

EPISTLES ON WOMEN  
AND OTHER WORKS

Lucy Aikin

[ONLINE EDITION]

*edited by Anne K. Mellor and Michelle Levy*



broadview editions

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I love thy rocks, down whose steep side  
     With foaming dizzying crash  
 Thunders the torrent's tan-brown tide,  
     The roaring whirlwinds dash.

With toiling step I love to climb 15  
 Thy wave-beat cliffs' tempestuous height,  
 And view, with terror-mixt delight,  
     The ocean scene sublime;<sup>1</sup>

Dim distant isles in ambient ether seen,  
 And stormy peaks, and deep-retiring bays, 20  
 Foam-crested breakers, and the boundless green  
 Streapt by the transient sun's swift-glancing rays.  
 'Mid clouds and crags, dark pools, and mountains drear,  
 The wild wood's silence and the billows' roll,  
 Great Nature rules, and claims with brow austere 25  
 The shuddering homage of the inmost soul.

    The vagrant goat well-pleased I mark  
     Percht scornful on the giddy brink,  
     While panting dogs affrighted shrink,  
     And bay beneath with idle bark: 30  
     Ragged of fleece the straggl'g flock  
     Bounding o'er the turfy rock;  
     The nimble herd of sparkling eye,  
     With black-tipt horns o'erarching high,  
 Their fetlocks<sup>2</sup> bathing in the lucid stream 35  
 Where softened suns thro' pendent birches gleam:  
 The stately heron that sweeps in flagging flight  
 The lonely rock-bound lake, the cormorant<sup>3</sup> black  
 Poised on the ridgy wave, and piercing the dun rack  
 The falcon pouncing from his airy height. 40

---

1 Edmund Burke, in his treatise on the sublime, defined it in precisely these terms: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling." See *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Part I, Sect. VII.

2 A joint above a goat's hoof.

3 A large and rapacious black sea bird about three feet in length.



But livelier pleasure heaves my breast,  
 And tears my softening eyes bedew,  
 As scenes by smiling Labour drest,  
 And Man's creative hand, I view.  
 The mountain oak, no longer doom'd 45  
 In the deep pathless glen entomb'd  
     His sturdy strength to waste,  
 Obedient to the shipwright's art,  
 Here launches for the crowded mart  
     With gaudy streamers graced. 50  
 Dragged up with toil, the searching plough  
 Furrows the mountain's rugged brow;  
 The mealy root with purple flower  
 There fattens in the misty shower.  
 The lonely shepherd of the heath-clad hill 55  
 Views the new harvest with paternal joy  
 As infant hands the ample basket fill;  
 And buxom Plenty smiles, no longer coy;  
 Plinlimmon<sup>1</sup> wild the peaceful triumph sounds,  
 And Snowdon,<sup>2</sup> king of crags, the jocund strain, rebounds. 60

    No longer now the labouring swain  
     Of sweeping floods and scanty soil,  
 Inclement skies, and unrewarded toil,  
 Shall, pincht by hopeless penury, complain.  
     On the life-deserted wild, 65  
     Thro' the rocks in ruin piled,  
     Science darts her piercing ray;  
     Bursts kind Nature's secret store,....  
     Leafy slate or ponderous ore,....  
     And vindicates her sway. 70

Ye too, proud torrents! with unbridled force  
 Leaping your mad innavigable course  
     'Mid rocks and clefts and gulfs profound;  
 Ye too Man's conquering prowess feel,

---

1 A ridge on the gritstone plateau of central Wales that reaches an elevation of 2,468 feet at Plynlimon Fawr.

2 Mountain in northern Wales that is the highest point in England and Wales and the principal massif in the Snowdonia mountains. Though probably unknown to Aikin (because it remained unpublished until 1850), William Wordsworth's *Prelude* concludes with a climactic ascent of Mount Snowdon in Book XIII.

Subdued to whirl the giddy wheel In white unvarying round.	75
Not always thus, to works of peace By patriot wisdom planned, The labourer lent his willing hand, And reaped the rich increase: Mark yon tower's embattled wall, Proud, yet nodding to its fall; Proud work of many a wretched thrall!	80
Edward! <sup>1</sup> on thy parted soul Heavy sit the murderous guilt Of Cambrian blood in battle spilt! Heavier still the unnumbered sighs Of Cambria's vanquish'd bands, As slow, beneath their forced reluctant hands, They saw thy castles rise! <sup>2</sup>	85 90
But not the warrior's blasting breath, But not the conqueror's scythed arm, Can spread eternal death; Far refuged from the loud alarm, Gentle Peace with healing hand Returns: obedient to her whisper bland Her own attendant Arts are seen, And Time the furrows smooths of Desolation's plough. See, on stern Denbigh's towered brow, <sup>3</sup> The bowler's smooth and level green O'erlook, 'mid ruin-heaps forlorn,	95 100

- 
- 1 Edward I (1239-1307), son of Henry III, was king of England from 1272 to 1307. He subdued Wales, destroying its autonomy; and he sought (unsuccessfully) the conquest of Scotland. His reign is particularly noted for administrative efficiency and legal reform.
  - 2 The Welsh landscape is famous for its castles, most of which were erected (or rebuilt) by Edward I. A symbol of the strength of Welsh rebellion, and of ruthless English imperialism, Edward's chief legacy was in building a strategic northern ring of fortresses to prevent the recurrence of massively expensive military campaigns.
  - 3 The impressive ruins and elevated position of Denbigh Castle in Denbighshire is one of Edward's creations.

Fair Clwyd's<sup>1</sup> tranquil vale, one sea of waving corn!  
By proud Caernarvon's wave-beat wall  
The light skiff shelters from the squall;  
And Harlech rent by many a storm, 105  
And graceful Conway's<sup>2</sup> mouldering form,  
Serve but to prompt the poet's moral lay,  
And charm the painter's eye with tints of soft decay.

“Dirge for the Late James Currie,<sup>3</sup> M.D., of Liverpool”

SPEED on the night-wind's wing, my sighs,  
While bends my head to earth;  
Go seek the grave where CURRIE lies,  
The grave of parted worth!

The piercing, rapid, ardent mind, 5  
To useful science bent;  
Th' expansive soul, to human kind  
With free devotion lent;

Ambition high of noble fame,  
From pride, from envy clear, 10

- 
- 1 River in northeastern Wales that flows through a broad agricultural vale, the Vale of Clwyd.
  - 2 Caernarvon, Harlech, and Conway: all castles in North Wales erected by Edward after his conquest of Wales.
  - 3 James Currie (1756-1805), physician and author, was born in Kirkpatrick Fleming, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. During his medical career Currie was best known for his pioneering treatments involving hot and cold, and for his work with the mentally ill and patients stricken with fever. Throughout his life Currie was involved in progressive political and social causes, and was closely associated with a circle of other like-minded reformers, including William Roscoe and John Howard. He became best known, however, for his four-volume edition of *The Works of Robert Burns*, which appeared in 1800. Burns (1759-96), the popular Scottish poet, had left his papers in a very poor state. To prepare his edition, Currie had to work tirelessly and with much effort. Through his work on this edition, Currie achieved his goal of raising funds for the support of Burns's widow and family. The work was praised by reviewers (though some, including William Wordsworth, objected to Currie's frank treatment of Burns's alcoholism and womanizing), and several other editions were later printed.

That burnt, a bright benignant flame,  
His onward course to cheer;

The large discourse of lucid flow,  
With bland persuasion fraught; 15  
The beaming glance, that lurked below  
The furrowed brow of thought;

The helping hand, the watchful eye,  
Awake to every call;  
The heartfelt tone of sympathy 20  
That dearer was than all:....

These, these, grim Death! thy hasty prey,  
To yon cold tomb are borne;  
And Memory, still, from day to day  
Must linger there to mourn. 25

Speed on the night-wind's wing, my sighs,  
While bends my head to earth;  
Go seek the grave where CURRIE lies,  
The grave of parted worth!

“Futurity”

“Tell us, ye dead! will none of you in pity  
To those you left behind disclose the secret?  
O that some courteous ghost would blab it out!”  
B's Grave.<sup>1</sup>

RISE, spectres, rise! some pitying ghost, appear,  
And pour the grave's dread secret on mine ear!  
Ye live, ye live! Yes, by the generous glow  
Of Virtue struggling thro' a night of woe;

---

1 Robert Blair was a Scottish poet and author of *The Grave*, a melancholic and morbid blank verse meditation upon a grave published in 1743. The poem examines the power and horror of death and the fragile nature of the humanity, as well as the nature of sin and possibility of resurrection. This poem was printed in *The Poetical Register and Repository of Fugitive Poetry for 1808-1809*. London: F.C. Rivington and J. Rivington, 1812, Vol. 7, 464-65. It was signed “L.”

By the fell tyrant on his blood-stained throne; 5  
 By nameless wretchedness that dies alone;  
 By lovely Hope that soothes the parting sigh;  
 By Faith, bright-beaming from the death-fixt eye,  
 Ye live! From forth the narrow dark abode  
 The spirit steals.... some viewless unknown road;.... 10

Then, each fond tie to earth and matter broke  
 By the free soul, disdainful of the yoke,  
 Shall it not soar on vigorous pens away  
 Beyond the ken<sup>1</sup> of thought and golden eye of day?  
 Or, by fierce flames from mortal dross<sup>2</sup> refined, 15  
 Shall it not mingle with the mass of mind?  
 Absorbed and lost the old familiar store  
 Of treasuring Memory's many-coloured lore.  
 Or does this self, this conscious self, remain  
 Awake to human joys, to human pain? 20  
 Hangs the fond mother o'er her orphan's head?  
 Cheers the fond spouse the widow's sorrowing bed?  
 In airy watch do guardian spirits stand,  
 And guide our faltering steps, an angel band?  
 Or, senseless, wrapt in lone sepulchral<sup>3</sup> gloom, 25  
 Sleeps the regardless tenant of the tomb  
 Till the dread blast shall rouse the silent earth,  
 And joyful Nature start to second birth,  
 All nations waken from the awful trance,  
 And times and realms in wondering gaze advance, 30  
 While Memory's voice renews its tuneful sound,  
 And marshals all the tribes of earth around,  
 Bids fresh reviving scenes salute their eyes,  
 And friend with virtuous friend to lasting bliss arise?

Cease, curious thoughts! too close the shades of night 35  
 Veil the dread Future from our anxious sight;  
 The boldest here may urge their course in vain,  
 Nor pass one bulwark of the drear domain.  
 Then,.... when the last faint panting heaves my heart,  
 And weary Life stands fluttering to depart,.... 40

---

1 Range of sight or vision.

2 Refuse; rubbish; worthless, impure matter.

3 Relating to burial or a place of burial.

One beam of joy shall warm my trembling soul  
As Doubt's dun clouds to awful distance roll;  
Truth's angel form my fleeting spirit own,  
And spring to clasp her in the world unknown.<sup>1</sup>

“Sonnet to Fortune. From Metastasio”<sup>2</sup>

“Che spero, instabil Dea, di sassi é spine, &c.”<sup>3</sup>

WHAT hopest thou, Goddess,<sup>4</sup> when thy envious care  
Strews rocks and thorns to check my onward way?  
That I should tremble at thy fickle sway?  
Or toil in vain to catch thy flying hair?

With threats like these, awake the dastard fears 5  
Of him who crouches to thy base controul:  
Know, I could see, with calm intrepid soul,  
The world in ruins and the falling spheres.

Nor am I new to dangers and alarms;  
Long didst thou prove me in the doubtful fight; 10  
From trying conflicts and opposing harms  
I rose more valiant, and confirmed in might.  
From falling hammers thus, the tempered arms  
Strike with a keener edge, and beam more dazzling light.

---

1 This poem, and the last stanza in particular, bears comparison with Barbauld's "A Summer Evening's Meditation," which similarly addresses the pleasures and dangers of "[u]nlock[ing] the glories of the world unknown" (Barbauld, line 122).

2 Pietro Antonio Domenico Trapassi (1698-1782), better known by his pseudonym of Metastasio, was an Italian poet and librettist whose poetry and above all music garnered him a considerable international reputation during the eighteenth century.

3 The poem is Aikin's translation of the original.

4 In Roman mythology, Fortune was the goddess of luck and prosperity. She is often depicted blind, disbursing favor at random.

“To Mr. Montgomery.<sup>1</sup> Occasioned by an Illiberal Attack on his Poems”

DROOP not, sweet Bard! the envious cloud  
Pale Malice breathes, thy fame to shroud,  
    Shall quickly pass away:  
No meteor lights thy sky adorn,<sup>2</sup>  
'Tis the true promise of a morn, 5  
    And it must turn to day.

Strike, strike again the quivering wire,  
Awake old Memnon's magic lyre,<sup>3</sup>  
    And give thy soul to song;  
By Fancy blest, to Feeling dear, 10  
Their guardian forms shall hover near  
    And shield thy head from wrong.

Whence beams the light that guides the soul  
Beyond our nature's humble goal,  
    The hope that points on high? 15  
It beams from Pity's aspect meek,  
From generous Feeling's moistened cheek,  
    From Fancy's sparkling eye.

---

1 James Montgomery (1771-1854) was a Scottish journalist, poet, reviewer and writer of hymns. His radical reporting in the 1790s in Sheffield, England resulted in several terms of imprisonment. The publication in 1806 of *The Wanderer of Switzerland and other Poems* launched Montgomery into the national literary scene. Savaged in the *Edinburgh Review*, it was nevertheless popular and quickly reprinted; by 1850, it had run to thirteen editions in Britain. *The Wanderer* is a political poem set in the context of Napoleon's subjugation of Switzerland, a theme that Aikin returns to in the following poem, "The Swiss Emigrant." The two poems by Montgomery that Aikin cites in her notes are from *The Wanderer*. John Aikin was also an admirer of Montgomery, and the two met and became friends after Aikin had written "a few laudatory stanzas" and inserted them in the *Athenaeum: Memoirs of John Aikin*, 251-52.

2 See "The Snowdrop." [L.A.] A paraphrase of a line in the poem.

3 See "The Battle of Alexandria." [L.A.] In his poem, Montgomery invokes the lyre of Memnon, a colossal (70-foot) stone statue of Amen-hotep III near Thebes that was said to emit musical sounds like the twang of a harp string, hailing the rising of the sun when its rays first touched the statue, and mourning in a melancholic tone the departure of the sun at the close of every day.

'Tis these that feed the patriot's flame,  
'Tis these that prompt each gentler aim; 20  
    And he whose heart is cold,  
A loveless sojourner on earth,  
Might sell the freedom of his birth,  
    His British birth, for gold.

Hence! groveling and unfeeling band, 25  
With cruel eye and deadening hand  
    And grin Sardonic,.... hence!  
Rise, sons of Virtue, sons of Praise,  
Avenge the violated bays,  
    Our glory and defence! 30

Droop not, sweet Bard! the candid mind  
By Genius warmed, by Taste refined,  
    Shall open to thy lay:  
So generous soils expand to meet  
The fosterings of the solar heat, 35  
    While shrinks the sterile clay.

“The Swiss Emigrant”<sup>1</sup>

FAREWELL, farewell, my native land,  
A long farewell to joy and thee!  
On thy last rock I lingering stand,  
Thy last rude rock how dear to me!

Once more I view thy valleys fair, 5  
But dimly view, with tearful eye;

---

1 During the French Revolutionary Wars, French armies advanced into Switzerland; by 1798, the country had been taken over entirely by the French and renamed the Helvetic Republic. The Helvetic Republic encountered severe economic and political problems. In 1803 Napoleon's Act of Mediation re-established a Swiss Confederation that partially restored the sovereignty of the cantons, though it was not until the Congress of Vienna of 1815 (following Napoleon's final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo) that Swiss independence was fully re-established. The theme of compelled French emigration, by members of the clergy and nobility, at the outbreak of the Revolution, is the subject of Charlotte Smith's 1791 lengthy blank-verse poem, *The Emigrants*.



Once more I breathe thy healthful air,  
But breathe it in how deep a sigh!

Ye vales, with downy verdure<sup>1</sup> spread,  
Ye groves that drink the sparkling stream, 10  
As bursting from the mountain's head  
Its foaming waves in silver gleam;

Ye lakes, that catch the golden beam  
That floods with fire yon peak of snow,  
As evening vapours blueely steam 15  
And dimly roll their volumes slow;

Scenes on this bursting heart imprest  
By every thrill of joy, of woe,  
The bliss of childhood's vacant breast,  
Of warmer youth's impassion'd glow, 20

The tears by filial duty shed  
Upon the low, the peaceful tomb,  
Where sleep, too blest, the reverend dead  
Unconscious of their country's doom;

Say, can Helvetia's<sup>2</sup> patriot child 25  
A wretched exile bear to roam,  
Nor sink upon the lonely wild,  
Nor die to leave his native home?

His native home? No home has he;  
He scorns in servile yoke to bow; 30  
He scorns the land no longer free;  
Alas! he has no country now!

Ye snow-clad Alps, whose mighty mound,  
Great Nature's adamantine wall,  
In vain opposed its awful bound 35  
To check the prone-descending Gaul,<sup>3</sup>

---

1 Green vegetation; plants or trees.

2 The Helvetia (or Helvetii) were a Celtic people who, in the second century BCE, migrated from southern Germany into what is now northern Switzerland as a result of pressure from Germanic peoples.

3 Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), ruler of France from 1804 to 1815, and military force behind the Napoleonic Wars.

What hunter now with daring leaps  
Shall chase the ibex<sup>1</sup> o'er your rocks?  
Who clothe with vines your rugged steeps?  
Who guard from wolves your rambling flocks? 40

While low the freeborn sons of toil  
Lie sunk amid the slaughtered brave,  
To freedom true the stubborn soil  
Shall pine and starve the puny slave.

Spoilers, who poured your ravening bands 45  
To gorge on Latium's<sup>2</sup> fertile plains,  
And filled your gold-rapacious hands  
From regal domes and sculptured fanes,

What seek ye here?... Our niggard earth  
Nor gold nor sculptured trophies owns; 50  
Our wealth was peace and guileless mirth,  
Our trophies are th'invader's bones!

Burst not, my heart, as dimly swell  
Morat's<sup>3</sup> proud glories on my view!  
Heroic scenes, a long farewell! 55  
I fly from madness and from you.

Beyond the dread Atlantic deep  
One gleam of comfort shines for me;  
There shall these bones untroubled sleep,  
And press the earth of Liberty. 60

Wide, wide that waste of waters rolls,  
And sadly smiles that stranger land;  
Yet there I hail congenial souls,  
And freemen give the brother's hand.

---

1 Species of wild goat inhabiting the Alps and Apennines.

2 Ancient area in west-central Italy, annexed by Napoleon.

3 On 22 June 1476 a battle, which was a major victory for the Swiss Confederation in its war against Burgundy, was fought right outside the town of Morat.

Columbia,<sup>1</sup> bear the exile's prayer; 65  
To him thy fostering love impart;  
So shall he watch with patriot care,  
So guard thee with a filial heart!

Yet O forgive, with anguish fraught  
If sometimes start the unbidden tear, 70  
As tyrant Memory wakes the thought,  
"Still, still I am a stranger here!"

Thou vanquish't land, once proud and free,  
Where first this fleeting breath I drew,  
This heart must ever beat for thee, 75  
In absence near,.... in misery true.

"Midnight Thoughts"

YE loud-howling tempests, fell roamers of night,  
O cease your intrusion, and leave me to rest!  
I drink in the terrors you waft in your flight,  
And I feel a rude chill at my breast.

In fancy I stand on the surf-beaten shore; 5  
I view the tost vessel that reels on the waves;  
I hear the wild shriek and the groan.... but 'tis o'er;  
It died 'mid the rocks and the caves.

Yet the slumber of infancy smiles at the blast:  
Deep draw'st thou, young orphan, thy innocent breath; 10  
Lulled e'en by the voice of the Spoiler that past  
To whelm thy lost father in death.

I see the fierce storm sweep the snow on the moor;  
It flies in dim eddies bewildering and chill;  
Ah, traveller! thy death-bed's the wilderness hoar, 15  
Thy tomb is the drift of the hill.

I hear the poor exile, forgotten, forlorn,  
Who breathes from Siberia his famishing prayer;

---

1 The United States of America.

And I shrink at the merciless blast of her morn,  
That blights the cold home of despair. 20

O! ne'er at my ease may I fancy a charm<sup>1</sup>  
In the voice of the tempest that beats not on me;  
Ne'er enliven my safety with scenes of alarm,  
Composed by the rage of the sea!

No; be cheerless my musings, be broken my rest; 25  
Let the outcry of nature sound sad in my ears: ...  
Such pitiless pleasure I chase from my breast,  
And quench my thanksgiving in tears.

“To the Memory of the Late Rev. Gilbert Wakefield”<sup>2</sup>

FRIEND of departed worth! whose pilgrim feet  
Trace injured merit to its last retreat,<sup>3</sup>  
Oft will thy steps imprint the hallowed shade  
Where WAKEFIELD's dust embalmed in tears is laid:  
“Here,” wilt thou say, “a high undaunted soul, 5  
That spurned at palsied Caution's chill controul,  
A mind by Learning stored, by Genius fired,  
In Freedom's cause with generous zeal inspired,  
Slumbers in dust: the fabric of his fame  
Rests on the pillar of a spotless name!” 10  
Tool of corruption! spaniel-slave of power!  
Should thy rash steps in some unguarded hour  
Profane the shrine, deep on thy shrinking heart  
Engrave this awful moral, and depart: ...

That not the slanderer's shaft, the bigot's hate, 15  
The dungeon's gloom, or the keen stroke of Fate,  
Can rob the good man of that peerless prize  
Which not pale Mammon's<sup>4</sup> countless treasure buys;

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1 Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis, E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem. LUCRETIUS. *De Rerum Natura* “It is sweet to watch, from land, the peril of another in a great sea amidst the rushing winds.” [L.A.]

2 See note 1, p. 99 of *Epistles on Women*. This poem was signed “L.A.” and printed in *The Poetical Register and Repository of Fugitive Poetry for 1810-11*. London: F.C. Rivington and J. Rivington, 1814, Vol. 8, 321-22.

3 A reference to Wakefield's lengthy imprisonment, just prior to his death.

4 The false god of riches and avarice.

The conscience clear whence secret pleasures flow,  
And friendship kindled 'mid the night of woe, 20  
Assiduous love that stays the parting breath,  
And honest fame triumphant over death.

For you, who o'er the sacred marble bend  
To weep the husband, brother, father, friend,  
And, mutely eloquent, in anguish raise 25  
Of keen regrets his monument of praise,  
May Faith, may Friendship dry your streaming eyes,  
And Virtue mingle comfort with your sighs;  
Till Resignation, softly stealing on,  
With pensive smile bid lingering Grief begone, 30  
And tardy Time veil o'er with gradual shade  
All but the tender tints you would not wish to fade!

“On Seeing the Sun Shine in at my Window for the First Time  
in the Year”

CALM the evening sun declines,  
Bright his western glory shines;  
Long by wintry clouds concealed,  
Now he glows; he burns revealed;  
Now he darts a stronger ray, 5  
And smiles upon the lengthened day.  
It comes, it comes, the welcome beam!  
See the ruddy radiance stream;  
See the long-lost splendour fall  
Playful on the brightening wall! 10  
Hail, stranger, to my lonely room;  
Disperse the cold ungenial gloom!

Thy keen, thy quickening beams diffuse,  
And wake to song my torpid Muse!  
Carol all the feathered choir 15  
Toucht by thy reviving fire;  
By it the glittering insect throng  
Fills the air with murmuring song.  
From clime to clime, the birds of spring  
Follow thee on gaudy wing; 20  
The buds, the flowers, thy light obey,  
All that gem the car of May:

Unblest by thee, with drooping head  
They sink upon their earthy bed.

Let others fly the golden noon 25  
To stray beneath the pallid moon,  
And in languid strains relate  
Hapless loves, and hostile fate;  
While the cold and glimmering ray  
Sadly glides, the ghost of day, 30  
And the boding owlet screams,  
Flitting thro' the doubtful gleams:  
Be mine to hail thee, source of light!  
Gorgeous in thy western plight,  
Now my cheerful song employ, 35  
Source of music, life, and joy!  
And when sportive youth expires,  
Feeling cools, and Fancy tires,  
Often may thy evening glow  
Gild again my locks of snow; 40  
Oft at noon, with tottering feet,  
May I woo thy vital heat;  
Amid thy radiance bask at will,  
And smiling bid thee welcome still!

“On Seeing Blenheim Castle”<sup>1</sup>

O ASK not me of Blenheim's marble halls,  
Her towering column and triumphal gate;  
With vacant glance I viewed the trophied walls,  
The wide unsocial haunt of sullen state!

Boast not to me the wooded green domain, 5  
Formed by the labourer's hand, the artist's rule;  
Joyless I saw, in yon extended plain,  
A cultured desert and a stagnant pool.

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1 A monumental residence in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England. The castle was constructed by the English Parliament as a national gift to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, for his victory over the French and Bavarians in Germany in 1704 at the Battle of Blenheim. The palace, one of England's largest houses, was built between 1705 and 1724.

Be mine the cheerful view of village green  
With ruddy children scattered far and near, 10  
The babbling brook thro' willow hedgerows seen  
That turns the mill with current cold and clear!

At scenes like these the feeling breast may warm,  
And tears of young philanthropy may start,  
The poet's mind new dreams of beauty form, 15  
And fancy own the promptings of the heart.

But ask not me of Blenheim's marble halls;  
Tho' Marlborough's triumphs grace her sculptured gate,<sup>1</sup>  
With careless glance I viewed her trophied walls,  
Chilled by the frown of dull unsocial state. 20

“Ode to Ludlow Castle”<sup>2</sup>

PROUD pile! that rearest thy hoary head  
In ruin vast, in silence dread,  
    O'er Teme's<sup>3</sup> luxuriant vale,  
Thy moss-grown halls, thy precincts drear,  
To musing Fancy's pensive ear 5  
    Unfold a varied tale.

When Terror stalked the prostrate land  
With savage Cambria's ruthless band,  
    Beneath thy frowning shade,  
Mixt with the grazers of the plain, 10  
The plundered, helpless, peasant train  
    In sacred ward were laid.

From yon high tower the archer drew  
With steady hand the twanging yew,  
    While, fierce in martial state, 15

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1 A reference to the monumental East Gate, a triumphal arch designed by Sir John Vanbrugh.

2 A castle in the town of Ludlow, Shropshire, England, begun in the eleventh century, with a lengthy political history until it fell into ruins in the eighteenth century.

3 A valley and river near Ludlow.

The mailed host in long array,  
 With crested helms and banners gay,  
     Burst from the thundering gate.

In happier times, how brightly blazed  
 The hearth with ponderous billets raised,                     20  
     How rung the vaulted halls,  
 When smoked the feast, when care was drowned,  
 When songs and social glee went round....  
     Where now the ivy crawls!

'Tis past! the marcher's princely court,                     25  
 The strength of war, the gay resort,  
     In mouldering silence sleeps;  
 And o'er the solitary scene  
 While Nature hangs her garlands green,  
     Neglected Memory weeps.                                     30

The Muse too weeps:.... in hallowed hour  
 Here sacred Milton<sup>1</sup> owned her power,  
     And woke to nobler song;  
 The wizard's baffled wiles essayed,  
 Here first the pure majestic maid                             35  
     Subdued the enraptured throng.<sup>2</sup>

But see! beneath yon shattered roof  
 What mouldy cavern, sun-beam proof,  
     With mouth of horror yawns?  
 O sight of grief! O ruthless doom!                             40  
 On that deep dungeon's solid gloom  
     Nor hope nor daylight dawns.

Yet there, at midnight's sleepless hour,  
 While boisterous revels shook the tower,  
     Bedewed with damps forlorn,                                     45

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1 The famous poet Milton performed *Comus* in 1634 on September 29 at Ludlow Castle, first published as *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* in 1638.

2 *Comus* was first represented in a hall of Ludlow Castle, where there now grows a large elder, planted by the children of the Earl of Bridgewater, then lord warden. [L.A.]





The battle roars, the day is won,  
Exulting Fortune crowns her son:  
Sickening I turn on yonder plain  
To mourn the widows and the slain; 10  
To mourn the woes, the crimes of man,  
To search in vain the eternal plan,  
In outraged nature claim a part,  
And ponder, desolate of heart.<sup>1</sup>

But, restless long, the wanderer Thought 15  
Returns at length with comfort fraught;  
And thus, with look benign, serene,  
Would moralize the mortal scene.  
Weep'st thou the dead? and who are *they*?  
Those powerless limbs, that senseless clay? 20  
Weep'st thou the dead? and canst thou read  
The spirit's doom, the spirit's meed?  
Go, fold thine arms, and bow the head  
In reverence o'er their lowly bed;  
Then lift thy brow, and calmly trust 25  
The Wise, the Merciful, the Just.  
The widowed.... yes, they claim a tear,  
Yet comfort meets us even here:  
'Tis but the fate of one short span  
That lies within the gripe of man: 30  
Whate'er of joy the oppressor steals,  
Whate'er of ill the victim feels,  
The lapse of ages in their course  
Shall bring a compensating force,  
Succeeding worlds atone the past, 35  
And strike our balance right at last.

Unclench thy hand, subdue thine eye!  
Recall those curses loud and high!  
Tame thy rude breast's vindictive swell,

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1 The human cost of war, as opposed to the triumph of military success, was a common theme for many of the period's progressive writers. It also holds a central place in the writing of Aikin's father and aunt, particularly their collaborative six-volume miscellany written for young persons, *Evenings at Home, or the Juvenile Budget Opened* (1792-96), later revised by Lucy Aikin and her brother Arthur in 1846, and then transformed by Lucy into a "one-syllable," under the pseudonym Mary Godolphin.

Nor rave of everlasting hell! 40  
 "I hate the oppressor!" say'st thou. Hate  
 A poor, blind, instrument of fate?  
 Does not the tyrant's self obey  
 Some feller tyrant's lawless sway?  
 See Anger goad his fiery breast, 45  
 Remorse, Suspicion, kill his rest,  
 And rather say, "Thou suffering soul,  
 Doomed for a time beneath the pole  
 In guilt, in fear, short breath to fetch,  
 A hated, solitary wretch,.... 50  
 May Death his friendly stroke extend,  
 And soon thy hard commission end,  
 And bear thee hence, O sweet release!  
 To taste of innocence and peace!"

For human woe, for human weal, 55  
 Man will, man must, man ought to feel;  
 And while they feel, the untutored crowd  
 With clamours vehement and loud  
 Will rend the skies, and wildly trust  
 God shall revenge, for God is just! 60  
 They see not a resistless might  
 Still guide us on, and guide us right;  
 Foreseen our passions' utmost force,  
 Foredoomed our most eccentric course,  
 We seem to will, nor cease to be 65  
 Slaves of a strong necessity.  
 This knows the sage, and calmly sees  
 Vice, matter's weakness or disease;  
 The eternal Mind, the first great Cause,  
 A power immense, but bound by laws; 70  
 Wise all its ways.... contriving still  
 The most of good, the least of ill,  
 Redressing all it can redress,  
 And turned to pity and to bless.  
 Toucht by this faith, his mellowing mind, 75  
 From terror and from wrath refined,  
 Light from the scene upsprings, and wrought  
 To tender ecstasy of thought,  
 Sees a just God's impartial smile  
 Relieve the opprest, restore the vile, 80  
 Pour good on all:.... with joy, with love,

He looks around, he looks above;  
And views no more with anxious eye  
The world's great pageant passing by.

**3. From *The Annual Register: Or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1811*. London W. Otridge et al., 1812. 607-08**

“The Balloon”

The *airy ship* at anchor rides;<sup>1</sup>  
Proudly she heaves her painted sides  
Impatient of delay;  
And now her silken form expands,  
She springs aloft, she bursts her bands, 5  
She floats upon her way.

How swift! for now I see her sail  
High mounted on the viewless gale,  
And speeding up the sky;  
And now a speck in ether tost, 10  
A moment seen, a moment lost,  
She cheats my dazzled eye.

Bright wonder! thee no flapping wing,  
No labouring oar, no bounding spring,  
Urged on thy fleet career; 15  
By native buoyancy impelled,  
Thy easy flight was smoothly held  
Along the silent sphere.

No curling mist at closing light,  
No meteor on the breast of night, 20  
No cloud at breezy dawn,  
No leaf adown the summer tide  
More effortless is seen to glide,  
Or shadow o'er the lawn.

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1 The first tethered balloon flight with humans on board took place on 19 October 1783, with three Frenchmen, at the Folie Tiron in Paris.

Yet thee, e'en thee, the destined hour 25  
Shall summon from thy airy tower,  
Rapid in prone descent;  
Methinks I see thee downward borne  
With flaccid sides that droop forlorn,  
The breath ethereal spent. 30

Thus daring Fancy's plume sublime,  
Thus Love's bright wings are clipp'd by time;  
Thus Hope, her soul elate,  
Exhales amid this grosser air;  
Thus lightest hearts are bowed by care, 35  
And Genius yields to Fate.

**4. From *Poetry for Children: Consisting of Short Pieces, to Be Committed to Memory. Selected by Lucy Aikin. Seventh Edition. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown: 1818. (First Edition 1801), 1-3; 108-10***

[Most of the poems Aikin selected for her anthology were by well-established poets, including her aunt, Anna Barbauld, and she also included many excerpts from poems and translations by Alexander Pope and John Dryden.]

“The Beggar Man”

Around the fire, one wintry night,  
The farmer's rosy children sat;  
The faggot lent its blazing light;  
And jokes went round and careless chat.

When, hark! a gentle hand they hear  
Low tapping at the bolted door;  
And thus, to gain their willing ear,  
A feeble voice was heard t'implore:

“Cold blows the blast across the moor;  
The sleet drives hissing in the wind;  
Yon toilsome mountain lies before;  
A dreary treeless waste behind.

