“(1791) On the 29th of April of this year Mr Holcroft and I wrote two anonymous letters, he to Mr Fox & I to Mr Sheridan. Mr Fox in a debate on the bill for giving a new constitution to Canada, had said, that he would not be the man to propose the abolition of a house of Lords in a country where such a power was already established, but as little would he be the man to recommend the introduction of such a power where it was not - this was by no means the only public indication he had shewn how deeply he had drunk of the spirit of the French revolution - the object of the above mentioned letters was to exite [sic] these two illustrious men to persevere gravely & inflexibly in the career on which they had entered - I was strongly impressed with the sentiment, that in the then existing circumstances of England & of Europe, great & happy improvements might be achieved under such auspices without anarchy & confusion - I believed that important changes must arise, & I was inexpressibly anxious that such changes should be effected under the conduct of the best & most competent leaders.

“This year was the main crisis of my life - in the summer of the year 1791 I gave up my concern in the New Annual Register, the historical part of which I had written for seven years, & abdicated, I hope for ever, the task of performing a literary labour the nature of which should be anything but the promptings of my own mind - I suggested to Robinson the bookseller the idea of composing

a Treatise on Political Principles, & he agreed to aid me in executing it - my original conception proceeded on a feeling of the imperfections & errors of Montesquieu, & a desire of supplying a less faulty work In the first fervour of my enthusiasm I entertained the vain imagination of “hewing a stone from the rock” which by its inherent energy & weight should overbear & annihilate all opposition, & placing the principles of politics on an immoveable basis. I need not add to anyone who has read the work, that it was my first determination to tell all that I
apprehended to be truth, confident that from such a proceeding the best results were to be expected. - My residence this year was in Titchfield Street, Marybone.

Duke reel 2

Chapter II

Continuation of autobiography - removal from Wisbeach - residence at Guestwick - coronation of George III - Schoolmistress - Religious bias of his instructors - resolves to be a clergyman - Sermons - temper of his father - desires to run away - the Cat - Schoolmaster - Mrs Sothren - visit to Norwich - the seat on the top of the organ

Chapter IV

The autobiographical fragment ends here. There are few written documents & few survivors to tell the story of the years intervening between 1773 & 1793 - twenty years during which a double & the momentous struggle was going forward - mentally it brought Godwin from being learned & a teacher the learning & teaching of the Latinistic form of Christianity into the character of an apostle of disbelief into scepticism & final disbelief. In a more worldly view.

During these years he Mr. Godwin prepared for the ecclesiastical state; he became a preacher of the gospel - seceded from the church - entered on an arduous struggle for a maintenance by the literary labour & finally established his fame as a man of genius.

No letters of his remain written during this period. I find a correspondance with [illeg] that concerns the carrying on the Annual Register & some a few letters from his family. Besides these there are some few memoranda & notes which continue the history of his life - together
with scattered remarks on the progress & formation of his opinions. These were written later in
life - & put down either as materials for the continuation of his autobiography - or to assist the
future writer of his life collater of his remains. I introduce these as they appear to accord with the
person or topic in hand. The following first among the following fragments is somewhat a
repetition of the foregoing pages - but it places some of the circumstances in a new & impressive
light; and I insert it here before we are carried onward to view the effects of the operations of
mind that it records.

......

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At this place ends any regular autobiography\textsuperscript{xii} A few notes carry on Mr Godwin’s personal
history for some years - & in process of time a good many letters fill up the void.

At seventeen Mr Godwin’s destiny in life future career was decided by a journey to
London.\textsuperscript{xiii} It is evident that at that time he possessed the intellectual ardour - yet ^constitutional^ calm of disposition that accompanied him through life. There was within him an anticipation of
future greatness. Even as a child, I have heard him say, that he was often influenced by the
reflection, “How would such or such an act look in the history of my life?” - this might be called
mere vanity, had not his aspirations after fame ^always ^ been of the purest & loftiest nature.

Timid yet in manner, but with considerable internal ^self^confidence; desirous of the
approbation & sympathy of others - yet without that overflowing sensibility communicativeness of
heart of soul disposition that wins love, & e or that co overflowing sensibility of soul that readily participates in the pains & pleasures of others - he was often doomed to receive coldness
when he felt his own heart warm open warmly to the sentiments of friendship; & often did
quiescence of manner & tardiness in understanding & entering into the feelings of others cause him
to chill & stifle those overflows of mind from those he loved which he would have received with
ardor had he been previously prepared.

In one of the last - & in many respects the wisest of Mr Godwin’s works, he refers in two
^three^

\textsuperscript{\ldots}

\[53v\]
three four of the pages to his own individual mind & in two of them to his own the feelings of his early boyhood.

