

SOME LETTERS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.



WAS first directed to Landor's works by hearing how much store Emerson set by them. I grew acquainted with them fifty years ago in one of those arched alcoves in the old college library in Harvard Hall, which so pleasantly secluded without wholly isolating the student. That footsteps should pass across the mouth of his Aladdin's Cave, or even enter it in search of treasure, so far from disturbing only deepened his sense of possession. These faint rumors of the world he had left served but as a pleasant reminder that he was the privileged denizen of another, beyond "the flaming bounds of place and time." There, with my book lying at ease and in the expansion of intimacy on the broad window-shelf, shifting my cell from north to south with the season, I made friendships, that have lasted me for life, with Dodsley's Old Plays, with Cotton's Montaigne, with Hakluyt's Voyages, among others that were not in my father's library. It was the merest browsing, no doubt, as Johnson called it, but how delightful it was! All the more, I fear, because it added the stolen sweetness of truancy to that of study, for I should have been buckling to my allotted task of the day. I do not regret that diversion of time to other than legitimate expenses, yet shall I not gravely warn my grandsons to beware of doing the like?

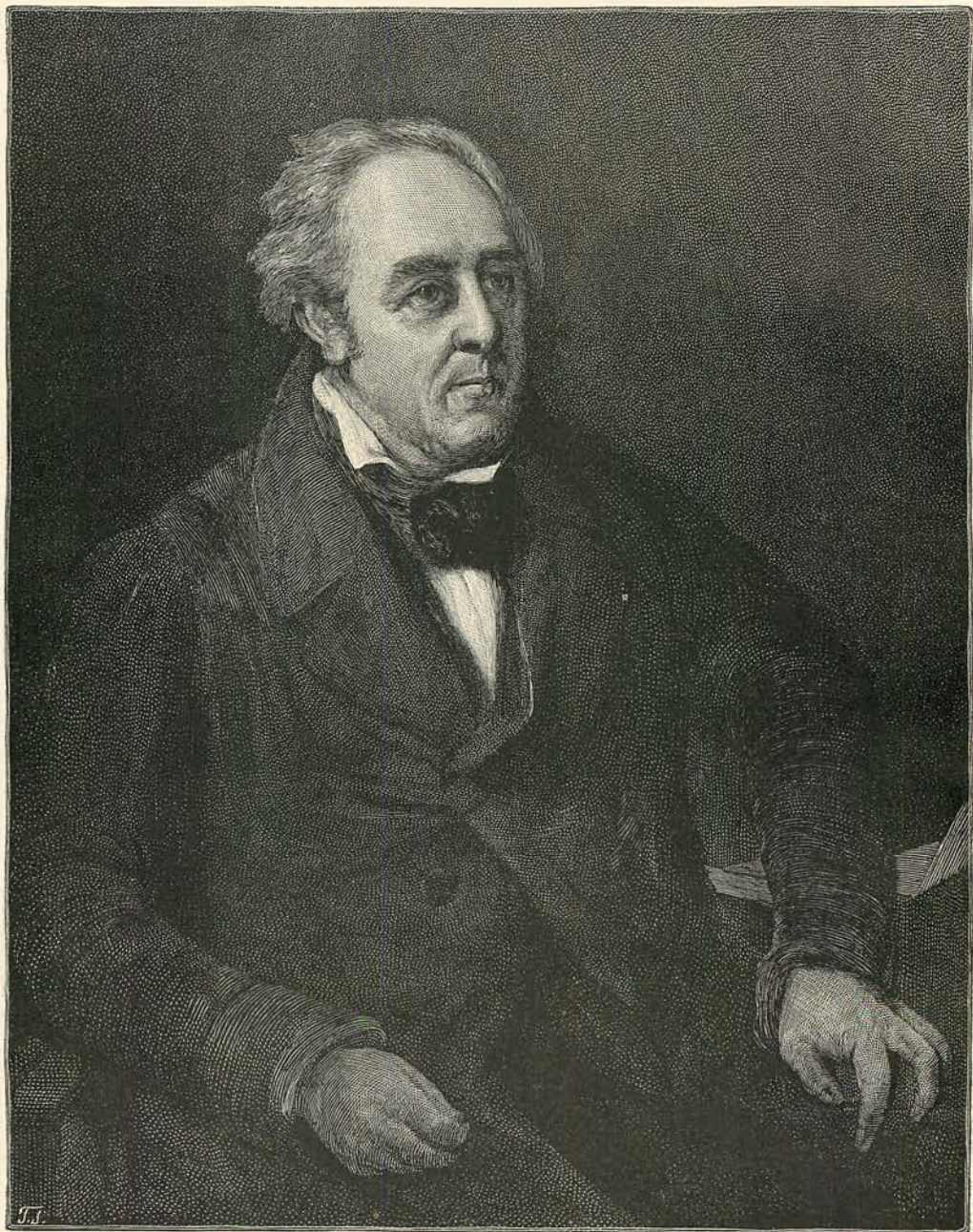
I was far from understanding all I heard in this society of my elders into which I had smuggled myself, and perhaps it was as well for me; but those who formed it condescended to me at odd moments with the tolerant complacency of greatness, and I did not go empty away. Landor was in many ways beyond me, but I loved the company he brought, making persons for me of what before had been futile names, and letting me hear the discourse of men about whom Plutarch had so often told me such delightful stories. He charmed me, sometimes perhaps he imposed on me, with the stately eloquence that moved to measure

always, often to music, and never enfeebled itself by undue emphasis, or raised its tone above the level of good breeding. In those ebullient years of my adolescence it was a wholesome sedative. His sententiousness, too, had its charm, equally persuasive in the carefully draped folds of the chlamys or the succinct tunic of epigram. If Plato had written in English, I thought, it is thus that he would have written. Here was a man who knew what literature was, who had assimilated what was best in it, and himself produced or reproduced it.

