



TOBIAS SMOLLETT

Fantastica World Classics

THE EXPEDITION OF
HUMPHRY CLINKER

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NEW EDITION



Fantastica



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THE EXPEDITION

To Mr HENRY DAVIS, Bookseller, in London.

ABERGAVENNY, Aug. 4.

RESPECTED SIR,

I have received your esteemed favour of the 13th ultimo, whereby it appeareth, that you have perused those same Letters, the which were delivered unto you by my friend, the reverend Mr Hugo Behn; and I am pleased to find you think they may be printed with a good prospect of success; in as much as the objections you mention, I humbly conceive, are such as may be redargued, if not entirely removed—And, first, in the first place, as touching what prosecutions may arise from printing the private correspondence of persons still living, give me leave, with all due submission, to observe, that the Letters in question were not written and sent under the seal of secrecy; that they have no tendency to the mala fama, or prejudice of any person whatsoever; but rather to the information and edification of mankind: so that it becometh a sort of duty to promulgate them in usum publicum. Besides, I have consulted Mr Davy Higgins, an eminent attorney of this place, who, after due inspection and consideration, declareth, That he doth not think the said Letters contain any matter which will be held actionable in the eye of the law. Finally, if you and I should come to a right understanding, I do declare in verbo sacerdotis, that, in case of any such prosecution, I will take the whole upon my own shoulders, even quoad fine and imprisonment, though, I must confess, I should not care to undergo flagellation: Tam ad turpitudinem, quam ad amaritudinem poenoe spectans—Secondly, concerning the personal resentment of Mr Justice Lismahago, I may say, non flocci facio—I would not willingly vilipend any Christian, if, peradventure, he deserveth that epithet: albeit, I am much surprised that

more care is not taken to exclude from the commission all such vagrant foreigners as may be justly suspected of disaffection to our happy constitution, in church and state—God forbid that I should be so uncharitable, as to affirm, positively, that the said Lismahago is no better than a Jesuit in disguise; but this I will assert and maintain, totis viribus, that, from the day he qualified, he has never been once seen intra templi parietes, that is to say, within the parish church.

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

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

Respected Sir, Your very humble servant,
JONATHAN DUSTWICH.

P.S. I propose, Deo volente, to have the pleasure of seeing you in the great city, towards All-hallowtide, when I shall be glad to treat with you concerning a parcel of MS. sermons, of a certain clergyman deceased; a cake of the right leaven, for the present taste of the public. Verbum sapienti, &c.

J.D.

To the Revd. Mr JONATHAN DUSTWICH, at—

SIR,

I received yours in course of post, and shall be glad to treat

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

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

honesty and wit enough to appear and take your trial—If you should be sentenced to the pillory, your fortune is made—As times go, that's a sure step to honour and preferment. I shall think myself happy if I can lend you a lift; and am, very sincerely,

Yours,

HENRY DAVIS. LONDON, Aug. 10th.

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

H. D.

THE EXPEDITION OF HUMPHRY CLINKER

To Dr LEWIS.

DOCTOR,

The pills are good for nothing—I might as well swallow snowballs to cool my reins—I have told you over and over how hard I am to move; and at this time of day, I ought to know something of my own constitution. Why will you be so positive? Prithee send me another prescription—I am as lame and as much tortured in all my limbs as if I was broke upon the wheel: indeed, I am equally distressed in mind and body—As if I had not plagues enough of my own, those children of my sister are left me for a perpetual source of vexation—what business have people to get children to plague their neighbours? A ridiculous incident that happened yesterday to my niece Liddy, has disordered me in

such a manner, that I expect to be laid up with another fit of the gout—perhaps, I may explain myself in my next. I shall set out tomorrow morning for the Hot Well at Bristol, where I am afraid I shall stay longer than I could wish. On the receipt of this send Williams thither with my saddle-horse and the demi pique. Tell Barns to thresh out the two old ricks, and send the corn to market, and sell it off to the poor at a shilling a bushel under market price.—I have received a snivelling letter from Griffin, offering to make a public submission and pay costs. I want none of his submissions, neither will I pocket any of his money. The fellow is a bad neighbour, and I desire, to have nothing to do with him: but as he is purse-proud, he shall pay for his insolence: let him give five pounds to the poor of the parish, and I will withdraw my action; and in the mean time you may tell Prig to stop proceedings.—Let Morgan's widow have the Alderney cow, and forty shillings to clothe her children: but don't say a syllable of the matter to any living soul—I'll make her pay when she is able. I desire you will lock up all my drawers, and keep the keys till meeting; and be sure you take the iron chest with my papers into your own custody—Forgive all, this trouble from,

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

To Mrs GWYLLIM, house-keeper at Brambleton-hall.

MRS GWILLIM,

When this cums to hand, be sure to pack up in the trunk male that stands in my closet; to be sent me in the Bristol waggon without loss of time, the following articles, viz. my rose collard neglejay with green robins, my yellow damask, and my black velvets with the short hoop; my bloo quilted petticoat, my green mantel, my laced apron, my French commode, Macklin head and lappets and the litel box with my jowls. Williams may bring over my bum-daffee, and the viol with the easings of Dr Hill's dockwater and Chowder's lacksitif. The poor creature has been terribly stuprated ever since we left huom. Pray take particular

care of the house while the family is absent. Let there be a fire constantly kept in my brother's chamber and mine. The maids, having nothing to do, may be sat a spinning. I desire you'll clap a pad-luck on the wind-seller, and let none of the men have excess to the strong bear—don't forget to have the gate shit every evening be dark—The gardnir and the hind may lie below in the landry, to partake the house, with the blunderbuss and the great dog; and hope you'll have a watchful eye over the maids. I know that hussy Mary Jones, loves to be rumping with the men. Let me know Alderney's calf be sould yet, and what he fought—if the ould goose be sitting; and if the cobbler has cut Dicky, and how pore anemil bore the operation. No more at present, but rests,

Yours, TABITHA BRAMBLE GLOSTAR, April 2.

