

Womens Travel Writing 1750-1850

Volume 4

Edited by **Caroline Franklin**



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1750–1850

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BY HYDER ALI. TO WHICH IS ADDED AN ABSTRACT OF
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Mrs Elizabeth Fay

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ORIGINAL LETTERS

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BY MRS. FAY.

PRINTED AT CALCUTTA.

1821.



Engraved by T. Allen from a Drawing by

A. W. Davis.

The Author dressed in the Egyptian Costume

3rd Letter 7th

P R E F A C E.

The volume now submitted to the public, exhibits a faithful account of certain remarkable occurrences in the history of an individual, whose lot has been to make frequent visits to several distant regions of the globe, to mingle in the society of people of different kindreds and tongues, and to experience many vicissitudes of fortune. At a time when fictitious representations of human life are sought for with so much avidity, and constitute one of the principal sources of amusement in the hours of solitude, such a work as the present will, it is presumed, not be unacceptable. Those whose curiosity is attracted by the recital of incidents that never took place, or whose sensibility can be awakened by the description of emotions that were never felt may perhaps derive a similar gratification from the following unembellished narrative of simple facts and real sufferings.

Five and thirty years ago, it was the fate of the author to undertake a journey overland to India, in company with her husband the late Anthony Fay Esq. who, having been called to the bar by the honorable society of Lincoln Inns, had formed the resolution of practising in the courts of Calcutta. They travelled through France, and over the Alps to Italy, whence embarking at Leghorn they sailed to Alexandria in Egypt. Having visited some of the curiosities in this interesting country, and made a short stay at Grand Cairo, they pursued their journey across the Desert to Suez after passing down the Red Sea. The ship in which they sailed touched at Calicut, where they were seized by the officers of Hyder Ally, and for fifteen weeks endured all the hardships and privations of a rigorous imprisonment.

When

When, after residing two years in India, the author, on account of circumstances explained in the course of the work, returned to her native country, she was repeatedly urged by several of her friends to publish some account of the events that had befallen her, which, it was supposed would engage the attention of the public, being connected with important circumstances in the lives of well known and respectable individuals, and illustrative of the character of a Potentate whose movements were the subject of serious alarm in India. But, at this period a woman who was not conscious of possessing decided genius or superior knowledge could not easily be induced to leave "the harmless tenor of her way," and render herself amenable to the "pains and penalties" then, generally, inflicted on female authorships; unless inspired by that enthusiasm that tramples on difficulties, or goaded by misfortune which admits not of alternative. Being utterly uninfluenced by either of these motives, and having all the fear of criticism and aversion to publicity which characterizes the young women of her day, the author at that time declined complying with the wishes of those she yet highly honored, and never enquired farther after the fate of her letters, than to learn that they were duly received by those dear friends, to whom all her peregrinations and the knowledge of her eventual safety could not fail to be highly interesting.

Since then, a considerable change has gradually taken place in public sentiments, and its developement, we have now not only as in former days a number of women who do honour to their sex as literary characters, but many unpretending females, who fearless of the critical perils that once attended the voyage, venture to launch their little barks on the vast ocean through which amusement

amusement or instruction is conveyed to a reading public: The wit of Fielding is no longer held over them in terrorem, and the delineations of Smollet would apply to them in vain. The race of learned ladies ridiculed by these gentlemen is extinct. A female author is no longer regarded as an object of derision, nor is she wounded by unkind reproof from the *literary Lords of Creation*. In this indulgent era the author presumes to deliver her letters to the world as they have been preserved by the dear sister to whom they were partly addressed, trusting that as this is, in its nature, the most unassuming of all kinds of writing, and one that claims the most extensive allowances, they will be received with peculiar mercy and forbearance.

Since the period to which these letters refer, the Author has made voyages to India, touching in the course of them at various places in all the quarters of the globe, and has been engaged in commercial and other speculations. Her trials and anxieties, however, have produced only a long train of blasted hopes, and heart rending disappointments.—An account of these subsequent occurrences is therefore subjoined in a series of letters lately drawn from the original Journals and Memorandums, and addressed to a lady, whom the Author has the happiness to rank in the number of her friends.

