ask in my turn, what reason you think I have to expect such an invitation from the gentleman who gives tea?' 'I have my own reasons (cried Mr Bramble, with some emotion) and am convinced, more than ever, that this Paunceford is a contemptible fellow.' 'Sir (said the other, laying down the paper) I have not the honour to know you; but your discourse is a little mysterious, and seems to require some explanation. The person you are pleased to treat so cavalierly, is a gentleman of some consequence in the community; and, for aught you know, I may also have my particular reasons for defending his character'—'If I was not convinced of the contrary (observed the other) I should not have gone so far'—'Let me tell you, Sir (said the stranger, raising his voice) you have gone too far, in hazarding such reflections'.

Here he was interrupted by my uncle; who asked peevishly if he was Don Quixote enough, at this time of day, to throw down his gauntlet as champion for a man who had treated him with such ungrateful neglect. 'For my part (added he) I shall never quarrel with you again upon this subject; and what I have said now, has been suggested as much by my regard for you, as by my contempt of him'—Mr Serle, then pulling off his spectacles, eyed uncle very earnestly, saying, in a mitigated tone, 'Surely I am much obliged—Ah, Mr Bramble! I now recollect your features, though I have not seen you these many years.' 'We might have been less strangers to one another (answered the squire) if our correspondence had not been interrupted, in consequence of a misunderstanding, occasioned by this very—, but no matter—Mr Serle, I esteem your character; and my friendship, such as it is, you may freely command.' 'The offer is too agreeable to be declined (said he); I embrace it very cordially; and, as the first fruits of it, request that you will change this subject, which, with me, is a matter of peculiar delicacy.'

My uncle owned he was in the right, and the discourse took a more general turn. Mr Serle passed the evening with us at our lodgings; and appeared to be intelligent, and even entertaining; but his disposition was rather of a melancholy hue. My uncle says he is a man of uncommon parts, and unquestioned probity: that his fortune, which was originally small, has been greatly hurt by a romantic spirit of generosity, which he has often displayed, even at the expence of his discretion, in favour of worthless individuals—That he had rescued Paunceford from the lowest distress, when he was bankrupt, both in means and reputation—That he had espoused his interests with a degree of enthusiasm, broke with several friends, and even drawn his sword against my uncle, who had particular reasons for questioning the moral character of the said Paunceford: that, without Serle's countenance and assistance, the other never could have embraced the opportunity, which has raised him to this pinnacle of wealth: that Paunceford, in the first transports of his success, had written, from abroad, letters to different correspondents, owning his obligations to Mr Serle, in the warmest terms of acknowledgement, and declared he considered himself only as a factor for the occasions of his best friend: that, without doubt, he had made declarations of the same nature to his benefactor himself, though this last was always silent and reserved on the subject; but for some years, those tropes and figures of rhetoric had been disused; that, upon his return to England, he had been lavish in his caresses to Mr Serle, invited him to his house, and pressed him to make it his own: that he had overwhelmed him with general professions, and affected to express the warmest regard for him, in company of their common acquaintance; so that every body believed his gratitude was liberal as his fortune; and some went so far as to congratulate Mr Serle on both.

All this time Paunceford carefully and artfully avoided particular discussions with his old patron, who had too much spirit to drop the most distant hint of balancing the account of obligation: that, nevertheless, a man of his feelings could not but resent this shocking return for all his kindness: and, therefore, he withdrew himself from the connexion, without coming to the least explanation or speaking a syllable on the subject to any living soul; so that now their correspondence is reduced to a slight salute with the hat, when they chance to meet in any public place; an accident that rarely happens, for their walks lie different ways. Mr Paunceford lives in a palace, feeds upon dainties, is arrayed in sumptuous apparel, appears in all the pomp of equipage, and passes his time among the nobles of the land. Serle lodges in Stall-street, up two pair of stairs backwards, walks a-foot in a Bath-rug, eats for twelve shillings a-week, and drinks water as preservative against the gout and gravel—Mark the vicissitude. Paunceford once resided in a garret; where he subsisted upon sheep's-trotters and cow-heel, from which commons he was translated to the table of Serle, that ever abounded with good-chear; until want of economy and retention reduced him to a slender annuity in his decline of years, that scarce affords the bare necessaries of life.—Paunceford, however, does him the honour to speak of him still, with uncommon regard; and to declare what pleasure it would give him to contribute in any shape to his convenience: 'But you know (he never fails to add) he's a shy kind of a man—And then such a perfect philosopher, that he looks upon all superfluities with the most

sovereign contempt. Having given you this sketch of squire Paunceford, I need not make any comment on his character, but leave it at the mercy of your own reflection; from which I dare say, it will meet with as little quarter as it has found with

Yours always, J. MELFORD BATH, May 10.

