

**LETTERS OF JOHN RANDOLPH, TO  
A YOUNG RELATIVE;  
EMBRACING A SERIES OF YEARS,  
FROM EARLY YOUTH, TO  
MATURE MANHOOD**

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Letters of John Randolph, to a young relative; embracing a series of years, from early youth, to mature manhood by John Randolph

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*J. W. Wilde*

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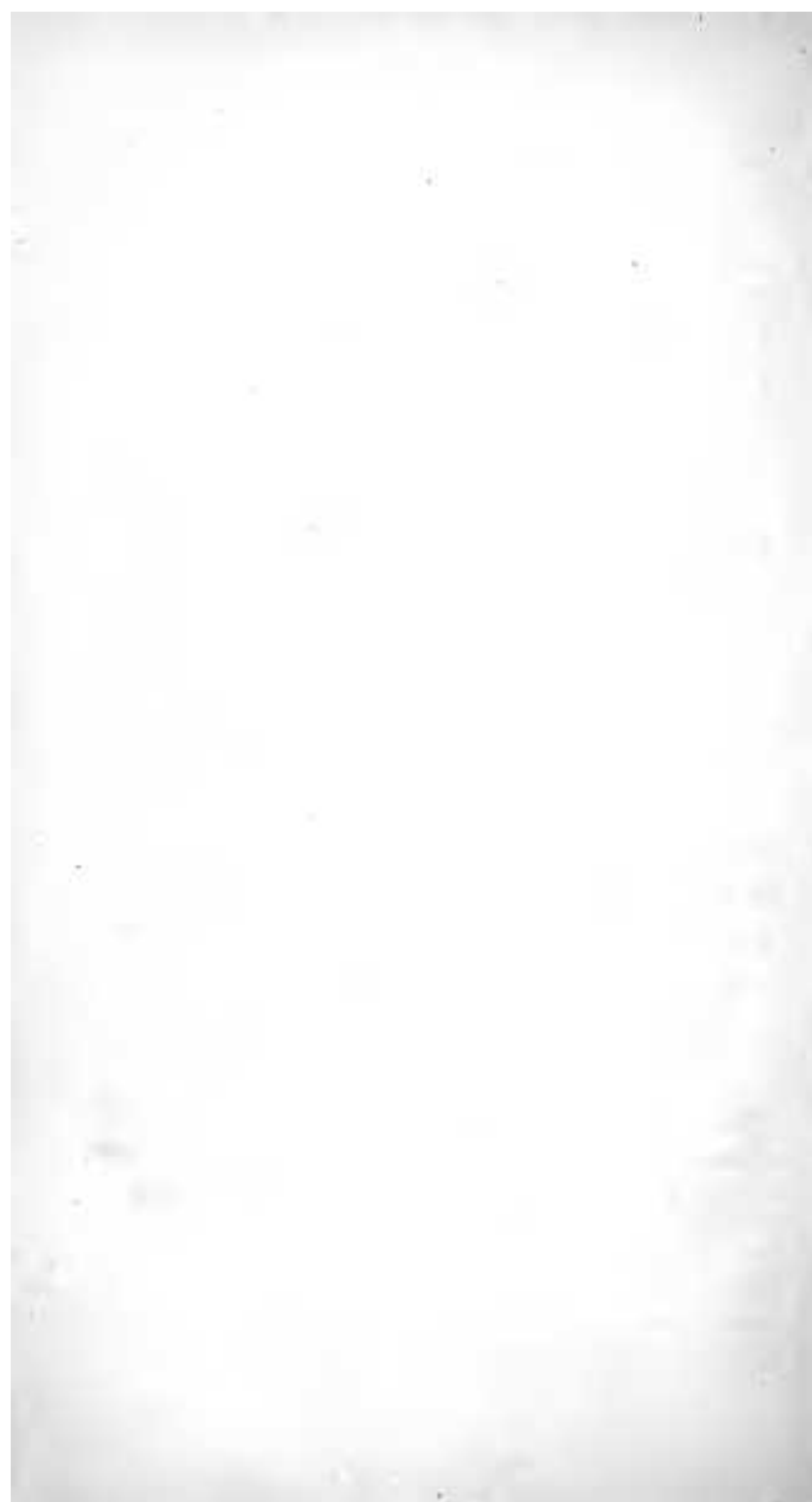
## NOTICE TO THE READER.

