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## A CHAPTER OF COUNTY GOSSIP;

BEING A SERIES OF CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS FROM A YOUNG LADY OF  
KENT BETWEEN 1713 AND 1728.

No apology or preface is needed to introduce these Letters to the reader. They were written by Isabella, daughter of Francis Twisden, Esq., (younger son of Sir Thomas, of Bradbourne,) to Mary, the second wife of William Hammond, Esq., of St. Alban's, who had been a Miss Turner, of Hleden. These two ladies seem to have established an interchange of gossip between East and West Kent, and we here get the benefit of the western half of the arrangement. The writer was born in 1689, and would thus be twenty-four years of age at the date of our first letter. She was never married, and was indeed fast entering on the dignity of an old maid when the two last of the series were written; for, whether from loss of the intermediate letters, or perhaps from actual intermission of correspondence after Mr. Hammond's death, there is, it will be observed, an interval of nearly nine years between the tenth and the eleventh letters. She lived to the age of seventy-five, and, with the talent which she here exhibits, must have been, before her death, a perfect mine of county history of the smaller and more personal description. It has been sometimes necessary to modify her expressions, which, however befitting to a young lady of the eighteenth century, would occasionally be found not quite so appropriate in the nineteenth.

The Society is indebted for the Letters to the kindness of Mr. Dalison, of Hamptons, himself one of the family of their recipient.

T. G. F.

I.—FROM MISS ISABELLA TWISDEN TO MRS. HAMMOND.

I am very apprehensive Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hamond has abandon'd. all favourable thoughts you've ever had of me by my seeming ingratitude in not returning you a thousand thanks for y<sup>r</sup> enquieres after me. I begg, Madam, you won't think it either want of thought or enclination has kept me silent, but knowing you to live in a mistake y<sup>t</sup> is so much to my advantage, you can't I'm sure blame my unwillingness to give you so convincing a proffe of it as I now do. Why wou'd you, Dear Madam, think of y<sup>e</sup> only thing in y<sup>e</sup> world I wou'd wish to dennie you in, but I find your cōmands are not to be resisted, tho' my Reason and y<sup>e</sup> Natural desire of y<sup>r</sup> beleiving better of me y<sup>a</sup> I deserve strongly tempt me to disobey, ells nothing cou'd be a greater pleasure then conversing w<sup>th</sup> you by way of Pen and Ink, since we are at too great a distance for a nearer confabulation, tho' I won't despair but I may yet have y<sup>e</sup> happyness of seeing S<sup>t</sup> Albans. I wish Cosen R. T.<sup>1</sup> and I cou'd have waited on you as we promiss'd, but business, illness, and y<sup>e</sup> Approach of dismal Winter has entirely defaced those pleasing Ideas w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> thoughts of that Journey inspired. He is now gone to the Wells for a week, but there is hardly any mortal there. I've been as good as my word and not layn there, tho' y<sup>e</sup> know nobody w<sup>d</sup> beleive me but I design now to set up for a L<sup>dy</sup> of resolution. I've pay'd my respects to y<sup>t</sup> place 3 several days, and found not a quarter ye company was there last year, very few of our Kentish neighbours, and I think none of yours. Cosen Twisden is to go a Munday to stay w<sup>th</sup> m<sup>rs</sup> Cockman till she Lyes Inn; she is y<sup>e</sup> most transported w<sup>th</sup> her condition y<sup>t</sup> ever you heard of. My sister, who I'm now w<sup>th</sup>, desires much hum. servise to you, and thanks for y<sup>r</sup> good wishes. She has layn inn 3 weeks of a fine thriving boy, and is pritty well her self.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roger Twisden, of Malling, second son to Sir Roger, of Bradbourne, and first cousin to the writer.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Twisden's sister, Jane, had married her cousin, William Twysden (afterwards Sir William, of Roydon Hall),—changing thereby but

I hear Betty Maynard is going to be marrid to a namesake of y<sup>rs</sup>, one Mr Turner, a Parson. I did not think the gay Stars w<sup>ch</sup> seem'd to rule o're her wou'd ever have distin'd one of so grave a Proffesion to her lot; perhaps when the two extreems meet it may make an improvement. She has made some stay at Tun:<sup>1</sup> but I don't know wether this conquest was made there or in Town.

I've been thinking w<sup>t</sup> I had ells to tell you, but I believe the only subject I ought to trouble dear m<sup>rs</sup> Hamond w<sup>th</sup> at present is to begg you will summons all y<sup>r</sup> good nature in my behalf to pardon this dull letter. Were I secure of so powerfull an Advocate I shou'd be perfectly easie, but how do I know that I have not lost all interist there, and the good judgment that I know you to be mistress of may represent it as it really is, an impertinent Scribble fitt for nothing but the fire. Dear Madam, let that be its fate this moment, and promiss me never to think of it againe. I must put you in mind of one thing more, w<sup>h</sup> is to consider that the dullness of a lying room, with the conversation of two or 3 old Nursess, is enough to stupifie any bodys sences y<sup>t</sup> is not more then ordinary alart. One line from you will certainly expell all those opiates, and revive new life in her who is, by every thought each day brings me of you, still more and more confirm'd y<sup>r</sup> most Affect and obedient humble servant,

ISA: TWISDEN.

I hope you'll present my hum. ser. to miss Hamond and all y<sup>r</sup> Neighbours y<sup>t</sup> I've the honour to be acquainted with. I've gott the skill. I won of you still in my Pockett book. I doubt my little Hub: has forgott me, but I shall certainly come and claim him. My fath. is M<sup>r</sup> Hamond and y<sup>r</sup> hum. servant.

Peckham, Sep<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 25<sup>th</sup>. [1713.]

[Superscription (of this and most of the following).—*To Mrs. Hamond, at her House at St. Albains, to be left at the Post House at Wingham, Kent. Wingham bagg, by way of London.*]

one letter of her name, for the Bradbourne branch had assumed "i" instead of "y." The year of this first letter, so far undated, is fixed by the mention of the birth of a son to this sister shortly before; her son Philip, afterwards Bishop of Raphoe, having been born Sept. 7, 1713.

<sup>1</sup> Tun. Tunbridge Wells.



