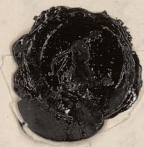


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*Miss Margaret Mercer
6 Windmill Street
Edin Burch*



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Hawick 18th November 1839
Monday Morning 11, O'clock

My dearest Miss Margaret,

I wrote to Miss Mercer, about three weeks ago, and she has not yet dign'd to answer - I am grown quite impatient for a letter, and I do hope you will not also disappoint me - You remember you promised, to answer if I wrote first, - this I am doing in the expectation that you will act as you said - I do not know how it is, but I just imagine if I had the privilege of corresponding with you and Miss Mercer, that I wou'd feel very happy. - I begin to think that I have offended all my epistolary correspondents, for I have not received a single letter since I came home - although I wrote profuse than eight after my arrival. - When did you hear from Galashields? I cannot conceive the meaning of the silence in that quarter to me - it is not all in accordance with Isabella Mathews ordinary behaviour, however I have done nothing that deserves their drawback, and they may take their will, I am so proud in matters of that sort, that I will not ask them again. -

Miss White did not call with Miss Mercer's letter, as I desired her to do, when diffidence arises at this pitch, it is overacting itself, don't you think? she is a singular girl, yet one that in spite of all her many foibles one cannot help liking, she came home ten days ago, and I have been staying with her since, I only came home to night, she lives in the country about four miles from this - I went away the day after I heard of her arrival, quite elated with the hope of her having a letter from that dear dark-eyed Cora, but in this as in almost all matters in which I am so sanguine I was grievously disappointed.

I have again been very ill, but I must tell you the cause of this illness and then you will have some idea of the very foolish personage who is writing to you - Miss White's residence is on the banks of a nice stream, at this season of the year, for fishing, the fish of late have been rather plentiful, and I thought while there I might do worse than try a take, had I done this in a manner which other wise people would have done, it might have been all well enough -

But instead of that, I took the more masculine ^{way} of the thing, Miss White's brother and I took the net and went off at twelve at night, they were what fishers term taking well, and I went about 3 miles down the water, I was so fatigued with helping to drag the net, and the sudden transition from a cold cold atmosphere into a warm room brought on a violent fit of coughing and the consequence was the breaking of a small pebble, owing to the weak state of my body before, it has of course made me a great deal more so - however it will be a lesson I think I will long remember -

But I have had so many similar ones, and they have only been as the morning cloud and the early dew, they have never left their proper impression. - you have already my dear Miss Margaret ^{begin} to remark that I am a real egotist, I speak of nothing or nobody but myself, then again what can I tell you of, there is nothing happens in this part of place, that can at all interest you, so that would be vain - in a large city it is very different, you there have always something to interest the beholder, and to be worth recounting, but you need neither the aid of city or town to fill your pages, for you have that in your own originality that is always ^{aid} for the task -

My dear Miss Margaret, I sometimes begin to think I am never to get better of this disease, I have the foreboding that I am hastening to the silent tomb, and when possessed of that thought, I try to alienate my affections, from this passing scene and fix them on something more substantial - but how soon does this world intervene between God and my soul - how soon the trifling parasites of time engross my affections - I have never acted as a probationer for eternity - often does my conscience

to reproach me for my trifling conduct, yet it has never brought me back
to that fold, from which like a strayed sheep I have wandered far
astray - We are now forming characters, and performing actions
for a never ending existence - Time is indeed short - months
and years are ~~flitting~~ flying away with velocity never, never to return

I am to night afflicted with a severe pain in my head, I forget
the author who says that every pain, ought to remind us of our
latter end, & I wish that this only was the case with me.

I know my dear Miss Margaret, that you will laugh at this letter
and when you do so, it only receives its deserts, did you ever see
such a writer? did you ever read such dictioⁿ? I hear you answer, I
never did - well I cannot help it, my writing like every else I do, is
done in the impulse of the moment - I dare not for the life of me
read what I have written, if I did that, I could never send it -
you will have to put on Mrs. Hemm's hot magnifiers to enable
you to read, I have written closely that I might write a great deal
do you so likewise - and then at least in one respect
be proud of being your equal, in giving plenty of it -

and now as I conclude this harangue, I desire to ^{be} remembered to
all the household - tell Miss Mercer she is very shabby, she might
have written me long ago - I would not have asked a second letter
so suddenly, so she might have answered it.

you will write to me next week, and I will ever remain your debtor
and believe my dearest Miss Margaret,

your very affectionate

Isabella K. Olin

I have heard it remarked, that the best part of a Lady's letter is
the postscriptum - I have lately been reading for the second
time Rob Roy - and let me tell you I think you the exact prototype
of the gay, the happy, and the often thoughtful Diana Beanson
this shall be your name - I suppose Miss Will be some terrible
Lady Chastell