To Mrs MARY JONES, at Brambleton-hall

DEAR MOLLY,

We are all upon the ving—Hey for London, girl!—Fecks! we have been long enough here; for we're all turned tipsy turvy—Mistress has excarded Sir Ulic for kicking of Chowder; and I have sent O Frizzle away, with a flea in his ear—I've shewn him how little I minded his tinsy and his long tail—A fellor, who would think for to go, for to offer, to take up with a dirty trollop under my nose—I ketched him in the very feet, coming out of the housemaids garret.—But I have gi'en the dirty slut a siserary. O Molly! the sarvants at Bath are devils in garnet. They lite the candle at both ends—Here's nothing but ginketting, and wasting, and thieving and tricking, and trigging; and then they are never content—They won't suffer the 'squire and mistress to stay any longer; because they have been already above three weeks in the house; and they look for a couple of ginneys a-piece at our going away; and this is a parquisite they expect every month in the season; being as how no family has a right to stay longer than four weeks in the same lodgings; and so the cuckold swears she will pin the dish-clout to mistress's tail; and the house-maid vows, she'll put cowitch in master's bed, if so be he don't discamp without funder ado—I don't blame them for making the most of their market, in the way of vails and parquisites; and I defy the devil to say I am a tail-carrier, or ever brought a poor sarvant into trouble—But then they oft to have some conscience, in vronging those that be sarvants like themselves—For you must no, Molly, I missed three-quarters of blond lace, and a remnant of muslin, and my silver thimble; which was the gift of true love; they were all in my workbasket, that I left upon the table in the sarvants-hall, when mistresses bell rung; but if they had been under lock and kay, 'twould have been all the same; for there are double keys to all the locks in Bath; and they say as how the very teeth an't safe in your head, if you sleep with your mouth open—And so says I to myself, them things could not go without hands; and so I'll watch their waters: and so I did with a vittness; for then it was I found Bett consarned with O Frizzle. And as the cuckold had thrown her slush at me, because I had taken part with Chowder, when he fit, with the turnspit, I resolved to make a clear kitchen, and throw some of her fat into the fire. I ketched the chare-woman going out with her load in the morning, before she thought I was up, and brought her to mistress with her whole cargo—Marry, what do'st think she had got in the name of God? Her buckets were foaming full of our best bear, and her lap was stuffed with a cold tongue, part of a buttock of beef, half a turkey, and a swinging lump of butter, and the matter of ten mould kandles, that had scarce ever been lit. The cuckold brazened it out, and said it was her rite to rummage the pantry; and she was ready for to go before the mare: that he had been her potticary many years, and would never think of hurting a poor sarvant, for giving away the scraps of the kitchen. I went another way to work with madam Betty, because she had been saucy, and called me skandelus names; and said O Frizzle couldn't abide me, and twenty other odorous falsehoods. I got a varrant from the mare, and her box being sarched by the constable, my things came out sure enuff; besides a full pound of vax candles, and a nite-cap of mistress, that I could sware to on my cruperal oaf—O! then madam Mopstick came upon her merry bones; and as the squire wouldn't hare of a purseution, she scaped a skewering: but the longest day she has to live, she'll remember your

Humble sarvant, W. JENKINS BATH, May 15.

If the hind should come again, before we be gone, pray send me the shift and apron, with the vite gallow manky shoes; which you'll find in my pillowber—Sarvice to Saul—

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, Bart. of Jesus college, Oxon

You are in the right, dear Phillips; I don't expect regular answers to every letter—I know a college-life is too circumscribed to afford materials for such quick returns of communication. For my part, I am continually shifting the scene, and surrounded with new objects; some of which are striking enough. I shall therefore conclude my journal for your amusement; and, though, in all appearance, it will not treat of very important or interesting particulars, it may prove, perhaps, not altogether uninteresting and unentertaining.

The music and entertainments of Bath are over for this season; and all our gay birds of passage have taken their flight to Bristolwell, Tunbridge, Brighthelmstone, Scarborough, Harrowgate, &c. Not a soul is seen in this place, but a few broken-winded parsons, waddling like so many crows along the North Parade. There is always a great shew of the clergy at Bath: none of your thin, puny, yellow, hectic figures, exhausted with abstinence, and hardy study, labouring under the morbi eruditorum, but great overgrown dignitaries and rectors, with rubicund noses and gouty ancles, or broad bloated faces, dragging along great swag bellies; the emblems of sloth and indigestion.

