

[TO ELIZABETH BRIDGET PIGOT]

August 2d. 1807

My dear Elizabeth—London begins to disgorge its contents, town is empty, consequently I can scribble at leisure, as my occupations are less numerous, in a fortnight I shall depart to fulfil a country engagement, but expect 2 Epistles from you previous to that period.—Ridge, you tell me, does not proceed rapidly in Notts, very possible, in Town things wear a most promising aspect, & a *Man* whose works are praised by *Reviewers*, admired by *Duchesses* & sold by every Bookseller of the Metropolis, does not dedicate much consideration to *rustic Readers*.—I have now a Review before me entitled, "Literary Recreations" where my *Bardship* is applauded far beyond my Deserts.¹ I know nothing of the critic, but think *him* a very *discerning gentleman*, & *myself* a *devilish clever fellow*, his critique pleases me particularly because it is of great length, & a proper quantum of censure is administered, just to give an agreeable *relish* to the praise, you know I hate insipid, unqualified common-place compliments, if you would wish to see it, tell Ridge to order the 13th Number of "Literary Recreations" for the last Month. I assure you, I have not the most distant Idea, of the Writer of the article, it is printed in a periodical publication, & though I have written a paper (a Review of Wordsworth) which appears in the same work, I am ignorant of every other person concerned in it, even the Editor, whose name I have not heard.—My Cousin, Lord Alexander Gordon, who resided in the same Hotel, told me his Mother, her *Grace of Gordon*,² requested he would introduce my *poetical Lordship*, to her *highness*, as she had bought my volume, admired it extremely, in common with the Rest of the fashionable world, & wished to claim her relationship with the Author.—I was unluckily engaged on an excursion for some days afterwards, & as the Duchess was on the eve of departing for Scotland, have postponed my Introduction till the Winter, when I shall favour this Lady, *whose Taste I shall not dispute*, with my *most sublime & edifying conversation*.—She is now in the Highlands, & Alexander, took his departure a few days ago, for the same *blessed Seat*, of "*dark-rolling Winds*".—³ Crosby

¹ A laudatory review of *Hours of Idleness* appeared in the July 1807 number of *Monthly Literary Recreations*. Despite his statement that he did not know the editor, etc., Byron was perfectly aware that the review was not impartial, for the bookseller Crosby was puffing his stock in a periodical which he published and controlled.

² The Duchess of Gordon (1748–1812), a leader of the Tories, was a famous matchmaker, who succeeded in marrying three of her daughters to Dukes, Manchester, Richmond, and Bedford.

³ "dark-rolling Winds" is probably a by-product of Byron's imitation of Ossian, "The Death of Calmar and Orla", published in *Hours of Idleness*.

my London publisher, has disposed of his second importation, & has sent to Ridge for a *third* (at least so he says) in every Bookseller's I see my *own name*, & *say nothing*, but enjoy my *fame in secret*.—My last Reviewer, kindly requests me to alter my determination of writing no more, and "*as a friend to the cause of Literature*" begs, I will *gratify the Public*, with some new *work* "at no very distant period".—Who would not be a Bard? *Elizabeth*, that is to say, if all critics would be so polite, however the others will pay me off I doubt not, for this *gentle encouragement*.—If so, have at 'em, By the Bye, I have written at my Intervals of leisure, after 2 in the *Morning*. 380 lines in *blank verse*, of "Bosworth Field,"⁴ I have luckily procured Hutton's account,⁵ & shall extend the Poem to 8 or 10 Books, & shall have finished in a year, whether it will be published or not must depend on circumstances.—So much for *Egotism*, my *Laurels* have turned my Brain, but the *cooling acids* of forthcoming criticisms, will probably restore me to *Modesty*.— — — Southwell, I agree with your Brother, is a *damned place*, I have done with it, & shall see it no more, (at least in all probability) excepting yourself, I esteem no one within its precincts, you were my only *rational* companion, & in plain truth I had more respect for you, than the whole *Bevy*, with whose foibles I *amused* myself in compliance with their *prevailing propensities*, you gave yourself more trouble with me & my *manuscripts*, than a thousand *dolls* would have done, believe me, I have not forgotten your good nature, in *this Circle of Sin*, & one day I trust shall be able to evince my gratitude.—As for the village "*Lass'es*" of every description, my *Gratitude* is also unbounded, to be equalled only by my *contempt*, I saw the *designs* of all *parties*,⁶ while they imagined me *every thing* to be *wished*, Adieu
yours very truly

BYRON

P.S.—Remembrance to *Dr. Pigot*.—

[TO ELIZABETH BRIDGET PIGOT]

London, August 11th. 1807

Dear Elizabeth,—On Sunday next I set off for the Highlands, a friend of mine accompanies me in my Carriage to Edinburgh, there we shall leave it, & proceed in a *Tandem* (a species of open Carriage)

⁴ The poem was never finished nor published, and the manuscript is not extant.
⁵ William Hutton's *The Battle of Bosworth Field* was published in 1788.

