

Letters and Journals

Vol. I

Letters and Journals

Vol. I

by

Lord Byron

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. 1788—1805	1
1.— <i>To Mrs. Parker.</i>	1
2.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	1
3.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	2
4.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	2
5.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	3
6.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	4
7.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	4
8.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	5
9.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	6
10.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	7
11.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	8
12.— <i>To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.</i>	9
13.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	10
14.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	11
15.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	12
16.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	14
17.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	15
18.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	16
19.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	17
20.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	18
21.— <i>To Hargreaves Hanson.</i>	19
22.— <i>To Hargreaves Hanson.</i>	19
23.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	20
24.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	21

25.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	22
26.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	22
27.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	23
28.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	23
29.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	24
30.— <i>To Charles O. Gordon.</i>	25
31.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	26
CHAPTER II. 1805–1808	28
32.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	28
33.— <i>To Charles O. Gordon.</i>	29
34.— <i>To Hargreaves Hanson.</i>	29
35.— <i>To Hargreaves Hanson.</i>	30
36.— <i>To Hargreaves Hanson.</i>	30
37.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	31
38.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	31
39.— <i>To Hargreaves Hanson.</i>	32
40.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	33
41.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	34
42.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	35
43.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	36
44.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	37
45.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	37
46.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Byron.</i>	38
47.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	39
48.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	40
49.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	40
50.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	41

51.—To Henry Angelo.	42
52.—To John M. B. Pigot.	42
53.—To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.	43
54.—To John M. B. Pigot.	44
55.—To John M. B. Pigot.	44
56.—To John M. B. Pigot.	45
57.—To John M. B. Pigot.	46
58.—To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.	47
59.—To John Hanson.	47
60.—To J. Ridge.	48
61.—To John M. B. Pigot.	48
62.—To Captain John Leacroft.	49
63.—To Captain John Leacroft.	50
64.—To Captain John Leacroft.	50
65.—To the Earl of Clare.	51
66.—To Mrs. Hanson.	52
67.—To William Bankes.	52
68.—To William Bankes.	53
69.—To — Falkner.	54
70.—To John Hanson.	54
71.—To John M. B. Pigot.	55
72.—To John Hanson.	56
73.—To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.	57
74.—To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.	57
75.—To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.	58
76.—To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.	60
77.—To John Hanson.	61

78.— <i>To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.</i>	61
79.— <i>To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.</i>	63
80.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	64
81.— <i>To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.</i>	64
82.— <i>To J. Ridge.</i>	65
83.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	67
84.— <i>To Henry Drury.</i>	67
85.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	68
86.— <i>To Robert Charles Dallas.</i>	69
87.— <i>To Robert Charles Dallas.</i>	71
88.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	72
89.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	72
90.— <i>To James De Bathe.</i>	73
91.— <i>To William Harness.</i>	74
92.— <i>To J. Ridge.</i>	74
CHAPTER III. 1808–1809	76
93.— <i>To the Rev. John Becher.</i>	76
94.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse</i>	76
95.— <i>To the Rev. John Becher.</i>	77
96.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Leigh.</i>	78
97.— <i>To the Rev. John Becher.</i>	79
98.— <i>To John Jackson.</i>	79
99.— <i>To John Jackson.</i>	80
100.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	80
101.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	81
102.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	82
103.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	83

104.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	84
105.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Leigh.</i>	85
106.— <i>To the Hon. Augusta Leigh.</i>	86
107.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	86
108.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	87
109.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	88
110.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	89
111.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	90
112.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	90
113.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	91
114.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	91
115.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	91
116.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	92
117.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	92
118.— <i>To William Harness.</i>	93
119.— <i>To William Bankes.</i>	94
120.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	94
121.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	94
122.— <i>To the Rev. R. Lowe.</i>	95
CHAPTER IV. 1809—1811	97
123.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	97
124.— <i>To Scrope Berdmore Davies.</i>	97
125.— <i>To the Rev. Henry Drury.</i>	98
126.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	99
127.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	100
128.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	101
129.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	102

130.— <i>To Mr. Rushton.</i>	105
131.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	105
132.— <i>To Captain Cary, A.D.C.</i>	106
133.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	107
134.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	111
135.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	112
136.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	112
137.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	113
138.— <i>To Henry Drury.</i>	113
139.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	116
140.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	118
141.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	118
142.— <i>To Henry Drury.</i>	119
143.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	121
144.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	123
145.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	124
146.— <i>To His Excellency Robert Adair</i>	125
147.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	126
148.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	127
149.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse</i>	128
150.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	130
151.— <i>To Scrope Berdmore Davies.</i>	132
152.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	133
153.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	135
154.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	137
155.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	138
156.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	139

157.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	140
158.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	142
159.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	144
160.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	145
161.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	146
162.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	149
163.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	151
163.— <i>To Francis Hodgson</i>	153
164.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	154
165.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	155
166.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	156
167.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	158
168.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	161
169.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	162
170.— <i>To Francis Hodgson.</i>	163
171.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	164
172.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse</i>	165
173.— <i>To Henry Drury.</i>	166
174.— <i>To his Mother.</i>	167
175.— <i>To William Miller.</i>	167
176.— <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	168
177.— <i>To C. S. Matthews.</i>	169
178.— <i>To John M. B. Pigot.</i>	169
179.— <i>To John Hanson.</i>	170
180.— <i>To Scrope Berdmore Davies.</i>	171
181. <i>To John Cam Hobhouse.</i>	171
182.— <i>To R. C. Dallas.</i>	172

183.—To — Bolton. 173

184.—To — Bolton. 175

185.—To — Bolton. 175

186.—To the Hon. Augusta Leigh. 176

187.—To R. C. Dallas. 177

188.—To Francis Hodgson. 178

NOTES 180

CHAPTER I. 1788—1805

1.—To Mrs. Parker.

