

Longitude, I was obliged to tell your ancient *Hospes* Litchfield⁴ my *name* & sorry am I to say I lose daily *weight* "*notens volens*" I have lost 2 LB since Saturday, & am barely 11 stone by Litchfields *machine* with all my *Clothes, heavy shoes, gaiters* &c. &c.—Edleston⁵ called on me last night, & told me he saw me in Trinity walks twice, & *knew* me not, till pointed out to him, by his Brother or Cousin, I think he is much grown & rather improved, I shall be in town on Saturday, as I have not determined what Hotel to reside in, I cannot give you my positive address, but if you will call at 16 Piccadilly,⁶ my old Lodgings, I will leave word, where I am to be met with, I wish you to answer this immediately, that I may know *when, where, & how* we are to meet, or if we are to *meet at all*, with the permission of your *Commander*.

yours ever
BYRON

P.S.—Pray what the Devil did you do with my *smaller Lamp*? Smith⁷ has only the large one, & there was another, tell me if you have seen it, because I shall *indict* Mrs. Whitaker,⁸ if it is not discovered.—

[TO ELIZABETH BRIDGET PIGOT] Cambridge. June 30th. 1807

My dear *Elizabeth*,—"Better late than never Pal"¹ is a saying of which you know the origin, & as it is applicable on the present occasion, you will excuse its conspicuous place in the front of my Epistle. I am almost *superannuated* here, my old friends (with the exception of a very few) *all* departed, & I am preparing to follow them, but remain till monday to be present at 3 *Oratorios*, 2 *Concerts*, a *fair*, a *boxing match*, & a *Ball*.—I find I am not only *thinner*, but *taller* by an Inch since my last visit, I was obliged to tell every body my

⁴ Litchfield was an inn-keeper in Cambridge.

⁵ John Edleston, the Trinity choirboy, to whom Byron had become attached during his first residence at Cambridge.

⁶ The address of Mrs. Elizabeth Massingberd with whom Byron frequently took rooms when in London.

⁷ Possibly Abel Smith, son of S. Smith, Woodhall Park, Hertford. Smith entered Harrow in 1800 and left in 1805, and afterward went to Trinity College, Cambridge. He was M.P. for Herts., 1835-47.

⁸ Mrs. Whitaker may have been the housekeeper.

¹ The farce *Better Late than Never*, attributed to Peter Andrews, had first been played at Drury Lane on October 17, 1790, and apparently it was still popular. Byron may have seen it, for he went to the theatre frequently when he was in London.

name, nobody having the least recollection of my *visage*, or person.—Even the *Hero* of my *Cornelian*? (Who is now sitting *vis a vis*, reading a volume of my *poetics*) passed me in Trinity walks without recognizing me in the least, & was thunderstruck at the alteration, which had taken place in my Countenance &c. &c.—Some say I look *better*, others *worse*, but all agree I am *thinner*, more I do not require.—I have lost 2 LB in my weight since I left your *curse*, *detestable* & *abhorred* abode of *Scandal*, *antiquated virginity*, & universal *Infamy*, where excepting yourself & John Becher,³ I care not if the whole Race were consigned to the *Pit of Acheron*, which I would visit in person, rather than contaminate my *sandals* with the polluted Dust of *Southwell*.—*Seriously* (unless obliged by the *emptiness* of my purse to revisit Mr. B) you will see me no more, on monday I depart for London, & quit Cambridge forever, with little regret, because our *Set* are *vanished*, & my *musical protégé* above mentioned, has left the Choir, & is to be stationed in a mercantile house of considerable eminence in the Metropolis. You may have heard me observe he is exactly to an hour, 2 years younger than myself, I found him grown considerably, & as you will suppose, very glad to see his former *patron*.—He is nearly my height, very thin, very fair complexion, dark eyes, & light locks, my opinion of his mind, you already know, I hope I shall never have reason to change it.—Every Body here conceives me to be an *Invalid*, the University at present is very gay from the *fêtes* of divers kinds, I sipped out last night, but *eat* (or ate) nothing, sipped a bottle of Claret, went to bed at 2, & rose at 8. I have commenced early rising, & find it agrees with me, the master & the *felloes* all very *polite*, but look a little *askance*, dont much admire *lampoons*, truth always disagreeable.—Write & tell me how the Inhabitants of your *menagerie* go on, & if my publication goes off well, do the *Quadrupeds growl*, apropos how is *Boatswain* & *Bran*,⁴ alas! my Bulldog⁵ is deceased, "*Flesh both of cur & man is grass*"—Address your answer to Cambridge, if I am gone it will be forwarded, sad news just arrived, Russians beat,⁶ a bad set, eat nothing but oil, consequently must melt before a *hard fire*.—I get awkward in my academic habiliments, for want of practice, got up in a