Now we are upon the subject of parsons, I must tell you a ludicrous adventure, which was achieved the other day by Tom Eastgate, whom you may remember on the foundation of Queen's. He had been very assiduous to pin himself upon George Prankley, who was a gentleman-commoner of Christchurch, knowing the said Prankley was heir to a considerable estate, and would have the advowson of a good living, the incumbent of which was very old and infirm. He studied his passions, and flattered them so effectually, as to become his companion and counsellor; and, at last, obtained of him a promise of the presentation, when the living should fall. Prankley, on his uncle's death, quitted Oxford, and made his first appearance in the fashionable world at London; from whence he came lately to Bath, where he has been exhibiting himself among the bucks and gamblers of the place. Eastgate followed him hither; but he should not have quitted him for a moment, at his first emerging into life. He ought to have known he was a fantastic, foolish, fickle fellow, who would forget his college-attachments the moment they ceased appealing to his senses. Tom met with a cold reception from his old friend; and was, moreover, informed, that he had promised the living to another man, who had a vote in the county, where he proposed to offer himself a candidate at the next general election. He now remembered nothing of Eastgate, but the freedoms he had used to take with him, while Tom had quietly stood his butt, with an eye to the benefice; and those freedoms he began to repeat in common-place sarcasms on his person and his cloth, which he uttered in the public coffeehouse, for the entertainment of the company. But he was egregiously mistaken in giving his own wit credit for that tameness of Eastgate, which had been entirely owing to prudential considerations. These being now removed, he retorted his repartee with interest, and found no great difficulty in turning the laugh upon the aggressor; who, losing his temper, called him names, and asked, If he knew whom he talked to? After much altercation, Prankley, shaking his cane, bid him hold his tongue, otherwise he could dust his cassock for him. 'I have no pretensions to such a valet (said Tom) but if you should do me that office, and overheat yourself, I have here a good oaken towel at your service.'

Prankley was equally incensed and confounded at this reply. After a moment's pause, he took him aside towards die window; and, pointing to the clump of firs, on Clerken-down, asked in a whisper, if he had spirit enough to meet him there, with a case of pistols, at six o'clock tomorrow morning. Eastgate answered in the affirmative; and, with a steady countenance, assured him, he would not fail to give him the rendezvous at the hour he mentioned. So saying, he retired; and the challenger stayed some time in manifest agitation. In the morning, Eastgate, who knew his man, and had taken his resolution, went to Prankley's lodgings, and roused him by five o'clock.

The squire, in all probability, cursed his punctuality in his heart, but he affected to talk big; and having prepared his artillery overnight, they crossed the water at the end of the South Parade. In

their progress up the hill, Prankley often eyed the parson, in hopes of perceiving some reluctance in his countenance; but as no such marks appeared, he attempted to intimidate him by word of mouth. 'If these flints do their office (said he) I'll do thy business in a few minutes.' 'I desire you will do your best (replied the other); for my part, I come not here to trifle. Our lives are in the hands of God; and one of us already totters on the brink of eternity' This remark seemed to make some impression upon the squire, who changed countenance, and with a faltering accent observed, 'That it ill became a clergyman to be concerned in quarrels and bloodshed'—'Your insolence to me (said Eastgate) I should have bore with patience, had not you cast the most infamous reflections upon my order, the honour of which I think myself in duty bound to maintain, even at the expence of my heart's blood; and surely it can be no crime to put out of the world a profligate wretch, without any sense of principle, morality, or religion'—'Thou may'st take away my life (cried Prankley, in great perturbation) but don't go to murder my character. What! has't got no conscience?' 'My conscience is perfectly quiet (replied the other); and now, Sir, we are upon the spot—Take your ground as near as you please; prime your pistol; and the Lord, of his infinite mercy, have compassion upon your miserable soul!'

This ejaculation he pronounced in a loud solemn tone, with his hat off, and his eyes lifted up; then drawing a large horse-pistol, he presented, and put himself in a posture of action. Prankley took his distance, and endeavoured to prime, but his hand shook with such violence, that he found this operation impracticable—His antagonist, seeing how it was with him, offered his assistance, and advanced for that purpose; when the poor squire, exceedingly alarmed at what he had heard and seen, desired the action might be deferred till next day, as he had not settled his affairs. 'I ha'n't made my will (said he); my sisters are not provided for; and I just now recollect an old promise, which my conscience tells me I ought to perform—I'll first convince thee, that I'm not a wretch without principle, and then thou shalt have an opportunity to take my life, which thou seem'st to thirst after so eagerly.'

Eastgate understood the hint; and told him, that one day should break no squares: adding, 'God forbid that I should be the means of hindering you from acting the part of an honest man, and a dutiful brother'—By virtue of this cessation, they returned peaceably together. Prankley forthwith made out the presentation of the living, and delivered it to Eastgate, telling him at the same time, he had now settled his affairs, and was ready to attend him to the Fir-grove; but Tom declared he could not think of lifting his hand against the life of so great a benefactor—He did more: when they next met at the coffeehouse, he asked pardon of Mr Prankley, if in his passion he had said any thing to give him offence; and the squire was so gracious as to forgive him with a cordial shake of the hand, declaring, that he did not like to be at variance with an old college companion—Next day, however, he left Bath abruptly; and then Eastgate told me all these particulars, not a little pleased with the effects of his own sagacity, by which he has secured a living worth 160*l.* per annum.

Of my uncle, I have nothing at present to say; but that we set out tomorrow for London en famille. He and the ladies, with the maid and Chowder in a coach; I and the man-servant a-horseback. The particulars of our journey you shall have in my next, provided no accident happens to prevent,

Yours ever, J. MELFORD BATH May 17.