Newstead Abbey,
Nov. 8th, 1798.

DEAR MADAM,—

My Mamma being unable to write herself desires I will let you know that the potatoes are now ready and you are welcome to them whenever you please. She begs you will ask Mrs. Parkyns if she would wish the poney to go round by Nottingham or to go home the nearest way as it is now quite well but too small to carry me. I have sent a young Rabbit which I beg Miss Frances will accept off and which I promised to send before. My Mamma desires her best compliments to you all in which I join.

I am, Dear Aunt, yours sincerely,

BYRON.

I hope you will excuse all blunders as it is the first letter I ever wrote.

2.—To his Mother.

Nottingham,
13 March, 1799.

DEAR MAMA,—

I am very glad to hear you are well. I am so myself, thank God; upon my word I did not expect so long a Letter from you; however I will answer it as well as I can. Mrs. Parkyns and the rest are well and are much obliged to you for the present. Mr. Rogers¹ could attend me every night at a separate hour from the Miss Parkynses, and I am astonished you do not acquiesce in this Scheme which would keep me in Mind of what I have almost entirely forgot. I recommend this to you because, if some plan of this kind is not adopted, I shall be called, or rather branded with the name of a dunce, which you know I could never bear. I beg you will consider this plan seriously and I will lend it all the assistance in my power. I shall be very glad to see the Letter you talk of, and I have time just to say I hope every body is well at Newstead,

And remain, your affectionate Son,

BYRON.

P.S.—Pray let me know when you are to send in the Horses to go to Newstead. May desires her Duty and I also expect an answer by the miller.

3.—*To John Hanson.*

SIR,—

I am not a little disappointed at your Stay, for this last week I expected you every hour; but, however, I beg it as a favour that you will come up soon from Newstead as the Holidays commence in three weeks Time. I congratulate you on Capt. Hanson's being appointed commander of The *Brazen Sloop* of War, and I congratulate myself on Lord Portsmouth's Marriage, hoping his Lady, when he and I meet next, will keep him in a little better order. The manner I knew that Capt. Hanson was appointed Commander of the Ship before mentioned was this. I saw it in the public Paper, and now, since you are going to Newstead, I beg if you meet Gray send her a packing as fast as possible, and give my Compliments to Mrs. Hanson and to all my comrades of the Battalions in and out upon different Stations,

And remain, your little friend,

BYRON.

I forgot to tell you how I was. I am at present very well and my foot goes but indifferently; I cannot perceive any alteration.

4.—*To his Mother.*

Harrow-on-the-Hill,
Sunday, May 1st, 1803.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

I received your Letter the other day. And am happy to hear you are well. I hope you will find Newstead in as favorable a state as you can wish. I wish you would write to Sheldrake to tell him to make haste with my shoes.

I am sorry to say that Mr. Henry Drury has behaved himself to me in a manner I neither *can* nor *will bear*. He has seized now an opportunity of showing his resentment towards me. To day in church I was talking to a Boy who was sitting next me; *that* perhaps was not right, but hear what followed. After Church he spoke not a word to me, but he took this Boy to his pupil room, where he abused me in a most violent manner, called me *blackguard*, said he *would* and *could* have me expelled from the School, and bade me thank his *Charity* that *prevented* him; this was the Message he sent me, to which I shall return no answer, but submit my case to *you* and those you may think *fit to consult*. Is this fit usage for any body? had I

stole or behaved in the most *abominable* way to him, his language could not have been more outrageous. What must the boys think of me to hear such a Message ordered to be delivered to me by a *Master*? Better let him take away my life than ruin my *Character*. My Conscience acquits me of ever *meriting* expulsion at this School; I have been *idle* and I certainly ought not to talk in church, but I have never done a mean action at this School to him or *any one*. If I had done anything so *heinous*, why should he allow me to stay at the School? Why should he himself be so *criminal* as to overlook faults which merit the *appellation* of a *blackguard*? If he had had it in his power to have me expelled, he would long ago have *done* it; as it is, he has done *worse*. If I am treated in this Manner, I will not stay at this *School*. I write you that I will not as yet appeal to Dr. Drury; his Son's influence is more than mine and *justice* would be *refused* me. Remember I told you, when I *left* you at *Bath*, that he would seize every means and opportunity of revenge, not for leaving him so much as the mortification he suffered, because I begged you to let me leave him. If I had been the Blackguard he talks of, why did he not of his own accord refuse to keep me as his *pupil*? You know Dr. Drury's first letter, in it were these Words: "My son and Lord Byron have had some Disagreements; but I hope that his future behaviour will render a change of Tutors unnecessary." Last Term I was here but a short time, and though he endeavoured, he could find nothing to abuse me in. Among other things I forgot to tell you he said he had a great mind to expel the Boy for speaking to me, and that if he ever again spoke to me he would expel him. Let him explain his meaning; he abused me, but he neither did nor can mention anything bad of me, further than what every boy else in the School has done. I fear him not; but let him explain his meaning; 'tis all I ask. I beg you will write to Dr. Drury to let him know what I have said. He has behaved to me, as also Mr. Evans, very kindly. If you do not take notice of this, I will leave the School myself; but I am sure *you* will not see me *ill treated*; better that I should suffer anything than this. I believe you will be tired by this time of reading my letter, but, if you love me, you will now show it. Pray write me immediately. I shall ever remain,

Your affectionate Son,

BYRON.

P.S.—Hargreaves Hanson desires his love to you and hopes you are very well. I am not in want of any Money so will not ask you for any. God bless, bless you.