TO Mrs MARY JONES, at Brambleton-hall.

DEAR MOLLY,

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

Dear Molly, Your humble servant to command, W. JENKINS

GLOSTAR, April 2nd.

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

DEAR PHILLIPS,

As I have nothing more at heart than to convince you I am incapable of forgetting, or neglecting the friendship I made at college, now begin that correspondence by letters, which you and I agreed, at parting, to cultivate. I begin it sooner than I intended, that you may have it in your power to refute any idle reports which may be circulated to my prejudice at Oxford, touching a foolish quarrel, in which I have been involved on account of my sister, who had been some time settled here in a boarding-school. When I came hither with my uncle and aunt (who are our guardians) to fetch her away, I found her a fine tall girl, of seventeen, with an agreeable person; but remarkably simple, and quite ignorant of the world. This disposition, and want of experience, had exposed her to the addresses of a person—I know not what to call him, who had seen her at a play; and, with a confidence and dexterity peculiar to himself, found means to be recommended to her acquaintance. It was by the greatest accident I intercepted one of his letters; as it was my duty to stifle this correspondence in its birth, I made it my business to find him out, and tell him very freely my sentiments of the matter. The spark did not like the stile I used, and behaved with abundance of mettle. Though his rank in life (which, by the bye, I am ashamed to declare) did not entitle him to much deference; yet as his behaviour was remarkably spirited, I admitted him to the privilege of a gentleman, and something might have happened, had not we been prevented.—In short, the business took air, I know not how, and made abundance of noise—recourse was had to justice—I was obliged to give my word and honour, &c. and to-morrow morning we set out for Bristol Wells, where I expect to hear from you by the return of the post.—I have got into a family of originals, whom I may one day attempt to describe for your amusement. My aunt, Mrs Tabitha Bramble, is a maiden of

forty-five, exceedingly starched, vain, and ridiculous.—My uncle is an odd kind of humorist, always on the fret, and so unpleasant in his manner, that rather than be obliged to keep him company, I'd resign all claim to the inheritance of his estate. Indeed his being tortured by the gout may have soured his temper, and, perhaps, I may like him better on further acquaintance; certain it is, all his servants and neighbours in the country are fond of him, even to a degree of enthusiasm, the reason of which I cannot as yet comprehend. Remember me to Griffy Price, Gwyn, Mansel, Basset, and all the rest of my old Cambrian companions.—Salute the bedmaker in my name—give my service to the cook, and pray take care of poor Ponto, for the sake of his old master, who is, and ever will be,

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

To Mrs JERMYN at her house in Gloucester.

DEAR MADAM,

Having no mother of my own, I hope you will give me leave to disburden my poor heart to you, who have always acted the part of a kind parent to me, ever since I was put under your care. Indeed, and indeed, my worthy governess may believe me, when I assure her, that I never harboured a thought that was otherwise than virtuous; and, if God will give me grace, I shall never behave so as to cast a reflection on the care you have taken in my education. I confess I have given just cause of offence by my want of prudence and experience. I ought not to have listened to what the young man said; and it was my duty to have told you all that passed, but I was ashamed to mention it; and then he behaved so modest and respectful, and seemed to be so melancholy and timorous, that I could not find in my heart to do any thing that should make him miserable and desperate. As for familiarities, I do declare, I never once allowed him the favour of a salute; and as to the few letters that passed between us, they are all in my uncle's hands, and I hope they contain nothing

contrary to innocence and honour.—I am still persuaded that he is not what he appears to be: but time will discover—mean while I will endeavour to forget a connexion, which is so displeasing to my family. I have cried without ceasing, and have not tasted any thing but tea, since I was hurried away from you; nor did I once close my eyes for three nights running.—My aunt continues to chide me severely when we are by ourselves; but I hope to soften her in time, by humility and submission.—My uncle, who was so dreadfully passionate in the beginning, has been moved by my tears and distress; and is now all tenderness and compassion; and my brother is reconciled to me on my promise to break off all correspondence with that unfortunate youth; but, notwithstanding all their indulgence, I shall have no peace of mind till I know my dear and ever honoured governess has forgiven her poor, disconsolate, forlorn,

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

To Miss LAETITIA WILLIS, at Gloucester.

MY DEAREST LETTY,

I am in such a fright, lest this should not come safe to hand by the conveyance of Jarvis the carrier, that I beg you will write me, on the receipt of it, directing to me, under cover, to Mrs Winifred Jenkins, my aunt's maid, who is a good girl, and has been so kind to me in my affliction, that I have made her my confidant; as for Jarvis, he was very shy of taking charge of my letter and the little parcel, because his sister Sally had like to have lost her place on my account: indeed I cannot blame the man for his caution; but I have made it worth his while.—My dear companion and bed-fellow, it is a grievous addition to my other misfortunes, that I am deprived of your agreeable company and conversation, at a time when I need so much the comfort of your good humour and good sense; but, I hope, the friendship we contracted at boarding-school, will last for life—I doubt not but on my side it will daily increase and improve, as I gain

experience, and learn to know the value of a true friend. O, my dear Letty! what shall I say about poor Mr Wilson? I have promised to break off all correspondence, and, if possible, to forget him: but, alas! I begin to perceive that will not be in my power. As it is by no means proper that the picture should remain in my hands, lest it should be the occasion of more mischief, I have sent it to you by this opportunity, begging you will either keep it safe till better times, or return it to Mr Wilson himself, who, I suppose, will make it his business to see you at the usual place. If he should be low-spirited at my sending back his picture, you may tell him I have no occasion for a picture, while the original continues engraved on my—But no; I would not have you tell him that neither; because there must be an end of our correspondence—I wish he may forget me, for the sake of his own peace; and yet if he should, he must be a barbarous—But it is impossible—poor Wilson cannot be false and inconstant: I beseech him not to write to me, nor attempt to see me for some time; for, considering the resentment and passionate temper of my brother Jerry, such an attempt might be attended with consequences which would make us all miserable for life—let us trust to time and the chapter of accidents; or rather to that Providence which will not fail, sooner or later, to reward those that walk in the paths of honour and virtue. I would offer my love to the young ladies; but it is not fit that any of them should know you have received this letter.—If we go to Bath, I shall send you my simple remarks upon that famous center of polite amusement, and every other place we may chance to visit; and I flatter myself that my dear Miss Willis will be punctual in answering the letters of her affectionate,

LYDIA MELFORD CLIFTON, April 6.

