

ART. XII.—*A Lakeland Young Lady's Letters.* By the  
REV. S. TAYLOR.

AS the writer of this introduction was going through certain family papers, he came across a small bundle of letters, tied with a faded pink ribbon, to which his father had attached the following note:—

“These letters were written by Miss A. . . . X. . . . of Keswick to her friend, Miss Martha Irton of Irton. Miss Irton at the time was living at Belmont, Hawkshead, with her mother, Mrs. Braithwaite, who had married again. Martha Irton married William Fell of Ulverston. These letters were in the possession of her daughter, Martha Fell, who married Richard Wordsworth Smith, and their grandson, Canon Irton Smith, gave them to me, who am, as he is, a great-grandson of Martha Irton.”

Samuel Taylor. 1930.

The letters are here published in the hope that they will interest and entertain Lake Country readers, whose roots still lie in their native soil. Unlike most of the material provided by these *Transactions*, they are patently light and unsubstantial, but they will serve to illustrate with the clear-cut incisiveness of woodcuts the manners and ways if not the inmost thoughts of young ladies in the 18th century. They are strongly reminiscent of Richardson's Pamela, but what sentiment they display is greatly diluted. They prove, indeed, that such young ladies were as spirited, as gay, as determinedly realistic, and sometimes as silly as are the young ladies of to-day, endowed moreover with that added spice of superficial heartlessness, which is perhaps only the defensive armour which Mother Nature provides for the very young in their early days of courtship. They prove also that in the 18th century the country houses of Lakeland, whose owners certainly looked upon woman as the weaker and inferior vessel, did nevertheless contrive so to educate their daughters that they were enabled to taste life with great gusto, untrammelled by the over-inflamed social conscience and the manifold discontents which afflict their great-great-granddaughters, and at the same time to write with pungency and point letters which would not

discredit the great Jane Austen herself, had she in her earliest youth taken up that magic pen of hers to write to a bosom friend, of whom she was a tiny bit jealous, her comments on the intimate scene.

In his well-known series of the *Herries* novels Sir Hugh Walpole has painted a picture of the very scenes and occasions which are commented upon in these letters. The natives of this country which he loved, notwithstanding their gratitude to him for his services to their homeland and with a full appreciation of his descriptions of its beauties, have sometimes wondered whether he caught the atmosphere of the times and places about which he wrote. Letters like these may serve as a pendant if not as a criticism to his tales.

It will be observed that throughout the length of these seven letters there can be found no single comment upon the scenery, no hint of Romance except in so far as it is called forth by the contemplation of the gallant masculine form. But on the other hand there is much evidence of a great delight in the homely intercourse of family life, a vivid sense of style, which expresses itself in elegant composition and in good manners and withal the sunshine of a contentment which leads to charity of mind and, within limits, to kindness and unaffected hospitality. The writer, who lived in the Keswick district, was a witty child. She will be known for the purposes of this article as Miss A. . . . X. . . ., while a certain other prominent character will appear as Bill Z. . . .

The recipient, Martha Irton, was the youngest child of Samuel Irton of Irton Hall and Frances Tubman of Cockermouth. She was born (see these *Transactions*, n.s. xli, 107) at Irton on the 6th May, 1766, a few days after her father's death in London, and in 1770, when her mother married Reginald Braithwaite, she moved with her to Belmont, Hawkshead.

In 1785, when the fair Martha mounted her pony Jenny on the steps of Belmont, a young boy, lodging with Ann Tyson in the same little town, made his way to Hawkshead Grammar School. So up with the curtain for a fleeting glimpse of a century which is as yet untouched by the schoolboy William Wordsworth:—

#### LETTER I.

July 30th, 1785.

I take the earliest opportunity of thanking my dear Martha for her obliging letter, which I received on Friday.

H

We were all happy to hear you arrived safe at Belmont, and that the ladies were not fatigued with their Expedition. *You, I know, are a little Veteran,\** so I will not pay your *delicacy* such a compliment as to *mention the word fatigue*.

The pleasure you kindly say you received from your short visit here, believe me, was reciprocated, and I sincerely join with you in hoping that a personal acquaintance which has been so long in commencing, will be permanent.