## II.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I must own it requires abundance of Philosophy to bear the disappointment of not waiting on Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond, a pleasure I had lived upon in imagination these 6 months, and when y<sup>e</sup> forbidding knews came had every thing pack'd up in order to it. But I won't enlarge upon my own unhappyness for fear you will make yourself a sharer in it; I begg you not to fancy y<sup>r</sup> own so great as you obligingly say, for if you call reason to y<sup>r</sup> aid I beleive you will find the loss of my company but a triffl at most. However, such as it is, I can't but own I wish it y<sup>e</sup> the time you are reading this, for I just then reflected on y<sup>t</sup> part of y<sup>r</sup> letter where you tell me the whole world flys you, and express it in so moving a way y<sup>t</sup> I stop't a considerable time to contemplate upon y<sup>t</sup> sentence before I cou'd go on. I can't but fancy I cou'd find some way to divert you from such maloncolly reflections, tho' I hope the pleasure of Dear Masters being in so good a way has by this time proved a more effectual cordial y<sup>n</sup> I cou'd expect from my insignificant chitt-chatt. It will be a daily joy to you, dear Madam, to think he has scaped y<sup>t</sup> trial for life, in w<sup>ch</sup> so many have suffer'd this year in Town. I have been in great concern for one of the most agreeable Ladys of my acquaintance who died of it this winter; I never mett with a more ingenious conversation and more valueable good qualites in any one person in my life, and with all had goodness enough to profess a sincer friendship to me. I ever thought such a friend the greatest happyness of life. Lett me then, Dear Madam, still enjoy it in you, and I will no longer repine for w<sup>t</sup> is irretreviable, but study how to mirit y<sup>e</sup> favour I ask you, w<sup>ch</sup> you've encouraged me to do by a thousand oblidgings things you say in every letter I see from you. This unhappy Small Pox has been a general misfortune to all People who were disposed for East Kent. S<sup>r</sup> Thos. Tayler<sup>1</sup> was to have been at Canterbury, but hears 'tis so much there, dares not venture; and M<sup>rs</sup> Riders,<sup>2</sup> who was going to S<sup>r</sup> Tho. Palmer's,<sup>3</sup> is off upon y<sup>e</sup> same account. I hope in God, Madam, it will go no farther in y<sup>r</sup> family, for I'm sure you will endure abundance of

<sup>1</sup> Probably Sir Thomas Taylor, of Park House, Maidstone.

<sup>2</sup> Of Boughton-Monchensie, wife of Thomas Rider, Esq., and daughter and heiress of Sir Robert Barnham, of Boughton-Monchensie.

Of Wingham. His wife is mentioned a few lines further on.

fears and trouble, tho' it be ever so favourable. I doubt I must not think of seeing you this sumer, but will live in hopes y<sup>t</sup> next may be more fortunate. Pray, when you see L<sup>dy</sup> Palmer, lether know I'm her humble servant, and that I had allmost tempted L<sup>dy</sup> Susan Fane<sup>1</sup> to come with us and been w<sup>th</sup> her Ladyship, but company coming down prevented her. She had given me abundance of servise to give to my Lady and Cosen Bridges when she came to take leave of me the night before I was to go to Cosen Twisden's. There has been most glorious doings at M<sup>rs</sup> Manyard's weding, whose lott has at last faln upon a little insignificant Hop Marchant, whose chief dependance is on the good head-peice of his mother, who is reckon'd to be a notable manager, and is to try her skill with her fortune, w<sup>ch</sup> is all to be turned into ready money without any consideration of setleing any thing upon her. It may happen well, but without doubt she runs a greater venture then discreetion wou'd encourage her to. None once aproved of it, but now the appearance of a blue satten manteau and pettecote trimed with silver, a rose colour luttstring, and a sligher sute, a d Head and ruffles, and the Bridegroom in all respects ans[wering], perticularly in fine Wiggs and lace (w<sup>ch</sup> I'm afraid the [hops] will be apt to staine) has intirely defaced all notion [against] the continuance of their present happyness. I have no [t yet] seen any thing of her: when I do, perhapps I may be like y<sup>e</sup> rest of the world. He has presented her with a pair of Earrings cost 70 p<sup>d</sup>, and a watch. I've now given you a full account of our Weding; I begg, in return, you will let me hear of the splended one you are going to have at Waldershire w<sup>th</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Wattson,<sup>2</sup> L<sup>d</sup> Rockingham's daughter, who is a very pritty Lady, and very deserving as I hear. I think S<sup>r</sup> Robert judges right to gett a little quaility to so much riches. I have not left room to thank you as I ought for the favour of both y<sup>r</sup> letters. The first I had answerd long before had I not thought I shou'd pick up more to divert you when I was in Town, as I once designed to be, and after thought I shou'd see you so soon y<sup>t</sup> I need not give you the trouble. I begg you will excuse y<sup>e</sup> present one, and lett me hear how fortune deals w<sup>th</sup> you. Don't set and fret, for God's sake, and fancy one contradiction will draw on any more. You may depend upon

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Vere, Earl of Westmoreland, of Mereworth.

<sup>2</sup> Arabella, daughter of Lewis, Earl of Rockingham, was married in this year to Sir Robert Furnese, of Waldershare.

my prayers and best wishes for every action of y<sup>r</sup> life, if you have any faith in 'em; at least let me desire you to have enough to beleive none can be more affectionatly, dear Madam, y<sup>r</sup> humble Servant, then

ISA TWISDEN.

*Watteringbury June y<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> 1714.*

Pray give my Father's and my own servise to all acquaintance, but tell Master Jackey I'll never beleive but the Aprehension of my comeing to claim him for my Hub: has tirified him into y<sup>e</sup> Small Pox.

### III.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Watteringbury Sept<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> [1714].*

Cou'd I flatter my self into a beleife y<sup>t</sup> my letters can be any entertainment to Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hamond, my pen and ink would be y<sup>e</sup> greatest favoured belonging to me, but when I consult my own reason as to y<sup>t</sup> point I'm all-most tempted to throw it in y<sup>e</sup> fire, or at least let it extend no higher y<sup>n</sup> to my Milener, or Manteau woman, till I have found out a tolerable excuse for being imper-tient; but why shou'd I be guided by Reason and discreetion when I find it of a sower contradicting nature that has a thousand times put me into y<sup>e</sup> hight of mortification? I'll rather choose to be lead astray by vanity (w<sup>ch</sup> by y<sup>e</sup> way I beleive is one of the best engredients towards our happyness in this world), and fancy you, dear Madam, in earnest when you bestow so many compliments upon my letters. There has happen'd so many turns in our designs since I last writ y<sup>t</sup> I don't know w<sup>t</sup> subject to begin with, but I conclud this sumer (w<sup>ch</sup> I had unluckely pitch'd upon to enjoy y<sup>e</sup> most pleasur in) was allotted us to exercise our patience; our not meeting in East Kent I may set down as y<sup>e</sup> first, and to me y<sup>e</sup> greatest tryal of it; in the next place, Lady Marsham and S<sup>r</sup> Robert<sup>1</sup> had invited me to be with em at Tunbridg, where they designd to be most part of y<sup>e</sup> season. I went one day and found it in the most flourishing way y<sup>t</sup> cou'd be expected for y<sup>e</sup> time, and all people inspired with a notion y<sup>t</sup> the company w<sup>d</sup> be better and more agreeable

Sir Robert Marsham, afterwards the first Lord Romney. He was M.P. for Maidstone from 1708 till his creation in 1716.

y<sup>n</sup> it ever had been in my memory. I went home charm'd w<sup>th</sup> a thousand ideas of y<sup>e</sup> approaching pleasures, lived in y<sup>t</sup> state 3 days, then y<sup>e</sup> Queen<sup>1</sup> departed, turn'd all my castles into air, and prevent most of the peoples coming down. As for S<sup>r</sup> Robert, you may easily beleive hee was so taken up with y<sup>e</sup> Par-  
liment that the world cou'd not have gott him into y<sup>e</sup> country. However, Cosen Styles<sup>2</sup> and I contrived to spend a week there before the mourning, and found a good deal of diversion; not much neither upon Second thoughts, for the first two days I thought it grown y<sup>e</sup> awkward place y<sup>t</sup> ever I saw; y<sup>e</sup> company was not engaged in any sociable sort of way, but begun to improve, as in my opinion it allways does, towards the latter end of the Season. The ladys, I think, were much the genteelest part of the company, and their hearts, I beleive, were in no maner of danger; for my own part I can with a safe conscience ashure you y<sup>t</sup> I did not see one new face there y<sup>t</sup> I wou'd wish to see againe. The most Polite part I beleive were otherways engaged upon the change of affairs; but, Madam, I hear you designed to have been there, this nasty mourning I fancy made you alter y<sup>r</sup> mind, as it did several others. Lord bless, how delightfull wou'd it have been to have mett you. Well! I'm resolved, for my part, never to think of any thing farther then the present moment, and y<sup>t</sup> I'll enjoy to the best advantage. Why shou'd I put it in the power of fortune, who all y<sup>e</sup> world allows to be a Jilt, to make a fool of me?