“My eyes are weak and dim with age;  
No road, no path, can I descry;  
And these poor rags ill stand the rage  
Of such a keen inclement sky.

“So faint I am—these tottering feet  
No more my palsied frame can bear;  
My freezing heart forgets to beat,  
And drifting snows my tomb prepare.

“Open your hospitable door,  
And shield me from the biting blast:  
Cold, cold it blows across the moor,  
The weary moor that I have pass’d!”

With hasty step the farmer ran,  
And close beside the fire they place  
The poor half-frozen beggar man,  
With shaking limbs and blue-pale face.

The little children flocking came,  
And chafed his frozen hands in theirs;  
And busily the good old dame  
A comfortable mess<sup>1</sup> prepares.

Their kindness cheer’d his drooping soul;  
And slowly down his wrinkled cheek  
The big round tears were seen to roll,  
And told the thanks he could not speak.

The children, too, began to sigh,  
And all their merry chat was o’er;  
And yet they felt, they knew not why,  
More glad than they had done before.

“Prince Leeboo”

From the mighty Pacific, with soft-swelling waves,  
That a thousand bright islands eternally laves,<sup>2</sup>  
’Mid rocks of red coral, with shelf-fish abounding,

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1 A serving of food; a course; a meal.

2 Poetical, meaning to wash or bathe.

The notes of the parrot and pigeon resounding,  
Crown'd with groves of banana and taper bamboo,  
Rise the gay sunny shores of the Isles of Pelew.<sup>1</sup>

From China returning with silk and with tea,  
The tall English vessel sails over the sea;  
Ah! look how she heaves! on the rock she is stranded!  
But the boats are thrown out, and the sailors are landed.  
What black men are those in their slender canoe,  
Who gaze with such wonder?—The men of Pelew.

How kindly they welcome the sailors on shore!  
And yams and sweet cocoa-nuts bring from their store;  
But vain ev'ry effort to soften their anguish!  
For home, distant home, the poor Englishmen languish:  
They build a stout ship, they sail off from Pelew,  
And away with the strangers sail young Prince Leeboo.

O what is his rapture, and what his surprise,  
When, in gay busy London, he opens his eyes!  
“Fine shops, houses, coaches, O joy beyond measure!  
Yes, yes, my dear friends shall partake in my pleasure:  
Fine clothes, coaches, horses, I'll bear to Pelew,—  
What wonder for them, what delight for Leeboo!”

Fond projects! In vain shall his father explore  
The wide shipless waves,—he shall see him no more.  
O chide not the English thy darling detaining,  
And chide not thy son 'mid the strangers remaining!  
Know, death has arrested him far from Pelew,  
And the strangers have wept o'er the gentle Leeboo!

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1 In 1788, George Keate published *A Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Antelope a Packet Belonging to the Honourable East India Company, Commanded by Captain Henry Wilson which was Lost in August 1783, on the Pelew Islands*. The account related a shipwreck that took place in 1783, which constituted the most noteworthy first contact with the natives of the Pelew Islands (Palau in the Caroline Islands). As the poem describes, Wilson and his crew survived the wreck and they were eventually able to build a small vessel that took them, and a native prince, to Macao, and from there they returned to Europe. Their return generated considerable contemporary interest in the commercial prospects of trade with the South Seas.

5. From Mary Ann Humble's Autograph Album,  
New York Public Library, Misc. 4023

"Written in an Alcove at Allerton"

Beneath this sheltered still alcove  
Haste ye warblers of the grove!  
Here your first soft notes be tried  
Ere cowslips bud by Mersey's side,  
Here thro' winter's shortened day  
Fearless pour your mellow lay!  
Here no schoolboy dares molest  
With ruthless hand your mossy nest,  
Smiling thro' the fair domain  
Gentler spirits hold their reign;  
Science walks the dewy lawn  
Genius hails the redd'ning dawn,  
Friendship here delights to claim  
The tribute of the sculptured name,  
And here the muses' meanest child  
Timid chaunts her woodnotes wild!



## II. Histories

### 2. *From Memoirs of the Court of King James the First. 2 vols. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1822*

[In her account of James I (1566-1625), son of Mary I, Aikin engaged in a similarly broad political, social and cultural history. James became King of Scotland in 1567, and King of England following Elizabeth's death in 1603. It seems that Aikin may have found less to please her in the character of James; in a letter from 1818, she complained of "that paltry king and pedant James!" and expressed her "wish [that] I had a better centre figure for my picture" (*Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters of the late Lucy Aikin*, 145). The following extract contains a description of James at age 35, just two years before he became King James I of England in 1603. The description is notable for the balanced view she attempts; it also, in its discussion of James's theory of divine right, foreshadows the troubles that dogged his rule and that of his heirs (I: 59-62).]

Five and thirty years of royalty<sup>1</sup> had now fully accomplished James VI. [of Scotland] in what he called "king-craft"; but they had left him deplorably ignorant of the only true art of government,—the best mode of securing the honor and happiness of a civilized nation. Amid the turbulence and lawlessness of the contending factions who had alternately seized the custody of his person and protected themselves by the authority of his name, self-preservation had become the first object of the monarch's solicitude; and destitute of all higher and better resources, he had learned to avail himself of the natural weapons of the feeble,—deceit and artifice. A temporising policy, which flattered and disappointed every party by turns, which exposed all his professions to contempt, and all his principles to suspicion, thus became habitual to him, and passed upon himself for the perfection of civil wisdom. Two classes of men indeed, he regarded with undisguised aversion; the jesuits, who preached up the right of the pope to free subjects from their allegiance to heretical sovereigns; and the presbyterian clergy, who claimed the privilege of controlling the actions of their prince, and of excommunicating him if he refused to obey their admonitions. Against these enemies he

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1 As King of Scotland.

exerted himself with all the energy of which he was capable; combating the jesuits with his pen, and the Scotch church not with this instrument alone, but with acts of parliament, and acts of power and prerogative, which in any other cause he would have feared to hazard. It seems to have been partly out of opposition to the contumacious spirit of the followers of Knox, that James adopted, and endeavoured to inculcate upon his subjects, that sublime theory of the absolute power and ineffable majesty of kings, which consoled his vanity in some degree for those practical limitations to which a haughty nobility and an intractable presbytery compelled him to submit.

The temper of this prince, though childishy irascible, was only on great and repeated provocations susceptible of rancor and revenge; towards his courtiers and favorites he overflowed with affability and good nature, and unfortunately both for himself and his people he was able to deny them nothing. Of dignity, whether moral, intellectual, or personal, he was totally destitute; and his indifference to female society, his passion for the sports of the field, the love of ribaldry and buffoonery which he had caught from Arran and the vile crew of sycophants with which he surrounded him, added to his odious habit of profane swearing, contracted probably in the same society, gave to his manners a decided stamp of coarseness and vulgarity.

James's private morals seem to have been free from all other stain than the grossnesses to which we have alluded; it was only in later life that he became somewhat intemperate in the use of wine; and it appears from a passage of the *Basilicon Doron*,<sup>1</sup> in which he speaks of the evil consequences which resulted from those amours of his grandfather James V. [of Scotland] by which the honor of many ancient families was wounded, that he made his own exemption from similar transgressions a topic of self-approbation and religious gratitude.<sup>2</sup> One of the most respect-

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- 1 The *Basilicon Doron* is a treatise on government written by James I. Ostensibly addressed to his eldest son, it was printed in Edinburgh in 1599 and in London in 1603. Aikin was critical both of the style of James's writing and the substance of the text (the *Basilicon* promoted the belief that kings were divinely sanctioned to rule over their subjects, and attacked Presbyterianism, the decentralized form of Protestantism that prevailed in Scotland.
  - 2 Hume has thought proper to impute to the Scotch clergy the exertion of a control over the morals of the young king before his marriage, from which he found it impossible to escape; but this charge is entirely gratuitous, or rather false. As they were not able to keep him out of the hands of Arran and his profligate associates, it is clear that they could not have

able and pleasing features of James's character was his attachment to learning and his kind and munificent patronage of its professors. It is true that his taste was incorrect, and his style pedantic and tedious, and readers would have lost little had the monarch never dipped his pen in politics or divinity; but he would himself have lost the most creditable occupation and the solace of his leisure hours, and several of the most eminent scholars both of Great Britain and of the continent would have lost the notice which cheered and the bounty which sustained them.

[In the following passage, Aikin delineates the transition, in terms of culture and manners, from the reign of Elizabeth to James (I:74-82).]

English literature at this period might in some respects be regarded as flourishing beyond all former example; yet it had received from the state of manners and society a taint which was already turning its beauty to corruption. At the court of Elizabeth the patronage of letters was not less a fashion than at that of Augustus.<sup>1</sup> Every book, whatever might be its subject, was inscribed to some noble, "worshipful," or wealthy dedicatee; and every author of the smallest pretensions to celebrity found his cover regularly spread at the table of a peer, bishop, minister of state, or other "person of honor." There is something highly gratifying to the imagination in such a state of things; we love to contemplate such men as Burleigh and Camden,

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debarred him of the opportunities of indulging in any vice to which his disposition had inclined him. In fact, though these ecclesiastics assumed the freedom of openly, and even insolently, reproving in the pulpit the public faults or follies of their sovereign, it does not appear that they familiarly frequented his court, to become spies upon his private actions, or that they possessed there either credit or authority. The merit of this virtue must therefore rest with himself alone. [L.A.]

- 1 Augustus, (63 BCE-14 CE), was the first emperor of the Roman Empire, ruling from 27 BCE until his death. He was a patron of the arts, and showered favors on poets, artists, sculptors, and architects; his reign is often considered the Golden Age of Roman literature, in which Horace, Livy, Ovid, and Virgil flourished. However, Augustus demanded, in exchange for his support, that they pay him tribute and adhere to his standard. It is precisely this control to which Aikin objects. Scholars have long considered Samuel Johnson's 1755 Letter to Lord Chesterfield, in which he rejected Chesterfield's public praise of *Dictionary*, as an important turning point in the history of letters, as the "modern author" emerged from the compromised position to which he had been subjected under the system of patronage.

Spenser and Raleigh, linked together by the ties of benefits on one part and gratitude on the other:<sup>1</sup> yet on calmer consideration, it cannot but be acknowledged that this general association of men of letters with the great, on the footing of patron and client, in whatever age or country it may have subsisted, has begun by debasing the minds of the votaries of letters, and ended in the degradation of literature itself. It is usually by no easy or honorable tenure that the dependent child of genius is permitted to hold the favors of a patron. His Mecænas becomes his task-master;<sup>2</sup> by *his* will however unenlightened, by *his* taste however perverted, the unfortunate bondsman must submit to have his labors directed and over-ruled: hence we have had Michael Angelo bestowing his inimitable workmanship on a mass of snow,<sup>3</sup> and a French academy tormenting their imaginations to invent new modes of deifying their mighty Louis.<sup>4</sup>

Nor can any person be widely conversant in the literature of the age of Elizabeth without discovering and deploring numerous similar abuses. Complimentary effusions, commanded strains of congratulation or condolence on subjects then interesting to few, and now to no one, form the larger portion of the occasional pieces of Spenser, of Jonson, of Donne, and of the whole herd of minor poets.<sup>5</sup> Shakespear alone, pre-eminent in moral as in intellectual dignity, disdained to prostitute his immortal lines to tem-

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- 1 Burleigh and Camden, Spenser, and Raleigh: William Cecil, later Lord Burghley (1520/21-98), royal minister, and patron of historians including Camden; William Camden (1551-1623), historian and herald, author of *Britannia* (1586), an account of British antiquity, dedicated to Lord Burghley, and a *History of Elizabeth* (1615-29), both highly regarded; Edmund Spenser (1552?-99), poet and administrator in Ireland, author of *The Faerie Queene* (1590), in the preface to which Spenser thanks his friend and neighbor, Sir Walter Raleigh; Sir Walter Raleigh (1554-1618), courtier, explorer, and author.
  - 2 Caius Cilnius Maecenas (70-78 BC) was a confidant and political advisor to Augustus, and an important patron for the new generation of "Augustan" poets. His name has become synonymous with a wealthy patron of the arts.
  - 3 In 1494, after Michelangelo returned to court following the death of Lorenzo de Medici in 1492, the young Piero de Medici commissioned a snow statue from him.
  - 4 Louis XIV (1638-1715), also known as the "Sun King," was also famous for his patronage of the arts.
  - 5 Edmund Spenser, see previous note; Ben Jonson (1572-1637), poet and playwright; John Donne (1572-1631), poet and clergyman. It should be noted that several of Aikin's own poems (as well as those of her aunt) were also occasional in nature, and thus could be subject to the same criticism she levels against these poets.

porary or to selfish purposes, and stands nobly acquitted of the vice of adulation. Fashion also required from the votary of the muse the dedication of another considerable portion of his rhymes to the passion of love, and to the glory of some fair one, real or imaginary, who was to be clothed in all the graces and perfections of a Laura,<sup>1</sup> and adored in as many high-flown sonnets as the brain of her poet could be compelled to produce; and it was not till his fancy had been worn and his moral sensibility irreparably injured, by the performance of this task-work of the lyre, that he was at liberty to devote the relics of his genius to some theme of general and lasting interest. Need we search further for the source of that depravation of taste which had already begun to substitute quaintness and bombast, forced conceits and unmeaning similes, couched in stiff and rugged verse, for the free and harmonious flow of natural sentiment and lively imagery which still delights us in the elder strains of Surrey, of Sackville,<sup>2</sup> and of the anonymous poets whose occasional pieces still shine in the collections of the early years of Elizabeth?

In the drama, however, English genius still exulted in the wildness of its liberty. Shakespear was in his zenith; Jonson had commenced his celebrated series of comedies of character on a perfectly regular model,—a species of composition with which he was the first to enrich the English theatre. Fletcher had lately begun to devote to the drama poetical powers of a high order; and the contemporary names of Decker, Marston, Chapman, Heywood and Chettle, served further to attest the flourishing condition of the stage.<sup>3</sup> The dramatic poets were, for the most part, men of mirth and pleasure; poor from thoughtless profusion rather than from any deficiency of remuneration; flattered by the public and caressed by the great.

It was not however from the cultivation of poetry alone, or lighter literature, that the fruits of fame and favor were at this time to be reaped. The scholastic reputation of Henry Saville had procured for him in the first instance the office of Greek preceptor to Elizabeth, who frequently commanded his atten-

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1 Laura is the idealized love object in several poems written by the Italian poet Petrarch (1304-74).

2 Henry Howard, earl of Surrey (1516/17-47), poet and soldier; Thomas Sackville (c. 1536-1608), poet and administrator.

3 Thomas Decker (c. 1572-1632), playwright and pamphleteer; John Marston (bap. 1576, d. 1634), poet and playwright; George Chapman (1559/60-1634), poet and playwright; Thomas Heywood (c. 1573-1641), playwright and poet; and Henry Chettle, (d. 1603 or 1607), printer and playwright.

dance at her hours of privacy for the benefit of his learned discourse; his annotated translation of the annals of Tacitus, and of the life of Agricola, had been eagerly welcomed by the reading public; and his collection of English chroniclers and historians, illustrated with chronological tables, had further advanced his reputation, and entitled him in the judgement of his royal pupil to the creditable appointment of provost of Eton: he afterwards received from the hand of James the honor of knighthood. The topographical and antiquarian pursuits of Camden, besides being celebrated in verse by Spenser, and encouraged by Philip Sidney and by his friend Fulk Greville, had obtained for him the valuable patronage of Burleigh. His *Britannia* was celebrated as a great national monument; and sir Robert Cotton, a leading member of the Society of Antiquaries, and afterwards eminent by many learned works on the constitution and ancient usages of his country, was impelled by a liberal curiosity to attend the veteran topographer in an expedition to Carlisle, for the purpose of examining the remains of the Picts' wall.

The mathematicians and natural philosophers of the age, such as they were, found many favorers, and certainly not the fewer because their course of study comprehended alchemy, astrology, and what was then called natural magic. Dr. Dee, the chief of his class, had been honored with the notice of the queen herself.

Essex had been a general patron of merit in almost every department; and Raleigh, in his double capacity of a splendid courtier and of the most variously gifted genius of the age, received and rewarded numerous dedications of works on a variety of topics; amongst these may be enumerated for their appropriateness, Hooker's of his continuation of the chronicles of Ireland, and Hakluyt's of a translation from the French of four voyages to the Floridas. On the subject of dedications it may be mentioned, as a singular proof of the general acceptableness of these purchased flatteries, that Decker, in his *English Villanies*, minutely describes one class of impostors who lived by them. These persons, it seems, travelled the country with some worthless pamphlet headed by an epistle dedicatory to let,—on the plan of Falstaff's love letter,—in which they contrived to insert successively the names of all the principal persons in the counties through which they passed; extracting from each, in return for the compliment, a fee of three or four angels.

England possessed as yet no native school of art; but from the time of Henry VIII. royal patronage and example had been gradually diffusing a taste for painting among the nobility. Elizabeth pos-

sessed a considerable number of pictures; there still exists at Knowle a collection of portraits believed to have been formed by lord Buckhurst; and artists from Holland and Flanders frequently visited the country as portrait painters and found abundant encouragement.

