

THE ANONYMOUS LETTERS

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The anonymous letters by Anonymous

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1839.

467.

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IN the spring of 1830, after being some years abroad, I returned home with my brother, and found Mr and Mrs T—, and her sister, Miss H—, settled in our village. We soon became acquainted, and in the course of a year or so, more intimate than the generality of country neighbours. However, Mr. T— and my youngest brother quarrelled, and were on such bad terms, that all communication between them ceased. In May, 1833, this brother married and on the 4th of April, 1833, a ridiculous account of his intended marriage was sent to the "John Bull," much in Mr. T—'s style, who was

given to hoaxing. The Editor most properly forbore to insert it, and caused it to be made known to us. Three weeks afterwards a well-worded letter enquired the reason of its non-insertion, and if the guinea sent with it was insufficient. This fixed it on a person of education, who did not care for a guinea.

On the 14th of August, 1833, I received an abusive anonymous letter; soon after which I heard that Mr. T—— was suspected of having put a paragraph in the newspaper, reflecting upon the character of a lady who lived in the neighbourhood, but with whom he was not acquainted. This made me think that if the pure love of mischief could induce him so to act towards a person who could have given him no offence, he was more likely to have acted so towards my brother, with whom he was enraged, or my sisters, against whom he brought petty charges—viz., that one of them, when riding, cut him, &c. When I next met him, at his house, he took occasion to say, that he had been pleased to see my father walking about his field, as he had a great regard for him &c. &c. But as my letter was

full of abuse of my father, I maintained a rather marked silence. From that time his manner to me was so completely changed—became so shy and reserved, from being the very reverse, that I then told my brother J., I was convinced he was the author, and aware of my suspicion, but I should take no notice of it. My silence was not sufficiently marked to strike Mrs. T— or her sister, who were present; *it was his taking the hint, and his consequent change of manner, which convinced me.* Up to that time I had no cause to think he disliked me; and I then began to suppose either that I had grazed his very thin skin, or that his dissatisfaction with my family in general, made him send a letter which abused others more than myself. Indeed, it appears from the letter that such a one was sent to them, though it never reached them; and the one sent to me, who was on good terms with him, was perhaps meant for a blind. The deep-rooted animosity, which soon after betrayed itself, I ascribed to his seeing my suspicion; and to this day I can ascribe it to nothing else.

On the 27th of Aug. 1833, Mr T—'s family

went to Scotland, and the following correspondence will shew the terms on which we parted My Letters were returned to me in 1836, that I might refer to them.

FROM MISS H—.

26th August, 1833.

As C— is writing you a few words of farewell, I think there can be no harm in my sending you a little billet at the same time. I cannot tell you *how* sorry I feel at the idea of our long absence from a friend we like so much as yourself; but if our stay in Scotland should be longer than we at present anticipate, I *do* hope you will come and pay us a visit at my brother's house, where I promise you a most hospitable reception. My hand trembles so much, that I can hardly form a letter. Farewell, and that every good may attend you, is the fervent wish of

Your very sincere friend,

A— R— C— H—.

FROM MRS. T——.

Wednesday, 18th Sept., 1833.

* * * * *

THERE is no such thing as perfect happiness to be found in this sublunary sphere, but I think it would be a very near approach to it, could we reckon upon a visit from your brother and yourself, while we are under C——'s roof. To you we could point out half a hundred delightful walks and shady groves; besides the finest sands in the world, and the enjoyment of as much solitude as you pleased, excepting at breakfast and at dinner. Then to J—— we could promise hunting and shooting, golfing (a game resembling cricket), dancing, and the society of some of the best amateur musicians of which this land of song can boast; and to both of you we offer the heartiest of all hearty welcomes. And what detains J—— and you at A——? simply habit and indolence. At home you can gain no new ideas, and you will every day be acquiring *bachelor habits*, which we shall have infinite trouble in *correcting* when we return;