Shadows, clouds, and darkness still rest on the remainder of her pilgrimage, which calls for the pilotage of kindness and the Day-star of friendship. She has, however, by the blessing of Providence been constantly enabled to rise superior to misfortune, and will not now in the evening of her days, derogate from the unostentatious energy of her character, or seek to solicit the pity of her
her

her readers by wearisome retrospect or painful complaints. With feelings acutely alive to kindness and truly grateful for every expression of it, she most thankfully esteems the generous patronage with which she has been honoured, and is rendered the more sensible of its value, because she is conscious, that it was not meanly solicited or unworthily obtained.

To the inhabitants of Calcutta, she begs more particularly to render her thanks. Long acquaintance, high esteem, and unfeigned affection call for this peculiar tribute. Five times has she visited this city under various circumstances, and with different feelings, yet never had cause to regret the length or the dangers of the voyage, secure of ever meeting here, all that could encrease the joys of social life, in its happiest moments, or soothe the hours of languishment in the days of adversity.

CALCUTTA, }
Anno. 1816. }

ORIGINAL
L E T T E R S.

—0000000000—

LETTER I.

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FROM MRS. F——.

PARIS, 18TH APRIL, 1779.

I BELIEVE before I left England it was agreed that, my Letters should not in general be addressed to any one particularly, as they will be something in the style of journals; therefore a contrary method would be rather embarrassing—I suppose you begin to think that I have forgotten you all; but it really has not been in my power to write till now, of which assertion an account of our route will furnish abundant proof.—We reached Dover at about seven in the evening of the (*in my eyes,*) ever

B memorable

memorable 10th of April. The thoughts of what we all suffered on that day, can never be banished one instant from my recollection, till it shall please God to grant us a happy meeting. My constant prayers are that, we may be enabled to support this dreadful separation with fortitude—but I dare not trust myself with the subject; my very heart seems to melt as I write, and tears flow so fast as to compel me to shut one eye while I proceed. It is all in vain, I must leave off. And must weeks, nay months elapse before I can have the satisfaction of even hearing from you? How shall I support the idea! oh my dear Father! my beloved Mother! for your poor girl's sake, take care of your precious health; do not be unhappy. The Almighty will, I doubt not, preserve us to each other; something tells me that we shall meet again; and you have still two excellent children left to be your comfort; they I know will use every effort to keep up your spirits; happy to be so employed! but let me not repine; this trial is not permitted, but for all wise purposes. I will now lay down my pen and endeavour to acquire a calmer set of ideas, for I must either write with more fortitude or not at all. Adieu for a little while; I will try to take some refreshment

refreshment, and then resume my pen. Half past four P. M.—In vain I strive, the thoughts of home still prevail, and totally preclude every other consideration. I know no better method of chasing these intruders, than by proceeding with the narrative of our journey; *allons donc*. We embarked at Dover for Calais on the 11th at 5 P. M. and had a most delightful passage of just three hours, from port to port. I wished for a little sea sickness but either the wind was not high enough, or I am become too good a sailor, to expect benefit this way, for I remained perfectly well. I assure you there is a deal of ceremony used here now. On coming within gunshot of the Fort, we hoisted a French flag, and were permitted to sail quite up to the Quay. We met the other packet coming out, which accounts for my not writing by that mail.—I have neglected to mention that Mr. B—the young gentleman whom Captain Mills recommended as a travelling companion, joined us before we left England. His appearance is by no means prepossessing; he seems a dissipated character and more calculated to shine in convivial parties than to render himself agreeable in the common routine of society; whether this opinion be just or not, time will discover. On landing