To Dr LEWIS

DEAR DICK,

I shall to-morrow set out for London, where I have bespoke lodgings, at Mrs Norton's in Golden-square. Although I am no admirer of Bath, I shall leave it with regret; because I must part with some old friends, whom, in all probability, I shall never see again. In the course of coffeehouse conversation, I had often heard very extraordinary encomiums passed on the performances of Mr T—, a gentleman residing in this place, who paints landscapes for his amusement. As I have no great confidence in the taste and judgment of coffeehouse connoisseurs, and never received much pleasure from this branch of the art, those general praises made no impression at all on my curiosity; but, at the request of a particular friend, I went yesterday to see the pieces, which had been so warmly commended—I must own I am no judge of painting, though very fond of pictures. I don't imagine that my senses would play me so false, as to betray me into admiration of any thing that was very bad; but, true it is, I have often overlooked capital beauties, in pieces of extraordinary merit.—If I am not totally devoid of taste, however, this young gentleman of Bath is the best landscape-painter now living: I was struck with his performances in such a manner, as I had never been by painting before. His trees not only have a richness of foliage and warmth of colouring, which delights the view; but also a certain magnificence in the disposition and spirit in the expression, which I cannot describe. His management of the chiaro oscuro, or light and shadow, especially gleams of sunshine, is altogether wonderful, both in the contrivance and execution; and he is so happy in his perspective, and marking his distances at sea, by a progressive series of ships, vessels, capes, and promontories, that I could not help thinking, I had a distant view of thirty leagues upon the back-ground of the picture. If there is any taste for ingenuity left in a degenerate age, fast sinking into barbarism, this artist, I apprehend, will make a capital figure, as soon as his works are known.

Two days ago, I was favoured with a visit by Mr Fitzowen; who, with great formality, solicited my vote and interest at the general election. I ought not to have been shocked at the confidence of this man; though it was remarkable, considering what had passed between him and me on a former occasion—These visits are mere matter of form, which a candidate makes to every elector; even to those who, he knows, are engaged in the interest of his competitor, lest he should expose himself to the imputation of pride, at a time when it is expected he should appear humble. Indeed, I know nothing so abject as the behaviour of a man canvassing for a seat in parliament—This mean prostration (to borough-electors, especially) has, I imagine, contributed in a great measure to raise that spirit of insolence among the vulgar; which, like the devil, will be found very difficult to lay. Be that as it may, I was in some confusion at the effrontery of Fitzowen; but I soon recollected myself, and told him, I had not yet determined for whom I should give my vote, nor whether I should give it for any.—The truth is, I look upon both candidates in the same light; and should think myself a traitor to the constitution of my country, if I voted for either. If every elector would bring the same consideration home to his conscience, we should not have such reason to exclaim against the venality of p—ts. But we all are a pack of venal and corrupted rascals; so lost to all sense of honesty, and all tenderness of character, that, in a little time, I am fully persuaded, nothing will be infamous but virtue and public-spirit.

G. H—, who is really an enthusiast in patriotism, and represented the capital in several successive parliaments, declared to me t'other day, with the tears in his eyes, that he had lived above thirty years in the city of London, and dealt in the way of commerce with all the citizens of note in their turns; but that, as he should answer to God, he had never, in the whole course of his life, found above three or four whom he could call thoroughly honest: a declaration which was rather mortifying than surprising to me; who have found so few men of worth in the course of my acquaintance, that

they serve only as exceptions; which, in the grammarian's phrase, confirm and prove a general canon—I know you will say, G. H— saw imperfectly through the mist of prejudice, and I am rankled by the spleen—Perhaps, you are partly in the right; for I have perceived that my opinion of mankind, like mercury in the thermometer, rises and falls according to the variations of the weather.

Pray settle accompts with Barnes; take what money of mine is in his hands, and give him acquittance. If you think Davis has stock or credit enough to do justice to the farm, give him a discharge for the rent that is due, this will animate his industry; for I know that nothing is so discouraging to a farmer as the thoughts of being in arrears with his landlord. He becomes dispirited, and neglects his labour; and so the farm goes to wreck. Tabby has been clamouring for some days about the lamb's skin, which Williams, the hind, begged of me, when he was last at Bath. Prithee take it back, paying the fellow the full value of it, that I may have some peace in my own house; and let him keep his own counsel, if he means to keep his place—O! I shall never presume to despise or censure any poor man, for suffering himself to be henpecked; conscious how I myself am obliged to truckle to a domestic demon; even though (blessed be God) she is not yoked with me for life, in the matrimonial waggon—She has quarrelled with the servants of the house about vails; and such intolerable scolding ensued on both sides, that I have been fain to appease the cook and chambermaid by stealth. Can't you find some poor gentleman of Wales, to take this precious commodity off the hands of

Yours, MATT. BRAMBLE BATH, May 19.