5.—*To his Mother.*

Harrow-on-the-Hill,
June 23rd, 6th, 8th, 30th, 1803.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

I am much obliged to you for the Money you sent me. I have already wrote to you several times about writing to Sheldrake: I wish you would write to him, or Mr. Hanson to call on him, to tell him to make an Instrument for my leg immed^{ly}, as I want one, rather. I have been placed in a higher form in this School to day, and Dr. Drury and I go on very well; write soon, my Dear Mother.

I remain, your affectionate Son,

BYRON.

6.—*To his Mother.*

Southwell.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

I have sent Mealey to day to you, before William came, but now I shall write myself. *I promise* you, upon my *honour*, I will come over tomorrow in the *Afternoon*. I was not wishing to resist your *Commands*, and really seriously intended coming over tomorrow, ever since I received your last Letter; you know as well as I do that it is not your Company I dislike, but the place you reside in. I know it is time to go to Harrow. It will make me *unhappy*; but I will *obey*. I only desire, entreat, this one day, and on my *honour* I will be over tomorrow in the evening or afternoon. I am sorry you disapprove my Companions, who, however, are the first this County affords, and my equals in most respects; but I will be permitted to chuse for myself. I shall never interfere in your's and I desire you will not molest me in mine. If you grant me this favour, and allow me this one day unmolested, you will eternally oblige your

Unhappy Son,

BYRON.

I shall attempt to offer no excuse as you do not desire one. I only entreat you as a Governor, not as a Mother, to allow me this one day. Those that I most love live in this County; therefore in the name of Mercy I entreat this one day to take leave, and then I will join you again at Southwell to prepare to go to a place where- I will write no more; it would only incense you. Adieu. Tomorrow I come.

7.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Burgage Manor,
March 22d, 1804.

Although, My ever Dear Augusta, I have hitherto appeared remiss in replying to your kind and affectionate letters; yet I hope you will not attribute my neglect to a want of affection, but rather to a shyness naturally inherent in my Disposition. I

will now endeavour as amply as lies in my power to repay your kindness, and for the Future I hope you will consider me not only as a *Brother* but as your warmest and most affectionate *Friend*, and if ever Circumstances should require it your *protector*. Recollect, My Dearest Sister, that you are *the nearest relation* I have in *the world both by the ties of Blood and affection*. If there is anything in which I can serve you, you have only to mention it; Trust to your Brother, and be assured he will never betray your confidence. When You see my Cousin and future Brother George Leigh, tell him that I already consider him as my Friend, for whoever is beloved by you, my amiable Sister, will always be equally Dear to me. I arrived here today at 2 o'clock after a fatiguing Journey, I found my Mother perfectly well. She desires to be kindly remembered to you; as she is just now Gone out to an assembly, I have taken the first opportunity to write to you, I hope she will not return immediately; for if she was to take it into her head to peruse my epistle, there is one part of it which would produce from her a panegyric on *a friend of yours*, not at all agreeable to me, and I fancy, *not particularly delightful to you*. If you see Lord Sidney Osborne I beg you will remember me to him; I fancy he has almost forgot me by this time, for it is rather more than a year Since I had the pleasure of Seeing him.—Also remember me to poor old Murray; tell him we will see that something is to be done for him, for *while I live he shall never be abandoned In his old Age*. Write to me Soon, my Dear Augusta, And do not forget to love me, In the meantime, I remain, more than words can express, your ever sincere, affectionate

Brother and Friend,

BYRON.

P.S.—Do not forget to knit the purse you promised me, Adieu my beloved Sister.

8.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Southwell,
March 26th, 1804.

I received your affectionate letter, my ever Dear Sister, yesterday and I now hasten to comply with your injunction by answering it as soon as possible. Not, my Dear Girl, that it can be in the least irksome to me to write to you, on the Contrary it will always prove my Greatest pleasure, but I am sorry that I am afraid my correspondence will not prove the most entertaining, for I have nothing that I can relate to you, except my affection for you, which I can never sufficiently express, therefore I should tire you, before I had half satisfied myself. Ah, How unhappy I have hitherto been in being so long separated from so amiable a Sister! but fortune has now sufficiently atoned by discovering to me a relation whom I love, a Friend in whom I can confide. In both these lights, my Dear Augusta, I shall ever look upon you, and I hope you will never find your Brother unworthy of your affection and Friendship.

I am as you may imagine a little dull here; not being on terms of intimacy with Lord Grey I avoid Newstead, and my resources of amusement are Books, and writing to my Augusta, which, wherever I am, will always constitute my Greatest pleasure. I am not reconciled to Lord Grey, *and I never will*. He was once my *Greatest Friend*, my reasons for ceasing that Friendship are such as I cannot explain, not even to you, my Dear Sister, (although were they to be made known to any body, you would be the first,) but they will ever remain hidden in my own breast.

They are Good ones, however, for although I am *violent* I am not *capricious* in my *attachments*. My mother disapproves of my quarrelling with him, but if she knew the cause (which she never will know,) She would reproach me no more. He Has forfeited all *title to my esteem*, but I hold him in too much *contempt* ever to *hate him*. My mother desires to be kindly remembered to you. I shall soon be in town to resume my studies at Harrow; I will certainly call upon you in my way up. Present my respects to Mrs. Harcourt; I am Glad to hear that I am in her Good Graces for I shall always esteem her on account of her behaviour to you, my Dear Girl. Pray tell me If you see Lord S. Osborne, and how he is; what little I know of him I like very much and If we were better acquainted I doubt not I should like him still better. Do not forget to tell me how Murray is. As to your Future prospects, my Dear Girl, *may they be happy!* I am sure you deserve Happiness and if *you* do not meet with it I shall begin to think it is "a bad world we live in." Write to me soon. I am impatient to hear from you. God bless you, My amiable Augusta, I remain,

Your ever affectionate Brother and Friend,

BYRON.

9.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Burgage Manor,
April 2d, 1804.