Music was highly fashionable and practised both by men and women of the first rank. A set of very difficult lessons for the virginals, composed expressly for the use of queen Elizabeth, attests her proficiency; and a viol de gamba was seen hanging up in every fashionable house, and even in the barbers' shops, to occupy the leisure moments of the guests. Several English composers, as well as performers, had attained to high celebrity among their contemporaries; but Italy was then, as now, honored as the great mistress of the art. Yonge published at London in 1588 his *Musica Transalpina*,<sup>1</sup> the dedication to which supplies the following interesting notice of the state of music in the metropolis:—"Since I first began to keep house in this city, it hath been no small comfort unto me, that a great number of gentlemen and merchants of good account, as well of this realm as of foreign nations, have taken in good part such entertainments of pleasure as my poor ability was able to afford them, both by the exercise of music daily used in my house, and by furnishing them with books of that kind, yearly sent me out of Italy and other places, which, being for the most part Italian songs, are for sweetness of air very well liked of all, but most in account with them that understand the language."

With respect to the manners of the court over which James was called to preside, it may be remarked, that the chivalrous spirit with which Elizabeth was approached in the earlier period of her reign, had gradually faded away with her youth, her graces, and the ambitious hopes of her adorers; and that amid the gloom thrown around her declining years, a tone of pedantry, of constraint, and of insipid affectation had become general. In no other state of public taste could *Euphuism* have been adopted as the reigning language of the fair and the noble.<sup>2</sup>

The vice of drinking was a prevalent and growing evil, by the testimony of all the satirists and moralists of the age, and of the preamble of more than one act of parliament; and its increase was

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1 Nicholas Yonge (d. 1619) was a music editor. His edition of Italian vocal music referred to by Aikin includes the fifty-seven "madrigals"—the first recorded English use of the term.

2 Named for John Lyly's immediately influential *Euphuus, the Anatomy of Wit: Very Pleasant for All Gentlemen to Read* (1578); euphuism is a form of prose that is highly mannered and ornate. It was a popular style in the 1580s, but was never again revived.

principally attributed to the habits acquired by military men during their service in Flanders; a country long notorious for this species of excess. The *ordinaries* newly established in London, and at this time the most fashionable places of resort for gentlemen, are represented as exhibiting most disgraceful scenes of intoxication and riot; nor was this the only mischief attending them; gaming was here pushed to a frightful excess. Gangs of sharpers haunted these places, who made it their business to single out the wealthy and heedless heir, or the unsuspecting country gentleman; to insinuate themselves into his confidence; and by a long-drawn train to lure him on to his destruction. The money-lender took his station by the side of the infatuated victim; and, when the sense of intolerable losses had deprived him of the use of his reason, rushed in to supply him with the means of completing his ruin. Of the class of usurers, indeed, the reigns of Elizabeth and of her successor afforded specimens odious and formidable beyond all modern example. The sir Giles Overreach of Massinger is believed to represent without considerable aggravation a contemporary character;<sup>1</sup> and his variety of iniquitous expedients for obtaining the forfeiture of bonds, and possessing himself of the lands and houses mortgaged to him by unwary debtors, were doubtless copied from the genuine practice of these harpies.

The sex and the character of Elizabeth had conspired to preserve decorum, if not purity, in the manners of her court, and to repress those vicious extravagancies of various kinds which were ready to burst forth in full luxuriance under her successor. In her days, acts of violence and outrage were never encouraged by impunity, and the savage practice of duelling was comparatively rare: neither was it a part of her policy to excite a ruinous prodigality amongst her nobility and gentry for the purpose of rendering them dependent and corrupt. On the contrary, she desired to see them such prudent managers of their own revenues, as to want little from her except the favour of her smiles and gracious speeches; and she appears to have been the more sparing of titles of honor, on account of the higher style of living by which new dignities would require to be supported. In consequence of this system James, at his entrance into England, found a nobility neither numerous, recent, nor necessarily dependent on the crown; and a gentry very numerous, extremely wealthy, and abounding with individuals eagerly pressing for admission into the

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1 Philip Massinger (1583-1640), playwright. Sir Giles Overreach is a rapacious character in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625).



order of knighthood or into the peerage, the dignity of which they could well support and had long in vain aspired to. This consideration ought somewhat to modify the censure generally passed upon James, for the lavish distribution of titles by which the first years of his reign were distinguished; he found in fact many subjects ripe for honors: there can be no question, however, that great and numerous evils sprung from the passion for show and pomp and ostentatious rivalry in every mode of luxury and expense, which was partly an effect of the new dignities with which so many heads were turned at once....

[The following passage recounts James's first address to Parliament in 1604. Aikin criticizes the new King of England's speech as impolitic, and expresses her disdain for his repudiation of the rule of law and his theory of "divine rule," which would haunt future generations of Stuart monarchs as well (I:182-90).]

James had been seated nearly a twelvemonth on the throne of England when at length he judged it necessary to call a parliament,—usually the first measure of a new reign. The pestilence which had raged in the metropolis had been the ostensible, and in part perhaps the real cause of this delay; but it is sufficiently evident by many concurring indications, that the arbitrary maxims of the king, his aversion to business, and his apprehensions of the spirit likely to be manifested by the house of commons, were all motives of considerable force in inclining him to defer the evil day, as he regarded it, when he must meet his people.

In his proclamation for the calling of the parliament, the king took upon him to instruct the electors what kind of persons they should choose or reject for their representatives; and he even went so far as to threaten, that any notorious contravention of the meaning of this his royal edict, should be visited upon the cities or boroughs with forfeiture of their liberties, and upon the persons elected with fine and imprisonment;—by what law, or in what court of judicature, it would be superfluous to inquire. In the house of lords the cause of prerogative might be expected to triumph uncontrolled: the bench of bishops, with not more than one or two exceptions, were its devoted partisans; and amongst the temporal peers, the new creations alone would go far towards securing it from defeat; the number of these already amounting to nineteen out of eighty-eight, at this time the sum total of the baronage of England, including the two attainted lords, Cobham and Grey of Wilton. The fact may be worth stating, that only nine peers of the creation of

Elizabeth sat in the first parliament of her successor....

The king's speech was, after the manner of the other productions of its royal author, prolix and filled with common places: it contained, however, some remarkable declarations of sentiment on subjects which a prince of greater practical wisdom would carefully have abstained from agitating. After expressing, with at least as much self-complacency as gratitude, his acknowledgements to the English people for the extraordinary alacrity with which they had accepted him as their prince, he proceeds on the other hand to expatiate on the blessings which they had received in his person. Peace, it seems, was one of these; for James was ignorant enough of the laws of nations to suppose, that because he, as king of Scotland, was in amity with the court of Spain, the war between that country and England was ended by the mere circumstance of his accession to the English throne. Even on the obvious topic of the advantages of the union of the British crowns he contrived to give extreme offence, by speaking of his native country as half of the island, and representing the resources of England as doubled by this addition. He also threw out hints of an intended union of the kingdoms, which alarmed at once the pride and the prejudices of his new subjects.

Proceeding to treat on the delicate and dangerous topic of the religious divisions subsisting in the country, he adverted to the late conference at Hampton-court, and to the proclamation for the observance of uniformity which he had since issued; taking occasion to stigmatise the puritans and "*novelists*" as persons "ever discontented with the present government" (in church), "and impatient to suffer any superiority," which, he added, "maketh their seats insufferable in any well-governed commonwealth." Towards the catholics, the laity at least, and such as lived like good subjects, he expressed himself far more indulgently: saying, that he "would be sorry to punish their bodies for the error of their minds." ...

This avowal on the part of the king of his readiness to meet the catholics half-way, was heard by all zealous protestants with horror; while it impressed the minds of thinking men with contempt for the narrow and as it were egotistical view, which their sovereign had taken of controversies so extensive, so complicated, and, in the opinions of all the contending parties, so pre-eminently important, as those now pending in matters of religion.

The vague professions of love and gratitude towards his people, and care for their interests, and the apologetical notice of

a somewhat lavish expenditure of public money, with which it had pleased the royal orator to conclude his harangue, were felt as slender compensation for the grounds of offence or alarm so wantonly obtruded; and, whatever "flattering unction" he might lay to his soul, James had certainly little reason to congratulate himself on the effects of this first display of his boasted eloquence before an English parliament.

The two houses made it their earliest business to pass an act of recognition of the king's title, for which he was far from thanking them; because such an act appeared to militate against that divine and indefeasible right which was more than once asserted by him in the course of his speech, and from which the character of an absolute monarch, which he was determined to assert, appeared to him to flow as a necessary consequence....

... James was so accustomed to regard himself, and to be addressed by his flatterers, as "the Lord's anointed," "the vicegerent of God upon earth,"—in fact a kind of deputed deity,—that he was constantly tempted to accuse his subjects of blasphemy and irreligion when they presumed to oppose his will, or to call in question his lawless assumptions of authority. At the same time, there was no form of impiety, from the light and irreverent mention of the sacred name in familiar speech, to profane cursing and swearing, and to the blasphemous and audacious assumption of a kind of parity with the supreme being, by which the lips and mind of the prince himself were undefiled:—thus he stands chargeable with the double outrage to religion of insulting it in his own person, and of employing it towards others as an instrument of that selfish and despicable species of "kingcraft" in which he made it his boast to excel.

James was the first king of England to whom the inappropriate title of *sacred majesty* was applied.

In confident anticipation of the union which he so ardently desired, the king had already, of his own authority, made the Scotch coin current in England, caused the cross of St. Andrew to be quartered with that of St. George on all flags and standards, and ordered himself to be proclaimed king of *Great Britain*: but these precipitate steps rather tended to exasperate the opposition of parliament; and the utmost which James was able to obtain from this assembly, was the nomination of a certain number of its members to be joined with commissioners from Scotland for the purpose of drawing up articles of union but without the power of taking any steps towards causing such articles to be carried into

effect.<sup>1</sup> ...

[Aikin concludes with the following summation of James I's reign (II:396-408).]

James expired at his palace of Theobalds on March 27 1625, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, after a reign in England of twenty-two years.

It is agreed by all writers, that a monarch has seldom quitted the world less deplored by his subjects than James I.; his detractors ascribe this insensibility to his demerits, his panegyrists to the ingratitude of human nature; more impartial estimators may be inclined to compromise the difference, by saying that the intentions of this prince were better than his performance; and that the people, who suffered by his errors of judgement, were little inclined to accept, in so important a concern as the good government of the country, the will for the deed....

It is somewhat singular that, in the enumeration of king James's merits with respect to religion, the bishop [in his eulogy] should have omitted all mention of his care for the completion of a new version of the bible. This great work was undertaken in performance of a promise made by the king at the Hampton-court conference, and Dr. Reynolds, the great champion of the puritans, by whom it was there suggested, was one of the divines engaged in its execution. The translators were in number forty-seven; they were divided into six companies, to each of which a portion of the scriptures was assigned. Rules for their proceeding were drawn up by his majesty himself, with great attention and apparently with much prudence. Nearly three years were occupied in the task; and it was not till 1611 that the book appeared in print with a well-merited dedication to the king. This is the authorised version of the present day; and, with some allowances for the subsequent advancement of the science of biblical criticism, it has constantly been regarded by the best judges as a very honorable monument of the learning, skill and diligence of the translators.<sup>2</sup>

The appearance of king James's bible forms also one of the

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- 1 In fact, the kingdoms were not permanently united until the Acts of Union, passed by both the Parliament of England and the Parliament of Scotland in 1707, to form the Kingdom of Great Britain.
  - 2 According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the King James Bible, or "The Authorized Version, published in 1611, stands as a lasting monument to Hampton Court, as a masterpiece of English

most important events in the history of the English language; it had the immediate effect of recommending to common use a very considerable number of words derived from the learned languages, for which the translators had been unable to find equivalents in the current English of the time. At present it performs a service of an opposite nature, and keeps in use, or at least in remembrance, many valuable words and expressive idioms which would otherwise have been rejected with disdain by the fastidiousness of modern taste, as homely and familiar.

Some attempts have been made by the eulogists of James I. to affix to his name the title of *The Just*; but impartial posterity has refused to confirm an addition so glorious: Justice is the virtue of great minds, and the praise of general good intention is the utmost that can be conceded to a prince so habitually swayed by fear, by prejudice and by private affections.

**3. From *Memoirs of the Court of King Charles the First*.  
London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and  
Longman, 1833. Second Edition**

[In recounting the history of Charles I's reign, Aikin returns to many of the themes of her first two court memoirs: religious struggles; foreign wars; conflicts between Parliament and the monarchy; as well as sketching the cultural and social history of the age. As she had done in her earlier memoirs, in *Memoirs of the Court of King Charles the First* Aikin begins with an impressive "survey of the commerce, the arts, the luxury, the literature, the education and the manners of the age" at the time of the accession of Charles I (1600-49) in 1625. The first selection below focuses on two aspects not treated in earlier excerpts: economic history and education. Aikin's extensive reference to other sources provides some indication of the considerable research she undertook in preparing the memoirs (I:26-62).]

The undisputed sovereignty of the British isles, appears at first sight an inheritance which, well improved, could not fail to render its possessor, abroad and at home, one of the most powerful princes of Europe; but in order to appreciate correctly the circumstances favorable or adverse under which it descended upon Charles I., it will be proper to take a general view of the

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prose that modern versions of the Bible do nothing to rival, and as a shared interest between the aspirations of the puritans and the aspirations of a 'puritanical' king."

state of manners, commerce, society and literature at the period of his accession.

James I. had received the kingdom of England from the hands of his illustrious predecessor rich in resources of every kind, the accumulation of five and forty years of a wise, frugal, and vigilant administration. The union of the British crowns in his person,<sup>1</sup> though it brought little direct addition to the wealth of England, was yet an accession highly conducive to its internal strength and tranquillity, and eventually to its general prosperity; and whilst the heedless prodigality of this prince had impoverished the crown, by the alienation of lands or the anticipation of its other principal sources of independent revenue, his profound peace of two and twenty years had afforded to his subjects leisure and ample facilities for the acquisition of wealth and the culture of every art by which human life is supported and adorned; and the active genius of the people had largely availed itself of these advantages.

Weary of the monotony and stagnation of a pacific court, the enterprising spirits of the time, both under Elizabeth and James, had eagerly thrown themselves into voyages of discovery, which had sometimes indeed degenerated into mere buccaneering expeditions against the Spanish settlements in the new-found regions of the West; but of which the general and ultimate results were of incalculable importance in promoting, together with the extension of trade, the progress of knowledge, and of civilization. The same spirit of adventure had guided English prows in the track opened by the Portuguese to the shores of Hindostan,<sup>2</sup> and impelled English travellers to explore by land the kingdoms of western Asia. It was about the close of the reign of Elizabeth that the learned Hackluyt<sup>3</sup> was enabled thus to sum up, with becoming pride, the results of all the missions of discovery and commerce sent forth either under the immediate auspices of the queen, or those of the trading companies established by her.

“Which of the kings of this land before her majesty had their banners ever seen in the Caspian sea? Which of them hath ever dealt with the emperor of Persia, as her majesty hath done, and obtained for her merchants large and loving privileges? Who ever saw before this regiment an English lieger in the stately porch of

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1 As opposed to in law.

2 India.

3 Richard Hakluyt (1552?-1616), geographer, editor, translator, and encourager of geographical literature.

the grand Seignor of Constantinople? Who ever found English consuls and agents at Tripolis in Syria, at Aleppo, at Babylon, at Balsara, and which is more, who ever heard of Englishmen at Goa before now? What English ships did heretofore ever anchor in the mighty river of Plate, pass and repass the unpassable, in former opinion, strait of Magellan, range along the coast of Chili, Peru, and all the backside of Nova Hispania, further than any christian ever passed, traverse the mighty breadth of the South sea, land upon the Luzones in despite of the enemy, enter into alliance, amity and traffic with the prince of the Moluccas and the isle of Java, double the famous Cape of Bona Speranza, arrive at the isle of Santa Helena, and last of all return home most richly laden with the commodities of China, as the subjects of this now flourishing monarchy have done?"<sup>1</sup>

During the reign of James all the marts of trade here indicated continued to be frequented with increasing diligence, and additional ones were opened. The woollen cloths of England, as well as its tin and its copper, were now bartered for the gold and raw silk of Persia; an intercourse was opened with the great Mogul; and English ships maintained on the coast of Coramandel a carrying trade of sufficient importance strongly to excite the jealousy of the Portuguese.<sup>2</sup>

The first attempts at colonization in the New World, of which Raleigh was the leader, had failed; in fact, at the end of the sixteenth century England was not yet possessed of a single foreign settlement, but since that period prosperous plantations had been formed on various points of the North American coast. Lord Delaware, a catholic, had established one in Virginia; governor Guy had formed another on the island of Newfoundland; part of a congregation of persecuted independents, who had previously taken refuge in Holland, had laid the foundations of the colony of New Plymouth, and a small band of emigrant puritans had planted themselves in New Hampshire. But all these were private undertakings, prompted by the love of enterprise and the hope of gain, by public spirit, or by the want of religious liberty; and to which king James contributed nothing but his credentials or letters patent. During the whole of his reign the merchants and naval adventurers complained heavily of the deficiency of that naval protection which it was the duty of the state to afford them....