Three years later, while I was trying to persuade myself that I was reading law, a friend* who knew better gave me the first series of the "Imaginary Conversations," in three volumes, to which I presently added the second series, and by degrees all Landor's other books as I could pick them up, or as they were successively published. Thus I grew intimate with him, and, as my own judgment gradually affirmed itself, was driven to some abatement of my hitherto unqualified admiration. I began to be not quite sure whether the balance of his sentences, each so admirable by itself, did not grow wearisome in continuous reading,—whether it did not hamper his freedom of movement, as when a man poises a pole upon his chin. Surely he has not the swinging stride of Dryden, which could slacken to a lounge at will, nor the impassioned rush of Burke. Here was something of that cadenced stalk which is the attribute of theatrical kings. And sometimes did not his thunders also remind us of the property-room? Though the flash failed, did the long reverberation ever forget to follow? But there is always something overpassionate in the recoil of the young man from the idols of the boy. Even now when I am more temperate, however, I cannot help feeling that his humor is horse-play; that he is often trivial and not seldom slow; that he now and again misses the true mean that can be grave without heaviness and light without levity, though he would have dilated on that virtue of our composite tongue which enabled

* Let me please myself by laying a sprig of rosemary ("that's for remembrance") on his grave. This friend was John Francis Heath of Virginia, who took his degree in 1840. He was the handsomest man I have ever seen, and in every manly exercise the most accomplished. His body was as exquisitely molded as his face was beautiful. I seem to see him now taking that famous standing-jump of his, the brown curls blowing backward, or laying his hand on his horse's

neck and vaulting into the saddle. After leaving college he went to Germany and dreamed away nine years at Heidelberg. We used to call him Hamlet, he could have done so much and did so absolutely nothing. He died in the Confederate service, in 1862. He was a good swordsman (we used to fence in those days), and the rumor of his German duels and of his intimacy with Prussian princes reached us when some fellow-student came home.



ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

FROM A PAINTING BY WILLIAM FISHER, IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

it to make the distinction, and would have believed himself the first to discover it. He can not be familiar unless at the cost of his own dignity and our respect. I sometimes question whether even that quality in him which we cannot but recognize and admire, his loftiness of mind, should not sometimes rather be called uppishness, so often is the one caricatured into the other by a blustering self-confidence and self-assertion.

He says of himself —

Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art;

but I am inclined to think that it was Art he loved most. His perennial and abiding happiness was in composition, in fitting word to word, and these into periods, like a master-workman in mosaic. This, perhaps, is why he preferred writing Latin verse, because in doing that the joy of composing was a more conscious joy. Certainly we miss in him that quality of spontaneousness, that element of luck, which so delights us in some of the lesser and all the greater poets. By his own account the most audacious of men, his thought and phrase have seldom the happy audacity of what Montaigne calls the first jump. Father Thames could never have come upon *his* stage with both his banks on the same side, refreshing as that innovation might have been to an audience familiar with the humdrum habits of the river. Yet he is often content to think himself original when he has lashed himself into extravagance; and the reserve of his better style is the more remarkable that he made spoiled children of all his defects of character. It might almost seem that he sought and found an equipoise for his hasty violence of conduct in the artistic equanimity of his literary manner. I think he had little dramatic faculty. The creations of his brain do not detach themselves from it and become objective. He lived almost wholly in his own mind and in a world of his own making which his imagination peopled with casts after the antique. His "Conversations" were imaginary in a truer sense than he intended, for it is images rather than persons that converse with each other in them. Pericles and Phocion speak as we might fancy their statues to speak,— nobly indeed, but with the cold nobleness of marble. He had fire enough in himself, but his pen seems to have been a non-conductor between it and his personages. So little could he conceive the real world as something outside him, that nobody but himself was astonished when he was cast in damages at the suit of a lady to whom he had addressed verses that would have blackened Canidia. But he had done it merely as an exercise in verse; it was of that he was thinking, more

than of her, and I doubt if she was so near his consciousness, or so actual to him, as the vile creatures of ancient Rome whose vices and crimes he laid at her door. Even his in every way admirable apothegms seem to be made out of the substance of his mind, and not of his experience or observation. And yet, with all his remoteness, I can think of no author who has oftener brimmed my eyes with tears of admiration or sympathy.

When we have made all deductions, he remains great and, above all, individual. There is nothing in him at second-hand. The least wise of men, he has uttered through the mask of his interlocutors (if I cannot trust myself to call them characters) more wisdom on such topics of life and thought as interested or occurred to him than is to be found outside of Shakspeare; and that in an English so pure, so harmonious, and so stirringly sonorous that he might almost seem to have added new stops to the organ which Milton found sufficient for his needs. Though not a critic in the larger sense,— he was too rash for that, too much at the mercy of his own talent for epigram and seemingly conclusive statement,— no man has said better things about books than he. So well said are they, indeed, that it seems ungrateful to ask if they are always just. One would scruple to call him a great thinker, yet surely he was a man who had great thoughts, and when he was in the right mood these seam the ample heaven of his discourse like meteoric showers. He was hardly a great poet, yet he has written some of the most simply and conclusively perfect lines that our own or any other language can show. They float stately as swans on the tamer level of his ordinary verse. Some of his shorter poems are perfect as crystals. His metaphors are nobly original; they stand out in their bare grandeur like statues against a background of sky; his similes are fresh, and from nature; he plucks them as he goes, like wild-flowers, nor interrupts his talk. An intellectual likeness between him and Ben Jonson constantly suggests itself to me. Both had burly minds with much apparent coarseness of fiber, yet with singular delicacy of temperament.

In politics he was generally extravagant, yet so long ago as 1812 he was wise enough (in a letter to Southey) to call war between England and America civil war, though he would not have been himself if he had not added, "I detest the Americans as much as you do." In 1826 he proposed a plan that would have pacified Ireland and saved England sixty years of odious mistake.

Ten or twelve years ago I tried to condense my judgment of him into a pair of quatrains, written in a copy of his works given to a dear

young friend on her marriage. As they were written in a happier mood than is habitual with me now, I may be pardoned for citing them here with her permission, and through her kindness in sending me a copy :

A villa fair, with many a devious walk
Darkened with deathless laurels from the sun,
Ample for troops of friends in mutual talk,
Green Chartreuse for the reverie of one :
Fixed here in marble, Rome and Athens gleam ;
Here is Arcadia, here Elysium too ;
Anon an English voice disturbs our dream,
And Landor's self can Landor's spell undo.

