

**THE CHELTENHAM MAIL
BAG; OR, LETTERS FROM
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

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The Cheltenham Mail Bag; Or, Letters from Gloucestershire by Peter Quince

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PETER QUINCE

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BAG; OR, LETTERS FROM
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

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CHELTENHAM MAIL BAG;

OR,

Letters from Gloucestershire.

EDITED BY

PETER QUINCE, THE YOUNGER.

“ Moi donc qui conçois peu Phébus et ses douces
“ Qui suis nouveau sévère sur le mont des neuf Sœurs :

“ Moi, la plume à la main, je gourmand les vices
“ Et parlant pour moi-même une juste rigueur,
“ Je confie au papier les secrets de mon cœur.”

BOILEAU, *Discours au Roi.*

“ Les lettres et les pensées sur divers sujets que je publie aujourd'hui
“ peignant à la fois la reverie et la familiarité de l'esprit.”

DE STAEL.

LONDON:
JOHN WARREN, OLD BOND STREET.

MDCCCXX.

LONDON :

W. SWACKELL, JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.



PREFACE.

IF it were at all necessary for me, and I rejoice that it is not, to account for the way in which the following Letters came into my possession, I think I could as satisfactorily acquit myself of any fraudulent or irreverent practices, in obtaining them, as any of my cotemporaries, not even with the exception of the witty and learned Editor of the *FUDGERS*,—THOMAS BROWN *the younger*. I have merely availed myself of an opportunity, which may never again occur—to me at least—and have accordingly, with all Editorial diligence and accuracy, prepared for the public eye, some certain Epistles, which, partly

through negligence—partly through accident, and a little through good fortune, (for one's *luck-penny* must not be forgotten,) have fallen under my *surveillance*. It is merely essential for me to state, that as I have betrayed no confidence—neither have I compromised any gentlemanly feeling, in obtaining the *porte-feuille*, from which my present Selection is made—and which contains an immense quantity of manuscripts, no less interesting and important, “to those whom it may concern.”—Whether the success of my present attempt, at restoring those documents to their right possessors—(which is my principal inducement to publish them,) may lead me to the disclosure of any others, I am not prepared to say:—I shall only observe, that when the packet, which contained the Letters in question, came into my hands, it was not padlocked;—when I looked to

the letters, they were not sealed;—neither were they marked “*Private*” nor “*Confidential*,”—the blanks in the names were not even filled up,—and there was no probability of their ever reaching their destination, but by the course I now adopt, whereby many an anxious doubt of faith preserved—of friendship unshaken—of love untired—and of esteem unchanged, may be at once removed.—If a few secrets should escape,—or, a few little uneasy thoughts spring out like the plagues from *Pandora's* box, they will still leave hope behind—at least, the hope that though a passing smile may be excited at the expense of some fashionable folly, no sting may for a moment, wound an honest bosom, nor PETER QUINCE *the younger* have cause to lament the publication of—

“One line which dying he should wish to blot.”—

As for myself, as the Editor of this selection, were

I to follow the bent of my humour I should certainly assume the favour of an *Incognito*,—"parcequ'il y à quelque chose de joli d'être auteur sans y être connu;"—but even this gratification, my love of candour at once repels, even though my risk in literary fame becomes "doubly hazardous," when I reflect that, "Quand on lit un ouvrage sans nom, on se trouve suspendu entre la crainte de mépriser un auteur célèbre, et celle d'admirer un Ecrivain mediocre;—on a recours à son *pis aller*, et ne pouvant pas juger par prévention, on est forcé de décider par son gout, et par discernement."*

When BURTON first published his celebrated "Anatomy of Melancholy," under the signature of *Democritus Junior*, he thus cautioned the more curious part of his Readers.—"Seek not after that

* Misanthrops.

which is hid—if the contents please thee, and be for thy use, suppose the man in the moon, or whom thou wilt, to be the author. I would not willingly be known. If I be pressed, I will as readily reply, as that *Egyptian* in PLUTARCH, when a curious fellow would needs know what he had in his basket. Quum vides velatam, cur inquiris in rem absconditam?"—Far from adopting disguise or seeking concealment, I cordially invite my kind and indulgent readers, to assure themselves of my identity, by honoring me with a visit at *Sibyl Lodge*; where they shall, at all times, be most cordially received by

Their's and the Public's

Faithfully devoted

(Though not humble) Servant,

PETER QUINCE,

the Younger.

Sibyl Lodge, Cheltenham, June 4th, 1820.