Among the first and most natural results of the intellectual

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1 *Hackluyt's Voyages*, Epistle Dedicatorie. [L.A.]

2 Coromandel Coast: the southeastern coast of the Indian peninsula.

progress of the age, was an extension of the established plan of education, as far at least as respected youths of family and fortune exempted by their station from an observance of the routine of professional instruction. In Peacham's "Complete Gentleman," addressed to his pupil Thomas Howard, fourth son of the earl of Arundel, we possess a summary of the acquirements at this time necessary to a man of quality desirous of doing honor to his rank, interesting from the topics of comparison and reflection which it is formed to suggest.<sup>1</sup> This writer treats in some preliminary chapters, on the duties of parents to their children respecting education, and points out prevailing errors. He stigmatizes the class of schoolmasters as often ignorant and incompetent, and generally chargeable with a high degree of ill-manners and even barbarity towards their pupils. Ingenuous youths, he well observes, cannot brook such contempt as to be called by opprobrious names, and "which is more ungentlemanly, nay barbarous and inhumane, pulled by the ears, lashed over the face, beaten about the head with the great end of the rod, smitten upon the lips for every slight offence with the ferula,—not offered to their fathers' scullions at home." Domestic tutors, however, he represents as usually still worse; ignorant and mean-spirited persons, engaged by sordid parents at a pitiful salary, and encouraged to expect their reward from some family-living to be bestowed as the meed of their servility and false indulgence.

Some parents he blames for the vanity or inconsideration which moved them to send to the universities "young things of twelve, thirteen, or fourteen, that have no more care than to expect the carrier, and where to sup on Fridays and fasting-nights: no further thought of study than to trim up their studies with pictures, and to place the fairest books in open view, which, poor lads, they scarce ever opened, or understand not." "Other fathers, if they perceive any wildness or unstayedness in their children," hastily despairing of their "ever proving scholars or fit for any thing else, to mend the matter, send them either to the court to serve as pages, or into France and Italy to see fashions and mend their manners, where they become ten times worse."

The first branches of study of which he treats are, "Style and History," which he joins, seeming to regard a familiarity with correct and elegant writers as the chief advantage to be derived from the perusal of the Latin and English historians, the only

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1 Henry Peacham (1578-1644?), writer and illustrator, and author of *The Complete Gentleman* (1622), well known in its day as a book of courtesy literature, offering advice on a wide range of topics.



ones of whom he makes mention.

Cosmography, or what would now be termed geography and the use of the globes, he earnestly recommends and shortly treats of; after which he proceeds to geometry. Under this head he amuses his disciple with an account of several ingenious mechanical toys, ancient and modern, and of a "heaven of silver," showing the motions of all the heavenly bodies, sent by the emperor Ferdinand to Soliman the great Turk; and he endeavours to show the utility of this science to a country gentleman, as connected with a knowledge of land-surveying, building, draining, and the construction of mills and water-works; or, should the bent of his genius prove military, with fortification.

In a chapter on Poetry, he gives brief characters of the principal Latin poets, and a hurried list of the English ones from Chaucer to Spenser. Whilst exhibiting with some complacency his own knowledge of Greek, it is remarkable that he never proposes to his pupil the acquisition even of the rudiments of that language; nor does he recommend to his attention any modern tongue excepting French, though he occasionally quotes Italian. Music he most earnestly recommends, being, as he says, "verily persuaded" that those who love it not "are by nature very ill-disposed, and of such a brutish stupidity, that scarce any thing else that is good and savoureth of virtue is to be found in them." On antiquities, under the three heads of statues, inscriptions, and coins, he is pretty full; nor does he neglect the opportunity of paying a just tribute to the earl of Arundel in the character of a collector.<sup>1</sup> He gives many directions for the practice of "drawing and limning," of which arts he declares himself an earnest votary; but a much more elaborate dissertation follows on the practice of blazonry, which in that age was probably considered as the branch of knowledge most peculiarly appropriated, and as it were professional, to a gentleman. A chapter "On exercises of the body," and another "Of observations military," conclude this course of instruction; the university and foreign travel must then *complete the gentleman*.

If we compare this summary, not with our present affluence of knowledge, but with the penury and rudeness of the preceding ages, we shall be struck with the rapid increase of useful and ornamental learning which it implies. It is true indeed that some of the most accomplished individuals for a century preceding; as for example, the English sovereigns, male and female, from Henry VIII. to James

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1 Thomas Howard, fourteenth earl of Arundel (1585-1646), art collector and politician.

I. inclusive, were most of them better classics than the Gentleman of Peacham; and all were skilled in theology; a branch of study totally omitted by this writer; perhaps in consideration of the Roman catholic predilections of the Howard family. But Henry VIII is said to have been destined to the church, and somewhat of an ecclesiastical education might well be judged fitting for his successors, who were to preside over the national religion; and few, it is probable, of their nobility could have emulated them in these scholastic acquirements. On the other hand, geography, with the elements of astronomy, geometry and mechanics; the study of antiquities, comprising mythology and the knowledge of medals, and the theory and practice of the arts of design, were parts of learning now almost for the first time enumerated amongst the becoming accomplishments of an English gentleman; and what fruitful sources were here opened of extended utility and elegant delight! ...

Female education, in the higher class, appears to have shared in the extension given to the objects of liberal pursuit. In classical learning indeed the reign of James seems to have supplied no rivals to the daughters of sir Thomas More and sir Anthony Coke, to Jane Grey, or queen Elizabeth; but lady Anne Clifford received instructions from Daniel in history, poetry, and general literature; Lucy Harrington, afterwards countess of Bedford, besides enjoying, as we have seen, the repute of a medallist and a Latin scholar, was celebrated by sir William Temple, long after her death, for the singular skill and taste which she had exercised in laying out the gardens of Moor Park: lady Wroth, born a Sidney, was both herself a writer, and distinguished as a patroness of the learned; a merit shared by other ladies of rank and fortune.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hutchinson, whose admirable Memoirs of her husband bespeak a mind not less adorned by culture than elevated by principle, informs us that at about the age of seven, she “had at one time eight tutors in several qualities, languages, music, drawing, writing and needlework.”<sup>2</sup>

Sir Matthew Hale, whose sentiments and manners tended towards puritanical strictness, has traced in his “Advice to his grandchildren” and “Counsels of a father,” a very different plan of instruction and employment for females, which he represents as a

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1 Anne Clifford (1590-1676), noblewoman and diarist; Lucy Harrington (bap. 1581-1627), courtier and patron of the arts; Lady Wroth (1587?-1651/53), author of *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621) and the sonnet sequence “Love's Victory.”

2 Lucy Hutchinson (1620-81), poet and biographer of her husband, referred to by Aikin in the *Epistles* (IV:401).

return to ancient order from modern extravagance, dissipation and idleness; and it must be recollected that he was writing in the times of Charles II. He would have them to read well, but “in the scriptures and good books, not in play-books, romances and love-books.” To learn the use of the needle, but chiefly in useful kinds of works; others “more curious” are to be learned, if at all, only to keep them employed and “out of harm’s way.” “Excessively chargeable” ones are not to be used. To learn and practise as there is occasion all points of good housewifery, as “spinning of linen, the ordering of dairies, and to see to the dressing of meal, salting and dressing of meat, brewing and baking, and to understand the common prices of corn, meat, malt, wool, butter, cheese, and all other household provisions; and to see and know what stores of all things necessary for the house are in readiness, what and when more are to be provided. To have the prices of linen cloths, stuffs and woollen cloth.... to cast about to provide all things at the best hand; to take and keep accounts of all things; to know the condition of the poultry about the house (for it misbecometh no woman to be a henwife). To cast about how to order your clothes with the most frugality; to mend them when they want, and to buy but when it is necessary, and with ready money; to love to keep at home.”<sup>1</sup>

The only recreations which he allows to “young gentlewomen” to diversify this life of household care are, “walking abroad in the fields.... some work with their needle, reading of histories or herbals, setting of flowers or herbs, practising their music.” ...

A marking feature of the system of manners at this period was the extreme disparity in station and fortune between the eldest son and the other children of a gentleman’s family. The unfortunate condition of a “younger brother” is thus vividly depicted by bishop Earle in his *Microcosmography*.<sup>2</sup>

“His father.... tasks him to be a gentleman, and leaves him nothing to maintain it. The pride of his house has undone him, which the elder’s knighthood must sustain, and his beggary that knighthood. His birth and bringing up will not suffer him to descend to the means to get wealth; but he stands at the mercy of

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1 Matthew Hale (1609-1676), judge and legal writer, *A Letter of Advice to His Grandchildren* (1817). For Aikin’s own advice on housewifery, see her *Letters*, Appendix A.

2 John Earle (c. 1598-1665), bishop of Salisbury and character writer. *Microcosmographie, or, A Peece of the World Discovered in Essayes and Characters* was published anonymously in 1628, and helped to launch the “craze for characters—pithy, ironic, pen portraits of social or moral types, often with a didactic moral purpose” (*ODNB*).

the world and, which is worse, of his brother. He is something better than the serving-men; yet they more saucy with him than he bold with the master, who beholds him with a countenance of stern awe, and checks him oftener than his liveries.... If his annuity stretch so far, he is sent to the university, and with great heart-burning takes upon him the ministry, as a profession he is condemned to by his ill-fortune. Others take a more crooked path, through the king's highway; where at length their vizard is plucked off, and they strike fair for Tyburn; but their brother's pride, not love, gets them a pardon. His last refuge is the Low-countries, where rags and lice are no scandal, where he lives a poor gentleman of a company, and dies without a shirt. The only thing that may better his fortunes is an art he has to make a gentlewoman, wherewith he baits now and then some rich widow, that is hungry after his blood. He is commonly discontented and desperate, and the form of his exclamation is, That churl my brother!"

A tract published in 1636, called "The Art of Thriving," under the form of a dialogue with a Northamptonshire gentleman, furnishes some curious hints of the modes of educating and placing out the portionless sons and daughters of good families. In the first place, the young heir, whilst he is still in his father's power, and tractable to his will, is to be disposed of in marriage "at the highest rate," and the fortune of his wife shared amongst the younger children for their advancement in life. The other sons, according to their abilities or inclinations, are to become divines, lawyers, physicians, "sea or land soldiers," courtiers, mechanics or tradesmen, navigators or husbandmen, and particular directions are added for the course to be pursued, and the patronage to be sought in every line, with intimations of the kind of presents, or "bribes," to be offered to fit persons on proper occasions. A vein of low cunning not unmixed with humor, runs through the whole....

From this survey of the commerce, the arts, the luxury, the literature, the education and the manners of the age, we may certainly conclude the general state of the country at the accession of Charles I. to have been highly prosperous and rapidly improving. To its felicity however an important alloy was found in the abuses which had crept into the administration of justice, and every other department of civil government, through the rapacity and corruption of men in power, and the arbitrary spirit of the prince, which inclined him to disdain the limits of law and the control of parliament; and also in the oppression to which large

bodies of peaceable subjects were exposed through the operation of unjust and cruel laws enacted for the enforcement of religious conformity.

From many signs and tokens sagacity might have predicted, that whatever might be the personal qualities of the successor of James I., it was on conflicts between the maxims of passive obedience in church and state, and the rising spirit of civil and religious liberty amongst a moral and enlightened people, that the historic interest of his reign and the crisis of his fate, must turn.

[Shortly after taking the throne in 1625, Charles took active steps to help his brother-in-law, Frederick V, Elector Palatine, who had lost his hereditary lands in the Palatinate to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, by declaring war on Spain, hoping to force the Catholic Spanish King Philip IV to intercede with the emperor on Frederick's behalf. This was neither a popular nor a successful war, and it immediately brought Charles into a prolonged conflict with Parliament, who had to vote to provide him with funds to support the war. In the following passage, Aikin describes the constitutional crises of 1628, where Parliament demanded that the king adopt a Petition of Right in exchange for their provision of funds, calling upon the king to acknowledge that he could not levy taxes without Parliament's consent, impose martial law on civilians, imprison them without due process, or quarter troops in their homes. Though Charles eventually assented to the petition, his delays and prevarications foreshadow the coming conflicts between Charles and Parliament over taxation and religious matters, and demonstrate Aikin's own strong commitment to parliamentary rights and the rule of law.]

At length the important day arrived; on June the 2nd the king went to the house of lords, and after assuring the parliament of his purpose to give them satisfaction respecting the Petition both in form and substance,—to the general surprise and disappointment,—evading the customary form of royal assent, pronounced these words. “The king willeth that right be done according to the laws and customs of the realm; and that the statutes be put in due execution, that his subjects may have no cause to complain of any wrong or oppressions, contrary to their just rights and liberties, to the preservation whereof he holds himself in conscience as well obliged, as of his prerogative.” There was perhaps no weaker act than this in the whole life of Charles, and its consequences were irreparable. The commons of England, having repeatedly

declared and fully proved, that they sought nothing but their undoubted right to be governed by the laws of the land; to which the king had pledged obedience by his coronation oath, but which in points of the most vital interest he had manifestly and repeatedly violated;—having rejected the evasion proposed by the other branch of the legislature, and obtained its full concurrence in their original bill;—willing to forgive, but unable to forget, the past delinquencies of their prince;—having rejected as worthless all slighter securities, came to demand of him a solemn pledge for his future conduct in the authentic form of legal assent to a declaratory law.—Was this a time, was this a cause “to palter with them in a double sense?” Could there be any middle way in such a case? They had required nothing more than their right, they had refused to be contented with less. The king, without troops, without treasure, almost without a party, wanted alike strength and boldness to refuse their bill and openly assert the tyrant. After numerous delays and various shiftings he had promised them full satisfaction, he had sent for them to receive it,—he dismissed them with a subterfuge, and had the incredible folly not to perceive, that it was a negative imbittered by a mockery and accompanied by a confession of weakness.

On the return of the commons to their own house, the general indignation burst forth; the popular leaders suffered themselves to be transported beyond the bounds of their former respectful forbearance, and sir John Eliot “stood up and made a long speech, wherein he gave forth so full and lively a representation of all grievances, both general and particular, as if they had never before been mentioned.” ...

These extraordinary signs of agitation in the house of commons, had evidently inspired the ministers with extreme alarm; it was plain that no concession would come from that quarter; the vote of subsidy would not be passed into a law till the petition of right were secured; and to dissolve another parliament without any relief to the king’s necessities, was to plunge again into the most appalling difficulties....

At length, on June the 8th, the king once more made his appearance in the house of lords, and causing the petition of right to be read, after some expressions which looked like a lingering reservation for what he was pleased to consider as his prerogative, gave his assent to it in the customary form. The joy of the people on this event was unbounded: bells were rung, bonfires lighted, and a day of festivity celebrated throughout the metropolis.

This memorable charter of English liberties consists simply of

a perpetual renunciation on the part of the king of four kinds of oppression stated to have been lately exercised against the people, contrary to the common law and statutes: The levy of loans or taxes not enacted by common consent in parliament, and the imposition of unlawful oaths and the subjecting of men to confinement and other molestations respecting them: Imprisonment without due process of law by the king's special command: The billeting of soldiers in private houses: and lastly, Commissions for subjecting soldiers and others to martial law, when they are rightly amenable to the common justice of the country. It was perfectly true that nothing was added by this instrument to the recorded rights of Englishmen nor anything taken away from the legal powers of the crown; but tyranny and oppression had in some of these points been exercised so frequently by his predecessors, and in all of them had been carried so far by himself, that the subjects of Charles esteemed it more than a victory to be but promised hereafter the unmolested enjoyment of what was incontrovertibly their own....

## V. Literary Criticism and Biography

### 3. Review of *The Life of William Roscoe, Edinburgh* *Review* 58:117 (July 1833) 65-86

[William Roscoe was an art historian and collector, an author of books for children and on botany, a banker and an attorney, and, briefly, a Member of Parliament standing for Liverpool. He was a dissenter and spoke out against the slave trade during his brief parliamentary career. Aikin introduces her review by commenting on the significance of biography generally; in her remarks, she illuminates her own methods as an historian, as she sought in her court memoirs to reveal public life through the lives of various individuals.]

There is a point of view in which the biographies of private persons, and particularly men of letters, have not been sufficiently contemplated, nor their value duly acknowledged. Such works, when written considerably in detail, and presenting, through the medium of extracts from correspondence, a record of opinions as well as of events, may be regarded as running commentaries on the history and spirit of an age, more interesting, and more instructive in some respects, than any others. Whilst an important addition is made to our means of estimating the character and principles of an individual, by learning to what kind of public measures he gave his commendation or reprehension, his opposition or support; we often gain, conversely, more insight into the real nature of a public measure, or, at least, the contemporary understanding as to its objects and tendencies, from the sentiments of that individual, as thrown out in conversation or in familiar letters, than is to be obtained by the most assiduous study of official documents, Parliamentary speeches, or political pamphlets. Opinions, too, on subjects of taste and literature, and incidental notices of manners and modes of life, which show the man in connexion with his age, have all, from that connexion, a value which augments with the lapse of time, and which an enlightened posterity will not fail duly to appreciate.