I received your present, my beloved Augusta, which was very acceptable, not that it will be of any use as a token of remembrance, No, my affection for you will never permit me to forget you.

I am afraid, my Dear Girl, that you will be absent when I am in town. I cannot exactly say when I return to Harrow, but however it will be in a very short time. I hope you were entertained by Sir Wm. Fawcet's funeral on Saturday, Though I should imagine such spectacles rather calculated to excite Gloomy ideas. But I believe *your motive was not quite of so mournful a cast*.

You tell me that you are tired of London. I am rather surprised to hear that, for I thought the Gaieties of the Metropolis were particularly pleasing to *young ladies*. For my part I detest it; the smoke and the noise feel particularly unpleasant; but however it is preferable to this horrid place, where I am oppressed with *ennui*, and

have no amusement of any kind, except the conversation of my mother, which is sometimes very *edifying*, but not always very *agreeable*. There are very few books of any kind that are either instructive or amusing, no society but old parsons and old Maids;—I shoot a Good deal; but, thank God, I have not so far lost my reason as to make shooting my only amusement. There are indeed some of my neighbours whose only pleasures consist in field sports, but in other respects they are only one degree removed from the brute creation.

These however I endeavour not to imitate, but I sincerely wish for the company of a few friends about my own age to soften the austerity of the scene. I am an absolute Hermit; in a short time my Gravity which is increased by my solitude will qualify me for an Archbishoprick; I really begin to think that I should become a mitre amazingly well. You tell me to write to you when I have nothing better to do; I am sure writing to you, my Dear Sister, must ever form my Greatest pleasure, but especially so, at this time. Your letters and those of one of my Harrow friends form my only resources for driving away *dull care*. For Godsake write me a letter as long as may fill *twenty sheets* of paper, recollect it is my only pleasure, if you won't Give me twenty sheets, at least send me as long an epistle as you can and as soon as possible; there will be time for me to receive one more Letter at Southwell, and as soon as I Get to Harrow I will write to you. Excuse my not writing more, my Dear Augusta, for I am sure you will be sufficiently tired of reading this complaining narrative. God bless you, my beloved Sister. Adieu.

I remain your sincere and affectionate

Friend and Brother,

BYRON.

Remember me kindly to Mrs. Harcourt.

10.—To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

Burgage Manor,
April 9th, 1804.

A thousand thanks, my dear and Beloved Augusta, for your affectionate Letter, and so ready compliance with the request of a peevish and fretful Brother; it acted as a cordial on my drooping spirits and for a while dispelled the Gloom which envelopes me in this uncomfortable place. You see what power your letters have over me, so I hope you will be liberal in your epistolary consolation. You will address your next letter to Harrow as I set out from Southwell on Wednesday, and am sorry that I cannot contrive to be with you, as I must resume my studies at Harrow directly. If I speak in public at all, it will not be till the latter end of June or the beginning of July. You are right in your conjecture for I feel not a little nervous in the anticipation of *my Debut as an orator*. By the bye, I do not dislike Harrow. I find *ways and means* to amuse *myself very pleasantly* there; the friend, whose

correspondence I find so amusing, is an old sporting companion of mine, whose recitals of Shooting and Hunting expeditions are amusing to me as having often been his companion in them, and I hope to be so still oftener.

My mother Gives a *party* to night at which the principal *Southwell Belles* will be present, with one of which, although I don't as yet know whom I shall so far *honour*, *having never seen them*, I intend to *fall violently* in love; it will serve as an amusement *pour passer le temps* and it will at least have the charm of novelty to recommend it, then you know in the course of a few weeks I shall be quite *au désespoir*, shoot myself and Go out of the world with *éclat*, and my History will furnish materials for a pretty little Romance which shall be entitled and denominated the loves of Lord B. and the cruel and Inconstant Sigismunda Cunegunda Bridgetina, etc., etc., Princess of Terra Incognita.

Don't you think that I have a very good Knack for *novel writing*? I have Just this minute been called away from writing to you by two Gentlemen who have given me an invitation to go over to Screveton, a village a few miles off, and spend a few days; but however I shall not accept it, so you will continue to address your letters to Harrow as usual. Write to me as soon as possible and give me a long letter. Remember me to Mrs. Harcourt and all who enquire after me. Continue to love me and believe me,

Your truly affectionate Brother and Friend,

BYRON.

P.S.—My Mother's love to you, Adieu.

11.—To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

Burgage Manor,
August 18th, 1804.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—

I seize this interval of my *amiable* mother's absence this afternoon, again to inform you, or rather to desire to be informed by you, of what is going on. For my own part I can send nothing to amuse you, excepting a repetition of my complaints against my tormentor, whose *diabolical* disposition (pardon me for staining my paper with so harsh a word) seems to increase with age, and to acquire new force with Time. The more I see of her the more my dislike augments; nor can I so entirely conquer the appearance of it, as to prevent her from perceiving my opinion; this, so far from calming the Gale, blows it into a *hurricane*, which threatens to destroy everything, till exhausted by its own violence, it is lulled into a sullen torpor, which, after a short period, is again roused into fresh and revived phrenzy, to me most terrible, and to every other Spectator astonishing. She then declares that she plainly sees I hate her, that I am leagued with her bitter enemies,

viz. Yourself, L^d C[arlisle] and Mr. H[anson], and, as I never Dissemble or contradict her, we are all *honoured* with a multiplicity of epithets, too *numerous*, and some of them too *gross*, to be repeated. In this society, and in this amusing and instructive manner, have I dragged out a weary fortnight, and am condemned to pass another or three weeks as happily as the former. No captive Negro, or Prisoner of war, ever looked forward to their emancipation, and return to Liberty with more Joy, and with more lingering expectation, than I do to my escape from this maternal bondage, and this accursed place, which is the region of dullness itself, and more stupid than the banks of Lethe, though it possesses contrary qualities to the river of oblivion, as the detested scenes I now witness, make me regret the happier ones already passed, and wish their restoration.