You cannot conceive how much we were amused at the idea of Bill setting you half-way, for do you know *the little timorous dear* was so conscious, he did not give the smallest hint of it to anyone of us, but contented himself with saying, that he saw the *party safe off at the Vicarage*.

I'll assure you, I think it is the most hopeful sign which has yet been given, tho' we wanted no additional proof to be convinced that *you* were the magnet which attracted him, for his visits since your departure, have been much less frequent.

Indeed my dear, you will make a charming Mrs. Z., and I answer for it that Bill will be delighted to find you in his parts.

Pray give my best compliments to Comd. and Mrs. Braithwaite, and tell him I am greatly flattered by his *calling* me cousin, an epithet I shall be happy to return.

I am quite happy with the thought of our all meeting at the Regatta. I do not find that any day is yet fixed for it, but I suppose it will be late in the season.

The family drank tea with us on Wednesday in their way home, they informed us you were well and had spent a few days with them upon the Island.

We have not seen Bill since his return, but I do not suppose he will confess his seeing you there.

\* Where italics are used in the letters, the young lady underlined her words in the original.

My brother is most astonishingly recruited indeed, and in comparison looks really quite fat and well, but my Mamma dare not yet let him return to school.

My Aunt Brownrigg is also much better; she and my uncle and Miss Wood beg their best respects.

Peggy talks of you in raptures and wonders whether you remember her calling out "Miss Matty, Miss Matty, unbutton, unbutton!"

Oh, if you were but here this afternoon, what a charming sail we might have in our little barge, for it is Sunday, which you know is generally a long day, and my Mamma and Aunt have gone to drink tea at Mirehouse, though upon consideration, I believe if you were here, it would be impracticable, as I have sprained my ankle and they insist upon my keeping it laid up. Fidelia is as lively as ever and begs her love. She sent you a very pretty message this morning in verse, but it must be reserved till our meeting.

Last week we dined at Snittlegarth along with the Brayton family; Poll Davy well and vastly red and lively.

I wish I could put your scheme in practice and pay you a visit through Borodale. Pray give my kind love to Miss Hayne and tell her I hope she has not forgotten our *dissatisfied fat friend* in the Barn at Borodale. I think I never saw a greater oddity. I often wish to hear "My Little Lubin" song, it is certainly the sweetest little thing ever was written, and I am sure helped to *captivate Bill*.

You will by this time wish both me and my letter at Old Nick, for I am "sans dote" a most dreary scribbler, therefore as I am not yet quite tired of these Upper Regions, I will draw to a conclusion as fast as possible.

All the family here join in kind wishes and best compliments to yourself and Mr. and Mrs. Braithwaite.

I am, my dear Martha  
your sincerely affect friend

A. . . . X. . . .

I believe on looking at your letter I must direct this to Irton, as you say you were to be there the latter end of the week.

## LETTER 2.

Oct. 19, 1785.

Upon my honour, Matty, you are a wicked girl! How dare you have the audacity to abuse Bill to me, who you know he is such a favourite with. I'll assure you would not have been *gratified with so soon hearing from me*, had it not been to vent my *anger in reproaches*; For I really don't think I have been so incensed for some time. How can you behave so ill *to a man*, who if you even cannot love, is at least entitled both to your *gratitude and esteem*, from the *repeated proofs* he has given of his attachment.

You don't deserve to have your curiosity gratified, with regard to the conversation we had with him, but I am too much your friend to suffer you to persist in an error, which carried with it so much the appearance of ingratitude. I am sure after hearing the conversation you must be a perfect stoic if you do not pity and you know

“ Pity is akin to love.”

