

**LETTER FROM THE EARL OF
SHREWSBURY TO AMBROSE LISLE
PHILLIPPS, ESQ. DESCRIPTIVE OF
THE ESTATICA OF CALDARO AND
THE ADDOLORATA OF CAPRIANA**

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Letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury to Ambrose Lisle Phillipps, Esq. Descriptive of the Estatica of Caldaro and the Addolorata of Capriana by John Talbot

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JOHN TALBOT

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NOTICE TO THE READER.

So many doubts having been expressed, both publicly and privately, as to my being the real author of writings which have appeared under my name, I deem it right thus publicly to protest against all such imputations. All that I have published I have myself written, and entirely at my own suggestion, nor have I ever shewn the manuscript to any one with a view to its correction, nor has any one even proposed to me the propriety of such correction. Fully sensible of the many imperfections, both in matter and manner, which characterize my productions, I earnestly request that the responsibility of them may not be ascribed to any one but to him to whom it solely and entirely belongs.

When I wrote the first part of this publication, I had not a single work to refer to save one number of the *Université Catholique*, and a small German Pamphlet: I therefore trust that the additions made to it in its present form, will give it additional interest, and render it less incomplete.

LETTER
FROM
THE EARL OF SHREWSBURY
TO
AMBROSE LISLE PHILLIPPS, ESQ.
DESCRIPTIVE OF THE
ESTATICA OF CALDARO
AND
THE ADDOLORATA OF CAPRIANA.

BEING A
SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED;
TO WHICH IS ADDED THE RELATION OF THREE
SUCCESSIVE VISITS TO THE
ESTATICA OF MONTE SANSAVINO,
IN MAY 1842.

—
"It is honourable to reveal and confess the works of God,"

TORIAS XII. 7.
—

LONDON:
CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET.

—
1842.

A LETTER,

ETC.

Munich, May 27, 1841.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU have doubtlessly heard of the Estatica of Caldaro, and of the Addolorata of Capriana. We have lately seen both: and considering them the most extraordinary objects in existence, and confident that you will feel the same intense interest in their regard that we did, I will endeavour, as leisure and opportunity shall serve, to give you a more distinct notion of them than you have probably yet formed.

On Thursday, the 20th of May, being Ascension day, we left Neumarkt, a post station about half way between Trent and Botzen, in those light but incommodious carriages which alone are to be procured in those parts of the country, and after travelling for about two hours along an exceedingly rough road, through a wide and smiling valley, we ascended to the large, substantial village of Caldaro. Having brought letters from the bishop of Trent to the clergymen of the place, we were very shortly introduced into the house and into the chamber of

the Estatica, accompanied by her confessor and the assistant priest of the dean. It was about eleven o'clock. We found her in her usual state of ecstasy, as represented in the annexed print,* kneeling upon her bed, with her eyes uplifted, and her hands joined in the attitude of prayer, as motionless as a statue. She was dressed in white, with her head uncovered, but with very long, flowing, black hair; and there was much of elegance in her figure, and grace in her attitude. Our first feeling was that of awe at finding ourselves in the presence of so favoured a creature. When this had partially subsided, we might have mistaken her for a waxen image: for it appeared impossible that any being possessed of a soul could seem so inanimate—could remain so motionless; still a closer inspection soon proved that that soul was at work. When in this state, she neither sees nor hears: all her senses are absorbed in the object of her contemplation; she is entranced—but it is neither the trance of death, nor the suspension of life, but a sort of supernatural existence—dead indeed to this world, but most feelingly alive to the other; one might fancy that the spirit were dwelling in heaven, while the body (without, however, losing its consciousness) remained expecting its return. After contemplating her in this condition for some minutes, she closed her eyelids, but

* The plates being much worn, it has not been thought necessary to renew them.

without any other, even the slightest, movement, and certainly without the least perception of our presence. She might have remained in this state and posture for several hours, had not her confessor, by a slight touch or a word, we could not exactly say which, so quiet and imperceptible it was, caused her to fall back upon her pillow, which she did with the most perfect ease, placing herself in a sitting posture, with her legs extended under the counterpane, without the slightest effort, and without awaking from her ecstasy, remaining with her eyes shut and her hands joined as before, in the attitude of prayer, her lips motionless, and her soul transfixed in the same profound meditation. After again contemplating her for a few moments in this new position; her confessor proposed to us that he should awaken her entirely from her trance. We had no sooner assented, than he addressed her in a mild, gentle tone, as did the assistant priest from the other side of the bed, which was placed with its head against the centre of one side of the room, we standing close at her feet,—when, in an instant, she was restored to the most perfect animation. She let fall her hands and opened her eyes, while her countenance beamed with a most heavenly, benignant smile, full of gratitude and joy, looking first to one side, then to the other, as if it were the unexpected meeting of friends whom she had not seen for years. She then took the hand of her confessor

and kissed it with the most unaffected devotion, and turning with equal kindness to the assistant, paid him the same mark of affectionate respect. Her consciousness of our presence was merely signified by an occasional glance of the eyes, which otherwise were kept modestly cast down upon her hands. These she was continually covering with the ruffles of her sleeves, which were wide and ample, for the express purpose of hiding the stigmata with which they were marked. Both the confessor and assistant said a few words to her at short intervals, which appeared to give her great pleasure, and to which she ever assented by an inclination of the head, with that same placid, benign, and heavenly smile, which had stamped the moment of her awakening with an inexpressible charm. Amongst other things, the assistant said to her, "Maria, this is an easy life;" to which she replied, "Yes," with a manner indicative of the serenity of her mind. This was said in Italian, which we understood, while the rest was spoken in German, which we understood not. We all agreed it was the sweetest scene we ever beheld. It was, however, soon and abruptly terminated; for one of our party happening incautiously to ask the confessor, in her hearing, whether she were marked with the stigmata, she instantly changed countenance, as if she had heard that which should make her sorrowful, and without any perceptible transition, became again transfixed in ecstasy, with her

hands, as before, joined over her breast in the attitude of prayer. Her confessor then told us that she had the stigmata on her hands, feet, and side, and that they occasionally emitted blood,— a statement which was afterwards confirmed by the assistant, who remarked that he could only vouch for the wound in the side by the assertion of the women who had dressed her, but the others he had seen with his own eyes.

After allowing her to remain for a few minutes in this second ecstasy, her confessor again brought her to herself by speaking gently to her, and she once more awoke with the same angelic countenance. The assistant then asked her to present us each with a small print of some religious subject, of which he took a box-full out of a drawer, and handed them to her for the purpose. She selected them one by one, presenting them to us with great complacency and affability ; and it was upon this occasion that we distinctly observed the stigmata on her hands, though marked only by a red spot, perhaps a quarter of an inch in diameter. Only a few minutes more had elapsed, when she again became absorbed in ecstatic contemplation, and not wishing to trouble her or her attendants any longer, we reluctantly took our leave, inexpressibly delighted, interested, and edified by our visit to this singularly-favoured child of heaven. Her ecstasy aside, the circumstance which struck us as the most extraordinary, was the extreme facility