His books, as I seem to have hinted here, are especially good for reading aloud in fitly sifted company, and I am sure that so often as the experiment is tried this company will say, with Francesca :

Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso.

Landor was fond of saying that he should sup late, but that the hall would be well lighted, and the company, if few, of the choicest. The table, indeed, has been long spread, but will he sit down till the number of the guests is in nearer proportion to that of the covers? It is now forty years since the collected edition of his works was published, probably, as was usual in his case, a small one. Only one re-impression has yet been called for. Mr. Forster's biography of him is a long plea for a new trial. It is a strange fate for a man who has written so much to interest, to instruct, to delight, and to inspire his fellow-men. Perhaps it is useless to seek any other solution of the riddle than the old *habent sua fata libelli*. But I envy the man who has before him the reading of those books for the first time. He will have a sensation as profound as that of the peasant who wandered in to where Kaiser Rothbart sits stately with his knights in the mountain cavern bidding his appointed time.

I saw Landor but once—when I went down from London, by his invitation, to spend a day with him at Bath in the late summer of 1852. His friend the late Mr. Kenyon went with me,—his friend and that of whoever deserved or needed friendship, the divinely appointed *amicus curiæ* of mankind in general. For me it was and is a memorable day, for Landor was to me an ancient, and it seemed a meeting in Elysium. I had looked forward to it, nevertheless, with a twinge of doubt, for three years before I had written a review of the new edition of his works, in which I had discriminated more than had been altogether pleasing to him. But a guest was as sacred to Landor as to an Arab, and the unaffected heartiness of his greeting at once reassured me. I have little to tell of our few hours' converse, for the

stream of memory, when it has been flowing so long as mine, gathers an ooze in its bed like that of Lethe, and in this the weightier things embed themselves past recovery, while the lighter, lying nearer the surface, may be fished up again. What I can recollect, therefore, illustrates rather the manner of the man than his matter. His personal appearance has been sufficiently described by others. I will only add, that the suffused and uniform ruddiness of his face, in which the forehead, already heightened by baldness, shared, and something in the bearing of his head, reminded me vividly of the late President Quincy, as did also a certain hearty resonance of speech. You felt yourself in the presence of one who was emphatically a Man, not the image of a man; so emphatically, indeed, that even Carlyle thought the journey to Bath not too dear a prize to pay for seeing him, and found something royal in him. When I saw him he was in his seventy-eighth year, but erect and vigorous as in middle life. There was something of challenge even in the alertness of his pose, and the head was often thrown back like that of a boxer who awaits a blow. He had the air of the arena. I do not remember that his head was large, or his eyes in any way remarkable.

After the first greetings were over, I thought it might please him to know that I had made a pilgrimage to his Fiesolan villa. I spoke of the beauty of its site. I could not have been more clumsy, had I tried. "Yes," he almost screamed, "and I might have been there now, but for that in-tol-e-rr-r-a-ble woman!" pausing on each syllable of the adjective as one who would leave an imprecation there, and making the *r* grate as if it were grinding its teeth at the disabilities which distance imposes on resentment. I was a little embarrassed by this sudden confidence, which I should not here betray had not Mr. Forster already laid Landor's domestic relations sufficiently bare. I am not sure whether he told me the story of his throwing his cook out of a window of this villa. I think he did, but it may have been Mr. Kenyon who told it me on the way back to London. The legend was, that after he had performed this summary act of justice, Mrs. Landor remonstrated with a "There, Walter! I always told you that one day you would do something to be sorry for in these furies of yours." Few men can be serene under an "I always told you so"—least of all men could Landor. But he saw that here was an occasion where calm is more effective than tempest, and where a soft answer is more provoking than a hard. So he replied mildly: "Well, my dear, I *am* sorry, if that will do you any good. If I had remembered that our best tulip-bed was under that window, I'd have flung the dog out of t' other."

He spoke with his wonted extravagance (he was always in extremes) of Prince Louis Napoleon: "I have seen all the great men that have appeared in Europe during the last half-century, and he is the ablest of them all. Had his uncle had but a tithe of his ability, he would never have died at St. Helena. The last time I saw the Prince before he went over to France, he said to me, 'Good-bye, Mr. Landor; I go to a dungeon or a throne.' 'Good-bye, Prince,' I answered. 'If you go to a dungeon, you may see me again; if to a throne, never!'" He told me a long story of some Merino sheep that had been sent him from Spain, and which George III. had "stolen." He seemed to imply that this was a greater crime than throwing away the American colonies, and a perfidy of which only kings could be capable. I confess that I thought the sheep as shadowy as those of Hans in Luck, for I was not long in discovering that Landor's memory had a great deal of imagination mixed with it, especially when the subject was anything that related to himself. It was not a memory, however, that was malignly treacherous to others.

I mentioned his brother Robert's "Fountain of Arethusa"; told him how much it had interested me, and how particularly I had been struck with the family likeness to himself in it. He assented; said it *was* family likeness, not imitation, and added: "Yes, when it came out many people, even some of my friends, thought it was mine, and told me so. My answer always was, 'I wish to God I *could* have written it!'" He spoke of it with unfeigned enthusiasm, though then, I believe, he was not on speaking terms with his brother. Whenever, indeed, his talk turned, as it often would, to the books or men he liked, it rose to a passionate appreciation of them. Even upon indifferent matters he commonly spoke with heat, as if he had been contradicted or hoped he might be. There was no prophesying his weather by reading the barometer of his face. Though the index might point never so steadily to *Fair*, the storm might burst at any moment. His quiet was that of the cyclone's pivot, a conspiracy of whirlwind. Of Wordsworth he spoke with a certain alienated respect, and made many abatements, not as if jealous, but somewhat in the mood of that Athenian who helped ostracize Aristides. Of what he said I recollect only something which he has since said in print, but with less point. Its felicity stamped it on my memory. "I once said to Mr. Wordsworth, 'One may mix as much poetry with prose as one likes, it will exhilarate the whole; but the moment one mixes a drop of prose with poetry, it precipitates the whole.' He never forgave me!" Then

followed that ringing and reduplicated laugh of his, so like the joyous bark of a dog when he starts for a ramble with his master. Of course he did not fail to mention that exquisite sea-shell which Wordsworth had conveyed from *Gebir* to ornament his own mantel-piece.