But to the point. I believe I told you that we dined at old Pockington's the day after you left us. Bill was there and went along with us to sup at Ormathwaite, when the night proving very wet, we offered to give him a “ set-down ” in the coach, which he accepted of. He was half-seas over, I must own, consequently his heart was *open*. We rather unfairly, I must own, took advantage of it, and endeavoured to make him give his opinion of all the *ladies*. He began by expatiating upon the comforts of a coach, and declared, *if ever he had a family*, he would certainly get one; he then told us of Lord William Gordon and Mrs. Lodge! “ Yes, I know a little of that affair! ” (a fit of nodding). “ Lord William only went from

Greystock yesterday morning" (nods, etc.). "My Lord Surrey only expected him to breakfast. But . . . there was a little of *something that kept him*, it was very plain." "Then Henrietta Farrar?" . . . "Yes, a fine figure of a woman, *very fine!*" "But, Mrs. X, a fine woman is like a fine picture" (nod, nod, nod), "it does well to look at, extremely well! but when you settle into conversation!! There's the want in Miss Farrar! Nothing more to attract and please!" "Then Miss Martha Irton!" "Aye, yes," (quite in rapture) "*there indeed you are right—she is a charming delightful girl—her beauty first attracts you—but when you come to talk to her, her conversation draws fast the snare, which that had at first irresistibly entangled you in. I was in a\** and took a good deal of notice of her and *if I was but a few years younger*, I would do all *in my power to bring her back again*, but I am *afraid there is too much disparity.*" Then A. . . X. . . , always busy and impertinent, put in her word. ("I could have loved her, but that would have done little good!") "Oh, Mr. Z. . . ." says she, "I am sure it would be very absurd to make that an objection to any lady whatever, I am sure I would make none at all." "Indeed," returned he, "I don't know, I should be rather afraid how *such an affair could be settled.*" "Why," said the ladies, "though there is a little disparity, still it is on the right side; those kind of matches often turn out the happiest, at least there could be no harm in trying." He said he was afraid of a repulse . . . so the conversation ended.

Well my dear, what do you think *of it?* I must make no comments upon it, as it has already taken up so much room, I shall not be able to say anything else. It is easy to see that the man is deeply smitten, and the best security of all for making a good husband, is conducting himself, with propriety in the character of a Sin. I had the

\* An indecipherable word here.

mortification of losing dear Fiddy on Friday last. Mrs. Jones called and took her away in spite of all our intreaties. Mrs. Jones and Jenny Younger were on their way from Wales; I think Jenny is as lovely a girl as I ever saw, about fifteen.

Uncle and Aunt Benn came here last week, they return to Hensingham either to-day or to-morrow, but leave Mary here. We had a large party dining here on Monday, the Ormathwaite family, Bainber Gascoigne, who you say you remember at the Regatta and Bill, etc., etc.

Bill supped here, he and I were partners, at which I was in monstrous spirits, so we were not a little noisy. We played whist every night; the Rydal party has been very gay indeed. We had heard their manoeuvres before from Ned. S.

“ *What shall I do for room?* ”

Bill's affairs took up so *much* room, that I really cannot say half what I intended. We are afraid that we shall lose my aunt Peele soon. I don't know what we shall do without her, but Fiddy has promised to return when she goes. You will find a great loss of your sister and Miss Hayne, I am sorry Cockshott is going, pray tell me who were your party at the dance you had? and who you danced with . . . *Cockshott, I suppose!* Who make up the Rydal party? and what Beaux have you seen lately of my acquaintance?

A string of questions, I am sure.

We saw a good deal of Wilkinson and really liked him much, he is amazingly good-humoured, not cynical, which his appearance leads you to think; he was *very much smitten with Fiddy*.

I am sure you are very kind to John,\* he will be quite happy having such good friends to visit. I am not surprised to hear that Mary Christian is displeased with Miss Wood's conduct.

\* The writer's young brother, obviously a schoolboy at Hawkshead Grammar School.

My Mamma and Aunt join me in kindest love and best wishes to their favourite Matty, and in best compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Braithwaite. What a long letter have I written, do you think you have patience to read it thro'?

I must conclude with begging my dear Martha to believe me her ever *afectate* friend

A. . . . X. . . .

LETTER 3.

Dec. 5, 1785.

How could My Dear Martha suppose I had forgot her?

No, my dear, though I have been very idle, and justly incurred your displeasure; yet I hope forgetting friends to whom I am bound, both by affection and gratitude, will be an accusation which I shall never deserve.