To Dr LEWIS

DOCTER LEWS,

Give me leaf to tell you, methinks you mought employ your talons better, than to encourage servants to pillage their masters. I find by Gwyllim, that Villiams has got my skin; for which he is an impotent rascal. He has not only got my skin, but, moreover, my butter-milk to fatten his pigs; and, I suppose, the next thing he gets, will be my pad to carry his daughter to church and fair: Roger gets this, and Roger gets that; but I'd have you to know, I won't be rogered at this rate by any ragmatical fellow in the kingdom—And I am surprised, docter Lews, you would offer to put my affairs in composition with the refuge and skim of the hearth. I have toiled and moyled to a good purpuss, for the advantage of Matt's family, if I can't safe as much owl as will make me an under petticoat. As for the butter-milk, ne'er a pig in the parish shall thrust his snout in it, with my good-will. There's a famous physician at the Hot Well, that prescribes it to his patience, when the case is consumptive; and the Scots and Irish have begun to drink it already, in such quantities, that there is not a drop left for the hogs in the whole neighbourhood of Bristol. I'll have our butter-milk barrell'd up, and sent twice a-week to Aberginny, where it may be sold for a half-penny the quart; and so Roger may carry his pigs to another market—I hope, Docter, you will not go to put any more such phims in my brother's head, to the prejudice of my pockat; but rather give me some raisins (which hitherto you have not done) to subscribe myself

Your humble servant, TAB. BRAMBLE BATH, May 19.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon

DEAR PHILLIPS,

Without waiting for your answer to my last, I proceed to give you an account of our journey to London, which has not been wholly barren of adventure. Tuesday last the 'squire took his place in a hired coach and four, accompanied by his sister and mine, and Mrs Tabby's maid, Winifrid Jenkins, whose province it was to support Chowder on a cushion in her lap. I could scarce refrain from laughing when I looked into the vehicle, and saw that animal sitting opposite to my uncle, like any other passenger. The squire, ashamed of his situation, blushed to the eyes: and, calling to the postilions to drive on, pulled the glass up in my face. I, and his servant, John Thomas, attended them on horseback.

Nothing worth mentioning occurred, till we arrived on the edge of Marlborough Downs. There one of the four horses fell, in going down hill at a round trot; and the postilion behind, endeavouring to stop the carriage, pulled it on one side into a deep rut, where it was fairly overturned. I had rode on about two hundred yards before; but, hearing a loud scream, galloped back and dismounted, to give what assistance was in my power. When I looked into the coach, I could see nothing distinctly, but the nether end of Jenkins, who was kicking her heels and squalling with great vociferation. All of a sudden, my uncle thrust up his bare pate, and bolted through the window, as nimble as a grasshopper, having made use of poor Win's posteriors as a step to rise in his ascent—The man (who had likewise quitted his horse) dragged this forlorn damsel, more dead than alive, through the same opening. Then Mr Bramble, pulling the door off its hinges with a jerk, laid hold on Liddy's arm, and brought her to the light; very much frightened, but little hurt. It fell to my share to deliver our aunt Tabitha, who had lost her cap in the struggle, and being rather more than half frantic, with rage and terror, was no bad representation of one of the sister Furies that guard the gates of hell—She expressed no sort of concern for her brother, who ran about in the cold, without his periwig, and worked with the most astonishing agility, in helping to disentangle the horses from the carriage: but she cried, in a tone of distraction, 'Chowder! Chowder! my dear Chowder! my poor Chowder is certainly killed!'

This was not the case—Chowder, after having tore my uncle's leg in the confusion of the fall, had retreated under the scat, and from thence the footman drew him by the neck; for which good office, he bit his fingers to the bone. The fellow, who is naturally surly, was so provoked at this assault, that he saluted his ribs with a hearty kick, exclaiming, 'Damn the nasty son of a bitch, and them he belongs to!' A benediction, which was by no means lost upon the implacable virago his mistress—Her brother, however, prevailed upon her to retire into a peasant's house, near the scene of action, where his head and hers were covered, and poor Jenkins had a fit. Our next care was to apply some sticking plaister to the wound in his leg, which exhibited the impression of Chowder's teeth; but he never opened his lips against the delinquent—Mrs Tabby, alarmed at this scene, 'You say nothing, Matt (cried she); but I know your mind—I know the spite you have to that poor unfortunate animal! I know you intend to take his life away!' 'You are mistaken, upon my honour! (replied the squire, with a sarcastic smile) I should be incapable of harbouring any such cruel design against an object so amiable and inoffensive; even if he had not the happiness to be your favourite.'

John Thomas was not so delicate. The fellow, whether really alarmed for his life, or instigated by the desire of revenge, came in, and bluntly demanded, that the dog should be put to death; on the supposition, that if ever he should run mad hereafter, he, who had been bit by him, would be infected—My uncle calmly argued upon the absurdity of his opinion, observing, that he himself was in the same predicament, and would certainly take the precaution he proposed, if he was not sure he ran no risque of infection. Nevertheless, Thomas continued obstinate; and, at length declared, that if the

dog was not shot immediately, he himself would be his executioner—This declaration opened the flood-gates of Tabby's eloquence, which would have shamed the first-rate oratress of Billingsgate. The footman retorted in the same stile; and the squire dismissed him from his service, after having prevented me from giving him a good horse-whipping for his insolence.