To Dr LEWIS.

DEAR LEWIS,

I have followed your directions with some success, and might have been upon my legs by this time, had the weather permitted

me to use my saddle-horse. I rode out upon the Downs last Tuesday, in the forenoon, when the sky, as far as the visible horizon, was without a cloud; but before I had gone a full mile, I was overtaken instantaneously by a storm of rain that wet me to the skin in three minutes—whence it came the devil knows; but it has laid me up (I suppose) for one fortnight. It makes me sick to hear people talk of the fine air upon Clifton-downs: How can the air be either agreeable or salutary, where the demon of vapours descends in a perpetual drizzle? My confinement is the more intolerable, as I am surrounded with domestic vexations. My niece has had a dangerous fit of illness, occasioned by that cursed incident at Gloucester, which I mentioned in my last.—She is a poor good-natured simpleton, as soft as butter, and as easily melted—not that she’s a fool—the girl’s parts are not despicable, and her education has not been neglected; that is to say, she can write and spell, and speak French, and play upon the harpsichord; then she dances finely, has a good figure, and is very well inclined; but, she’s deficient in spirit, and so susceptible—and so tender forsooth!—truly, she has got a languishing eye, and reads romances.—Then there’s her brother, ‘squire Jerry, a pert jackanapes, full of college-petulance and self-conceit; proud as a German count, and as hot and hasty as a Welch mountaineer. As for that fantastical animal, my sister Tabby, you are no stranger to her qualifications—I vow to God, she is sometimes so intolerable, that I almost think she’s the devil incarnate come to torment me for my sins; and yet I am conscious of no sins that ought to entail such family-plagues upon me—why the devil should not I shake off these torments at once? I an’t married to Tabby, thank Heaven! nor did I beget the other two: let them choose another guardian: for my part I an’t in a condition to take care of myself; much less to superintend the conduct of giddy-headed boys and girls. You earnestly desire to know the particulars of our adventure at Gloucester, which are briefly these, and I hope they will go no further:—Liddy had been so long copped up in a boarding-school, which, next to a nunnery, is the worst kind of seminary that ever was contrived for young women, that she became as inflammable as touchwood; and going to a play in holiday-time,—’sdeath, I’m ashamed to tell you! she fell in love with one of the actors—a handsome young fellow that goes by the name of Wilson. The rascal soon

perceived the impression he had made, and managed matters so as to see her at a house where she went to drink tea with her governess.—This was the beginning of a correspondence, which they kept up by means of a jade of a milliner, who made and dressed caps for the girls at the boarding-school. When we arrived at Gloucester, Liddy came to stay at lodgings with her aunt, and Wilson bribed the maid to deliver a letter into her own hands; but it seems Jerry had already acquired so much credit with the maid (by what means he best knows) that she carried the letter to him, and so the whole plot was discovered. The rash boy, without saying a word of the matter to me, went immediately in search of Wilson; and, I suppose, treated him with insolence enough. The theatrical hero was too far gone in romance to brook such usage: he replied in blank verse, and a formal challenge ensued. They agreed to meet early next morning and decide the dispute with sword and pistol. I heard nothing at all of the affair, till Mr Morley came to my bed-side in the morning, and told me he was afraid my nephew was going to fight, as he had been overheard talking very loud and vehement with Wilson at the young man's lodgings the night before, and afterwards went and bought powder and ball at a shop in the neighbourhood. I got up immediately, and upon inquiry found he was just going out. I begged Morley to knock up the mayor, that he might interpose as a magistrate, and in the mean time I hobbled after the squire, whom I saw at a distance walking at a great pace towards the city gate—in spite of all my efforts, I could not come up till our two combatants had taken their ground, and were priming their pistols. An old house luckily screened me from their view; so that I rushed upon them at once, before I was perceived. They were both confounded, and attempted to make their escape different ways; but Morley coming up with constables, at that instant, took Wilson into custody, and Jerry followed him quietly to the mayor's house. All this time I was ignorant of what had passed the preceding day; and neither of the parties would discover a tittle of the matter. The mayor observed that it was great presumption in Wilson, who was a stroller, to proceed to such extremities with a gentleman of family and fortune; and threatened to commit him on the vagrant act.—The young fellow bustled up with great spirit, declaring he was a gentleman, and would be treated as such; but he refused to explain

