

Her eyes are fascinating ; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations the first peer in the realm might own with pride ; then why do you not keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks ? I had a thousand questions to answer about you. I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John* was so good a boy, and so fine a scholar, and that Willie was going on still very pretty ; but I have it in commission to tell her from them, that beauty is a poor silly bauble without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Chalmers, only Lady Mackenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore throat somewhat marred our enjoyment.

I shall not be in Ayrshire for four weeks. My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Doctor Mackenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other.—I am ever, Sir, yours most gratefully,

ROBT. BURNS.

LX.—TO MR. WALKER, BLAIR OF ATHOLE.†

INVERNESS, 5th September 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have just time to write the foregoing,‡ and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it) the effusion of an half-hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was extempore, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicol's chat, and the jogging of the chaise, would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is

* This is the "Wee Curlie Johnnie" mentioned in Burns's *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq.*

† Mr. Walker was tutor to the children of the Duke of Athole. He afterwards became Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow.

‡ The Humble Petition of Bruar Water.

the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honour or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need! I shall never forget.

The "little angel-band!" I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyers. I shall never forget the fine family-piece I saw at Blair; the amiable, the truly noble duchess, with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head of the table; the lovely "olive plants," as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother; the beautiful Mrs. G——; the lovely, sweet Miss C., etc. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice! My Lord Duke's kind hospitality—markedly kind indeed; Mr. Graham of Fintry's charms of conversation; Sir W. Murray's friendship. In short, the recollection of all that polite, agreeable company raises an honest glow in my bosom.

R. B.

LXI.—TO HIS BROTHER, MR. GILBERT BURNS, MOSSGIEL.

EDINBURGH, 17th September 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—I arrived here safe yesterday evening after a tour of twenty-two days, and travelling near six hundred miles, windings included. My farthest stretch was about ten miles beyond Inverness. I went through the heart of the Highlands by Crieff, Taymouth, the famous seat of Lord Breadalbane, down the Tay, among cascades and druidical circles of stones, to Dunkeld, a seat of the Duke of Athole; thence across Tay, and up one of his tributary streams to Blair of Athole, another of the duke's seats, where I had the honour of spending nearly two days with his grace and family; thence many miles through a wild country among cliffs grey with eternal snows, and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed Spey and went down the stream through Strathspey, so famous in Scottish music; Badenoch, etc., till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent