

The first extract is a playful defence of herself from a mock charge of having pilfered the manuscripts of a young relation.

"What should I do, my dearest E. with your manly, vigorous sketches, so full of life and spirit? How could I possibly join them on to a little bit of ivory, two inches wide, on which I work with a brush so fine as to produce little effect after much labour?"

The remaining extracts are from various parts of a letter written a few weeks before her death.

"My attendant is encouraging, and talks of making me quite well. I live chiefly on the sofa, but am allowed to walk from one room to the other. I have been out once in a sedan-chair, and am to repeat it, and be promoted to a wheel-chair as the weather serves. On this subject I will only say further that my dearest sister, my tender, watchful, indefatigable nurse, has not been made ill by her exertions. As to what I owe to her, and to the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occasion, I can only cry over it, and pray to God to bless them more and more."

She next touches with just and gentle animadversion on a subject of domestic disappointment. Of this the particulars do not concern the public. Yet in justice to her characteristic sweetness and resignation, the concluding observation of our authoress thereon must not be suppressed.

"But I am getting too near complaint. It has been the appointment of God, however secondary causes may have operated."

The following and final extract will prove the facility with which she could correct every impatient thought, and turn from complaint to cheerfulness.

"You will find Captain — a very respectable, well-meaning man, without much manner, his wife and sister all good humour and obligingness, and I hope (since the fashion allows it) with rather longer petticoats than last year."

London, Dec. 20, 1817.

APPENDIX C:

Extracts from Jane Austen's letters.

[Austen wrote regularly to members of her family, though comparatively few of the letters survive. The first of the following letters gives Austen's impressions of Bath shortly after she went to live there in 1801. The two other letters were written to her teenage niece, Fanny Knight, in response to Fanny's request for advice on whether to marry a particular suitor. Austen's reaction to an appeal on such a subject is very relevant to the situation created in *Persuasion*, which she began within months of the exchange of letters with Fanny.]

1. Austen in Bath

Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, Tuesday 5 - Wednesday 6 May 1801

Paragon, Bath

My dear Cassandra

I have the pleasure of writing from my *own* room up two pair of stairs, with everything very comfortable about me. Our Journey here was perfectly free from accident or Event; we changed Horses at the end of every stage, & paid at almost every Turnpike; — we had charming weather, hardly any Dust, & were exceedingly agreeable, as we did not speak above once in three miles. — Between Luggershall & Everley we made our grand Meal, and then with admiring astonishment perceived in what a magnificent manner our support had been provided for —; — We could not with the utmost exertion consume above the twentieth part of the beef. — The cucumber will I beleive be a very acceptable present, as my Uncle talks of having enquired the price of one lately, when he was told a shilling. — We had a very neat chaise from Devizes; it looked almost as well as a Gentleman's, at least as a very shabby Gentleman's —; inspite of this advantage however We were above three hours coming from thence to Paragon, & it was half after seven by *Your* Clocks before we entered the house. Frank, whose black head was in waiting in the Hall window, received us very kindly; and his Master & Mistress did not shew less cordiality. — They both look very well, tho' my Aunt has a violent cough. We drank tea as soon as we arrived, & so ends the account of our Journey, which my Mother bore without any fatigue. — How do you do to day? — I hope you improve in sleeping — I think you must, because *I* fall off; — I have been awake ever since 5 & sooner, I fancy I had too much cloathes over my stomach; I thought I

