

Feb. 1825

1824 to 1826

See Memoir Lamb, Let. CCCLVIII

Dear L,

I expect to come to Town next week, or the week after, being my nearest way into N[orfolk]. I w^d. gladly make a few days stay at that Cottage, situate in a romantic nook on the banks of the new river, & wish to know how the Lord & Lady of the Demesne stand affected therewith. I spent many pleasant [ones], tho' daily basked at by Pryune, whose voice, mingled as it is, I should hear again with pleasure. Port perhaps in addition to the cropping of his ears, (whence the learned antiquarian Betty calls him Pryune instead of Prince) ^{was} ~~was~~ bound Death has already cropped him & sent his skin to the tanner, or at least adverse ravishing fate brought on his dissolution from your society. If you are after purchasing a boat for your portion of y^e. River, hasten the bargain, & get it home, for I am very fond of the water, & can fancy a strange pleasure in rowing from your arched Entrance to the Gates with Port-cullis at the bottom of Cambden St. - Is there a P. cullis there? or do I dream? I always think of Colebrooke Cottage as a mysterious Castle, hard of access to find, - owing I suppose to first impressions; for the Coachman & I drove 3 times round the Walls & fosse before we [saw] that Sally Port, to which Sally port the person who performed the office of Sally-Porter was one Betty. I think: - she also, not easy of access, - guarded with severe indifference & stern neglect of all that does not concern her offices. The shafts of Badinage dropt from her like School-boy

arrows from the walls of a lonely Castle; you would not hear whether they hit her or not, so distant was she; you saw them drop into the nettles & rubbish below, & were vexed to think they were lost. But all this, rough & hard & puzzling, does but give a zest to the hospitable & generous reception of the lady of the Castle within; 'tis like the pleasure of cracking a hard good walnut. Says Martin B. who is now standing by me, "ay, & much better, for the within of a walnut only gives you meat, (High as Hall; Bitter as Gall; Soft as silk; White as Milk, & yet tis man's meat; vide Seminarium Infantile;) but the lady within at Colebrook Hall gives you both meat & drink." & then he laughed with strange obliquity of feature, & I laughed for company; but I thought it a great falling down from the pure sublime I had been floating in. However, it gives me a good opportunity of descending to the familiar, & begging you to give me a line, just saying whether it will be perfectly convenient to you & your good sister to be so so.