

"Mr Charles Lamb
India House
London"

Over the address Lamb has written JM/2/21
"first letter from Manning"

Cambridge Dec. 15. [1799]

[P.M. Dec 18. 99]

Dear Lamb

You must not suppose that my slowness in answering your letter proceeds from an indifference to your correspondence. I have been, & still am, harrass'd by business - I have obtained another Pupil; & the hour of Examination draweth nigh - and really when my occupation for the day is over, I find myself so dispirited & cold, that I am unfitted for writing - At this very time I feel frozen. I would express my thankfulness for your letter, & the satisfaction I experience (not at this instant, but when I am myself) in the prospect of our future correspondence, & intercourse - but I hate to have recourse to memory on these occasions - So I must beg of you, my dear Friend, to take cheerfully in payment all I have to give, & allow me credit for the rest. —

I rejoice exceedingly in the hope of spending some time with you, when I come to Town, ~~at~~ ^{with} I believe will be in about 5 weeks. —

I had some conversation the other day with Sophia concerning your Tragedy; & she made some very sensible observations (as I thought) with respect to the unfitness of its title. The Folly, whose consequences humble the Pride & ambition of John's heart, does not originate in the working of those passions, but from an underpart in his character, & as it were accidentally, viz from the ebullitions of a drunken mind & from a rash confidence. You will understand what I mean, without my explaining myself any further. God Bless You, - & keep you from all evil things, that walk upon the face of the Earth - I mean Night-mares, Hobgoblins, & Spectres. I shall expect a letter from you very soon. I am

Your affectionate Friend

Thomas Manning.

Postscript

[here is a page full of drawings of queer beasts]

I wish I could draw.

It will not do. —