himself further. The master of the company being sent for, and examined, touching the said Wilson, said the young man had engaged with him at Birmingham about six months ago; but never would take his salary; that he had behaved so well in his private character, as to acquire the respect and good-will of all his acquaintance, and that the public owned his merit as an actor was altogether extraordinary.—After all, I fancy, he will turn out to be a run-away apprentice from London.—The manager offered to bail him for any sum, provided he would give his word and honour that he would keep the peace; but the young gentleman was on his high ropes, and would by no means lay himself under any restrictions: on the other hand, Hopeful was equally obstinate; till at length the mayor declared, that if they both refused to be bound over, he would immediately commit Wilson as a vagrant to hard labour. I own I was much pleased with Jerry's behaviour on this occasion: he said, that rather than Mr Wilson should be treated in such an ignominious manner, he would give his word and honour to prosecute the affair no further while they remained at Gloucester—Wilson thanked him for his generous manner of proceeding, and was discharged. On our return to our lodgings, my nephew explained the whole mystery; and I own I was exceedingly incensed—Liddy being questioned on the subject, and very severely reproached by that wildcat my sister Tabby, first swooned away, then dissolving in a flood of tears, confessed all the particulars of the correspondence, at the same time giving up three letters, which was all she had received from her admirer. The last, which Jerry intercepted, I send you inclosed, and when you have read it, I dare say you won't wonder at the progress the writer had made in the heart of a simple girl, utterly unacquainted with the characters of mankind. Thinking it was high time to remove her from such a dangerous connexion, I carried her off the very next day to Bristol; but the poor creature was so frightened and fluttered, by our threats and expostulations, that she fell sick the fourth day after our arrival at Clifton, and continued so ill for a whole week, that her life was despaired of. It was not till yesterday that Dr Rigge declared her out of danger. You cannot imagine what I have suffered, partly from the indiscretion of this poor child, but much more from the fear of losing her entirely. This air is intolerably cold, and the place quite solitary—I never go down to the Well

without returning low-spirited; for there I meet with half a dozen poor emaciated creatures, with ghostly looks, in the last stage of a consumption, who have made shift to linger through the winter like so many exotic plants languishing in a hot-house; but in all appearance, will drop into their graves before the sun has warmth enough to mitigate the rigour of this ungenial spring.—If you think the Bath-water will be of any service to me, I will go thither so soon as my niece can bear the motion of the coach. Tell Barns I am obliged to him for his advice; but don't choose to follow it. If Davis voluntarily offers to give up the farm, the other shall have it; but I will not begin at this time of day to distress my tenants, because they are unfortunate, and cannot make regular payments: I wonder that Barns should think me capable of such oppression—As for Higgins, the fellow is a notorious poacher, to be sure; and an impudent rascal to set his snares in my own paddock; but, I suppose, he thought he had some right (especially in my absence) to partake of what nature seems to have intended for common use—you may threaten him in my name, as much as you please, and if he repeats the offence, let me know it before you have recourse to justice.—I know you are a great sportsman, and oblige many of your friends: I need not tell you to make use of my grounds; but it may be necessary to hint, that I am more afraid of my fowling-piece than of my game. When you can spare two or three brace of partridges, send them over by the stagecoach, and tell Gwyllim that she forgot to pack up my flannel and wide shoes in the trunk-mail—I shall trouble you as usual, from time to time, till at last I suppose you will be tired of corresponding with

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

To Miss LYDIA MELFORD.

Miss Willis has pronounced my doom—you are going away, dear Miss Melford!—you are going to be removed, I know not whither! what shall I do? which way shall I turn for consolation? I know not what I say—all night long have I been tossed in a sea of doubts and fears, uncertainty and distraction, without

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

WILSON GLOUCESTER, March 31.

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon.

HOT WELL, April 18.

DEAR PHILLIPS,

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

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

I was t'other day much diverted with a conversation that passed in the Pump-room, betwixt him and the famous Dr L—n, who is come to ply at the Well for patients. My uncle was complaining of the stink, occasioned by the vast quantity of mud and slime which the river leaves at low ebb under the windows of the Pumproom. He observed, that the exhalations arising from such a nuisance, could not but be prejudicial to the weak lungs of many consumptive patients, who came to drink the water. The

Doctor overhearing this remark, made up to him, and assured him he was mistaken. He said, people in general were so misled by vulgar prejudices that philosophy was hardly sufficient to undeceive them. Then humming thrice, he assumed a most ridiculous solemnity of aspect, and entered into a learned investigation of the nature of stink. He observed, that stink, or stench, meant no more than a strong impression on the olfactory nerves; and might be applied to substances of the most opposite qualities; that in the Dutch language, *stinken* signifies the most agreeable perfume, as well as the most fetid odour, as appears in Van Vloudel's translation of Horace, in that beautiful ode, *Quis multa gracilis, &c.*—The words *fiquidis perfusus odoribus*, he translates *van civet & moschata gestinken*: that individuals differed *toto coelo* in their opinion of smells, which, indeed, was altogether as arbitrary as the opinion of beauty; that the French were pleased with the putrid effluvia of animal food; and so were the Hottentots in Africa, and the Savages in Greenland; and that the Negroes on the coast of Senegal would not touch fish till it was rotten; strong presumptions in favour of what is generally called stink, as those nations are in a state of nature, undebauched by luxury, unseduced by whim and caprice: that he had reason to believe the stercoraceous flavour, condemned by prejudice as a stink, was, in fact, most agreeable to the organs of smelling; for, that every person who pretended to nauseate the smell of another's excretions, snuffed up his own with particular complacency; for the truth of which he appealed to all the ladies and gentlemen then present: he said, the inhabitants of Madrid and Edinburgh found particular satisfaction in breathing their own atmosphere, which was always impregnated with stercoraceous effluvia: that the learned Dr B—, in his treatise on the Four Digestions, explains in what manner the volatile effluvia from the intestines stimulate and promote the operations of the animal economy: he affirmed, the last Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Medicis family, who refined upon sensuality with the spirit of a philosopher, was so delighted with that odour, that he caused the essence of ordure to be extracted, and used it as the most delicious perfume: that he himself (the doctor) when he happened to be low-spirited, or fatigued with business, found immediate relief and uncommon satisfaction from hanging over the stale contents of a close-stool, while his

