Love and Freindship [sic]

Jane Austen

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LOVE & FREINDSHIP
AND
OTHER EARLY WORKS

A Collection of Juvenile Writings

By Jane Austen

CONTENTS

LOVE AND FREINDSHIP
LETTER the FIRST From ISABEL to LAURA
LETTER 2nd LAURA to ISABEL
LETTER 3rd LAURA to MARIANNE
LETTER 4th Laura to MARIANNE
LETTER 5th LAURA to MARIANNE
LETTER 6th LAURA to MARIANNE
LETTER 7th LAURA to MARIANNE
LETTER 8th LAURA to MARIANNE, in continuation
LETTER the 9th From the same to the same
LETTER 10th LAURA in continuation
LETTER 11th LAURA in continuation
LETTER the 12th LAURA in continuation
LETTER the 13th LAURA in continuation
LETTER the 14th LAURA in continuation
LETTER the 15th LAURA in continuation.

AN UNFINISHED NOVEL IN LETTERS LESLEY CASTLE
LETTER the FIRST is from Miss MARGARET LESLEY to Miss CHARLOTTE LUTTERELL LETTER the SECOND From Miss C.

LUTTERELL to Miss M. LESLEY in answer. LETTER the THIRD From Miss MARGARET LESLEY to Miss C. LUTTERELL LETTER the FOURTH From Miss C. LUTTERELL to Miss M. LESLEY LETTER the FIFTH Miss MARGARET LESLEY to Miss CHARLOTTE LUTTERELL LETTER the SIXTH LADY LESLEY to Miss CHARLOTTE LUTTERELL LETTER the SEVENTH From Miss C. LUTTERELL to Miss M. LESLEY LETTER the EIGHTH Miss LUTTERELL to Mrs MARLOWE LETTER the NINTH Mrs MARLOWE to Miss LUTTERELL LETTER the TENTH From Miss MARGARET LESLEY to Miss CHARLOTTE LUTTERELL

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

A COLLECTION OF LETTERS To Miss COOPER LETTER the FIRST From a MOTHER to her FREIND. LETTER the SECOND From a YOUNG LADY crossed in Love to her freind LETTER the THIRD From a YOUNG LADY in distressed Circumstances to her freind LETTER the FOURTH From a YOUNG LADY rather impertinent to her freind LETTER the FIFTH From a YOUNG LADY very much in love to her Freind

THE FEMALE PHILOSOPHER

THE FIRST ACT OF A COMEDY

A LETTER from a YOUNG LADY, whose feelings being too strong A TOUR THROUGH WALES—in a LETTER from a YOUNG LADY—

A TALE.

LOVE AND FREINDSHIP

TO MADAME LA COMTESSE DE FEUILLIDE THIS NOVEL IS INSCRIBED BY HER OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT THE AUTHOR.

“Deceived in Freindship and Betrayed in Love.”

LETTER the FIRST From ISABEL to LAURA

How often, in answer to my repeated intreaties that you would give my Daughter a regular detail of the Misfortunes and Adventures of your Life, have you said “No, my freind never will I comply with your request till I may be no longer in Danger of again experiencing such dreadful ones.”

Surely that time is now at hand. You are this day 55. If a woman may ever be said to be in safety from the determined Perseverance of disagreeable Lovers and the cruel Persecutions of obstinate Fathers, surely it must be at such a time of Life.

Isabel

LETTER 2nd LAURA to ISABEL

Altho’ I cannot agree with you in supposing that I shall never again be exposed to Misfortunes as unmerited as those I have already experienced, yet to avoid the imputation of Obstinacy or ill-nature, I will gratify the curiosity of your daughter; and may the fortitude with

which I have suffered the many afflictions of my past Life, prove to her a useful lesson for the support of those which may befall her in her own.

Laura

LETTER 3rd LAURA to MARIANNE

As the Daughter of my most intimate freind I think you entitled to that knowledge of my unhappy story, which your Mother has so often solicited me to give you.

My Father was a native of Ireland and an inhabitant of Wales; my Mother was the natural Daughter of a Scotch Peer by an italian Opera-girl—I was born in Spain and received my Education at a Convent in France.

When I had reached my eighteenth Year I was recalled by my Parents to my paternal roof in Wales. Our mansion was situated in one of the most romantic parts of the Vale of Uske. Tho' my Charms are now considerably softened and somewhat impaired by the Misfortunes I have undergone, I was once beautiful. But lovely as I was the Graces of my Person were the least of my Perfections. Of every accomplishment accustomary to my sex, I was Mistress. When in the Convent, my progress had always exceeded my instructions, my Acquirements had been wonderfull for my age, and I had shortly surpassed my Masters.

In my Mind, every Virtue that could adorn it was centered; it was the Rendez-vous of every good Quality and of every noble sentiment.

A sensibility too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Freinds,

my Acquaintance and particularly to every affliction of my own, was my only fault, if a fault it could be called. Alas! how altered now! Tho' indeed my own Misfortunes do not make less impression on me than they ever did, yet now I never feel for those of an other. My accomplishments too, begin to fade—I can neither sing so well nor Dance so gracefully as I once did—and I have entirely forgot the _Minuet Dela Cour_.

