

ABS. 1. 79. 117
L 30.00



LETTERS

ADDRESSED

TO CLARINDA, &c.

~~~~~  
BY ROBERT BURNS.

~~~~~  
A NEW EDITION.

BELFAST:
PRINTED FOR L. RAE.

1814.

SCOTLAND.
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF
SCOTLAND.
GLASGOW.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following Letters were, with the exception of one only, written by ROBERT BURNS before his marriage. They are printed *verbatim* from the Originals, and where any of them are torn, which unfortunately is the case with two or three, the deficiencies are marked by *asterisks*.

The Lady to whom they are addressed, seems to have encouraged a friendly correspondence with the Poet, whose fascinating powers of mind must necessarily have produced, on her part, esteem and admiration.

Yet, although he was forbidden to indulge the more tender affections of the heart, it was natural to expect from the strong sensibility and delicate feelings of the Bard, that in his correspondence with a young and amiable woman, love must be a principal theme.

We are happy, that, from the condescension of the Proprietor, we are enabled to favour the Public with an additional portion of the Writings of our favourite Poet: nor is this condescension the effect of vanity, as from the Letters themselves this Lady can never be discovered, although, like Swift's Vanessa, she is, under a fictitious name, ushered into immortality, by an author equally celebrated.

LETTERS
TO
CLARINDA, &c.

No. 1.

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

Farewell! every happiness be yours!

Saturday Evening.

* * *

No. II.

Madam,

I HAD set no small store by my tea-drinking to-night, and have not often been so disappointed.—

Saturday evening I shall embrace the opportunity with the greatest pleasure. I leave this town this day se'ennight, and probably for a couple of twelve-months—but must ever regret that I so lately got an acquaintance I shall ever highly esteem, and in whose welfare I shall ever be warmly interested.

Our worthy common friend, in her usual pleasant way, rallied me a good deal on my new acquaintance, and in the humour of her ideas, I wrote some lines which I enclose you, as I think they have a good deal of poetic merit; and Miss —— tells me that you are not only a critic, but a poetess. Fiction you know, is the native region of poetry; and I hope you will pardon my vanity in sending you the bagatelle as a tolerable off-hand *jeu-d'esprit*. I have several poetic trifles, which I shall gladly leave with Miss —— or you, if they were worth house-room—as there are scarcely two people on earth by whom it would mortify me more to be forgotten, though at the distance of ninescore miles.

I am, Madam,

With the highest respect,

Your very humble servant.

Thursday Evening,

No. III.

I BEG your pardon, my dear "Clarinda," for the fragment scrawl I sent you yesterday. I really do not know what I wrote. A gentleman, for whose character, abilities and critical knowledge, I have the highest veneration, called in, just as I had begun the second sentence, and I would not make the porter wait. I read to my much-respected friend

several of my own bagatelles, and among others, your lines, which I had copied out. He began some criticisms on them as on the other pieces, when I informed him they were the work of a young lady in this town; which I assure you made him stare. My learned friend seriously protested, that he did not believe any young woman in Edinburgh was capable of such lines; and if you know any thing of Professor Gregory, you will neither doubt of his abilities nor his sincerity. I do love you, if possible, still better, for having so fine a taste for poesy. I have again gone wrong in my usual unguarded way, but you may erase the word, and put esteem, respect, or any other tame Dutch expression you please, in its place. I believe there is no holding converse, or carrying on correspondence, with an amiable woman, much less a *gloriously amiable, fine woman*, without some mixture of that delicious passion, whose most devoted slave I have more than once had the honour of being. But why be hurt, or offended on that account? Can no honest man have a prepossession for a fine woman, but he must run his head against an intrigue?—Take a little of the tender witchcraft of love, and add it to the generous, the honourable sentiments of manly friendship; and I know but one more delightful morsel, which few, few in any rank, ever taste. Such a composition is like adding cream to strawberries—it not only gives the fruit a more elegant richness, but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.

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

You cannot imagine, Clarinda, (I like the idea of Arcadian names in a commerce of this kind) how much store I have set by the hopes of your future friendship. I do not know if you have a just idea of my character, but I wish you to see me—as *I am*. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange *will o' wisp* being; the victim, too frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My great constituent elements are pride and passion:—the first I have endeavoured to humanize into integrity and honour; the last makes me a devotee, to the warmest degree of enthusiasm, in love, religion, or friendship; either of them, or altogether as I happen to be inspired. 'Tis true I never saw you but once; but how much acquaintance did I form with you at that once! Do not think I flatter you, or have a design upon you, Clarinda—I have too much pride for the one, and too little cold contrivance for the other—but of all God's creatures I ever could approach in the beaten way of acquaintance, you struck me with the deepest, the strongest, the most permanent impression—I say the most permanent, because I know myself well, and how far I can promise either on my prepossessions or powers. Why are you unhappy? and why are so many of our fellow creatures, unworthy to belong to the same species with you, blest with all they can wish? You have a hand all-benevolent to give; why were you denied the pleasure? You have a heart formed, gloriously formed, for all the most refined luxuries of love; why was that heart ever wrung? O Clarinda! shall we not meet in a state, some yet unknown state of being, where the lavish hand of Plenty shall minister to the highest wish of Benevolence? and where the chill north-wind of

Prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of enjoyment? If we do not, Man was made in vain! I deserved most of the unhappy hours that have lingered over my head; they were the wages of my labour; but what unprovoked Demon, malignant as hell, stole upon the confidence of unmistrusting busy Fate, and dashed your cup of life with undeserved sorrow?