Such Augusta is the happy life I now lead, such my *amusements*. I wander about hating everything I behold, and if I remained here a few months longer, I should become, what with *envy, spleen and all uncharitableness*, a complete *misanthrope*, but notwithstanding this,

Believe me, Dearest Augusta, ever yours, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

12.—To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

Burgage Manor,
August 29, 1804.

I received the arms, my dear Miss Pigot, and am very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken. It is impossible I should have any fault to find with them. The sight of the drawings gives me great pleasure for a double reason,—in the first place, they will ornament my books, in the next, they convince me that *you* have not entirely *forgot* me. I am, however, sorry you do not return sooner—you have already been gone an *age*. I perhaps may have taken my departure for London before you come back; but, however, I will hope not. Do not overlook my watch-riband and purse, as I wish to carry them with me. Your note was given me by Harry, at the play, whither I attended Miss Leacroft, and Dr. S—; and now I have sat down to answer it before I go to bed. If I am at Southwell when you return,—and I sincerely hope you will soon, for I very much regret your absence,—I shall be happy to hear you sing my favourite, "The Maid of Lodi." My mother, together with myself, desires to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Pigot, and, believe me, my dear Miss Pigot, I remain, your affectionate friend,

BYRON.

P.S.—If you think proper to send me any answer to this, I shall be extremely happy to receive it. Adieu.

P.S. 2d.—As you say you are a novice in the art of knitting, I hope it don't give you too much trouble. Go on *slowly*, but surely. Once more, adieu.

13.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Harrow-on-the-Hill,
October 25th, 1804.

MY DEAR AUGUSTA,—

In compliance with your wishes, as well as gratitude for your affectionate letter, I proceed as soon as possible to answer it; I am glad to hear that *any body* gives a good account of me; but from the quarter you mention, I should imagine it was exaggerated. That you are unhappy, my dear Sister, makes me so also; were it in my power to relieve your sorrows you would soon recover your spirits; as it is, I sympathize better than you yourself expect. But really, after all (pardon me my dear Sister), I feel a little inclined to laugh at you, for love, in my humble opinion, is utter nonsense, a mere jargon of compliments, romance, and deceit; now, for my part, had I fifty mistresses, I should in the course of a fortnight, forget them all, and, if by any chance I ever recollected one, should laugh at it as a dream, and bless my stars, for delivering me from the hands of the little mischievous Blind God. Can't you drive this Cousin of ours out of your pretty little head (for as to *hearts* I think they are out of the question), or if you are so far gone, why don't you give old L'Harpagon (I mean the General) the slip, and take a trip to Scotland, you are now pretty near the Borders. Be sure to Remember me to my formal Guardy Lord Carlisle, whose magisterial presence I have not been into for some years, nor have I any ambition to attain so great an honour. As to your favourite Lady Gertrude, I don't remember her; pray, is she handsome? I dare say she is, for although they are a *disagreeable, formal, stiff* Generation, yet they have by no means plain *persons*, I remember Lady Cawdor was a sweet, pretty woman; pray, does your sentimental Gertrude resemble her? I have heard that the duchess of Rutland was handsome also, but we will say nothing about her temper, as I hate Scandal.

Adieu, my pretty Sister, forgive my levity, write soon, and God bless you.

I remain, your very affectionate Brother,

BYRON.

P.S.—I left my mother at Southwell, some time since, in a monstrous pet with you for not writing. I am sorry to say the old lady and myself don't agree like lambs in a meadow, but I believe it is all my own fault, I am rather too fidgety, which my precise mama objects to, we differ, then argue, and to my shame be it spoken fall out a *little*, however after a storm comes a calm; what's become of our aunt the amiable antiquated Sophia? is she yet in the land of the living, or does she sing psalms with the *Blessed* in the other world. Adieu. I am happy enough and Comfortable here. My friends are not numerous, but select; among them I rank as the principal Lord Delawarr, who is very amiable and my particular friend; do you know the family at all? Lady Delawarr is frequently in town, perhaps you may have seen her; if she resembles her son she is the most amiable woman in Europe. I

have plenty of acquaintances, but I reckon them as mere Blanks. Adieu, my dear Augusta.

14.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Friday, November 2d, 1804.

This morning, my dear Augusta, I received your affectionate letter, and it reached me at a time when I wanted consolation, not however of your kind for I am not yet old enough or Goose enough to be in love; no, my sorrows are of a different nature, though more calculated to provoke risibility than excite compassion. You must know, Sister of mine, that I am the most unlucky wight in Harrow, perhaps in Christendom, and am no sooner out of one scrape than into another. And to day, this very morning, I had a thundering Jobation from our Good Doctor, which deranged my *nervous system*, for at least five minutes. But notwithstanding He and I now and then disagree, yet upon the whole we are very good friends, for there is so much of the Gentleman, so much mildness, and nothing of pedantry in his character, that I cannot help liking him, and will remember his instructions with gratitude as long as I live. He leaves Harrow soon, *apropos*, so do I. This quitting will be a considerable loss to the school. He is the best master we ever had, and at the same time respected and feared; greatly will he be regretted by all who know him. You tell me you don't know my friend L^d Delaware; he is considerably younger than me, but the most good tempered, amiable, clever fellow in the universe. To all which he adds the quality (a good one in the eyes of women) of being remarkably handsome, almost too much so for a boy. He is at present very low in the school, not owing to his want of ability, but to his years. I am nearly at the top of it; by the rules of our Seminary he is under my power, but he is too goodnatured ever to offend me, and I like him too well ever to exert my authority over him. If ever you should meet, and chance to know him, take notice of him on my account.