After lunch, he led us into a room the whole available wall-space of which was hung with pictures, nearly all early Italian. As I was already a lover of Botticelli, I think I may trust the judgment I then inwardly pronounced upon them, that they were nearly all aggressively bad. They were small, so that the offense of each was trifling, but in the aggregate they were hard to bear. I waited doggedly to hear him begin his celebration of them, dumfounded between my moral obligation to be as truthful as I dishonestly could and my social duty not to give offense to my host. However, I was soon partially relieved. The picture he wished to show was the head of a man, an ancestor, he told me, whose style of hair and falling collar were of the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Turning sharply on me, he asked: "Does it remind you of anybody?" Of course this was a simple riddle; so, after a diplomatic pause of deliberation, I replied, cheerfully enough: "I think I see a likeness to you in it." There was an appreciable amount of fib in this, but I trust it may be pardoned me as under duress. "Right!" he exploded, with the condensed emphasis of a rifle. "Does it remind you of anybody else?" For an instant I thought my retribution had overtaken me, but in a flash of inspiration I asked myself, "Whom would Landor like best to resemble?" The answer was easy, and I gave it forthwith: "I think I see a likeness to Milton." "Right again!" he cried triumphantly. "It *does* look like me, and it *does* look like Milton. That is the portrait of my ancestor, Walter Noble, Speaker of one of Charles First's parliaments. I was showing this portrait one day to a friend, when he said to me, 'Landor, how can you pride yourself on your descent from this sturdy old cavalier—you who would have cut off Charles's head with the worst of 'em?' 'I cut off his head? Never!' 'You would n't? I'm astonished to hear you say that. What would you have done with him?' 'What would I have done? Why, *hanged* him, like any other malefactor!'" This he trumpeted with such a blare of victory as almost made his progenitor rattle on the wall where he hung. Whether the portrait was that of an ancestor, or whether he had bought it as one suitable for his story, I can not say. If an ancestor, it could only have been Michael (not Walter) Noble, Member of Parliament (not Speaker) during the Civil War, and siding with the Commons against the King. Landor had con-

founded him with Sir Arnold Savage (a Speaker in Henry Seventh's time), whom he had adopted as an ancestor, though there was no probable, certainly no provable, community of blood between them. This makes the anecdote only the more characteristic as an illustration of the freaks of his innocently fantastic and creative memory. I could almost wish my own had the same happy faculty, when I see how little it has preserved of my conversation, so largely monologue on his part, with a man so memorable.

The letters which follow can lay no claim to importance, but they illustrate pleasantly the more playful as well as the more lovable side of his nature. They are at least more interesting, and bear more clearly the stamp of the writer's character, than many of Goethe's to the Frau von Stein. Landor has not, it is true, the literary or historical importance of Goethe, but he was one of the most remarkable men of a remarkable generation, and of rarer type, perhaps, than any of them as a conscious artist in words. The letters will add nothing to his fame and little to our knowledge of him, but they will be welcome to those who already value him, and may awaken some curiosity about him in others. They give an amiable picture of him without his armor, and in an undress, though never a careless or slovenly one. That on the death of his dog Pomero is especially worth having, and the slapdash judgments upon artists in others are very characteristic. They were written, in various years, to Miss Mary Boyle. That sister to

whom he sends messages was Miss Carolina Boyle, for many years maid of honor to Queen Adelaide. As Landor seems almost never to have dated his letters, it is impossible to assign any but a conjectural order to them. The postmark of one enables us to pin it down to 1842. The annotations are Miss Boyle's.

I was going to say that more than fifty—but I feel Cynthia at my ear, and shall say instead, that in honor of Miss Mary Boyle, Silvio Pellico, just released from his Prigioni, wrote some of those facile verses that sing in Italian, but are apt to have bad colds in English. Indiscreet readers may look up the date if they will. Miss Boyle bears no discoverable relation to dates. As nobody ever knew how old the Countess of Desmond was, so nobody can tell how young Miss Mary Boyle is. Known formerly as a vivacious amateur authoress, her recent historical and biographical catalogues of the art treasures at Longleat and Panshanger have a serious value. No knock could surprise the modest door of what she calls her Bonbonnière in South Audley street, for it has opened and still opens to let in as many distinguished persons, and, what is better, as many devoted friends, as any in London. However long she may live,—and may so excellent a woman live as long as she chooses!—hers can never be that most cheerless of fates, to outlive her friends, while cheerfulness, kindness, cleverness, and contentedness, and all the other good nesses have anything to do with the making of them.

James Russell Lowell.

I.

MY DEAR MISS BOYLE: Your letter is really a most delightful ramble. I believe I must come and be your writing-master. Certainly, if I did nothing else by drilling, I should make rank and file stand closer.

We must now be serious. I am grieved and shocked at the idea of any dog in existence, quadruped or other, tearing your handkerchief. Hampton Court—indeed any court upon earth—would loudly protest against such an outrage. I, who am too low for ambition, take out my pencil and try my hand at accounts, and find that two such handkerchiefs as ladies now carry are worth in hard cash somewhat more than the purchase of a villa (freehold, delightfully situated, furnished, etc., etc.) on the Southampton-water. If you can trust me in the making of a bargain, I will go forthwith to my neighbour and acquaintance Lord Ashtown, with the fragments of yours in my

hand, and offer them to him for his, which is a very pretty and commodious one. If you consent to it, I will allow him to remove the pictures. This will not materially diminish any little advantage in the transfer: so do not stand out for them. I like to do things handsomely, particularly at another's expense. I must fit Grison's* face to mine, and reason with him amicably on running away with a treasure which he can neither make use of nor lay up.