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

SYLVANDER.

Friday Evening.

No. IV.

Monday Evening, 11 o'Clock.

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

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

To Mr Elphinstone, &c.

O thou, whom poesy abhors!
Whom prose has turned out of doors!
Heardst thou yon great ? proceed no further !
'Twas laurel'd Martial calling murder !

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

“The night is my departing night,
“The morn's the day I maun awa:
“There's neither friend nor foe of mine,
“But wishes that I were awa!
“What I hae done for lack o' wit,
“I never, never, can reca';
“I hope ye're a' my friends as yet,
“Gude night and joy be wi' you a'.”

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

I shall certainly be ashamed of thus scrawling whole sheets of incoherence. The only unity (a sad word with Poets and Critics!) in my ideas, is Clarinda. There my heart “reigns and revels.”

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

I like to have quotations for every occasion. They give one's ideas so pat, and save one the trouble of finding expression adequate to one's feelings. I think it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, loves, &c. an embodied form in verse; which to me, is ever immediate ease. Goldsmith says finely of his Muse—

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

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

SYLVANDER.

No. V.

Sunday Night.

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

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

I cursed them in my soul. They sacrilegiously disturb my meditations on her who holds my heart. What a creature is man ! A little alarm last night and to-day that I am mortal, has made such a revolution on my spirits ! there is no philosophy, no divinity, comes half so home to the mind. I have no idea of courage that braves heaven. 'Tis the wild ravings of an imaginary hero in Bedlam.

I can no more, Clarinda ; I can scarce hold up my head : but I am happy you do not know it, you would be so uneasy.

SYLVANDER.

Monday Morning.

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

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

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

“ J. LOCKE.”

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

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

But I fear that inconstancy, the consequent imperfection of human weakness. Shall I meet with a friendship that defies years of absence, and the chances and changes of fortune? Perhaps “such things are,” one honest man I have great hopes from that way: but who, except a romance writer, would think on a love that could promise for life, in spite of distance, absence, chance, and change; and that too, with slender hopes of fruition? For my own part, I can say to myself in both requisitions, “Thou art the man!” I dare, in cool resolve I dare, declare myself that Friend, and that Lover. If womankind is capable of such things, Clarinda is. I trust that she is; and feel I shall be miserable if she is not. There is not one virtue which gives worth, or one sentiment which does honour, to the sex, that she does not possess superior to any woman I ever saw; her exalted mind, aided a little perhaps by her situation, is, I think, capable of that nobly-romantic love-enthusiasm.

May I see you on Wednesday evening, my dear angel? The next Wednesday again will, I conjecture, be a hated day to us both. I tremble for censorious remarks, for your sake; but, in extraordinary cases, may not usual and useful precautions

be a little dispensed with? Three evenings, three swift-winged evenings, with pinions of down, are all the past—I dare not calculate the future. I shall call at Miss —— to-morrow evening; 'twill be a farewell call.

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

I see you laughing at my fairy fancies, and calling me a voluptuous Mahometan; but I am certain I would be a happy creature, beyond any thing we call bliss here below; nay, it would be a paradise congenial to you too. Don't you see us, hand in hand, or rather my arm about your lovely waist, making our remarks on Sirius, the nearest of the fixed stars; or surveying a Comet flaming innocuous by us, as we just now would mark the passing

pomp of a travelling monarch ; or in a shady bower of Mercury, or Venus, dedicating the hour to love, in mutual converse, relying honour, and revelling endearment—while the most exalted strains of poesy and harmony would be the ready spontaneous language of our souls ! Devotion is the favourite employment of your heart ; so is it of mine : what incentives then to, and powers for reverence, gratitude, faith, and hope, in all the favours of adoration and praise, to that Being, whose unsearchable wisdom, power, and goodness, so pervaded, so inspired, every sense and feeling !—By this time, I dare say, you will be blessing the neglect of the maid that leaves me destitute of paper.

SYLVANDER.

No. VI.

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

—— “ If I unweeting have offended,

“ Impute it not.”

—— “ But while we live

“ But one short hour perhaps, between us two

“ Let there be peace,”

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

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

* * * * *

Tuesday Evening.