² Byron had written a poem, "*The Cornelian*", to the choirboy John Edleston, which was printed in *Fugitive Pieces*. See Jan. 7 [1806], to Augusta Byron, note 1.

³ The Rev. John Becher was Byron's friend and literary adviser at Southwell. His objection to the poem "*To Mary*" as "too warmly drawn" caused Byron to suppress *Fugitive Pieces*.

⁴ Boatswain was Byron's Newfoundland dog and Bran was another dog, whether his or the Pigots' is not clear.

⁵ Byron's bulldog pup Savage. See June 11, 1807, to Elizabeth Pigot.

⁶ The Russians were beaten at the battle of Friedland, June 15, 1807.

Window to hear the Oratorio at St. Mary's, popped down in the middle of the *Messiah*, tore a *woeful rent* in the Back of my best black Silk gown, & damaged an *egregious pair* of Breeches, mem.—never tumble from a church window, during Service.—Adieu, dear Bess, do not remember me to any one, to *forget*, & be forgotten by the people of S.—is all I *aspire* to, too contemptible for hatred, & totally insignificant I leave them to their fate, & think of the tedious *dream* I past there, as a *Blank* in my life, when men without religion are priests, & women without principle, are compelled to drag on a weary form of *involuntary chastity*, what can be said? *nothing*—so here ends my *chapter*.—

[Signature torn out]

[TO ELIZABETH BRIDGET PIGOT] Trin. Coll. Camb. July 5th. 1807

My dear *Eliza*,—Since my last letter I have determined to reside *another year* at *Granta* as my Rooms &c. &c. are finished in *great Style*, several old friends *come up* again, & many *new* acquaintances made, consequently my Inclination leads me *forward*, & I shall return to College in October if still *alive*. My life here has been one continued *routine* of Dissipation, out at different places every day, engaged to more *diners* &c. &c. than my *stay* would permit me to *fulfil*, at this moment I write with a *bottle* of *Claret* in my *Head*, & *tears* in my *eyes*, for I have just parted from "my *Cornelian*"¹ who spent the evening with me; as it was our last Interview, I postponed my engagements to devote the hours of the *Sabbath* to friendship, Edleston & I have separated for the present, & my mind is a *Chaos* of *hope* & *Sorrow*.—Tomorrow I set out for London, you will address your answer to "*Gordon's Hotel*" *Albemarle Street*, where I *sojourn*, during my visit to the *Metropolis*.—I rejoice to hear you are interested in my "*protegè*", he has been my *almost constant* associate since October 1805, when I entered Trinity College; his *voice* first attracted my notice, his *countenance* fixed it, & his *manners* attached me to him forever, he departs for a *mercantile house* in *Town*, in October, & we shall probably not meet, till the expiration of my minority, when I shall leave to his *decision*, either *entering* as a *Partner* through my Interest, or residing with me altogether. Of course he *would* in his present *frame* of mind prefer the *latter*, but he may alter his opinion previous to that period, however he shall have his choice, I certainly *love* him more than any human being, & neither *time* or *Distance* have had the least effect on

¹ See June 30, 1807, to Elizabeth Pigot, note 2.

