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978-1-108-05897-1 - Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore: Volume 6

Edited by John Russell

Excerpt

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MEMOIRS,  
JOURNAL, AND CORRESPONDENCE  
OF  
THOMAS MOORE.

VOL. VI.

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DIARY  
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1829.

[THE year 1829 opened with a very general speculation and anxiety as to the course about to be pursued by the Duke of Wellington and his colleagues in the question of Roman Catholic Emancipation. Since the time when Mr. Pitt resigned his undisputed power because he was not allowed to bring this question forward, the plan of relieving the Roman Catholics from their civil disabilities had from time to time been a subject of parliamentary discussion. Mr. Fox, in 1805, had introduced a motion in the House of Commons for this purpose. From that period the Whigs, with undeviating consistency, had declared that the claims of the Catholics were founded in justice, and ought to be conceded. The more able of the Tory party generally adopted the same view. Lord Wellesley, Mr. Canning, Lord Castlereagh agreed with Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Windham upon this question. Lord Liverpool had made it an open question in his cabinet. Hence, upon this vital question of internal government, Mr. Canning was seen consulting

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with Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Brougham, while he answered his colleague Mr. Peel. The great schism among the Tory party, in 1827, rose from this diversity of opinion. Lord Eldon and Mr. Peel would not consent to serve under a Prime Minister who favoured the Roman Catholic claims.

The Duke of Wellington had taken little part in these discussions. He supported Lord Liverpool in the cabinet, but would have supported him equally had he declared at any time that the claims of Roman Catholics could no longer be resisted.

When he became himself Prime Minister, he took a calm view of the situation of the country. In the summer and autumn of 1828, Ireland was organised for agitation and almost for civil war. The Duke determined to yield. By his great authority, by his firmness, by his patience, he gained over his colleagues. He then obtained the reluctant assent of the King to announce the proposed concession in the speech from the throne.

The following extract alludes to the subject. — ED.]

January 1st, 1829. Left Bowood before breakfast, in order to have more of the day to myself. Intended, at first, to return to dinner, but fixed for Saturday next instead. Found a letter from Barnes, saying that the verses I had sent him (in ridicule of the Duke of Wellington) had been actually set up in type, but that, on maturer deliberation, he had decided not to print them. He then gives his reasons at length, being, in substance, that he has great hopes from the Duke for the Catholic question; that it would be, therefore, wrong to make a laughing-stock of him, &c. &c., but that they will watch him well, and should they see reason to attack him, will then be glad of the aid of my “formidable artillery.”

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JAN. 1829.]

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3rd. Walked over to Bowood to dinner. The only addition to the company a Russian, whose name nobody could pronounce for me. Lady L. begged me to take Miss Fox out in going to dinner, and sit next Lord Lansdowne. After the ladies went followed him to the other end of the table, and got next the Russian; a very intelligent man, and much versed in the literature of England, as well as of every other part of Europe. Told me that there were two translations of my "Irish Melodies" into Russian, and that he had with him the translation of my "Peri," made by the Russian poet who accompanied the present Empress when she was at Berlin. In the evening sung a good deal. The Russian showed me the translation of my "Peri" in a collection of Russian poems which he had bound together to read in travelling. My name in the Russian was made *Murosou*, the *ou* at the end being, as in Greek, the sign of the genitive case, "of Moore." Walter Scott not at all to be recognised in its Russian shape. Said that there are two different schools of style in Russia; the one being advocates for a mixture of the old Slavonic words with their diction, and the other all for a new and purer phraseology. Petersburg and Moscow have each their distinct literary circles,—that of Moscow-he thinks the best. Generally two translations of any celebrated foreign work,—a Moscow and a Petersburg one. Read aloud to us a good part of the Russian "Peri," which sounded very musically.

4th. News of Lord Anglesey's recall from Ireland. A great sensation at breakfast, every one producing their letters of private intelligence, with rumours of his successor, &c. &c. Lord L., when asked how he was this morning, answered, "All the better for reading Anglesey's admirable letter."

8th. Bessy took Anastasia to Devizes, to consult Dr. Brabant about her knee, which has been more than usually tender these some days past: her cries this morning dreadful. Little Henry Fitzmaurice called with a message about to-morrow from Lady L. Sent off the verses, "Rival Topics," to "The Times." Find it a hard task now to write *anything* with a mind so harassed as mine is by the prolonged illness of the child, and the evident effect it begins to have upon the (even far more precious) health of the mother, who looks every day more and more worn with it.

9th. The Lansdownes' carriage came for us at half-past seven, and Bessy, Tom, Russell, and I set off in it; my dearest Bess looking remarkably well, and danced four country dances.

16th. Walked over to Bowood to dinner. Lord L. showed me after dinner a letter he had received from Lord Anglesey, explaining the circumstances that led to his recall and to the publication of his letter to Curtis; was very well written, and both the style and the feeling showing him to have been fully capable of the letter to the Archbishop. One word in it rather an odd coinage: "*upholdatory* of his government." Set off at nine for the ball. The Houltons there, looking very handsome. Kerry all happiness, and I *tant soit peu ennuyé*. Got to Bowood between two and three. My intention was to return home, but Lady L. persuaded me to stay and sleep.

19th. Walked into Devizes, to see Dr. Brabant about Anastasia. Had a long consultation with him; the state of inaction into which she has fallen lately having given us great uneasiness, and the limb making no progress whatever.

20th. A letter from my sister Ellen, to say that my mother is very ill, and Crampton attending her. This, at

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her age, is alarming, and affected me deeply, my darling Bessy doing all in her power to strengthen and prepare my mind for the worst. A note from Lord Kerry, proposing to take Bessy and me to the Devizes ball to-night, but declined.