The two extracts, marked by inverted commas, are taken from the last & in many respects the most delightful of my father’s works, Thoughts on Man.\textsuperscript{xiv}

“I find in myself, for as long a time as I can remember trace backward the records of Memory, a prominent vein of docility. Whatever it was proposed to teach me, that was in any degree accordant with my constitution & capacity, I was willing to learn. - In addition to this vein of docility, which early prompted me to learn whatever was proposed for my instruction, I felt in myself a sentiment of ambition - a desire to possess the qualifications which I found to be productive of esteem and that should enable me to excel among my contemporaries. I was ambitious to be a leader, & to be regarded by others with feelings of complacency. I had no wish to rule by brute force or compulsion; but I was desirous to govern by love, & honour, & “the cords of Man”.

In another portion of the same essay he remarks

“I go back to the recollections of my youth & can scarcely find where to draw a line between swiftness & maturity. The thoughts that occurred to me as far back as I can recollect them are often shrewd; the suggestions ingenious, the judgements not seldom acute. I feel myself the same individual all through. Sometimes I was unreasonably presumptuous, & sometimes unnecessarily [sic] mistrustful”.\textsuperscript{xv}

The briefest outline written by the man himself contains more real information in matters of biography than pages of uncertain guesses. The following skeleton of his life. Indeed nothing but conjecture is left us with regard to the early manhood of Mr Godwin - & we are glad to see the path through these years traced by his own hand, however slight the sketch may be - the following consists of brief annals of the years from 1772 to 1798,\textsuperscript{xvi} written either to assist his own memory if he continued his autobiography, or to prevent material mistakes in any future history.\textsuperscript{xvii}
Having arrived at a certain limit of the account which Mr Godwin gives of himself it is necessary to go back for the sake of greater detail - to give an account of his literary career - the political events in which he took a part - & to view his position in society - the variety of persons who sought to know him & the circles he formed out of these of near & particular friends - his domestic habits - & those peculiar modes of thinking & acting that influenced his manner of life.

........
During this year we begin the series of letters which mark & illustrate a very interesting portion of Godwin’s Life. Unfortunately, many of these letters are to him, instead of from him. But I see no reason for suppressing a reasonable number of them on that account. A private man’s life is spent among his friends and derives its interest from the variety of sentiments or events that occur in friendly intercourse. In modern times, even when living in the same town, thanks to the twopenny post, much of this intercourse is carried on by means of pen ink & paper & to give the notes & letters a man receives as well as writes is to cite the subjects on which his heart is set - which occupy his thoughts & influence him to sadness or enjoyment. Most of the letters I insert however are from celebrated people - nor do I insert any that do not derive an interest from the writer, from the subject, or the style in which light it throws in a just measure on my Father’s feelings & opinions. I give these letters chronologically - for, as far as I can judge, that is the most effectual way of interesting the reader.

The first in the series is from his mother who, as he mentioned in his Life, had after losing her husband become uncomfortable in mind, through association with Methodists. The primitive tone of the letter, its mixture of religious precept with a warning not to walk in the dark, renders it a precious relic of the good old times.

Following this is a letter from Godwin to his mother. I do not know whether it was written in answer - but as to a great degree it is an answer it can be inserted with as great propriety as in any other place. It is taken from copy in his own hand

writing; but being merely a copy accounts for the abruptness of the conclusion.

Doubtless in the real letter On the top of the real letter the proper ceremonies of subscription were observed.

........
19) dear William, Dalling Ap 5 92

I earnestly pray you may be making progress Heavenward, that is my fear & question, on account of the little appearance of religion in those that are left as well as those yt are departed this life, my life is bitter, am obleg’d to cry out with David Ps 13 How long wilt thou forget me O Lord forever, How long wilt thou hide thy face from me, I may say I pray without ceasing for you, 3 times a Day, besides the sleepless hours of the night and my strength is so feble that I know not how to sustain myself in the day somtimes. I know that its Gods work to make the hart susceptible of divine Impressions. Not ye most Eloquent Preachers, for they are but Earthen Vesels, Paul & [?Apolas] may plant & water, but without God gives the increase no fruit will spring up.