my (in general) changeable Disposition.—In short, We shall put *Lady E. Butler*, & Miss *Ponsonby*² to the *Blush*, *Pylades* & *Orestes* out of countenance, & want nothing but a *Catastrophe* like *Nisus* & *Euryalus*,³ to give *Jonathan* & *David* the "*go by*".—He certainly is perhaps more *attached* to me, than even I am in *return*, during the whole of my residence at *Cambridge*, we met every day summer & Winter, without passing *one tiresome moment*, & separated *each time* with increasing Reluctance. I hope you will *one day* see us together, he is the only *being* I *esteem*, though I *like many*.—The Marquis of *Tavistock*⁴ was down the other day, I supped with him at his *Tutor's*, entirely a *whig party*, the opposition *muster* very *strong* here, & Lord Hartington,⁵ the Duke of *Leinster*,⁶ &c. &c. are to join us in October, so every thing will be *splendid*.—The *Music* is all over at present, met with another "*accidency*", upset a *Butter Boat* in the *lap* of a *lady*, looked very *blue*, *spectators* grinned, "*curse em*" apropos, sorry to say, been *drunk* every day, & not quite *sober yet*, however touch no meat, nothing but fish, soup & vegetables, consequently does me no harm, sad dogs all the *Cantabs*, mem, *we mean* to reform next January.—This place is a *Monotony* of *endless variety*, *like it*, hate Southwell, full of old maids, how is Anne *Becher*?⁷ wants a husband, *men scarce*, wont *bite*, mem—tell Anne to fish more cautiously or the *Gudgeons* will be off; catch nothing but *Roach* & *Dace*.—Write soon, has *Ridge's* sold well? or do the *Ancients* demur? what *Ladies* have bought? all disappointed I dare say nothing *indecent* in the present publication, (<sorry for it>) *bad* set at Southwell, no *faces* & dont ever "*mean well*".—Saw a *Girl* at St.

² Lady Eleanor Butler, sister of the seventeenth Earl of Ormonde, and Sarah Ponsonby, cousin of the Earl of Bessborough, lived together for fifty years (1779–1829) in the Vale of Llangollen. They dressed as men, but their sexual ambivalence was generally regarded as an amiable eccentricity. Their fame spread widely and they were visited by many famous people.

³ Byron was fond of the classical stories of male friendships. He published in *Hours of Idleness* his paraphrase of the story of Nisus and Euryalus from the 9th book of the *Aeneid*.

⁴ The Marquis of Tavistock was later a fellow member of the Cambridge Whig Club with Byron.

⁵ William Spencer, Marquis of Hartington (1790–1858), succeeded his father as sixth Duke of Devonshire in 1811. His sister, Georgiana Dorothy, had married Lord Carlisle's eldest son in 1801.

⁶ The third Duke of Leinster, born in 1791, was a contemporary of Byron at Cambridge.

⁷ Anne Becher may have been a sister of the Rev. John Becher, and she may have been a cousin of Elizabeth Pigot, whose mother was a daughter of Richard Turner Becher of Southwell. For the Pigot family relationships see Willis W. Pratt, *Byron at Southwell*, pp. 11–12.

⁸ John Ridge in the neighbouring town of Newark printed Byron's early poems.

Mary's⁹ the Image of Anne Houson,¹⁰ thought it was her, all in the wrong, the Lady stared, so did I, I blushed, so did *not* the Lady, sad thing, wish women, had *more modesty*.—Talking of women brings my *terrier Fanny*¹¹ into my head[;] how is she? very well I thank you.—Got a Headach, must go to bed, up early in the morning to travel, my "protégé" breakfasts with me, parting spoils my appetite, excepting from Southwell, mem—*I hate Southwell,*

yours ever

BYRON

[TO ELIZABETH BRIDGET PIGOT] *Gordon's Hotel, July 13th. 1807*

My dear *Elisabat*,—You write most excellent epistles, a fig for other correspondents, with their nonsensical apologies for "*knowing nought about it*," you send me a delightful Budget, *beginning with Anne Becher*,¹ & *ending with Crim con*. nothing could be more natural, the moment I saw *her* name in the commencement, I anticipated the *result*.—I am here in a perpetual vortex of dissipation (very pleasant for all that) & strange to tell get thinner, being now below 11 stone considerably, stay in Town a *month*, perhaps 6 weeks, trip into Essex, & then as a favour *irradiate* Southwell for 3 *days* with the light of my Countenance, but nothing shall ever make me *reside* there again, I positively return to Cambridge in October, we are to be uncommonly gay, or in truth, I should *cut* the University.—An extraordinary circumstance occurred to me at Cambridge, a Girl so very like Anne Houson² made her appearance, that nothing but the most *minute Inspection* could have undeceived me, I wish I had asked if *she* ever was at [Hockerton?].—What the Devil, would Ridge have? is not 50 in a fortnight before the Advertisements a sufficient sale, I hear many of the London Booksellers have them, & Crosby³ has sent Copies to the principal watering places. Are they *liked* or *not* in Southwell? how does John Becher⁴ go on? & Sherard⁵ on his receiving the "*Coup de grace*"

