

88. W. W. to Francis Wrangham

No address.

MS. Henry Huntington Library.

K. MY i. 311, p. 148.

Grasmere, Nov. 4th, [1807.]

My dear Wrangham,

I have just received from Montagu two Letters of yours to him, by which I learn that your application to have the Review of my Poems taken out of Le Grice's hands [278](#) was successful; for the trouble you have taken in this business I thank you, but alas! either for me, or for the Critical Review, or for both! it has been out of the frying-pan into the fire

-- primo avulso non deficit alter
Aureus, et simili frondescit virga metallo, [279](#)

-- 174 --

for I am told that there has appeared in the said journal an article purporting to be a Review of those Poems which is a miserable heap of spiteful nonsense, even worse than anything that has appeared hitherto, in these disgraceful days. I have not seen it, for I am only a Chance-Reader of Reviews, but from what I have heard of the contents of this precious piece, I feel not so much inclined to accuse the author of malice as of sheer, honest insensibility, and stupidity. With what propriety did I select my motto for the Lyrical Ballads, which might have been continued with equal or greater propriety on the present occasion:

Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum! [280](#)

But Peace to this gentleman, and all his Brethren: as Southey neatly says "they cannot *blast* our *laurels*, but they may *mildew* our *corn*"; and it is only on account of this latter power which to a certain degree they unfortunately possess that I troubled you, or deemed them worth a moment's thought. To turn to a more agreeable subject; I am indeed much pleased that Mrs. Wrangham and yourself have been gratified by these breathings of simple Nature, the more so, because I conclude, from the character of the Poems which you have particularized, that the Volumes cannot but improve upon you. I see that you have entered into the spirit of them. You mention the daffodils; you know Butler, Montagu's friend, not Tom Butler, but the Conveyancer; when I was in Town in Spring he happened to see the Volumes lying on Montagu's mantel-piece and to glance his eye upon this Very Poem of the Daffodils; "aye," says he, "a fine morsel this for the Reviewers." When this was told me, for I was not present, I observed that there were two lines in that little Poem which if thoroughly felt, would annihilate nine tenths of the Reviews of the Kingdom, as they would find no Readers; the lines I alluded to, were those 'They flash upon that inward eye, Which is the bliss of Solitude.' --

I should not have been sorry to have had an opportunity of saying this to Butler himself. Before I finish the subject of these Poems let me request you to take a pen and correct in your Copy the following gross blunders of the Press, as some of them materially affect the sense.

1st volume, page 37 rightful Heir

Do. Do. 113 and *through* this wilderness.

Do. Do. 121 while I was framing beds *for*.

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2d volume, page 84 small wooden isle.

Do. Do. 91 wheels hither *her* store.

Do. Do. 127 His Thrift thy use/essness.

`Guilt-burthen'd' you have already noted; I will also thank you if any of your Friends happen to possess the Book, and their copy should fall in your way, to take the trouble of correcting the grossest of the above blunders. `In Gaelic or the English tongue' the language in your substitution is certainly more correct, and is the *proper* language, but somehow it sounds ill. *In English*. Your other corrections I shall adopt and thank you for them; and should be glad of more. Bringi tales is a gross error of the Press. --

Pray let me now ask, how you are employed? I had heard a rumour of the offence you had given to Dr. Symmonds by the Review, but I never either saw it or the book itself. In fact I might as well live at St. Kilda for any commerce I have with passing Literature, especially bulky works; for I have no neighbour that buys them, and we have no Book-club. Have you any good old Libraries near you? or how are you accommodated with Books, new or old? You speak kindly in your Letter of the pleasure you would have in seeing Montagu, and me, in your neighbourhood; I should like it much, but can[not] encourage the hope, for a reason which I believe I have heretofore specified. Yorkshire is a favorite region with me, both your side of the country, and the vallies on the western side, among the Ribs of the British Apennine. I know it all well, almost every corner in it; and should like better to wander through it on that very account. -- If Montagu comes down to you next summer, I shall expect you to find your way to Grasmere: remember this. -- I am pleased to find you do not forget the drawing or drawings. Mrs. W. desires me to say that when you see Mrs. Langley 281 she will thank you to mention her name as a person who remembers her kindness with pleasure. With best regards to yourself and Mrs. Wrangham I remain affectionately yours

Wm. Wordsworth.