

Wednesday 15—Thursday 16 September 1813

Henrietta S^t Wednesday—½ past 8—

Here I am, my dearest Cassandra, seated in the Breakfast, Dining, sitting room, beginning with all my might. Fanny will join me as soon as she is dressed & begin her Letter. We had a very good journey—Weather & roads excellent—the three first stages for 1st 6^d d., & our only misadventure the being delayed about a q^r of an hour at Kingston for Horses, & being obliged to put up with a p^r belonging to a Hackney Coach & their Coachman, which left no room on the Barouche Box for Lizzy, who was to have gone her last stage there as she did the first;—consequently we were all 4 within, which was a little crowd.—We arrived at a q^r past 4—& were kindly welcomed by the Coachman, & then by his Master, and then by W^m, & then by M^{rs}. Perigord, who all met us before we reached the foot of the Stairs. M^{de} Bignon was below dressing us a most comfortable dinner of Soup, Fish, Bouillée, Partridges & an apple Tart, which we sat down to soon after 5, after cleaning & dressing ourselves & feeling that we were most commodiously disposed of.—The little adjoining Dressing-room to our apartment makes Fanny & myself very well off indeed, & as we have poor Eliza's bed our space is ample every way.—Sace arrived safely about ½ past 6. At 7 we set off in a Coach for the Lyceum—were at home again in about 4 hours and ½—had soup & wine & water, & then went to our Holes. Edward finds his quarters very snug & quiet.—I must get a softer pen.—This is harder.—I am in agonies.—I have not yet seen M^r Crabbe.—Martha's letter is gone to the Post.

I am going to write nothing but short Sentences. There shall be two full stops in every Line. Layton and Shear's is Bedford House. We mean to get there before breakfast if it's possible. For we feel more & more how much we have to do. And how little time. This house looks very nice. It seems like Sloane S^t moved here. I believe Henry is just rid of Sloane S^t—Fanny does not come, but I have Edward seated by me beginning a Letter, which looks natural.

Henry has been suffering from the pain in the face which he has been subject to before. He caught cold at Matlock, & since his return has been paying a little for past pleasure.—It is nearly removed now,—but he looks thin in the face,—either from the pain or the fatigues of his Tour, which must have been great.

Lady Robert is delighted with P.&P—and really was so, as I understand before she knew who wrote it—for, of course, she knows now.—He told her with as much satisfaction as if it were my wish. He did not tell me this, but he told Fanny. And M^r. Hastings—I am quite delighted with what such a Man writes about it. Henry sent him the books after his return from Daylesford—but you will hear the letter too.

Let me be rational & return to my two full stops.

I talked to Henry at the Play last night. We were in a private Box—M^r Spencer's—which made it much more pleasant. The Box is directly on the Stage. One is infinitely less fatigued than in the common way.—But Henry's plans are not what one could wish. He

does not mean to be at Chawton till y^e 29.—He must be in town again by Oct^r 5.—His plan is to get a couple of days of Pheasant Shooting and then return directly; his wish was to bring you back with him. I have told him your scruples.—He wishes you to suit yourself as to time, and if you cannot come till later, will send for you at any time, as far as Bagshot.—He presumed you w^d not find difficulty in getting so far. I c^d not say you would. He proposed your going with him into Oxfordshire. It was his own thought at first. I could not but catch at it for you.

We have talked of it again this morning (for now we have breakfasted), and I am convinced that if you can make it suit in other respects you need not scruple on his account. If you cannot come back with him on y^e 3^d or 4th, therefore, I do hope you will contrive to go to Adlestrop.—By not beginning your absence till about the middle of this month I think you may manage it very well. But you will think all this over. One c^d wish he had intended to come to you earlier, but it cannot be helped.

I said nothing to him of M^{rs} H. & Miss B— that he might not suppose Difficulties. Shall not you put them into our own Room? This seems to me the best plan—& the Maid will be most conveniently near.

Oh, dear me, when I shall ever have done. We did go to Layton & Shear's before Breakfast. Very pretty English poplins at 4.3—Irish D^o at 6.0—more pretty certainly—beautiful.—

Fanny & the two little girls are gone to take Places for to-night at Covent Garden; Clandestine Marriage & Midas. The latter will be a fine show for L. & M.—They revelled last night in Don Juan, whom we left in Hell at ½ past 11. We had Scaramouch & a Ghost—and were delighted;—I speak of them: my delight was very tranquil, & the rest of us were sober-minded. Don Juan was the last of 3 musical things;—Five hours at Brighton, in 3 acts—of which one was over before we arrived, none the worse—and The Beehive, rather less flat & trumpety.

I have this moment received £5 from kind, beautiful Edward. Fanny has a similar Gift. I shall save what I can of it for your better leisure in this place. My letter was from Miss Sharpe.—nothing particular.—A letter from Fanny Cage this morning.

