

[TO JOHN HANSON]

Newstead Abbey Notts.
January 5th. 1808 [sic] [1809]

Dear Sir,—I am surprised to have received no answer to my last two letters, one of which (the second) required a particular reply.—Tomorrow I shall draw on you for three hundred pounds payable on the first of *February*, which I hope it will be convenient to honour, as I shall then be twenty one, and I have several Bills due, which I mean to pay before I leave the County. I remain

yours very truly
BYRON

P.S.—Present my best remembrances to Mrs. Hanson & the family.—

[TO SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES¹]

Newstead Abbey. Notts.
January 6th. 1809

Sir,—To convince you, if possible, that my animosity is not so implacable as you seem to conceive, allow me to offer you my very sincere congratulations on the award of the University in your favour, and the success of your Essay.²—With regard to the subject of your last letter, I certainly conceived your request to Wallace³ a piece of ill timed waggery, more especially as he informed me that you "*had told him all about me*" (I quote literally) and that he expected "*a deal of Fun*" in consequence.—Now next to being "patted on the back by Tom Davies" having my house converted into a temple of "Fun" appears to be the penultimate of the practical Bathos though I have no objection

¹ Scrope Berdmore Davies (1783—1852) was born at Horsley, Gloucestershire, and educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, where he was admitted as a Scholar in 1802, and awarded a Fellowship in 1805. He received the Belham Scholarship (for Eton Scholars at King's) in 1808. Byron met him through Hobhouse and other friends at Cambridge, and was attracted by his wit and man-of-the-world attitudes. He had "a quaint dry caustic manner of speaking and an irresistible stammer". (Hodgson, *Memoir* I, 104.) He was at home in the fashionable society of London, and at the gaming tables, where he won, and lost, huge sums. Byron called him "one of the cleverest men I ever knew, in conversation". ("Detached Thoughts", No. 26.) Davies borrowed several thousand pounds from usurers to give Byron before he went abroad in July 1809, which Byron repaid in 1814. Davies was finally ruined by gambling losses and debts and escaped to Bruges in 1819. He spent his last days in Paris, living on his King's College Fellowship.

² No information is available on the award or the essay. Few letters of Davies survive.

³ Wallace was an army officer who had served nine years in the East Indies. He was a friend of Byron and Davies. See April 26, 1808, to Augusta Leigh, note 2.

to an occasional Sacrifice to Momus, or even deities of a less harmless description.—You have now the whole of my complaint, I confess myself angry, and as I wrote upon the impulse of the moment, I may have said more than the occasion justified.—However I shall say no more, and as there appears to have been a mistake somewhere, I shall be glad to drop it altogether, and pay my personal respects in turn at Batts, after the 19th. when I set out for London.—I remain your very obedt. Servt.

BYRON

[TO JOHN HANSON] *Newstead Abbey, Notts. January 10th. 1809*

Dear Sir,—A few days ago I wrote to you stating my intention of drawing on the *first of February* for three hundred pounds; I now wish to inform you that I shall only draw for *two hundred and fifty eight* pounds, but you will oblige me much by paying the *forty guineas* over into the hands of

"Samuel Viner Esqre.

"Stone Buildings

"Lincoln's Inn, on the account of Lady Perceval; 1

the sum is for my Opera Subscription, as I am one of her Ladyship's subscribers, and the sooner it is paid the more I shall be obliged, as also *her Ladyship* I dare be sworn.—You will be extremely welcome here and your presence will preserve order in my absence, the tenants are to have a good dinner and plenty of Ale & Punch, and the *Rabble* will have an Ox and two Sheep to tear in pieces, with *Ale*, and *Up-roat*.—² dear Sir

yours ever sincerely

BYRON

[TO JOHN HANSON] *Newstead Abbey. Notts. January 15th. 1809*

My dear Sir,—I am much obliged by your kind invitation, but I wish you if possible to be here on the *22d.*¹ your presence will be of

¹ Lady Perceval was perhaps the wife of an Irish Peer. There was a Baron Perceval of Burton, Cork (Barony created 1715), and a Perceval of Kanturk, Cork (Viscounty created 1722/23).

² In celebration in his absence of Byron's coming of age.

¹ Byron's birthday which would mark his coming of age. Because of the embarrassing celebration of it by the tenants, he did not wish to be present at Newstead.

great service, every thing is prepared for your reception exactly as if I remained, & I think Hargreaves will be gratified by the appearance of the place, and the *humours* of the *day*.—I shall on the first opportunity pay my respects to your family, and though I will not trespass on your hospitality on the 22d. my obligation is not less for your agreeable offer, which on any other occasion would be immediately accepted, but I wish you much to be present at the festivities, and I hope you will add *Charles* to the party.—Consider as The Courtier says in the tragedy of "Tom Thumb".

