

thing is arranged—& were it otherwise—you don't know what a perplexity he would prove—honest & faithful but fearfully superannuated—now *this* I ought & do bear—but as he has not been 50 years in your family—it would be rather hard to convert your mansion into a hospital for decayed domestics.—Rushton is or may be made useful & I am less *compunctious* on his account.—“Will I be Godfather?”<sup>2</sup> yea—verily—I believe it is the only species of parentage I shall ever encounter—for all my acquaintance—Powerscourt<sup>3</sup>—Jocelyn<sup>4</sup>—yourself—Delawarr—Stanhope<sup>5</sup>—with a long list of happy &c. are married—most of them my Juniors too—and I as single & likely to remain so as—nay—more than if I were seventy.——If it is a *Girl* why not also?—Georgina—or even *Byron* will make a classical name for a spinster—if Mr. Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison is any authority in your estimation.——My ship is not settled—my passage in the Boyne was only for *one* servant—& would not do of course—you ask after the expence—a question no less interesting to the married than the single—unless things are much altered no establishment in the Mediterranean countries could amount to a quarter of the expenditure requisite in England for the same or an inferior household.—I am interrupted—& have only time to offer my best thanks for all your good wishes and intentions—& to beg you will believe me equally

yours ever  
B

P. S. Rushton shall be sent on Saturday next.—

[TO THOMAS MOORE]

Sept. 5, 1813

You need not tie yourself down to a day with Toderini,<sup>1</sup> but send him at your leisure, having anatomized him into such annotations as

<sup>2</sup> In a manuscript note on this letter Webster later wrote: “My eldest son—now dead! was christened “Byron Wedderburn” and when I afterward mentioned the loss to Lord Byron he almost chuckled with joy—or Irony—& said “Well—I cautioned you—& told you that my name would almost damn any thing or creature”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Richard Wingfield, Lord Powerscourt, was the brother of Byron's friend John Wingfield, who died in 1811, and to whom Byron paid tribute in *Child Harold*.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Jocelyn was at Harrow with Byron.

<sup>5</sup> See Sept. 21, 1813, to Lady Melbourne, note 1.

<sup>1</sup> See Sept. 1, 1813, to Moore, note 1.

you want; I do not believe that he has ever undergone that process before, which is the best reasons for not sparing him now.

\* \* [Rogers] has returned to town, but not yet recovered of the Quarterly.<sup>2</sup> What fellows these reviewers are! “these bugs do fear us all.”<sup>3</sup> They made you fight, and me (the milkiest of men) a satirist, and will end making \* \* [Rogers] madder than Ajax. I have been reading *Memory* again, the other day, and Hope together, and retain all my preference of the former.<sup>4</sup> His elegance is really wonderful—there is no such thing as a vulgar line in his book. \* \* \* \* \*

What say you to Buonaparte? I back him against the field barring *Catalepsy* and the Elements. Nay, I almost wish him success against all countries but this,—were it only to choke the Morning Post, and his undutiful father-in-law, with that rebellious bastard of Scandinavian adoption, Bernadotte.<sup>5</sup> Rogers wants me to go with him on a crusade to the Lakes, and to besiege you on our way. This last is a great temptation, but I fear it will not be in my power, unless you would go on with one of us somewhere—no matter where. It is too late for Matlock, but we might hit upon some scheme, high life or low,—the last would be much the best for amusement. I am so sick of the other, that I quite sigh for a cider-cellar,<sup>6</sup> or a cruise in a smuggler's sloop.

You cannot wish more than I do that the Fates were a little more accommodating to our parallel lines, which prolong ad infinitum without coming a jot the nearer. I almost wish I were married, too—which is saying much. All my friends, seniors and juniors, are in for it, and ask me to be godfather,—the only species of parentage which, I believe, will ever come to my share in a lawful way; and, in an unlawful one, by the blessing of Lucia, we can never be certain,—though the parish may. I suppose I shall hear from you to-morrow.

<sup>2</sup> The *Quarterly Review*, of March, 1813 (IX, 207) had a review of Rogers' *Poems*. It was by J. W. Ward. Although it was balanced, its censure disturbed Rogers for some months.

<sup>3</sup> Henry VI, Part 3, Act. V. Scene 2 . . . : “Warwick was a bug that feared us all.”

<sup>4</sup> Rogers published *The Pleasures of Memory* in 1792, and Campbell produced his best known poem, *The Pleasures of Hope* when he was only 21 in 1799. Byron was a great admirer of both. Rogers and Campbell were two of the very few contemporaries whom Byron praised in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

<sup>5</sup> Bernadotte, Crown Prince of Sweden, once a general of Napoleon, had been adopted by the King of Sweden. He turned against Napoleon and helped the Dutch in their revolution in 1813.

<sup>6</sup> A cider-cellar was a tavern where comic songs were sung and where a general informality reigned. Such a tavern was the *Cider Cellars* at 20 Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, frequented by the famous Greek scholar Porson.

If not, this goes as it is; but I leave room for a P.S., in case any thing requires an answer. Ever, &c.

No letter—*n'importe*. [Rogers] thinks the Quarterly will be at me this time: if so, it shall be a war of extermination—no *quarter*. From the youngest devil down to the oldest woman of that Review, all shall perish by one fatal lampoon. The ties of nature shall be torn asunder, for I will not even spare my bookseller; nay, if one were to include readers also, all the better.

[TO LADY MELBOURNE]

Sept. 5th. 1813

Dear Lady Melbourne—I return you the plan of Annabella's spouse elect of which I shall say nothing because I do not understand it—though I dare say it is exactly what it ought to be.—Neither do I know why I am writing this note as I mean to call on you—unless I be to try your "new patent pens" which delight me infinitely with their colours—I have pitched upon a yellow one to begin with—Very likely you will be out—& I must return you the annexed epistles—I would rather have seen your answer—she seems to have been spoiled—not as children usually are—but systematically Charissa Harlowed into an awkward kind of correctness—with a dependence upon her own infallibility which will or may lead her into some egregious blunder—I don't mean the usual error of young gentlewomen—but she will find exactly what she wants—& then discover that it is much more dignified than entertaining.—[two pages torn away]... in town....

[TO ANNABELLA MILBANKE]

Sept. 6th 1813

Agreed—I will write to you occasionally & you shall answer at your leisure & discretion.—You must have deemed me very vain & selfish to imagine that your candour could offend—I see nothing that "could hurt my feelings" in your correspondence—you told me you declined me as a lover but wished to retain me as a friend—now as one may meet with a good deal of what is called love in this best of all possible worlds—& very rarely with friendship I could not find fault

<sup>1</sup> Annabella Milbanke had sent her aunt, Lady Melbourne, a statement of her requirements for a husband, which she sent on to Byron.

—upon calculation at least—I am afraid my first letter was written during some of those moments which have induced your belief in my *general despondency*—now in common I believe with most of mankind—I have in the course of a very useless & ill regulated life encountered events which have left a deep *impression*—perhaps something at the time recalled *this* so forcibly as to make it apparent in my answer—but I am not conscious of any habitual or at least long continued pressure on my spirits.—On the contrary—with the exception of an occasional spasm—I look upon myself as a very facetious personage—& may safely appeal to most of my acquaintance (Ly. M. for instance) in proof of my assertion.—Nobody laughs more—& though your friend Joanna Baillie says somewhere that "Laughter is the *child* of Misery" yet I don't believe her—(unless indeed in a hysteric)—though I think it is sometimes the *Parent*.—Nothing would do me more honour than the acquaintance of that Lady—who does not possess a more enthusiastic admirer than myself—she is our only dramatist since Otway & Southerne—I don't except Home!—With all my presumed prejudice against your sex or rather the perversion of manners & principle in many which you admit in some circles—I think the worst woman that ever existed would have made a *man* of very passable reputation—they are all better than us—& their faults such as they are must originate with ourselves.—Your sweeping sentence "in the circles where we have met" amuses me much when I recollect some of those who constituted that society—after all bad as it is it has it's agremens.—The great object of life is Sensation—to feel that we exist—even though in pain—it is this "craving void" which drives us to Gaming—to Battle—to Travel—to intemperate but keenly felt pursuits of every description whose principal attraction is the agitation inseparable from their accomplishment.—I am but an awkward dissembler—as my friend you will bear with my faults—I shall have the less constraint in what I say to you—firstly because I may derive some benefit from your observations—& next because I am very sure you can never be perverted by any paradoxes of mine.—You have said a good deal & very well too—on the subject of Benevolence *systematically* exerted—two lines of Pope will explain mine (if I have any) and that of half mankind—

<sup>1</sup> John Home (1722–1808) made his first success as a dramatist in Edinburgh with the historical drama *Douglas*. He was for a time tutor to the Prince of Wales and was pensioned by George III. From 1778 he settled in Edinburgh among a brilliant circle of literary men. He supported the claims of Macpherson to be the translator of Ossian.