

Sunday [Mar. 1800]

(P.M. Mar 9)

What! not a word of reproach for my long silence? Do you mean to affront me, Sir? — But, Damn-me, if I'll be affronted so, neither, my master — I must have a broader hint, before I'll construe it into "Your writing or not writing is a matter of perfect indifference to me" — In Christian verity, I like not to be reproached for my sins of omission, except by my Conscience — for this good reason (we Mathematicians always give a reason) that nobody, save He, can know all I have to say in my excuse.

Falsbaffs letters I have perused with much delectation — they are indeed genuine — whether many of the allusions & delicate touches have escaped my tact, it is clearly impossible for me to say — but I protest I have noticed & relished many felicities, that would pass unobserved by an incurious reader. When we meet again (God grant it be soon) we will discuss the hidden beauties of this little Morceau. —

I have dipped a little into Burnets' history, & have been very much pleased with his manner — I always speak of it, as the right stile, in historical matters. — I mean, when Golden leisure arrives, to read him thoroughly. I hear that many of his accounts are much controverted, but he is generally allowed to be an honest writer — where he deceives, he is himself deceived. — As to Hume, Gibbon etc. I have but a low opinion of them, so far as usefulness goes — but we must allow, Lamb, that Hume is easy, sweet, clear etc; Gibbon pointed, terse, brilliant etc & Robertson judicious, vigorous etc (N.B. I have read about 17 pages of Hume's History, 153 of Gibbon's, & 19 of Robertson's).

Upon looking back to your Penultimate letter I find the following Query — "Pray is it a part of your

seniority to shew my letters to Lloyd? To which I answer, "No". — I shewed that former letter of yours to him, because any thing, that might, per se, appear harsh, is corrected by the statement of the reason why you could not write so freely to him on that subject; you better corrected & qualified than any extract would have been by comments of mine. Your last letter I did not shew to him, altho it concerned himself — I thought he would neither see the beauty of, nor be exactly pleased with the sentence (which upon my soul, I think exquisite) "A letter I would not have sent to my Enemy's Bitch, if she had thought proper to seek me in the way of marriage". — I expect you to see, from this example, without my saying any thing further, that you may write most freely to me. — One thing, tho, I must beg of you — that is, not to call me Atheist in your letters — for tho it be mere rallery in you, & not meant as a serious imputation on my Faith, yet, if the Catholic or any other intolerant religion should [happen] to become established in England, (which sp[ite] of the Bishop of R — r, may be the case) & if the Post-people should happen to open & read your letters, (which, considering the ~~sp[ite]~~ sometimes quaintness of their form, they may possibly be incited to do) such names might send me to Smithfield on a hurdle, — & nothing, upon earth, is more discordant to my wishes, than to become one of the Smithfield Illuminati.

You recollect, I suppose the story about Coleridge's humming Caldwell of Jesus College concerning his newspaper engagements — well, it is turned out to be all a mistake — Caldwell has never imputed any such declaration to Coleridge — 'twould waste both your time & my own to explain such nonsense. —

God bless you — write to me very soon — if your spirit tells you that I ever yawn over your letters tis a lying

spirit (begging your pardon). In serious truth, my  
dear friend, the oftener you write, the more you  
gratify your very affectionate friend

T. M.

P.S. Don't regard my dilatoriness.

L<sup>d</sup> says you have not written to him for a  
long time. —

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