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**March 24-May 19, 1803.**

[ 24. March. 1803 ]

North Allerton

We proceeded sixteen miles to North Allerton, entering Yorkshire at Croft; we had a most pleasant ride all the way from Newcastle; -- spring begins to appear, and the fineness of the day shewed the country to great advantage. We got to North Allerton at five o'clock and as we did not wish to over-fatigue ourselves the first day, we took up our quarters at Hurst's very good inn for the night. Mr. Plunket & I took a little walk about the town, where an incessant ringing of bells seemed to proclaim some joyful news, but we found it was only some ringers practising different methods of ringing the changes; thus the great joy was only to the great annoyance of the inhabitants.--We had an excellent dinner & tea at eight o'clock, after which Mrs. Plunket & I played at backgammon for an hour, and Plunket paid the bill & went to bed. She & I had a great deal of talk about her family, &c. -- she is really a pleasant little good tempered woman, and altogether I had a very entertaining, and agreeable day. -- We went to bed before ten, as we are to be off in the morning for Thirsk before six o'clock.

[ 25. March. 1803 ]

Thirsk

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... At Thirsk we breakfasted at Cass's, the Excise office, than which I never was at a more dirty and uncomfortable inn: -- Plunket, from the dirt of the room, enquired if the landlady was an Irish woman -- at which she was much incensed, & replied she was no more an Irishwoman than he was an Irishman, and that she was born in & had lived near sixty years in Thirsk. Excepting the inn, Thirsk is a very neat clean little town with a market place, and a very large church, near which are several good houses. It is considerably larger than North Allerton; we walked about,

and as the church was open we stepped in. The church was neat but plain, tho' with some good monuments -- in particular

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a very neat marble monument with some poetry, very well turned, to the memory of the Honorable Amelia Frederica Wilhelmina Melesina Sparre, daughter of the Countess of Gyllenburg. -- Having seen the tomb of this illustrious person, we returned to the Inn, & a little after eight set out to Easingwold, where we arrived at 10. ... We changed horses and went on thro' a very flat but well cultivated country to York, where we arrived at 12. We stopped at the York Tavern, at which I have been twice before tho' never during daylight.

York

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... we saw a very great number of ladies & gentlemen walking, which the fineness of the day seemed to have brought out. There is a very splendid walk by the waterside, planted with tall trees, which must be a most agreeable promenade as it is near two miles long, by the side of the river Ouse which runs by the city, and over which is a very curious bridge with part of a church built on it. Ships of small burden can come up the river as far as York. -- I also walked into the Assembly rooms; the great room is supported by pillars and is handsomely finished; I saw a great many musicians practicing a concert which is to be held to night. The Assembly rooms are not however at all to be compared with ours at Newcastle. -- The York company are acting at York just now; & tomorrow night our old favorite Melvin has his benefit; Miss Smith is also here. -- We also went and saw the Castle, which as a building is nothing very extraordinary -- tho' the new courtrooms for

the trials are handsomely finished: & form a quadrangle with the prison, which is upon a very good plan -- as both Debtors & Felons can have the air, & the latter walk about the area -- they are however kept separate.

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York castle is kept in neat order & in the large green area of the prison some deer feed: the sight of prisoners is always distressing, especially the clanking of the Felon's chains -- but it was not without a kind of horror I saw a man decently dressed and powdered look out of a window, who we were told is Mr. Maister, the relation of Mrs. A. Reed at Newcastle, who lately murdered his two children.

As we went into the Castle we met a most amazing number of genteely drest gentlemen coming out; there had been a meeting in the courtroom of the country Gentlemen to sign a congratulatory address to the King on his late escape, if it can be called so.

Near the Castle is an old Tower of a circular form, built on a high mound of false earth which has been raised, I imagine, in former times for defence, as it seems now a useless ruin. York is walled round, & is entered by gates; the suburbs of it are very neat, especially towards Tadcaster.

The principal object of curiosity in York is the Minster. It is an amazing large pile of Building in the richest style of gothic architecture, built in the form of a cross, with a very large square tower in the centre and two round ones at the west end.

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Nothing can exceed the richness & massiveness of the exterior & the elegance & beauty, the airy lightness & immense magnitude of the inside. It far surpassed the idea I had formed of it,

and is indeed by far the finest ecclesiastical building I ever saw; it unites lightness, unity of design, & richness more than I ever saw in any other ... the perspective from the centre of it is most noble -- it is 524 feet long from east to west, and 250 feet high, in many parts of it. The East & North Windows are of immense size -- that to the east is 100 feet high and 32 feet wide; they are all filled with the most delicately & elegant colored glass I ever saw -- almost all of it is ancient, & very brilliant: it seems almost like needle & fillagree work: but what I chiefly admire is the perpendicular elevation, the grandeur & lightness of the architecture, and the illusion of serpentine mobility in the stone.

In the vestry we saw the vestments of King James the 1<sup>st</sup> who was here crowned on his way to London -- also the large horn given to this diocese by some old Norman Knight with various lands -- won in battle, which the Archbishop is to hold as long as they keep the horn.

We also saw the Octagon chapel of the Virgin on the North side: -- it is connected with the

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cathedral by a gothic cloister and has 8 beautiful windows finely filled with painted glass, & is still a most elegant place, tho' it was dispoiled of some of its ornaments by Oliver Cromwell.

There are a very great number of beautiful monuments all round the Cathedral, & the church in the middle is most beautifully finished in oak, of the lightest & most laborious tho' elegant carving. The Grand east window casts a beautiful reflection on the church, thro' a screen of plate glass but thro' the gothic arcades of the east side of the church. -- It is impossible to particularize all the elegnat monuments & curious

relics, which we saw in the Minster, but altogether it is a most magnificent spectacle, & what I have never seen equalled in the same style of building in all my travels.

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## Leeds

... Leeds is a most disagreeable dirty smoky place, far worse than Newcastle, as there are such a number of cloth dye houses which poison the air.