4 o'clock.—We are just come back from doing M^{rs} Tickars, Miss Hare, and M^{rs} Spence. M^r Hall is here; & while Fanny is under his hands, I will try to write a little more.

Miss Hare had some pretty caps, and is to make me one like one of them, only white sattin instead of blue. It will be white sattin and lace, and a little white flower perking out of the left ear, like Harriot Byron's feather. I have allowed her to go as far as £1-16. My Gown is to be trimmed everywhere with white ribbon plaited on, somehow or other. She says it will look well. I am not sanguine. They trim with white very much.

I learnt from M^{rs} Tickars's young Lady, to my high amusement, that the stays now are not made to force the bosom up at all;—that was a very unbecoming, unnatural fashion. I was really glad to hear that they are not to be so much off the shoulders as they were.

Going to Mr Spence's was a sad Business & cost us many tears, unluckily we were obliged to go a 2^d time before he could do more than just look:—we went 1st at ½ past 12 and afterwards at 3. Papa with us each time—&, alas! we are to go again to-morrow. Lizzy is not finished yet. There have been no Teeth taken out, however, nor will be I believe, but he finds hers in a very bad state, & seems to think particularly ill of their Durableness.—They have been all cleaned, hers filed, and are to be filed again. There is a very sad hole between two of her front Teeth.

Thursday morning ½ past 7.—Up & dressed and downstairs in order to finish my Letter in time for the Parcel. At 8 I have an appointment with M^{de} B. who wants to show me something downstairs. At 9 we are to set off for Grafton House & get that over before breakfast. Edward is so kind as to walk there with us. We are to be at Mr Spence's again at 11 & from that time shall be driving about I suppose till 4 o'clock at least.—We are if possible to call on M^{rs} Tilson.

Mr Hall was very punctual yesterday & curled me out at a great rate. I thought it looked hideous, and longed for a snug cap instead, but my companions silenced me by their admiration. I had only a bit of velvet round my head. I did not catch cold however. The weather is all in my favour. I have had no pain in my face since I left you.

We had very good places in the Box next the Stage box—front and 2nd row; the three old ones behind of course.—I was particularly disappointed at seeing nothing of Mr Crabbe. I felt sure of him when I saw that the boxes were fitted up with Crimson velvet. The new Mr Terry was L^d Ogleby, & Henry thinks he may do; but there was no acting more than moderate, & I was as much amused by the remembrances connected with Midas as with any part of it. The girls were very much delighted, but still prefer Don Juan—& I must say that I have seen nobody on the stage who has been a more interesting Character than that compound of Cruelty & Lust.

It was not possible for me to get the Worsteds yesterday. I heard Edward last night pressing Henry to come to G^m & I think Henry engaged to go there after his November collection. Nothing has been done as to S&S. The Books came to hand too late for him to have time for it, before he went. Mr Hastings never hinted at Eliza in the smallest degree.—Henry knew nothing of Mr Trimmer's death. I tell you these things that you may not have to ask them over again.

There is a new Clerk sent down to Alton, a Mr Edmund Williams, a young Man whom Henry thinks most highly of—and he turns out to be a son of the luckless Williamses of Grosvenor Place.

I long to have you hear Mr H.'s opinion of P&P. His admiring my Elizabeth so much is particularly welcome to me.

Instead of saving my superfluous wealth for you to spend, I am going to treat myself with spending it myself. I hope at least that I shall find some poplin at Layton & Shear's that will tempt me to buy it. If I do, it shall be sent to Chawton, as half will be for you; for I depend upon your being so kind as to accept it, being the main point. It will be a

great pleasure to me. Don't say a word. I only wish you could choose too. I shall send 20 yards.

Now for Bath. Poor F. Cage has suffered a good deal from her accident. The noise of the White Hart was terrible to her.—They will keep her quiet, I dare say. She is not so much delighted with the place as the rest of the Party; probably, as she says herself, from having been less well, but she thinks she sh^d like it better in the season. The Streets are very empty now, & the shops not so gay as she expected. They are at No. 1 Henrietta Street, the corner of Laura Place; and have no acquaintance at present but the Bramstons.

Lady B. drinks at the Cross Bath, her son at the Hot, and Louisa is going to Bathe. D^r Parry seems to be half starving M^r Bridges; for he is restricted to much such a Diet as James's Bread, Water and Meat, & is never to eat so much of that as he wishes;—& he is to walk a great deal, walk till he drops, I believe, Gout or no Gout. It really is to that purpose; I have not exaggerated.

Charming weather for you & us, and the Travellers, & everybody. You will take your walk this afternoon, & ... [*end of letter missing*]

Miss Austen

Chawton.

By favour of M^r Gray