You cannot overvalue† James. There is not on God's earth (I like this expression, vulgar or not) any better creature of his hand, any one more devoted to his highest service, the office of improving us through our passions. You are destined and gifted by the same Power for the same glorious work. I am curious to see your sister's two petitions. Her commands may assume that form, but they are commands nevertheless, and must be executed. This morning at breakfast I wrote some verses on the Chinese war. Here they are.

There may be many a reason why,
O ancient land of Kong-Fu-Tsi!
We burn to make the little feet

* Miss Boyle's large Sardinian greyhound.
† Mr. G. P. R. James, the novelist.

Of thy indwellers run more fleet.
 But while (as now) before my eyes
 The steams of thy sweet herb arise,
 Amid bright vestures, faces fair,
 Long eyes and closely braided hair,
 I cannot wish thee wrongs or woes.
 And when thy lovely single rose,
 Which every morn I run to see,
 Smiles with fresh-opened flower on me,
 And when I think what hand * it was
 Cradled the nursling in its vase,
 By all the Gods, O, ancient land!
 I wish thee, and thy laws, to stand.

Altissimo Poeta, non è vero?

Are you acquainted with the Eltons at Southampton? The girls are most delightful; the father an excellent man and good poet. I have a great regard for all the family.

II.

BATH, June 28 [1841].

DEAR MISS BOYLE: Your letter has followed me from Bath to Paris, and from Paris back again to Bath, not without a short delay in London. Had I been aware that you and your fair sister were at Hampton Court, I should certainly have paid you my respects there. I was in town only 5 days as I went and only 3 as I returned. No lady on earth will believe that any person can dislike Paris. I hate and abominate it: yet never in any place have I received so much civility and attention. There was no opera, and the gallery of the Louvre was open only for the exhibition of modern works. The French have no Landseer, no Stanfield, no Eastlake. I hope you have enjoyed the sight of their wonderful productions. This year, I am sorry to say, ill-health has prevented Landseer from displaying his wonderful powers, but Stanfield has a picture which I hear is sold for seven hundred guineas, representing the Island of Ischia in the beginning of a storm, to which neither Claude nor Gaspar nor Nicotas Poussin ever painted anything equal. Eastlake's Christ weeping over the fate of Jerusalem is worthy of Domenichino, to say the least. Between the time of Hogarth and Eastlake we never had an artist who could draw. Reynolds and Lawrence are on a level in this particular.

You perhaps will wonder what could have induced me to revisit Bath at such a season. The fact is, I abhor all popular bustle, and had I made the visits I intended to make, I should have been in the midst of contested elections, and what is worse, where some of my personal friends are opposed. This very day an election is going on here; but I neither hear, nor will go where I can hear, anything of the matter. To-morrow I will write to our friend James — as great a *conservative* as I am,

even of his temper. With love to your sister (for nobody can give her less), believe me, ever sincerely,

Yours,
 W. S. LANDOR.

III.

DEAR MISS BOYLE: It is incredible to me that I should have permitted your letter to remain unanswered. So, at last, you can be enthusiastic about our artists. Take especial care to avoid the expression of your enthusiasm in good society. You know it is forbidden on all subjects, particularly on works of art or literature, by those we may see and serve. Stanfield, in his view of Ischia, has produced a nobler work, in my opinion, than the best of Claude or Poussin. I rejoice to hear that Boxall† has been painting your family. He is an excellent artist and a modest man. Do not think me too obstinate in persisting to call myself a conservative. My "Letters of a Conservative"‡ were written to bring the apostate Bishops back to Christianity; to make them useful as teachers; that the indignation of the people might not rise up against the only unreformed Church in Christendom. It would grieve me to see religion and education taken out of the hands of gentlemen, and turned altogether, as it is in part, into those of the uneducated and vulgar. I would rather see my own house pulled down than a cathedral. But if Bishops are to sit in the House of Lords as Barons, voting against no corruption, against no cruelty, not even the slave-trade, the people ere long will knock them on the head. Conservative I am, but no less am I an *aristocratic radical* like yourself. I would eradicate all that vitiates our constitution in church and state, making room for the gradual growth of what altered times require, but preserving the due ranks and orders of society, and even to a much greater degree than most of the violent tories are doing.

You have here my profession of political faith, explicit, and without mystery.

Remember me to your brother, and present me with your usual grace to Lady Boyle and your sister. Above all, believe me very sincerely

Yours,
 W. S. LANDOR.

IV.

DEAR MISS BOYLE: It is humane and generous in you to wish me a happy New Year, and judicious not to wish me many of them.

* Rose was the name of a great favorite of the writer's.

† Afterwards Sir William Boxall, and Director of the National Gallery.

‡ Published in 1836.

You ask me whether I have ever seen Burleigh.* Yes; nearly a half-century ago. Nevertheless, I have not forgotten its magnificence. No place ever struck me so forcibly. And then the grounds! Surely they were made expressly for the grand attitudinarian Grison. Being but a boy when I saw Burleigh, I admired, as most people do to the end of their lives, by prescription. I had not then learnt pictures by costly experience, and the probability is, that I admired a celebrated work by the vilest and least imaginative of painters even more than the Domenichino to which you allude. The Christ breaking the bread, by Carlo Dolce, is the most celebrated in England of that painter's works. I happen to possess the one which is the most celebrated in Italy, the one in which the pearls of the Madonna (they tell you, and tell you truly) "*paiono vere*": I gave, out of wantonness, sixty louis for it, the real value is three farthings. How many thousand of such fellows as Carlo Dolce and Sasso Ferrato are worth less than a finger's breadth of Domenichino. In regard to his frescoes you are nearly right. But it is impossible to conceive the perfection of frescoes out of Siena. Not Michelangelo, nor even Raffael himself, quite understood the coloring. Razzi, Beccafumi, and their contemporaries in Siena, did perfectly. Nearest to them is Andrea del Sarto.