Adeiu. Laura.

LETTER 4th LAURA to MARIANNE

Our neighbourhood was small, for it consisted only of your Mother. She may probably have already told you that being left by her Parents in indigent Circumstances she had retired into Wales on eoconomical motives. There it was our freindship first commenced. Isobel was then one and twenty. Tho' pleasing both in her Person and Manners (between ourselves) she never possessed the hundredth part of my Beauty or Accomplishments. Isabel had seen the World. She had passed 2 Years at one of the first Boarding-schools in London; had spent a fortnight in Bath and had supped one night in Southampton.

"Beware my Laura (she would often say) Beware of the insipid Vanities and idle Dissipations of the Metropolis of England; Beware of the unmeaning Luxuries of Bath and of the stinking fish of Southampton."

"Alas! (exclaimed I) how am I to avoid those evils I shall never be exposed to? What probability is there of my ever tasting the Dissipations of London, the Luxuries of Bath, or the stinking Fish of

Southampton? I who am doomed to waste my Days of Youth and Beauty in an humble Cottage in the Vale of Uske."

Ah! little did I then think I was ordained so soon to quit that humble Cottage for the Deceitfull Pleasures of the World.

Adeiu. Laura.

LETTER 5th LAURA to MARIANNE

One Evening in December as my Father, my Mother and myself, were arranged in social converse round our Fireside, we were on a sudden greatly astonished, by hearing a violent knocking on the outward door of our rustic Cot.

My Father started—"What noise is that," (said he.) "It sounds like a loud rapping at the door"—(replied my Mother.) "it does indeed." (cried I.) "I am of your opinion; (said my Father) it certainly does appear to proceed from some uncommon violence exerted against our unoffending door." "Yes (exclaimed I) I cannot help thinking it must be somebody who knocks for admittance."

"That is another point (replied he;) We must not pretend to determine on what motive the person may knock—tho' that someone _does_ rap at the door, I am partly convinced."

Here, a 2d tremendous rap interrupted my Father in his speech, and somewhat alarmed my Mother and me.

"Had we better not go and see who it is? (said she) the servants are out." "I think we had." (replied I.) "Certainly, (added my Father) by all means." "Shall we go now?" (said my Mother,) "The sooner the

better.” (answered he.) “Oh! let no time be lost” (cried I.)

A third more violent Rap than ever again assaulted our ears. “I am certain there is somebody knocking at the Door.” (said my Mother.) “I think there must,” (replied my Father) “I fancy the servants are returned; (said I) I think I hear Mary going to the Door.” “I’m glad of it (cried my Father) for I long to know who it is.”

I was right in my conjecture; for Mary instantly entering the Room, informed us that a young Gentleman and his Servant were at the door, who had lossed their way, were very cold and begged leave to warm themselves by our fire.

“Won’t you admit them?” (said I.) “You have no objection, my Dear?” (said my Father.) “None in the World.” (replied my Mother.)

Mary, without waiting for any further commands immediately left the room and quickly returned introducing the most beauteous and amiable Youth, I had ever beheld. The servant she kept to herself.

My natural sensibility had already been greatly affected by the sufferings of the unfortunate stranger and no sooner did I first behold him, than I felt that on him the happiness or Misery of my future Life must depend.

Adeiu. Laura.

LETTER 6th LAURA to MARIANNE

The noble Youth informed us that his name was Lindsay—for particular reasons however I shall conceal it under that of Talbot. He told us that he was the son of an English Baronet, that his Mother had

been for many years no more and that he had a Sister of the middle size. “My Father (he continued) is a mean and mercenary wretch—it is only to such particular freinds as this Dear Party that I would thus betray his failings. Your Virtues my amiable Polydore (addressing himself to my father) yours Dear Claudia and yours my Charming Laura call on me to repose in you, my confidence.” We bowed. “My Father seduced by the false glare of Fortune and the Deluding Pomp of Title, insisted on my giving my hand to Lady Dorothea. No never exclaimed I. Lady Dorothea is lovely and Engaging; I prefer no woman to her; but know Sir, that I scorn to marry her in compliance with your Wishes. No! Never shall it be said that I obliged my Father.”

We all admired the noble Manliness of his reply. He continued.

“Sir Edward was surprised; he had perhaps little expected to meet with so spirited an opposition to his will. “Where, Edward in the name of wonder (said he) did you pick up this unmeaning gibberish? You have been studying Novels I suspect.” I scorned to answer: it would have been beneath my dignity. I mounted my Horse and followed by my faithful William set forth for my Aunts.”

“My Father’s house is situated in Bedfordshire, my Aunt’s in Middlesex, and tho’ I flatter myself with being a tolerable proficient in Geography, I know not how it happened, but I found myself entering this beautifull Vale which I find is in South Wales, when I had expected to have reached my Aunts.”

“After having wandered some time on the Banks of the Uske without knowing which way to go, I began to lament my cruel Destiny in the bitterest and most pathetic Manner. It was now perfectly dark, not a

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