The biography of Mr Roscoe is peculiarly rich, from various causes, in these adventitious sources of interest, as well as in intrinsic value....



**4. From *The Life of Joseph Addison*. 2 vols. London:  
Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1843, I:1-3**

[Aikin's *Life of Addison* was poorly received by the *Edinburgh Review*, in a review attributed to Thomas Macaulay; nevertheless, the book (and the subject of Addison's life) was a topic felt sufficiently worthwhile to justify a 67-page review. While praising her historical writing and finding that she had justly earned her high reputation in that field, the reviewer asserts that: "The truth is, that she is not well acquainted with her subject. No person who is not familiar with the political and literary history of England during the reigns of William III., of Anne, and of George I., can possibly write a good life of Addison": *Edinburgh Review*, CLVII (July 1843): 193-260, 193-94. The basic complaint was that Aikin had failed in not providing sufficient historical and cultural context, one of the most notable features of her court memoirs. The *Life* does, in fact, seem susceptible to this criticism. The following brief excerpt from the first chapter contains Aikin's general theory of biographical writing.]

The study of biography brings home to the mind no one truth with greater force and distinctness than the impossibility of explaining, on any general system, the formation of human character. Hereditary or innate propensities appear to afford the solution of one set of facts, the power of early associations, of another; the influence of education, of outward circumstances, of imitation, must all in turn be called in to solve the different classes of examples, no single theory will account for all. There evidently lies at the root a great mystery inscrutable by man.

On this account every life should be written on the plan suited to itself, and no general rule can be given with regard to the insertion or omission of accessory circumstances. Thus, the instances are many in which the judicious biographer will find no inducement to dwell at any length on the parentage of his subject; for although the circumstance can seldom be considered as totally insignificant, its operation is often not clearly distinguishable; sometimes even the results are in direct opposition to what might naturally have been expected. It can rarely be made to appear, either that genius ran in the blood, or that the particular direction which it took in any given instance was a design or calculated effect of parental agency. Nay, the examples are not a few in which the vehement opposition of a father to the native bent of his child's genius, has only served, like most other surmountable

obstacles, to add strength to the original propensity, by calling forth the energy of resistance.

With respect to Addison the case is different. In his modest and amiable character there were few striking peculiarities, in his conduct there were no eccentricities, in his opinions no tendency to startling paradox.

An admirable, and certainly very original genius in his own line,—that of wit and humour, combined with fancy and an indescribable grace,—in the other parts of literature he was rather the judicious and discriminating follower of the best classical models, than the inventor of any new style of excellence; and the exquisite taste which is one of his most pervading qualities, was doubtless in great part the product of early and well-adapted culture.

**5. “Recollections of Joanna Baillie,” *Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters of the Late Lucy Aikin*. Ed. Philip Hemery Le Breton. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1864, 7-11**

[The form of Aikin’s “Recollections”—an affectionate sketch written by a friend or family member well-known to the deceased author—was a popular one during the later Romantic and Victorian eras. Aikin had a long acquaintance with Baillie (1762-1851), one of the leading playwrights and poets of her day and best-known for her *Plays on the Passions*, published in three volumes in 1798, 1802 and 1812. Baillie moved to Hampstead in 1802, and quickly became intimate with the Aikin-Barbauld circle. Like Aikin, Baillie never married and lived to old age; the following sketch, which was not published until after Aikin herself died in 1864, corroborates the high regard Baillie was held in by those who knew her, both for her personal qualities and her literary talents. It also reflects the very close relationship between Aikin and Baillie, who were buried beside one another in Hampstead cemetery.]

RECOLLECTIONS OF JOANNA BAILLIE

It has been my privilege to have had more or less of personal acquaintance with almost every literary woman of celebrity who adorned English society from the latter years of the last century nearly to the present time, and there was scarcely one of the number in whose society I did not find much to interest me; but of all these, excepting of course Mrs. Barbauld from the compar-

ison, Joanna Baillie made by far the deepest impression upon me. Her genius was surpassing, her character the most endearing and exalted.

I was a young girl when I first met her at Mrs. Barbauld's, to whom she had become known through her residence at Hampstead, her attendance on Mr. B.'s ministry, and her connection with the Denman family. Her genius had shrouded itself under so thick a veil of silent reserve, that its existence seems scarcely to have been even suspected beyond the domestic circle, when the "Plays on the Passions" burst on the world. The dedication to Dr. Baillie gave a hint in what quarter the author was to be sought; but the person chiefly suspected was the accomplished widow of his uncle John Hunter. Of Joanna no one dreamt on the occasion. She and her sister—I well remember the scene—arrived on a morning call at Mrs. Barbauld's; my aunt immediately introduced the topic of the anonymous tragedies, and gave utterance to her admiration with that generous delight in the manifestation of kindred genius, which distinguished her. But not even the sudden delight of such praise, so given, could seduce our Scottish damsel into self-betrayal. The faithful sister rushed forward, as we afterwards recollected, to bear the brunt, while the unsuspected author lay snug in the asylum of her taciturnity. Repression of all emotions, even the gentlest, and those most honourable to human nature, seems to have been indeed the constant lesson of her Presbyterian home.... [T]he first thing which drew upon Joanna the admiring notice of Hampstead society, was the devoted assiduity of her attention to her mother, then blind as well as aged, whom she attended day and night. But this task of duty came at length to its natural termination, and the secret of her authorship having been permitted to transpire, she was no longer privileged to sit in the shade, shuffling off upon others her own fair share in the expenses of conversation. Latterly, her discourse flowed freely, and it had too much of her own nature in it not to be ever welcome and delightful; but of all the writers, I might almost say the readers, I have ever known, she spoke the least of books. In fact she never loved them; it was not from them, but from real life, and from the aspects of rural nature, that her imagination drew the materials in which it worked, and it had been the penance of her youth to be drawn away from these to her studies. "I could not read well," she once said to me, "till nine years old!" "O Joanna," cried her sister, "not till eleven!" "I made my father melancholy breakfasts," she continued, "for I used to say my lesson to him then, and I always cried over it. And yet they

used to say, 'this girl is not stupid neither; she is handy at her needle, and understands common matters well enough.' I rambled over the heaths and plashed in the brook most of the day."....

... At the time of her birth, and during all her girlhood, her father, who afterwards became Divinity Professor in the University of Glasgow, was the minister of a rural parish in the neighbourhood, and his children ran about with those of his humble parishioners, barefoot like the rest. It was even a sacrifice to her to give up the practice. In summer she would confess her longing to pad in the grass, free from the incumbrance of hose and shoes; and I have known her throw away some eloquence in vain endeavours to prevail upon prejudiced English parents to allow their children to partake in so *healthful* an indulgence.

She had, in fact, a full share of the national predilections for which the Scotch are remarkable. But her large benevolence of nature purified this sentiment in her from the spirit of boasting and the gross unfairness which are its usual concomitants. It appeared practicable in her to love Scotch things and persons more, without loving the English less. Yet in many respects she never Anglicised in the least degree. Whether she and her sister actually took pains to keep up their native dialect, I know not, but it is certain that on their revisiting Glasgow twenty or thirty years after they had first quitted it, their friends were surprised to find them speaking with a broader accent than themselves, by whom the English pronunciation had long been anxiously cultivated as a genteel accomplishment. If, however, any stranger, on the strength of these her primitive notions and Scottish provincialisms, had expected to detect in her the slightest deficiency in good manners or social refinement, he would speedily have found his error. Joanna Baillie was an innate gentlewoman, and over the meekness of her disposition and the simplicity of her demeanour, there presided a genuine dignity, capable of repelling arrogance, and striking unworthiness with "blank awe." Her reserve had much of caution, but nothing of cowardice; she had perfect self-possession, and courage sufficient to say and do whatever in her high moral sense she judged right, regardless of any one's opinion. But such was her indulgence, and the truly Christian humility of her spirit, that practically she was only too tolerant of impertinence and intrusions. She was the only person I have ever known, towards whom fifty years of close acquaintance, while they continually deepened my affection, wore away nothing of my reverence.

## VII. Children's Literature

### 3. *From Juvenile Correspondence, or, Letters, Designed as Examples of the Epistolary Style, for Children of Both Sexes.* London: J. Johnson, 1811. v-ix

[Because letter writing was such an important skill for members of the middle and upper classes, letter-writing manuals were common throughout the early modern period. Aikin's volume, however, appears to have been the first designed expressly for children. After the preface, reproduced below, Aikin presents a series of model letters for children, beginning with that of an eight-year-old, and proceeding to letters written by teenagers. Interestingly, it seems that, as a child herself, Aikin was criticized by her brother for her deficient letter-writing abilities. In 1793, when she was twelve, her brother Arthur wrote to her: "I was much pleased with your kind letter but should have been much more so if it had not been so short: it is hardly fair I think to send me a small sheet even full of words one inch high; before I was as old as you I used to write away on single lines with great expedition" (Arthur to Lucy Aikin, 1793, Aikin Family Papers, Department of Rare Books & Special Collections, University of Rochester Library).]

#### Preface

That letter-writing is usually an irksome and difficult task to children, must be observed by all who take part in the work of education, since an unpractised pen is never fluent. To facilitate this necessary business, it is not unusual at schools to dictate a form, in which every child announces the coming vacation, makes some small requests, expresses the proper sentiments towards parents, brothers and sisters, and concludes by signing his name to the established assurances of love and duty.

It is plain that, whatever else is to be gained by such an exercise of penmanship, a free epistolary style is not.

With children more carefully educated at an elegant and lettered home, a different method is accordingly pursued.—Little Caroline is instructed to inform her friend Eliza of all her concerns: her studies, her amusements, the progress of the flower-garden, and the adventures of birds and kittens; with the welfare

and kind remembrance of different branches of the family. At first, the narration will be bald and dry; “What shall I say next?” will be often and dolefully repeated; and in mere pity to the correspondent, mamma will now and then be obliged to suggest a lively turn, or an intelligent remark. But things have been put in the right train; by degrees less prompting will be required; the letters will begin to reflect more of the individual character of the writer: as the understanding, and especially as the heart, begins to expand, new ideas will rush in, demanding new expressions; Sentiment will begin her reign in the soul, and make the fingers her nimble and willing interpreters.

All arts, however, are best taught by uniting example to precept. In that of letter-writing, English men and women have many and admirable patterns in every style; children, few or none. The genuine correspondences of a Mary Wortley Montagu, a Gray, and a Cowper,<sup>1</sup> must be far superior as models to any fancied letters that even themselves could have written; but epistolary patterns for the imitation of children must obviously be composed on purpose by an older person.

To furnish such patterns is the object of the following work.

How far the chief difficulty of the undertaking has been surmounted—to render the letters better than children’s and yet like children’s—is not for the author to decide; should she have failed here, it is a failure of judgment, not of attention. The topics selected are all such as delighted herself at an early age; the incidents were most of them real, and the traits of natural history, so largely interspersed, have been chosen on the principle of combining strict truth with some degree of novelty.

**4. From Mary Godolphin, *Robinson Crusoe in Words of One Syllable*. New York: McLoughlin Brothers, 1882.  
4-6**

[A series of adapted classic children’s books, in “words of one syllable,” were written by one “Mary Godolphin.” These books have long been attributed to Aikin (in the British Library Catalog and elsewhere). As with many books printed during the later Victo-

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1 Mary Wortley Montagu (bap. 1689, d. 1762), Thomas Gray (1716-71), and William Cowper (1731-1800), were all eighteenth-century authors famous for their posthumously published letters.

rian period, many of these editions were not dated and, as a result, it is difficult to offer a precise chronology of these books, nor even to say when they were first printed. Several sources, including the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, do not accept this attribution, though it is difficult to find definitive proof on either side. These books were adapted in order to make them accessible to very early readers, and the series includes several titles, including *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Evenings at Home*, and *Sandford and Merton*. It does appear that the adaptation of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, first published in 1719 and ever since a favorite with children, was the first in the series.]

## Preface

The production of a book which is adapted to the use of the youngest readers needs but few words of excuse or apology. The nature of the work seems to be sufficiently explained by the title itself, and the author's task has been chiefly to reduce the ordinary language into words of one syllable. But although, as far as the subject matter is concerned, the book can lay no claims to originality, it is believed that the idea and scope of its construction are entirely novel, for the One Syllable literature of the present day furnishes little more than a few short, unconnected sentences, and those chiefly in spelling books.

The deep interest which De Foe's story has never failed to arouse in the minds of the young, induces the author to hope that it may be acceptable in its present form.

It should be stated that exceptions to the rule of using words of one syllable exclusively have been made in the case of the proper names of the boy Xury and of the man Friday, and in the titles of the illustrations that accompany this work.

## Robinson Crusoe. In Words of One Syllable

I was born at York on the first of March in the sixth year of the reign of King Charles the First. From the time when I was quite a young child, I had felt a great wish to spend my life at sea, and as I grew, so did this taste grow more and more strong; till at last I broke loose from my school and home, and found my way on foot to Hull, where I soon got a place on board a ship.

When we had set sail but a few days, a squall of wind came on, and on the fifth night we sprang a leak. All hands were sent to the

pumps, but we felt the ship groan in all her planks, and her beams quake from stem to stern; so that it was soon quite clear there was no hope for her, and that all we could do was to save our lives.

The first thing was to fire off guns, to show that we were in need of help, and at length a ship, which lay not far from us, sent a boat to our aid. But the sea was too rough for it to lie near our ship's side, so we threw out a rope, which the men in the boat caught, and made fast, and by this means we all got in.

Still, in so wild a sea it was in vain to try to get on board the ship which had sent out the men, or to use our oars in the boat, and all we could do was to let it drive to shore.

In the space of half an hour our own ship struck on a rock and went down, and we saw her no more. We made but slow way to the land, which we caught sight of now and then when the boat rose to the top of some high wave, and there we saw men who ran in crowds, to and fro, all bent on one thing, and that was to save us.



## Appendix C: Contexts for Epistles on Women

3. From John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Newton. London: J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper, 1750. Book IV, lines 288-311, 634-38; Book VII, lines 505-16; Book IX, lines 5-13, 733-90, 1134-89

[John Milton (1608-74), poet and polemicist, completed his most famous poem, *Paradise Lost*, in 1663. It was written over a span of many years late in his life during the political upheavals of the Restoration, and the personal difficulties he faced including increasing blindness. The basic structure of the poem is an epic depiction of the fall of Adam and Eve, beginning with the fall of the angel Lucifer. The initial response to the poem was tempered, the first edition selling only a modest number of copies until a very deluxe folio fourth edition was printed in 1688. The following excerpts are those most relevant to Aikin's revision of Milton's telling.]

### Book IV

[The following passage describes Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve.]

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,  
Godlike erect, with native honour clad  
In naked majesty seemed lords of all, 290  
And worthy seemed, for in their looks divine  
The image of their glorious Maker shone,<sup>1</sup>  
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,  
Severe but in true filial freedom placed;  
Whence true authority in men; though both  
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;  
For contemplation he and valor formed,

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1 *Genesis* 1.26-27. "26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them."

For softness she and sweet attractive grace,  
 He for God only, she for God in him:<sup>1</sup>  
 His fair large front<sup>2</sup> and eye sublime declared 300  
 Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks  
 Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
 Clustr'ng, but not beneath his shoulders broad:  
 She as a veil down to the slender waist  
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore  
 Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waved  
 As the Vine curls her tendrils, which implied  
 Subjection, but required with gentle sway,  
 And by her yielded, by him best received,  
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride, 310  
 And sweet reluctant amorous delay....

[Eve responds as follows to Adam's instructions about the Sabbath.]

To whom thus Eve with perfect beauty adorned.  
 My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st 635  
 Unargued I obey; so God ordains,  
 God is thy Law, thou mine:<sup>3</sup> to know no more  
 Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.

## Book VII

[Raphael,<sup>4</sup> at the request of Adam, relates how and why this world was first created.]

There wanted yet the Master work, the end  
 Of all yet done; a creature who not prone<sup>5</sup>  
 And brute as other creatures, but indued  
 With sanctity of reason, might erect  
 His stature, and upright with front serene  
 Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence 510

- 
- 1 He for God only, she for God in him: Genesis 1.21-23 "21. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22. And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man."
  - 2 Front: forehead; a large forehead was thought to be a symbol of intelligence.
  - 3 God is thy Law, thou mine: similar to line 299 above.
  - 4 One of the seven archangels from the Bible.
  - 5 Abject, base.

Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,  
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good  
Descends, thither with heart and voice and eyes  
Directed in devotion, to adore  
And worship God supreme, who made him chief  
Of all his works ...

## Book IX

[The narrator begins Book IX by introducing the subject of the fall.]

... I now must change  
Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach  
Disloyal on the part of Man, revolt,  
And disobedience; on the part of Heaven  
Now alienated, distance and distaste,  
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given, 10  
That brought into this world a world of woe,  
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery  
Death's harbinger ...