[ 26. March. 1803 ]

Manchester

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... We got to Manchester at four o'clock. It is in size the second town in Great Britain, & has been entirely raised by its manufactures to its present immense size -- it would have been very much larger, if the last war had not stopped the progress on buildings, which were then going on with astonishing rapidity. When the estimate was taken of the population, two years ago, they amounted to above 90,000 -- & have since much increased: & buildings are now going on very rapidly.

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We found a very good inn -- The Commercial Inn in High Street. Three miles before we got to Manchester it began to rain & continued very heavy for an hour after we arrived; it then cleared & was a very fine evening. I borrowed an umbrella & walked before dinner to the infirmary, a very elegant building, & very extensive; here I found John Hutchinson, who was very glad to see me, and I gave him J. Lamb's letter, and had some talk & fixed to call again after dinner. I then went back to the Inn & dined; and then returned to J. Hutchinson, who shewed me the Lunatic Hospital -- which adjoins the Infirmary; I could not help pitying the unfortunate wretches -- & as the sight was so melancholy, I did not stop to see many of them.

[ 29. March. 1803 ] Worcester

... directly after dinner Mrs. Plunket & I went to the play; the theatre is a very neat little one & holds about £80, but to night there would not be one fourth of that sum: there were some very smart people there; the left hand stage box is done up with a canopy, &c., in the Royal style for the Duke of Cumberland, who was here last week for a few days. The play was the Cure for the Heartache, in which Mr. Archer acted young Rapid with great spirit. I well recollect his being in our company at Newcastle -- he now much fatter, & improved in his acting -- the rest were very bad, particularly the women; except a Mr. Young, who is a very good looking Man & acted Charles Stanley very well. The Wolverhampton company act here under the management of Mr. Gibbons, who is himself a most

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wretched actor, as he shewed us in Sir Hubert. -- After the play Mr. Moritz, from London, who is here for three nights, displayed the most wonderful & incredible feats of balancing. He held 3 chairs in his mouth -- & then a chair with a boy on it, & also a musket with a sharp bayonet, the latter balanced in a small hole on his forehead: also an egg on a straw on his nose -- & made a poor bird lie down, get up, turn round, &c., exactly as he ordered -- this last, however, I did not like, from the idea of the torments the poor little thing must have suffered & must still suffer. -- The farce of the Sixty third Letter is very diverting, but I recollect it too well at Haymarket to be pleased with it here. A Mr. G. Shutes in Patrick was very well -- a Mr. Dawson in Dulcet was barely decent -- a Mrs. Chambers was very natural & good in Miss Metaphor, & a



Mrs. St. John was charming in Lydia. She is rather large but very easy & elegant, & has a most engaging countenance & disarming smile tho' she can't be called beautiful.

[ 30. March. 1803 ]

Gloucester

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... We went back to the Inn, where we stopped a while to hear the band of the Regiment quartered here play in the Mess room -- an officer was so civil as to request us to walk in, and listen to it; but we were then going to see the Jail, which is said to be the best regulated in England on Mr. Howard's plan, with some late improvements. It is a very fine building indeed; all the prisoners are kept separate; only the debtors can associate together -- they are also made to work, & produce by that means

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a good deal of money. The whole place is ventilated, & all the prisoners can use air & exercise; no irons are used: solitary confinement is the most rigorous state in which any of them are kept. Strangers are not allowed to see any of the prisoners. The prison is remarkably clean & neat, & very secure; indeed it is conducted altogether upon a most admirable plan, all the particulars of which it is impossible to detail, but Mr. Howard's reform has not only corrected much abuse, it has also provided for instruction, labour, and skills, that criminal ways may be replaced by useful habits of industry.

[ 31. March. 1803 ]

Bath

... Mrs. Plunket & I went to the play which was very full, & for the benefit of Mr. Bartley & Mr. Smith, boxkeepers; the theatre is very neat, but much smaller than ours at Newcastle. It does not hold above £140, tho' the prices are higher than ours at Newcastle. Boxes 4/, Pit 2/6, Galleries 1/6 & 1/-. The play was the Heiress which was most admirably acted by Elliston, who is a delightful actor, in Clifford, and by Edwin in

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Alscup, Cunningham in Prompt, Egan in Blandish, Bennet in Sir Clement Flint, Sedley in Lord Gayville, Mrs. Egan in Mrs. Blandish, Mrs. Taylor in Miss Alton, Mrs. Edwin in Lady Emily, & Miss Smith in Miss Alscup -- it was most capitally done by all except Sir Clement, who was but stupid. The farce was the Son in Law, which was highly diverting. Edwin was truly comic in Bowkett, Tebay in Bouquet, Cunningham in Orator Mum, Ryre in Vinegar, & above all Miss Daniels in Cecilia. She is wife to Cooke of Covent Garden, but does not live with him on account of his ill treatment. She sings most divinely: her voice is as powerful & extensive as Mrs. Billington's, but she wants sweetness, tho' it is very clear and has a beautiful swell, and she executes the most difficult passages with perfect ease & neatness. -- I was highly delighted as was Mrs. Plunket. ...

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Having now arrived and got settled at Bath, I can take leisure to look over and correct the numerous errors, and write in the following pages what I have omitted in the foregoing imperfect account ....

... Descending the hills to Rockdale we entered the district famous for

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the various branches of the cotton trade. These extensive cotton works have certainly been the means of the riches which Manchester & the surrounding country has so rapidly accumulated, but the dreadful confinement which is obliged to be used, & the keeping all together so many children are very ruinous both to their health & morals. This is sufficiently evident; for in the county gaol at Lancaster there are three times as many prisoners from the neighbourhood & town of Manchester than from any other part of the country.

Manchester is a much larger place than I had supposed & is still rapidly increasing, tho' it has never, till very lately, increased so much as it did before the late war began. The loss of commerce caused a great suffering for the newly settled population, and much poverty still persists. Like pathetic alms beggars, even the youngest of girls offer themselves in trade, while gin or laudanum provides the cheapest cure for many miseries.