servant stirred it about under his nose; nor was this effect to be wondered at, when we consider that this substance abounds with the self-same volatile salts that are so greedily smelled to by the most delicate invalids, after they have been extracted and sublimed by the chemists.—By this time the company began to hold their noses; but the doctor, without taking the least notice of this signal, proceeded to shew, that many fetid substances were not only agreeable but salutary; such as *assa foetida*, and other medicinal gums, resins, roots, and vegetables, over and above burnt feathers, tan-pits, candle-snuffs, &c. In short, he used many learned arguments to persuade his audience out of their senses; and from stench made a transition to filth, which he affirmed was also a mistaken idea, in as much as objects so called, were no other than certain modifications of matter, consisting of the same principles that enter into the composition of all created essences, whatever they may be: that in the filthiest production of nature, a philosopher considered nothing but the earth, water, salt and air, of which it was compounded; that, for his own part, he had no more objections to drinking the dirtiest ditch-water, than he had to a glass of water from the Hot Well, provided he was assured there was nothing poisonous in the concrete. Then addressing himself to my uncle, ‘Sir (said he) you seem to be of a dropsical habit, and probably will soon have a confirmed ascites: if I should be present when you are tapped, I will give you a convincing proof of what I assert, by drinking without hesitation the water that comes out of your abdomen.’—The ladies made wry faces at this declaration, and my uncle, changing colour, told him he did not desire any such proof of his philosophy: ‘But I should be glad to know (said he) what makes you think I am of a dropsical habit?’ ‘Sir, I beg pardon (replied the Doctor) I perceive your ancles are swelled, and you seem to have the *facies leucophlegmatica*. Perhaps, indeed, your disorder may be oedematous, or gouty, or it may be the *lues venerea*: If you have any reason to flatter yourself it is this last, sir, I will undertake to cure you with three small pills, even if the disease should have attained its utmost inveteracy. Sir, it is an arcanum, which I have discovered, and prepared with infinite labour.—Sir, I have lately cured a woman in Bristol—a common prostitute, sir, who had got all the worst symptoms of the disorder; such as *nodi*, *tophi*, and *gummata*, *verruca*, *cristoe Galli*, and a

serpiginous eruption, or rather a pocky itch all over her body. By the time she had taken the second pill, sir, by Heaven! she was as smooth as my hand, and the third made her sound and as fresh as a new born infant.' 'Sir (cried my uncle peevishly) I have no reason to flatter myself that my disorder comes within the efficacy of your nostrum. But this patient you talk of may not be so sound at bottom as you imagine.' 'I can't possibly be mistaken (rejoined the philosopher) for I have had communication with her three times—I always ascertain my cures in that manner.' At this remark, all the ladies retired to another corner of the room, and some of them began to spit.—As to my uncle, though he was ruffled at first by the doctor's saying he was dropsical, he could not help smiling at this ridiculous confession and, I suppose, with a view to punish this original, told him there was a wart upon his nose, that looked a little suspicious. 'I don't pretend to be a judge of those matters (said he) but I understand that warts are often produced by the distemper; and that one upon your nose seems to have taken possession of the very keystone of the bridge, which I hope is in no danger of falling.' L—n seemed a little confounded at this remark, and assured him it was nothing but a common excrescence of the cuticula, but that the bones were all sound below; for the truth of this assertion he appealed to the touch, desiring he would feel the part. My uncle said it was a matter of such delicacy to meddle with a gentleman's nose, that he declined the office—upon which, the Doctor turning to me, intreated me to do him that favour. I complied with his request, and handled it so roughly, that he sneezed, and the tears ran down his cheeks, to the no small entertainment of the company, and particularly of my uncle, who burst out a-laughing for the first time since I have been with him; and took notice, that the part seemed to be very tender. 'Sir (cried the Doctor) it is naturally a tender part; but to remove all possibility of doubt, I will take off the wart this very night.'

So saying, he bowed, with great solemnity all round, and retired to his own lodgings, where he applied a caustic to the wart; but it spread in such a manner as to produce a considerable inflammation, attended with an enormous swelling; so that when he next appeared, his whole face was overshadowed by this tremendous nozzle; and the rueful eagerness with which he explained this unlucky accident, was ludicrous beyond all

description.—I was much pleased with meeting the original of a character, which you and I have often laughed at in description; and what surprises me very much, I find the features in the picture, which has been drawn for him, rather softened than over-charged.

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

Yours always, J. MELFORD

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon.

HOT WELL, April 20.

DEAR KNIGHT,

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

T'other day, I thought I had detected him in such a state of frailty, as would but ill become his years and character. There is a decent sort of woman, not disagreeable in her person, that comes to the Well, with a poor emaciated child, far gone in a consumption. I had caught my uncle's eyes several times directed to this person, with a very suspicious expression in them, and every time he saw himself observed, he hastily withdrew them, with evident marks of confusion—I resolved to watch him more narrowly, and saw him speaking to her privately in a corner of the walk. At length, going down to the Well one day, I met her half way up the hill to Clifton, and could not help suspecting she was going to our lodgings by appointment, as it was about one o'clock, the hour when my sister and I are generally at the Pump-room.—This notion exciting my curiosity, I returned by a back-way, and got unperceived into my own chamber, which is contiguous to my uncle's apartment. Sure enough, the woman was introduced but not into his bedchamber; he gave her audience