The coach being adjusted, another difficulty occurred—Mrs Tabitha absolutely refused to enter it again, unless another driver could be found to take the place of the postilion; who, she affirmed, had overturned the carriage from malice aforethought—After much dispute, the man resigned his place to a shabby country fellow, who undertook to go as far as Marlborough, where they could be better provided; and at that place we arrived about one O'clock, without farther impediment. Mrs Bramble, however, found new matter of offence; which, indeed, she has a particular genius for extracting at will from almost every incident in life. We had scarce entered the room at Marlborough, where we stayed to dine, when she exhibited a formal complaint against the poor fellow who had superseded the postilion. She said he was such a beggarly rascal that he had ne'er a shirt to his back, and had the impudence to shock her sight by shewing his bare posteriors, for which act of indelicacy he deserved to be set in the stocks. Mrs Winifred Jenkins confirmed the assertion, with respect to his nakedness, observing, at the same time, that he had a skin as fair as alabaster.

'This is a heinous offence, indeed (cried my uncle) let us hear what the fellow has to say in his own vindication.' He was accordingly summoned, and made his appearance, which was equally queer and pathetic. He seemed to be about twenty years of age, of a middling size, with bandy legs, stooping shoulders, high forehead, sandy locks, pinking eyes, flat nose, and long chin—but his complexion was of a sickly yellow; his looks denoted famine, and the rags that he wore could hardly conceal what decency requires to be covered—My uncle, having surveyed him attentively, said, with an ironical expression in his countenance, 'An't you ashamed, fellow, to ride postilion without a shirt to cover your backside from the view of the ladies in the coach?' 'Yes, I am, an please your noble honour (answered the man) but necessity has no law, as the saying is—And more than that, it was an accident. My breeches cracked behind, after I had got into the saddle' 'You're an impudent varlet (cried Mrs Tabby) for presuming to ride before persons of fashion without a shirt'—'I am so, an please your worthy ladyship (said he) but I am a poor Wiltshire lad—I ha'n't a shirt in the world, that I can call my own, nor a rag of clothes, and please your ladyship, but what you see—I have no friend nor relation upon earth to help me out—I have had the fever and ague these six months, and spent all I had in the world upon doctors, and to keep soul and body together; and, saving your ladyship's good presence, I han't broke bread these four and twenty hours.'

Mrs Bramble, turning from him, said, she had never seen such a filthy tatterdemalion, and bid him begone; observing, that he would fill the room full of vermin—Her brother darted a significant glance at her, as she retired with Liddy into another apartment, and then asked the man if he was known to any person in Marlborough?—When he answered, that the landlord of the inn had known him from his infancy; mine host was immediately called, and being interrogated on the subject, declared that the young fellow's name was Humphry Clinker. That he had been a love begotten babe, brought up in the work-house, and put out apprentice by the parish to a country black-smith, who died before the boy's time was out: that he had for some time worked under his ostler, as a helper and extra postilion, till he was taken ill of the ague, which disabled him from getting his bread: that, having sold or pawned every thing he had in the world for his cure and subsistence, he became so miserable and shabby, that he disgraced the stable, and was dismissed; but that he never heard any thing to the prejudice of his character in other respects. 'So that the fellow being sick and destitute (said my uncle) you turned him out to die in the streets.' 'I pay the poor's rate (replied the other) and I have no right to maintain idle vagrants, either in sickness or health; besides, such a miserable object would have brought a discredit upon my house.'

'You perceive (said the 'squire, turning to me) our landlord is a Christian of bowels—Who shall presume to censure the morals of the age, when the very publicans exhibit such examples of

humanity?—Heark ye, Clinker, you are a most notorious offender—You stand convicted of sickness, hunger, wretchedness, and want—But, as it does not belong to me to punish criminals, I will only take upon me the task of giving you a word of advice. Get a shirt with all convenient dispatch, that your nakedness may not henceforward give offence to travelling gentlewomen, especially maidens in years.’

So saying, he put a guinea into the hand of the poor fellow, who stood staring at him in silence, with his mouth wide open, till the landlord pushed him out of the room.

In the afternoon, as our aunt stepped into the coach, she observed, with some marks of satisfaction, that the postilion, who rode next to her, was not a shabby wretch like the ragamuffin who had taken them into Marlborough. Indeed, the difference was very conspicuous: this was a smart fellow, with a narrow brimmed hat, with gold cording, a cut bob, a decent blue jacket, leather-breaches, and a clean linen shirt, puffed above the waist-band. When we arrived at the Castle, on Spin-hill, where we lay, this new postilion was remarkably assiduous in bringing in the loose parcels; and, at length, displayed the individual countenance of Humphry Clinker, who had metamorphosed himself in this manner, by relieving from pawn part of his own clothes, with the money he had received from Mr Bramble.

