

Tuesday, July 13, 1802. Gretna Hall, Keswick.

My dear Sir

I had written you a letter, and was about to have walked  
to the Post with it, when I received yours from Langrue - it gave me  
such a lively pleasure, that I threw my letter into the Fire for it  
chiefly related to the entire Schaffer of Jenson, and I could not endure  
that my first letter to you should begin with a subject so little  
interesting to my heart or understanding. - I trust, that you are  
before this at the end of your journey, and that Mrs and Miss  
Stethy have so completely recovered themselves, as to have almost  
forgotten all the fatigue, except such instances of it as it may be  
pleasant to them to remember. Why need I say, how often I have  
thought of you since your departure, & with what hope of pleasurable  
Emotions? I will acknowledge to you, that your very, very kind letter was  
not only a pleasure to me, but a relief to my mind, for after it  
had left you on the road between Ambleside & Grasmere, I was  
dejected by the apprehension, that I had been unpardonably lagging,  
and had opposed you, & still more Mrs Stethy, with my many  
words so impetuously uttered. But in simple truth you were yourselves  
in part the innocent causes of it, for the meeting with you; the manner  
of the meeting; your kind attentions to me; the deep & healthful delight  
which every impressive & beautiful object seemed to pour out upon  
you. hundred generous, kind passions, kind feelings, in persons  
whose hearts & as it were walk of life, have been so different from  
my own - these, and more than thirty <sup>which I would not count</sup> ~~words~~ <sup>impulses of pleasure</sup>  
any, all flowed in upon me, <sup>urgently strong</sup> ~~words~~ <sup>impulses of pleasure</sup>  
and I pleasure in a body of real such as I suppose to Joseph, "intoxicated  
more than strong wine". However, I promise to be much more  
subdued creature - when you next meet me - for I had but  
but recovered from a state of extreme dejection wrought in  
in part by ill health, partly by other circumstances, and  
solitude and solitary Musings do of themselves impregnate our  
Thoughts perhaps with more life of sensation, that will leave the  
Balance quite even. - But you, my dear Sir! looked out  
Brother Post with a Brother's eye - O that you gave me  
any study, & saw what is now before <sup>the windows, at which you worked,</sup> ~~my eyes~~ <sup>that rich mulberry-purple</sup>  
which a floating cloud has thrown on the lake & that quiet Boat  
making its way thro' it to the shore. - We have had little else but  
Rain & squally weather since you left us, till within the last  
three days - but showery weather is no evil to us - & ever that  
most impressive of all weathers, but small Drizzle, exhibits the  
Mountains the best of any. It produced such new combinations  
of ridges in the Lodge of Borrowdale Mountains, on ~~the~~ Saturday  
morning, that, I declare, had I been blindfolded & so brought to  
the Prospect, I should <sup>scarcely</sup> have known them again. It was  
a Dream, such as others have - a wild & transfiguring, yet  
enchantingly lovely, Dream of an Object lying by the side of  
the Sleeper. Wordsworth who has walked thro' Switzerland, declares  
that he never saw anything superior - perhaps nothing equal -  
in the Alps. - The latter part of your letter made me truly  
happy. Unlucky himself should not be half so welcome, if indeed  
he, I must admit, was never any great favourite of mine. I  
always thought him a Bantering ~~man~~ <sup>man</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>zany</sup> ~~Italian~~ <sup>man</sup>  
with Milton heard cry at the Door of his Imagination, & but



out of charity. However, come posse as you may, carnis mihi  
expectatusque venies. De ceteris rebus, (si quid agendum  
est, et quicquid sit agendum) ut quam rectissime agantur,  
omni meâ curâ, operâ, diligentia, gratiâ, providebo.

On my return to Norwich I repented the error Schiffer with great  
Akantha; & the result was an increasing disinclination to the business of  
Translating it / tho' my fancy was not a little flattered by the idea  
of seeing my Rhymes in such a gay ditty - as poor Giordano  
Bruno ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> eddy in his strange yet noble Poem De Immenso  
et Innumerable

Inam ganymedeo Cultu, graphiceque Venustus!  
Narivis referam, paramarunt me quoque Nymphæ.