But all their works, with Michelangelo's included, are incomparably less than equivalent to the Incendio del Borgo. Well, let us be contented. The cartoons make us nearly as rich as Italy herself in painting, and all the sculpture in Italy is not worth the single figure of the Ilyssus in the Elgin marbles. We are pleased to underrate our contemporaries, partly thro' ignorance, and partly thro' malignity. But I question whether the twelve of the greater Gods, by any ancient, were comparable to the twelve Apostles of Thorwaldsen.

Of course, if Phidias was the sculptor, they were; but we hear only of his Zeus and Pallas. I have no doubt that he not only designed but finished the Ilyssus and Theseus. These fragments are the *only* remains of any very great Greek sculptor. Happily they are of the very greatest—the unapproachable Zeus of sculptors.

And now let me turn to the work which you are about. James† would no more tell you to throw it into the fire, than he would tell you to throw fire into it. The one would be an arson for which there would be a thousand prosecutors, all of whom would have lost valuable property by it, and the other (the throwing fire into it), I am certain, is done already.

What I myself have been doing is hardly

worth mentioning. I have given strict orders not even to have it advertised, much less puffed. Nevertheless it is not unlikely that it will be puffed—puffed away, when it reaches Burleigh. I shall give orders this moment for it to be sent to you.

Remember me to your sister, if she is awake, but do not waken her on purpose, and to your brother, and believe me, dear Miss Boyle,

Yours very sincerely,

W. S. LANDOR.

BATH, January 5.

V.

DEAR MISS BOYLE: Everybody who writes to you begins with "I am delighted, I am charmed," etc., etc. For my part, I am quite incapable of originality and must say the same thing. James† wrote to me also. It appears the Duke of Wellington asked him whether it would be possible to establish a Newspaper which should tell the truth. Alas! what a question for a wise man—for a man of experience—above all, for a politician—for a minister of state!

If the thing *is* to be done, he must do it himself. But you are very capable of furnishing one good article—take care it is quite true. The paragraph may run somewhat thus: "On Tuesday last Miss Mary Boyle, accompanied by her cousin the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Boyle, did Mr. Landor the honour of calling on him on his ground-floor No. 35 St. James Sq., Bath.

"They found him writing some nonsense verses, by which he acquired great distinction both at school, and since. We are enabled, by the favour of our fair correspondent, to give the reader a sample.

"The leaves are falling; so am I;
The few late flowers have moisture in the eye;
So have I too.
Scarcely on any bough is heard
Joyous (or e'en unjoyous) bird
The whole wood through.
Winter *may* come; he brings but nigher
His circle (yearly narrower) to the fire
Where old friends meet.
Let him! now heaven is overcast
And spring and summer both are past,
And all things sweet!"

VI.

AND so, Carissima, you want to know whether I shall be *glad* to see you, or *sorry* to see you, on the twentieth. Well then—*sorry*—to *have* seen you—glad, exultingly glad, to see you. And now I am resolved not to tell you which I love best, Melcha or Mora.‡

* Seat of the Marquis of Exeter.

† Mr. G. P. R. James.

‡ Names of two characters in a poetical drama by Miss Mary Boyle.

Melcha colpisce fortemente — Mora più ancora s'innamora.

I have broken my word to myself, all thro' you.

Tell the Maid of Honour I w^d rather the Queen* gave her a thousand pounds than any one else gave her *qualsì voglia somma*.

You see I have learnt to write from you — only I can sometimes get three or four words into a line — which you can never do for the life of you. But there are several in which I find two entire ones. I do not like to spoil the context, otherwise I would order them to be glazed, and framed in gold.

The Grand-duke of Tuscany has completed his collection of hieroglyphics, so I need give you no assurance that I will not make money of those I expect.

I was at a pic-nic on Saturday. The dancing did not tire me. I can only account for it from having used my eyes only. I like the Polka amazingly, and many years shall not elapse before I take a lesson or two. I do not promise to dance at your wedding, but I will promise to dance at your eldest daughter's if I receive an invitation. *Addio, Carina.*

VII.

I HOPE you have enough of appellatives. For my part, I have no notion of giving any to young ladies, unless it be such as they, by acceptance at the altar, have fairly taken. Godfathers and godmothers are small authority for me. Many a man has admired the pitch of his courage, and the charms of his handwriting, at that pretty word *Dear*, preceding a name that always has a long and sweet quaver in it, be its constituent vowels and consonants what they may. I myself, in times past, have looked at the two together so long that it required an effort to make the pen follow the flutterings of the heart. For be it known, hearts were worn then. So, you are resolved to have a *name*, are you? I suspected as much at the very first page of yours I ever read. But how can you expect an author to call you dear, or any such thing? or even to say, what all men of sound judgment agree in, and many whose judgment is thrown a trifle off the balance — that "Mary" has the sweetest sound of any? Before I am driven into a letter, I usually think I have been in the presence of, if not still conversing with the person I write to. Otherwise I doubt whether I could overcome my disposition to idleness — in the fingers at least. When I have called you dear, pray tell me how I must go on — and whether when I have written the next word, I am to put a

* Alluding to the marriage portion of maids of honor.

comma or a mark of admiration. If you leave it to me — indeed whether you do or not — I am for the ! Three generations, you tell me, were present at your triumphal entry to Marston. This is not enough for me. When you can muster four, I shall take it unkind of the hospitable rector if he does not invite me again. Should he forget it, I will sit upon the park-gate and write a squib on every soul that enters. I wonder by what right or reason they presented you with anything like *freedom*.† You who have made so many wish to lose it, ought to forfeit it forthwith. And now which of your lords is to take you to the concert? Lord Cork, Lord Dungarvon, or that lord who will be prouder than either, seeing that certain rights and privileges are conferred on him under your sign manual. I leave this place, Torquay, after the Regatta, the end of next week, and shall be then at Llanbedr Hall, Ruthin. It is rich in orange-flowers — so you need not provide any for me if you summon me to Marston. Furthermore, the waistcoat I had ordered for the Regatta ball shall be kept unopened. I will descend no farther to particulars, but assure you that you *shall* have a name, and that I am very sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. S. LANDOR.