You say that you shall write to the Dowager Soon; her address is at Southwell, *that* I need hardly inform you. Now, Augusta, I am going to tell you a secret, perhaps I shall appear undutiful to you, but, believe me, my affection for you is founded on a more firm basis. My mother has lately behaved to me in such an eccentric manner, that so far from feeling the affection of a Son, it is with difficulty I can restrain my dislike. Not that I can complain of want of liberality; no, She always supplies me with as much money as I can spend, and more than most boys hope for or desire. But with all this she is so hasty, so impatient, that I dread the approach of the holidays, more than most boys do their return from them. In former days she spoilt me; now she is altered to the contrary; for the most trifling thing, she upbraids me in a most outrageous manner, and all our disputes have been lately heightened by my one with that object of my cordial, deliberate detestation, Lord Grey de Ruthyn.

She wishes me to explain my reasons for disliking him, which I will never do; would I do it to any one, be assured you, my dear Augusta, would be the first who would know them. She also insists on my being reconciled to him, and once she let drop such an odd expression that I was half inclined to believe the dowager was in love with him. But I hope not, for he is the most disagreeable person (in my opinion) that exists. He called once during my last vacation; she threatened, stormed, begged me to make it up, "he himself loved me, and wished it;" but my reason was so excellent—that neither had effect, nor would I speak or stay in the same room, till he took his departure. No doubt this appears odd; but was my reason known, which it never will be if I can help it, I should be justified in my conduct. Now if I am to be tormented with her and him in this style, I cannot submit to it. You, Augusta, are the only relation I have who treats me as a friend; if you too desert me, I have nobody I can love but Delawarr. If it was not for his sake, Harrow would be a desert, and I should dislike staying at it. You desire me to bum your epistles; indeed I cannot do that, but I will take care that They shall be invisible. If you burn any of mine, I shall be *monstrous angry*; take care of them till we meet.

Delawarr and myself are in a manner connected, for one of our forefathers in Charles the 1st's time married into their family. Hartington, whom you enquire after, is on very good terms with me, nothing more, he is of a soft milky disposition, and of a happy apathy of temper which defies the softer emotions, and is insensible of ill treatment; so much for him. Don't betray me to the Dowager. I should like to know your Lady Gertrude, as you and her are so great Friends. Adieu, my Sister, write. From

[Signature, etc., cut out]

15—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Harrow,
Saturday, 11th Novr., 1804.

I thought, my dear Augusta, that your opinion of my *meek mamma* would coincide with mine; Her temper is so variable, and, when inflamed, so furious, that I dread our meeting; not but I dare say, that I am troublesome enough, but I always endeavour to be as dutiful as possible. She is so very strenuous, and so tormenting in her entreaties and commands, with regard to my reconciliation, with that detestable Lord G. that I suppose she has a penchant for his Lordship; but I am confident that he does not return it, for he rather dislikes her than otherwise, at least as far as I can judge. But she has an excellent opinion of her personal attractions, sinks her age a good six years, avers that when I was born she was only eighteen, when you, my dear Sister, know as well as I know that she was of age when she married my father, and that I was not born for three years afterwards. But

vanity is the weakness of *your sex*,—and these are mere foibles that I have related to you, and, provided she never molested me, I should look upon them as follies very excusable in a woman. But I am now coming to what must shock you, as much as it does me, when she has occasion to lecture me (not very seldom you will think no doubt) she does not do it in a manner that commands respect, and in an impressive style. No! did she do that, I should amend my faults with pleasure, and dread to offend a kind though just mother. But she flies into a fit of phrenzy, upbraids me as if I was the most undutiful wretch in existence, rakes up the ashes of my *father*, abuses him, says I shall be a true Byrrone, which is the worst epithet she can invent. Am I to call this woman mother? Because by nature's law she has authority over me, am I to be trampled upon in this manner? am I to be goaded with insult, loaded with obloquy, and suffer my feelings to be outraged on the most trivial occasions? I owe her respect as a Son, But I renounce her as a Friend. What an example does she shew me! I hope in God I shall never follow it. I have not told you all, nor can I; I respect you as a female, nor, although I ought to confide in you as a Sister, will I shock you with the repetition of Scenes, which you may judge of by the Sample I have given you, and which to all but you are buried in oblivion. Would they were so in my mind! I am afraid they never will. And can I, my dear Sister, look up to this mother, with that respect, that affection I ought? Am I to be eternally subjected to her caprice? I hope not—; indeed a few short years will emancipate me from the Shackles I now wear, and then perhaps she will govern her passion better than at present. You mistake me, if you think I dislike Lord Carlisle; I respect him, and might like him did I know him better. For him too my mother has an antipathy, why I know not. I am afraid he could be but of little use to me, in separating me from her, which she would oppose with all her might; but I dare say he would assist me if he could, so I take the will for the Deed, and am obliged to him in exactly the same manner as if he succeeded in his efforts. I am in great hopes, that at Christmas I shall be with Mr. Hanson during the vacation, I shall do all I can to avoid a visit to my mother wherever she is. It is the first duty of a parent, to impress precepts of obedience in their children, but her method is so violent, so capricious, that the patience of Job, the versatility of a member of the House of Commons could not support it. I revere Dr. Drury much more than I do her, yet he is never violent, never outrageous: I dread offending him, not however through fear, but the respect I bear him makes me unhappy when I am under his displeasure. My mother's precepts, never convey instruction, never fix upon my mind; to be sure they are calculated, to inculcate obedience, so are chains, and tortures, but though they may restrain for a time, the mind revolts from such treatment. Not that Mrs. Byron ever injures my *sacred* person. I am rather too old for that, but her words are of that rough texture, which offend more than personal ill usage. "A talkative woman is like an Adder's tongue," so says one of the prophets, but which I can't tell, and very likely you don't wish to know, but he was a true one whoever he was.