Since I received your last letter, we have been very gay in our parts. Lord Surrey, Lord W. Gordon, etc. have greatly contributed to enliven us. Lord Surrey was at Mirehouse all night and Mr. Z. (alias dear Bill) invited the Ormathwaite family and this to meet him. I was at Ormathwaite and Lord William coming there, upon a morning visit, and finding we were all going, agreed to go with us. We spent a most agreeable Day; for adding to those I have already mentioned, there was Mr. and Mrs. Featherstonaugh, Bowman the fine singer, and a young Mr. Howard of Corby, who is a most elegant young man "indeed." Your little fat favourite was particularly agreeable, and very facetious *with Bill upon his single state*.

The next day we dined with Lord William. Lord Surrey called here in the morning with Mr. Howard, and expressed great concern at not seeing the Ormathwaite party at Gowbarrow. He has given us all an invitation to spend a week at Greystock, whither we go on the 12th. I wish me dear Martha could have been of the party; as you were prevented before. Do you think you could come over? I heard the other day that my friend Miss

*Mary* Irton was going to be married, at least that Mr. Fisher had offered his services, and that the lady had told him, she would always be happy to see him as a friend; Now I don't know what degree of credit to give to these reports, but as you know *Mary* very well, you may perhaps be able to give me some information? Mr. Fisher is certainly a very handsome genteel man, and for all accounts an eligible match for any woman, therefore My Dear Friend, tho I pity Bill, I cannot help thinking that your heart may be more in this affair than in the other. I must tell you however, your friends here are all interested in it.

My Aunt Peele left us on Wednes. last; Fiddy went some time before, so only Mrs. Benn remains and I suppose she will not be with us much longer. We have not yet been in Whitehaven, but I hope that we shall go there very soon, and I am sorry to find that we are not to hope for your company, and also for the reason for it, which we had heard before I received your letter, but I hope you may perhaps be prevailed upon to come for a few nights to my aunt Peele, though you cannot come to Irton. The Players, we hear, are a very good set, Mrs. Whitlock something like her sister in her manner and handsome face.

You should see your old flirt mentioned in the papers as having honoured the Theatre with his presence.

Peggy has gone with my aunt Peele to Whitehaven to attend Miss Hayes and Mr. Hadwen.

From a letter from Miss Farish, I hear Mr. Benson is paying his addresses to a Kendal lady of Fortune; I believe he is a favourite of yours, tho I've an idea he is not overstocked "avec l'esprit." Pray have you heard from your sister or Miss Hayne lately? When you write be so good as to give my best compliments.

I was greatly obliged for the pattern but I think I shall follow your advice in doing a spot.

My mother received a letter not long ago from Mr. Bristow, in which he inquires particularly after the fascinating laughing Siren (those are his words) who contributed her assistance to rendering the Cockbridge scheme. I also have had a letter from him, with some elegant French books. I am now employed in making a purse for the Man, brown with pink points and pink and white waves.

My mother and M.B. are dining at Ormathwaite to day; how pleasant it would be, if you could just pop in and drink tea with poor solitary me.

I will write you a full account of our visit to Greystock as soon as we return.

My Mamma is just come back from Ormathwaite and says my Aunt is so poorly that it is doubtful whether she can go or not and I am afraid my Mamma will not be prevailed upon to go without, and would like to be in the way of joining the party later; but at any rate if you can spare a few days from your other engagements we shall be happy to see you.

Pray do you still continue out of Powder? I don't know whether I shall be prevailed upon to put it in this winter or not.

Pray give my most respectful love to my cousin. My mother joins in best compliments to your Papa and Mamma and kindest love to yourself my dear Martha's  
sincerely affectate friend,

A . . . X . . .

It will be the greatest mortification in the world to me if we do not go to Greystock, as I never wished for anything of the kind so much before. Pray write soon, very soon.

LETTER 4.

Dec. 26, 1785.

I received my dear Martha's kind letter on Friday, and take the earliest opportunity of thanking her for it; the

assurance you give me of your Friendship and esteem, could not fail of being grateful to a heart which has, and I trust ever will have the most cordial affection for you. We returned from Greystock about a week since, after spending a most agreeable week; indeed, tho I must own I was pretty near knocked up with the rattling, we dined at six, drank tea between nine and ten, danced till one, supped and got to bed at five! so you may imagine, it was generally twelve or one before we breakfasted.