Say some tender thing for me to your sister, and, this being duly performed, lay your face (as far as it will go) along Grison's, with my blessing.

VIII.

IN speaking of two sisters, *the two* — how dare you talk of the older and the younger? Do you not know that all the angels were created at once — *ad un fiato*?

Now you little thought that the old Torment (for "Tormentor" is a weak expression) would take you at your word. He will, however, and without so much as a finger at nose-side or ear-side, by way of taking counsel with himself.

Expect your Imaginary Conversation to make its appearance in front of my last volume.

Some critic in another century may, by way of paradox, start a doubt whether it is genuine, that is, *mine*; but all the rest will cry out against his temerity. *Addio, Madcap.*

IX.

It is only this evening that I received the Bridal of Melcha.‡ I do not like to be an Echo, but I am certain I must be one in expressing my admiration of it.

To-night is our Fancy Ball. You should be at it, crowned with myrtle and bay. If I had

† A birthday jest,—"freedom of the city."

‡ A dramatic poem by Miss Mary Boyle.

opened the volume but at the very hour of meeting my friends there, I could not have refrained from reading it through before I set out.

Indeed it is already late enough, and, I suspect, past the post-office hour, so adieu, *Musa-Grazia!* and call me in future anything but *Dottissimo*. Remember, you have a choice of *Issimi*. Among them all there is no one who can glorify you for more of noble and exalted attributes than

W. LANDOR.

1 St. James Square,
Monday, April 22.

Say everything you can think of, on my part, to our incomparable friend James,* and his lady.

If you distribute any kisses for me among the lesser ones, I know not through what banker to send you the amount.

Non essendo pratico,
Come sanno tutti.

X.

1842.

To meet with a failure is one thing, and to commit one is another. Now even you are liable to the former. It was vexation, it was grief to me when I found the little card of the little lady. I was ready to strike my forehead, but I feared from its vacuity it might make a loud report in the square, and I should be bundled off to Dr. Foxe's. And so your sister permitted the noblest of the animal creation (his serene Highness)† to travel without her! For shame! for shame!

I saw him the very day of my arrival in Bath. He recognized me, but was rather ashamed of acknowledging me. He stood with one foot upon the carriage-wheel remonstrating against delay. I put my face to his, and my hand on his hard loins, hard as if he had been mesmerized. I wanted to whisper a few words in his ear, but he thought it too great a liberty, and shook me off; just as if he had been one fresh from court — as he probably was. O that I were acquainted with the Satirist or John Bull! He should be down for it. And pray what have you been doing, that you should inflict on yourself the voluntary penance of reading my poems? Before you get them (which will not be until we meet at Millard's Hill), I must admonish you that the *amatory* are all ideal. Some have fancied that *Ianthe* (stolen by Byron) is only Jane, with the Greek θ (th) put in. What noodles are commentators!

If ever you read the "Foreign Quarterly," you will find in the two last numbers two *Articles*, as they are called, by me on Catullus

* Mr. G. P. R. James.

† Grison, a large Sardinian greyhound.

and Theocritus. A friend made me break my resolution of declining all entreaties to review, because he had an interest in this publication. *Addio.*

XI.

If you quarrel with yourself I will quarrel with you, for I am the sworn enemy of all yours. You have been happy, and have made others so — now what would you have or do? At this moment I return from a cricket club, where indeed I did not play at cricket, but I did at quoits, and won two games in three, after a disuse of nearly half a century. Hereupon I think myself no inconsiderable personage. Nevertheless I suspect there are certain proud Boyles here and there, who fancy they have done as great things merely because they have been men of state, or men of war, with a philosopher or so, and now and then a beauty at the buttonhole. I can clearly prove the contrary, and will.

You will grant that Apollo was among the first to move in what is called a high sphere. He composed well on various subjects. In fact he did everything well but play at quoits.

There he mistook a boy's head for a feather; why! it would have almost been a mistake if it had been a girl's! Now I made the feather shake, and the turf about it, at every cast of my quoits.

Apropos of hitting and missing — at least at one of them, I will not say which — do you meditate as much mischief to the grouse this month as you did to the pheasants in Hampshire? What a clear conscience! what unbroken slumbers are yours! On second thought, I will not swear to that. But you appear to have adopted the notion,

That a brave *pheasantry*, a manor's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.

Never did so vile a verse make so deep an impression.

I am worth only one pen in the world, and were it no bull, I would say it is a borrowed one. I can make nothing of it, else I would speedily show you how much better my handwriting is than yours. I must now leave off — for here are come from the hotel sundry porters for sundry shillings to be disbursed — one of them indeed has very much of a half-crown face, for he sports a speck of black hair under his nether lip. So, adieu.

XII.

Sept. 12 [1842].

Più che Dottissima! I should be very much delighted to see you as you describe yourself with one cheek crimson, and the other a livid white, and yellow eyes. Surely some extraor-

dinarily scientific painter must have arranged these colours for you.

Whatever lady presumes to wear them henceforth, I shall cry out against her audacious plagiarism. But as you, like all your sex, are fond of change, I am ready to lay any wager that when I see you, it will be the fashion for you to wear both cheeks slightly tinged with pink, and both eyes more the colour of the heavens than of the sun. This latter change may perhaps be less glorious: never mind! be moderate and submit.

What a glorious day is this for the pictures and the gardens and the waters and the Nymphs of Hampton Court! Do not let Campbell's Life of Petrarch darken it. I have not read the book and never shall read it — but I hear it is wretched. I am sorry for this. However, his fame is fairly established, by the admirable poem "Hohenlinden," and some others. Do not start if I tell you that in my poor opinion Campbell is a much better poet than Petrarch. I do not say a better; I say a *much* better. But the world ought to venerate the friend of Boccaccio — of Boccaccio, the most creative genius that the continent has produced since *the* creation: for Homer and Dante were not preëminent as creators. I love the lover of Laura, the recluse of Arquà, the defender of resuscitated Liberty, and the recoverer of ancient learning. But among all the departed men of genius Boccaccio is the one most after my own heart; a friend of freedom, a despiser of faction and of popularity, and too great to enter as a dependent or suitor the courts of princes. Literary men in general are the vilest of the human race: happy we, who enjoy the friendship of one* incomparably good and great in all his works, words, and thoughts.