I have said nothing yet of poor Lady Palmer;<sup>3</sup> sure the loss she is to her familey is inexpressable. I pittie Cosen Bridges of all things; it must stick heavey with her. I hear S<sup>r</sup> Thos. is much afflicted; the loss of so valueable a wife and his own good Nature must needs make him so, but Mankind you know—and a gay temper will soon wear it off. I hear he intends to break off Housekeeping and be with S<sup>r</sup> Rob: you will all miss him very much out of y<sup>r</sup> neighbourhood. I hear you have

<sup>1</sup> Queen Anne, Aug. 1, 1714. This fixes the date of this letter. Queen Anne, as Princess of Denmark, had been a great patroness of Tunbridge Wells, and on her accession "Queen's Grove" was planted in her honour.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth, Lady Style, wife of Sir Thomas Style, of Watlington, daughter of Sir Thomas Twisden, and thus the writer's first cousin.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth, Lady Palmer, wife of Sir Thomas, died 1714. "Cosen Bridges" is her sister, Lady Bridges, of Goodnestone,—they were daughters of Sir Robert Marsham.

had splended doings at Waldershire; pray tell me how you like y<sup>e</sup> young lady, and tell me somthing of S<sup>r</sup> Thos. for acquaintance Sake you know, or any thing you think of will certainly be extreamly agreeable to Dear Madam y<sup>r</sup> most aff<sup>ct</sup> hum. Servant,

ISA: TWISDEN.

I hope my little Hub: and the rest of y<sup>r</sup> nursery are well. My sister is in a way of encreasing hers, w<sup>ch</sup> I'm very sorry for she's so extreamly thinn and weak. Betty Manyard is ruined to all intents and purposes; her Husband and she falln out all-ready w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Mother, so her fortune's all they have to depend upon. I saw him once—the most simple, impertinent fellow that you can imagen. 'Tis a most unhappy thing when a Woman takes it into her head to marry the first she can gett.

#### IV.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Watteringbury, Nov<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 22, 1714.*

When I received the pleasure of Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond's last Letter I was just return'd from a very pleasant ramble. Cosen Style and Cosen Betty Dalison<sup>1</sup> and my self had taken to London, and Greenwich; to see y<sup>e</sup> King make his entry was our cheif pretence, but a little tast of the pleasures of the Town was a great improvement to y<sup>t</sup> sight. Pray did any of y<sup>r</sup> Ladys think it worth their pains to take such a journey. We stay'd a fortnight there and at Eltheam, where M<sup>rs</sup> Dalison has lived all this sumer, and will I beleive be there altogether. I saw Lady Marsham several times, was one morn to breakfast with her, and mist S<sup>r</sup> Tho: Palmer by a quarter of an hour, w<sup>ch</sup> I was sorry for, having not seen him since his misfortune. You guess right in saying we shou'd provide him a wife, the ingenious Town of Maidston has chose him out two long ago; one is M<sup>rs</sup> Rider, the other to the full as unlikely, for I can't think S<sup>r</sup> Thos head so much turn'd to materimony as to have encouraged one thought towards a second Choice. If ever he does, I hope it will be to some very great fortune that may make his own as easie as his good nature deserves.

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Dalison, Esq., of West Peckham; her mother was Elizabeth Twisden, daughter of Sir Thomas Twisden, and therefore the writer's aunt. She became Mrs. Boys, as we shall see.

But if I can judge of him, I beleive he will leave that affaire to his rich unkle, and keep his person like his enclinations unconfined. S<sup>r</sup> Rob. and he are at this time at Rochester making entirest against the election. I sopose they are in full content with their new King, who I think has incouriaged their intriest with most surprising zeal, whether 'tis to his own he may hear-after be a better judge; but this is a topick far beyond my sphere, the alteration of fashions (w<sup>ch</sup> is the reigning descourse amongst us at present) is much more suteable to my capacity; and, to tell you the truth, makes a much greater impression upon my spirits. Pray how can you reconcile y<sup>r</sup> self to the odious Hanover cutt? I sopose you saw the Princess at Canterbury. We hear she took perticular notice of the dress of M<sup>rs</sup> Marsham's head and the beauty of M<sup>rs</sup> (but I can't think of her name)'s face. I flatterd my self a great while y<sup>t</sup> the Princess wou'd find out that we dress'd after a much genteeler way then her highness, but I hear all the Town have paid her the compliment of dressing their heads half as ugly as her own, and without doubt we must all follow the example within this half year or submitt to be hollow'd at. M<sup>rs</sup> Rider and her daughter are the only people have had the courag to put one on hear abouts, except some of the country Town Ladys. I did not see her in it, but the discription is most tirible, and indeed it sutes so ill with my pockett to buy two y<sup>ds</sup> where I used to buy one, and that only to make me ugler than Nature has done already, y<sup>t</sup> I think to walk off into a nother Land, or ells content my self with a good warm sute of nightcloths in my chamber, and intirely have done with all the vaintys of dress. But Lord, Madam, if you shou'd be gott into one of these heads after I have been railing at it without that consideration, may I hope you will forgive me? Upon my word, I beleive if I were to see you in one I shou'd not think it one quarter so disagreeable as I have represented it to my self. But to have done with this subject, I must tell you w<sup>t</sup> an unhappy Plainit rules over us at this time in the affair of mariage. About 2 months agoe a gentleman of a bout 3 or 4 hundred p<sup>d</sup> a year—his name's Watton,<sup>1</sup> a neighbour of Cosen R. Twisden's—thought fitt to marry his maid. He had 5 daughters by a former wife, the eldest a woman; but there mother was but of just y<sup>e</sup> same ranck, so it

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Watton, Esq., of Addington Place.

is not so much to be wondered at, for I sopose the poor man was born for the binifitt of the Cook-maids. The sadest story is y<sup>t</sup> Coll: Cage's<sup>1</sup> daughter a week since went off with her father's coachman, and is marrid to him; an a nother gentleman's daughter about 10 mile off was very near marring a farmer with 4 or 5 children y<sup>t</sup> lived in her father's yard, but was discovered by the cook-maid; an I cou'd tell you of a nother fine lady, but she is not of this country, who is ready to hang her self for her man. I am perfectly astonished at this low love. I can w<sup>t</sup> to impute it to. Sure it must proceed from some the air. I remember M<sup>r</sup> Steel bids us beware of the month of May; but with his leave I am apt to think a much more dangerous season. I hope he will take [this] month into consideration, and provide us with anti[dotes for] the next infection. Well, I wonder how I have [ventured] to trouble you with so much impertinence. I was [about to] have made a long excuse, but I don't think you'll have Patience to read it, and dare venture upon no farther request, but beg, Dearest Madam, you will ever beleive me y<sup>r</sup> most sincerely affect<sup>ed</sup> hum. Servant,

ISA: TWISDEN.