[ 16. April. 1803 ] Bristol

The house was very full -- but at the end of the play we got downstairs where we had very good seats: -- & above we saw the play perfectly well in the box above the stage door tho' it was very hot.

The Play was the Stranger. Great as John Kemble is in this part & often as I have seen him act it, I never saw him to such advantage: the settled melancholy & misery at the beginning, & the recital of his misfortunes to Steinfort, & the conflicting emotions of love, pity, & sorrow in the last scene were admirable. Mrs. Johnston is an excellent actress, & possesses forcibly the power of exciting the feelings; in her story related to the countess, & in her last scene, she was very affecting; her figure is good & her action graceful -- her face is expressive tho' not handsome: her voice in the lower tones reminded me much of Mrs. Siddons; she feels the part very strongly, & upon the whole performed it very well indeed: -- tho' in a character of more passion, I can easily see, that she would be apt to be too violent. Tho' I have seen the play twenty times, I could not help again watering it with tears; I never saw it make a stronger impression. -- Mr. Eyre in Baron Steinfort was

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very respectable, as was Sedley in the Count; Mrs. Sedley in the Countess looked well but is a very awkward actress; Edward in Peter was truly comic -- he put on a most laughable appearance of childish silliness. Evans in Solomon was very stupid. -- Upon the whole, however, the play was very well done -- & Kemble's powers were very adequately supported.

The farce was Midas, which of course was far inferior in scenery, acting, dresses, & decoration to when I saw

it in London:--Taylor in Apollo was tolerably good, but not compared to Kelly. -- Mrs. Taylor in Daphne was very well, & Miss Daniels excellent in Nysa: -- the rest were all bad except Edwin, who in the character of Midas was irresistibly laughable. I never saw anything so completely comic as his countenance, the cut of his wig & tone of his voice -- & the variety of humorous gestures, looks, & faces made it highly amusing.

The farce was very stupid except Edwin & Miss Daniels, & the music, tho' pretty in itself, seemed stupid after the delightful harmonies I have heard this week.

[ 17. April. 1803 ]

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[Oratorios and Music Festival at Bristol, Spring Concert at Bath]

A more complete band could not possibly be got together, nor could anything be more admirably performed than the whole of the oratorios in every particular of them.

The selection opened with a very grand full chorus of Te Deum. To me who had never heard before a full band of vocal & instrumental performers, the effect was astonishing & awfully striking. -- Mr. Harrison then opened the oratorio by the beautiful song of Total Eclipse, which was well suited to the polished smooth tones of his voice, which tho' not very extensive is very equal, round, & sweet, & has great expression, but there is a sameness & sometimes a want of animation in his singing: in some songs, however, he can forcibly move the passions. -- The three choruses of the first act, "Oh first created beam" -- "Fixed in his ever-lasting seat" -- and "God save the King" from the Coronation anthem were all so grand & affecting that

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I don't know which to prefer. Mr. Knyvett next sung the song of "Return, Oh God of hosts" but his voice, tho' a fine counter

tenor, is not full enough for sacred music, & his manner is very awkward & he seems rather conceited -- while the modesty & composure of Messrs. Harrison & Bartleman render their performance still more pleasing. Mr. Bartleman sung next "Honor & Arms" in a most superior style of capital execution, and the song is very difficult; his voice is a very powerful bass, and for a bass voice possesses the greatest flexibility I ever met with -- it is sometimes rather harsh, but the spirit & taste with which he executes his songs render them very pleasant. Harrison's voice is however, I think, the best; it is a sweet medium between the soft tones of Knyvett and the powerful notes of Bartleman. Mr. Harrison sung next "Lord remember David" in a style of pathetic simplicity & sweetness which was truly delightful. After that Mrs. Billington made her first appearance, or rather gave her first song -- for all the vocal performers of the oratorio stand up during the choruses & sit in front of the orchestra the whole time of the performance. --

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She sung "Let the bright Seraphims" in a style that at once shewed the wonderful expression, the astonishing flexibility of execution, and the range & power of voice she possesses. Her upper tones are truly delightful -- clear, sweet, & loud, and she has a compass of fully 3 octaves. Her shake is soft, easy, & warbling -- the swell of her voice forming a long chord with the trumpet was ecstatic; in singing she is perfection itself, and it is ecstasy to listen to her notes -- then the consummate ease with which she runs thro' the most difficult passages is astonishing; in short, she is altogether perfect in singing. -- She was very elegantly dressed. She looks not to

be above 33 or 34, but I believe she is near 40. Her face is beautiful, her countenance lively, & her smile enchantingly good humored; tho' when grave she has an air of hauteur & pride. She seems like a Queen, & indeed she is the Queen of Song. -- She is very fat & very fair, but yet sings without the smallest effort, & one never observes her draw her breath. -- Knyvett is a very supercilious disagreeable looking young man of about 28 or 29. -- Harrison is a little

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black man, & looks very melancholy while he sings. -- Bartleman has a remarkably pleasant countenance & manner, & seems a very plain good kind of man. He seems about 36. Harrison is, I suppose, about 50. -- Mr. Weichsel, Mrs. Billington's brother, is a genteel looking man, but neither so fat nor so handsome as Mrs. B. -- He seems to be 32 or 33. -- Ashe, the famous flute player, seems about 40, & is a genteel, stout, good looking little man. Lindley, the first violincello in England, strikes one as typically Yorkshire in appearance and manner: very tall & very awkward -- remarkably good humored countenance. -- Rauzzini is a neat little old man & an excellent conductor of the orchestra. He seemed always in raptures with the music, & I participated in his feelings. -- Last tho' not least in the personal account of the performers is Miss Sharp. She is a neat figure, about 22 or 23, & very handsome; a very fine complexion & regular features, but without much expression. Her manner is very pleasing & unaffected, & she was very neatly & simply drest. She teaches music in Bristol.