[Eve proposes that she and Adam separate and divide their labors (214); Adam resists, reminding Eve that they have been warned that "malicious foe / Envyng our happiness, and of his own / Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame / By sly assault" (253-56). Eve persists, upset that Adam "shouldst my firmness ... doubt / To God or thee" (279-80). Adam finally relents, with misgivings. Satan, taking the form of a serpent, observes Eve alone and approaches her. He urges her to taste the fruit, telling her to ignore God's threats, and that he forbids it "but to keep ye low and ignorant" (704). The following passage describes her thoughts after she hears his speech.]

He ended; and his words, replete with guile,  
Into her heart too easy entrance won:  
Fix'd on the fruit she gaz'd, which to behold  
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound  
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd  
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth;  
Mean while the hour of noon drew on, and wak'd  
An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell 740  
So savory of that fruit, which with desire,  
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,  
Solicited her longing eye; yet first  
Pausing a while, thus to herself she mus'd.

Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,  
 Though kept from man, and worthy to be admir'd;  
 Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay  
 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught  
 The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise:  
 Thy praise he also who forbids thy use, 750  
 Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree  
 Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;  
 Forbids us then to taste! but his forbidding  
 Commends thee more, while it infers the good  
 By thee communicated, and our want:  
 For good unknown, sure is not had, or, had  
 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.  
 In plain then, what forbids he but to know,  
 Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?  
 Such prohibitions bind not. But if death 760  
 Bind us with after-bands, what profits then  
 Our inward freedom? In the day we eat  
 Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!  
 How dies the Serpent? he hath eaten and lives,  
 And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,  
 Irrational till then. For us alone  
 Was death invented? or to us deny'd  
 This intellectual food, for beasts reserv'd?  
 For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first 770  
 Hath tasted, envies not, but brings with joy  
 The good befall'n him, author unsuspect,  
 Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.  
 What fear I then, rather, what know to fear  
 Under this ignorance of good and evil,  
 Of God or death, of law or penalty?  
 Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,  
 Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,  
 Of virtue to make wise: what hinders then  
 To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?  
 So saying, her rash hand in evil hour 780  
 Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she eat!  
 Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,  
 Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,  
 That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk  
 The guilty Serpent, and well might, for Eve,  
 Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else  
 Regarded, such delight till then, as seem'd,  
 In fruit she never tasted, whether true

Or fancy'd so, through expectation high  
Of knowledge, nor was God-head from her thought.... 790

[Eve returns to find Adam waiting for her. She tells him her story, whereupon he “amaz’d, / Astoni[sh]ed stood and blank, while horror chill / Ran through his veins” (889-91). He decides that he cannot abandon her to her fate alone, and thus eats the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge that Eve brings him. They soon feel shame in their nakedness, and seek to cover themselves with leaves. The book ends with Adam admonishing Eve as follows.]

Would thou hadst hearken'd to my words, and stay'd  
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange  
Desire of wand'ring, this unhappy morn,  
I know not whence possess'd thee; we had then  
Remain'd still happy, not, as now, despoil'd  
Of all our good, sham'd, naked, miserable.  
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve 1140  
The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek  
Such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail.  
To whom, soon mov'd with touch of blame, thus Eve.  
What words have pass'd thy lips, Adam severe!  
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will  
Of wand'ring, as thou call'st it, which who knows  
But might as ill have happen'd thou being by,  
Or to thyself perhaps? hadst thou been there,  
Or here th' attempt, thou couldst not have discern'd  
Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake; 1150  
No ground of enmity between us known,  
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.  
Was I to have never parted from thy side?  
As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.  
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,<sup>1</sup>  
Command me absolutely not to go,  
Going into such danger as thou saidst?  
Too facil then, thou didst not much gainsay,  
Nay didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.  
Hadst thou been firm and fix'd in thy dissent, 1160  
Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with me.

---

1 Refers to Adam, who is associated with intelligence. 1 Corinthians 113. “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

To whom, then first incens'd, Adam reply'd.  
 Is this the love, is this the recompense  
 Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, express'd  
 Immutable when thou wert lost, not I,  
 Who might have liv'd, and joy'd immortal bliss,  
 Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?  
 And am I now upbraided as the cause  
 Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,  
 It seems, in thy restraint: what could I more? 1170  
 I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold  
 The danger, and the lurking enemy  
 That lay in wait; beyond this had been force,  
 And force upon free will hath here no place.  
 But confidence then bore thee on, secure  
 Either to meet no danger, or to find  
 Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps  
 I also err'd, in overmuch admiring  
 What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought  
 No evil durst attempt thee, but I rue 1180  
 That error now, which is become my crime,  
 And thou th' accuser. Thus it shall befall  
 Him who to worth in women overtrusting,  
 Lets her will rule; restraint she will not brook;  
 And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,  
 She first his weak indulgence will accuse.  
 Thus they in mutual accusation spent  
 The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,  
 And of their vain contest appear'd no end.

**4. From Alexander Pope, *Epistles to Several Persons*, “Epistle II: To a Lady on the Characters of Women,” *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*. Vol. 3. J. French: London, 1777. 73-82<sup>1</sup>**

[Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was the leading poet of the early eighteenth century. His “Epistle to a Lady” (1735) is addressed to Pope’s closest female friend, Martha Blount (1690-1763). There was much gossip that she was his mistress and even that he had secretly married her, but there is no convincing evidence to support such speculation. His devotion to Martha remained unbroken and in his will he left her a considerable fortune. The poem is the most satirically scathing of

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1 This Epistle is part of a tradition of satiric Epistles on women descending from Juvenal’s Epistle VI (see Appendix C, Print Version, pp. 181-82).

Pope's moral epistles. The reader eavesdrops as Pope, the painter-poet, and his companion, Martha Blount, stroll round an imaginary portrait gallery and the poet points out the most prominent (and usually negative) characteristics of the portraits of different women.]

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,  
"Most Women have no Characters at all."  
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,  
And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair.

How many pictures of one nymph we view,  
All how unlike each other, all how true!<sup>1</sup>  
Arcadia's Countess, here, in ermin'd pride,  
Is, there, Pastora<sup>2</sup> by a fountain side.  
Here Fannia, leering on her own good man,  
And there, a naked Leda with a Swan.<sup>3</sup> 10  
Let then the Fair one beautifully cry,  
In Magdalen's<sup>4</sup> loose hair and lifted eye,  
Or dress'd in smiles of sweet Cecilia<sup>5</sup> shine,  
With simp'ring angels, palms, and harps divine;  
Whether the charmer sinner it, or saint it,  
If folly grows romantic, I must paint it.

Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!  
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air;  
Choose a firm cloud, before it fall, and in it  
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute. 20

Rufa, whose eye quick-glancing o'er the park,  
Attracts each light gay meteor of a spark,  
Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,  
As Sappho's<sup>6</sup> diamonds with her dirty smock;

---

1 Pope names his female characters in various ways drawing upon both classical mythology and more conventional names found in, or in imitation of, those used in pastoral poetry. Some of his characters are thought to have been modeled after actual individuals. See p. 73, note 6, below.

2 A shepherdess.

3 A character from Greek mythology who became the mother of Helen of Troy after Zeus, in the form of a swan, seduced her.

4 Mary Magdalen from the Bible, often conceived of as a reformed prostitute.

5 Saint Cecilia, Roman martyr and patroness of music.

6 Female Greek lyric poet.

Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,  
With Sappho fragrant at an ev'ning Masque:  
So morning insects that in muck begun,  
Shine, buzz, and flyblow in the setting sun.

How soft is Silia! fearful to offend;  
The frail one's advocate, the weak one's friend: 30  
To her, Calista<sup>1</sup> prov'd her conduct nice,  
And good Simplicius asks of her advice.  
Sudden, she storms! she raves! You tip the wink,  
But spare your censure; Silia does not drink.  
All eyes may see from what the change arose,  
All eyes may see—a pimple on her nose.

Papillia, wedded to her doating spark,  
Sighs for the shades—"How charming is a park!"  
A park is purchas'd, but the fair he sees  
All bath'd in tears—"Oh, odious, odious trees!" 40

Ladies, like variegated tulips, show,  
'Tis to their changes that their charms they owe;  
Their happy spots the nice admirer take,  
Fine by defect, and delicately weak.  
'Twas thus Calypso<sup>2</sup> once each heart alarm'd,  
Aw'd without virtue, without beauty charm'd;  
Her tongue bewitch'd as oddly as her eyes,  
Less wit than mimic, more a wit than wise;  
Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,  
Was just not ugly, and was just not mad; 50  
Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,  
As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate.

Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,  
To make a wash, would hardly stew a child;  
Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a lover's pray'r,  
And paid a tradesman once to make him stare,  
Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,  
And made a widow happy, for a whim.  
Why then declare good nature is her scorn,  
When 'tis by that alone she can be borne? 60

---

1 In Greek mythology, a huntress nymph whom Zeus loved.

2 A siren from Greek mythology; in *The Odyssey* the nymph who keeps Odysseus on the island of Ogygia for seven years.



Why pique all mortals, yet affect a name?  
 A fool to pleasure, yet a slave to fame:  
 Now deep in Taylor and the Book of Martyrs<sup>1</sup>  
 Now drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres.<sup>2</sup>  
 Now conscience chills her, and now passion burns;  
 And atheism and religion take their turns;  
 A very heathen in the carnal part,  
 Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart.

See Sin in State, majestically drunk;  
 Proud as a peeress, prouder as a punk; 70  
 Chaste to her husband, frank to all beside,  
 A teeming mistress, but a barren bride.  
 What then? let blood and body bear the fault,  
 Her head's untouch'd, that noble seat of thought:  
 Such this day's doctrine—in another fit  
 She sins with poets through pure love of wit.  
 What has not fir'd her bosom or her brain?  
 Caesar and Tallboy,<sup>3</sup> Charles and Charlema'ne.  
 As Helluo,<sup>4</sup> late dictator of the feast,  
 The nose of hautgout,<sup>5</sup> and the tip of taste, 80  
 Critiqu'd your wine, and analys'd your meat,  
 Yet on plain pudding deign'd at home to eat;  
 So Philomede,<sup>6</sup> lect'ring all mankind  
 On the soft passion, and the taste refin'd,  
 Th' address, the delicacy—stoops at once,  
 And makes her hearty meal upon a dunce.

Flavia's a wit, has too much sense to pray,  
 To Toast our wants and wishes, is her way;  
 Nor asks of God, but of her stars to give  
 The mighty blessing, "while we live, to live." 90  
 Then all for death, that opiate of the soul!

- 
- 1 Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*; Book of Martyrs: John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*.  
 2 Francis Charteris (1665-1732), "a gambler and a rake," was twice convicted of rape, but eventually pardoned for both.  
 3 A character in low comedy.  
 4 A glutton, a gourmandizer.  
 5 "A high or piquant flavor; a strong relish" (*OED*).  
 6 Philomede is thought to refer to Sarah Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough (1660-1744), an influential aristocrat; and Flavia, mentioned below, to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), a well-known author.

Lucretia's<sup>1</sup> dagger, Rosamonda's<sup>2</sup> bowl.  
 Say, what can cause such impotence of mind?  
 A spark too fickle, or a spouse too kind.  
 Wise wretch! with pleasures too refin'd to please;  
 With too much spirit to be e'er at ease;  
 With too much quickness ever to be taught;  
 With too much thinking to have common thought:  
 You purchase pain with all that joy can give,  
 And die of nothing but a rage to live.

100

Turn then from wits; and look on Simo's<sup>3</sup> mate,  
 No ass so meek, no ass so obstinate:  
 Or her, that owns her faults, but never mends,  
 Because she's honest, and the best of friends:  
 Or her, whose life the Church and scandal share,  
 For ever in a passion, or a prayer:  
 Or her, who laughs at Hell, but (like her Grace)  
 Cries, "Ah! how charming, if there's no such place!"  
 Or who in sweet vicissitude appears  
 Of mirth and opium, ratafie and tears,

110

The daily anodyne, and nightly draught,  
 To kill those foes to fair ones, time and thought.  
 Woman and fool are two hard things to hit,  
 For true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.

But what are these to great Atossa's<sup>4</sup> mind?  
 Scarce once herself, by turns all womankind!  
 Who, with herself, or others, from her birth  
 Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:  
 Shines, in exposing knaves, and painting fools,  
 Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules.

120

No thought advances, but her eddy brain  
 Whisks it about, and down it goes again.  
 Full sixty years the world has been her trade,  
 The wisest fool much time has ever made.

- 
- 1 Tragic Roman heroine and wife of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus. After being raped by Sextus Tarquinius Superbus she killed herself.
  - 2 Rosamond Clifford, royal mistress who, legend claims, was killed by Queen Eleanor after being given the choice between being killed by a dagger or a poisoned bowl.
  - 3 Character of an old man.
  - 4 Some believe Atossa to be Katherine, Duchess of Buckinghamshire. Atossa was also a historical figure who was the daughter of Cyrus and Cambyses.

From loveless youth to unrespected age,  
 No passion gratified except her rage.  
 So much the fury still outran the wit,  
 The pleasure miss'd her, and the scandal hit.  
 Who breaks with her, provokes revenge from Hell,  
 But he's a bolder man who dares be well. 130  
 Her every turn with violence pursu'd,  
 Nor more a storm her hate than gratitude.  
 To that each passion turns, or soon or late;  
 Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate:  
 Superiors? death! and equals? what a curse!  
 But an inferior not dependant? worse.  
 Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;  
 Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live:  
 But die, and she'll adore you—Then the Bust  
 And Temple rise—then fall again to dust. 140  
 Last night, her Lord was all that's good and great;  
 A knave this morning, and his will a cheat.  
 Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,  
 By spirit robb'd of pow'r, by warmth of friends,  
 By wealth of follow'rs! without one distress  
 Sick of herself through very selfishness!  
 Atossa, curs'd with ev'ry granted pray'r,  
 Childless with all her children, wants an heir.  
 To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,  
 Or wanders, heav'n-directed, to the poor. 150

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,  
 Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;  
 Some wand'ring touch or some reflected light,  
 Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right:  
 For how should equal colours do the knack?  
 Chameleons who can paint in white and black?

"Yet Chloe sure was form'd without a spot"—  
 Nature in her then err'd not, but forgot.  
 "With ev'ry pleasing, ev'ry prudent part,  
 Say, what can Chloe want?"—She wants a heart. 160  
 She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;  
 But never, never, reach'd one gen'rous thought.  
 Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,  
 Content to dwell in decencies for ever.  
 So very reasonable, so unmov'd,  
 As never yet to love, or to be lov'd.

She, while her lover pants upon her breast,  
 Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;  
 And when she sees her friend in deep despair,  
 Observes how much a chintz exceeds mohair. 170  
 Forbid it heav'n, a favour or a debt  
 She e'er should cancel—but she may forget.  
 Safe is your secret still in Chloe's ear;  
 But none of Chloe's shall you ever hear.  
 Of all her dears she never slander'd one,  
 But cares not if a thousand are undone.  
 Would Chloe know if you're alive or dead?  
 She bids her footman put it in her head.  
 Chloe is prudent—would you too be wise?  
 Then never break your heart when Chloe dies. 180

One certain portrait may (I grant) be seen,  
 Which Heav'n has varnish'd out, and made a Queen:<sup>1</sup>  
 The same for ever! and describ'd by all  
 With truth and goodness, as with crown and ball.  
 Poets heap virtues, painters gems at will,  
 And show their zeal, and hide their want of skill.  
 'Tis well—but, artists! who can paint or write,  
 To draw the naked is your true delight.  
 That robe of quality so struts and swells,  
 None see what parts of nature it conceals. 190  
 Th' exactest traits of body or of mind,  
 We owe to models of an humble kind.  
 If Queensbury<sup>2</sup> to strip there's no compelling,  
 'Tis from a handmaid we must take a Helen.<sup>3</sup>  
 From peer or bishop 'tis no easy thing  
 To draw the man who loves his God, or King:  
 Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)  
 From honest Mah'met,<sup>4</sup> or plain Parson Hale.<sup>5</sup>

But grant, in public men sometimes are shown,  
 A woman's seen in private life alone: 200

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1 Queen Caroline (1683-1737).  
 2 Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensbury.  
 3 Helen of Troy.  
 4 "Servant to the late king, George I, said to be the son of a Turkish Bassa, whom he took at the siege of Buda, and constantly kept about his person" [Pope].  
 5 Dr. Stephen Hales (1677-1761), natural philosopher and friend of Pope.

Our bolder talents in full light display'd;  
Your virtues open fairest in the shade.  
Bred to disguise, in public 'tis you hide;  
There, none distinguish twixt your shame or pride,  
Weakness or delicacy; all so nice,  
That each may seem a virtue, or a vice.

In men, we various ruling passions find;  
In women, two almost divide the kind;  
Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,  
The love of pleasure, and the love of sway. 210  
That, Nature gives; and where the lesson taught<sup>1</sup>  
Is still to please, can pleasure seem a fault?  
Experience, this; by man's oppression curs'd,  
They seek the second not to lose the first.

Men, some to bus'ness, some to pleasure take;  
But ev'ry woman is at heart a rake:  
Men, some to quiet, some to public strife;  
But ev'ry Lady would be queen for life.