M<sup>rs</sup> Turner did me a great deal of honour in thinking me worth enquiring after at Tunbridg. Pray, Madam, ashure her I often lamented my misfortune in coming there after her, and shall be proud of her acquaintance when ever I have an opportunity to enjoy it. Dear madam, writ soon.

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V.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

What preverse Star hangs o're my head, Dearest Madam, y<sup>t</sup> I am thus perpetually baulked in my designs of waiting on you. It realy is somthing so astonishing y<sup>t</sup> I am allmost tempted to goe to a Conjurer to enquire the reason, and if it be possible for me by any art or pains to prevert y<sup>e</sup> severe decrees of Fate. Must I allways please my self but with imagenary joys, and be baffaled when I am just within y<sup>e</sup> reach; this is so maloncoely a contemplation that you must forgive me if I write you a letter as dull as I am myself. I can't possibly obtaine one gay thought,

<sup>1</sup> Of Millgate, in Bersted.

tho' you are so often y<sup>e</sup> subject, and used to be with uttmost pleasure, but now with so much discontent y<sup>t</sup>, to tell you the truth, I very Philosophically try to forgett y<sup>t</sup> I ever knew any such Person as agreeable M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond. You'll say this is an odd compliment, but self ease is so powerfull a Charme over us weak mortals y<sup>t</sup> you must forgive me if I endeavour at impossibilitys to obtaine it. My heart dictates a thousand thanks to you, Dear Madam, that you shou'd so much desire to see me, as Cosen Whetenhal informd me, so far beyond w<sup>t</sup> my company can ever deserve, that I was the impatience creature in the world to tell you in person how much I am y<sup>r</sup> humble servant. As to my health, w<sup>ch</sup> you so kindly enquire after, I can't help saying that I beleive you had a notion of my being much more out of order then I was, for I was never very ill; but the Wensday before I was to waight on you came out with a rash, w<sup>ch</sup> Dr Cockman and every body told me (with lying in bed and taking care) wou'd last but two days, and by Munday I shou'd be as well able to goe as ever I was in my life. I thought there was so little difference between Munday and Fryday y<sup>t</sup> Cosen Twisden wou'd have been so obliging to have stayed, espically when she took her coach thro', and had not write for your horses to meet her, but perhapps I was in the wrong, for my Cosen was of another opinion. However, I sha'n't dispute that matter with her, for to some tempers these things are best drop'd in Oblivion; and I still comfort my self that there is more ways of getting into East Kent then one, and don't despair but my third attempt will be more successfull. When it will be I dare not pretend to say, for fear of more disapointments, for I am resolved to keep it a secret. You are a-going to robb me of my nearest neighbour, w<sup>ch</sup> will be a very great loss to me, but M<sup>r</sup> Diggs<sup>1</sup> is allowed a man of so much mirit y<sup>t</sup> I dare not say one repining word. To leave this subject, then, I will tell you y<sup>t</sup> I have been in a very great consternation upon the discovery of my maid's being in the family way by S<sup>r</sup> Thos. Styles' coachman, after living with me 8 year, and I beleived in a very sober way, but it seems she thought a little verity in her life

<sup>1</sup> John, eldest son of Leonard Diggs, Esq., of Chilham Castle. It seems, from the two following letters, that he was then engaged to be married to Margaret Style, the writer's first cousin, daughter of Sir Thomas Style, and eventually Mrs. Vyrer. We shall read of the breaking off of this match. This allusion fixes the date of this letter.



might be agreeable, and upon it flew into this extravagance w<sup>ch</sup> will undoubtedly cost her many a repenting moment, for to my great joy the fellow has run for it, and left her to think on w<sup>t</sup> is past, and sigh alone. Bless me! how shocking is that thought; how it inspires one with new pride and detestation of—but I won't give my self leave to tire you with all I cou'd say upon so copious a subject, for I think 'tis time to reflect y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>r</sup> patience seldom meets with more difcutey then when you are troubled with y<sup>e</sup> scribbles of her who is more affectionatly y<sup>rs</sup> then you can imagen or Isa. Twisden express.

*Watteringbury, July 3<sup>e</sup> 6. [1715.]*

Pray, Madam, tell me if you have any thoughts of coming to Tunbridg this year.

# VI.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Watteringbury, Nov<sup>br</sup> 3<sup>e</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>, 1715.*

I doubt Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond takes me to be a very odd sort of a Person not to have acknowledg'd the favour of y<sup>r</sup> letter before this time, but since I had y<sup>t</sup> pleasure several things have conspired to make me dull. Instead of being at Tunbridg (w<sup>ch</sup> I allways admire), I was shut up w<sup>th</sup> Lady Susan Fane, while poor M<sup>r</sup> Fane<sup>1</sup> was ill. I must leave you to judge how maloncoly a scene y<sup>t</sup> must be to see so young a Gentleman, and of so good a fortune, injoy it so short a time. I can't but say he is very much to be lamented, espical by those who were perticularly acquainted with him.

The next misfortune y<sup>t</sup> ensued was parting with my Cosen Styles, who went to Town last week in order to be y<sup>r</sup> neighbour. You must forgive me if I repine at M<sup>r</sup> Digges happyness, for I can't tell w<sup>t</sup> we shall do without her, espicaly I, who had so large a share of her company. I cou'd tell you of another who is gone up with her upon the same arrant, but I wou'd not have you say much of it tell you hear it from some body ells, I mean Cosen Betty Dalison to Coll Boys.<sup>2</sup> I don't know whether you

<sup>1</sup> Mildmay Fane, fourth son of Vere, Earl of Westmoreland. He died unmarried, Sept. 11, 1715. Lady Susan was his sister.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel John Boys, of Hoath Court, in Blean. They were soon afterwards married.

are acquainted with him, but his habitation is within 5 or 6 miles of Chillum. I very much wish he may prove as good a husband as I beleive M<sup>r</sup> Digges will, for I think she deserves as much happyness as any body I know. I wish you wou'd tell me w<sup>t</sup> sort of a Character he has amongst you, and I promiss it shall go no farther, if it happens to be none of y<sup>e</sup> best. I doubt, for my own part, I shall be inclined to bear some malice in my heart against y<sup>r</sup> East Kent gentlemen for robbing me of my two cheif companions. I think they can do me no farther injurey, for we have no more Ladys left but w<sup>t</sup> are secured to us by matterimony.