I will tell you who the party consisted of in order—Mrs. Arscott, Mrs. Raincock, three of the Miss Waughs, two Miss Custs from Penrith, Miss Bet Hudleston, Miss Mary Richardson, Miss Sharp, Miss Fleming who came with the Hudson family on Wednesday and stayed till Friday (*Mr. Milbourn was there*); she had only a white Irish poplin trimmed with painted Ermine crepe linen, etc., etc. and had intended to return with the Vanes that night, but after they had got into the Coach, Miss F's cloak was missing; therefore upon Lord Surrey's just saying she had better stay, she consented, and the dress I have described was her morning dress! Miss Vane said very cleverly "IT was a good little cloak to lay so quiet!" Many think the affair between Milbourn and her is coming on again. I must now give you a list of the men.

Mr. Yates of Skirwith Abbey, Mr. Hazel, Mr. Cookson, Mr. Christian, Mr. Hudleston, Mr. Senhouse, Mr. Howard of Corby (who is one of the most pleasing young men I ever saw), the two Richardsons, Mr. Jaff, and Bowman and Bingay. I danced the first night with Mr. Howard, the second we changed partners, and I danced with Bill, Mr. Howard and Mr. Cookson and a Cumberland Jig with Lord Surrey; the third with John Richardson and Mr. Howard, and the fourth with Mr. Milbourn, Mr. J. Richardson, Lord Surrey and Mr. Howard! *I am sure I have been circumstantial.*

Poor Lady Surrey is an affecting proof of the *ineficacy*

of Rank and Fortune to happiness; she was generally with the company, came into the dance room and always sat at table; but never at the head, she cannot be prevailed upon to sit anywhere but by the steward at the foot, or at a side table. She has the remains of an elegant figure, and such an appearance of humility as I never saw; nobody can form an idea of Lord Surrey's attention to her but those who have seen it, it must give everybody a high opinion of him.

We go to Whitehaven I suppose in about a fortnight, I am impatient to see the Players, I cannot say I give much credit to the report Mrs. Siddons is coming to Whitehaven, particularly at the season when the London Theatres are the most brilliant. What you say about Fisher gives me pleasure; for tho the connection at first appeared an eligible one, yet the objections you mention can by no means be overbalanced, either by his fortune or his Person. I don't remember seeing him myself at the Regatta, but my Mamma says he had not the appearance of more than five or six and twenty.

John says, Alex Hoskins is paying you particular attention, at least, that report said so at Hawkshead; Corydon was once a flame of mine (*de maitre a'dancer*); I am sure the Gentleman honoured me by giving me a place among the list of Belles.

Lord Surrey has invented a new diversion to be exhibited at the next Regatta. A Pig with a soaped tail, which I am to catch and throw by the tail over my shoulder; don't you think it will have a fine effect! John speaks in raptures of Miss Clark, so as she is the first woman I ever found to answer his ideas of beauty, I can suppose nothing less than divine! Most of the Ladies who are accounted Belles are in his estimation only middling; so that the rareness of this approbation may make it in some degree valuable.

You will have heard of Mr. Williamson's death? I cannot say Bingay's singing answered my expectations, he sings, I daresay, with more judgement, but his voice is not as sweet so Bowman's and I think his manner is affected, but that might perhaps be owing to a kind of fear in singing before so large a company.

Fiddy Younger is an idle girl, I have not heard from her this month. Pray remember me affectionately to Miss Ireton and Miss Hayne when you write.

I forgot to tell you—that's M.B.\* I went with Bill in his big Coat. If you don't understand *that I'll explain* it in my next letter, but I am a *wicked ungrateful girl* and you too; for he loves you to distraction, I daresay its a shame to ridicule him.

Farewell, my Dear Matty.

Believe me your very affect-ate

A . . . X . . .

My mother joins in kindest love to you and compliments to your F. and M. If you do not know what F. and M. means, I must explain, it is Father and Mother. I will also beg my compilments to Miss Clark, for tho I don't know her personally, yet any friend of yours I must esteem.

