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Wied to Widd (Extract)

Your mama has chosen Wednesday to answer your letters and those of Mr Allison; your Sister, again, has chosen Sunday.

I hope that you preserve most carefully all the letters that you receive, and particularly those of your mama. If you were asked, to answer ^{whose} letters - out of the number of letters that you have ever received - were and are best written? your heart would say at once, your mama's. And, after a little more consideration, you would perceive that ~~if~~ that preeminence is due to her not because she is your mother, but because she is superior in mind to all persons with whom you are come ^{as yet} in contact. By analysing a little more your own feelings and trying to recollect all the observations that arose in your bosom on many an occasion, you would say: yes I have a proof that my mother is superior in mind not only to the generality of mankind, but to great many chosen few. Did I not hear her discuss many a subject before a number of persons? and did I not observe that all felt whilst she was speaking a feeling of satisfaction which went to that extent that when she stopped short, ^{speaking} no one dared open his lips after her?

And what are the persons, I beg of you,
to whom we listen with sati'sfaction, and
after whom we do not venture to open our
Eyes? Why, but the persons whom we feel
and do acknowledge silently (that is by
silence) to be superior to us.

Yes, Midd, that would be your reasoning.
We often payed your mama that mute
acknowledgment of superiority: myself
as well as your papa, your sister as well
as yourself. — And you know, your mama's
constant complaint: that nothing tires
her so much as the visitors. Why? because
is compelled with them to speak for all.
And, why so? why, because the others have
nothing to say to her, and in her presence
dare not open their mouths.

The very ^{same} thing occurs, when in a company
composed of persons each of whom can
play, say, on the piano — a real artist
makes his appearance. Be sure, that after
that artist has played, no one will venture
to play after him, and the boldest will grow
to mid in his presence. That has been
seen often and is seen every day.

~~We~~ Besides we are all players
in speech, but we are struck ~~dumb~~
dumb when an artist appears among
us. You will understand therefore
your mama's complaint about the visitor

and the cause that seals their mouths
whenever she speaks, whenever they
are in her presence.

Now, everybody knows that
your mama writes as well as she speaks.
Vigour, great limpidity, and majestic
lovely flow of diction are characteristic
qualities of her style.

But she writes without any
effort and unconscious of her power,
just as wrote M^{me} de Sevigne and
Lady W. Montagu. Posterity has
collected their letters and ever
since holds them before the world
as models of writing.

Do not you lose a single leaf of
your mama's writings. She did
not even suspect that she has all
the precious qualities of great
writers.

my paper is at an end
so good bye for the present

only the name that led their hands
 to receive the bread which they
 were in the habit of taking
 You, ever last of those that
 your name is given out well as to speak
 A long great limping and miserable
 lovely often of his own and earnest
 practice of his name
 And the subject of his name

~~of his name and his name~~
 will all were the holy and
 say the name of the Lord
 called that he had and every
 since held them before the world
 as a model of virtue
 do not you have a single leaf
 from a woman's writing in the book
 that ever respect the name had all
 the precious quality of good
 writing

in your own hand
 I have seen
 in your hand
 and held in
 your hand
 and held in
 your hand

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wed to widd.

23^d Nov. 1816

You have promised your name in your last letter a description of the Palace Guildhall to which it was your intention to go. all were happy to hear that you had that intention, thus will receive with interest and pleasure your description. as to myself I am not only interested in the matter but have taken it already as a proof of your good heart.

Perhaps it is right here to record that you belong to a family that has inscribed its name in it illustrious characters in the history of England. By inheriting their name, you inherit their fame and a duty to hand it over to posterity in a lustre undiminished. your Father perhaps least aware of it, has great many of those sterling qualities that distinguished his ancestors, but he has foreborne bringing them under the notice of the public eye: but still in his veins runs that blood, that led to glorious deeds your ancestors: a great decision - scrupulous rigidity - a readiness and activity unparalleled. - He has a perfect confidence in his powers, for he always depends on himself - wrong or right - in every action. Such confidence is always a sure sign of ones superiority. -

If he asks you for advice, do not fancy that he does it because he does not know what to do; quite the reverse, he tries only whether you have not hit upon the very same thing as himself. If you have, then he is confirmed in his opinion; if you have not, he follows all the same his own idea.

He is quiet in forming an opinion. It shews a determination of character - because he never hesitates - An invaluable quality in a general.

But what crowns his rare qualities is the faculty he has of making his body a willing slave to his thought. You would say that he were thinking with all his body, so well the body renders his thought. Indeed, thought and execution with him are all the same - no space between them.

No one feels more the value of this quality than myself because I do not possess it. To arrive from resolution to execution I am obliged to remove from my way a rock of idleness which obstructs my passage. - Not so your Father. With him you would say the execution begins before he has done thinking, the one following the other so rapidly. I have seen him often return home tired and wanting rest: but if he found that something were to be done, he set to work at once and as fresh as if nothing happened.

His body obeys his thought willingly and instantly. And that body of his has not a large volume. Only thin can be great: Copulency is always an argument against one's aptitude.

Lastly your Father never imitates any one, that is he never borrows ideas of another. No one can do it but who is rich by himself, who has his own resources. - you will lose your time with your Father, if you say to him: Do so, because others do it. That is no reason for him. He knows that we are responsible for what we do, therefore should act by squaring our deeds with our own responsibility. Aping is always a very inferior function, unworthy of man, and leads often to shame and ruin.

Murderer's blood. You have two excellent bloods in your veins and an illustrious name to bear: turn only your eye into yourself and you shall see that whatever your ancestors have been has entered freely into your soul. For, nothing is lost in this world: you have heard of hereditary virtues and hereditary diseases or vices. This is no mere figure of speech. It is a truth and

a reality. You know that the son
of a madman will be a madman—
do what you like. Let me tell you
that wisdom is as well inherited
by children as folly.

As I know it, under Widd, and
by knowing from what illustrious
parents you descended, spur
yourself early in your life to
noble deeds that you may feel
one day the life that you live

Whoever has that feeling
has immortality — for
immortality is life felt

4th January 1847 267

my dear widd

What wishes have you formed with the new year? Every one has a different wish, differing in quantity and in quality for a wish is a picture of what we feel we do deserve and could best enjoy. -
Hence, to inscribe it ^{in your memory} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~the~~ ^{the} basis of our wish therefore is our own desert and the force of using the gotten. A great man will have great wishes; - man simple will have little and timid wishes.

Tell me therefore your wishes and I shall be able to tell you at once whether your soul is large or contracted.

And do not imagine, my dear widd that there are wishes which could not be fulfilled. God who has given us the wishes (for all is God's, we have not yet created a thing which we could call ours, the wishes therefore are not of our make) - God who has given us the wishes, holds in his hands a satisfaction for each of them. A man that expects little does not deserve more. You see by this that our expectations are the measure of our aptitude.

Now I come round to my friend Weid
and ask him what wishes he has formed
with the new year. I take a great interest
in you, I have great expectations on you
as man. My expectations as you see
are a measure of what I ascribe to
you in point of talents & worth.
You have entered on the life under the
best advantages: a soul uncontro-
nated with vice, a mind freely
developped, a body well formed
and comely. ^{you wish therefore with respect}
In fact you started
in the life in perfect purity —
what are now your aspirations
what thoughts do occupy your
mind. — Tell me all that
with the new year and gladden
my heart with all that you
are going to tell me &