

Sunday 24 January 1813

Chawton Sunday even^g Jan^y 24.

My dear Cassandra

This is exactly the weather we could wish for, if you are but well enough to enjoy it. I shall be glad to hear that you are not confined to the house by an increase of Cold. M^r Digweed has used us basely. Handsome is as Handsome does; he is therefore a very ill-looking Man. I hope you have sent off a Letter to me by this day's post, unless you are tempted to wait till tomorrow by one of M^r Chute's franks.—We have had no letter since you went away, & no visitor, except Miss Benn who dined with us on friday; but we have received the half of an excellent Stilton cheese—we presume, from Henry.—My Mother is very well & finds great amusement in the glove-knitting; when this pair is finished, she means to knit another, & at present wants no other work.—We quite run over with Books. *She* has got Sir John Carr's Travels in Spain¹ from Miss B. & *I* am reading a Society-Octavo,² an Essay on the Military Police & Institutions of the British Empire, by Capt. Pasley³ of the Engineers, a book which I protested against at first, but which upon trial I find delightfully written & highly entertaining. I am as much in love with the Author as I ever was with Clarkson or Buchanan,⁴ or even the two M^r Smiths of the city.⁵ The first soldier I ever sighed for; but he does write with extraordinary force & spirit. Yesterday moreover brought us M^{rs} Grant's Letters, with M^r White's Comp^{ts}.—But I have disposed of them, Comp^{ts} & all, for the first fortnight to Miss Papiilon—& among so many readers or retainers of Books as we have in Chawton, I dare say there will [*p.* 2] be no difficulty in getting rid of them for another fortnight if necessary.—I learn from Sir J. Carr that there is no Government House at Gibraltar.—I must alter it to the Commissioner's.⁶—Our party on Wednesday was not unagreeable, tho' as usual we wanted a better Master of the House, one less anxious & fidgety, & more conversible. In consequence of a civil note that morn^g from M^{rs} Clement, I went with her & her Husband in their Tax-cart;⁷—civility on both sides; *I* would rather have walked, & no doubt, *they* must have wished I had.—I ran home with my own dear Thomas⁸ at night in great Luxury. Thomas was very useful. We were Eleven altogether, as you will find on computation, adding Miss Benn & two strange

Gentlemen, a M^r Twyford, curate of G^t Worldham who is living in Alton, & his friend M^r Wilkes.—I do not know that M^r T. is anything, except very dark-complexioned, but M^r W. was a useful addition, being an easy, talking, pleasantish young Man;—a *very* young Man, hardly 20 perhaps. He is of S^t Johns, Cambridge, & spoke very highly of H. Walter as a Schollar;—he said he was considered as the best Classick in the University.—How such a report would have interested my Father!—I could see nothing very promising between M^r P. & Miss P. T.⁹—She placed herself on one side of him at first, but Miss Benn obliged her to move up higher;—& she had an empty plate, & even asked him to give her some Mutton without being attended to for some time.—There might be Design in this, to be sure, on his side;—he might think an empty Stomach the most favourable for Love.—Upon M^{rs} Digweed's mentioning that she had sent the Rejected Addresses to M^r Hinton, I began talking to her a little about them & expressed my hope of their having amused her. Her answer was, "Oh! dear, [*p.* 3] yes, very much;—very droll indeed;—the opening of the House!—& the striking up of the Fiddles!"—What she meant,¹⁰ poor Woman, who shall say?²—I sought no farther.—The Papillons have now got the Book & like it very much; their neice Eleanor has recommended it most warmly to them.—*She* looks like a rejected Addresser. As soon as a Whist party was formed & a round Table threatened, I made my Mother an excuse, & came away; leaving just as many for *their* round Table,¹¹ as there were at M^{rs} Grants.—I wish they might be as agreeable a set.—It was past 10 when I got home, so I was not ashamed of my dutiful Delicacy.—The Coulthards were talked of you may be sure; no end of *them*; Miss Terry had heard they were going to rent M^r Bramston's house at Oakley, & M^{rs} Clement that they were going to live at Streatham.—M^{rs} Digweed & I agreed that the House at Oakley could not possibly be large enough for them, & now we find they have really taken it.—M^r Gauntlett is thought very agreeable, & there are *no* Children at all.—The Miss Sibleys want to establish a Book Society in their side of the Country, like ours. What can be a stronger proof of that superiority in ours over the Steventon & Manydown Society, which I have always foreseen & felt?²—No emulation of the kind was ever inspired by *their* proceedings; no such wish of the Miss Sibleys was ever heard, in the course of the many years of that Society's existence;—And what are their Biglands & their Barrows, their Macartneys & Mackenzies,¹² to Capt. Pasley's Essay on the Military Police of the Brit-

ish Empire, & the rejected Addresses? I have walked once to Alton, & yesterday Miss Papillon & I walked together to call on the Garnets. She invited herself very pleasantly to be my companion, when I went to propose to her the indulgence of accomodating us about the Letters from the Mountains. *I* had a very agreeable walk; if *she* had not, more shame for her, for I was quite as entertaining as she was. Dame G. is pretty well, & we found her surrounded by her well-behaved, healthy, large-eyed Children.¹³—I took her an old Shift & promised her a set of our Linen; & my Companion left some of her Bank Stock¹⁴ with her. [*p.* 4] Tuesday has done its duty, & I have had the pleasure of reading a very comfortable Letter. It contains so much, that I feel obliged to write down the whole of this page & perhaps something in a Cover.¹⁵—When my parcel is finished I shall walk with it to Alton. I beleive Miss Benn will go with me. She spent yesterday evening with us.—As I know Mary is interested in her not being neglected by her neighbours, pray tell her that Miss B. dined last wednesday at M^r Papillons—on Thursday with Capt. & M^{rs} Clement—friday here—saturday with M^{rs} Digweed—& Sunday with the Papillons again.—I had fancied that Martha w^d be at Barton from last Saturday, but am best pleased to be mistaken. I hope she is now quite well.—Tell her that I hunt away the rogues¹⁶ every night from under her bed; they feel the difference of her being gone.—Miss Benn wore her new shawl last night, sat in it the whole even^g & seemed to enjoy it very much.—“A very sloppy lane” last friday!—What an odd sort of country you must be in! I cannot at all understand it! It was just greasy here on friday, in consequence of the little snow that had fallen in the night.—Perhaps it *was* cold on Wednesday, yes, I beleive it certainly was—but nothing terrible.—Upon the whole, the Weather for Winter-weather is delightful, the walking excellent.—I cannot imagine what sort of a place Steventon can be!—My Mother sends her Love to Mary, with Thanks for her kind intentions & enquiries as to the Pork, & will prefer receiving her Share from the two *last* Pigs.—She has great pleasure in sending her a pair of Garters, & is very glad that she had them ready knit.—Her Letter to Anna is to be forwarded, if any opportunity offers; otherwise it may wait for her return.—M^{rs} Leigh’s¹⁷ Letter came this morn^g—We are glad to hear anything so tolerable of Scarlets.—Poor Charles & his frigate. But there could be no chance of his having one, while it was thought such a certainty.—I can hardly beleive Brother Michael’s news;¹⁸ We have no such idea in Chawton at least.—M^{rs} Bramstone is the sort of Woman I detest.—M^r Cottrell is worth ten of her. It is better to be

given the Lie direct, than to excite no interest. . . . [*end of p. 4, last leaf
of letter missing.*]

[Miss Austen
Steventon]