

**THE LOVE-LETTERS
OF MR. H. & MISS
R.: 1775-1779**

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The love-letters of Mr. H. & Miss R.: 1775-1779 by Gilbert Burgess

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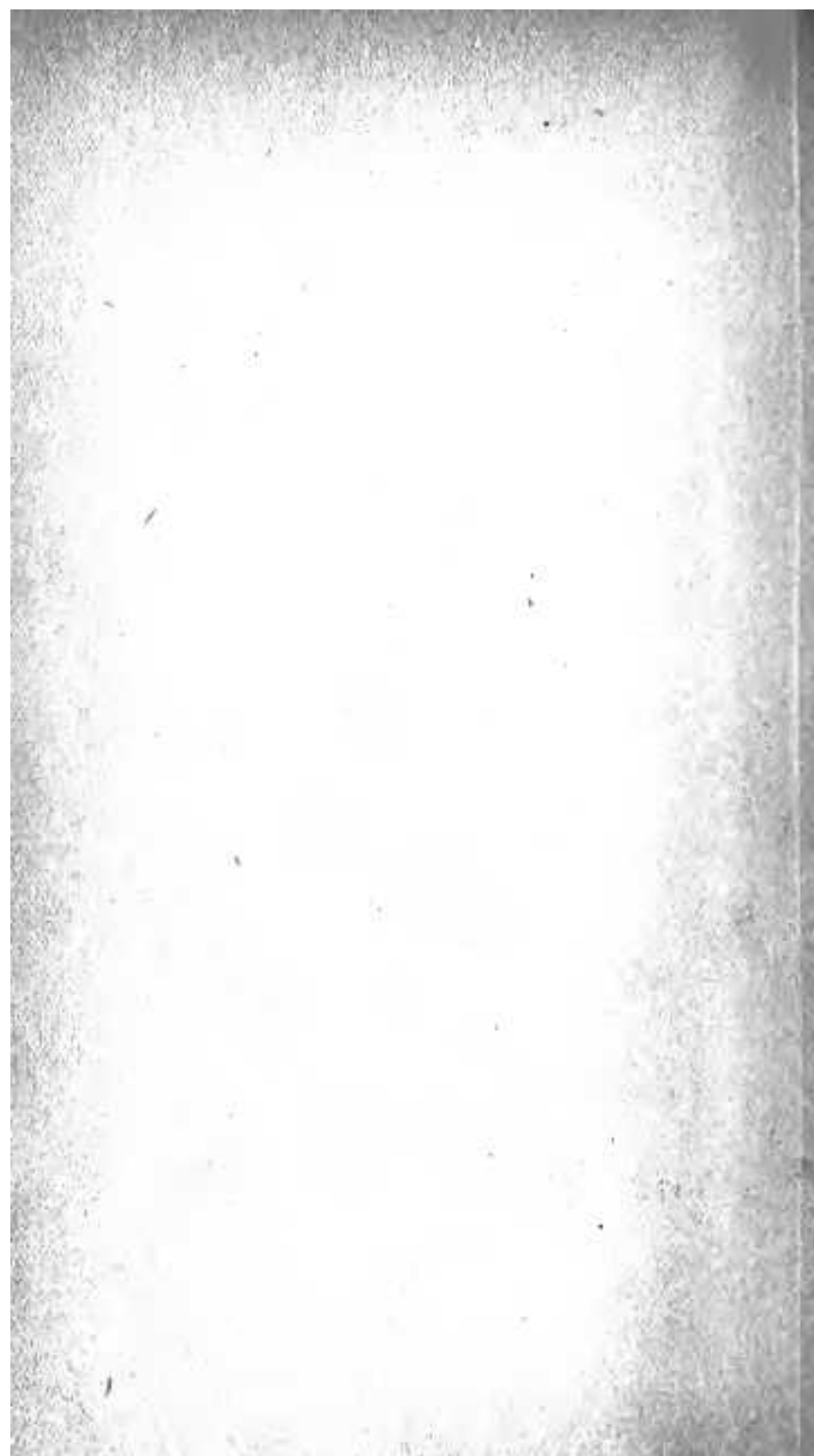
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GILBERT BURGESS

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OF MR. H. & MISS
R.: 1775-1779**

The Love Letters
of
Mr. H. & Miss R.



Hackman Kern

The Love-Letters of
Mr. H. & Miss R.
1775-1779.

EDITED BY
GILBERT BURGESS



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INTRODUCTION

THE strange and pathetic story that is told in the love letters that passed between Mr. Hackman and Miss Reay, excited widespread attention and sympathy during the spring of the year 1779, and interest in the affair was revived in the following year by the publication of an anonymous book in which some of these letters, in a garbled form, were inserted.

The originals, or copies of the originals—for Hackman was sufficiently romantic to have kept copies of his own letters—were given to Kearsly, the publisher, by Mr. Frederick Booth, Hackman's brother-in-law, in consequence of Kearsly having issued a pamphlet, on the 24th of April, 1779, called "The Case and Memoirs of the late Revd. Mr. James Hackman," which was full of errors. In the *Public Advertiser* of the 24th of

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April, 1779, Booth, in view of the advertised publication of the "Case and Memoirs" by Kearsly, announced positively that no materials for a life of Hackman could possibly be obtained except through him, as all the necessary letters and documents were in his possession. Croft's edition of the letters was issued by the same publisher in the spring of the following year. It is not quite clear whether Booth was approached by Kearsly or by Croft; but that he (Booth) was satisfied with the latter's work is evident from the fact that it elicited no further protest from him.

Sir Herbert Croft, Bart., was born at Dunster Park, Berkshire, on November 1, 1751. In March, 1771, he matriculated at University College, Oxford,¹ where Scott—afterwards Lord Stowell—was his tutor.² He then entered Lincoln's Inn, but want of means did not allow him to continue in the profession of the law, so in 1782 he returned to Oxford, and decided for the Church. In April, 1785, he took the degree of B.C.L., and in 1786 he received the vicarage of

¹ Nichols' "Literary Illustrations," v. 202.

² "Dict. Nat. Biog." (Stephen.)

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Prittlewell,¹ in Essex. During his sojourn at Lincoln's Inn, he wrote many tracts and pamphlets; he also tried to compile an English dictionary, but he found that £100 a year—the amount he had available for that purpose—was hardly sufficient.

He also wrote the life of Young for Johnson's series of the Lives of the Poets.² Croft was somewhat eccentric in the management of his finances, and was always begging money or preferment from his friends; there is a letter in the British Museum³ from him to Bishop Douglas,⁴ in which he complains of having been cold-shouldered by Pitt, whose favour he had tried to gain by offering

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1816, pt. i. 470.

² Among Croft's other works were: "A Brother's Advice to his Sisters," 1775. "Fanaticism and Treason," "The Literary Fly," 1780. "The Abbey of Kilhampton," 1780—a series of anticipatory epitaphs upon prominent living personages. "Sunday Evenings," 1784, religious discourses, which Dr. Johnson disapproved of on account of their levity of style (Boswell's *Johnson*, Morley's edition, iv. 231), and a curious French work, "Horace éclairci par la ponctuation," Paris, 1810.

³ Egerton MSS. 2185, fol. 172.

⁴ John Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury. (*Gent. Mag.* 1807, pt. i. 475.)