should by the feel of them before I went to bed, but I had not courage to alter them. – I am warmer here without any fire than I have been lately with an excellent one. – Well – & so the Good news is confirmed, & Martha triumphs. – My Uncle & Aunt seemed quite surprised that you & my father were not coming sooner. – I have given the Soap & the Basket; – & each have been kindly received. – One thing only among all our Concerns has not arrived in safety; – when I got into the Chaise at Devizes I discovered that your Drawing Ruler was broke in two; – it is just at the Top where the crosspeice is fastened on. – I beg pardon. – There is to be only one more Ball; – next monday is the day. – The Chamberlaynes are still here; I begin to think better of M^{rs} C-, and upon recollection beleive she has rather a long chin than otherwise, as she remembers us in Gloucestershire when we were very charming young Women. – The first veiw of Bath in fine weather does not answer my expectations; I think I see more distinctly thro' Rain. – The Sun was got behind everything, and the appearance of the place from the top of Kingsdown, was all vapour, shadow, smoke & confusion. – I fancy we are to have a House in Seymour S^t or thereabouts. My Uncle & Aunt both like the Situation –. I was glad to hear the former talk of all the Houses in New King S^t as too small; – it was my own idea of them. – I had not been two minutes in the Dining room before he questioned me with all his accustomed eager interest about Frank & Charles, their veiws & intentions. – I did my best to give information. – I am not without hopes of tempting M^{rs} Lloyd to settle in Bath; – Meat is only 8^d per pound, butter 12^d & cheese 9½^d. You must carefully conceal from her however the exorbitant price of Fish; – a salmon has been sold at 2^s: 9^d p^r pound the whole fish. – The Duchess of York's removal is expected to make that article more reasonable – & till it really appears so, say nothing about salmon.

Tuesday Night. – When my Uncle went to take his second glass of water, I walked with him, & in our morning's circuit we looked at two Houses in Green Park Buildings, one of which pleased me very well. – We walked all over it except into the Garrets; – the dining-room is of a comfortable size, just as large as you like to fancy it, the 2^d room about 14 ft. square; – The apartment over the Drawing-room pleased me particularly, because it is divided into two, the smaller one a very nice sized Dressing-room, which upon occasion might admit a bed. The aspect is South-East. – The only doubt is about the Dampness of the Offices, of which there were symptoms. –

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Best Love.

Yrs Ever JA

2. Austen's letters to Fanny Knight about John Plumptre

Jane Austen to Fanny Knight, Friday 18–Sunday 20 November, 1814

Chawton

I feel quite as doubtful as you could be my dearest Fanny as to *when* my Letter may be finished, for I can command very little quiet time at present, but yet I must begin, for I know you will be glad to hear as soon as possible, & I really am impatient myself to be writing something on so very interesting a subject, though I have no hope of writing anything to the purpose. – I shall do very little more I dare say than say over again, what you have said before. – I was certainly a good deal surprised *at first* – as I had no suspicion of any change in your feelings, and I have no scruple in saying that you cannot be in Love. My dear Fanny, I am ready to laugh at the idea – and yet it is no laughing matter to have had you so mistaken as to your own feelings – And with all my heart I wish I had cautioned you on that point when first you spoke to me; – but tho' I did not think you then so *much* in love as you thought yourself, I did consider you as being attached in a degree – quite sufficiently for happiness, as I had no doubt it would increase with opportunity. – And from the time of our being in London together, I thought you really very much in love. – But you certainly are not at all – there is no concealing it. – What strange creatures we are! – It seems as if your being secure of him (as you say yourself) had made you Indifferent. – There was a little disgust I suspect, at the Races – & I do not wonder at it. His expressions then would not do for one who had rather more Acuteness, Penetration & Taste, than Love, which was your case. And yet, after all, I *am* surprised that the change in your feelings should be so great. – He is, just what he ever was, only more evidently and uniformly devoted to *you*. This is all the difference. – How shall we account for it? – My dearest Fanny, I am writing what will not be of the smallest use to you. I am feeling differently every moment, & shall not be able to suggest a single thing that can assist your mind. – I could lament in one Sentence & laugh in the next, but as to Opinion or Counsel I am sure none will [be?] extracted worth having from this Letter. – I read yours through the very even^g I received it – getting away by myself – I could not bear to leave off, when I had once begun. – I was full of curiosity & concern. Luckily Your Aunt C. dined at the other house, therefore I had not to manœuvre away from *her*; – & as to anybody else, I do not care. – Poor dear M^r J. P! – Oh! dear Fanny, Your mistake has been one that thousands of women fall into. He was the *first* young Man who attached himself to you. That was the charm, & most powerful it is. – Among the multitudes however that make the same mistake with yourself, there can be few indeed who have so little reason

