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To Miss Lloyd¹

My dear Martha

As a small testimony of the gratitude I feel for your late
generosity to me in finishing my muslin Cloak,² I beg leave
to offer you this little production of your sincere Friend³

The Author

line 4: 'muslin' inserted above line.

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Frederic and Elfrida

a novel.⁴

CHAPTER THE FIRST

The Uncle of Elfrida⁵ was the Father of Frederic; in other words, they were first cousins by the Father's side.⁶

Being both born in one day and both brought up at one school,⁷ it was not wonderful⁸ that they should look on each other with something more than bare politeness.⁹ They loved with mutual sincerity but were both determined not to transgress the rules of Propriety by owning their attachment, either to the object beloved, or to any one else.¹⁰

They were exceedingly handsome and so much alike,¹¹ that it was not every one who knew them apart. Nay even their most intimate freinds had nothing to distinguish them by, but the shape of the face, the colour of the Eye, the length of the Nose and the difference of the complexion.

Elfrida had an intimate freind to whom, being on a visit to an Aunt, she wrote the following Letter.

To Miss Drummond

“Dear Charlotte”¹²

“I should be obliged to you, if you would buy me, during your stay with Mrs Williamson, a new and fashionable Bonnet, to suit the Complexion¹³ of your

E. Falknor.”

line 2: ‘Mother’ deleted; ‘Father’ inserted above line. // line 6: ‘politenness’ changed to ‘politeness’. // line 9: ‘either to the object beloved, or’ inserted above line.

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Charlotte, whose character was a willingness to oblige every one, when she returned into the Country, brought her Friend the wished-for Bonnet, and so ended this little adventure, much to the satisfaction of all parties.

On her return to Crankhumdunberry (of which sweet village¹⁴ her father was Rector) Charlotte was received with the greatest Joy by Frederic and Elfrida, who, after pressing her alternately to their Bosoms, proposed to her to take a walk in a Grove of Poplars which led from the Parsonage to a verdant Lawn enamelled with a variety of variegated flowers¹⁵ and watered by a purling Stream, brought from the Valley of Tempé¹⁶ by a passage under ground.

In this Grove they had scarcely remained above 9 hours, when they were suddenly agreeably surprized by hearing a most delightfull voice warble the following stanza.

Song.
 That Damon¹⁷ was in love with me
 I once thought and believ'd
 But now that he is not I see,
 I fear I was deceiv'd.

No sooner were the lines finished than they beheld by a turning in the Grove 2 elegant young women leaning on each other's arm, who immediately on perceiving them, took a different path and disappeared from their sight.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

As Elfrida and her companions, had seen enough of them to know that they were neither the 2 Miss Greens, nor Mrs Jackson and her Daughter, they could not help expressing their surprise at their appearance; till at length recollecting, that a new family had lately taken a House not far from the Grove, they hastened home, determined to lose no time in

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forming an acquaintance with 2 such amiable and worthy Girls, of which family they rightly imagined them to be a part.

Agreeable to such a determination, they went that very evening to pay their respects to Mrs Fitzroy and her two Daughters. On being shewn into an elegant dressing room, ornamented with festoons of artificial flowers,¹⁸ they were struck with the engaging Exterior and beautiful outside of Jezalinda¹⁹ the eldest of the young Ladies; but e'er they had been many minutes seated, the Wit and Charms which shone resplendant in the conversation of the amiable Rebecca,²⁰ enchanted them so much that they all with one accord jumped up and exclaimed.

“Lovely and too charming Fair one,²¹ notwithstanding your forbidding Squint, your greazy tresses and your swelling Back,²² which are more frightfull than imagination can paint or pen describe, I cannot refrain from expressing my raptures, at the engaging Qualities of your Mind, which so amply atone for the Horror, with which your first appearance must ever inspire the unwary visitor.”

“Your Sentiments so nobly expressed on the different excellencies of Indian and English Muslins,²³ and the judicious preference you give the former, have excited in me an admiration of which I can alone give an adequate idea, by assuring you it is nearly equal to what I feel for myself.”

Then making a profound Curtesy²⁴ to the amiable and abashed Rebecca, they left the room and hurried home.

From this period, the intimacy between the Families of Fitzroy, Drummond, and Falknor, daily encreased till at length it grew to such a pitch, that they did not scruple to kick one another out of the window on the slightest provocation.²⁵

line 2: ‘them’ inserted above line.

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During this happy state of Harmony, the eldest Miss Fitzroy ran off with the Coachman²⁶ and the amiable Rebecca was asked in marriage by Captain Roger of Buckinghamshire.²⁷

Mrs Fitzroy did not approve of the match on account of the tender years of the young couple, Rebecca being but 36 and Captain Roger little more than 63.²⁸ To remedy this objection, it was agreed that they should wait a little while till they were a good deal older.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

In the mean time the parents of Frederic proposed to those of Elfrida, an union between them,²⁹ which being accepted with pleasure, the wedding cloathes were bought and nothing remained to be settled but the naming of the Day.³⁰

As to the lovely Charlotte, being importuned with eagerness to pay another visit to her Aunt, she determined to accept the invitation and in consequence of it walked to Mrs Fitzroys to take leave of the amiable Rebecca, whom she found surrounded by Patches, Powder, Pomatum and Paint³¹ with which she was vainly endeavouring to remedy the natural plainness of her face.