in a parlour; so that I was obliged to shift my station to another room, where, however, there was a small chink in the partition, through which I could perceive what passed. My uncle, though a little lame, rose up when she came in, and setting a chair for her, desired she would sit down: then he asked if she would take a dish of chocolate, which she declined, with much acknowledgment. After a short pause, he said, in a croaking tone of voice, which confounded me not a little, 'Madam, I am truly concerned for your misfortunes; and if this trifle can be of any service to you, I beg you will accept it without ceremony.' So saying, he put a bit of paper into her hand, which she opening with great trepidation, exclaimed in an extacy, 'Twenty pounds! Oh, sir!' and sinking down upon a settee, fainted away—Frightened at this fit, and, I suppose, afraid of calling for assistance, lest her situation should give rise to unfavourable conjectures, he ran about the room in distraction, making frightful grimaces; and, at length, had recollection enough to throw a little water in her face; by which application she was brought to herself: but, then her feeling took another turn. She shed a flood of tears, and cried aloud, 'I know not who you are: but, sure—worthy sir—generous sir!—the distress of me and my poor dying child—Oh! if the widow's prayers—if the orphan's tears of gratitude can ought avail—gracious Providence—Blessings!—shower down eternal blessings.'—Here she was interrupted by my uncle, who muttered in a voice still more and more discordant, 'For Heaven's sake be quiet, madam—consider—the people of the house—'sdeath! can't you.'—All this time she was struggling to throw herself on her knees, while he seizing her by the wrists, endeavoured to seat her upon the settee, saying, 'Prithee—good now—hold your tongue'—At that instant, who should burst into—the room but our aunt Tabby! of all antiquated maidens the most diabolically capricious—Ever prying into other people's affairs, she had seen the woman enter, and followed her to the door, where she stood listening, but probably could hear nothing distinctly, except my uncle's, last exclamation; at which she bounded into the parlour in a violent rage, that dyed the tip of her nose of a purple hue,—'Fy upon you, Matt! (cried she) what doings are these, to disgrace your own character, and disparage your family?'—Then, snatching the bank note out of the stranger's hand, she went on—'How now, twenty pounds!—here is temptation with

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

Dear Phillips, Yours always, J. MELFORD

Direct your next to me at Bath; and remember me to all our

fellow-jesuits.

To Dr LEWIS.

HOT WELL, April 20.

I understand your hint. There are mysteries in physic, as well as in religion; which we of the profane have no right to investigate—A man must not presume to use his reason, unless he has studied the categories, and can chop logic by mode and figure—Between friends, I think every man of tolerable parts ought, at my time of day, to be both physician and lawyer, as far as his own constitution and property are concerned. For my own part, I have had an hospital these fourteen years within myself, and studied my own case with the most painful attention; consequently may be supposed to know something of the matter, although I have not taken regular courses of physiology et cetera et cetera.—In short, I have for some time been of opinion (no offence, dear Doctor) that the sum of all your medical discoveries amounts to this, that the more you study the less you know.—I have read all that has been written on the Hot Wells, and what I can collect from the whole, is, that the water contains nothing but a little salt, and calcarious earth, mixed in such inconsiderable proportion, as can have very little, if any, effect on the animal economy. This being the case, I think the man deserves to be fitted with a cap and bells, who for such a paultry advantage as this spring affords, sacrifices his precious time, which might be employed in taking more effectual remedies, and exposes himself to the dirt, the stench, the chilling blasts, and perpetual rains, that render this place to me intolerable. If these waters, from a small degree of astringency, are of some service in the diabetes, diarrhoea, and night sweats, when the secretions are too much increased, must not they do harm in the same proportion, where the humours are obstructed, as in the asthma, scurvy, gout and dropsy?—Now we talk of the dropsy, here is a strange fantastical oddity, one of your brethren, who harangues every day in the Pump-room, as if he was hired to give lectures

on all subjects whatsoever—I know not what to make of him—Sometimes he makes shrewd remarks; at other times he talks like the greatest simpleton in nature—He has read a great deal; but without method or judgment, and digested nothing. He believes every thing he has read; especially if it has any thing of the marvellous in it and his conversation is a surprizing hotch-potch of erudition and extravagance. He told me t’other day, with great confidence, that my case was dropsical; or, as he called it, leucophlegmatic: A sure sign, that his want of experience is equal to his presumption—for, you know, there is nothing analogous to the dropsy in my disorder—I wish those impertinent fellows, with their ricketty understandings, would keep their advice for those that ask it. Dropsy, indeed! Sure I have not lived to the age of fifty-five, and had such experience of my own disorder, and consulted you and other eminent physicians, so often, and so long, to be undeceived by such a—But, without all doubt, the man is mad; and, therefore, what he says is of no consequence. I had, yesterday, a visit from Higgins, who came hither under the terror of your threats, and brought me in a present a brace of hares, which he owned he took in my ground; and I could not persuade the fellow that he did wrong, or that I would ever prosecute him for poaching—I must desire you will wink hard at the practices of this rascallion, otherwise I shall be plagued with his presents, which cost me more than they are worth.—If I could wonder at any thing Fitzowen does, I should be surprized at his assurance in desiring you to solicit my vote for him at the next election for the county: for him, who opposed me, on the like occasion, with the most illiberal competition. You may tell him civilly, that I beg to be excused. Direct your next for me at Bath, whither I propose to remove to-morrow; not only on my own account, but for the sake of my niece, Liddy, who is like to relapse. The poor creature fell into a fit yesterday, while I was cheapening a pair of spectacles, with a Jew-pedlar. I am afraid there is something still lurking in that little heart of hers, which I hope a change of objects will remove. Let me know what you think of this half-witted Doctor’s impertinent, ridiculous, and absurd notion of my disorder—So far from being dropsical, I am as lank in the belly as a grey-hound; and, by measuring my ancle with a pack-thread, I find the swelling subsides every day. From such doctors, good Lord deliver us!—I have not yet taken any

lodgings in Bath; because there we can be accommodated at a minute's warning, and I shall choose for myself—I need not say your directions for drinking and bathing will be agreeable to,

Dear Lewis, Yours ever, MAT. BRAMBLE

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

To Miss LETTY WILLIS, at Gloucester

HOT WELL, April 21.