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The second act of the Oratorio began with the Dead March in Saul which was truly grand; after that there was a most de-

lightful quartett & grand chorus in the middle of it, between, Mrs. Billington & the 3 gentlemen. Miss Sharp then sung "O magnify the Lord" in a charming manner: her voice is weak, but sweet & flexible, & she executes the rapid flights with neatness, and the whole with much feeling & taste. -- Bartleman's song of "O Lord have mercy" is very grand & striking: but it is impossible to do justice to the sublimity and elevating effect of the double chorus called the Hailstone chorus from Israel in Egypt. Mr. Harrison next sung most delightfully & so as to affect every one, "Pleasure my former ways" -- it is a most beautiful tune: after that Mrs. Billington sung in the most exquisite pathetic strain of sweetness & feeling "In sweetest Harmony" -- then succeeded the grand chorus of "O fatal day" -- and after that the touching minor of "For thee my brother Jonathan" by Mrs. Billington. -- The act concluded with the Grand Double Chorus from Israel in Egypt of "the Lord shall reign for ever & ever" -- and the concluding verse at the end of it, "Sing ye to the Lord" by Mrs. Billington contained the finest

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swell of notes I ever heard. -- The third act was entirely selected from Judas Maccabeus. After the Overture, the Chorus of "Mourn, mourn, ye afflicted children" was astonishing -- then Mrs. Billington in "Pious Orgies" was heart melting -- in sacred music, tho' she does not go beyond the chaste simplicity & elegance of Mara, yet the powerful swell of her voice & softness of her tones have a charming effect: and in the lively & pathetic strains of miscellaneous music she is far before Mara, while in the Bravura style, she is undoubtedly the finest in the world. Such is her affinity with Handel's



music, that every impulse seems to be created sympathetically in her utterance of song -- the wonderful compass, equality, & sweetness, & power of her voice, and the astonishing taste, feeling, & ease of execution are beyond everything; while the amazing power of running thro' the longest divisions of above two octaves, together with the width of her chest, which enables her to swell, quaver, shake, or hold a note for an immense time, make her completely perfect -- if there is a fault, it is in her voice itself -- in which, tho' it is altogether the best in the world, the lower tones are some of them not so round & clear as the remainder of the voice.

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The Choruses of "O Father whose almighty power" -- of "We come, we come in bright array" & "Fallen is the foe," especially the last, were very fine indeed. Bartleman in "Arm, arm, ye brave" was very energetic & animated. The more I hear him the more I like his style; there is so much spirit and grandeur in it, that the rough part of his voice loses its unpleasantness. I did not much admire Harrison's song of "O Liberty, thou choicest treasure," but Miss Sharp executed with much grace & sweetness the very pretty tune of "Come ever smiling Liberty." Harrison in "Sound an alarm" and the recitative was enchanting, but Mrs. Billington in "From mighty Kings" was beyond every thing -- in the quick part of the tune her execution seemed exactly like the finest pianoforte: it was without exception the best sung song I ever heard. I never heard any thing so delightful; it seemed more so from my knowing the great difficulty of the tune. Her cadence at the end was indeed angelic. -- The concluding Semichorus & grand chorus formed a grand burst of harmony & concluded this most exquisite selection.

The First Grand Concert at Bristol Theatre was on Tuesday Eve, April 12th: -- it was supported by the same capital performers, with the exception of the Chorus singers, as the Oratorio, and was if possible a still more delightful treat. -- The stage was fitted up as an orchestra, and the concert opened with Haydn's Grand Military Overture, which, tho' I have heard it before, never before appeared so exquisite, as it was so admirably performed. -- Miss Sharp then sung a charming & rather difficult air by Cimarosa: after which Mrs. Billington & Harrison sung the beautiful Duet of "Together let us range the fields" by Dr. Boyce -- in which the harmony was exquisite, & Mrs. Billington's high cadence both wonderful & pleasing. They were encored & very readily enchanted us with it again.-- Mr. Weichsel then played a concerto on the violin, in which he displayed most astonishing powers & facility of execution -- he is indeed one of the best violin players in Europe: -- and his execution, tho' I don't think his taste (for he gives way to frenzies of over-embellishment), is very great indeed: he is very spirited & very correct & is a most admirable leader of the band & accompanies his Sister in a capital style.

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I cannot go thro' all the particulars of this concert as I could not get a bill of it, & I have since heard so many others that I forget some of it. -- I well recollect, however, a most charming concerto by Ashe on the flute. He is the finest player on that Instrument I ever heard, & his facility & clearness of execution is only surpassed by the taste & feeling of his tones. Mr. Lindley, tho' but a young man, is considered

as the first Violincello in the world. He played a concerto on it, and the wonderful height to which he soared & the silver tones resembling a flute which he drew from it were to me astonishing & far beyond what I had conceived to be in the power of the instrument. Bartleman sung a very fine song. Harrison sung most delightfully & was encored & repeated the Mansion of Peace; his equal fine round plaintive tones are well adapted to the song & he gave it with great taste & expression. -- A charming comic Italian Terzetto was sung by Harrison, Bartleman, & Mrs. Billington, which had a delightful effect, & was also encored & repeated; but the two most

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delightful songs were a most beautiful Italian Bravura of Bach's by Mrs. Billington in which her wonderful execution, taste, & volubility were displayed in a rapturous degree -- but the last song of all she sung exceeded every thing for execution and effect. It was "Sweet Bird that shun'st the noise of folly" -- in this very difficult piece, the beautiful swell of her voice, the successive shakes, the warbling of the birds, & the cadence at the conclusion are beyond every thing I ever heard. -- Upon the whole I was more delighted than in the morning as the Music was more varied, & Mrs. Billington appeared to still greater advantage.