we were all drawn up together, and ordered to the Custom House, where we gave in our names, occupations, &c. they next marched us about half a mile farther to wait on the Governor, in order that he might put any questions he chose to us ; his Lordship not being visible, we were forced to arm ourselves with patience and proceed to his Commissary, where we found it a mere matter of form, they asking but what was known before. However I assure you, we thought more than we dared to express on the occasion. Only imagine how disagreeable to be dragged about in such a manner immediately after a Sea voyage instead of reposing ourselves. After all was settled, we first took places in the Diligence for the next day ; then called on Monsr. Pigault de l'Epinoye, to whom you will remember I had been formerly introduced. He received us with his usual kindness and hospitality. This gentleman is descended in a direct line from one of the six brave Citizens of Calais, who so nobly offered themselves as victims to save their beloved country from the barbarous sentence pronounced against it by our third Edward. He is much esteemed by his countrymen on this account.

This

This being my fourth visit to Calais, I must of course have formerly described every thing worth notice there, so shall merely say we sat off from thence on the 12th Inst. at 8th A. M. and reached Boulogne about noon. The sight of this place brought to my mind many pleasant recollections of the social hours passed there. I called on several friends, and was much urged to prolong my stay among them, but that you know was impossible. Indeed far rather would I, had time permitted, have taken *one* turn round the ramparts, to enjoy the melancholy satisfaction of once again beholding the white cliffs of my dear native land, so frequently viewed from thence.

You must expect me to make frequent omissions and mistakes, for two men have just placed themselves under my window with humstrums; and indeed there is constantly some noise or other through the day and evening; sometimes two or three dancing bears; and a few hours ago they exhibited a poor little Porcupine. I pitied the miserable animal from my heart. What can these unhappy creatures have done to merit being so tormented? (now by way of parenthesis, I could almost wish that a London mob had possession of the two musicians, as possibly

sibly the discipline of a horse-pond might be of use in teaching them for the future, better employment on Sunday evenings); but to proceed: We left Boulogne (a place I shall ever admire, and perhaps regret), and about ten at night reached Montreuil, from whence we departed at three on Tuesday morning, dined at Abbeville, and by eight in the evening were set down at the same Inn, where you may remember we stopped when travelling this road before, but were hurried away when we had scarcely tasted a morsel, under pretence of the Diligence being ready, and afterwards detained in the yard an hour; nor did our hostess in any respect deviate from her former character, as you shall hear. As a lady in company and myself were greatly fatigued we chose tea, but none being procurable there, were forced to use our own; the rest sat down to supper, which I had predetermined to avoid doing. Before they had a quarter finished, in came the woman; never did I behold such a horribly looking great creature. "Well" said she "the coach is ready" and on being asked if she wanted to get rid of us, replied that it was equal to her whether we went or staid provided she were paid for our suppers: at last when compelled to re-
linquish

linquish her claim on that score from the lady and me, she insisted on being allowed twenty-four sous for the hot water, this we complied with, to oblige our hospitable countrywoman, (tell it not in Gath I blush to acknowledge the claim) but persisted in remaining till on being summoned by the driver, nearly an hour afterwards, we sat off and travelled sixty miles without alighting, to Chantilly, where is a famous palace belonging to the Prince of Condé, but to my great mortification, I was through weariness obliged to remain in the house while the rest of the party went to see it. Well never mind, you can read better descriptions of it, than mine would have been. From thence we proceeded to St Denis, where I was fortunate enough to obtain a cursory view of the ancient abbey; a most magnificent structure, the burying place of the Kings of France. Such scenes naturally induce reflections on the vanity of all human grandeur, and lead to a melancholy, rather soothing than otherwise, to minds wearied by exertion, or irritated by disappointment. Having however little leisure to indulge these reveries, we passed on to the Library, where among other trophies is deposited the sword of our illustrious Talbot; a pang
shot