I sup't last night with Cosen Twisden; I think they are both better this sumer then I have known 'em lately, seting up, and —Play goes on as briskly as ever. They have had S<sup>r</sup> R. and Lady Newdigate with 'em. First she was at Bradborn, w<sup>ch</sup> S<sup>r</sup> Thos. is now come into, and has made it a very fine place, but there is very little of it furnished yet. My Cosen told me she had a letter from you, by w<sup>ch</sup> I am sorry to hear you have lost so agreeable a neighbour as M<sup>rs</sup> Death.<sup>1</sup> I think her a mighty pritty sort of woman as ever I saw. This time of year we are very apt to be forsaken for the Polite entertainments of London. For my part, I am perfectly terified at the apprehension of the 4 ensuing. I am grown very idle, and have no work, nor not at all enclined to gett any; I can't think w<sup>t</sup> I shall do if Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond won't send me some letters to read, and tell me w<sup>t</sup> devertions you have stiring with you. I sopose the publike affaire are the cheif part of y<sup>r</sup> converse, 'tis so with us. I am so tired of it y<sup>t</sup> I have some thoughts of keeping my chamber till matters are desided either one way or other; sure it won't be long first.<sup>2</sup>

I have not had the maners yet to say one word yet to thank you, Dear Madam, for y<sup>r</sup> obliging proposal of meeting me at

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Sir John Narborough, of Knowlton, and heiress of her two brothers, who were wrecked with their step-father Sir Cloudesley Shovel. Her husband was made a baronet a few months after this date.

<sup>2</sup> This was written in all the excitement of the first Jacobite rebellion, an excitement which it appears the writer did not share. Her words seem to imply that the success of the attempt was quite contemplated in Kent. Her prophecy came true: the next week saw the surrender of the Highlanders at Preston, and their defeat at Dumblaine, which virtually put an end to the rebellion.

Chairing, but I must not think of y<sup>t</sup> happyness till y<sup>e</sup> sumer. I doubt by that time you will be almost tired of expecting me, but I am resolved still to please my self with y<sup>e</sup> imagenation of seeing S<sup>t</sup> Albans before I depart this life, tho' fortune lays so many obstacles in the way y<sup>t</sup>, to tell you the truth, I don't much think I can have struggled thro' all till I'm arrived to y<sup>e</sup> years of three score and ten. In the mean time I desire we may impart our transactions to each other, or we shall have soe many things to relate y<sup>t</sup> I don't beleive my head will be capable of going thro' it. I think my sences begin to fail me already, or I might have contrived a more diverting letter; but for my excuse I must tell you y<sup>t</sup> L<sup>dy</sup> Styles and I were overturned two days agoe, and I gott such a voilent bang upon my head, [which] has turn'd my neck all most t'other way, and am sure brains have had the same alteration; therefore, w<sup>t</sup> ever errors y<sup>e</sup> find, or hear of my being guilty of, I begg you will impute it all from y<sup>t</sup> fatal night. I dare answer for their steadyness but in one thing, w<sup>ch</sup> is that I being, Dear Madam, y<sup>r</sup> most aff<sup>ct</sup> hum: servant,

ISA: TWISDEN.

Pray Madam give my servise to Miss Hammond, M<sup>rs</sup> B., and M<sup>rs</sup> Marsham, not forgetting my hub: My father is y<sup>rs</sup>.

## VII.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[Undated, but apparently Jan. 1, 1716.]

Dear Madam,

I last night fell into a very serious Contemptplation of several accidents y<sup>t</sup> have happend within y<sup>e</sup> late year to give me disquiet; how y<sup>e</sup> succeeding one may prove is impossible to guess, but y<sup>e</sup> last resolution I made before I went to Sleep was y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> first worldly imployment I took in hand shou'd be something very pleasing to my Self, hoping it might prove a good Omen to y<sup>e</sup> rest. I begg Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond will forgive this foolish superstition, it being the only excuse I can make for troubleing you with this letter. Cou'd I have been so happy as to have been waked w<sup>th</sup> one from you it had put a gladness into my heart wou'd have given success to all my wishes by dint of imagenation. Were I enclined to encourage any maloncolly thoughts, I shou'd be apt to fancy you have forgott me, 'tis so

long since I've had y<sup>e</sup> pleasure of hearing from you ; but I rather choose to beleive y<sup>r</sup> letter has mett with some misfortune by y<sup>e</sup> way, or ells my last to you, w<sup>ch</sup> was write two months since. I remember one part of it was to tell y<sup>e</sup> how soon you might expect y<sup>r</sup> New Neighbour at Chillim, but how uncertain are affairs of y<sup>t</sup> nature I think fate in a perticular maner shows us in y<sup>e</sup> disposal of y<sup>t</sup> Lady. Sure never any thing was so unaccountable as to have a match go off y<sup>t</sup> has been twice in so great a forwardness, and espically this last time. I think the best way is to lay it upon distiney, for if we come to reasonable causes, one side or t'other must be in the wrong. I can't but say it was pitty Mr Diggs wou'd not make his son a larger Settlement. However, I hope they may both be as happy in their next choice, for tho' there is a great deal of Mirit on each side, yet I must own I never thought their tempers were very sutable, w<sup>ch</sup> in my opinion is a matter of no small importance.

The other match I told you of was my Cosen Betty Dalison w<sup>th</sup> Coll Boice ; perhapps y<sup>t</sup> may end in y<sup>e</sup> same maner, w<sup>ch</sup>, to say y<sup>e</sup> truth, I beleive can be no great loss on her side, but there she may be a better judge then Myself. I want you sadly to tell me y<sup>r</sup> opinion of y<sup>t</sup> Spark, for I beleive you know him, or at least his Caracter. I never intend to tell you (or any body ells) of one wedding againe, till I can bring a Parson to atest it, neither do I ever give into the beleife of any till affairs are so far agreed on y<sup>t</sup> I can foresee no reasonable cause of its breaking ; yet still I find my faith has been too great. The best excuse I can make for my credility is a notion I have y<sup>t</sup> people wou'd never publikely own affair of y<sup>t</sup> kind while it was in an uncertainty,—but don't you begin to be tyred with my Matterimonial sentiments ? W<sup>t</sup> shall I think of to divert you ? The most pleasing news I heard was from Cosen Twisden, who tells me you will be shure to make her a visit at Malling this spring. I long for y<sup>t</sup> time with y<sup>e</sup> greatest impatience. I was w<sup>th</sup> her a week last month, and poor Cosen R. layd up with his Rhumitism. Doctor Cockman has kept his chamber this month with the same distemper. He was once so ill they thought he wou'd have dyed ; if y<sup>t</sup> had happened (w<sup>ch</sup> I shou'd have been very sorry for) I beleive I might have broke my resolution in my next letter, and told you of an other wedding y<sup>t</sup> wou'd not have qeen at all uncertaine. L<sup>dy</sup> Marsham is at this time at M<sup>rs</sup> Rider's ; I don't know how long she stays there, I believe but

a little time. I think it pitty M<sup>rs</sup> Marsham has taken up her whole residence in east Kent. Pray, Madam, let her know I am very much her humble servant, and wish to see her in this part of y<sup>e</sup> world. My Cosen Twisden (when I wou'd give her leave to talk of any thing but you) mightly entertined me with telling how kindly and prittly M<sup>rs</sup> Bridges manages poor Lady Palmer's little ones. I think S<sup>r</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> can never enough acknowledge so great an undertaking. I hope you have gott agreeable M<sup>rs</sup> Death amongst you this +mas, and some enliveing folks, to pass of the dark dull days. Pray tell me when—but I think when I am gott so far in my paper I ought to make no farther request. y<sup>n</sup> y<sup>t</sup> you will beleive me, Dearest Madam, y<sup>r</sup> most aff<sup>t</sup> humble Servant,

ISA: TWISDEN.