The next Musical Meeting was Mr. Rauzzini's Spring Concert in the Upper Rooms at Bath -- at which all the principal singers except Miss Sharp attended, and all the band also. -- It opened with Haydn's Military Overture which was again delightful. It is, I think, a piece of music which in itself contains more striking & original beauties than any other I ever heard. --

Mr. Bartleman then sung a very fine martial song of Dr. Callcott's called "Angel of life" in his usual energetic & powerful style.

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We then had a most delightful glee, "Oh Nanny wilt thou gang with me," which was sung admirably & with great effect by Harrison, Knyvett, Bartleman, & Mrs. Billington. Her cadence & turn in one part of the tune was delicious. It was encored & repeated. Mr. Weichsel then performed a concerto on the violin in the same capital style as last night, but the music of it was, if possible, still better. Mr. Lindley also played another admirable concerto on the violincello: which received deservedly great applause. Harrison sung a very pretty Italian air of Ferrari's, tho' rather too plaintive. After that succeeded what to me was the greatest pleasure I ever experienced: an Italian Bravura composed for Mrs. Billington by Rauzzini, and which embraces 3 octaves & goes thro' every possible variety of execution -- it was long, tho' it appeared short: -- but I never shall forget the astonishing ease & beauty of her staccato notes of E & F in alt -- altogether it was tje most complete specimen of vocal art I ever heard or ever expect to hear again.

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The second act began with a very good overture composed by Rauzzini -- and after that Mrs. Billington, Harrison, & Bartleman sung a very pretty Italian trio; -- Harrison then sung "Pleasure my former ways," which I heard again with enjoyment -- after that Harrison, Knyvett, & Bartleman sung the Glee of "the Fairest Hours," which was very pretty as their voices accord together exactly. The next was the exquisite Trio by Handel, "The Flocks shall leave the Mountains," which

was most admirably sung by Mrs. Billington, Harrison, & Bartleman -- the raging bass music sung by the latter has a very fine effect & forms a delightful harmony with the smoothness of the first two. It was deservedly encored & repeated. -- Bartleman next sung his song of "O Lord have mercy" which I had heard before. -- The last & best was the "Soldier Tired" by Mrs. Billington. She sings it rather too quick on purpose to display her powers, but the clearness, rapidity, and beauty of her execution make it exquisite indeed. The "Soldier Tired" to my delight was repeated -- & still more inimitably than before. -- I never had such a musical feast as at this concert.

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The Second Oratorio performed at St. Paul's church (on Thursday morning, April 14th) was The Creation by Haydn: the numerous beauties of which it is impossible to describe. I never saw anything which so forcibly affected the feelings and at the same time struck the ear so often with the most delightful harmony. It is quite in a different style from the Oratorios of Handel, & certainly much more gratifying to the ears & more various in its beauties; at the same time it must be confessed that tho' the Choruses equal & even surpass the geneality of Handel's, & the Instrumental part is far superior, yet the airs are as much inferior, as the other parts are superior. -- The Introduction gives a grand crash of instruments, & an excellent idea of Chaos achieved by the strong yet plaintive surge of the clarinets & oboes -- nothing can be more sublime or affecting. All the music of it is wonderfully fine & striking, -- I shall not however attempt to particularize all the songs and choruses, but merely mention those by which I was most pleased. -- The air of "Now vanish before the holy beams" by Mr. Bartleman as Raphael was very grand,

but it is impossible to give any idea of the sublime grandeur of the second chorus, beginning "Despairing cursing rage" -- nothing can exceed the storm and rage except the heavenly harmony which succeeds at the words "a new created world springs up" -- I never heard any thing before which moved me so strongly: nobody who has not heard that Chorus can know the power of music. -- Mrs. Billington as Gabriel sung most beautifully "The marv'ulous work" and the chorus after it of "and to the ethereal vaults resound" -- was enchanting. Mr. Bartleman, too, in the air of "Rolling in foaming billows" was wonderfully great: but I never shall forget the exquisite expression of Mrs. Billington in the enchanting air (the finest air in the Oratorio) of "With verdure clad the fields appear" -- nothing could exceed it. The Chorus of "Awake the harp" was a delightful celebration of music. The concluding choruses & semichoruses by the Principal Singers to the first part of it, are truly delightful, particularly the psalmic grand Finale of "The Heavens are telling the Glory of God."

In the second part, Miss Sharp sung very sweetly the air of "On mighty wings uplifted soars" --

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Bartleman in "Be fruitful all" was very striking: but the Trio between Bartleman, Harrison, & Mrs. Billington was exquisite, especially where they all join in "How many are thy works." The Chorus of "the Lord is great" is very grand, & Bartleman's fine bass voice was very powerful in the Recitative of "Straight opening her fertile womb" and the air of "Now heaven in all her glory shone" -- and the caprices of the accompanying music mimicked each of the creatures as he recounted them, lion, tiger, nimble stag, and neighing steed, bleating flocks, and even swarming insects & the evil creeping worm. -- Harrison was charming in the

air of "In native worth & honor clad." In the Semichorus & Grand Chorus at the end, the harmony was beautiful; particularly the full burst of "Achieved is the glorious work."

Harrison's opening recitative of the 3<sup>d</sup> part was very fine, and Bartleman & Mrs. Billington as Adam & Eve in the long Hymn Duet were exquisite, as were the intervening choruses. The Grand chorus of "Hail bounteous Lord" was enchanting. The last Duet of Adam & Eve was also exquisite, but the concluding grand chorus of "Sing to the Lord ye voices all" was a combination of harmony I never heard equalled. -- I was highly delighted by the Creation, tho' it is rather short.