to regret it; – *his* Character & *his* attachment leave you nothing to be ashamed of. – Upon the whole, what is to be done? You certainly *have* encouraged him to such a point as to make him feel almost secure of you – you have no inclination for any other person – His situation in life, family, friends, & above all his Character – his uncommonly amiable mind, strict principles, just notions, good habits – *all* that *you* know so well how to value, *All* that really is of the first importance – everything of this nature pleads his cause most strongly. – You have no doubt of his having superior Abilities – he has proved it at the University – he is I dare say such a Scholar as your agreeable, idle Brothers would ill bear a comparison with. – Oh! my dear Fanny, the more I write about him, the warmer my feelings become, the more strongly I feel the sterling worth of such a young Man & the desirableness of your growing in love with him again. I recommend this most thoroughly. – There *are* such beings in the World perhaps, one in a Thousand, as the Creature You & I should think perfection, where Grace & Spirit are united to Worth, where the Manners are equal to the Heart & Understanding, but such a person may not come in your way, or if he does, he may not be the eldest son of a Man of Fortune, the Brother of your particular friend, & belonging to your own County. – Think of all this Fanny. M^r J.P. – has advantages which do not often meet in one person. His only fault indeed seems Modesty. If he were less modest, he would be more agreeable, speak louder & look Impudenter; – and is not it a fine Character, of which Modesty is the only defect? – I have no doubt that he will get more lively & more like yourselves as he is more with you; – he will catch your ways if he belongs to you. And as to there being any objection from his *Goodness*, from the danger of his becoming even Evangelical, I cannot admit *that*. I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be Evangelicals, & am at least persuaded that they who are so from Reason & Feeling, must be happiest & safest. – Do not be frightened from the connection by your Brothers having most wit. Wisdom is better than Wit, & in the long run will certainly have the laugh on her side; & don't be frightened by the idea of his acting more strictly up to the precepts of the New Testament than others. – And now, my dear Fanny, having written so much on one side of the question, I shall turn round & entreat you not to commit yourself farther, & not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection; and if his deficiencies of Manner &c &c strike you more than all his good qualities, if you continue to think strongly of them, give him up at once. – Things are now in such a state, that you must resolve upon one or the other, either to allow him to go on as he has done, or whenever you are together behave with a coldness which may convince him that he has been deceiving himself. – I have no doubt

of his suffering a good deal for a time, a great deal, when he feels that he must give you up; – but it is no creed of mine, as you must be well aware, that such sort of Disappointments kill anybody. –

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Yours very affect^{ly}

J. Austen

Jane Austen to Fanny Knight, Wednesday 30 November 1814

23 Hans Place, London

I am very much obliged to you my dear Fanny for your letter, & I hope you will write again soon that I may know You to be all safe & happy at home ... Now my dearest Fanny, I will begin a subject which comes in very naturally. You frighten me out of my Wits by your reference. Your affection gives me the highest pleasure, but indeed you must not let anything depend on my opinion. Your own feelings & none but your own, should determine such an important point. – So far however as answering your question, I have no scruple. – I am perfectly convinced that your present feelings, supposing you were to marry *now*, would be sufficient for his happiness; – but when I think how very, very far it is from a *Now*, & take everything that *may be*, into consideration, I dare not say, “determine to accept him.” The risk is too great for *you*, unless your own Sentiments prompt it. – You will think me perverse perhaps; in my last letter I was urging everything in his favour, & now I am inclining the other way; but I cannot help it; I am at present more impressed with the possible Evil that may arise to *You* from engaging yourself to him – in word or mind – than with anything else. – When I consider how few young Men you have yet seen much of – how capable you are (yes, I do still think you *very* capable) of being really in love – and how full of temptation the next 6 or 7 years of your Life will probably be – (it is the very period of Life for the *strongest* attachments to be formed) – I cannot wish you with your present very cool feelings to devote yourself in honour to him. It is very true that you never may attach another Man, his equal altogether, but if that other Man has the power of attaching you *more*, he will be in your eyes the most perfect. – I shall be glad if you *can* revive past feelings, & from your unbiassed self resolve to go on as you have done, but this I do not expect, and without it I cannot wish you to be fettered. I should not be afraid of your *marrying* him; – with all his Worth, you would soon love him enough for the happiness of both; but I should dread the continuance of this sort of tacit engagement, with such an uncertainty as there is, of *when* it may be completed. – Years may pass, before he is Independent. – You like him well enough to marry, but not well enough to wait. – The unpleasantness of appearing fickle is certainly great – but if you think you want Punishment for past Illusions,