No. VII.

My ever dearest Clarinda,

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

“ Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,

“ Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart.”

I have no patience to read the puritannic scrawl—
Vile sophistry!—Ye heavens! thou God of Na-

ture! thou Redeemer of mankind! ye look down with approving eyes on a passion inspired by the purest flame, and guarded by truth, delicacy, and honour: but the half-inch soul of an unfeeling, cold-blooded, pityful, presbyterian bigot, cannot forgive any thing above his dungeon-bosom and foggy head.

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

SYLVANDER.

No. VIII

You are right, my dear Clarinda: a friendly correspondence goes for nothing, except one write their undisguised sentiments. Yours please me, for their intrinsic merit, as well as because they are yours; which, I assure you, is to me a high recommendation. Your religious sentiments, Madam, I reverence. If you have, on some suspicious evidence, from some lying oracle, learnt that I despise or ridicule so sacredly important a matter as real religion, you have, my Clarinda, much misconstrued your friend. 'I am not mad, most noble Festus.' Have you ever met a perfect character? Do we not sometimes rather exchange faults than get rid of them? For instance, I am perhaps tired with and shocked at a life, too much the prey of giddy inconsistencies and thoughtless follies—By degrees I grow sober, pru-

dent, and statedly pious—I say statedly, because the most unaffected devotion is not at all inconsistent with my first character—I join the world in congratulating myself on the happy change. But let me pry more narrowly into this affair; have I, at bottom, any thing of a secret pride in these endowments and amendments? have I nothing of a presbyterian sourness, a hypocritical severity, when I survey my less regular neighbours? In a word, have I missed all those nameless and numberless modifications of distinct selfishness, which are so near our own eyes, that we can scarce bring them within our sphere of vision, and which the known spotless cambric of our character hides from the ordinary observer?

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

I can easily enter into the sublime pleasures that your strong imagination and keen sensibility must derive from religion, particularly if a little in the shade of misfortune; but I own I cannot, without a marked grudge, see Heaven totally engross so amiable, so charming a woman, as my friend Clarinda—and should be very well pleased at a *circumstance* that would put it in the power of somebody, happy somebody! to divide her attention, with all the delicacy and tenderness of an earthly attachment.

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

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

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

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

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

The alteration in the 2d stanza is no improvement, but there was a slight inaccuracy in your rhyme. The 3d I only offer to your choice, and

have left two *words* for your determination. The air is, "The banks of Spey," and is most beautiful.

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

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

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

SYLVANDER.

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

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

No. IX.

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

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

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

I mentioned to you my letter to Dr Moore, giving an account of my life: it is truth, every word of it; and will give you the just idea of a man whom you have honoured with your friendship. I am afraid you will hardly be able to make sense of so torn a piece. Your verses I shall muse on—deliciously—as I gazed on your image in my mind's eye, in my heart's core—they will be in time enough for a week to come. I am truly happy your head-ache is better—), how can pain or evil be so daringly, unfeelingly, cruelly savage, as to wound so noble a mind, so lovely a form!

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

SYLVANDER.

Saturday Noon.

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

No. X.

Sunday Morning.

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

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

Sunday Evening.

You are the constant companion of my thoughts. How wretched is the condition of one who is haunted with conscious guilt, and trembling under the idea of dreaded vengeance! and what a placid calm, what a charming secret enjoyment, it gives, to bosom the fine feelings of friendship, and the fond.



throes of love ! Out upon the tempest of Anger, the acrimonious gall of fretful Impatience, the sullen frost of lowring Resentment, or the corroding poison of wither'd Envy ! They eat up the immortal part of man ! If they spent their fury only on the unfortunate object of them, it would be something in their favour ; but these miserable passions, like traitor Iscariot, betray their Lord and Master.

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

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

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

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

Good night, and sound rest, my dearest Clarinda!
SYLVANDER.

No. XI.

I AM delighted, charming Clarinda, with your honest enthusiasm for Religion. Those of either sex, but particularly the female, who are lukewarm in that most important of all things,—“ O my soul, come not thou into their secrets !” —I feel myself deeply interested in your good opinion, and will lay before you the outlines of my belief. He, who is our Author and Preserver, and will one day be our judge, must be, (not for his sake in the way of duty, but from the native impulse of our hearts,) the object of our reverential awe and grateful adoration : He is almighty and all-bounteous, we are weak and dependent ; hence, prayer and every other sort of devotion—“ He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to everlasting life ;” consequently, it must be in every one’s power to embrace His offer of “ everlasting life ;” otherwise He could not, in justice, condemn those who did not. A mind pervaded, actuated and governed by purity, truth, and charity, though it does not *merit* heaven, yet is an absolutely necessary pre-requisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed ; and, by Divine promise, such a mind shall never fail of attaining “ everlasting life :” hence, the impure, the deceiving, and the uncharitable, exclude themselves from eternal bliss, by their unfitness for enjoying it. The Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this, for wise and good ends known to himself, into the hands of Jesus Christ, a great Personage, whose relation to

Him we cannot comprehend, but whose relation to us is a Guide and Saviour; and who, except for our obstinacy and misconduct, will bring us all, through various ways, and by various means, to bliss at last.