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The Second Grand Concert at the Bristol [Theatre], on Thursday Evg. April 14. It began with the beautiful Overture of the Surprise by Haydn, which is really enchanting -- but with the exception of Lindley's concerto on the violincello, in which he again displayed his astonishing power over the instrument in a diff<sup>t</sup> one from yesterday & the day before, the Overture to the second act, & Pleyel's new Concertante which was most admirably performed by Weichsel & Ashley & Seine on the violin, Lindley on the violincello, Ashe on the flute, Smith on the clarionet, & J. Ashley on the bassoon, the concert was entirely vocal: -- and began with the Glee of "the Fairest flowers" by Harrison, Knyvett, and Bartleman which I heard yesterday. The next was a Canzonet sung by Mrs. Billington & Bartleman in which their execution was beautifully neat, but I did not much admire the music of it. Miss Sharp then sung an aria from Bianchi which was very pretty: after that we had the charming glee of "Shepherds I have lost my love" by Mrs. Billington, Harrison,

Knyvett, & Bartleman. Mr. Harrison then sung with great expression the fine tune of "Gentle airs"; & then Mrs. Billington delighted our ears with an Italian

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Bravura, which she executed in the highest style of excellence, but with which I was not so delighted as with that of last night as it did not make such a complete display of her astonishing powers of voice & execution.

In the second act we had the exquisite Trio of "The Flocks shall leave the mountains" which was encored & with which I was again most highly delighted; nothing can have a finer effect than the music so beautiful supported by such singers. Miss Sharp then sung with much feeling and expression an Italian air by Mengozzi -- after which we had the enchanting glee again of "Oh Nanny wilt thou gang with me" which was encored & with the excellent modulation of which every one must be pleased. -- Bartleman then sung again with great effect Dr. Callcott's grand song of "Angel of life" -- after which Harrison, Knyvett, & Bartleman gave us a very fine glee of Dr. Callcott's called "Peace to the souls of the Heroes." -- Mrs. Billington then concluded this delicious concert by her admirable bravura of the "Soldier Tired " -- in which of course she was encored,

VII, 127

and tho' she sings it rather too fast for the accompaniments, yet the astonishing & exquisite manner of her execution, the taste, spirit, & ease with which runs thro' it, the delicious swell of her voice, the fine clear sound of the upper D, altogether make it the most completely perfect specimen of vocal powers I ever heard or ever shall hear.



The Third Oratorio performed in St. Paul's church, on Friday April 15th, was the Messiah. After the overture, the grand anthem of "Comfort ye my people" was admirably sung by Harrison. Tho' his voice is not so extensive as that of Miss Daniels who sung it last Sunday, the delicacy of his execution & sweetness of his tones make up for it. I cannot pretend to particularize all the various fine songs & recitatives of this sublime composition, but the choruses of "For unto us a child is given" -- & of "Glory to God" were sublime indeed -- and Mrs. Billington in "Rejoice greatly" was astonishing: the ease with which she ran thro' all the difficult passages was only surpassed by her exquisite cadence at the end.

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The Grand Chorus of "His Yoke is easy" concluded the first act. -- The second act opened with the beautiful chorus of "Behold the Lamb" & then Knyvett sung very well "He was despised" -- but the chorus of "All we like sheep" was delightful indeed, tho' the text is ill fitted to the melody. Harrison in the air of "Behold & see" was very affecting, and Mrs. Billington very grand & impressive in the song of "But thou didst not leave" -- after which the Semichorus of the principal singers and the Grand Chorus, beginning "Lift up your heads" was a most wonderfully affecting piece -- & contained a very grand power of harmony. Bartleman in the song of "Thou art gone up on high" was very bold & spirited: -- and Miss Sharp executed most charmingly the beautiful air "How beautiful are the feet" -- but ... Bartleman's astonishing powers & grandeur & boldness of expression in "Why do the nation" ... was the best I have heard him sing & the music of it is very grand: --

VII, 129

but I can never do justice to the Grand Chorus of "Hallelujah"

at the end of the second act -- it is without exception the most sublime and striking composition I ever heard, and it contains every variety and modulation of harmony, from the softest chords to the loudest burst of sound -- I shall never forget the impression it made on me. I seemed as if entranced in amazement.

The Third act began with the beautiful song of "I know that my Redeemer" -- in which she [Mrs. Billington] was delicious indeed -- the tones of her voice are so full; and nothing could be more sublime than the ascending passage in the second part: after that Bartleman in "the trumpet shall sound" and Harrison & Knyvett in the fine duet of "O death where is thy sting" were delightful, and impressed upon me Handel's genius for dramatic movement and variation. Miss Sharp sung very well "If God be for us," and then this sublime Oratorio concluded with the Grand Chorus of "Worthy is the Lamb," which, especially the conclusion, is elevating & striking in the highest degree --- nothing can exceed the beauty of the repetitions of "For ever & ever, Amen"; -- but

VII, 130

yet I don't think it equal to the "Hallelujah" which is the finest composition I ever heard. Tho' I greatly prefer to the Messiah, on account of the choral & instrumental parts of the Music, Haydn's Oratorio of the Creation, yet I must place the "Hallelujah" above every other composition: and also allow that Handel's airs & songs are far superior to those of Haydn. -- It was [with] heart felt regret that I heard the last strains of Mrs. Billington's delightful voice -- but I can recollect with pleasure the various delightful songs both sacred & miscellaneous, which I have heard her & the other excellent performers execute.

I have written down above of what most struck me at the performance of the Three Oratorios & Two Grand Concerts at Bristol, and at Rauzzini's benefit Concert at Bath: -- In these six music meetings I have heard more good music that I ever heard before in my life -- so that in one week I have heard music superior to any thing I could have formed an idea of -- and instrumental as well as vocal: indeed these six music meetings have afforded every variety of pleasure of which music is capable.

[ 19. April. 1803 ]

Bath

VII, 133

... The Play was the Merchant of Venice, which for the Bath Company was by no means capitally acted: tho' some of the characters were very well.

