



Edinburgh Feb 3. 1845

My dear Friend

It is such you prize my letters & good policy, the encourage me with little bits of flattery; for notwithstanding these encouragements each time I sit down to write to you I have to wage war against my extreme modesty, or want of self-confidence. I was its unwilling bondslave; having a strong desire to be free but without the moral courage necessary for striking off its fetters. How many opportunities of improvement have I lost by submitting to its rule. I dare say you may remember this, in your attempts to get me write & to try to sketch from nature. I do now most sincerely regret my silence in not at once complying with your kind request to show you my writing, for I am convinced your instructions

would have enabled me to communicate my thoughts
on paper with comparative ease to myself & pleasure
to my friends. I do not write thus to the 'good creatures'
J. W. D. as a provocation to compliment &c but really
in a pitiable desponding sort of state & perhaps somewhat
envious of the easy yet instructive epistles of his I have
now & again the pleasure of reading. I write so prim
in so would be fine a style that I am excessively discontent
To avoid this I jotted down little thoughts & incidents
as they occurred resolved to let you have the medley
however odd but that won't do either for an book.
my own these they appear so stupid that the last fault
is worse than the first. I must tell you what my
friend Mr. Walker says of my letters. "They appear (says he)
to be written with great pains & a kind of stiffness pro-
ceeding entirely from your evident wish to work with
the great correctors. To use an English expression you
seem to pull out your words & look at them before
writing. Now if you will only think of me as a dear friend
whom I trust I am & put down what you have to say
just as if you were talking to me & only write as you

'you would be just the thing! very true 'ma bome amie
thought I, but that would be the perfection of good
writing & had I only more confidence or less reverence
for my intellectual friends I would be more likely to
attain it. But enough of this. Notice it not, unless you
can aim a blow at the root of the matter. I am not
to make it severe. I know I can bear it unflinchingly.
Many thanks for the sketch of your every day existence.
Such scenes comfort me a little & bring you nearer the
capacity of a social companion instead of the esteemed
but unapproachable philosopher whose image (as per Com-
tra to the depository of thoughts) regards one instead of partic-
cipates in my pleasures. My comfort is short lived. It has
just struck me you have remedied one ail but sub-
stituted a greater. Like the fable of the Monkey, The Magpie
& The Cheese in depression the one seal you have raised
the other consequently they are as far from equality as ever
you understand what I allude to. Do you? I fear not for I
scarcely do myself. Well you have fashioned the image of an
image from a reality you have seen but in doing so you have
not so much likened it to the reality as what you wished

the reality to be. — Grace the of consequence. Pleased with the shadow how much more with the substance & you wish to revisit the attractive scene unfortunately too confident in the self framed delusion it remains companion of your voyage. — alas for the sequel! so dissimilar are they — so disappointed are you forgetting that yourself not the object is the aggressor / that you count yourself an illused unfortunate man. Now being your friend I warn you to undecieve yourself. I andes rather the faults the imperfections which do exist & if there are virtues they will not be the less enjoyed that they are not over anticipated. What an exuberance of absurd thoughts I could pass forth just now. I am in such a strange mood. you must pardon me if I have offended.

"Well, may I confess, it's my honest conviction,

"My breast is a chaos of all contradiction,

"How madd'ly I act now unthinking & gay"

"To all points of the compass I run a day".

I think I shall make a pause here & try to sober myself into something like propriety. — "Farewell a while I will" — "but have you long."

I was very proud of being entrusted with such a message
to Mr. Rogers. You will see by the Scotsman what he has
copied from your papers. But knowing you got the Scotsman
regularly he very kindly sent me the one to forward to you
He is sorry you have not sent what you have written
on the subject as his testimony of your character would have
been sufficient to induce W. Mr. Laren to believe it. Perhaps
it will do to send it yet. I neglected to ask this. You will
see he has lost his eldest son. It is a very severe trial
for them having previously lost seven children in infancy
There are only four left. I dare say his death has affected
me more in consequence of his having been one of our
Sabbath scholars. But it is very gratifying & a great stimulus
to further diligence to hear his parents say - They have reason
to mourn in hope for he stated his views of his own sin-
fulness & his trust in the finished work of the Saviour for
salvation with an intelligence beyond his years. adding Dox-
ery for me Mother. I am not afraid to die. Jesus makes me
happy. How delightful it is to contemplate the simplicity
of the Gospel that even a child can understand what is
necessary for his salvation. Would that men would humble
themselves & receive it in this childlike spirit. Now that we