⁹ St. Mary's the Great, the Cambridge University Church.

¹⁰ A Southwell girl to whom Byron addressed some of his early poems.

¹¹ Byron was a lover of all breeds of dogs, though he seemed to be fondest of the Newfoundland and the bulldog.

¹ See July 5, 1807, to Elizabeth Pigot, note 7.

² See July 5, 1807, to Elizabeth Pigot, note 10.

³ Ben Crosby was the London bookseller who was agent for John Ridge of Newark. Ridge sent him a consignment of Byron's *Hours of Idleness* for sale in the capital and the provinces.

⁴ The Rev. John Thomas Becher, of a family related to the Pigots, was vicar of Rumpton and of Midsomer Norton, and later prebendary and then Vicar-general of Southwell Minster. See Aug. 10, 1806, to John Pigot.

⁵ Sherard Becher. See Aug. 9, 1806, to John Pigot, note 5.

from Miss "*Twizzle*".—I wish Boatswain⁶ had *swallowed* Damon, how is Bran? by the immortal Gods! Bran ought to be a *Count* of the *Holy Roman Empire*.—So, Miss Harriet's⁷ *Invalid* is recovered, & declines matrimony. Alas! Alas! Ah! Good lack! Oh! Oh!—Are the Leacrofts⁸ returned? will the *Burtonians bite*, or do they dread Thalaba.⁹—What is become of the "Talents" are they disjointed, or in close alliance.—You perceive questions innumerable? & I expect answers to *all*.—The Intelligence of London cannot be interesting to you who *have rusticated* all your life, the annals of Routs, Riots, Balls & Boxing matches, Dowagers & demireps, Cards & Crim-con, Parliamentary Discussion, Political Details, Masquerades, Mechanics, Argyle Street Institution & Aquatic races, Love & Lotteries, Brookes's & Buonaparte, Exhibitions of pictures with Drapery, & *women without*; Statues with more *decent dresses*, than their *originals*, Opera-singers & Orators, Wine, Women, Wax works, & Weathercocks, cannot accord with your *insulated* Ideas, of Decorum & other *silly expressions*, not inserted in our *Vocabulary*.—Oh Southwell, Southwell, how I rejoice to have left thee, & how I curse the heavy hours I have dragged along for so many months, amongst the *Mohawks* who inhabit your *Kraals*.—However one thing I do not regret, which is having *pared* off a sufficient quantity of flesh, to enable me to slip into an "*Eelskin*" & vie with the *slim Beau*'s of modern times, though I am sorry to say, it seems to be the mode amongst *Gentlemen*, to grow *fat*, & I am told, I am at least 14 LB below the *Fashion*.—However I *decrease* instead of enlarging, which is extraordinary as *violent* exercise in London is impracticable, but I attribute the *phenomenon* to our *Evening squeezes*, at public & private parties.—I heard from Ridge this morning (the 14th, my letter was begun yesterday) he says the poems go on as well as can be *wished*, the 75 sent to *Town*, are circulated, & a demand for 50 more, complied with, the day he dated his Epistle, though the Advertisements are not yet half published.—Adieu

yours ever

BYRON

⁶ See June 11, 1807, to Elizabeth Pigot, note 1.

⁷ Harriet Maltby, to whom Byron addressed two poems, one "To Harriet" (posthumously published, *Poetry*, I, 268) and "To Marion" in *Hours of Idleness*.

⁸ See Jan. 31, 1807, to Capt. John Leacroft, note 1.

⁹ There is no clue to the local reference to the Burtonians, but Thalaba was the righteous hero of Southey's poem of that name.