shot across my heart at the exulting manner in which it was exhibited; in short I felt as an Englishwoman, a more severe degree of national mortification, than this Memento of an event, so long gone by seemed calculated to produce. The sacred relics were next displayed, amongst which are, an eye of St Thomas the apostle, the shoulder blade of I forget what saint, and a small phial of the Virgin Mary's milk; at the sight of these absurdities I silently blessed God, that my religious instruction had not been blended with such cunningly devised Fables. If, all the gems they shewed us were genuine, the Treasury must be immensely rich, for many of the shrines were almost covered with them. We arrived at Paris about eight on Wednesday; and most dreadfully fatigued was I; nor will that appear strange when one considers that, for the last sixty miles the carriage went as fast as eight horses could draw it, over a strong rough pavement; never stopping but to change horses, and at St. Denis to repair a wheel. As the post went off next morning, I could not recover myself sufficiently to write by it; but now feel quite strong again, and having brought you to Paris, may venture to take a little repose as it is past eleven.

ven. 9th 7 A. M. I have risen thus early on purpose to finish my letter (which must be in the Office before ten). I find little alteration in this Place; the people behave as politely as if there were no War, or even dispute between us. This you know is not the region of Politics, therefore little can be mentioned under that head. I could communicate some few observations, but as perhaps this may be inspected, judge it more prudent to suppress them. A variety of circumstances has contributed to detain us here much longer than we intended; and I am fearful we shall not leave Paris before Thursday; however this will be the only letter I shall write until I can give you intelligence of our safe arrival at Marseilles, which will be I suppose in about a fortnight. From thence to Leghorn we must coast it in a Feluca. So if you write by the mail of the 29th addressed to me at the Post Office Leghorn, your letter will be sure to meet me there. I have a thousand things more to say, but must reserve them for my next, for if I miss the post it will I am sure, make you very uneasy—God bless you.

Your's affectionately

C LETTER II.

LETTER II.

*MY DEAR FRIENDS,*PARIS 24TH APRIL 1779.

Being detained for want of our passports, I find it necessary for my comfort to hold the only communication now in my power with you. Last night we were at the Colissée, a place resembling our Ranelagh; there were some brilliant fire works to be exhibited, and as it is the custom for Ladies to stand upon chairs to see them, a gentleman of our party having placed us with our backs against a box, went to procure some. During his absence the Queen entered the box attended by the Duchess D'Alençon, and several other ladies. I had seen her Majesty before at Versailles, and thought her at that time very handsome, but had no idea how much better she would look, by candle light. She is delicately fair and has certainly the sweetest blue eyes that ever were seen; but there is a little redness, a kind of tendency to inflammation around them, and she is likewise slightly marked with the small pox; both which trifling blemishes were then imperceptible, and she appeared perfectly beautiful. On entering the box she sat down, and pressed the Dutchess to sit also, which
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the latter in terms of great respect declining, the Queen in a tone of kindness that it is impossible to forget, said, "Then you will oblige me to stand," rising as she spoke. The Duchess then complied, and they conversed together very agreeably during their stay. Her majesty seemed highly gratified by the entertainments, and expressed her approbation, in what I could not help thinking, rather too familiar a way for a person of her exalted rank: frequently clapping her hands and exclaiming aloud," Ah! mon Dieu que c'est charmant, ah! que c'est joli." The Royal party soon retired, and we afterwards walked in the Rotunda: than which a more brilliant spectacle can scarcely be imagined. The ladies were all splendidly dressed, and their heads adorned with feathers in greater profusion, and far more lofty, than is customary with us. But enough of this, I must now turn to a very different subject, having hitherto neglected to inform you of a singular conversation (and its result) which passed in the Diligence, as we came to this place. We had among the passengers a Mr. H—an English Jew, and two brothers, named Ar—f diamond merchants, who were just returned