The postage of your letters, My dear Augusta, don't fall upon me; but if they did, it would make no difference, for I am Generally in cash, and should think the trifle I paid for your epistles the best laid out I ever spent in my life. Write Soon. Remember me to Lord Carlisle, and, believe me, I ever am

Your affectionate Brother and Friend,

BYRONE.

16.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Harrow-on-the-Hill,
Novr., Saturday, 17th, 1804.

I am glad to hear, My dear Sister, that you like Castle Howard so well, I have no doubt what you say is true and that Lord C. is much more amiable than he has been represented to me. Never having been much with him and always hearing him reviled, it was hardly possible I should have conceived a very *great friendship* for his L^d.ship. My mother, you inform me, commends my *amiable disposition and good understanding*; if she does this to you, it is a great deal more than I ever hear myself, for the one or the other is always found fault with, and I am told to copy the *excellent pattern* which I see before me in *herself*. You have got an invitation too, you may accept it if you please, but if you value your own comfort, and like a pleasant situation, I advise you to avoid Southwell.—I thank you, My dear Augusta, for your readiness to assist me, and will in some manner avail myself of it; I do not however wish to be separated from *her* entirely, but not to be so much with her as I hitherto have been, for I do believe she likes me; she manifests that in many instances, particularly with regard to money, which I never want, and have as much as I desire. But her conduct is so strange, her caprices so impossible to be complied with, her passions so outrageous, that the evil quite overbalances her *agreeable qualities*. Amongst other things I forgot to mention a most *ungovernable appetite* for Scandal, which she never can govern, and employs most of her time abroad, in displaying the faults, and censuring the foibles, of her acquaintance; therefore I do not wonder, that my precious Aunt, comes in for her share of encomiums; This however is nothing to what happens when my conduct admits of animadversion; "then comes the tug of war." My whole family from the conquest are upbraided! myself abused, and I am told that what little accomplishments I possess either in mind or body are derived from her and *her alone*.

When I leave Harrow I know not; that depends on her nod; I like it very well. The master Dr. Drury, is the most amiable *clergyman* I ever knew; he unites the Gentleman with the Scholar, without affectation or pedantry, what little I have learnt I owe to him alone, nor is it his fault that it was not more. I shall always remember his instructions with Gratitude, and cherish a hope that it may one day be in my power to repay the numerous obligations, I am under; to him or some of his family.

Our holidays come on in about a fortnight. I however have not mentioned that to my mother, nor do I intend it; but if I can, I shall contrive to evade going to Southwell. Depend upon it I will not approach her for some time to come if it is in my power to avoid it, but she must not know, that it is my wish to be absent. I hope you will excuse my sending so short a letter, but the Bell has just rung to summon us together. Write Soon, and believe me,

Ever your affectionate Brother,

BYRON.

I am afraid you will have some difficulty in decyphering my epistles, but *that* I know you will excuse. Adieu. Remember me to L^d Carlisle.

17.—To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

Harrow-on-the-Hill,
Novr. 21st, 1804.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—

This morning I received your by no means unwelcome epistle, and thinking it demands an immediate answer, once more take up my pen to employ it in your service. There is no necessity for my mother to know anything of my intentions, till the time approaches; and when it does come, Mr. H. has only to write her a note saying, that, as I could not accept the invitation he gave me last holidays, he imagined I might do it now; to this she surely can make no objections; but, if she entertained the slightest idea of my making any complaint of her very *lenient* treatment, the scene that would ensue beggars all power of description. You may have some little idea of it, from what I have told you, and what you yourself know. I wrote to you the other day; but you make no mention of receiving my letter in yours of the 18th inst. It is however of little importance, containing merely a recapitulation of circumstances which I have before detailed at full length. To Lord Carlisle make my warmest acknowledgements. I feel more gratitude, than my feelings can well express; I am truly obliged to him for his endeavours, and am perfectly satisfied with your explanation of his reserve, though I was hitherto afraid it might proceed from personal dislike. I have some idea that I leave Harrow these holidays. The Dr., whose character I gave you in my last, leaves the mastership at Easter. Who his successor may be I know not, but he will not be a better I am confident. You inform me that you intend to visit my mother, then you will have an opportunity of seeing what I have described, and hearing a great *deal of Scandal*. She does not trouble me much with epistolary communications; when I do receive them, they are very concise, and much to the purpose. However I will do her the justice to say that she behaves, or rather means, well, and is in some respects very kind, though her manners are not the most conciliating. She likewise expresses a great deal of affection for you, but disapproves your marriage, wishes to know my

opinion of it, and complains that you are negligent and do not write to her or care about her. How far her opinion of your love for her is well grounded, you best know. I again request you will return my sincere thanks to Lord Carlisle, and for the future I shall consider him as more my friend than I have hitherto been taught to think. I have more reasons than one, to wish to avoid going to Notts, for there I should be obliged to associate with Lord G. whom I detest, his manners being unlike those of a Gentleman, and the information to be derived from him but little except about shooting, which I do not intend to devote my life to. Besides, I have a particular reason for not liking him. Pray write to me soon. Adieu, my Dear Augusta.

I remain, your affectionate Brother,

BYRON.

18.—To John Hanson.

Saturday,
Dec. 1st, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Our vacation commences on the 5th of this Month, when I propose to myself the pleasure of spending the Holidays at your House, if it is not too great an Inconvenience. I tell you fairly, that at Southwell I should have nothing in the World to do, but play at cards and listen to the edifying Conversation of old Maids, two things which do not at all suit my inclinations. In my Mother's last Letter I find that my poney and pointers are not yet procured, and that Lord Grey is still at Newstead. The former I should be very dull at such a place as Southwell without; the latter is still more disagreeable to be with. I presume he goes on in the old way*—quarrelling with the farmers, and stretching his judicial powers (he being now in the commission) to the utmost, becoming a torment to himself, and a pest to all around him.—I am glad you approve of my Gun, feeling myself happy, that it has been tried by so *distinguished* a *Sportsman*.