21st, 22nd. A letter to say that my mother is better.

26th. Some conversation with Lord L., Elwyn, &c., after breakfast. Lord Peterborough, being once surrounded by a mob, who took him for the Duke of Marlborough, then very unpopular, looked out of the carriage window, and said, "I assure you, my good friends, you are mistaken in your man; I have rather a large sum of money in my carriage, and, to convince you I am not the Duke of Marlborough, here it is, very much at your service." Elwyn mentioned to me an anecdote of Lord Byron having once taken a challenge from — to Chief Justice Best, on account of the latter having said that — was a great rascal. "I confess, my Lord, I did say that — was a great rascal, and I now repeat the assertion to your Lordship; but are you aware, Lord Byron," (he added, laughing,) "of the consequences you expose yourself to, by bringing a challenge to a Chief Justice?" Lord Byron was soon made to feel the ridicule of the step, and they parted very good-friends, leaving —'s honour to shift for itself. Fielding and Lord Lansdowne walked part of the way home with me.

27th. Busy revising my MS. of Byron's Life, in order to send some of it up by Lord Lansdowne.

[The beginning of this year was clouded by the illness and death of Anastasia, the remaining daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Moore. She was of a gentle and affectionate nature, with a sensibility and modesty of character which

deeply engaged the tenderness of her parents. Moore seems to have been afraid of disturbing her mind with religious preparation; but Mrs. Moore had long before inculcated in her daughter's mind those lessons of piety she was so well qualified to give.—ED.]

February 1st. Walked over to Bowood, with my two copybooks; found the Fieldings there to luncheon. Lord L. asked me to stay and dine with them as I was. Went in to prayers with them; a passage in the sermon Guthrie preached, "scenes of great distress await us all," struck mournfully on my heart, which has long had sad misgivings about our poor Anastasia. Staid to dinner. Walked home at night.

2nd. Bessy called with the Hugheses and Anastasia; asked me to go in and dine at Devizes, which I did. Our dear child not looking at all as I could wish. Though Dr. Brabant and I were left alone together after dinner, dreaded asking him about her.

3rd. Breakfasted at Hughes's; our darling child looking, as she lay in bed, like one dying. Walked home to Sloperton with a heavy heart.

4th and 5th. At home at work. On the 5th, Bessy came with the Hugheses and Anastasia; a sad scene with my poor Bessy, who evidently fears the worst. On the evening of the 5th received a letter of Luttrell's to Scott (which my kind Bess despatched to me), announcing the *certainty* that Emancipation is to be recommended in the King's forthcoming speech. Could I ever have thought that this event would, under any circumstances, find me indifferent to it? yet such is almost the case at present. Did not see Bessy's writing on the cover (congratulating me on the news, and saying, "let me have one line") till



I had sent off the servant; and fearing she might be disappointed, wrote a little note, and went out to get some one to take it, though past eight o'clock and pitch dark. The blacksmith's boy, however, undertook it readily.

6th. Obligated to go to Locke's to dinner, having promised a fortnight since to meet the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who made it a particular request that I should be of the party. Were I in a state to be amused, would have been abundantly so by the consternation of my Lord the bishop and five parsons (who proved our company) at the announcement in the King's speech. Discussed the subject after dinner, and (notwithstanding our *toto cælo* difference of opinion) got on very smoothly with them. Slept at Locke's. The Bishop expressed great compunction at having been one of those who gave way on the Corporation and Test Acts.

7th. Locke at breakfast said that the Bishop (who had started early) was quite delighted with me and with the way I spoke my mind! After breakfast set out to walk to Devizes, but met Bessy and Anastasia coming for me; got in with them and went on to Devizes. The dreadful truth at last forced upon me, that there were but little hopes for our poor girl. Bessy herself has known (and been wasting away on the knowledge of) it these three weeks, but feared to distress me by telling it. Has sent for Dr. Fowler of Salisbury, and expects him to-day. Walked home.

8th. Bessy arrived with Anastasia between three and four. Fowler has twice seen her, and says there are *some* favourable symptoms, but those of an opposite kind, by what I can collect, predominate. Never was there any thing in this world equal to the feeling, the firmness, the total sacrifice of self, the perfection, in short, of all

womanly virtue that exists in my beloved Bessy. Resolved, for *her* sake, to rally all my fortitude, and prepare for the worst.

9th to 12. A melancholy week, but lucky for me that I am *obliged* to work, as it, in some degree, distracts my thoughts. The dreadful moment is that interval at night, when I have done working and am preparing for bed. It is then every thing most dreadful crowds upon me, and the loss not only of this dear child, but of all that I love in the world, seems impending over me. Have sent up to Murray, since Lord L. went, two more books of copy. Shall be obliged to go up myself to arrange about printing. Sent an apology to the Fieldings for both the 10th and the 12th, when I was to have dined with them, telling them the hopeless state of our poor child. Nothing could surpass the kindness of them and everybody else. A letter from Lady Lansdowne, offering Bessy and me rooms at Bowood whenever we might wish to go there. Our poor girl sometimes cheerful, and the night before last not only made me play some waltzes to her, but hummed one or two herself.

13th to 15th. Some signs of amendment in our dear girl; so much so, as to give us a gleam of hope—Bessy, particularly, beginning to think more cheerfully of it.

16th. All our hopes dashed; the darling child's weakness evidently increasing. Doubtful whether I should leave home, but Bessy thinks it better now than later.

17th. Walked to Devizes, and started in the Emerald a little before eleven o'clock; only one companion. Read Penrose's Journal, on account of Lord Byron's mention of it; found it tiresome. Got to town between nine and ten; found my room at Sandon's ready for me. Had something to eat at the Athenæum.