VIII.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Mereworth.*

Dear Madam,

I won't pretend to relate all the dismall, maloncolly thoughts I have had in my head since I parted from y<sup>e</sup>. Sure the absence of a person one loves so sincerely as I do you is the most tormenting thing upon earth. I flew to my bed the moment the Coach turn'd out of y<sup>e</sup> yard, chiefly because 'twas the last place you were in.

On your forsaken Side I lay'd me down,  
And with a Show'r of Tears the place I drown.

Even Sleep, the only friend from whom I expected releife, forsook me in the midst of my distress. I then was reduced to begg of M<sup>rs</sup> Haymond to set down by me and talk (but not of you), for I own I endeavoured all y<sup>t</sup> ever I cou'd to forgett you for one 12 hours, but beleive all attempts that ever were made of that nature in reguarde to y<sup>r</sup> self have proved vain.

The morning after I was alauramd with a voice at my beds head y<sup>t</sup> told me M<sup>r</sup> Fane<sup>1</sup> had brought his Lady down. Not being quite awake, I concluded it a dream, and had no thoughts

<sup>1</sup> John Fane, third son of Vere, Earl of Westmoreland, and Colonel in the Grenadier Guards. The lady was Mary Cavendish, daughter of Lord Henry Cavendish, and their marriage took place on the 5th of August, two days after the date of this letter.

of making any further enquirey, but in a very little time was convinced 'twas a certain truth. The Match was concluded on a sudden, and surpris'd Lady Susan as much as it did me, for she did not know of it twelve hours before. We went that evening to sup at S<sup>r</sup> Tho. Styles; met my Bro: and Sister; and I went on in the coach and fetch'd Cosen Roger from maidston. After super the Box and Dice was produced. Poor Cosen Roger and (*sic*) had his usal luck. I stay'd with Lady Styles that night, and the next went with her to see M<sup>r</sup> Whetenhall,<sup>1</sup> where we met S<sup>r</sup> Thos. Twisden; he wou'd have us stay super. They then set me down at my Sister's, in order to go with her and my brother to see Lord Leister's house<sup>2</sup> the next day, with some other gentlemen; 'tis about ten mile from us, a mighty fine old house, and the best Pictures of any that ever I saw. There is one Closet of pictures valued at 6 thousand p<sup>d</sup>. The next day my Sis brought me home, and left me to contemplate on pleasures past, w<sup>ch</sup> amusement generally ends in the spleen. The next day I pay'd my respects to the Bride, who is in every respect as pritty a woman as ever I saw, and seems (to my great joy) to be very good humoured; M<sup>rs</sup> Marsham will discribe her to you. There is no company come down with them but a M<sup>rs</sup> Langton; I refer you to Miss Marsham, who, as I think, is very well acquainted with her. When I came home I found Lady Style in my closet writing to me; after I parted with her came in S<sup>r</sup> Tho.<sup>3</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Marjott, too late to make a very long visit.

Yesterday morn M<sup>rs</sup> Fane came and cary'd me home to diner, we sat down a little while to Omber, but was soon interrupted by companys. coming in. This day my neighbours from Wat-terbury call'd of me on horse back to go and see my Cosen Boys. She is very well pleased with her East Kent expedition, and I joy'd to confer with her on y<sup>t</sup> subject. She told me you were so obliging to send to her, and is very sorry she had not time to see you. When I came home I found a letter from Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond lye on my table; how delightfull a surprise that was to me no pen can relate: I cou'd not imagen you wou'd be so good to write to me first. I have not yet pull'd off my hood, but flew the moment I had read y<sup>rs</sup> to my pen and Ink, with w<sup>ch</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Hextalls Court, in East Peckham.

<sup>2</sup> Penshurst.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* Sir Thomas Style and his half-sister, Mrs. Marriott.

I think I have given you an exact account of all my proceedings. I desire you will continue to do the same by me; I very often fancy when you are at breakfast, and think how merry y<sup>e</sup> young gentleman and the ladys are in the hall over the Tea. I hope Mr Antony<sup>1</sup> has resumed his former gayity now you are come home; 'tis natural for all people to be grave y<sup>t</sup> part from y<sup>e</sup>, tho' I wonder it shou'd strike him with so deep a Silence, because you know out of the abundance of the heart the hand writeth. I doubt Aunt Suekey has been cruel, and wou'd give him no Rack. I wish you had write out the Answer to Pope's Psalm, for I shall never gett any thing that is a banter upon him, tho' it be printed; pray don't forget it next time you write. I think of going to Tunbrige, but can't tell the time; I am glad to hear there will be any of y<sup>r</sup> familey there. I hope my next letter will be an account of the devertions of y<sup>t</sup> place. I am sorry Miss Marsham is not to be there with Lady Romney, pray tell her so. I hope you will think this letter long enough, for I have left but just room to begg my humble servise to Mr Hammond and all the rest of the family. Don't let Mr Antony Critisise upon my letter, and beleive me dear Madam y<sup>r</sup> most Aff<sup>ct</sup> hum. Ser<sup>t</sup>,

ISA TWISDEN.

*August y<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> 1716.*

Mr M. was hear this afternoon, and I can ashur you, by what I made him tell me of them, they are not the same we saw,—the verses, I should have said; you know w<sup>t</sup> I mean.

#### IX.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Mereworth Oct<sup>br</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> 1716.*

I was very much pleas'd to find a letter from Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond when I came from Tunbridg Wells. I often wish'd you there with me; I'm sure y<sup>r</sup> company wou'd have made the pleasures of y<sup>t</sup> place ten times more ingaging. You will think it very strange when I tell you y<sup>t</sup> I was not at all acquainted with Mr Turner or any of his family, as I intended when I went, but they did not happen to converse with any of the people y<sup>t</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Hammond, eldest son of Mr. Hammond by his first wife, and ancestor of the present Mr. Hammond, of St. Albans, and Mr. Dali-son, of Hamptons.

I did, so cou'd not bring it to pass. I knew Mr Turner by sight, and wou'd have spoke to him if he had ever stood near me. You say you will ask him after me, but I'm sure he will tell you he never heard of any such person; pray tell me wether he did or not. I won't give you any account of my transactions there, because they were too trifling to be related. I stay'd much longer than any of my neighbours. I found several very agreeable people amongst my own sex, but as for the gentlemen, I never saw such indifferent; I'll ashure you I brought my heart home in the same tranquility and ease y<sup>t</sup> I caryed it. I am very angry with you for remembering Cosen Roger's discourse one day at breakfast; I think he was madd to put any such fancies in y<sup>r</sup> head; let me ashure you it was nothing but banter; the person you speak of is no more then a slight acquaintance. The variety of conversation at that place prevents any from making a perticular impression; besides Absence is the Death of Love.