Howsoever pleased the rest of the company were with such a favourable change in the appearance of this poor creature it soured on the stomach of Mrs Tabby, who had not yet digested the affront of his naked skin—She tossed her nose in disdain, saying, she supposed her brother had taken him into favour, because he had insulted her with his obscenity: that a fool and his money were soon parted; but that if Matt intended to take the fellow with him to London, she would not go a foot further that way—My uncle said nothing with his tongue, though his looks were sufficiently expressive; and next morning Clinker did not appear, so that we proceeded without further altercation to Salthill, where we proposed to dine—There, the first person that came to the side of the coach, and began to adjust the footboard, was no other than Humphry Clinker—When I handed out Mrs Bramble, she eyed him with a furious look, and passed into the house—My uncle was embarrassed, and asked him peevishly, what had brought him hither? The fellow said, his honour had been so good to him, that he had not the heart to part with him; that he would follow him to the world’s end, and serve him all the days of his life, without fee or reward.

Mr Bramble did not know whether to chide or laugh at this declaration—He foresaw much contradiction on the side of Tabby; and on the other hand, he could not but be pleased with the gratitude of Clinker, as well as with the simplicity of his character—‘Suppose I was inclined to take you into my service (said he) what are your qualifications? what are you good for?’ ‘An please your honour (answered this original) I can read and write, and do the business of the stable indifferent well—I can dress a horse, and shoe him, and bleed and rowel him; and, as for the practice of sow-gelding, I won’t turn my back on e’er a he in the county of Wilts—Then I can make hog’s puddings and hob-nails, mend kettles and tin sauce-pans.’—Here uncle burst out a-laughing; and inquired what other accomplishments he was master of—‘I know something of single-stick, and psalmody (proceeded Clinker); I can play upon the jew’s-harp, sing Black-ey’d Susan, Arthur-o’Bradley, and divers other songs; I can dance a Welsh jig, and Nancy Dawson; wrestle a fall with any lad of my inches, when I’m in heart; and, under correction I can find a hare when your honour wants a bit of game.’ ‘Foregad! thou are a complete fellow (cried my uncle, still laughing) I have a good mind to take thee into my family—Prithee, go and try if thou can’st make peace with my sister—Thou ha’st given her much offence by shewing her thy naked tail.’

Clinker accordingly followed us into the room, cap in hand, where, addressing himself to Mrs Tabitha, ‘May it please your ladyship’s worship (cried he) to pardon and forgive my offences, and, with God’s assistance, I shall take care that my tail shall never rise up in judgment against me, to offend your ladyship again. Do, pray, good, sweet, beautiful lady, take compassion on a poor sinner—God bless your noble countenance; I am sure you are too handsome and generous to bear malice—I will serve you on my bended knees, by night and by day, by land and by water; and all for the love and pleasure of serving such an excellent lady.’

This compliment and humiliation had some effect upon Tabby; but she made no reply; and Clinker, taking silence for consent, gave his attendance at dinner. The fellow's natural awkwardness and the flutter of his spirits were productive of repeated blunders in the course of his attendance—At length, he spilt part of a custard upon her right shoulder; and, starting back, trod upon Chowder, who set up a dismal howl—Poor Humphry was so disconcerted at this double mistake, that he dropt the china dish, which broke into a thousand pieces; then, falling down upon his knees, remained in that posture gaping, with a most ludicrous aspect of distress. Mrs Bramble flew to the dog, and, snatching him in her arms, presented him to her brother saying, 'This is all a concerted scheme against this unfortunate animal, whose only crime is its regard for me—Here it is, kill it at once, and then you'll be satisfied.'

Clinker, hearing these words, and taking them in the literal acceptation, got up in some hurry, and seizing a knife from the side-board, cried, 'Not here, an please your ladyship—It will daub the room—Give him to me, and I'll carry him to the ditch by the roadside' To this proposal he received no other answer, than a hearty box on the ear, that made him stagger to the other side of the room. 'What! (said she to her brother) am I to be affronted by every mangy hound that you pick up on the highway? I insist upon your sending this rascallion about his business immediately' 'For God's sake, sister, compose yourself (said my uncle) and consider that the poor fellow is innocent of any intention to give you offence' 'Innocent as the babe unborn' (cried Humphry). 'I see it plainly (exclaimed this implacable maiden), he acts by your direction; and you are resolved to support him in his impudence This is a bad return for all the services I have done you; for nursing you in your sickness, managing your family, and keeping you from ruining yourself by your own imprudence—But now you shall part with that rascal or me, upon the spot, without farther loss of time; and the world shall see whether you have more regard for your own flesh and blood, or for a beggarly foundling taken from the dunghill.'

Mr Bramble's eyes began to glisten, and his teeth to chatter. 'If stated fairly (said he, raising his voice) the question is, whether I have spirit to shake off an intolerable yoke, by one effort of resolution, or meanness enough to do an act of cruelty and injustice, to gratify the rancour of a capricious woman—Heark ye, Mrs Tabitha Bramble, I will now propose an alternative in my turn. Either discard your four-footed favourite, or give me leave to bid you eternally adieu—For I am determined that he and I shall live no longer under the same roof; and to dinner with what appetite you may'—Thunderstruck at this declaration, she sat down in a corner; and, after a pause of some minutes, 'Sure I don't understand you, Matt! (said she) 'And yet I spoke in plain English' answered the 'squire, with a peremptory look. 'Sir (resumed this virago, effectually humbled), it is your prerogative to command, and my duty to obey. I can't dispose of the dog in this place; but if you'll allow him to go in the coach to London, I give you my word, he shall never trouble you again.'