Godsword is full of promises to those who seek in sincerity, relying on Christ as the atoning sacrifice & intercesor, for sure ^I am^ that sinners cannot be justified, &, accepted, by any righteousness of their own. His word declares that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. and for that reason Christ came to make a propitiation, to offended justis, that all who beleive in him might be saved, You know its not ment without observing their faith by their obedience as far as we in our falen, &, depraved state, are capable. but its not said that his affronted & dispised patience will last always, a bare crying for mercy at last is a dangerous experiment. -- I’m obleg’d to you for the respect you profess for me. If I could see my Children walk in ye truth I should be happy, my Happiness is bound up in thires. It would sweeten my expiring moments, with Views of meeting those I have ^been^ ye instrument of bringing into life, in the happy Regions of blesedness, where all perplecty will forever cease. -- Thank ye for ye information you gave me respecting Natty, as to ye name of ye ship Captn &c [.] Am sorry he has not a better constitution, for he can have but few indulgences in the way of life He is in. the tempers of seafairing men are generally like the boisterous Element, I hope there will come a time that he will fare better, tho I dont think Mr Harry have been so kind to him as might be expected considering he had been so many

20) years in his service, his perseverance is a good sign, for what c’d be done wth him otherwise, I dont know. Am realy sorry John should accept a place an ^iniquitous ^employment, I think He might make a living of the two Clarks Places without the Lottery. I gave him my advice before I rec’d yours or knew anything abt it, not to disoblige Mr Finch, least he should lose his place. but would have you use all the influence you have to prevale with him to keep the two places, & never more to engage in the Lottery. I think he might do exceeding well with his pay, & the perquisites. I sincerely wish Mrs Cooper cou’d meet with an agreeable situation beleive they are hard to be met with, beleive there is somthing in her temper that forbids happiness, It must give Miss Cooper much uneasiness. Miss Cooper is ["sic" think a very senceable prudent agreeable Girl. Poor Hannah wrote me of the unlucky accident that befell her of her being push’d down in the street & her Cloths being spoiled, It was a great mercy she escaped so well as she did, & was able to get home I hope it will be a warning not to be out of an Evening at least not to come home alone. Intend writing to her soon, Am glad She has got such an agreeable girl as Miss Green to bare her company I was exceedingly hurt that you should have borrow’d 5 g ^guineas^ of Mr Venning so long, & then say to me when I was in Town [illeg] so mean as to mention it. What would you have him do, or what woud
you have done in such a predicament. However I have paid it, & shall expect your note for it. You can inquire at Fish street Hill when its likely, Mr Jacob will be in Town for you to meet him, & give him a proper note. These things so often repeated with all the oeconomy I am Mistress of shall not be able to do any thing for the young ones. -- I have a few friends that I highly value Mrs Sothren & Mrs Foster & Mrs A Hill is a comfort & help to me. but Mrs Sothren is a Person you ought to Rever as your second Mother, who nurtur’d you in your infancy. I did not expect she would[^sic] got this winter over She is so assmatic, thro divine mercy she is yet spared & hope shall see her in the course of the Summer. Mrs Hill was confined near 6 weeks has had a bad complaint of her neck, otherways much as usual --

She and Hully desire to be kindly remembered to you

from your Affecate Mother A Godwin

Shall give you a few sketches of a sermon I have lately read

[marginal note in MWS hand]

Here follows the abstract for sermon on xxv

....

xxvi [William Godwin to Ann Godwin]

I am exceedingly sorry that you should suffer yourself to form so unfavourable an opinion of my sentiments as & character as you express in your last letter. Not that I am anxious so far as relates to myself what opinion may be formed of me by any human jud being; I am answerable only to God & conscience. But I am sorry even without deserving it to occasion you the smallest uneasiness.

You seem to regret to my having quitted the character of a dissenting minister. To that I can only say with the utmost frankness whatever inference may be drawn from it, that the character quitted me, when I was far from desiring to part with it.

With respect to my religious sentiments I have faithfully endeavoured to improve the faculties & opportunities that God has given me, & I am perfectly easy about the consequences. No man can be sure that he is not mistaken, but I am sure that if I am so the best of beings will forgive my error. I have now more reason to hope for it than ever. My views I think were always right, but they now[^sic] nobler & more exalted. I am in every respect, so far as I am able to follow the dictates of my own mind, perfectly indiffe

.... rent to all personal gratification. I know of nothing worth living for but usefulness & the service of my fellow creatures. The only object I pursue is to increase as far as lies in my power the quantity of their knowledge & goodness & happiness. And as I derive every thing from God, I hope the situation in which I am now placed is that in which I am likely to be useful. Always anxious to resemble the great creator, can I be afraid of his displeasure? If he has resolved to punish in another world those who are most sincerely desirous to act properly & uprightly in this, what must we think of his goodness or his mercy

Mr M. xxvii had no authority from me to mention any circumstances relative to my pecuniary situation, but as he did mention them, I can only say that I believe he told you nothing but the truth. In signing my name to the
paper he mentioned I was made to believe I should essentially serve the person concerned, & be myself exposed to no risque. The fact turned out otherwise, & it is easy to condemn any mode of proceeding, when we have first seen in what manner it turns out. I am however cured by what has happened, & am pretty sure I shall never in future be induced to venture in a similar engagement. I have already paid upon account of this business near one hundred pounds, & the whole so far as relates to me may be considered as finished. But, though by frugality & strict economy I have been able to do this, you must think that it has reduced ["sic"] to considerable shifts, & that some few tradesmen’s bills of my own have been neglected, in order to extricate me from this more urgent demand. This was the reason Mr M. thought proper to mention the subject to you; but I should never have done so, & was determined to struggle with my own difficulties as well as I could.