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to

to their native country after a long residence in London. The former had left Paris some years and resided in a provincial town. Speaking of this circumstance he observed that, his principal reason for quitting the Capital was his dread of assassination, to which he thought it probable that his religion might render him more liable, than other inhabitants; although he admitted he had no proof that persons of his persuasion were among the more frequent Victims. This statement, of course, excited both surprize and curiosity in us, who were foreigners; and the elder Mr. A—f evidently mortified at such discourse, and doubting a representation of facts from so prejudiced a quarter, and about which it had not fallen in his way to inquire, stoutly denied the charge; but the Jew would not give up the point. He said that in a certain part of the City, where there were many houses of ill fame, it was but too common to rob and murder those, who were inveigled into them, and afterwards throw the bodies into the Seine; when taken out they were conveyed to the Petit Chatelet to be owned, and that who ever would take the trouble to visit that place would find that, out of the numbers deposited there were very few (as reported

reported merely drowned persons ; but evidently such as had died by violence. This conversation ended (as that of men frequently does) by a wager between the parties, both of whom agreed to refer the matter to Mr. F—. The Jew was to lose, if, in one week seven bodies under suspicious circumstances should not be found exposed at the Petit Chatelet. I thought this a monstrous supposition ; for though I had often heard of people being drowned in the Seine, and the explicit detail of Mr. H—led me to fear that, the manner in which they met their fate, was but too truly described, yet I could not believe the number of victims to be so great. The result of Mr. F—'s, researches has unhappily placed the fact beyond a doubt. Within the last seven days, ten miserable wretches have been exposed, who had marks of violence on their bodies, and of these, there were two dreadfully mangled. But I will say no more on this shocking subject than merely to observe, that there must be either some radical defect in the police, or a degree of ferocity in the people, not to be repressed by the severe penal Laws, which in other countries are found nearly adequate to the purpose. The slight degree of feeling express-
ed

ed by the lower order in speaking of such things, even when pressed on their senses, evinces a hardness of heart approaching to absolute insensibility, that to me seems quite revolting: I myself asked a young woman, who had been peeping through the grate at the Petit Chatelet, what was to be seen there? "Oh" replied she, with great apparent indifference, "*seulement quelques bras et jambes*" (only some arms and legs). I have written myself into a train of most uncomfortable thoughts, so lest I infect you with the gloomy ideas that fill my mind, the wisest way will be to say adieu! We shall now soon be out of Paris.

Ever your's
&c. &c.

LETTER III

LETTER III.

MY DEAR SISTER.

PARIS, 27th APRIL, 1779.

As I do not propose sending this before Monday, I shall have full time to write every particular. I date once more from this sink of impurity, contrary to my expectation. We have been detained thus long that the Lieutenant de Police might have time to make the necessary enquiries about us, but have at last obtained our passports, and thank Heaven shall soon breathe a purer air. From the first place we stop at, I purpose giving you a further account of our accommodations in the superb and elegant city of Paris, famous throughout the world for its superiority over all others, especially in the points of cleanliness and delicacy. I assure you that, so long as I before resided in France, I never till now formed an adequate idea of it: but adieu for the present: I am going to drink tea. How do you think I make it? Why in an earthen pot an inch thick at least, which serves the double purpose of tea kettle and teapot, so it is all boiled up together and makes a most curious mess.

Auxerre

Auxerre en Burgoyne,

130 MILES, DE PARIS.

When I wrote the above I was in a great rage and not without reason, pent up as we were in a street scarce wide enough to admit the light; our chamber paved with tiles, which most likely have never been wetted, nor even rubbed, since the building of the house; add to this two *Commodités* in the same state, on the stairs, and you will not wonder that my constitution was not proof against the shock; the very air I breathed seemed almost pestilential. However thank God I escaped with one of my fevretts of four days continuance. When I began this better I was but just recovering: no creature to do the least thing for me in the way I had been accustomed to; obliged to prepare for my departure the next morning, though scarcely able to crawl; and to crown the whole a most extravagant bill to pay for being poisoned with Dirt. Well we sat off, and the fresh country air soon restored me to myself—but I have not told you how we travel.