Her brother, entirely disarmed by this mild reply, declared, she could ask him nothing in reason that he would refuse; adding, 'I hope, sister, you have never found me deficient in natural affection.'

Mrs Tabitha immediately rose, and, throwing her arms about his neck, kissed him on the cheek; he returned her embrace with great emotion. Liddy sobbed, Win. Jenkins cackled, Chowder capered, and Clinker skipped about, rubbing his hands for joy of this reconciliation.

Concord being thus restored, we finished our meal with comfort; and in the evening arrived at London, without having met with any other adventure. My aunt seems to be much mended by the hint she received from her brother. She has been graciously pleased to remove her displeasure from Clinker, who is now retained as a footman; and in a day or two will make his appearance in a new suit of livery; but as he is little acquainted with London, we have taken an occasional valet, whom I intend hereafter to hire as my own servant. We lodge in Goldensquare, at the house of one Mrs Notion, a decent sort of a woman, who takes great pains to make us all easy. My uncle proposes to make a circuit of all the remarkable scenes of this metropolis, for the entertainment of his pupils; but as both you and I are already acquainted with most of those he will visit, and with some others

he little dreams of, I shall only communicate what will be in some measure new to your observation. Remember me to our Jesuitical friends, and believe me ever,

Dear knight, Yours affectionately, J. MELFORD LONDON, May 24.

To Dr LEWIS

DEAR DOCTOR,

London is literally new to me; new in its streets, houses, and even in its situation; as the Irishman said, 'London is now gone out of town.' What I left open fields, producing hay and corn, I now find covered with streets and squares, and palaces, and churches. I am credibly informed, that in the space of seven years, eleven thousand new houses have been built in one quarter of Westminster, exclusive of what is daily added to other parts of this unwieldy metropolis. Pimlico and Knightsbridge are now almost joined to Chelsea and Kensington; and if this infatuation continues for half a century, I suppose the whole county of Middlesex will be covered with brick.

It must be allowed, indeed, for the credit of the present age, that London and Westminster are much better paved and lighted than they were formerly. The new streets are spacious, regular, and airy; and the houses generally convenient. The bridge at Blackfriars is a noble monument of taste and public-spirit.—I wonder how they stumbled upon a work of such magnificence and utility. But, notwithstanding these improvements, the capital is become an overgrown monster; which, like a dropsical head, will in time leave the body and extremities without nourishment and support. The absurdity will appear in its full force, when we consider that one sixth part of the natives of this whole extensive kingdom is crowded within the bills of mortality. What wonder that our villages are depopulated, and our farms in want of day-labourers? The abolition of small farms is but one cause of the decrease of population. Indeed, the incredible increase of horses and black cattle, to answer the purposes of luxury, requires a prodigious quantity of hay and grass, which are raised and managed without much labour; but a number of hands will always be wanted for the different branches of agriculture, whether the farms be large or small. The tide of luxury has swept all the inhabitants from the open country—The poorest squire, as well as the richest peer, must have his house in town, and make a figure with an extraordinary number of domestics. The plough-boys, cow-herds, and lower hinds are debauched and seduced by the appearance and discourse of those coxcombs in livery, when they make their summer excursions. They desert their dirt and drudgery, and swarm up to London, in hopes of getting into service, where they can live luxuriously and wear fine clothes, without being obliged to work; for idleness is natural to man—Great numbers of these, being disappointed in their expectation, become thieves and sharpers; and London being an immense wilderness, in which there is neither watch nor ward of any signification, nor any order or police, affords them lurking-places as well as prey.

There are many causes that contribute to the daily increase of this enormous mass; but they may be all resolved into the grand source of luxury and corruption—About five and twenty years ago, very few, even of the most opulent citizens of London, kept any equipage, or even any servants in livery. Their tables produced nothing but plain boiled and roasted, with a bottle of port and a tankard of beer. At present, every trader in any degree of credit, every broker and attorney, maintains a couple of footmen, a coachman, and postilion. He has his town-house, and his country-house, his coach, and his post-chaise. His wife and daughters appear in the richest stuffs, bespangled with diamonds. They frequent the court, the opera, the theatre, and the masquerade. They hold assemblies at their own houses: they make sumptuous entertainments, and treat with the richest wines of Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne. The substantial tradesman, who wont to pass his evenings at the ale-house for fourpence half-penny, now spends three shillings at the tavern, while his wife keeps card-tables at home; she must likewise have fine clothes, her chaise, or pad, with country lodgings, and go three times a week to public diversions. Every clerk, apprentice, and even waiter of tavern or coffeehouse, maintains a gelding by himself, or in partnership, and assumes the air and apparel of a petit maitre

—The gayest places of public entertainment are filled with fashionable figures; which, upon inquiry, will be found to be journeymen taylors, serving-men, and abigails, disguised like their betters.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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