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

I am flattered by the entertainment you tell me you have found in my packet. You see me as I have been, you know me as I am, and may guess at what I am likely to be. I too may say, "Talk not of love, &c." for indeed he has plung'd me deep in "woe!" Not that I ever saw a woman who pleased unexceptionably, as my Clarinda elegantly says, "In the companion, the friend, and the mistress." *One*, indeed, I could except—*One*, before passion threw its mists over my discernment, I knew, *the* first of women! Her name is indelibly written in my heart's core—but I dare not look on it—a degree of agony would be the consequence.—Oh, thou perfidious, cruel, mischief-making demon, who presidest o'er that frantic passion—thou mayest, thou dost poison my peace, but shall not taint my honour—I would not for a single moment give an asylum to the most distant imagination, that would shadow the faintest outline of a selfish gratification, at the expence of her whose happiness is twisted with the threads of my existence.——May she be happy as she deserves! And if my tenderest, faithfullest friendship, can add to her bliss—I shall at least have one solid mine of enjoyment in my bosom! *Don't guess at these ravings!*

I watched at our front window to-day, but was disappointed. It has been a day of disappointments. I am just risen from a two-hours bout after supper, with silly or sordid souls, who could relish nothing in common with me—but the Port. “One” —’Tis now “’witching time of night:” and whatever is out of joint in the foregoing scrawl, impute it to enchantments and spells; for I can’t look over it, but will seal it up directly, as I don’t care for tomorrow’s criticisms on it.

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

“Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
“Shot forth peculiar graces——

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

SYLVANDER.

Tuesday Night.

No. XII.

Thursday Morning.

“Unlavish Wisdom never works in vain——”

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

precious jade ever known, she may have taken, not a fit of remorse, but a paroxism of whim, to raise the poor devil out of the mire, where he had so often and so conveniently served her as a stepping stone, and given him the most glorious boon she ever had in her gift, merely for the maggot's sake, to see how his fool head and his fool heart will bear it. At other times I was vain enough to think, that Nature, who has a great deal to say with Fortune, had given the coquettish goddess some such hint as, "Here is a paragon of Female Excellence, whose equal, in all my former compositions, I never was lucky enough to hit on, and despair of ever doing so again; you have cast her rather in the shades of life; there is a certain Poet, of my making; among your frolics, it would not be amiss to attach him to this master-piece of my hand, to give her that immortality among mankind which no woman of any age ever more deserved, and which few Rhymsters of this age are better able to confer."

Evening, 9 o'clock.

I AM here, absolutely unfit to finish my letter—pretty hearty after a bowl, which has been constantly plied since dinner, till this moment. I have been with Mr Schetki the musician, and he has set (A) it finely.—I have no distinct ideas of any thing, but that I have drunk your health twice to-night, and that you are all my soul holds dear in this world.

SYLVANDER.

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

To what dark cave of frozen night
 Shall poor Sylvander hie ;
 Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
 The sun of all his joy.

We part—but by these precious drops,
 That fill thy lovely eyes !
 No other light shall guide my steps,
 'Till thy bright beams arise.

She the fair sun of all her sex,
 Has blest my glorious day :
 And shall a glimmering planet fix
 My worship to its ray ! (*)

No. XIII.

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

SYLVANDER.

No. XIV.

I AM certain I saw you, Clarinda ; but you don't look to the proper storey for a Poet's lodging.

“ Where speculation roosted near the sky—”

I could almost have thrown myself over, for very vexation. Why didn't you look higher ? It has

* The first line of this song appears in No XII. it must have been sent in a former letter.

spoilt my peace for this day. To be so near my charming Clarinda; to miss her look when it was searching for me—I am sure the soul is capable of disease, for mine has convulsed itself into an inflammatory fever.

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

What I said in my last letter, the powers of fuddling sociality only know for me. By yours, I understand my good star has been partly in my horizon, when I got wild in my reveries. Had that evil planet, which has almost all my life shed its baleful rays on my devoted head, been, as usual, in my zenith, I had certainly blabb’d something that would have pointed out to you the dear object of my tenderest friendship, and, in spite of me—something more. Had that fatal information escaped me, and it was merely chance, or kind stars, that it did not—I had been undone!—You would never have wrote me, except perhaps once more! O, I could curse circumstances! and the coarse tie of human laws, which keeps fast what common sense would loose—and which bars that happiness itself cannot give—happiness which otherwise Love and Honour would warrant! But hold—I shall make no more “hair-breadth ’scapes.”