Since I come home our neighbours have entered into a great deal of gayity, and made several Balls. The first was at Lady Rumney's; 'tis to no end to tell you all the people were at it, so will only say 'twas as fine an entertainment as ever I saw. I wish Miss Marsh had been there. The next was at M<sup>rs</sup> Rider's, where we were all very much disapointed in not having Lady Rumney; her youngest boy died two hours before she was to have come out, so my L<sup>d</sup> and L<sup>dy</sup> stay'd at home. There was Lady Shovel and M<sup>r</sup> Shovel,—they went from the Moat yesterday. We meet all to-morrow at my sister's. I don't know where next, but I begine to be quite weary of such a disorderly way of life, and think to stay at home and compose. We have been very much alaurmed with the Prince coming to dine at Knowl. The entertainment was mighty fine, and a vast number of people. L<sup>d</sup> Lumly, L<sup>d</sup> Bell Haven, Coll Cambel, and one of Baron Shoot's sons came down with him. After diner they went to the Wells, being in his way to the Duke of Newcastle's,<sup>1</sup> where he was to lye. He took one turn upon the walks, gave 5 guineas to the coffee house, tasted the Watter, and gave the same to the dipers, and 5 to the Musick, and 9 or 10 to the Chaplin. From the Duke's he was to go to L<sup>d</sup> Scarborough's, and where ever he pleases next, so it be not into<sup>2</sup>, for he

<sup>1</sup> i. e. Stanmere, near Lewes.

<sup>2</sup> A piece is here torn from the side of the sheet.



has made such a racket and a disg . . . . I am quite sick of hearing the same thi[ng over] and over again. M<sup>rs</sup> Fane and the Coll a[re gone] to London. She was not well, and went for a doctor, but I fancy it will end in breeding. Between [us,] her beauty is her only charm, for I nev[er did] with a woman have so little conversation in my days. I give her over for an agre[eable] neighbour. I have the happyness of have[ing] Lady Susan and M<sup>rs</sup> Savage here all this w , w<sup>ch</sup> is no small comfort to me.

Pray let me know all things that happen am[ong you]. I can't think w<sup>t</sup> Lady Dixwell,<sup>1</sup> means never [to] come near you. Tell me how you spend th[e evenin]gs. Why don't you make M<sup>r</sup> Antony read to you; but I fancy you play at cards. If a wish w<sup>d</sup> convay me I should often make you a viset when the candles are brought; how vain is that thought, but I have a thousand such. May all y<sup>rs</sup> be happy and successfull is the sincere wishe of Dear Dear Madam y<sup>r</sup> very aff<sup>ct</sup> Humble Ser<sup>t</sup>,

ISA TWISDEN.

My servise to all the good company with you. I hope M<sup>r</sup> Antony will remember the answer to Collin, and any thing ells of y<sup>t</sup> nature y<sup>t</sup> will divert. Adue, I am just going to play at ombre with Lady Susan. Pray write soon w<sup>t</sup> is become of M<sup>r</sup> St. Johns.

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X.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Swakeley May y<sup>r</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> [1717].*

If Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hamond ever bestows a thought on me, I doubt you at the same time accuse me of ingratitude for not writing in all this time, but cou'd you imagen w<sup>t</sup> pain it is to me to mention any thing that will renew y<sup>r</sup> sorrow upon y<sup>r</sup> lait misfortune<sup>2</sup> I'm sure you wou'd forgive me, for I know 'tis impossible for me to say any thing y<sup>t</sup> will be any consolation to you, for I'm senceible nothing is so hard to submitt to as the loss of what one loves, but 'tis a difficulty we must all Struggle thro' in this World. I hope, Dear Madam, y<sup>r</sup> good Sence and Reason will

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy, wife of Sir Basil Dixwell, of Broome.

<sup>2</sup> The death of her husband, 1717, fixing the date of this letter.

assist you to bear it w<sup>th</sup> some ease, but I hate to say any thing of this nature to you, for w<sup>t</sup> is to be thought of I'm sure you don't forgett. I was extreemly disapointed at not having the pleasure of seeing you in Town; Cousen Vyner and I did our indeavour to find you out the day after I came, but we cou'd not find out the right House; two days after I sent you a letter to begg y<sup>e</sup> favour you wou'd come y<sup>t</sup> morn to us, but my letter came back with y<sup>e</sup> unhappy news of y<sup>r</sup> being y<sup>t</sup> morn gone out of Town. I sent you a very long Epistle about a Month before I came out of Kent, but I've never had any answer since, which makes me fear it did not come to y<sup>r</sup> hands. Why wou'd not you be so good to write to me while you were in Town, but I won't chide you much, knowing by expeirence w<sup>t</sup> a place of hurry that is. I saw Lady Death several times, and one night in the Drawing Room mett M<sup>r</sup> S<sup>t</sup> John. He told me [he] had not been at S<sup>t</sup> Albains since I was. I have been come out of Town 3 weeks. Cousen Vyner is mighty happy in an extream Pleasent Seat an a very agreeable Husband, indeed, I like M<sup>r</sup> Vyner prodigiously. We are very near Lady New, and see her often. Hear is a great many fine places to see in the Country which will be a great delight to me, and puts me very much in mind of last sumer, when I was so agreeable entertaind with Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond. My Cousen is to lyein the end of June, and will not give me leave to release her of my triffling Company a great while, for after she is up againe we are to take a journey into Linconshire to M<sup>r</sup> Vyner's estate, where we propose abundance of pleasure, espically being there at the time of the Races, w<sup>ch</sup> is one of the greatest meetings in England as I am told; I'm afraid I shall never compose my head after such veritye of places and Conversation; we are at this moment just resolved to make a short trip to London to-morrow, being but 15 mile off 'tis a thing very easily performed.

I have no more to add to this dull letter but to begg, Dear Madam, y<sup>e</sup> will let me hear from you very soon, and tell me if you ever had y<sup>r</sup> letter I speak of. I hope by this time you have gott all y<sup>r</sup> Neighbours into the Country againe, and y<sup>t</sup> they will divert you from all Maloncolly thought. I wish my letter could have y<sup>t</sup> effect, for I'm [sure] none is more Sincerely concern'd for any Sorrow you meet with, or loves you more then y<sup>r</sup> aff<sup>ct</sup> humble Ser<sup>t</sup>.

ISA TWISDEN.

Pray, Madam, let Mr Hammond and y<sup>e</sup> rest of y<sup>r</sup> family know how much I am their humble Ser<sup>t</sup>. My sister writes me word you have had a very agreeable letter from M<sup>rs</sup> Theobalds. I'm mighty glad to hear she is so happy. I hope M<sup>rs</sup> Sukey will make as luckey a Choice. My Cousen Vyner desires her servise to you. Pray let me hear from you very soon. Direct to me at M<sup>r</sup> Vyner's house at Swakley, near Uxbridge, in Midlesex.

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XI.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Mereworth the 12<sup>th</sup> of Jan<sup>y</sup> 1725.*

I am at all times extreamly pleased with a letter from Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond, for whom I shall ever retain a sincer love and esteem. I am sorry you shou'd meet with any disappointments or tryals of patience w<sup>ch</sup> you seem to complain off, indeed y<sup>t</sup> of parting w<sup>h</sup> a favourit son can't but give you great ancieitye of heart, expicaly when you entertain y<sup>e</sup> dismal apprehension of never seeing him againe ; but why, Dear Madam, doe you choose y<sup>t</sup> way of thinking, when there is reason for so much more an agreeable an imagination? He is lanchd into a Land of Riches, and you ought not to fear but by the Providence of God Almighty and his own industray he will succeed so well as to bring home a plentiful fortune, and become a great Man ; then think with what delighted Eyes you will look upon him. If you can't feast y<sup>r</sup> fancy with such thoughts, let me begg of you never to think of him at all, except when you say your Prayers. You don't tell me what you do with y<sup>e</sup> two youngest, but I beleave they may be yet at school. I am very glad M<sup>rs</sup> Hugonin is so happy ; you can't fail of being so too in living with them you so much value, and I dare say with great reason. I fancy your Sister was never very fond of the devertions of the Town, and since she likes the Place she is now in, will bid adieu to all those vanities. 'Tis, I think, the prittyest Country I ever saw, and a very agreeable neighbourhood. The Reding Assembly out tops all that ever was beyond the Smoak of St James's.

