

Chawton Thursday Feb: 4.

My dear Cassandra

Your letter was truly welcome & I am much obliged to you all for your praise; it came at a right time, for I had had some fits of disgust;—our 2^d evening's reading to Miss Benn had not pleased me so well, but I believe something must be attributed to my Mother's too rapid way of getting on—& tho' she perfectly understands the Characters herself, she cannot speak as they ought—Upon the whole however I am quite vain enough & well satisfied enough. —The work is rather too light & bright & sparkling; —it wants shade; —it wants to be stretched out here & there with a long Chapter—of sense if it could be had, if not of solemn specious nonsense—about something unconnected with the story; an Essay on Writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparté—or anything that would form a contrast & bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness & Epigrammatism of the general stile.—I doubt your quite agreeing with me here.—I know your starched Notions. —The caution observed at Steventon with regard to the possession of the Book is an agreeable surprise to me, & I heartily wish it may be the means of saving you from every thing unpleasant;—but you must be prepared for the Neighbourhood being perhaps already informed of there being such a work in the World, & in the Chawton World! Drummer will do that you know. —It was spoken of here one morn^g when M^{rs} D. called with Miss Benn. —The greatest blunder in the Printing that I have met with is in Page 220—Vol. 3. where two speeches are made into one. —There might as well have been no suppers at Longbourn, but I suppose it was the remains of M^{rs} Bennet's old Meryton habits.—I am sorry for your disappointment about Manydown, & fear this week must be a heavy one. As far as one may venture to judge at a distance of 20 miles you must miss Martha. For her sake I was glad to hear of her going, as I suppose she must have been

growing anxious, & wanting to be again in scenes of agitation & exertion.—She had a lovely day for her journey. I walked to Alton, & dirt excepted, found it delightful,—it seemed like an old Feb^y come back again.—Before I set out we were visited by M^{rs} Edwards, & while I was gone Miss Beckford & Maria, & Miss Woolls & Harriet B. called, all of whom my Mother was glad to see & I was very glad to escape.—John M. is sailed, & now Miss B. thinks his Father will really try for a house, & has hopes herself of avoiding Southampton;—this is, as it was repeated to me; —and I can tell the Miss Williamses that Miss Beckford has no intention of inviting them to Chawton.—Well done You.—I thought of you at Manydown in the Draw^g room & in your China Crape;—therefore, you were in the Breakfast parlour in your Brown Bombasin;—if I thought of you so, you would have been in the Kitchen in your Morning stuff.—I feel that I have never mentioned the Harwoods in my Letters to you, which is shocking enough—but we are sincerely glad to hear all the good of them you send us. There is no chance I suppose, no danger of poor M^{rs} H.s being persuaded to come to Chawton at present.—I hope John H. will not have more debts brought in, than he likes.—I am pleased with M. T.'s being to dine at Steventon;—it may enable you to be yet more decided with Fanny & help to settle her faith.—Thomas was married on saturday, the wedding was kept at Neatham; & that is all I know about it. Browning is quite a new Broom & at present has no fault. He had lost some of his knowledge of waiting, & is I think rather slow; but he is not noisy & not at all above being taught.—The Back gate is regularly locked.—I did not forget Henry's fee to Thomas.—I had a letter from Henry yesterday, written on sunday from Oxford; mine had been forwarded to him; Edward's information therefore [^]was correct.—He says that Copies were sent to S. & P. at the same time with the others.—He has some thoughts of going to Adlestrop—