"This is a day your majesties may boast of it
 "And since it never can come o'er, tis fit you
 make the most of it.

I shall take my seat as soon as circumstances will admit.² I have not yet chosen my side in politics, nor shall I hastily commit myself with professions, or pledge my support to any man or measures, but though I shall not run headlong into opposition, I will studiously avoid a connection with ministry.—I cannot say that my opinion is strongly in favour of either party, on the one side we have the late underlings of Pitt, possessing all his ill Fortune, without his Talents, this may render their failure more excusable, but will not diminish the public contempt; on the other we have the ill assorted fragments of a worn out minority, Mr. Windham³ with his Coat *twice* turned, and my Lord Grenville⁴ who perhaps has more sense than he can make a good use of;—between the two, and the *Shuttlecock* of both, is Sidmouth⁵ and the general *football* Sir F. Burdett,⁶ kicked at by all, and owned by none.

² Byron's taking his seat in the House of Lords was possible only after he presented proofs of his birth and ancestry. He had hoped to avoid those formalities by being presented to the House by his kinsman and guardian Lord Carlisle.
³ William Windham (1750-1810), a leader of the opposition to Castlereagh, had opposed the war, but in the ministry of "All the Talents" he won the nickname of "Weathercock" by changing face and supporting the war.
⁴ William Wyndham Grenville, Baron Grenville (1759-1824) headed the ministry of "All the Talents" in 1806, which abolished the slave trade, but resigned on the Catholic question in 1807.
⁵ Henry Addington, first viscount Sidmouth (1757-1844), a friend of Pitt, became first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1801. He was later Home Secretary in the Tory government under Lord Liverpool and enforced the harsh measures against the Luddites. He thanked the troops for their part in the "Manchester Massacre".

⁶ Sir Francis Burdett (1770-1844) resided in Paris in the first years of the French Revolution. In 1793 he married Miss Sophia Coutts, daughter of Thomas Coutts, the banker. He formed a friendship with Home Tooke, the radical reformer, and was a leader of reform and of opposition to Tory repressions in Parliament. He sat for Westminster for 30 years, and was jailed several times for his outspokenness.

— — — — I shall stand aloof, speak what I think, but not often, nor too soon, I will preserve my independence, if possible, but if involved with a party, I will take care not to be the *last* or *least* in the Ranks.—As to *patriotism* The word is obsolete, perhaps improperly so, for all men in this country are patriots, knowing that their own existence must stand or fall with the Constitution, yet every body thinks he could alter it for the better, & govern a people, who are in fact easily governed but always claim the privilege of grumbling.—So much for Politics, of which I at present know little, & care less, by and bye, I shall use the Senatorial privilege of talking, and indeed in such times, and in such a crew, it must be difficult to hold one's tongue.— — — — — Believe me to be with great Sincerity

yours very affectly
 BYRON

[TO JOHN SAM HOBHOUSE]

Newstead Abbey Notts.
 January 16th. 1808 [sic] [1809]

My dear Hobhouse,—I do not know how the *dens*-descended Davies came to mention his having received a copy of my epistle to you, but I addressed him & you on the same evening, & being much incensed at the account I had received from Wallace,¹ I communicated the contents to the Birdmore [sic], though without any of that malice, wherewith you charge me. I shall leave my card at Batt's, and hope to see you in your progress to the North.—I have lately discovered Scrope's genealogy to be ennobled by a collateral tie with the Beardmore, Chirurgeon and Dentist to Royalty, and that the town of Southwell contains cousins of Scrope, who disowned them, (I grieve to speak it) on visiting that city in my society.—How I found out I will disclose, the first time "we three meet again" but why did he conceal his lineage, "ah my dear Hi it was *cruel*, it was *insulting*, it was *unnecessary*."—I have (notwithstanding your kind invitation to Wallace) been alone since the 8th. of December, nothing of moment has occurred since our anniversary row, except that Lucinda² is pregnant, and Robert³ has recovered of the Cowpox, with which it He was later a friend of Byron and of Hobhouse, who joined him in Parliament as a reform statesman.

¹ See Jan. 6, 1809, to Davies, note 3; April 26, 1808, to Augusta Leigh, note 2.
² See Jan. 17, 1809, to Hanson, note 1.
³ Robert Rushton, son of a Newstead tenant, to whom Byron became attached. He took him along as a page on his first journey abroad, sending him back from Gibraltar.