My friendship, Clarinda, is a life-rent business. My likings are both strong and eternal. I told you I had but one male friend. I have but two female. I should have a third, but she is surrounded by the blandishments of flattery and courtship.

*** I register in my heart's core—*****. Miss N——— can tell you how divine she is. She is worthy of a place in the same bosom with my Clarinda. That is the highest compliment I can pay her. Farewell, Clarinda! Remember

SYLVANDER,

Thursday noon.

No XV.

Tuesday Evening.—

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

I looked long, my dear Clarinda, for your letter, and am vexed that you are complaining. I have not caught you so far wrong as in your idea, that the commerce you have with *one* friend hurts you, if you cannot tell every tittle of it to *another*. Why have you so injurious a suspicion of a good God, Clarinda, as to think that Friendship and Love, on the sacred, inviolate principles of Truth, Honour, and Religion, can be any thing else than an object of his divine approbation?

I have mentioned, in some of my former scrawls, Saturday evening next. Do allow me to wait on you that evening. Oh, my angel! how soon must

we part! and when can we meet again? I look forward on the horrid interval with tearful eyes. What have I lost by not knowing you sooner. I fear, I fear my acquaintance with you is too short, to make that *lasting* impression on your heart I could wish.

SYLVANDER.

No XVI.

Saturday Morning.

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

"Reverence thyself," is a sacred maxim, and I wish to cherish it. I think I told you Lord Bolingbroke's saying to Swift—"Adieu, dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee entirely; make an effort to love me with all mine." A glorious sentiment, and without which there can be no friendship! I do highly, very highly esteem you indeed, Clarinda: you merit it all! Perhaps too, I scorn dissimulation! I could fondly love you: judge then what a maddening sting your reproach would be. "Oh! I have sins to *heaven*, but none to you!"—With what pleasure would I meet you to-day; but I cannot walk to meet the fly. I hope to be able to see you, on *foot*, about the middle of next week.

I am interrupted—perhaps you are not sorry for it, you will tell me—But I wont anticipate blame. O Clarinda ! did you know how dear to me is your look of kindness, your smile of approbation ! you would not, either in prose or verse, risque a censorious remark.

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

SYLVANDER.

No XVII.

Saturday Morning.

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

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

“’Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright
“’Tis this that gilds the horrors of our night.”

I have been this morning taking a peep through, as Young finely says, “the dark postern of time long elaps’d ;” and you will easily guess, ’twas a rueful prospect. What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weak-

ness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple; what strength, what proportion in some parts! what unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of mercies and said, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!" I rose, eased and strengthened. I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man. "The future," said I to myself, "is still before me: there let me

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

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

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

Saturday Night—half after Ten.

WHAT luxury of bliss I was enjoying this time yesternight! My ever-dearest Clarinda, you have stolen away my soul. But you are refined, you have exalted it, you have given it a stronger sense of virtue, and a stronger relish for piety—Clarinda, first of your sex, if ever I am the veriest wretch on earth to forget you; if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul,

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

What trifling silliness is the childish fondness of the every-day children of the world! 'tis the unmeaning toying of the younglings of the fields and

forests ; but where Sentiment and Fancy unite their sweets ; where Taste and Delicacy refine ; where Wit adds the flavour, and Good-sense gives strength and spirit to all ; what a delicious draught is the hour of tender endearment !—Beauty and Grace, in the arms of Truth and Honour, in all the luxury of mutual love !

Clarinda have you ever seen the picture realized ? Not in all its very richest colouring.

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

—————Innocence

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

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

Good night, my dear Clarinda !

SYLVANDER.

No. XVIII.

“ I am distressed for thee my brother, Jonathan !”
I have suffered, Clarinda, from your letter. My soul was in arms at the sad perusal. I dreaded that I had acted wrong. If I have robbed you of a friend, God forgive me. But, Clarinda, be comforted. Let us raise the tone of our feelings a little higher and bolder. A fellow-creature who leaves us, who spurns us without just cause, though once our bosom friend—up with a little honest pride—let them go ! How shall I comfort you who am the cause of the injury ?

Can I wish that I had never seen you? that we had never met? No, I never will! But have I thrown you friendless! there is almost distraction in that thought.

Father of mercies! against thee often have I sinned; through thy grace I will endeavour to do so no more! She who, Thou knowest, is dearer to me than myself; pour Thou the balm of peace into her past wounds, and hedge her about with Thy peculiar care, all her future days and nights: strengthen her tender noble mind, firmly to suffer and magnanimously to bear! Make me worthy of that friendship she honours me with. May my attachment to her be pure as devotion, and lasting as immortal life! O Almighty Goodness, hear me! Be to her at all times, particularly in the hour of distress or trial, a Friend and Comforter; a Guide and Guard.

“How are Thy servants blest, O Lord,

“How sure is their defence!