In 1785 Mr Godwin’s only sister Hannah returned from Norwich & settled herself in London. She was affectionately attached to her brother, & her letters now lying before me are full of proofs of the kind & active interest he took in her welfare. For himself he deeply sympathized with the poor - & was ever ready to assist in whatever way he was able the various members of his own family who were struggling painfully to make their way in the world. In one of his mother’s letters, dated 1797, she says, “I have been burning a great number of old letters; but when I came to yours it was with great reluctance that I destroyed them, there is such a kind & benevolent spirit towards your dear sister & J in their difficulties necessities[. “] xxx

Of Mr Godwin’s dinners & interviews with Sheridan there exist several records in scattered notes which we will present in their crude state thus giving a livelier idea of what passed than any comments drawn from them by us.
1788 At the parties of Mr Brand Hollis, whom I first saw at Mr Timothy Hollis’s of Ormond St, I became acquainted with Mr John Adams, American Ambassador[,] Mr Romilly, Mr Richard Sharpe, Mr Capel Lofft, Mr Wodhull, Mr Grose, Thomas Taylor the Platonist, Dr Geddes, Mr Gilbert Wakefield, Mr George Walker of Nottingham, Mr Paradise, &c, &c. - In the summer of this year I took lodgings for two months at Guilford in Surry, & received as an inmate my kinsman Mr Thomas Cooper, then twelve years of age, who had just lost his father in the East Indies, by whose premature death, his family were left unprovided[,] I pass over some insignificant matters of literature in which I was engaged in these years - but, about the period at which I am now arrived, I found my disbursements clearly exceeding my receipts, & had foolishly anticipated in future receipts, & being under the necessity of retrenching I took a cheaper lodging than I had lately been accustomed to, in Great Marybone St. It was at this time that I became extremely intimate with Mr Holcroft.

On 6th April 1788 Mr Godwin began a journal - which he continued to the end of his life. Nothing can be more concise than this record - & contrary probably to the usual practise it is more laconic at the beginning than at the end. The use to which he put it was to mention the portion of writing he each day accomplished - the books he read, the persons he saw & where he went - at the commencement he leaves many days & even weeks without a record - & the most full account of any extends but to a few words - as for example:

April 11th F. Dined at Leg of Pork. Doctor Priestley in London.
23 W. Holcroft calls. Send him corrections of French.
[illeg]
May 8 Th. Tea Holcroft’s. Dinner at Cadel’s on Gibbon’s birthday & day of publication. Sheffield, Fullarton, Reynolds, Geddes, Kippis.

June 3 Tu. Hear Sheridan. Earl of Mansfield resigns. See Mrs Williams, who goes every day to Sheridan’s speech, introduced by Geo. Hardinge.
From these brief notices we find the intimacy between Godwin & Holcroft are already intimate friends see each other several times a week & communicate their writing & aid each other by mutual criticism. [illeg] the more polished education & great acquirements of Godwin led him to be of most use to his friend - but when he undertook the writing a drama Holcroft's criticisms became valuable & important

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June 30 M. Dispute between Pitt & Thurlow, respecting Arden’s appointment to the rolls, terminated in favour of the former.

July 1. Tu. Dine at Hollis’s with Lindsey. Go with Barry to see the Cerberus groupe by Locatelli.

July 14 M. See Canning: Call on Hamilton: Dine at Robinsons: Nomination of S J. [?]Brownhead] Shield at the Bedford

July 27 Su. T. Cooper at Guildford.

Dec. 16 Dine at Hollis’s: Barry at tea. Right of Parliament to appoint a regency decided 267 to 203. Fox condemns Thurlow.

From this journal it appears that the friends whom Godwin saw most frequently at this time were Holcroft & Barry. His friendship with Barry was only broken up by the increasing madness of that unfortunate man, who, as Rousseau, entertained a belief that a wide spread conspiracy was entered into to destroy him, & his friends were one after the other sacrificed to this unfortunate disastrous passion.