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THE following letters have been selected, from among several hundred, as most fit for publication.

The sentiment of filial devotion towards the author, which, for many years, constituted a large portion of my moral existence, together with the want of critical acumen, may so far mislead the judgment, as to make me overrate the merit of these letters. Be that as it may, I shall make no apology for giving them to the public: neither have they a right to require, nor shall they receive, any explanation of motives, that may be personal to myself, in making the publication.

Suffice it to say, that, I think, they will do credit to American literature; and add something to the fame of a man, who long held a distinguished rank among American orators, and statesmen; and whose genius has added not a little to his country's glory.





# LETTERS

OF

JOHN RANDOLPH.

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## LETTER I.

Georgetown, Jan. 31, 1806.

MY DEAR THEODORE,

I SEND you by the New Orleans mail, "letters written by the great Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, to his nephew, when at college." You know my opinion of Lord Chatham: that he was at once the greatest *practical* statesman that ever lived, and the most transcendent orator. With all this, he was a truly *good man*, (indeed, he *must have been*, since *virtue is essential to great excellence in laudable pursuits*.) and the most elegant and polished gentleman of his time.

When I speak of a *practical* statesman, I wish you to understand me. A man may possess great theoretic knowledge on any subject, and yet be a poor practitioner. To take an example from the profession which you seem to have chosen, in preference to any other,—a man might have all the best medical authors by heart, know the treatment which is considered to be most judicious for every disease, and the properties of every medicine, so as, in *conversation*,

to vie with any, and to outshine the greater part of his profession, and yet be so deficient in *practice*, as, when brought to a patient, to be unable to tell what his disease was, and, of course, how it was to have been treated,—whether the pulse indicated depletion or stimulants. Such is the difference between theory and practice; one is disease on paper, where all goes smoothly, and the *patient infallibly recovers*: the other is disease in the subject of malady, in man himself, where symptoms are complicated, and the various considerations of age, sex, and condition, in the patient, baffle the most skilful, and dismay the most experienced—*where the patient dies*.

I fear, from the shortness of your letter, from the incorrectness of its *orthography* and *syntax*, and from the omission of some material words, that want of paper was not your *ONLY* cause for omitting to write the week before last. Enclosed you have something to obviate that objection.—

“There is only 20 more to carry down.”

*Note*.—A verb *DOES NOT* agree with its nominative in *number* and *person*.

“*Plowing*”—which in the preceding line you have spelt correctly.

“No accidents *has* befallen.” A verb does *not*, &c.

“The reason that I did not (the word write omitted) last week, was, &c.” No attention to points, at all.

Number of lines in your letter, nine,

———— errors ————— four;\*

Surely you cannot have read over, once what you wrote. Moreover, the hand is a very bad one; many words blotted, and every part of it betrays negligence and a *carelessness of excelling*—a most deplorable symptom in a young man.

Is Dr. Robinson in Farmville, and is he likely to remain there? Would you prefer being at Hamp. Sid. Coll. to stay-

\* Besides omitting the year 1806.

ing at Bizarre? I am very uneasy about you, my dear boy. In your letters I see no trace of your studies—no mention made of Ovid or Homer--nothing as to your manner of disposing of your time. As soon as I am well enough, I shall set off for Bizarre. God bless you.

Your affectionate friend  
and relation,

JOHN RANDOLPH.

What has become of the journal that I directed you to keep?

Have you ever received the two banks notes that I sent you.

Do not imitate your father's handwriting—it is a running hand, unfit for you at present. You must learn to write *distinctly* first, as children learn to read, letter by letter, syllable by syllable, word by word. The first page of this letter is a very good copy for you—particularly the data.

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## LETTER II.

Georgetown, Feb. 2, 1806.

MY DEAR THEODORE,

I WROTE to you, yesterday, by the New Orleans mail, and, through mistake, dated my letter in January. I would have you, my dear boy, consider the little book, which I sent at the same time, as coming from my head and heart, and addressed to your own. Our situation, and that of its writer and his nephew, are not dissimilar. Let us, then, profit by their example. Whilst I endeavour to avail myself of the wisdom and experience of the one, do you also strive to imitate the amiable docility of the other; and so may God bless you, my dear boy.