“Eternal wisdom is their guide,

“Their help, Omnipotence!”

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

SYLVANDER.

No. XIX.

Two o'clock.

I JUST now received your first letter of yesterday, by the careless negligence of the penny post.—Clarinda, matters are grown very serious with us; then seriously hear me, and hear me Heaven—I met you, my dear * * * * * by far the first of womankind, at least to me. I esteemed, I loved you

at first sight ; the longer I am acquainted with you, the more innate amiableness and worth I discover in you—You have suffered a loss, I confess, for my sake. But, if the firmest, steadiest, warmest friendship ; if every endeavour to be worthy of *your* friendship ; if a love, strong as the ties of Nature, and holy as the duties of Religion—if all these can make any thing like a compensation for the evil I have occasioned you ; if they be worth your acceptance, or can in the least add to your enjoyments—so help Sylvander, ye Powers above, in his hour of need, as he freely gives these all to Clarinda !

I esteem you, I love you, as a friend—I admire you, I love you, as a Woman, beyond any one in all the circle of creation—I know I shall continue to esteem you, to love you, to pray for you, nay, to pray for *myself* for *your* sake.

Expect me at eight—And believe me to be ever, my dearest Madam, yours most entirely.

SYLVANDER.

No. XX.

WHEN matters, my Love, are desperate, we must put on a desperate face——

———“ On reason build resolve,

“ That column of true majesty in Man.”

Or, as the same Author finely says in another place ;

——— Let thy soul spring up,

“ And lay strong hold for help on him that made thee.”

I am yours, Clarinda, for life. Never be discouraged at all this. Look forward—in a few weeks I shall be somewhere or other out of the possibility of seeing you : till then, I shall write you often, but visit you seldom. Your fame, your welfare, your

happiness, are dearer to me than any gratification whatever. Be comforted, my Love! the present moment is the worst—the lenient hand of Time, is daily and hourly either lightening the burden, or making us insensible to the weight. None of these friends, I mean Mr —— and the other gentleman, can hurt your worldly support—and of their friendship, in a little time you will learn to be easy, and by and by, to be happy without it. A decent means of livelihood in the world, an approving God, a peaceful conscience, and one firm trusty friend—can any body that has these be said to be unhappy! These are yours.

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

Adieu! my dearest Madam! SYLVANDER.

No. XXI.

Glasgow, Monday Evening, 9 o'clock.

THE attraction of Love, I find, is in an inverse proportion to the attraction of the Newtonian Philosophy: in the system of Sir Isaac, the nearer objects are to one another, the stronger is the attractive force; in my system, every milestone that marked my progress from Clarinda, awakened a keener pang of attachment to her. How do you feel, my Love? Is your heart ill at ease? I fear it. God forbid, that these persecutors should harass that Peace which is more precious to me than my

own. Be assured, I shall ever think of you,—muse on you, and in my moments of devotion, pray for you.—The hour that you are not in my thoughts, “be that hour darkness,—let the shadows of death cover it,—let it not be numbered in the hours of “the day !”

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

I have just met with my old friend, the Ship-Captain ; guess my pleasure—To meet you could alone have given me more. My brother William, too, the young saddler, has come to Glasgow to meet me ; and here are we three, spending the evening.

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

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

SYLVANDER.

No. XXII.

Cumnock, 2d March, 1788.

I HOPE, and am certain, that my generous Clarinda will not think my silence, for now a long week, has been in any degree owing to my forgetfulness. I have been tost about through the country ever since I wrote you ; and am here returning from Dumfries-shire, at an inn, the post-office of the place, with just so long time as my horse eats his corn, to write you. I have been hurried with business and dissipation almost equal

to the insidious degree of the Persian monarch's mandate, when he forbade asking petition of God or man for forty days : had the venerable prophet been as I, he had not broke the decree ; at least not thrice a-day.

I am thinking my farming scheme will yet hold. A worthy intelligent farmer, my father's friend and my own, has been with me on the spot ; he thinks the bargain practicable. I am myself, on a more serious review of the lands, much better pleased with them. I won't mention this in writing to any body but you and ———— Don't accuse me of being fickle ; I have the two plans of life before me, and I wish to adopt the one most likely to procure me independence. I shall be in Edinburgh next week. I long to see you : your image is omnipresent to me : nay, I am convinced I would soon idolatrize it most seriously ; so much do absence and memory improve the medium through which one sees the much-loved object. To-night, at the sacred hour of eight, I expect to meet you at the Throne of Grace. I hope as I go home to-night, to find a letter from you at the post-office in Mauchline. I have just once seen that dear hand since I left Edinburgh ; a letter indeed which much affected me. Tell me, first of womankind, will my warmest attachment, my sincerest friendship, my correspondence, will they be any compensation for the sacrifices you make for my sake ? If they will, they are yours. If I settle on the farm I propose, I am just a day and a half's ride from Edinburgh. We will meet—don't you say, " Perhaps too often."