Besides this journal there are various notes among his papers - made after recording

It appears from this journal that from some unexplained motive Godwin passed a portion of this year at Guildford. The earliest letter that I possess of his was written addressed to Holcroft from that town

........
Mr Holcroft
No 45 Upper Marybone St London

Dear Sir

Though I am flattered by your attention, & must acknowledge that you have touched upon my [illeg] hobbyhorse, yet I am sorry that your politeness led you to give yourself a moment’s trouble for the sake of gratifying the silly impatience of your humble servant. I owe you a thousand apologies for not having answered your letter of a fortnight since; but the fact is, I wrote to you & another gentleman immediately after my arrival by the same post, & was answered by said gentleman that “I was a man of leisure & could write letters; he was engaged in active life, & could not.” No man is less willing to be guilty of the sin of intrusion than I am: I therefore took this rebuff in dudgeon, & forswore the writing any letters, but of mere business, for a fortnight. Will you accept this apology? If you do, in gra-

Only upon this occasion keep the reins in your own hands, & do not fetter yourself too much with domestic stipulations before you set out.

Sir, had you remembered the letter of the Chinese Mandarin, which had no other address than, “Dr Boerhaave Europe”; you surely would not have insulted me with the supposition that I must borrow lustre from a petty upholsterer in such a town as Guildford, & not be seen by my own radiance. I would have you to know that I am as much of a poet, as either Dr Boe- r^  haave, or even Van Swieten, his

commentator. Nay, if you provoke me, I do not know but I shall ^enter^ the lists with mynheer van Haaven, the Homer of the whole Dutch nation. Lord John Townshend for ever! Huzza!

yours sincerely
Guildford, W Godwin.  
Aug. 5. 1788.

presents my compliments to Robinson & Hamilton. Tell the latter (if you see him & if you like it) that he has forgo(ten me ). xliv

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128)  
Besides the journal I have extracted there are various notes among his papers recounting anecdotes he heard in conversation. To these are appended usually the name of his informant - & as Godwin was a correct reporter, the anecdotes bear at least the authority of their recounter ^whose name is appended to each^. I extract a few. I give these some of these; they are at least specimens of the manners of the times - & as Godwin [?thought]

[blank]

........

early works

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....

57)  
From childhood almost he had a propensity to composition & he has preserved a list of his earliest "works". Among papers referring to this period I find

[blank]

It runs as follows, though I believe a greater part of them were merely projected & begun & left unfinished

1761 - to 1767

The Wish, a poem; Sermons, Hymns; Paraphrase

1768   1769

Paradise regained; Integer vita.
The Paradise regained, I have heard him say, was conceived on a different plan from Milton. It was founded on the whole Life of Jesus Christ - & concluded with his triumph of Death & Hell - & his ascent to Heaven.

1770
Story for a Magazine

1771
Death of Socrates; Character of Alfred; Abridgment of Collier.

1772
Damon & Pythias; Verses on a Marriage; Palamon; The Brutus; Foundation of Ars Poetica & Ulysses to Penelope.

The Verses on a Marriage are all that remain of this list. They are entitled “The Happy Couple - A copy of verses Addressed to an Elderly Lady on her Marriage [“]

This lady was Miss Godwin, the instructress of his youth, now in mature years married to Mr Southern.¹ The verses are tolerably smooth - but trite. They are complimentary, not satyrical as the word “elderly” might

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58)

imply. They were addressed to Mrs Southern whom he loved & respected & who married during this year. Hymen is made to aver that neither Love Beauty nor Riches conduce to connubial happiness - which arises in a more perfect degree from prudence.

1773
Death of Caesar. Iphigenia; Harmony ^of the Evangelists^

1774
Talbot; Falkland; Lunaticus; Lucretia; Inkle & Yarico.
Talbot consists of two letters - one from Sir Edward Biron to his friend Talbot describing his return home to his native country after the death of his Father. It is very sentimental - & concludes by requesting a letter from “his friend” whom he names a droll fellow - The answer is noted as being by a different hand & is a very serious attempt at jollity & wit.

Nothing remains of Josephus Lunaticus but the introduction; which is meant to be satyrical & witty but fails in the attempt.

Three stanzas remain of Inkle & Yarico by which the reader may judge that the young author had attained some facility in versification - his verses indeed at that age were better than his prose - though neither, it must be confessed, give token of future eminence.

Inkle & Yarico
A Poem - 1775

Whilom an age there was, misnamed of gold,
The age of love & joy more fitly dight,
When every heart was cast in virtues mould,
When every hour implied some new delight,
And or in cheerful labour sped its flight,
Or in some sportive game’s pretended stealth,
The equal pastime of each gentle wight,
For peace & plenty, innocence & health,
Alike composed the Monarch’s & the peasant’s wealth.