“I am come my amiable Rebecca, to take my leave of you for the fortnight I am destined to spend with my Aunt. Beleive me this separation is painfull to me, but it is as necessary as the labour which now engages you.”

“Why to tell you the truth my Love, replied Rebecca, I have lately taken it into my head to think (perhaps with little reason) that my complexion is by no means equal to the rest of my face and have therefore taken, as you see, to white and

line 19: ‘Rouge’ deleted; ‘Patches’ inserted above line.

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red paint which I would scorn to use on any other occasion as I hate Art.”

Charlotte, who perfectly understood the meaning of her freind's speech, was too goodtemper'd and obliging to refuse her, what she knew she wished,—a compliment; and they parted the best freinds in the world.

With a heavy heart and streaming Eyes did she ascend the lovely vehicle^{a32} which bore her from her freinds and home; but greived as she was, she little thought in what a strange and different manner she should return to it.

On her entrance into the city of London which was the place of Mrs Williamson's abode, the postilion,³³ whose stupidity was amazing, declared and declared even without the least shame or Compunction, that having never been informed he was totally ignorant of what part of the Town, he was to drive to.

Charlotte, whose nature we have before intimated, was an earnest desire to oblige every one, with the greatest Condescension³⁴ and Good humour informed him that he was to drive to Portland Place,³⁵ which he accordingly did and Charlotte soon found herself in the arms of a fond Aunt.

Scarcely were they seated as usual, in the most affectionate manner in one chair,³⁶ than the Door suddenly opened and an aged gentleman with a sallow face and old pink Coat,³⁷ partly by intention and partly thro' weakness was at the feet of the lovely Charlotte, declaring his attachment to her and beseeching her pity in the most moving manner.

Not being able to resolve to make any one miserable, she consented to become his wife; where upon the Gentleman left the room and all was quiet.

^a a post chaise [JA's note].

line 10: 'would' deleted; 'should' inserted above line. // line 20: 'did' inserted above line.

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Their quiet however continued but a short time, for on a second opening of the door a young and Handsome Gentleman with a new blue coat,³⁸ entered and intreated from the lovely Charlotte, permission to pay to her, his addresses.

There was a something in the appearance of the second Stranger, that influenced Charlotte in his favour, to the full as much as the appearance of the first: she could not account for it,³⁹ but so it was.

Having therefore agreable to that and the natural turn of her mind to make every one happy, promised to become his Wife the next morning, he took his leave and the two Ladies sat down to Supper on a young Leveret,⁴⁰ a brace of Partridges, a leash of Pheasants⁴¹ and a Dozen of Pigeons.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

It was not till the next morning that Charlotte recollected the double engagement⁴² she had entered into; but when she did, the reflection of her past folly, operated so strongly on her mind, that she resolved to be guilty of a greater, and to that end threw herself into a deep stream which ran thro' her Aunts pleasure Grounds in Portland Place.⁴³

She floated to Crankhumdunberry where she was picked up and buried; the following epitaph, composed by Frederic Elfrida and Rebecca, was placed on her tomb.

Epitaph
 Here lies our freind who having promis-ed
 That unto two she would be marri-ed
 Threw her sweet Body and her lovely face
 Into the Stream that runs thro' Portland Place

These sweet lines, as pathetic as beautifull⁴⁴ were never read by any one who passed that way, without a shower of

line 3: ampersand deleted after 'coat'.

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tears, which if they should fail of exciting in you, Reader, your mind must be unworthy to peruse them.⁴⁵

Having performed the last sad office to their departed friend, Frederic and Elfrida together with Captain Roger and Rebecca returned to Mrs Fitzroy's at whose feet they threw themselves with one accord and addressed her in the following Manner.

"Madam"

"When the sweet Captain Roger first addressed the amiable Rebecca, you alone objected to their union on account of the tender years of the Parties. That plea can be no more, seven days being now expired, together with the lovely Charlotte,⁴⁶ since the Captain first spoke to you on the subject."

"Consent then Madam to their union and as a reward, this smelling Bottle which I enclose in my right hand, shall be yours and yours forever; I never will claim it again. But if you refuse to join their hands in 3 days time, this dagger⁴⁷ which I enclose in my left shall be steeped in your hearts blood."

"Speak then Madam and decide their fate and yours."

Such gentle and sweet persuasion could not fail of having the desired effect. The answer they received, was this.

"My dear young friends"

"The arguments you have used are too just and too eloquent to be withstood; Rebecca in 3 days time, you shall be united to the Captain."

This speech, than which nothing could be more satisfactory, was received with Joy by all; and peace being once more restored on all sides, Captain Roger intreated Rebecca to favour them with a Song, in compliance with which request

line 9: 'must' (?) deleted; 'first' inserted above line.