But this Poem was too silly. The first conception is noble - so very  
good, that I am spiteful enough to hope that I shall discover it not  
to have been original in Gesner - he has so abominably maltreated  
it. First, the story is very inartificially constructed - we should have been  
let into the existence of the girl & her father thro' the young man, & after  
his appearance, this however is comparatively a trifle - but the  
machinery is so superlatively contemptible & common place - as if a  
young man could not dream of a Tale which had deeply impressed  
him without being, or ~~was~~ <sup>having</sup> a fair wind all the way to an  
Island within sight of the ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> shore, he smothered, without Colus.  
Colus himself is a God devote of ridicule, I should have thought,  
to the Muse of Travesties his speech in Gesner is not deficient  
in fancy - but it is a childish fancy - & the God of the winds  
exceedingly disquieted with animal love, in other a very ridiculous  
my imagination. - Besides, it was ill taste to introduce  
Cupid and Colus in at a time which we ~~are~~ <sup>have</sup> positive knowledge  
to have been anterior to the invention & establishment of the Grecian  
mythology, and the speech of Colus reminds me perpetually of little  
upstarts from the last stones of the Ancients, seals, & whatever  
else they call them. - Again, the girl's yearnings of conversation with  
Templa - et libidinem spiritus et subsusurrat, dum innocentie  
loquelam, et virgineæ cogitationis dulciter offensantis luctamina  
simulat. It is not the thought that a lovely girl could have; but  
exactly such as a Boarding school Miss whose Imagination, tho'  
my so worse, had been somewhat stowed & heated by the perusal  
of French or German Pastorals, would suppose her to say. But this  
is indeed general in the German & French Poets. It is easy to  
cloathe Imaginary beings with our own thoughts & feelings,  
but to send ourselves out of ourselves, to think ourselves in to the  
Thoughts and feelings of beings in circumstances wholly & strangely  
different from our her labor, her opus, and who has  
achieved it? Perhaps only Shakespeare. Metaphysics is a word that  
you, my dear Sir, are no great friend to, but yet you will  
agree, that a great Poet must be, implicite if not explicitè,  
a profound metaphysician. He may not have it in logical  
coherence, in his brain or tongue; but he must have it  
in fact for all sounds, & forms of human nature he must



Love the ear of a wild Arab listening in the silent Desert, the  
eye of any North American Indian tracing the fortifications of an  
Enemy upon the leaves of that tree the Fuchs; the Touch of a Blind  
Man feeling the face of a darling Child - and I do not think me  
a Begot, if I say, that I have read no French or German writer,  
who appears to me to have had a heart sufficiently pure & simple  
to be capable of this or any thing like it. (I could say a great deal  
more in abuse of poor Goethe; then; but I have said more than I fear, will  
be creditable in your opinion to my good nature. I must tho' tell you  
the malicious Motto, which I have written on the first page of  
Klopstock's Nepias -

Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine Poeta,  
Quale Sopor!

Only I would have the words, divine Poeta, translated, verse, making, Di  
I found a great deal of German; but I do dearly & dearly love my  
own Countrymen of old times, and those of my contemporaries who  
write in their spirit.

William Wordsworth & his sister left me  
yesterday on their way to York-shire, they walked yesterday to the  
foot of Howater, from whence they go to Penrith & take the Coach. I  
accompanied them as far as the 7<sup>th</sup> mile stone. Among the last  
things which he said to me, was - "Do not forget to remember to  
write to them with whatever affectionate terms, so slight and  
intercourse may permit - and how glad we shall all be to  
see him again." - I was much pleased with your  
description of Wordsworth's character as it appeared to you,  
it is in few words, in a half a dozen strokes, like  
Bacon's figures, a fine portrait - The word "homage"  
gave me great pleasure, as most accurate & happily express-  
ed you right with regard to my perfect coin-  
cidence with his poetic creed. It is most certain, that that is  
the heads of our mutual conversation &c. & the  
was understood, that the Preface should be written by me and it is likewise  
true, that I warmly accord with Mr. W. in his abhorrence of those  
poetic diseases, as they are called, which are indeed mere  
tricks of convenience & <sup>egot. grat.</sup> self-interest. Dryden has these lines -

Once having Bubony had, as she were waxed mad,  
From her first stayder Course immediately doth gad,  
And in neardred Gyres doth whirl herself about,  
That, this way, here and there, back, forward, in, and out,  
And like a wanton Girl oft doubling in her gait  
In Cabyrinthen Turns & Twinnings intricate & c. &c.

the first heart, observing such a stream as this would say with  
truth & beauty - it strays - & now every stream <sup>shall</sup> strays there  
it frattles <sup>on</sup> the lebbled wyff - instead of its bed or channel [I  
have taken the instance from a Poet, from whom or from instances of the  
vile commonplace trashy style could be taken in from any writer -  
from Bowles's Execrable Translation of that lovely Poem of Gean  
Ogle's, vol. 11. p. 27. - I am confident, that Bowles's good unhappily translated  
it in a hurry, & to give him an excuse he presents the admirable