Farewell, my fair, my charming, Poetess ? May all good things ever attend you ! I am ever,

My dearest Madam,

Your

SYLVANDER.

Mossgiel, 7th March, 1788.

CLARINDA, I have been so stung with your reproach for unkindness, a sin so unlike me, a sin I detest more than a breach of the whole Decalogue, fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth articles excepted, that I believe I shall not rest in my grave about it, if I die before you. You have often allowed me the head to judge, and the heart to feel the influence of female excellence. Was it not blasphemy then, against your own charms, and against my feelings, to suppose that a short fortnight could abate my passion! You, my Love, may have your cares and anxieties to disturb you, but they are the usual recurrences of life; your future views are fix'd, and your mind in a settled routine. Could not you, my ever dearest Madam, make a little allowance for a man, after long absence, paying a short visit to a country full of friends, relations, and early intimates? Cannot you guess, my Clarinda, what thoughts, what cares, what anxious forebodings, hopes, and fears, must crowd the breast of the man of keen sensibility, when no less is on the tapis than his aim, his employment, his very existence through future life?

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

“She, the bright sun of all her sex.”

I would not have you, my dear Madam, so much hurt at Miss ——'s coldness. 'Tis placing yourself below her, an honour she by no means deserves. We ought, when we wish to be economists in hap-

piness; we ought in the first place, to fix the standard of our own character; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand, and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property; and those who seem to doubt, or deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices or despise their judgment. I know, my dear, you will say this is self-conceit; but I call it self-knowledge: the one is the overweening opinion of a fool, who fancies himself to be, what he wishes himself to be thought: the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.

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

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

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

There is an error in the commerce of intimacy
 * * * * *
 * * * * * way of exchange, have not an
 equivalent to give us—and what is still worse, have
 no idea of the value of our goods. Happy is our lot
 indeed, when we meet with an honest merchant who
 is qualified to deal with us on our own terms—but
 that is a rarity—with almost every body we must
 pocket our pearls, less or more—and learn, in the
 old Scottish phrase—“to gie sic like as we get.”
 For this reason one should try to erect a kind of
 bank, or store-house, in one’s own mind—or, as the
 Psalmist says, “We shou’d commune with our
 own hearts, and be still.” This is exactly * * *
 * * * * *

No. XXIV.

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

But, truce with all this! When I sit down to write to you, all is harmony and peace. A hundred times a day do I figure you, before your taper, your book or work laid aside as I get within the room. How happy have I been! and how little of that scantling portion of time, called the life of man, is sacred to happiness!

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

“O what is life, that thoughtless wish of all!

“A drop of honey in a draught of gall.”

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

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

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

* * * * *

SYLVANDER.

NO: XXV.

BEFORE you ask me, why I have not written you, first let me be informed of you, how I shall write you? “In friendship,” you say—and I have many a time taken up my pen to try an epistle of “Friendship” to you—but it will not do—'tis like Jove grasping a pop gun, after having wielded his thunder.

When I take up the pen, Recollection ruins me: Ah! my ever dearest Clarinda! Clarinda!—What an host of Memory's tenderest offspring crowd on my fancy at that sound! But I must not indulge that subject. You have forbid it.

I am extremely happy to learn that your precious health is re-established, and that you are once more fit to enjoy that satisfaction in existence, which health alone can give us. My old friend has indeed been kind to you. Tell him, that I envy him the power of serving you. I had a letter from him a while ago, but it was so dry, so distant, so like a card to one of his clients, that I could scarce bear to read it, and have not yet answered it. He is a good, honest fellow—and can write a friendly letter, which would do equal honour to his head and his heart, as a whole sheaf of his letters I have by me will witness; and though Fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach now, as she did then, when he first honoured me with his friendship, yet I am as proud as ever—and when I am laid in my grave, I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground which I have a right to.

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

You must know, my dearest Madam, that these now many years, wherever I am, in whatever company, when a married lady is called as a toast, I constantly give you—but as your name has never passed my lips, even to my most intimate friend, I gave you by the name of Mrs Mack. This is so well known among my acquaintances, that when any married lady is called for, the toast-master will say—“O, we need not ask him who it is—here’s Mrs Mack!” I have also, among my convivial friends, set on foot a round of toasts, which I call a round of Arcadian Shepherdesses; that is, a round of favourite ladies, under female names celebrated in ancient song; and then, you are my Clarinda. So, my lovely Clarinda, I devote this glass of wine to a most ardent wish for your happiness!

In vain would Prudence, with decorous sneer,
Point out a cens’ring world, and bid me fear;
Above that world on wings of love I rise,
I know its worst—and can that worst despise,
“Wrong’d, injured, shunned; unpitied, unredress’d,
“The mock’d quotation of the scorner’s jest.”
Let Prudence’ direst bodements on me fall,
Clarinda, rich reward! o’erpays them all!

