

**LETTERS OF DAVID HUME
AND
EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS
REFERRING TO HIM**

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Letters of David Hume and Extracts from Letters Referring to Him by Thomas Murray

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THOMAS MURRAY

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LETTERS
OF
DAVID HUME,
AND
EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS REFERRING TO HIM.

EDITED BY
THOMAS MURRAY, LL.D.,
AUTHOR OF 'THE LITERARY HISTORY OF GALLOWAY.'



EDINBURGH:
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MDCCCXLI.

TO
DAVID IRVING, Esq., LL.D.,
THIS
SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO OUR LITERARY HISTORY
IS
INSCRIBED,
AS A MARK OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS LEARNING,
AND
ESTEEM FOR HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER,
BY
THE EDITOR.

P R E F A C E.

OF the various Letters contained in this volume, the originals are supposed to have been deposited, about eighty years ago, in the hands of a legal gentleman in Edinburgh, as documents for a law-suit, to which the latter portion of them refers. Since his death, they have, we believe, passed through several hands without having attracted any particular attention, or, perhaps, without having ever been read. They ultimately came into the possession of a gentleman who appreciated their value, and who, several years ago, did me the honour of presenting them unconditionally to me. Since that time, they have been perused by many literary friends, to whom they were communicated; and they all, without a single exception, regarded this correspondence as calculated not merely to throw light on Mr Hume's character, but to illustrate a period of his history, which had they been destroyed, must have remained very obscure. In his well-known autobiography, the only mention of his residence with the Marquis of Annandale,—to which part of his life these Letters belong,—is sufficiently meagre, and contains no allusion to the interesting circumstances, which, while they could not but be painful to his feelings, elicited, in an eminent degree, the peculiarities of his character. In

1745,' says he, 'I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England: I found, also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune.'

Under these circumstances, I have thought it expedient to present this correspondence to the public. I have contributed a few brief notes explanatory of the occasional allusions which the Letters contain; but have not ventured to make any comment, or give any sketch of Mr Hume's character as developed by them. On the contrary, I have left the reader to draw his own inferences, and to form his own conclusions. I flatter myself that, on the whole, this publication will be regarded as supplying no mean addition to the knowledge which we already possess respecting the life and character of an illustrious Philosopher,—and, consequently, to the stock of our biographical literature.

EDINBURGH, *November* 1841.

LETTERS.

THE late MARQUIS of ANNANDALE, a person originally of highly excitable temper, and great waywardness of character, and subsequently declared to be a lunatic, required, before this legal step was taken, to be managed with much care and circumspection.* His mother and family successively employed persons of superior character to live with him as companions and guardians, whose province it was to read to him, amuse him, and exercise that superintendence over him which his unhappy situation rendered indispensable. In the beginning of the year 1745, overtures were made to the celebrated David Hume to reside in this capacity with his Lordship. Mr Hume expressed no unwillingness to accept of the offer; and, in the month of February, he accordingly went from Edinburgh to London, in order that the Marquis and he might be introduced to each other, preparatory to the arrangement being completed.

The following letter to Mr Hume, written by Captain Philip Vincent, a relation of the Marchioness of Annan-

* On the 6th of March 1746, an inquest from the Court of Chancery found that the Marquis was a lunatic, incapable of governing himself and managing his own affairs; and that he had been in this state of mind from the 12th of December 1744. He survived till the 29th of April 1792, when he died at Turnham Green, after having completed the seventy-second year of his age. (*Wood's Peerage of Scotland*, vol. 1. p. 77). The title has since been dormant.

dale, will show on what terms the connexion in question was formed :—

‘ SIR,

‘ You desire to have a letter from me, expressing all the conditions of the agreement concluded betwixt us, with regard to your living with the Marques of Annandale. In compliance with so reasonable a request, I hereby acknowledge that, by virtue of powers committed to me by the said Marques, and with the approbation and consent of his Lordship and Sir James Johnstone,* I engaged that my Lord should pay you three hundred pounds Sterling a-year, so long as you continued to live with him, beginning from the first of April, one thousand seven hundred and forty five : also, that the said Marques, or his heirs, should be engaged to pay you, or your heirs, the sum of three hundred pounds, as one year’s salary, even though the Marques should happen to die any time in the first year of your attendance, or should embrace any new scheme or plan of life, which should make him chuse that you should not continue to live out the first year with him. Another condition was, that, if you should, on your part, chuse to leave the Marques any time in the first or subsequent years, you should be free to do it ; and that the Marques should be bound to pay you your salary for the time you had attended him, and also the salary for that quarter in which you should leave him, in the same manner as if that quarter should be fully expired.

‘ These were the conditions of our agreement about the

* Sir James Johnstone, Bart. of Westerhall, is the person here referred to. He was the representative of an ancient family ; and the letters, which this publication contains, bear ample testimony to the prudence and worth which marked his character. He represented the Dumfries District of Burghs for eleven years in succession from 1743 inclusive. He married, in 1719, Barbara, daughter of Alexander, 4th Lord Elbank, and died on the 18th of December, 1772. His widow survived him five months. (*Playfair’s Baronetage of Great Britain*, vol. iii. p. 432.)