

14, Villiers Street, Strand 1880.

Dear and Rev^d. Sir,

If you, in the kindness of your feeling towards me, could fancy any apology necessary for not writing, what am I to say, for having neglected, apparently, your very welcome Epistle of the 16th? The Truth is, and I wish I could always bring forward an Excuse so likely to give you pleasure, (at least I presume so to think) I was very hard at work with my Pen, on a Task which will, for a year, if my Health is granted me, produce me a Guinea per Week - I am writing to you as to a sincere friend, for so have you proved, and therefore fancy you will so far be pleas'd to take an Interest in what I state, of my Concerns as to pardon my entering so much into them -

A Gentleman of your enviable Profession may not be at all aware of how many chance Resources a poor Bard proffers in this Metropolis, (supposing him without Regular Income or active Friends) is obliged to avail himself, especially if he should have three or four or more to feed and clothe besides himself.

I was, about three Weeks ago invited to meet a highly respectable party to dine at a Place of really ^{creditable} ~~extraordinary~~ convivial Resort, call'd the "Coal Hole" well known in the Strand, as having been a focus for almost all the Critical and Dramatic Talents of Auld Lang syne - Cooke, Keen, & hoc genus ^{omne} ~~omne~~, made this Place of name - it is now, however, comparatively quiet, but fills well enough to make a Fortune for the Linnelords, two Brothers of the Name of Rhodes - Well, I dined & sang a Song on "the Roads (Rhodes) to the Coal hole" which was kindly receiv'd. and soon after Dinner, a Gentleman in Spectacles, introduced himself to me ^{and} ask'd whether a weekly Appointment in a Newspaper to a small amount would be worth my Acceptance - I answer'd, "as in Duty bound" - "that anything" in an honest Way, and the Law on my side" - would be thankfully attended to - This Gentleman, whose name is Glenay, immediately wrote an Agreement engaging me for one Year to write an Article in the Queen's Paper, to be

call'd "further Reminiscences of Tom Diddin" - not limiting me to any quantity weekly, but expecting nearly a Column. He then wrote me an Order for a Weeks Salary in Advance as a present - the next Day being Saturday - As I was as much unprepared for the Execution of that Understanding as if I had been asked to write a Treatise on Algebra, you may imagine my Anxiety to do honour to my Employers Confidence & I very soon produced matter for a first, second, and third Number, ~~of the~~ and added a Bagatelle or two by way of acknowledgement of M^r G's Kindness - How far I have done justice to my new Patron you will see, if you should have Patience to peruse the "Guides" which being presented to me I have great Pleasure in expecting you to accept and which will be continued as long as you will afford them a Reception -

The next thing ^{which has occupied my time} (Always speaking of myself) is my Anniversary Dinner I have, at the Instance of my principal Patron, written nearly an hundred Letters in the last fortnight - and, I hope, not without Effect - I lament much your not being here, not only because of the reflected Respectability I should derive from your Presence, but because I am vain enough to think it would give real Pleasure to see the Last of the Three Diddins surrounded by so much of English Respectability & Kindness - We have a great increase of Names from last Year and the principal Patrons as presents are -

Lord Tenterden, the Hon Edmund Byron, Sir E. Cust, Sir John Osborn, Sir James Cochrane, Sir W^m DeBorke, General Hodgson, Lord Waldegrave, Charles Kemble, Sheridan Knowles, Captains Dr. V.P.C. Patten R.N., Major Gen. Sir C.W. Maxwell &c &c I have already written a Song for the occasion, and, if not intrusive, when I write you an Account of how the Day goes off I will ask your acceptance of a Copy.

Charles Keane is highly Talented, but - there are so many Interests, interfered in his Success that I should say, he may, by Possibility, be overvalued - he thus as it may, he is a very good Youngman, but -

troubled by his mother, and richly merits all the Success he meets with

I am endeavouring to get some Autographs for you, and should I not succeed to the extent you wish, you must be good enough to recollect that in London, for the last 15 years there has been a Mania for collecting them, and I have contributed to my humble Stock more than three times over

And now, my dear Sir, presuming you must be pretty considerably fatigued with so much selfish matter, I will ask you not to discontinue your kind recollection of the Dialectic Race, and to believe that I am,

With grateful Respect and Sincerity

Your much obliged friend and servant

Thos. Dibdin

P. S. Your Letters, should you at any time feel inclined to favor me with News from Cheltenham (where I was hospitably entertained many Years back by the Duchess of St. Albans, when her Father was the Cheltenham Post master) ^{will reach me if you} please to direct to 1/4 Villers St. Howard.

The Rev. Thos. Wilhenson
per se

1838
27
1838

To
The Rev. L. Wilkinson
Cheltenham

Nov. 27. 1838

ABUSE OF THE ROYAL BOUNTY.

When we see such names as those of Thomas Moore, the author of "Little's Poems," "The Fudge Family," "Tom Crib's Memorial," &c., and of Miladi Morgan, *née* Owenson, the writer of works to which, for the sake of her sex, we will not particularly allude—when we see such names stuck on the Pension List by Ministers, as recipients of public bounty to the enormous amount of £300 per annum each—we turn with heart-sickening disgust from these proofs of Treasury profligacy, to contemplate the humiliating contrast presented to us in the fact that Sir Egerton Brydges, a man who devoted his high intellectual powers and attainments to the improvement of our national literature, and the cultivation and encouragement of a pure, refined, and exalted national taste in literary pursuits—a man who sacrificed a noble fortune to the hope of thus benefitting society—a man of birth, talent, education, and, what was more than all, and above all, a man of unimpeachable moral worth; yet was he suffered to linger out the declining years of a valuable life in exiled penury, and the last hours of his existence were embittered by the certainty that he left his wife and children "steeped to the very lips in poverty"—such poverty that a private subscription has been raised for their relief. Surely, surely this was a case in which if ever a pension could worthily be considered as the reward of severe literary toil, it should have been granted; and yet from him it was withheld. But we can little wonder that such a man found no favour in the eyes of Ministers who could select Tom Moore and Lady Morgan as fit and proper objects for the exercise of a Protestant Sovereign's bounty. Sir Egerton Brydges had one fault inexpiable in their eyes—he was a steadfast Conservative.

But, again, in the streets of London we are daily grieved to see such a man as Tom Dibdin, whose talents have contributed upwards of one hundred and fifty excellent dramatic productions to the rational amusement of the public, and whose loyal songs have long been deservedly popular—a man of irreproachable private character—the descendant, too, of Charles Dibdin, our unrivalled naval song-writer, whose very name gives his family strong claims upon the sympathy and generous protection of the British Government—when we see such a man bending, not only beneath the weight of age, but of privation and suffering in the winter of his days, we cry shame upon the Ministers who could leave such worth and talent neglected, whilst Thomas Moore, with £700 a year of his own, and Lady Morgan, with the competence earned by her own meretricious scribblings, and by her husband in his drug-shop, are saddled on the public purse for six hundred pounds a year!