I hope your Campaigns against the Partridges and the rest of the feathered Tribe have been attended with no serious Consequences—*trifling accidents* such as the top of a few fingers and a Thumb, you *Gentlemen* of the *city* being used to, of course occasion no interruption to your field sports.

Your Accommodation I have no doubt I shall be perfectly satisfied with, only do exterminate that *vile Generation* of *Bugs* which nearly ate me up the last Time I *sojourned* at your House. After undergoing the Purgatory of Harrow *board* and *Lodging* for three Months I shall not be *particular* or exorbitant in my demands.

Pray give my best Compliments to Mrs. Hanson and the now *quilldriving* Hargreaves. Till I see you, I remain,

Yours, etc.,

BYRON.

19.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*6, Chancery Lane,
Wednesday, 30th Jany., 1805.

I have delayed writing to you so long, My dearest Augusta, from ignorance of your residence, not knowing whether you *graced* Castle Howard, or Kireton with your *presence*. The instant Mr. H[anson] informed me where you was, I prepared to address you, and you have but just forestalled my intention. And now, I scarcely know what to begin with; I have so many things, to tell you. I wish to God, that we were together, for It is impossible that I can confine all I have got to say in an epistle, without I was to follow your example, and fill eleven pages, as I was informed, by my *proficiency in the art of magic*, that you sometimes send that *number* to *Lady Gertrude*.

To begin with an article of *grand importance*; I on Saturday dined with Lord Carlisle, and on further acquaintance I like them all very much. Amongst other circumstances, I heard of your *boldness* as a *Rider*, especially one anecdote about your horse carrying you into the stable *perforce*. I should have admired amazingly to have seen your progress, provided you met with no accident. I hope you recollect the circumstance, and know what I allude to; else, you may think that I am *soaring* into the *Regions of Romance*. I wish you to corroborate my account in your next, and inform me whether my information was correct.

I think your friend Lady G. is a sweet girl. If your taste in *love*, is as good as it is in *friendship*, I shall think you a *very discerning little Gentlewoman*. His Lordship too improves upon further acquaintance, Her Ladyship I always liked, but of the Junior part of the family Frederick is my favourite. I believe with regard to my future destination, that I return to Harrow until June, and then I'm off for the university. Could I have found Room there, I was to have gone immediately.

I have contrived to pass the holidays with Mr. and Mrs. Hanson, to whom I am greatly obliged for their hospitality. You are now within a days journey of my *amiable Mama*. If you wish your spirits *raised*, or rather *roused*, I would recommend you to pass a week or two with her. However I daresay she would behave very well to *you*, for you do not know her disposition so well as I do. I return you, my dear Girl, a thousand thanks for hinting to Mr. H. and Lord C. my uncomfortable situation, I shall always remember it with gratitude, as a most *essential service*. I rather think that, if you were any time with my mother, she would bore you about your marriage which she *disapproves* of, as much for the sake of finding fault as any thing, for that is her favourite amusement. At any rate she would be very inquisitive, for she was always tormenting me about it, and, if

you told her any thing, she might very possibly divulge it; I therefore advise you, *when you see her* to say nothing, or as little, about it, as you can help. If you make haste, you can answer this *well written* epistle by return of post, for I wish again to hear from you immediately; you need not fill *eleven pages*, *nine* will be sufficient; but whether it contains nine pages or nine lines, it will always be most welcome, my beloved Sister, to

Your affectionate Brother and Friend,

BYRON.

20.—*To the Hon. Augusta Byron.*

Thursday, 4th April, 1805.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—

You certainly have excellent reasons for complaint against my want of punctuality in our correspondence; but, as it does not proceed from want of affection, but an idle disposition, you will, I hope, accept my excuses. I am afraid, however, that when I shall take up my pen, you will not be greatly *edified* or *amused*, especially at present, since, I sit down in very bad spirits, out of humour with myself, and all the world, except *you*. I left Harrow yesterday, and am now at Mr. Hanson's till Sunday morning, when I depart for Nottinghamshire, to pay a visit to my *mother*, with whom I shall remain for a week or two, when I return to town, and from thence to Harrow, until July, when I take my departure for the university, but which I am as yet undecided. Mr. H. Recommends Cambridge; L^d. Carlisle allows me to chuse for myself, and I must own I prefer Oxford. But, I am not violently bent upon it, and whichever is determined upon will meet with my concurrence.— This is the outline of my plans for the next 6 months. I am Glad that you are Going to pay his *Lordship* a visit, as I shall have an opportunity of seeing you on my return to town, a pleasure, which, as I have been long debarred of it, will be doubly felt after so long a separation. My visit to the Dowager does not promise me all the happiness I could wish; however, it must be gone through, as it is some time since I have seen her. It shall be as short as possible. I shall expect to find a letter from you, when I come down, as I wish to know when you go to town, and how long you remain there. If you stay till The middle of next month, you may have an opportunity of hearing me speak, as the first day of our *Harrow orations* occurs in May. My friend Delawarr, (as you observed) danced with the little Princess, nor did I in the least *envy* him the honour. I presume you have heard That Dr. Drury leaves Harrow this Easter, and That, as a memorial of our Gratitude for his long services, The scholars presented him with plate to the amount of 330 Guineas.

I hope you will excuse this *Hypocondriac* epistle, as I never was in such low spirits in my life. Adieu, my Dearest Sister, and believe me,

Your ever affectionate though negligent Brother,

BYRON.