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

* * * * *

SYLVANDER.

At what period of the Correspondence the following Poem was sent is uncertain.

“I burn, I burn, as when thro’ ripen’d corn,
“By driving winds the crackling flames are born.”
Now maddening, wild, I curse that fatal night;
Now bless the hour which charm’d my guilty sight,
In vain the laws their feeble force oppose;
Chain’d at his feet they groan Love’s vanquished foes;
In vain Religion meets my shrinking eye;

I dare not combat—but I turn and fly :
 Conscience in vain upbraids th' unhallowed fire ;
 Love grasps his scorpions—stifled they expire.
 Reason drops headlong from his sacred throne,
 Your dear idea reigns and reigns alone ;
 Each thought intoxicated homage yields,
 And riots wanton in forbidden fields !

By all on high adoring mortals know !
 By all the conscious villain fears below !
 By your dear self ! the last great oath I swear ;
 Not life nor soul were ever half so dear !

~~~~~

LETTER to MR M'W———LE, *Writer, Ayr.*

IT is injuring *some* hearts, those hearts that *elegantly* bear the impression of the good Creator, to say to them you give them the trouble of obliging a friend ; for this reason, I only tell you that I gratify my *own* feelings in requesting your friendly offices with respect to the inclosed, because I know it will gratify *yours* to assist me in it to the utmost of your power.

I have sent you four copies, as I have no less than eight dozen in whole, which is a great deal more than I shall ever need.

Be sure to remember a poor Poet militant in your prayers. He looks forward with fear and trembling to that, to him, important moment, which stamps the *die* with—with—with, perhaps the eternal disgrace of,

My dear Sir,

Your humbled, afflicted,

Tormented,

*Mossgiel, 17th April, 1786.*

R. BURNS.

## LETTER to Miss M———N.

HERE have I sat, my dear Madam, in the stony attitude of perplexed study, for fifteen vexatious minutes, my head askew, bending over the intended card; my fixed eye insensible to the very light of day pour'd around; my pendulous goose-feather, loaded with ink, hanging over the future letter; all for the important purpose of writing a complimentary card to accompany your trinket.

Compliments is such a miserable Greenland expression; lies at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my Constitution, that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem, every one must have for you who knows you.

As I leave town in three or four days, I can give myself the pleasure of calling for you only for a minute. Tuesday evening, sometime about seven, or after, I shall wait on you, for your farewell commands.

The hinge of your box I put into the hands of the proper Connoisseur—but it is like Willy Gaw's Skate past redemption. The broken glass, likewise, went under review—but deliberative wisdom thought it would too much endanger the whole fabric. I am, dear Madam,

With all sincerity of Enthusiasm,  
Your very humble Servant,  
ROBERT BURNS.

*Saturday Noon, No. 2, }  
St James Sq. New Town. }*

## LETTER TO MR M——R, KILMARNOCK.

DEAR SIR, *Mossgiel, 7th March, 1788.*

I HAVE partly changed my ideas, my dear friend, since I saw you. I took old Glenconner with me to Mr Miller's farm, and he was so pleased with it, that I have wrote an offer to Mr Miller; which, if he accepts, I shall sit down a plain farmer, the happiest of lives when a man can live by it. In this case I shall not stay in Edinburgh above a week. I set out on Monday, and would have come by Kilmarnock, but there are several small sums owing me for my first edition, about Galston and Newmills; and I shall set off so early as to dispatch my business, and reach Glasgow by night. When I return, I shall devote a forenoon or two to make some kind of acknowledgment for all the kindness I owe your friendship. Now that I hope to settle with some credit and comfort at home, there was not any friendship or friendly correspondence that promised me more pleasure than yours; I hope I will not be disappointed. I trust the Spring will renew your tattered frame, and make your friends happy. You and I have often agreed, that life is no great blessing on the whole. The close of life indeed, to a reasoning eye, is,

“ Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun  
 “ Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams  
 “ Athwart the gloom profound.”

But an honest man has nothing to fear. If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley,—be it so—at least there is an end of pain, care, woes, and wants. If that part of us called Mind, does survive the apparent destruction of the man—

away with old-wife prejudices and tales ! Every age and every nation has had a different set of stories—and as the many are weak, of consequence they have often, perhaps always, been deceived. A man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow creatures—even granting that he may have been the sport, at times, of passions and instincts—he goes to a great unknown Being, who could have no other end in giving him existence but to make him happy—who gave him those passions and instincts, and well knows their force.

These, my worthy friend, are my ideas. And I know they are not far different from yours. It becomes a man of sense to think for himself—particularly in a case where all men are equally interested, and where, indeed, all men are equally in the dark.

Adieu, my dear Sir ! God send us a cheerful meeting !

ROBERT BURNS.

FINIS.