#### LETTER 5.

Aug. 30th, 1786.

Charity, my dear Martha is, as you know, the first of all Christian virtues; and as I know from experience, that you possess it in an eminent degree, I am sure you will agree in thinking me very disinterested and very friendly, in offering so fair an opportunity for you to display so dazzling a quality, but make no acknowledgement.

My dear, it is my greatest pleasure to set off the perfections of my friends in the fairest point of view, and to

\* The writer seems to have been interrupted here and gives what are probably the initials of the interrupter.

see my choice justified by the convincing applause of the World, which in your instance, I have always the pleasure of finding. But seriously, my Dearest Martha, can you excuse my apparent negligence?

Often have I attempted to begin, but I was so sensible of my idleness, I know not what to say; though I knew the longer I differed (*sic*) it, the difficulty would still increase; yet constantly wanted resolution; however I trusted to the sweetness of my friend's disposition, and hope that she will impute to its true cause—indolence; what to a less indulgent heart might wear the appearance of neglect.

It is so long since we have had any intercourse that it would be impossible to enter into a regular detail of how we have been engaged, employed, etc., etc.

The particulars of the Regatta, you will have heard long since; the Parkers will have told you we kept it up three days. I don't know where to direct this to you, but as Mrs. Parker told me you were expected every day, I will send this at any rate to Belmont. How often have I wished to know what you have been about? I dare not ask for a letter, but I need not say, how very happy it would make me to hear an account of your journey and all your manoeuvres.

The Regatta was not near so full a meeting as the former, and the company that were there, were principally strangers; a great many Westmoreland and Lancashire people.

The Steward was very much out of spirits; which was a great disappointment. No queen elected, nor any of the amusements, except the dance (which was the pleasantest we have had) kept up with much spirit.

We stayed all night at Mirehouse, where Mrs. J. Parker and Miss Morland, Mr. Losh, Mr. Jagg, Miss Poll Davy dined the next day; from thence we went to the Play and had a dance; and the next day Mr. John Marsh (my

cousin) gave a dance at Ouze Beidge. The Party consisted of about twenty, and we danced seven or eight couple; they all supped here and about three oclock in the morning quietly adjourned to their respective habitations.

I refer you to Miss Morland, who we all think a most pleasing young woman. Upon the whole we have not had a very pleasant summer, so far at least, and I really begin to think the hard weather is set in for the whole winter; we have been calculating today and we cannot recollect above two good days (which was immediately following the Regatta) during the whole month of August. Pray has it been equally bad with you? for such a thorough succession of bad weather has hardly ever been remembered here before.

You may perhaps have heard that my brother returns no more to Hawkshead, he goes up with Mr. Bristow to Dr. Glass's in about a fortnight, where he will continue for a year or two before he goes to College.

Do you know my dear, you have made a conquest of Bristow; you can have no idea how much he was disappointed, when he found that you were not in the County!

*But I have volumes to tell you about when I see you, it is a most serious affair.*

Pray did you see Fish when you were in London? I hope Miss Hayne is by this time well? Is she soon to settle in London? I shall in all probability spend the ensuing winter in Newcastle with a Miss Forster, who is a very intimate friend of my mother's, she has written to press it exceedingly and I believe my Mamma will consent.

I hope that you will be at one or both of the Cumberland Hunts? They will be excellent meetings, every one seems to think, and the dresses will take of all forms.

I hope we shall contrive to meet somehow soon? Do you think you could come away for a few days? If you

could I need not say how happy it would make us. Bill particularly! *who is almost eat up with the vapours.* Do if you can dear Matty. Little dear Fiddy is now in the Isle of Man, staying with her friend Miss Moore. How happy we three used to be.

My aunt Peele has now been with us six weeks, she is very well and begs her love and best wishes. John Benn and I were staying a week with Poll Davy about a week since. You see she must have attractions for the gentleman to visit her, in that kind way! The family are very well. John Benn of India is coming home; With a niece of Lord Clive's who he is going to marry, I am sorry for it, for I think he might have made a better choice amongst the daughters of his *Father's House!*

Miss Wood would have done his choice credit. I hope it may not perhaps be true.