VII, 134

Kemble in Shylock is most wonderful -- the scene where he negotiates the bond -- the scene after the flight of his daughter, the joy at hearing of Antonio's losses, the determined rancorous malignity with which he insists on his bond, the fallen countenance he puts on when he finds it out of his power, are chef d'oeuvres of art, which to be felt or imagined must be seen: -- I have seen him before in Shylock but never so consummately great as to night. -- Charlton in Antonio was very dull & stupid. Cunningham made an excellent Gratiano, tho' rather noisy. Edwin in Lancelot was very comical ' Evans in Gobbo was very laughable. Taylor in Lorenzo sung, but not to please my ear. Sedley looked well in Bassanio, but his acting was very indifferent. Miss Daniels sung delightfully in "Listen to the voice of love" which she introduced into the character of Jessica & sung it with delightful effect. Miss Smith was very well in Nerissa, pert but proper. Mrs. Johnstone disappointed me in Portia. Her looks are not

the best & she does not retain the dialogue well. She was not impressive enough in the Trial scene. I see she can't be impressive without violence. In this character at least, she is far inferior to Mrs. Kemble. -- Upon the whole, however, the play went off extremely well, as it always must if tolerably acted from its own intrinsic merit.

VII, 135

The farce was Of age to morrow -- one of the most foolish in the world: tho' it is certainly very laughable & even now that I have seen it so often, still affords much amusement. It was most admirably acted by Mrs. Edwin in Maria, who looked beautifully, acted delightfully, & sung wretchedly, & by Elliston, whose versatility & talents in whatever he does are always excellent. Mrs. Egan was very well in Lady Brumback. Evans a very stupid Baron Piffleberg: but the comical strutt of Edwin in Hans Molkus, it is impossible to do justice to. I never saw any actor who so completely possessed the power of making one laugh -- the military duet between him & Elliston was capital. -- Upon the whole was highly amused with both play and farce.

[ 21. April. 1803 ]

VII, 137

... The play was Pizarro -- in which Kemble appeared in all his glory. Nothing can exceed his noble air & manner -- his attitudes -- his countenance -- the fire of his eyes -- the animation of his action -- so perfect a performance cannot be imagined: indeed he far surpassed every idea I could have formed of it -- & in many parts he most forcibly affected the feelings -- in the scene with the Centinel, then with Alonzo, then with Elvira, & lastly with Pizarro in the 4th act, he is most

inimitable -- and also his death is astonishing -- the whole performance is indeed a model of perfection in acting.

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The scenery, decorations, dresses, music, & bands of priests, virgins, warriors, &c., are capitally got up; far superior to what they are in Newcastle -- and the play is performed with great effect considering the smallness of the stage. Edwin was very serious & impressive in Orozembo, tho' a character quite out of his line. Eyre was very tolerable in Pizarro. He looked it well, & if he seldom exceeds mediocrity, he never falls below it. Sedley is very tame & stupid in Alonzo. He speaks very ill. Charlton very well in Las Casas, especially in his appeal "Pizarro hear me! Hear me chieftains!" & "Oh men of blood!"--Egan very stupid in Ataliba. -- Mrs. Edwin is a charming actress, but Cora is not exactly her part -- she was very animated as she always is, & very correct, yet she does not affect the feelings like Mrs. Kemble. -- Mrs. Johnstone would be a very good Elvira if she did not rant too much -- in some parts of it she was excellent; she wants a little judgment to correct her violence. ...

VII, 139

The farce was the Romp: -- in which Mrs. Edwin was really bewitching. Her little figure & smiling countenance are admirably adapted to Priscilla Tomboy. Taylor in Watty was excellent, as was Edwin in Barnacle & Tebay in Capt. Sightly -- & Miss Smith in Penelope: -- the rest are nothing. -- Upon the whole I was highly entertained and really delighted by the inimitable performance of Kemble in Rolla.

[ 26. April. 1803 ]

... We had the front row of the green boxes, & I was highly delighted by the grand acting of Kemble. The Play was the Distressed Mother. I saw it in Paris admirably acted by Talma in Orestes, & before that I saw it in England at Newcastle with Mrs. Siddons in Hermione. It is a very

VII, 150

interesting play, tho' rather too regular & wire drawn for an English audience -- it requires all the characters to be capitally acted, which was not the case. When I saw it in Newcastle, Mrs. Kemble in Andromache was charmingly affecting, Siddons very well in Orestes, & Egerton decent in Pyrrhus -- & Mrs. Siddons in Hermione outshone even herself, so astonishingly great were her powers -- here Mrs. Sedley was too full of sighs & moans, & looked too fat & plump for the wretched Andromache -- she is but indifferent. Mrs. Johnstone in Hermione looked well & in some parts of it was very good, but she rants too much & is very apt to forget her part. Eyre in Pyrrhus would have been very well if he could look better, but he has a heavy look unbecoming the impetuous Grecian. Kemble in Orestes was astonishing. His looks, attitudes, & powerful manner of speaking to the soul, were all affecting, but in the mad scene he was beyond himself -- it was horrible to look at & seemed complete reality: certainly that scene was the ne plus ultra of acting: far superior to Talma at Paris.

The farce was the Prisoner at large: it is very foolish but laughable. Edwin in Muno was very droll & Evans in old Dowdle highly laughable.

[ 28. April. 1803 ]

...Hamlet was the play and I was delighted by the exquisite performance of Kemble. It is most certainly his first character -- there are in it so many discriminating shades, so many varieties & turns of the mind that it is, I think, the most difficult character -- the two soliloquies, the scene with the Ghost, the scene with the players,

VII, 153

the representation of the play, & the closet scene with the Queen are altogether complete: in short, the whole character is perfection. His being so constantly on the stage renders it particularly so: and the beauty of the language & interest of the play, all of which lays with Hamlet, make it a most exquisite entertainment. Kemble owes much to the dramatic modulation of voice & delivery; his features, too, seem to mould themselves to suit the character; but his very step & stride are also altered: the quick, furtive, & slightly stooped movements of Shylock, the proud stride of Rolla; but what variations in Hamlet! -- now a broad stance, now faltering steps, and a slight jig for quizzing Polonius. The rest of the characters were poorly acted as they generally are. Some were decent. -- Mrs. Sedley as the Queen looked well. Mrs. Taylor was a very poor Ophelia, poor indeed after Mrs. Kemble. -- Charlton was stupid in Horatio, & Sedley in Laertes -- Evans decent in Polonius & Cunningham in Ostrick. Egan very bad in the King. Edwin was excellent in the Gravedigger. The play was, however, truly delightful owing to the exquisite performance of Hamlet.

