

Henry Crabb Robinson

Kewick 17th Sept. 1816.

Parish of Frofthwaite Cumberland

My dear friend.

It was my intention to write to you much earlier in the course of my excursion, but as my letters held the second place only, and my journal the first, and as circumstances have hitherto allowed me very little leisure, I could not with convenience attempt to write till this evening - I will give you a rapid outline of my history and therein dwell on the only subject upon which you can have any peculiar interest.

On Thursday the 29th Ult^o: I proceeded to Caaford, travelling with a servant of Bonapartes and just arrived from St. Helena - I rambled over the colleges for a few hours -

Friday. On leaving Caaford I was fortunate in having for companions two gentlemen with whom I was so much pleased, that on their account I altered my plan altogether and my journey assumed a new character - They were an Italian Gentleman abt. 20 years of age - a Mr. Torliano with an Englishman, a sort of Tutor, at least a travelling Companion. Of course, they were Catholics - Apparently conscientious & even scrupulous but withal liberal - We reached Birmingham

Sat. 31. Was spent in a journey to Manchester in bad weather & with nothing but each other to converse

Sunday 1st Sept. My Compan^s in the spirit of duty heard Mass, I from a social feeling heard a Unitarian sermon - Then I gratified the Italian's curiosity by shewing him a Quaker's Meeting & a Maastricht Chapel

2^d. We went to Lancaster. here I found the Offices were holding. I called on several acquaintances

3^d. I introduced my companions into the magnificent courts - really august in their structure and I then left them to make an excursion alone on foot - I joined them at Burton and we reached Kendal late

4th Having breakfasted, I called on the Thompsons & was most cordially received - I staid but a few minutes, promising to pay them a visit before I wo^d leave the country - Torliano rode & Walter & I walked to Poonefs - Here we had the first grand view on our journey - After dinner we ~~we~~ crossed the ferry & all walked to Ambleside where we arrived late.

5. I gratified Mr. Walter by introducing him to The Poet - and so sudden & complete was the effect of his conversation that tho' he had planned to hear Mass on the following Sunday at Dumfries, conceiv^g he co^d not discharge that duty in Westmoreland - and being unwilling to neglect it - He also resolved to spend but 2 or 3 days among the Lakes which was the reason of my changing the course of my journey that I might shew them what I could - (yet in a few minutes these resolutions were

broken and new plans were formed - We spent the day in looking over Rydal water & far more lake and in the evening we took tea at Rydal Mount - The house its incomparable situation command of the valley of Rydal with the head of Windermere - And also Rydal water in another direction - The society also - Mrs. & Miss W. & some other ladies - The splendor of the moonlight - The music and above all the conversation of Wordsworth quite enchanted my company and they were overflowing in gratitude to me for the pleasure I had given them

Friday 6. I accompanied Mrs. W. to Pallendale - a dreary journey over Hurkstone - but a grand scene at P. I left them there & returned alone & reached to the skin and having changed my days to spend the week with Wordsworth - I became as wet a second time in getting backward & forward

7. I walked with Miss Wordsworth to Kendal and having made myself decent at the inn & returned to the Thompsons accepted their friendly offer to sup & take a bed at their house. I enjoyed the visit much and left the family the next day with strong feelings of thankfulness for the attention to myself - and of esteem for all the family. Every one of them pleased me without exception. Mrs. Thompson I had forgotten, but I shall have known her from her resemblance to Mr. Thonks's wife. Her manners are very agreeable - those of a well bred gentlewoman - I should think her to be a sensible woman - Indeed I judged favorably of the good sense of all the family. Sarah approached me with the cordiality of an old acquaintance - indeed I was not a little flattered by perceiving that I was treated as an acquaintance by all of them - I knew to whom I was indebted for the distinction and that heightened the value - She entirely overcame the first unpleasant impression arising from her magnitude - she seems to have that full share of good humour & good spirits which are like yeast necessary to make the character light - Alicia is the prettiest

We spent the evening in talking about our Witham friends - I thought I perceived in Mr. T. occasionally an affectation in his manner which I ascribed to various subjects of care, but if I had not known these were such I might never have made the conjecture.

8. My company having relieved their consciences by the discharge of a religious duty we returned to Ambleside, we I probably going on foot tho' it rained almost all day - In the evening I dined at the New Wood Inn but we could see none of the glorious view here.

9. We took the stage to Keswick thro' a country which you acquainted with it seems to be unparalleled on a stage-coach road - The Laureate had heard of our arrival & sent us an

invitation to take tea with him. He too lives in a magnificent situation - He has a noble library - and tho' by no means so rich in the original resources of his mind, as his greater friend is yet a very interesting man - Three busy men had met us at the inn & joined us at Southey, - Friday 10. This day we devoted to Keswick but bad weather deprived it of half its charms we however saw do some in great excellence.

11. I parted from my company and a few hours afterwards joined Wordsworth on a journey of business which very bad weather would have rendered most unpleasant if his society had not afforded some relief. We slept at Cockermouth.

12. This day was spent by W. in business - I by that singular coincidence which is ever occurring to me spent the evening with Ant. Robinson's first wife's sister - a woman famed for her religious zeal - She startled me by bursting out into a loud long groan after tea which I was not prepared for - I have not for a long time seen so vulgar an expression of character - Besides the interest of curiosity in this visit, I had one of benevolence of which more hearty.

13. Another wet day - I was forced to go to bed before dinner while my clothes were drying I enjoyed the elegant ruin of Calder Abbey - It was slept at Calder-bridge

14. We proceeded to Præstons - a miserable town cut from the land by the water & from the sea by a dike - I had no resource but reading while it was selling land by auction

15. Wordsworth accompanied me to the beautiful valley of Sedale - left me there but first introduced me to the curate who resembled very much Mr. Netheram - After dinner he accompanied me to Dale girth force, a delightful water-fall -

16. A day rich in enjoyment - Mr. P. accompanied me over a fell to Wasdale head - I enjoyed that wild scene - the scene too of the Miss Thompsons midnight adventure of which you must have heard and I chatted with the woman who received them after the night's ramble over the mountains - I visited Sty-head - and passed thro' Bonnisdale the most romantic solitude & yet most beautiful of vallies

To day I have been exploring with a gentleman - accidentally here the valley of St. Helen but whether it is that I am a worse than ordinary mortal I cannot tell, but I could not see even that semblance of a rattle to the rocks of the valley such has given birth to the Bridal of Freemartin -

Such is my history in its outline - I shall have great pleasure in reading you the detail from my journal - My intention is to spend a fortnight longer here - or somewhat less - And then go into Yorkshire - Perhaps I shall do well to not to endanger my impression concerning the Thompson amiability by seeing the Doctor who may spoil all - And perhaps I shall be forced to shorten my journey on account of my purse falling short which has emptied itself more rapidly than I expected - I have now only to desire my best remembrances to William - Mrs. Palfrey - Mr. Frothingwaite - My love to the boys - Affectionally Yours H. C. Robinson

Keswick - Cumberland -

17. Sept. 1816.

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H. C. Robinson
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You -