As you say M<sup>rs</sup> M. was pritty remarkable with a certain Officer who I am very well acquainted with, her conduct upon y<sup>t</sup> account has been taken notice of in most publike places ; 'tis to be hoped no more then harmless flirtation for there can be no

marrying in the case. The gentleman who has a claim y<sup>t</sup> way lives in this Part of Kent, is very unhappy in a Perverse Father, who often lets him know the want of half a Crown; when he dies the Son will have 7 or 8 hundred p<sup>d</sup> a year as some say, others the contrary. I am not acquainted with the family but by comon fame, so don't take notice. If she is marri'd 'tis not own'd. You are so good as to tell me a great deal of news; I can't tell how to repay that debt, for we have nothing Stiring at present but the fire.

I was very much upon the ramble with my Cousen Vynner. We went to see a bundance of fine Seats, but I was of all things delighted with staying a week at Oxford. We went one day to Bleniam; 'tis surprissingly large, with very little room in it; I can't say it charms me. If you have not been at Oxford, I hope you will in the sumer; there is many things very well worth seeing, and you are not a great way off. I stay'd at Swakly till Mic+. M<sup>rs</sup> Hails lyes inn in the country. I can never get to hear any thing out of East Kent; if you won't be so good as to impart; perticularly I desire you to enquier if M<sup>rs</sup> Masters<sup>1</sup> is going to marrey again. We have a younger brother here of that name, who is a very good Natur'd man and only wants an estate; I fancy he makes applycation to her, pray tell me if you think there is any propobility of his succeeding. You need not be afraid to trust me, for I will never name any thing you say, and don't forget to find out, for I know you can if you will. My paper is so full I have but just room to ashure you that I am, Dear Madam, y<sup>r</sup> aff<sup>ct</sup> hum. Ser<sup>t</sup>,

ISA TWISDEN.

[Superscription.—*To M<sup>rs</sup> Hammond at M<sup>r</sup> Hugonin's House at Oakfield near Reding in Berkshire.*]

## XII.—FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Mereworth the 14<sup>th</sup> of Jan<sup>y</sup> 1728.*

I know you think I never intend to write to you againe, but I ashure you I have made no such resolution, and if ever I

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth, widow of Streynsham Master. The younger brother of her name was perhaps Richard Master, brother, and eventually heir, of James, of Yotes, and second cousin of the widow's late husband.

Shou'd I will certainly break it the first time I meet with a Pen and Ink. Dear Madam, how do you do, and what has happen'd of good or bad to you since I last had the pleasure of hearing from you? Can nothing happen y<sup>t</sup> you and I may sleep under the same Roofe againe? I wish I had the honour of your Sister's acquaintance, then I wou'd come and make you a Viset, and talk over the thousand things that have past since we were Last so happy. You come but little to Town, and I less, so y<sup>t</sup> there is small prospect of meeting there, and I fance you find Barkshire so pleasant you seldom think of any other place.

Our Neighbour is very much altered since you were here, quite a new set of people. There's a Lady Forbes<sup>1</sup> at poor Cosin R. Twisden's—Loves, Cardes, Company, and disorder, as well or better than her Predecessours. I hate the Place, and am quite Maloncolly to see every thing in house just as when you were there (for my Cosen W. T. sold Comodore Stewart every thing, even the Pictures and little Baubles posest by Strangers one is quite indifferent too). I saw a friend of yours not long ago, I mean St George Oxenden. I mett him one morning at Lady Rumney's; he is one of the Luckey.<sup>2</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Masters, he seems to beleive, has no thought of marrying againe, but M<sup>r</sup> Barret<sup>3</sup> is, to one he Loved before his first wife. I hope she will prove more deserving.

M<sup>rs</sup> Hales has left East Kent quite, and taken a house in Town. He may trust her there, for she'll run into no extravagance I dare ingage.

I was mighty sorry for the Death of M<sup>r</sup> Head,<sup>4</sup> knowing him

<sup>1</sup> Roger Twisden, the writer's first cousin, died at a house in Town Malling, which he hired of Commodore Stewart, to whom it appears that William Twisden, his brother and executor, sold the furniture. Lady Forbes, the new tenant, was no doubt wife of Lord Forbes, son of the Earl of Granard, and, at one time, ambassador to Muscovy. He held, too, various naval commands, and must have been constantly from home. Their son, Admiral Forbes, died at Malling in 1796.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Oxenden married in 1729 Elizabeth, co-heiress of Edmund Dunch, Master of the Household to George I.

<sup>3</sup> Of Lee, in Ickham. The second of his four wives was Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. Peters, of Canterbury; she died in 1729.

<sup>4</sup> James Head, a barrister, third son of Sir Francis, of the Hermitage, in Higham; he died in 1727. The fourth son, John, afterwards the Baronet, was Prebendary and Archdeacon of Canterbury, and Rector of Ickham.

a little one year at Tunbridge, and I was acquainted with the younger Brother (who is to be a Parson) when I was at Oxford, and seems very deserving. What is become of y<sup>r</sup> Cosin St Johns? I think you told me he had dedicated himself altogether to Books. He had better bestow a little study upon our sex, and find out an Agreeable wife. Don't forget to tell me something of him (when you write) and like wise of all your three sons, and when you heard from y<sup>r</sup> Eldest.

I was from May to November with my Cosin Vyner, at w<sup>ch</sup> place you know I allways meet with every thing y<sup>t</sup> is agreeable. Upon the Death of the King they were obliged to go into Lincolnshire, and w<sup>d</sup> have me with them. To prepare me for my journey I fell ill of a moderate Feavour, and kept my chamber a fortnight. My first step out of it was the day we began our expiditon, but Traveling and a verities of adventures quite Cured me. We w<sup>re</sup> a Lincoln the week of the Races, were all maner of devertions are stiring, and after that we made a Visit of some days to a gentlemans house. In coming home I caught Cold, and fell ill of so violent a feavour y<sup>t</sup> I began to think I must bid Adue to all my friends. It did not intermitt in ten days, and I was forced to go thro' all manner of severe disiplen, as you may beleive, when I tell you I had five Blisters at one time, and two Nurses three weeks; but I thank God and a good Physician I am now in perfect health and sound memory. I just got well enough to be able to undertake my journey back, and was better at the end of it than the begining. This has been a most terrible year for feavours, I hope you have escaped and all belonging to you.

I have got to the end of the fourth page sooner then I thought, and befor I have said any thing worth your reading. 'Tis too lait now to Aim at any more then desiring you'll except it, as it is from her who is (tho' I seldom tell you so) y<sup>r</sup> faithfull hum<sup>bl</sup> Ser<sup>t</sup>,

ISA: TWISDEN.

Dear Madam, don't stay so long as I have done before you write; render not evil for evil.

*No superscription.*