MY DEAR LETTY,

I did not intend to trouble you again, till we should be settled at Bath; but having the occasion of Jarvis, I could not let it slip, especially as I have something extraordinary to communicate. O, my dear companion! What shall I tell you? for several days past there was a Jew-looking man, that plied at the Wells with a box of spectacles; and he always eyed me so earnestly, that I began to be very uneasy. At last, he came to our lodgings at Clifton, and lingered about the door, as if he wanted to speak to somebody—I was seized with an odd kind of fluttering, and begged Win to throw herself in his way: but the poor girl has weak nerves, and was afraid of his beard. My uncle, having occasion for new glasses, called him up stairs, and was trying a pair of spectacles, when the man, advancing to me, said in a whisper—O gracious! what d'ye think he said?—'I am Wilson!' His features struck me that very moment it was Wilson, sure enough! but so disguised, that it would have been impossible to know him, if my heart had not assisted in the discovery. I was so surprised, and so frightened that I fainted away, but soon recovered; and found myself supported by him on the chair, while my uncle was running about the room, with the spectacles on his nose, calling for help. I had no opportunity to speak to him; but looks were sufficiently expressive. He was payed for his glasses, and went away. Then I told Win who he was, and sent her after him to the Pump-room; where she spoke to him, and begged him in my name to withdraw from the place, that he might not incur the suspicion of my

uncle or my brother, if he did not want to see me die of terror and vexation. The poor youth declared, with tears in his eyes, that he had something extraordinary to communicate; and asked, if she would deliver a letter to me: but this she absolutely refused, by my order.—Finding her obstinate in her refusal, he desired she would tell me that he was no longer a player, but a gentleman; in which character he would very soon avow his passion for me, without fear of censure or reproach—Nay, he even discovered his name and family, which, to my great grief, the simple girl forgot, in the confusion occasioned by her being seen talking to him by my brother, who stopt her on the road, and asked what business she had with that rascally Jew. She pretended she was cheapening a stay-hook, but was thrown into such a quandary, that she forgot the most material part of the information; and when she came home, went into an hysteric fit of laughing. This transaction happened three days ago, during which he has not appeared, so that I suppose he has gone. Dear Letty! you see how Fortune takes pleasure in persecuting your poor friend. If you should see him at Gloucester—or if you have seen him, and know his real name and family, pray keep me no longer in suspense—And yet, if he is under no obligation to keep himself longer concealed, and has a real affection for me, I should hope he will, in a little time, declare himself to my relations. Sure, if there is nothing unsuitable in the match, they won't be so cruel as to thwart my inclinations—O what happiness would then be my portion! I can't help indulging the thought, and pleasing my fancy with such agreeable ideas; which after all, perhaps, will never be realized—But, why should I despair? who knows what will happen?—We set out for Bath to-morrow, and I am almost sorry for it; as I begin to be in love with solitude, and this is a charming romantic place. The air is so pure; the Downs are so agreeable; the furz in full blossom; the ground enamelled with daisies, and primroses, and cowslips; all the trees bursting into leaves, and the hedges already clothed with their vernal livery; the mountains covered with flocks of sheep and tender bleating wanton lambkins playing, frisking, and skipping from side to side; the groves resound with the notes of blackbird, thrush, and linnet; and all night long sweet Philomel pours forth her ravishingly delightful song. Then, for variety, we go down to the nymph of Bristol spring, where the company is assembled

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

LYDIA MELFORD

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

To Sir WATKIN PHILLIPS, of Jesus college, Oxon.

BATH, April 24.

DEAR PHILLIPS,

You have, indeed, reason to be surprised, that I should have concealed my correspondence with miss Blackerby from you, to whom I disclosed all my other connexions of that nature; but the truth is, I never dreamed of any such commerce, till your last informed me, that it had produced something which could not be much longer concealed. It is a lucky circumstance, however, that her reputation will not suffer any detriment, but rather derive advantage from the discovery; which will prove, at least, that it is not quite so rotten as most people imagined—For my own part, I declare to you, in all the sincerity of friendship, that, far from having any amorous intercourse with the object in question, I never had the least acquaintance with her person; but, if she is really in the condition you describe, I suspect Mansel to be at the bottom of the whole. His visits to that shrine were no secret; and this attachment, added to some good offices, which you know he has done me, since I left Alma-mater, give me a right to believe him capable of saddling me with this scandal,

when my back was turned—Nevertheless, if my name can be of any service to him, he is welcome to make use of it; and if the woman should be abandoned enough to swear his banding to me, I must beg the favour of you to compound with the parish: I shall pay the penalty without repining; and you will be so good as to draw upon me immediately for the sum required—On this occasion, I act by the advice of my uncle; who says I shall have good-luck if I pass through life without being obliged to make many more compositions of the same kind. The old gentleman told me last night, with great good-humour, that betwixt the age of twenty and forty, he had been obliged to provide for nine bastards, sworn to him by women whom he never saw—Mr Bramble's character, which seems to interest you greatly, opens and improves upon me every day. His singularities afford a rich mine of entertainment; his understanding, so far as I can judge, is well cultivated; his observations on life are equally just, pertinent, and uncommon. He affects misanthropy, in order to conceal the sensibility of a heart, which is tender, even to a degree of weakness. This delicacy of feeling, or soreness of the mind, makes him timorous and fearful; but then he is afraid of nothing so much as of dishonour; and although he is exceedingly cautious of giving offence, he will fire at the least hint of insolence or ill-breeding.—Respectable as he is, upon the whole, I can't help being sometimes diverted by his little distresses; which provoke him to let fly the shafts of his satire, keen and penetrating as the arrows of Teucer—Our aunt, Tabitha, acts upon him as a perpetual grind-stone—She is, in all respects, a striking contrast to her brother—But I reserve her portrait for another occasion.

Three days ago we came hither from the Hot Well, and took possession of the first floor of a lodging-house, on the South Parade; a situation which my uncle chose, for its being near the Bath, and remote from the noise of carriages. He was scarce warm in the lodgings when he called for his night-cap, his wide shoes, and flannel; and declared himself invested with the gout in his right foot; though, I believe it had as yet reached no farther than his imagination. It was not long before he had reason to repent his premature declaration; for our aunt Tabitha found means to make such a clamour and confusion, before the flannels could be produced from the trunk, that one would have imagined the house was on fire. All this time, uncle sat boiling

with impatience, biting his fingers, throwing up his eyes, and muttering ejaculations; at length he burst into a kind of convulsive laugh, after which he hummed a song; and when the hurricane was over, exclaimed 'Blessed be God for all things!' This, however, was but the beginning of his troubles. Mrs Tabitha's favourite dog Chowder, having paid his compliments to a female turnspit of his own species, in the kitchen, involved himself in a quarrel with no fewer than five rivals, who set upon him at once, and drove him up stairs to the dining room door, with hideous noise: there our aunt and her woman, taking arms in his defence, joined the concert; which became truly diabolical. This fray being with difficulty suppressed, by the intervention of our own footman and the cook-maid of the house, the squire had just opened his mouth, to expostulate with Tabby, when the town-waits, in the passage below, struck up their music (if music it may be called) with such a sudden burst of sound, as made him start and stare, with marks of indignation and disquiet. He had recollection enough to send his servant with some money to silence those noisy intruders; and they were immediately dismissed, though not without some opposition on the part of Tabitha, who thought it but reasonable that he should have more music for his money. Scarce had he settled this knotty point, when a strange kind of thumping and bouncing was heard right over-head, in the second story, so loud and violent, as to shake the whole building. I own I was exceedingly provoked at this new alarm; and before my uncle had time to express himself on the subject, I ran up stairs, to see what was the matter. Finding the room-door open, I entered without ceremony, and perceived an object, which I can not now recollect without laughing to excess—It was a dancing master, with his scholar, in the act of teaching. The master was blind of one eye, and lame of one foot, and led about the room his pupil; who seemed to be about the age of threescore, stooped mortally, was tall, raw-boned, hard-favoured, with a woollen night-cap on his head; and he had stript off his coat, that he might be more nimble in his motions—Finding himself intruded upon, by a person he did not know, he forthwith girded himself with a long iron sword, and advancing to me, with a peremptory air, pronounced, in a true Hibernian accent, 'Mister What d'ye callum, by my saoul and conscience, I am very glad to sea you, if you are after coming in the way of

friendship; and indeed, and indeed now, I believe you are my friend sure enough, gra; though I never had the honour to see your face before, my dear; for becaase you come like a friend, without any ceremony at all, at all—I told him the nature of my visit would not admit of ceremony; that I was come to desire he would make less noise, as there was a sick gentleman below, whom he had no right to disturb with such preposterous doings. ‘Why, look-ye now, young gentleman (replied this original) perhaps, upon another occasion, I might shivilly request you to explain the maining of that hard word, prepasterous: but there’s a time for all things, honey’—So saying, he passed me with great agility, and, running down stairs, found our foot-man at the dining-room door, of whom he demanded admittance, to pay his respects to the stranger. As the fellow did not think proper to refuse the request of such a formidable figure, he was immediately introduced, and addressed himself to my uncle in these words: ‘Your humble servant, good sir,—I’m not so prepasterous, as your son calls it, but I know the rules of shivility—I’m a poor knight of Ireland, my name is sir Ulic Mackilligut, of the county of Galway; being your fellow-lodger, I’m come to pay my respects, and to welcome you to the South Parade, and to offer my best services to you, and your good lady, and your pretty daughter; and even to the young gentleman your son, though he thinks me a prepasterous fellow—You must know I am to have the honour to open a ball next door to-morrow with lady Mac Manus; and being rusted in my dancing, I was refreshing my memory with a little exercise; but if I had known there was a sick person below, by Christ! I would have sooner danced a hornpipe upon my own head, than walk the softest minuet over yours.’—My uncle, who was not a little startled at his first appearance, received his compliment with great complacency, insisted upon his being seated, thanked him for the honour of his visit, and reprimanded me for my abrupt expostulation with a gentleman of his rank and character. Thus tutored, I asked pardon of the knight, who, forthwith starting up, embraced me so close, that I could hardly breathe; and assured me, he loved me as his own soul. At length, recollecting his night-cap, he pulled it off in some confusion; and, with his bald-pate uncovered, made a thousand apologies to the ladies, as he retired—At that instant, the Abbey bells, began to ring so loud, that we could not hear

one another speak; and this peal, as we afterwards learned, was for the honour of Mr Bullock, an eminent cowkeeper of Tottenham, who had just arrived at Bath, to drink the waters for indigestion. Mr Bramble had not time to make his remarks upon the agreeable nature of this serenade, before his ears were saluted with another concert that interested him more nearly. Two negroes, belonging to a Creole gentleman, who lodged in the same house, taking their station at a window in the stair-case, about ten feet from our dining-room door, began to practise upon the French-horn; and being in the very first rudiments of execution, produced such discordant sounds, as might have discomposed the organs of an ass. You may guess what effect they had upon the irritable nerves of uncle; who, with the most admirable expression of splenetic surprize in his countenance, sent his man to silence these dreadful blasts, and desire the musicians to practise in some other place, as they had no right to stand there and disturb all the lodgers in the house. Those sable performers, far from taking the hint, and withdrawing, treated the messenger with great insolence; bidding him carry his compliments to their master, colonel Rigworm, who would give him a proper answer, and a good drubbing into the bargain; in the mean time they continued their noise, and even endeavoured to make it more disagreeable; laughing between whiles, at the thoughts of being able to torment their betters with impunity. Our 'squire, incensed at the additional insult, immediately dispatched the servant, with his compliments to colonel Rigworm, requesting that he would order his blacks to be quiet, as the noise they made was altogether intolerable—To this message, the Creole colonel replied, that his horns had a right to sound on a common staircase; that there they should play for his diversion; and that those who did not like the noise, might look for lodgings elsewhere. Mr Bramble no sooner received this reply, than his eyes began to glisten, his face grew pale, and his teeth chattered. After a moment's pause, he slipped on his shoes, without speaking a word, or seeming to feel any further disturbance from the gout in his toes. Then snatching his cane, he opened the door and proceeded to the place where the black trumpeters were posted. There, without further hesitation, he began to belabour them both; and exerted himself with such astonishing vigour and agility, that both their heads and horns were broken