We found the route totally different from what we expected, and that we must be positively

tively under the necessity of going by land to Chalons sur Soane, which is three hundred miles from Paris: now as we could get no remittances till our arrival at Leghorn, it did not suit us to take the Diligence, so after mature deliberation we determined on purchasing two horses, and an old single horsechaise; but how to avoid being cheated, was the question; for Mr. Fay did not care to depend on his own judgement in horseflesh—He made enquiry and found that there were many englishmen employed in the stables of Noblemen here; so putting a good face on the matter he went boldly to the Duc de Chartres' Castle, and scraped acquaintance with his head groom, who was very proud to see a countryman, and immediately on being told the affair, offered his assistance. Accordingly they went next day to the cattle Fair, where he pitched on an excellent draught horse, only a little touched in the wind, on which account he procured him for six guineas, so there cannot be much lost by him, even if he turn out amiss. But I dare say he will prove a most useful beast, for he has drawn Mr. B—r, and myself in our chaise (which by the bye we bought for seven guineas) at the rate of thirty five miles a day: and does

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not

not seem in the least fatigued, though we had our heavy trunk at our back: so much for Azor—now for his help-mate Zemire. In the course of conversation with his new friend, Mr. Fay found that, there was a very pretty mare in the Duc de Lausanne's stables, which had been intended for the course, but would not bear training; so he agreed to give eight guineas for her. Mr. B.—was to ride her next day to a horse-race in the Bois de Boulogne, and we were to accompany him in a post chaise. But alas! poor man! it was an unfortunate attempt. It seems he had never been used to riding, and was ashamed to own it, (one of the weaknesses to which I really believe men are almost invariably subject), so wishing to pass for an excellent horseman, he mounted with pretended courage: but through actual fear, reined her in so tight that miss, knowing the weakness of her rider, reared up on her hind legs, threw him first, and then fell backward over him. We thought by the violence of the fall that he must have been killed, but he came off with a few bruises; we had him bled immediately, put him to bed and left him in good hands till our return. Mr. Fay mounted Zemire, and we proceeded

to the course, where we were very agreeably entertained, only it grieved me to see so many beautiful English horses galloping about; I could hardly believe myself in France, for all the gentlemen were dressed after our manner. The Count D, Artois might very well have been taken for a Jockey in his buck-skin breeches, and round hat. The bets were chiefly between him and the Duc de Chartres; the horses were all rode by englishmen: as to our little mare she would fain have been amongst them, but she had now a rider who knew how to manage her, and is punished for her audacity; for Mr. B—has not the courage to mount her again, and she is forced to carry Mr. Fay with a port-manteau of twenty pounds weight—You will wonder at my temerity when I acknowledge having myself ventured to mount Zemire, after Mr. B——s, accident. I first however saw her tried by several persons, and wishing to be able to vary the exercise by riding now and then, during our journey, was induced to make the attempt. She performed twice very well; but on the third day, an umbrella being snapped close to her nose, just as I was going to set off, she began to rear, on which I instinctively abandoned both whip and reins, and

throwing my whole weight forward, clasped her round the neck with all my might, this sudden manoeuvre fortunately kept her down ; I seized the critical moment and alighted in safety with no other injury, than a little fright, and the consciousness of looking rather foolish. Nor has she ever been guilty of the like towards any one ; so that my character for horsemanship is completely established. We have been certainly very lucky in our purchases : the horses perform well, and the chaise, without being particularly uneasy, seems very strong. I am told they will bring a good price in the South, but you shall hear,

I have nothing particular to say of the country ; perhaps it may be national prejudice from which no person is entirely free, but notwithstanding all their boasting, I do not think it equals my own dear England. It must be allowed that the present season is not the most favourable for making observations, for they cut the Vines close to the stumps in the winter, and as they are not yet much sprouted, one sees nothing but a parcel of sticks in the manner of our hop poles, but not above thirty inches high, which gives an air of barrenness to the prospect. I do not know what my mother