The farce was Ways & Means -- which I did not stay to see, as I was engaged to go to Mr. De Fries's: where were Mrs. Roche, Mrs. Blake & her sister, the Plunkets & De Fries's. We had some

singing for above an hour -- near two hours. -- Mrs. Blake sung & I also. We sung the last Duet in Artaxerxes. She sings an excellent second & is a charming singer -- great taste & execution: -- she sung "Hope told a flattering tale" particularly well.

[30. April. 1803 ]

VII, 155

...Mrs. De Fries, Mrs. Plunket, & I went to the play at six. We had very good places in the lower boxes. -- The play was Rule a wife & have a wife, which I never saw before, -- & with which I was highly delighted. There is so much spirit, fun, whim & wit in it, & the contrivances of Estifania, the credulity & bluster of the Copper Captain, the affected stupidity & subsequent dignity & manliness of Leon form altogether a most delightful entertainment. Kemble in Leon was capital indeed -- he quite divested his manner & countenance of all meaning where he affects to be a fool, & after that the energy & grandeur of his manner was most exquisite. Mrs. Sedley in Margaritta looked well & acted very tolerably; indeed she improves on acquaintance.

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Elliston ought to have acted the Copper Captain as he has often done it -- Cunningham however, tho' he laughed too much & made too much noise, was very droll & animated -- but Mrs. Edwin in Estifania was bewitching -- she would have enamoured any one -- nothing could exceed the archness of her tricks upon the Captain, nor the irony of her "You have the art to cozen me" at the close of the 1st act. Indeed the whole play was capitally acted & went off very well indeed. The rest of the characters are of no great consequence. -- I am truly sorry this is the last I shall see of Kemble for some time. I never saw him to more advantage than in these six times. He acts only 3 nights more -- Octavian in the Mountaineers, Rolla again, & Richard the 3rd. --



The farce to-night was the Tale of Mystery which was capitally got up with regard to Scenery, Music & dresses, & was also very well acted -- in particular Eyre in Count Ronaldi was capital, Edwin in Francisco was very well tho' it is out of his line -- Mrs. Edwin was excellent in Selina but inferior to Mrs. Gibbs -- & Mrs. Jidies made very little of Fiametta which Mrs. Matlocks made so much of at Covent Garden. -- Got home at 11. Had a great deal of talk with a pleasant young Londoner about plays, &c. Having canvassed the merits of all the Bath Company & most of the London performers, he went home to his lodgings & I to bed.

[ L. May. 1803 ]

VII, 157

This morning I enter into the 23rd year of my life -- time passes quickly if not profitably, but in the last year many and various are the scenes I have witnessed; at my last birthday I was only two or three days arrived in Holland -- now I am just leaving Bath: -- perhaps before it returns again, I may have left this transitory scene. -- I ought however to be grateful to Heaven that has during all that time preserved all my nearest relations and friends, and inflicted on me no misfortune. May I endeavour to deserve the many blessings I enjoy!

[ 17. May. 1803 ]

London

Waldie: VII, 226

... I then walked to Leicester Square & dined with my Uncle who had got a letter from my Father: They are all well at home. -- My Aunt fixed that I am come to a room in Leicester Square to morrow; after dinner I went to Catherine Street & went with Mr. & Mrs. Hodgson & B. Ormston to Covent Garden to the Pit. -- The House was very full indeed. It was for the benefit of Mrs. Martyr. -- The play was the Haunted Tower, which by permission of Drury Lane Theatre was

VII, 227

on this night represented at Covent Garden. The play itself is silly, but the Music is truly delightful. -- Nothing can do justice to Braham in the character of Lord William. -- In "From hope's fond dream" -- & "Tho' time has from your Lordship's face" in the "Pollacca" which he introduced, he was exquisite indeed, & was encored in the two last. In "Spirit of my sainted sire" I did not admire him so much; it is too noisy for his delicate powers, but he executed it with great spirit; it is indeed too easy & does not admit that beautiful decoration which he bestows on ad libitum passages. Fawcett was capital in Edward -- & introduced the comic song "Woman" from Lock & Key -- w<sup>ch</sup> is truly laughable, & in it he was encored. -- Emery in the "Baron of Oakland was very ridiculous" & acted admirably. Miss Martyr is pretty but very awkward & sings but indifferently. She was but a poor Elinor. -- Mrs. Martyr made as much as possible of Cicely: but Signora Storace in Adela was most truly comic -- her dress, air, & manner are very ludicrous & she seems so happy acting, & so

much at her ease. She is most charming, and in the song of the "Carpet weaver" & "Whither my love" was delightful; tho' in that of "Be mine tender passion" I liked her best -- she was melting in the slow part, & in the quick part ran thro' the passages in a most charming & spirited manner; her upper notes are clear & beautiful, but there is a grating sharpness about her lower tones, which is unpleasant. Braham & Incledon sing the Hunt<sup>s</sup> Duet from family quarrels -- It was encored & was delightful. Emery sung the Yorkshireman from the same, & Munden sung John Bull or the Sights of London. Incledon sung the "End of Tom Moody" and "Black Eyed Susan" -- both were most delightful, but the latter was charming; it is certainly his chef d'oeuvre.

The farce of Honest Thieves is foolish but very laughable. -- Johnstone in Teague, Munden in Obadiah, Simmons in Abel, Ruth by Mrs. St. Ledger, & Mrs. Day by Mrs. Davenport were excellent indeed & afforded us much amusement.