Yet mark the fate of a whole sex of queens!  
Pow'r all their end, but beauty all the means. 220  
In youth they conquer, with so wild a rage,  
As leaves them scarce a subject in their age:  
For foreign glory, foreign joy, they roam;  
No thought of peace or happiness at home.  
But wisdom's triumph is well-tim'd retreat,  
As hard a science to the fair as great!  
Beauties, like tyrants, old and friendless grown,  
Yet hate repose, and dread to be alone,  
Worn out in public, weary ev'ry eye,  
Nor leave one sigh behind them when they die. 230

Pleasures the sex, as children birds, pursue,  
Still out of reach, yet never out of view;  
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the toy at most,  
To covet flying, and regret when lost:  
At last, to follies youth could scarce defend,  
It grows their age's prudence to pretend;

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1 "This is occasioned partly by their Nature, partly by their education, and in some degree by necessity" [Pope].

Asham'd to own they gave delight before,  
Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more:  
As hags hold sabbaths, less for joy than spite,  
So these their merry, miserable night; 240  
Still round and round the ghosts of beauty glide,  
And haunt the places where their honour died.

See how the world its veterans rewards!  
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards;  
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,  
Young without lovers, old without a friend,  
A fop their passion, but their prize a sot,  
Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!

Ah, Friend! to dazzle let the vain design,  
To raise the thought and touch the heart, be thine! 250  
That charm shall grow, while what fatigues the Ring,  
Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing:  
So when the sun's broad beam has tir'd the sight,  
All mild ascends the moon's more sober light,  
Serene in virgin modesty she shines,  
And unobserv'd the glaring orb declines.

Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray  
Can make tomorrow cheerful as today;  
She, who can love a sister's charms, or hear  
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear; 260  
She, who ne'er answers till a husband cools,  
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;  
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,  
Yet has her humour most, when she obeys;  
Let fops or fortune fly which way they will;  
Disdains all loss of tickets, or codille;  
Spleen, vapours, or smallpox, above them all,  
And mistress of herself, though China fall.

And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,  
Woman's at best a contradiction still. 270  
Heav'n, when it strives to polish all it can  
Its last best work, but forms a softer man;  
Picks from each sex, to make the fav'rite blest,  
Your love of pleasure, our desire of rest:  
Blends, in exception to all gen'ral rules,

Your taste of follies, with our scorn of fools:  
Reserve with frankness, art with truth allied,  
Courage with softness, modesty with pride,  
Fix'd principles, with fancy ever new;  
Shakes all together, and produces—You. 280

Be this a woman's fame: with this unblest,  
Toasts live a scorn, and queens may die a jest.  
This Phœbus<sup>1</sup> promis'd (I forget the year)  
When those blue eyes first open'd on the sphere;  
Ascendant Phœbus watch'd that hour with care,  
Averted half your parents' simple pray'r,  
And gave you beauty, but denied the pelf<sup>2</sup>  
Which buys your sex a tyrant o'er itself.  
The gen'rous God, who wit and gold refines,  
And ripens spirits as he ripens mines, 290  
Kept dross<sup>3</sup> for duchesses, the world shall know it,  
To you gave sense, good humour, and a poet.

**5. From Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. London: J. Johnson, 1792. 15-16, 92-108**

[Mary Wollstonecraft first began writing after her family had suffered a series of financial misfortunes. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*—more than 300 pages—was written in approximately three months. The first and second *Vindications* are written as a response to Burke and Rousseau respectively. The ambitious and confident stance that Wollstonecraft assumed put her at the center of debates regarding the claims she made for women in her text. While more conservative readers admonished Wollstonecraft's assertions regarding women's oppression, *Vindication* was soon translated into German and French and was very well received.]

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1 Apollo.

2 "Riches, material possessions. Could refer to stolen goods, or to riches with a corrupting influence" (*OED*).

3 "Generally, refuse; rubbish; worthless, impure matter, though here there is an allusion to the more specific usage, which is the extraneous matter thrown off from metals in the process of melting" (*OED*).

## Part I

### Chapter I. The Rights and Involved Duties of Mankind Considered

In the present state of society it appears necessary to go back to first principles in search of the most simple truths, and to dispute with some prevailing prejudice every inch of ground. To clear my way, I must be allowed to ask some plain questions, and the answers will probably appear as unequivocal as the axioms on which reasoning is built; though, when entangled with various motives of action, they are formally contradicted, either by the words or conduct of men.

In what does man's pre-eminence over the brute creation consist? The answer is as clear as that a half is less than the whole; in Reason.

What acquirement exalts one being above another? Virtue; we spontaneously reply.

For what purpose were the passions implanted? That man by struggling with them might attain a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes; whispers Experience.

Consequently the perfection of our nature and capability of happiness, must be estimated by the degree of reason, virtue, and knowledge, that distinguish the individual, and direct the laws which bind society: and that from the exercise of reason, knowledge and virtue naturally flow, is equally undeniable, if mankind be viewed collectively....

### From Chapter III

... It is time to effect a revolution in female manners—time to restore to them their lost dignity—and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners.—If men be demi-gods—why let us serve them! And if the dignity of the female soul be as disputable as that of animals—if their reason does not afford sufficient light to direct their conduct whilst unerring instinct is denied—they are surely of all creatures the most miserable! and, bent beneath the iron hand of destiny, must submit to be a fair defect in creation. But to justify the ways of Providence respecting them, by pointing out some irrefragable reason for thus making such a large portion of mankind accountable and not accountable, would puzzle the subtlest casuist.

The only solid foundation for morality appears to be the character of the supreme Being; the harmony of which arises from a balance of attributes;—and, to speak with reverence, one attribute seems to imply the necessity of another. He must be just, because he is wise, he must be good, because he is omnipotent. For to exalt one attribute at the



expense of another equally noble and necessary, bears the stamp of the warped reason of man—the homage of passion. Man, accustomed to bow down to power in his savage state, can seldom divest himself of this barbarous prejudice, even when civilization determines how much superior mental is to bodily strength; and his reason is clouded by these crude opinions, even when he thinks of the Deity. His omnipotence is made to swallow up, or preside over his other attributes, and those mortals are supposed to limit his power irreverently, who think that it must be regulated by his wisdom.

I disclaim that specious humility which, after investigating nature, stops at the author.—The High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, doubtless possesses many attributes of which we can form no conception; but reason tells me that they cannot clash with those I adore—and I am compelled to listen to her voice.

It seems natural for man to search for excellence, and either to trace it in the object that he worships, or blindly to invest it with perfection, as a garment. But what good effect can the latter mode of worship have on the moral conduct of a rational being? He bends to power; he adores a dark cloud, which may open a bright prospect to him, or burst in angry, lawless fury, on his devoted head—he knows not why. And, supposing that the Deity acts from the vague impulse of an undirected will, man must also follow his own, or act according to rules, deduced from principles which he disclaims as irreverent. Into this dilemma have both enthusiasts and cooler thinkers fallen, when they laboured to free men from the wholesome restraints which a just conception of the character of God imposes.

It is not impious thus to scan the attributes of the Almighty: in fact, who can avoid it that exercises his faculties? For to love God as the fountain of wisdom, goodness, and power, appears to be the only worship useful to a being who wishes to acquire either virtue or knowledge. A blind unsettled affection may, like human passions, occupy the mind and warm the heart, whilst, to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God, is forgotten. I shall pursue this subject still further, when I consider religion in a light opposite to that recommended by Dr. Gregory, who treats it as a matter of sentiment or taste.

To return from this apparent digression. It were to be wished that women would cherish an affection for their husbands, founded on the same principle that devotion ought to rest upon. No other firm base is there under heaven—for let them beware of the fallacious light of sentiment; too often used as a softer phrase for sensuality. It follows then, I think, that from their infancy women should either be shut up like eastern princes, or educated in such a manner as to be able to think and act for themselves.

Why do men halt between two opinions, and expect impossibilities? Why do they expect virtue from a slave, from a being whom the constitution of civil society has rendered weak, if not vicious?

Still I know that it will require a considerable length of time to eradicate the firmly rooted prejudices which sensualists have planted; it will also require some time to convince women that they act contrary to their real interest on an enlarged scale, when they cherish or affect weakness under the name of delicacy, and to convince the world that the poisoned source of female vices and follies, if it be necessary, in compliance with custom, to use synonymous terms in a lax sense, has been the sensual homage paid to beauty:—to beauty of features; for it has been shrewdly observed by a German writer, that a pretty woman, as an object of desire, is generally allowed to be so by men of all descriptions; whilst a fine woman, who inspires more sublime emotions by displaying intellectual beauty, may be overlooked or observed with indifference, by those men who find their happiness in the gratification of their appetites. I foresee an obvious retort—whilst man remains such an imperfect being as he appears hitherto to have been, he will, more or less, be the slave of his appetites; and those women obtaining most power who gratify a predominant one, the sex is degraded by a physical, if not by a moral necessity.

This objection has, I grant, some force; but while such a sublime precept exists, as, “be pure as your heavenly Father is pure”; it would seem that the virtues of man are not limited by the Being who alone could limit them; and that he may press forward without considering whether he steps out of his sphere by indulging such a noble ambition. To the wild billows it has been said, “thus far shalt thou go, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” Vainly then do they beat and foam, restrained by the power that confines the struggling planets in their orbits, matter yields to the great governing Spirit.—But an immortal soul, not restrained by mechanical laws and struggling to free itself from the shackles of matter, contributes to, instead of disturbing, the order of creation, when, co-operating with the Father of spirits, it tries to govern itself by the invariable rule that, in a degree, before which our imagination faints, the universe is regulated.

Besides, if women are educated for dependence; that is, to act according to the will of another fallible being, and submit, right or wrong, to power, where are we to stop? Are they to be considered as viceregents allowed to reign over a small domain, and answerable for their conduct to a higher tribunal, liable to error?

It will not be difficult to prove that such delegates will act like men subjected by fear, and make their children and servants endure their tyrannical oppression. As they submit without reason, they will, having

no fixed rules to square their conduct by, be kind, or cruel, just as the whim of the moment directs; and we ought not to wonder if sometimes, galled by their heavy yoke, they take a malignant pleasure in resting it on weaker shoulders.

But, supposing a woman, trained up to obedience, be married to a sensible man, who directs her judgment without making her feel the servility of her subjection, to act with as much propriety by this reflected light as can be expected when reason is taken at second hand, yet she cannot ensure the life of her protector; he may die and leave her with a large family.

A double duty devolves on her; to educate them in the character of both father and mother; to form their principles and secure their property. But, alas! she has never thought, much less acted for herself. She has only learned to please men, to depend gracefully on them; yet, encumbered with children, how is she to obtain another protector—a husband to supply the place of reason? A rational man, for we are not treading on romantic ground, though he may think her a pleasing docile creature, will not choose to marry a family for love, when the world contains many more pretty creatures. What is then to become of her? She either falls an easy prey to some mean fortune-hunter, who defrauds her children of their paternal inheritance, and renders her miserable; or becomes the victim of discontent and blind indulgence. Unable to educate her sons, or impress them with respect; for it is not a play on words to assert, that people are never respected, though filling an important station, who are not respectable; she pines under the anguish of unavailing impotent regret. The serpent's tooth enters into her very soul, and the vices of licentious youth bring her with sorrow, if not with poverty also, to the grave.

This is not an overcharged picture; on the contrary, it is a very possible case, and something similar must have fallen under every attentive eye.

I have, however, taken it for granted, that she was well-disposed, though experience shews, that the blind may as easily be led into a ditch as along the beaten road. But supposing no very improbable conjecture, that a being only taught to please must still find her happiness in pleasing;—what an example of folly, not to say vice, will she be to her innocent daughters! The mother will be lost in the coquette, and instead of making friends of her daughters, view them with eyes askance, for they are rivals—rivals more cruel than any other, because they invite a comparison, and drive her from the throne of beauty, who has never thought of a seat on the bench of reason.

It does not require a lively pencil, or the discriminating outline of a caricature, to sketch the domestic miseries and petty vices which such a mistress of a family diffuses. Still she only acts as a woman ought to

act, brought up according to Rousseau's system. She can never be reproached for being masculine, or turning out of her sphere; nay, she may observe another of his grand rules, and cautiously preserving her reputation free from spot, be reckoned a good kind of woman. Yet in what respect can she be termed good? She abstains, it is true, without any great struggle, from committing gross crimes; but how does she fulfil her duties? Duties!—in truth she has enough to think of to adorn her body and nurse a weak constitution.

With respect to religion, she never presumed to judge for herself; but conformed, as a dependent creature should, to the ceremonies of the church which she was brought up in, piously believing that wiser heads than her own have settled that business:—and not to doubt is her point of perfection. She therefore pays her tythe of mint and cummin—and thanks her God that she is not as other women are. These are the blessed effects of a good education! These the virtues of man's help-mate!<sup>1</sup>

I must relieve myself by drawing a different picture.

Let fancy now present a woman with a tolerable understanding, for I do not wish to leave the line of mediocrity, whose constitution, strengthened by exercise, has allowed her body to acquire its full vigour; her mind, at the same time, gradually expanding itself to comprehend the moral duties of life, and in what human virtue and dignity consist.

Formed thus by the discharge of the relative duties of her station, she marries from affection, without losing sight of prudence, and looking beyond matrimonial felicity, she secures her husband's respect before it is necessary to exert mean arts to please him and feed a dying flame, which nature doomed to expire when the object became familiar, when friendship and forbearance take place of a more ardent affection.—This is the natural death of love, and domestic peace is not destroyed by struggles to prevent its extinction. I also suppose the husband to be virtuous; or she is still more in want of independent principles.

Fate, however, breaks this tie.—She is left a widow, perhaps, without a sufficient provision; but she is not desolate! The pang of

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1 "O how lovely," exclaims Rousseau, speaking of Sophia, "is her ignorance! Happy is he who is destined to instruct her! She will never pretend to be the tutor of her husband, but will be content to be his pupil. Far from attempting to subject him to her taste, she will accommodate herself to his. She will be more estimable to him, than if she was learned: he will have a pleasure in instructing her."—Rousseau's *Emilius*. I shall content myself with simply asking, how friendship can subsist, when love expires, between the master and his pupil? [M.W.]

nature is felt; but after time has softened sorrow into melancholy resignation, her heart turns to her children with redoubled fondness, and anxious to provide for them, affection gives a sacred heroic cast to her maternal duties. She thinks that not only the eye sees her virtuous efforts from whom all her comfort now must flow, and whose approbation is life; but her imagination, a little abstracted and exalted by grief, dwells on the fond hope that the eyes which her trembling hand closed, may still see how she subdues every wayward passion to fulfil the double duty of being the father as well as the mother of her children. Raised to heroism by misfortunes, she represses the first faint dawning of a natural inclination, before it ripens into love, and in the bloom of life forgets her sex— forgets the pleasure of an awakening passion, which might again have been inspired and returned. She no longer thinks of pleasing, and conscious dignity prevents her from priding herself on account of the praise which her conduct demands. Her children have her love, and her brightest hopes are beyond the grave, where her imagination often strays.

I think I see her surrounded by her children, reaping the reward of her care. The intelligent eye meets hers, whilst health and innocence smile on their chubby cheeks, and as they grow up the cares of life are lessened by their grateful attention. She lives to see the virtues which she endeavoured to plant on principles fixed into habits, to see her children attain a strength of character sufficient to enable them to endure adversity without forgetting their mother's example.

The task of life thus fulfilled, she calmly waits for the sleep of death, and rising from the grave, may say—Behold, thou gavest me a talent—and here are five talents.

I wish to sum up what I have said in a few words, for I here throw down my gauntlet, and deny the existence of sexual virtues, not excepting modesty. For man and woman, truth, if I understand the meaning of the word, must be the same; yet the fanciful female character, so prettily drawn by poets and novelists, demanding the sacrifice of truth and sincerity, virtue becomes a relative idea, having no other foundation than utility, and of that utility men pretend arbitrarily to judge, shaping it to their own convenience.

Women, I allow, may have different duties to fulfil; but they are human duties, and the principles that should regulate the discharge of them, I sturdily maintain, must be the same.

To become respectable, the exercise of their understanding is necessary, there is no other foundation for independence of character; I mean explicitly to say that they must only bow to the authority of reason, instead of being the modest slaves of opinion.

In the superior ranks of life how seldom do we meet with a man of

superior abilities, or even common acquirements? The reason appears to me clear, the state they are born in was an unnatural one. The human character has ever been formed by the employments the individual, or class, pursues; and if the faculties are not sharpened by necessity, they must remain obtuse. The argument may fairly be extended to women; for, seldom occupied by serious business, the pursuit of pleasure gives that insignificancy to their character which renders the society of the great so insipid. The same want of firmness, produced by a similar cause, forces them both to fly from themselves to noisy pleasures, and artificial passions, till vanity takes place of every social affection, and the characteristics of humanity can scarcely be discerned. Such are the blessings of civil governments, as they are at present organized, that wealth and female softness equally tend to debase mankind, and are produced by the same cause; but allowing women to be rational creatures, they should be incited to acquire virtues which they may call their own, for how can a rational being be ennobled by any thing that is not obtained by its own exertions?