No care but love the happy Mortals knew,
A love estranged to guilt & anxious fear;
For every nymph was chaste & swain was true,
And every heart from dark dissembling clear.
Retired, where high in air the woodlands rear
Their arched shades, or where the silver stream
Exhales its breezy freshness far & near,
Safe from th’oppression of the noontide beam,
Pleased they converse apart, their love their grateful theme.

Thrice happy mortals, & thrice happy Age!
Ere yet they knew fell envy’s rankling sting,
Or mad ambition’s disappointed rage;
Th’uneasy gaiety our passions bring,
Or haughty pride of pontiff or of King.

Ere yet they knew diseases loathing life;
Remorse, despair, that guilty conscience wring;
Pomp, pride, or circumstance of warlike strife.

1775
Lucretia, Virginia - a Comedy

1776
Timoleon; Edward III; Libellare Superbos; An epilogue

Other papers remain consisting of College compositions, themes etc they are peculiar only from the lofty tone they assume with regard to the supereminence of virtue - & a certain energy of expression even then developed; but they are devoid of originality. The thoughts of his mind at that time rather shewn in aspiration than in execution. There are a few notes drawn up of feelings experienced at this period on which to found a continuation of his autobiography - the commentary of each of these kinds which he could have given is irretrievably lost - but we
preserve the heart - being of opinion that one word written by the man himself is more characteristic than pages of enquiry as to his character. In these he goes back to

Jacobs’ admiration of Jos. Read Sir Charles Grandison.
Disappointed in London - in Garrick - Epanouissement de l’imagination - Last tears - Require events to be made exprès
Hoxton - Second cause of misery
....

[91v]
Gregson G. C. Morgan. Walters - T. Brown, Keap[,] Marshal[.] These are names of fellow Collegiates. The latter remained his friend to the end of his life.
....

91)
Temper with which I saw Garrick

He mentions in a previous note that he was at first disappointed with Garrick. This wore off & he became his enthusiastic admirer. Mr Godwin was always a lover & frequenter of the theatre. This taste may have at first taken root in his admiration of Garrick. He used to walk home to Hoxton after the play (he thought it sacrilege to stay for the afterpiece) in a sort of extasy brooding with jealous delight over the feelings excited by the actor. This taste was called forth principally during Garrick’s last season.

Sequar veritatem, ubicunque ducit
Je me prête aisèment a la ridicule. Crabbedness of G. P. N.
Third part of Heaven.
Used to try to govern my thoughts & words.
1777 I preached during my last vacation in the months of July & August at Yarmouth every Sunday morning
and at Lowestoft in the afternoon.

Metaphysical correspondence with Evans.

This last note brings us back to his chronological abridgment of his life.

1778

"In the last year of my academical life I entered into a curious paper war with my fellow student, Mr Richard Evans, an excellent Mathematician & a man of very clear understanding, who was afterwards for some years a preacher; & then became a clerk in the Bank: the subject, the being of a God. Our papers were I believe seen by no one but ourselves. I took the negative side, in this instance as always, with great sincerity hoping that my friend would enable me to remove the difficulties I apprehended. - I did not fully see my ground as to this radical question; but I had little doubt that, grant the being of a God, & both the truth of Christianity & the doctrines of Calvinism followed by infallible inference. - I had not however the courage to persist in such an objection, & finally took refuge in the argument à priori, as contained in Dr Samuel Clarke’s Discourse on the Attributes.iv

"I had this spring a putrid fever which almost killed me. Preached as a Candidate at Christchurch in Hampshire. Settled at Ware.

1779

In this year my political sentiments experienced a great revolution: - Wilkes & Liberty had been the doctrine of

Newton my instructor at Norwich. - Speculations on the nature of parliamentary oppositions, occasioned by reading the debates in the Gentleman’s Magazine at Hin Dolvestonvi first shook my faith in this creed; on my arrival in London I immediately conceived a warm attachment & a profound deference particularly in politics, for Mr Joseph Jacob who was on that topic in total
hostility, though without any breach of fraternal concord, with his brother, Mr John Jacob, druggist on Fish Monger Hill, a most zealous champion of the Wilkite party, at whose house I resided as a guest, during the months of April & May 1773. - The first cause of my conversion in the present year was the newspaper reports of the speeches of Burke & Fox, to whom from this time I conceived an ardent attachment, which no change of circumstance or lapse of time has ever been able to shake. I was present for the first time in a debate in the House of Commons on the opening of Parliament, in the autumn of this year, when Mr Fox delivered the celebrated speech, a passage of which gave occasion to a duel between himself & Mr Adam. I quitted Ware about August, & resided with great economy for four months at a little lodging in Coleman Street. My favourite acquaintance now & for several subsequent years was Mr Joseph Fawcet, the poet.”