My Mother and all here join me in kindest loves to my Dear Martha, and best compliments to Mrs. and Miss Braithwaite and Miss Irton (you see I take it for granted you are at home) I need not say now happy a long letter would make me.

Adieu, my dear friend and believe me  
your ever sincerely affectionate

A. . . . X. . . .

I don't think upon reflection it is unreasonable to ask for a long letter, tho I have been idle, from you who have been half over the kingdom, to a poor girl who has been shut up all the time in the country, so *I insist upon your writing,* and a long letter too.

#### LETTER 6.

Fri. Even.

My Dearest Martha will believe, I sit down with pleasure to thank her and her sweet family for all their goodness to me during my most agreeable visit to Belmont, which I shall always remember with pleasure.

I found the horses waiting for me at Ormathwaite, but my Aunt Brownrigg would not part with me that night. The next morning Lord and Lady W. Gordon breakfasted there and took us all to dine at Waterhead; it is the most charming spot and Lady W. in my opinion the most beautiful woman I ever saw; I wish you could see her, for I am sure you would be as much charmed as I am.

The next day I spent at Ormathwaite and returned home on Wednes. Even. My Aunt Brownrigg and Miss Wood were very much disappointed they did not see you, and my Mamma says had she known your intention, she would have come to Keswick on purpose to have met you. But I must tell you what Bill and I did with ourselves. Immediatly upon your driving off I went to Mrs. Fisher, where he follow'd and I found that what you and Miss Irton surmised about his being a little "cut" was really the case, tho I have not before perceived it.

Mrs. Fisher was not at the Island, therefore I was a good deal at a loss, however we went upstairs and a most sensible conversation we had. I would give a good deal to give it you verbatim, but it is impossible to do it justice!

I endeavoured to sift him about J. Benn and Miss M. C., but the "deuce" a bit of information could I obtain! except what was so totally enveloped in nods and winks, that it was utterly unintelligible to me. But My Dear, he reserved himself for a more animated subject, which you will have by and by.

I then turned the conversation to the Parkers, and said I thought there must have been many handsouer women in the room than Miss Morland, upon which he gave a most significant nod, "Why no, you know, I'll let you a little into that affair; You know Gentlemen's beauties are different from Ladies', you know." "Why that to be sure sir, I do *know*, but tell me honestly whether you admire Miss Morland or Miss Martha more." "Oh, you know, as for that, there is a little partiality you know

there;" (nod, nod, nod) "for Miss Martha is in my opinion the first girl in the world you know!!" I told him that his opinion did him credit and I was glad to find it was still the same. He said you looked most charmingly lovely that day, better in a gown than a habit, and more so this summer than last, I believe he thinks you an angel and has the greatest struggle within himself how to act.

I think we stayed in this way for two hours, when I was relieved by the arrival of the Ormathwaiters and we went home together. Miss Wood tells me Mr. Christian's attentions were very general, not at all particular to the P. . . s. What a change! though, just as we imagined. She says also that Miss Ponsonby was quite the Belle, Miss Morland not to be mentioned with her, she is left in Carlisle *to be in the way of Mr. Johnson*. Miss Morland, the first night, was left out to the very last.

About the dresses, etc. and anything of that sort you will hear from the Parkers. I find from Miss Wood that tho it is what will always be called a very good meeting, we have not had any very great loss, for there was such a scarcity of gentlemen; (hardly any men there) and altogether she says she has enjoyed many meetings far more; so little Hawkshead still retains its superiority to my idea.

I believe so greatly a majority of Beaux can seldom be boasted of in this part of the world.

The dear Angelic Major and his Tower have hardly ever been out of my thoughts since I parted with you! I am now no more regaled with the sight of Guide Posts leading to Broughton, which I had been used to have my eyes gratified with at every turn. *The change is really too much for me!*

I hope when you went to Waterhead on Monday, little Jenny would as usual *instinctively take the road which leads*

to the much-famed smile! from being accustomed to obey the whims of its late rider would I am sure second the motion.

I am all impatience to hear from you and what you have been doing, any tidings of the Ball yet?