there it is – and nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound *without* Love, bound to one, & preferring another. *That* is a Punishment which you do *not* deserve. – I know you did not meet – or rather will not meet today – as he called here yesterday – & I am glad of it. – It does not seem very likely at least, that he sh^d be in time for a Dinner visit 60 m[iles] off. We did not see him, only found his card when we came home at 4. – Your Uncle H. merely observed that he was a day after the Fair. – He asked your Brother on Monday, (when M^r Hayter was talked of) why he did not invite *him* too? – saying, “I know he is in Town, for I met him the other day in Bond S^t –” Edward answered that he did not know where he was to be found. – “Don’t you know his Chambers? –” “No.” – I shall be most glad to hear from you again my dearest Fanny, but it must not be later than Saturday, as we shall be off on Monday long before the Letters are delivered – and write *something* that may do to be read or told.

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Yours most affect^{ly}

J. Austen

APPENDIX D

From Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (London, 1797), pp. 19–31.

[Thomas Gisborne (1758–1846) was a prolific author, moralist, and divine. In 1794 he published *An Enquiry into the Duties of Men*, and the success of this volume prompted him to follow it with *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex*. Published in 1797, the second *Enquiry* was hugely popular, going through seven editions by 1806. It is likely that Austen had read it: “I am glad you recommended ‘Gisborne’, for having begun, I am pleased with it, and I had quite determined not to read it,” she wrote to Cassandra on 30 August 1805. (The footnotes are Gisborne’s.)]

The Power who called the human race into being has, with infinite wisdom, regarded, in the structure of the corporeal frame, the tasks which the different sexes were respectively destined to fulfil. To man, on whom the culture of the soil, the erection of dwellings, and, in general, those operations of industry, and those measures of defence, which include difficult and dangerous exertion, were ultimately to devolve, He has imparted the strength of limb, and the robustness of constitution, requisite for the persevering endurance of toil. The female form, not commonly doomed, in countries where the progress of civilisation is far advanced, to labours more severe than the offices of domestic life, He has cast in a smaller mould, and bound together by a looser texture. But, to protect weakness from the oppression of domineering superiority, those whom He had not qualified to contend, He has enabled to fascinate; and has amply compensated the defect of muscular vigour by symmetry and expression, by elegance and grace. To me it appears, that He has adopted, and that He has adopted with the most conspicuous wisdom, a corresponding plan of discrimination between the mental powers and dispositions of the two sexes. The science of legislation, of jurisprudence, of political economy; the conduct of government in all its executive functions; the abstruse researches of erudition; the inexhaustible depths of philosophy; the acquirements subordinate to navigation; the knowledge indispensable in the wide field of commercial enterprise; the arts of defence, and of attack, by land and by sea, which the violence or the fraud of unprincipled assailants render needful; these, and other studies, pursuits, and occupations, assigned chiefly or entirely to men, demand the efforts of a mind endued with the powers of close and comprehensive reasoning, and of intense and continued application, in a degree in which they are not requisite