through the Grace of God & teaching of the Holy Spirit can rejoice
together in the Faith & Hope of the Gospel. I cannot tell you
how anxiously I desire we should also be agreed with
regard to the essential ordinances & doctrines. One of two
opinions must be wrong: but I am so convinced that
ours are truly scriptural views that I hope - may I almost
believe that studying the Scriptures with singleness of heart
& humble dependence on the teaching of the blessed Spirit
you will not fail to see them in the same light. I have
not the least doubt you will consider this a bigoted illiberal
sentiment, but I consider correct views of these to be so
necessary to our ~~comfort~~ ^{establishment} & upbuilding in the Faith that I
cannot help speaking strongly especially to those in whom
I feel interested. I could quarrel with weak minded or igno-
runt people, but not so readily people of discernment
I ought to have said Christians. We rejoice in the hope of
being spared to convince you, on the accomplishment of your
promised visit to us. (I think it will be the goal to which
all my thoughts will tend) I do long to converse with you on
these subjects but I must take care not to be too self-con-
fident lest like poor Miss Trail who, in a fit of zeal, went
out to convert the Pap. & was herself converted to Roman Catholicism
& in proof of her sincerity has since her return, taken the Black veil
in St. Margaret's Convent at the Pinkes.

Altho not very long some I named my relations & you I
 have no fewer than three little strangers to introduce to you
 Miss alias Jessie, Annemore & Annette & Miss — Bel! By the
 way if I could get them to defer naming them till I heard
 what you would advise I should like. I am to select them
 & I wish them to be uncommon - beautiful & appropriate. There
 is something so very interesting about twins but poor Jane
 is so tired that she would willingly have dispensed with
 this twofold addition. These events have caused Mother
 to be a great stranger at Windmill St. & given me such liberty
 of action & high ideas of my own consequence that she says
 there is no doing with me. Her advice this morning is no great
 proof however of her sincerity. She thinks I should just remain
 a beggy dogood all my life & as an inducement told me
 Father has left her of all his possessions if I retain this
 enviable title. In days when you were young did you think so
 Mother? — "Hem! — Experience my child" — O yes — yes I quite
 understand, said I!

It is such a rare
 treat to get a humorous
 chat with Mother. I
 am sure it makes
 me love her ten times better
 two of which were borrowed & I wished to return them as soon as possible
 I have read one little work by Abercrombie I think it was called Culture of the Mind

All Mother's old, with —
 Tell all the same unwearied tale,
 But
 Dry spirit takes another tone
 And sighs that it is all alone

I have been
 thinking what sort
 of apology I could send
 you with out having
 read either of the
 books you will see kind
 as recommend. But I can
 I had several on hand

Another - I wish you would read it - is *Principates & Powers* by
Charlotte Elizabeth. The first part is upon the Devil & his angels the
second upon the angels of God. It is a subject I had thought little about
so was surprised to find how much information Scripture gives us on the
subject. I am at present reading *Scripture Help* by Bickersteth - a most
useful excellent work but there are so many references & different kinds of
tables in it that one would require to have it by them to read as occasion
required - but amongst all I have read about that season that marks
the lapse of time nothing has pleased me more than your reflections
contained in your last letter. Even among my acquaintances, I can find
a few to correspond to each class you describe - It is almost too late
to tell you what I was doing on the first day of this year but the first
part of it was spent - I think - so much to your liking that you will be
pleas'd to hear of it. I may premise by telling you that I was with your
that time & for my amusement sent in my happy little nephews & nieces
to a very early breakfast. At ten I went to assist in distributing a new year
hymn & a sum to upwards of 60. of our Sabbath scholars. They consist of the
poorest most miserable looking children our City produces & you may imagine
how delighted they were with this little treat. An address & a prayer & singing
a hymn occupied us till past 12 o'clock when in consequence of our daughter's
friends being expected, I had to hurry home to superintend the dinner. I
did not feel much inclined to enjoy this topic of conversation so was
glad they left at an early hour. I felt very much fatigued & pleaded this
as my excuse for immediately leaving Father to his own meditations. But soon
alone in my own room, at my own preside & my thoughts allow'd to follow the
bent of their inclination, my work was allow'd to indicate a late hour before I thought
of retiring to rest. Such presents to you the important information how I spent this
day. I thank you for your kind wishes with regard to this year. I cannot
be better than sincerely & in the same spirit hope you may enjoy the same. Remem-
ber what I have written has for the most part hardly been display'd by impulse than
reason. Had I would fair retain my character but have within some few space left
many things in your two last letters remain unnotic'd but you must not on that
account infer they are forgotten. It is a failing in our sex I believe to give quantity for quality.

A dear

Mary Ann.