Mr Godwin notices this change in this intimacy in other notes on his life:

“New world in Fawcet - dispute with him a whole day: one question, whether motive be necessary to virtue; solitude; classics.

“Dear Fox - become an oppositionist.

“Regret at having never made a discovery, Stowmarket - at not having observed the scenes of nature.

Such as I am the world is welcome to me.

Singular mixture of gentleness & arête.

“I was cold or warm according to the persons around me. My first thorough warming was in 1778-9 - Fawcet, Fox etc. [“]

Fawcett was one of those men of whose talents his friends & contemporaries spoke with enthusiasm & admiration, but whose fame with posterity is not commensurate with their reputation while living. Everyone who knew him, however eminent themselves, regarded his genius with admiration. He was an extempore preacher of great eloquence & pathos, as several volumes of printed sermons testify.

1780

At the commencement of this year I went to reside at Stowmarket in Suffolk, in my
profession of a Dissenting Minister - the only pleasant acquaintance I had there was Mrs Alice Munnings, & her unfortunate son, Leonard, a captain of the Suffolk Militia, & an agreeable, lively, well-bred, intelligent Man.

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c.606/2

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options were singular, as Mr Godwin records when he remarks that it was through his conversation that “he became impressed with the immorality of the private affections[“], which forms so prominent & in the eyes of many so censurable a figure in the theory of ^theories promulgated in^ Political Justice. Hazlitt in his life of Holcroft speaks thus of him in his own person “The late Rev. Joseph Fawcett , author of the Art of War etc. It was he who delivered the Sunday evening lectures at the Old Jewry, which were so popular about twenty years ago. He afterwards retired to Hedgegrove in Hertfordshire. He was the friend of my early youth. He was the first person of literary eminence, whom I had then known; and the conversations I then had with him on subjects of taste & philosophy (for his taste was as refined, as his powers of reasoning were profound & subtle) gave me a delight such as I can never feel again. Of all the persons I have ever known, he was the most perfectly free from every taint of jealousy or narrowness. Never did a mean or sinister motive come near his heart. He was one of the most enthusiastic admirers of the French Revolution; & I believe that the disappointment of the hopes he had cherished of the freedom & happiness of Mankind, preyed upon his mind [^sic] hastened his death”

1.Life of Holcroft Vol II, note to p246.

All that is here said Godwin would have endorsed. He often spoke of long days spent with Fawcett in pedestrian rambles, the hours forgotten, as they discussed the tenets of religion & philosophy,

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and endeavoured to discover the hidden form of truth, as some of the happiest of his life. Never had his heart swelled with such pure enthusiasm, never did he enjoy with such fervent delight the pleasure derived from intimate communication with another mind. Their friendship & intimacy continued to the end of Fawcett’s life.
“1780 At the commencement of this year I went to reside at Stowmarket in Suffolk in my profession of Dissenting Minister. The only pleasant acquaintance I had there was Mrs Alice Munnings & her unfortunate son, Leonard, a captain in the Suffolk Militia, an agreeable, lively, well bred & intelligent man.

1781 This year there came to reside at Stowmarket Mr Frederick Norman, deeply read in the French philosophers, & a man of great reflection & acuteness. We immediately became exceedingly intimate.

1782 In April I quitted Stowmarket, in consequence of a dispute with my hearers in a matter of Church discipline. My faith in Christianity had been shaken by the books which Mr Norman put in my hands, & I was therefore pleased in some respects with the breach that dismissed me. I resided during the rest of the year at a lodging in Holborn, & by the persuasions of Fawcett & another friend was prevailed on to try my pen as an author. I drew up proposals for a biographical periodical series of English Biography, but having sat down first to the Life of Lord Chatham, I found it grew under my hands to the size of a volume, which I completed by the end of the year.

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**sermons and novels, 1783/4**

c.606/2

The Sermons are entitled Sketches of History & each is formulated upon some scriptural incident, which is described, commented upon, & brought home to the reader, as a warning or an example. They are peculiar from displaying that tendency to dive into & anatomize the human heart, which is so principal a feature in all Mr Godwins writings - & also by that lofty conception of the excellence of human nature which led him to consider its absolute
perfection no dream of the imagination - unlike the usual clerical exposition of the vileness of humanity, he speaks of the glorious being a good Man is with enthusiasm; this belief clung to him through life - he had a firm faith in the powers inherent in Man to raise himself to heroism & surpassing excellence, if his will & understanding combined to see the good, & to follow it.