would

would do here, as she is not fond of wine; for there is nothing else to drink. For my own part, and I believe I may answer for my companions, I cannot say that I find any great hardship in being obliged to put up with tolerable Burgundy at about four pence a bottle; it is not at all heady, so no creature thinks of drinking it with water. A pint every meal is the allowance of each. We have all necessaries with us, such as tea, sugar, bread, butter, corn for the horses &c: so we have little to do with the Inns, except at night, when we provide ourselves with meat for the next day. As to breakfast and dinner we fix on a place where there is water at hand, and there sit down under the shade of a tree, and make a fire, while the horses graze comfortably, and eat their corn. Ask my dear father if he does not think this a good plan? at least we find it pleasant, and much more to our taste, than spending more time as well as money, in the wretched public houses we have hitherto met with—I wish we were hardy enough to make the grass our pillow; but that is impossible, so we must submit to be disgusted and pillaged once a day. You may remember my remarking that, I was afraid we should suffer during our journey, for the fineness
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of the spring which has proved to be the case. The weather has been excessively boisterous for the last fortnight with much rain, than which nothing can be more disagreeable on a journey, especially when conducted on a plan like ours.— We were obliged to stop at Fontainebleau on account of the weather by which means we saw the Palace, and gardens, and were almost wet through, for our pains. It is an immense place; the Chapel has been beautiful, but the paintings are much injured by time. There is an elegant theatre which I was much pleased with. The apartments of the royal family are truly superb. We were shewn the council chamber where the last peace was signed, and I, as an Englishwoman, beheld it with *great pleasure* you may be sure. We saw likewise the gallery of *Stags*, famous for containing above a hundred stags' heads all ranged in order with an account, when they were killed and by whom; and infamous (at least in my opinion) as being the place where Christina, Queen of Sweden, caused Monaldeschi her chief chamberlain to be beheaded, if not absolutely in her presence, at least while she remained in an adjoining room. I cannot bear that woman. She abdicated her crown from sheer vanity but retain-

ed that passion for despotism which shewed what kind of feelings she had cherished, while seated on the throne. I think that in her, the faults of either sex were blended, to form a character, which without possessing the firmness of a man or the gentleness of a woman, was destitute of the virtues expected in both. Christina may have been an accomplished female ; but she can never be called great, even by her admirers.

The gardens of Fontainebleau are all in the old fashioned-gingerbread-style, ornamented with box in a thousand fantastical shapes. The Swiss who shewed us the Palace, was very thankful for a shilling, which is more than any person in the same situation would be in England for twice as much. The forest of Fontainebleau is thirty miles across, and nobody can hunt there without the Kings permission ; he comes here every season.—We found the roads very heavy, but Azor was strong enough to go through them ; however we have given him a day's rest, and after dinner shall set off Jehu like.

Now don't you envy us all this pleasure? I assure you I should be very glad to go all the way in the same manner, for we travel without fatigue, and the way of living just suits me ;
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for you know I always preferred wine to beer, but I would not have you imagine that I can shake off all thoughts of home; they return but too frequently, and I really believe now, that my illness at Paris, was brought on principally by uneasiness of mind: but I find myself unequal to this subject. I must make a resolution never to enter upon it; for what service can it do to either of us, to be continually recalling unpleasant ideas; especially when I have need of every possible consolation to support me in the arduous task, which Providence has called upon me to undertake.

I have now literally exhausted my paper, and must therefore leave you to imagine every thing my heart says to all, and how truly.

I am,
your affectionate
&c. &c.

LETTER IV

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR SISTER,

LEGHORN, 17th JUNE, 1779.

I suppose you have been long uneasy at my silence, but indeed it has not been in my power to write sooner—In my last I gave you reason to imagine we should arrive here in less than three weeks, by way of Marscilles; but after we reached Lyons we were informed, that this would prove a very uncertain and dangerous method; as between the English and French scarcely any vessel can pass free; therefore after mature deliberation, we determined as we had still our carriage and horses, to push our way boldly through Savoye, and cross the Alps to Italy. We stopped several days at Lyons, which as you and all the world know has long been famous for its incomparable silks, and velvets; I think it ought to be so for its asparagus which is the finest I ever tasted; and remarkably cheap. Being a vegetable I am very fond of, and having found it at all times beneficial to my constitution, I wished to eat it freely; but was almost disgusted by the manner in which it was constantly brought to

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table

table at the Inn, covered with a thick sauce composed of eggs, butter, oil and vinegar.