I think I should have felt a presentiment had it been any day this week.

I wished much to have joined the snug dish of tea you would have at Ambleside, for I got none at all.

*I hope Mr. Benson recovered his usual tone!*

I think Bill is a little jealous of Mr. Fell, he asks a vast number of questions about him, whether *he was often at Belmount*, etc., etc.; I know he was prevented from coming to Hawkshead by his father taking away his horse; and *very much mortified* they say he was.

The Youth, my Aunt and Mamma tell me, is quite smitten with a *certain little friend of mine!* I had a note from him today, inquiring *whether you had come home with me or not?*

I am sorry that I have not been able to get the black jugs made this week, but as Mrs. Southard thought it might be Sunday fortnight before she got to Hawkshead, they shall certainly be done against that time. I send some black lead for Mrs. Braithwaite, and wish it had been a larger quantity, but it is at present rather scarce. I suppose we shall have the Duke at breakfast on Sunday. Little Eglance, *I must urge him to walk about a bit!* But now I think of it, I hope *the constitution of the true Eglance is in a less uncertain state than when I left Belmount!*

My kind love to its sweet little Mistress and a kiss, tell her I beg my compliments to Harriet, Miss Matty and Milly. I hope Master Cowan's rheumatism is better.

I don't feel any inclination to go to the Egremont Hunt, Miss Wood does not mean to go, it will be about the time of Mr. Benson's arrival.

Miss Wood and Miss Younger and I tried the alphabet in water one night at Ormathwaite, but it had no effect!

*Bill told me that what was alluded to about your seeing his name in the papers, was the list of the Gentlemen who attended the Hunt! What wisdom!*

I have scribbled my paper quite through, therefore after giving united compliments and best wishes of all here to you, Mr. and Mrs. Braithwaite and Miss Irton, I must conclude with begging my dear Matty to believe me her ever affect-ate.

A. . . . X. . . .

I expect your letter with impatience, I hope Mr. Fell was facetious during your ride home.

#### LETTER 7.

No date.

Mr. dear Martha's letter I received safe by Miss Morland, and I should have answered before, but I only arrived home yesterday from Hensingham, and during my stay there we were all gay and so must engaged that I had not any time.

I am at home with my Uncle and Aunt Benn, who are going with William to Penrith on his way to London to his ship.

The Hunt was really a most delightful meeting, and we kept it up all the time I stayed; we had riding parties in the morning, and altogether with the Players we were very cheerful.

We were exceedingly pressed to go to Greystock and I believe would have gone, if the Ormathwaite family had not been at Hensingham, they had a very pleasant meeting.

What you told me about Mr. Fell surprised me a good deal; for though I certainly suspected his being partial to you, yet I never supposed it to have been gone so far! You kept it very snug!

I heard it from all quarters in the Hunt, and you cannot think how significantly People looked at me,

particularly when I denied any knowledge of the affair. Mr. Fell's character is highly spoken of for worth and goodness; and if the report is true, as from what you say in your letter, I think that there is not any room to doubt; it is the ardent prayer of my heart that my Martha may meet with that happiness, which in the opinion of partial friendship she deserves. I am impatient to hear from you, and to have particular account of the affair.

I though the Parkers were not much noticed by the Christians at the Hunt; a great change in Mr. C's behaviour from the time I have seen them together before.

Miss Morland must have a very dull time at Mrs. Palmer's, I saw her very little, as she was confined with a cold—Have you heard anything of the Major? I am all impatience to hear some tidings.

You will have heard all about the Nabob! John Benn I mean, therefore it will suffice to say, I don't like him! He is very high!! My Mamma has just had a letter from my brother who is very well and inquires after you.

I have a great deal more to tell you, but I have so little time at present that you must excuse a long letter now, and I shall write possibly next week.

I have made a "Little Affair" for you, which I hope you will do me the favour to accept of. I have been waiting for above three weeks for an opportunity to have it conveyed, but don't know where I shall meet with one.

My best love to Miss Irton and your dear self, and compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Braithwaite, in which I am joined by my Mother and Aunt, and believe me to be my Dear Martha

your sincere and ever affect-ate

A. . . . X. . . .