Another is Southey, to whose wife, I may almost say widow, I will write to-day if I can — for I often sit, when I am thinking of her and him, with my pen in my hand and with ink in it until it dries up. I am now at Warwick, on a visit to my sister. Toward the end of next week I propose setting out for Staffordshire, to see my brother the rector of Birlingham, whom I have not seen these five years; and about the end of October I hope to be at Bath. Now, unless you tell me that you are writing in good earnest, I will never say again that I am, affectionately,

Yours,

W. L.

XIII.

TAKE care, Graziosissima! If you lead captive a single beau, I will add a couple of belles to my territories, forthwith.

* Mr. G. P. R. James.

"Time has not thinned my flowing locks." Now do not suspect me of fibbery, or rub your memory till it smarts again. The thing is sure enough — and the "*perché*" is — they never flowed at all, but were equally stagnant and shallow at all seasons of my life — pretty nearly. At last, however, they have acquired that fine silvery tone which great painters have attained after long practice: something of the Guido, and something of the Vandyck.

Now for news. I sent your brother a ticket (I had six at my disposal) for Lady John Somerset's ball, at Clifton. But he would not go, because he had a cold, and his nose was red. His nose must be turned into a salamander, and his cold into an iceberg, before the ladies will find another so acceptable to them. But if ever he intends to marry, he should not throw away seven years more. It is rarely that pure blood and plentiful gold roll together in the same channel. If he wishes to raise a full cup to his lips, he must stoop a little. As to you and your sister, I will give my consent to nothing below the dignity of Earl. Somehow I like the sound of that title better than marquis or duke — it sounds more English — it looks nearer Alfred. There was a duke of Shrewsbury — and he was nothing at all — but one can hardly form an idea of any title so glorious as Earl of Shrewsbury. Shakespeare was the sovereign who conferred it; but not without merit.

And so! it was to you I promised my teapot, — was it? Never mind. I have a "*cosa stupenda*" for flowers and butterflies — a Japan pattern, large enough to hold an apronful of primroses. You must come for it, and remind me — for you see how apt we young people are to forget our promises. I knew I had something to present to you; and there are flowers and butterflies on both — as there is a river as well at Macedon as at Monmouth. *Addio, Graziosissima* and *mi creda sempre divotissimo*.

XIV.

MARIUCCIA MIA.

[March, 1856.]

It is not always that I know one of the places, out of the two, where you are — but one I do know to a certainty. Alas! I have lost my poor dear Pomerof.† He died, after a long illness, apparently from a kick he received in the stomach in my absence. The whole house grieved for him. I buried him in a coffin in the garden. I would rather have lost everything else I possess in the world. Seven years we lived together in more than amity. He loved me to his heart — and what a heart

† The writer's pet white Pomeranian dog.

it was! Mine beats audibly while I write about him.

At present I am doing nothing. Last month I ordered some "Leaves for the Study" to be printed for the benefit of a day-labourer who has written some good and manly poetry, now published by subscription. If you read "Fraser's Magazine," you will see

in April two imaginary conversations of mine. My scenes are on Antony and Octavius—characters of which it appears to me that Shakespeare has made sad work—and worse in Cleopatra. God bless you, my pleasant Mariuccia. Pray for me, and Pomerò. Some people are so wicked as to believe we shall never meet again!

W. S. L.

A RUSSIAN POLITICAL PRISON.

THE FORTRESS OF PETROPAVLOVSK.



HE great state prison of Russia—the prison in which all important and dangerous political offenders sooner or later find themselves—is the fortress of Petropavlovsk. Every traveler who has visited

St. Petersburg must remember the slender gilded spire which rises to a height of nearly four hundred feet from the low bank of the Neva opposite the Winter Palace, and which shines afar like an uplifted lance of gold across the marshy delta of the river and the shallow waters of the Finnish Gulf. It is the spire of the fortress cathedral under which lie buried the bones of Russia's Tsars and around which lie buried almost as effectually the enemies of the Tsars' government. All that can be seen of the fortress from the river, upon which it fronts, is a long, low wall of gray stone broken sharply into salient and reëntering angles with a few cannon *en barbette*, a flag fluttering from the parapet, and over all the white belfry and burnished spire of the cathedral and the smoking chimneys of the Imperial mint. The main entrance to the fortress is a long vaulted passage leading through the wall near the end of the Troitski bridge and opening into a rather spacious grassy and well-shaded park or boulevard to which the public are admitted at all hours of the day and through which the residents of "the Petersburg side," as that part of the city is called, go to and from their homes. It is impossible, however, to obtain by merely walking along this thoroughfare any definite idea of the extent or character of Russia's great political prison. The fortress as a whole is an immense aggregation of bastions, ravelins, curtains, barracks, and store-houses which must cover at least three-quarters of a square mile and which is intersected by the boulevard above referred to, and by a canal or moat which separates the citadel or fortress proper from the "crown-work" in the rear. In what part of this vast labyrinth of

walls, gates, courts, bastions, and redoubts the political prisoners are confined even they themselves do not know. They are taken to the fortress at night, between gendarmes in closely curtained carriages, and when, after being conveyed hither and thither through heavy gates between echoing walls and along vaulted passages, they are finally ordered to alight, they find themselves in a small and completely inclosed court-yard from which nothing whatever can be seen except the sky overhead. Where this court-yard is situated they can only conjecture. There is some reason to believe that the part of the fortress where the political prisoners are confined while awaiting trial is a bastion which projects on the river side in the direction of the Bourse; but even this is not certain. All that I could learn from the political exiles whose acquaintance I made in Siberia was that they had been shut up in what they believed to be the Trubetskoï bastion. Of this particular part of the fortress, however, they could give me a full description, and a plan of it, drawn by an exile who is now in Eastern Siberia, will be found below.