⁶ The designs of the Southwell girls, or their families, especially the Leacrofts, to entrap him in marriage.

through the Western passes to Inverary, where we shall purchase *Shelties*, to enable us to view places inaccessible to *vehicular Conveyances*, on the Coast, we shall hire a vessel, & visit the most remarkable of the Hebrides, & if we have time & favourable weather mean to sail as far as Iceland only 300 miles from the Northern extremity of Caledonia, to peep at *Hecla*, this last Intention you will keep a secret, as my nice *Mamma* would imagine I was on a *voyage of Discovery*, & raise the accustomed *maternal "Warhoop."*¹—Last week I swam in the Thames from Lambeth through the 2 Bridges Westminster & Blackfriars, a distance including the different turns & tacks made on the way, of 3 miles!! you see I am in excellent training in case of a *squall* at Sea.—I mean to collect all the Erse traditions, poems, & & c. & translate, or expand the subjects, to fill a volume, which may appear next Spring, under the Denomination of "*the Highland Harp*" or some title equally *picturesque*. Of Bosworth Field, one Book is finished, another just begun, it will be a work of 3 or four years, & most probably never *concluded*.—What would you say to some Stanzas on Mount *Hecla*? they would be written at least with *Fire*.—How is the Immortal Bran? & the Phoenix of canine Quadrupeds, Boatswain? I have lately purchased a thorough bred Bulldog worthy to be the Coadjutor of the aforesaid celestials, his name is *Smut!* "bear it ye breezes! on your *balmy wings*".²—Write to me before I set off, I conjure you by the 5th Rib of your Grandfather; you say, Ridge goes on well with the Book now, I thought that worthy *Phrygian*, had not done much in the Country, in Town they have been very very successful, Carpenter (Moore's publisher)³ told me a few days ago they sold all their's immediately, & had several enquiries made since, which from the Book being gone, they could not supply, the Duke of York, the Marchioness of Headfort,⁴ the Duchess of Gordon & c. & c. were among the Purchasers, & Crosby says the circulation will be still more extensive in the Winter, the Summer Season being very bad for a sale, as most people are absent from London, however they have gone off extremely well altogether.—I shall pass very near you on my Journey, through Newark, but cannot approach, dont tell this to Mrs.

¹ This scheme for visiting the Hebrides, and Iceland, was never executed, for what reason is not clear, perhaps simple lack of funds.

² Probably another by-product of his imitation of Ossian. See Aug. 2, 1807, to Elizabeth Pigot, note 3.

³ Moore's early pseudonymous *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little* (1801) was printed by J. and T. Carpenter, Old Bond Street. Moore's later work was published by Longman.

⁴ Mary, daughter of George Quinn, married the first Marquis of Headfort (in the peerage of Ireland).

B. who supposes I travel a different Road.—If you have any Letter, order it to be left at Ridge's shop, where I shall call, or the post office Newark, which you please, on Monday I shall change horses at Newark, about 6 or 8 in the Evening, if your Brother would ride over, I should be devilish glad to see him, he can return the same night, or sup with us, & go home the following Morning, the Kingston arms is my Inn.—Adieu,

yours ever
BYRON

P.S.—Lord Carlisle on receiving my poems, sent before he opened the Book, a tolerably handsome Letter, I have not heard of or from him since, his opinion I neither know nor care about, if he is the least insolent, I shall enroll him with "*Butler*"⁵ & the rest of the worthies, he is in Yorkshire poor man! very ill!—He said he had not had time to read the contents, but thought it necessary to acknowledge the Receipt of the volume immediately.—Perhaps the Earl "*bears no Brother near the Throne*" if so, I will make his *sceptre* totter in [his] *hands*.—Adieu!—

[TO THE EARL OF CLARE]

Cambridge, August 20th. 1807

My dear Clare,—What apology will be adequate to atone for my offence, I know not, I can only say your Letter's would not have remained so long unnoticed, had I received them, previous to my arrival at this place, after an absence of 10 months, where your kind Epistles were diligently perused.—Here they had waited for 6 months, & from them I received the first Intimation of your departure from Harrow. Since *we* met they tell me I am grown taller, & so much thinner from Illness & violent Exercise, that many who had lived with me in habits of Intimacy, even old *Schoolfellows*, found great difficulty in acknowledging me to be the *same person*.—Indeed I ought to be *thin* for I weigh less by *three Stone, & 9 pounds*, than I did 6 months ago.—My weight was then *14 stone & 6 LB.* it is now *10 Stone 11 LB.!!!*—I believe I saw you and your Brother a few weeks since, passing through Bond Street, in a Lady's Carriage, I was *only* a Pedestrian, & escaped your notice.—The Poems you were pleased to mention, have been

⁵ Byron had caricatured Dr. George Butler, the new Headmaster of Harrow, as Pomposus in "*Childish Recollections*".