Having in vain remonstrated against this cookery, I at length insisted on seeing the Cook himself; and when he made his appearance, arrayed as is customary, in a white waistcoat, cap, and apron, with a meagre face almost as sharp as the large knife he held in his hand, I calmly represented to him that the sauce he had sent up, totally disagreed with my stomach, and requested to have the asparagus simply boiled with melted butter, the poor man looked much distressed "What without oil!" yes! "Without eggs"? certainly! this answer completed his misery, "Ah madame" exclaimed he, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes "de grace un peu de viniagre! Madame was inexorable, and the shrug of contemptuous pity with which he retreated was ludicrous beyond expression.

On arriving near the Alps, it appeared that I had formed a very erroneous idea of the route, having always supposed that we had only one mountain to pass, and that the rest of the way was level ground; instead of which when we came to Pont de Beauvoisin (50 miles from Lyons, and the barrier between France and Savoye) we heard the agreeable news, that

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we had a hundred and twelve miles to travel thro' a chain of mountains, to the great Mont Cenis.

You may imagine how uncomfortable this information made us all; with what long faces we gazed upon each other, debating how the journey was to be performed; but being happily you know very courageous, I made light of all difficulties, and whenever there was a hill, mounted Zemire, while the two gentlemen took it by turns to lead me as I had not a proper side saddle, so poor Azor made shift to drag the chaise up pretty well, and in the descents we made him pay for the indulgence. I forgot to mention that they were very particular about our passports at this Barrier, and detained us while the Governor examined them minutely, though justice compels me to acknowledge that in general we were treated with great politeness in our passage through France; no one ever attempted to insult us, which I fear would not be the case were three French people to travel in England; I wish I could say as much for their honesty; but I must confess that here they are miserably deficient, however my being acquainted with the language saved us from flagrant

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imposition.

imposition. Our method was this: we always if possible, contrived to stop at night in a large Town, (as to dinner we easily managed that you know how), but never did we suffer the horses to be put into the stable till I had fixed the price of every thing; for they generally ask four times as much for any article as it is worth. If I found there was no bringing them to reason, we left the house. In particular, at Chalons sur Soane, the first Inn we stopped at, the woman had the conscience to ask half a crown for each bed; you may suppose we did not take up our abode there, but drove on to another very good house, where they shewed us two rooms with six excellent beds in them, at the rate of four sous a bed, for as many as we wanted; so for once I committed an act of extravagance by paying for the whole; or we might perhaps have been disturbed in the night by strangers coming to take possession of those left vacant. For they are not very nice about such matters in France. I have seen rooms with six beds in them more than once during our route. I only mention the difference of price by way of shewing what people may gain by choosing their houses, for we were really better accommodated at less than one fourth of what we

we must have paid at the other house. Speaking of Chalons reminds me of a very unpleasant circumstance that occurred to us at the following stage. Mr. Fay had most unwisely and contrary to my earnest intreaty, pinned our passports to the book of roads, which he usually carried with him on horse back, and as might be expected, they, in a short time worked themselves loose, and we were on our arrival at the end of the next day's journey alarmed with the idea of their being intirely lost, and that we should be compelled to return all the way to Paris to procure others: happily Mr. Fay went back & found them at a place where we had stopped, I need not tell you what fright and vexation, this folly and obstinacy cost us: but I hope it will have a salutary effect for the rest of our journey.

In further proof of my assertion on the subject of honesty, I must relate a little incident which occurred on our way to Lyons. Mr. Fay had changed as many guineas at Paris, as he thought would be sufficient to bring us to Chalons, and received by weight twenty four livres ten sous, for each, that is seven pence halfpenny profit: well, the last day