The first sermon has for its text the simple words “And Aaron held his peace” (Leviticus x 3) & is a commentary on Aaron’s behaviour when his sons, incurring the displeasure of the Lord, by offering strange fire, were thereon immediately destroyed. He describes the natural anguish of a father’s heart at so cruel a bereavement from apparently so slight a cause - he dwells on the meeting between the brothers, Moses & Aaron, & ^brings forward^ the silence of the latter abstaining from all repinings at the judgement of God ^as an impressive instance ^ of fortitude & pious resignation. He observes “Resignation is the most direct & proper improvement of affliction. If you wish to second the gracious designs of heaven upon your soul, nothing can do it so effectually as acquiescence & submission. If you wish to have the affliction removed, or not to be again visited by the divine chastisement

nothing will so immediately propitiate the sovereign displeasure or take away further calls to repentance & amendment. Resignation calms the surges of the mind, calls home the wandering attention, & leaves us room to reflect upon our ways, & consider the intent of those divine messengers, under whose inflictions we are now mourning. But what I would principally remark, & what falls in most immediately with the tendency of my text, is the grace, the amiability & the beauty of this affection both with regard to man & with respect to God. We ought ever to reflect, that however keenly we may feel our misfortunes it is not to be expected that the world about us will feel them in the same way. Peevishness & a continual tendency to complaint, instead of exciting additional pity, tends only to dry up the sources of that which our misfortunes naturally excited. But turn to the other character, to him who retains the dignity of a Man under the severest pressure of misfortune - However much he may inwardly suffer he scorns to complain. The severest torture cannot wring from him a murmur or a groan. He carefully shuts up his anguish in the little circle of his bosom & outwardly adorns his countenance with all the serenity of complacency & composure. His friends perceive how he is inwardly worn with
anguish & sorrow, & they come to condole with him. But he chides the weakness of their tears, calls forth their courage, & bids them be of good heart still. With what a warm, what an overflowing pity do we consider a character like this, a pity mixed with every generous sentiment, with love, esteem, reverence & admiration. Who would not wish to be made the object of a passion like this? Consider the example of Aaron. In pitying such a man, are we not apt to feel a generous resentment, a sense that the man was worthy a better fortune? Contrast this with the resentment we feel for a man peevish & impatient, madly cursing his fortune & arrogantly arraigning his creator. Add to it the 

complacency Deity feels for so faithful a servant for so faithful so loyal so obedient a subject. There needs no argument to convince you that such a character as this must appear an object of honour & love to God himself. Does heaven appear to frown on him? Shortly it will regard him with unequivocal never changing smiles. His afflictions are but the clouds of morning, or the flitting dew. Shortly this refulgent man of virtue & felicity will break forth with meridian undecaying beams.”

In another of these sermons speaking of the language of Scripture he observes: on the simplicity of the style of the Old Testament & the genius that scorns to stoop to embellishment or stratagem. He observes that: “Its reasonings are nervous pointed & concise - & its narratives to [sic] last degree plain inartificial & unadorned. There are no traps to elude our impartiality - it exhibits the sublimest virtues without arrogance & the bitterest sufferings without execration”. He continues (carrying on his observations to the “discourses of the Apostles & the Conversation of Jesus[“]), “One of the graces most naturally to be expected from this manner of writing & speaking, is the mode of speech which rhetoricians have stiled the laconic. This appears in its constitution the reverse of everything artificial. It is founded upon the observation, that energy consists very much in conciseness, & its end is to suggests the sentiments it means to convey, whether they be one or more in as few words as may be [.] I say to suggest the sentiments; for provided they be implied with sufficient clearness, it contents itself without actually having them expressed. The rays of the sun when diffused though the hemisphere we inhabit, suffice to cheer the globe, & to keep alive vegetation & animal heat, but it is only when collected in a burning glass, that they impart a genuine flame to the object towards which they are directed. And thus in sentiment. A thought may have energy & force, when drawn out into length, but it can only
transport the soul with vehemence, or overpower it with splendour, when its point becomes centered in a single phrase, short, masculine & pithy” -

Another of the sermons is on the character of Jesus Christ - whose perfection is dwelt upon with affectionate earnestness & alluding to the history of his life he exclaims, “My friends, ye do not come here to hear some new thing - & to learn that with which you were before unacquainted. We pretend to nothing of this sort. I can tell you but one plain story, that is seventeen hundred years old. You have often looked upon Jesus as he walked, and wept over the sad story of his sufferings. But methinks there are some among you that tire with the endless repetition, & to whom our words seem but as idle tales. You love a melting story, & the tears of sympathy are pleasant unto you, and yet your bibles lie neglected on your shelves. You are ready to exclaim with Dives in the parables, “Nay, father Abraham, but if something unexplained claimed our attention, & if one rose from the dead we should believe. But, no. Old as the story is, it is inexhaustible. Angels do but look into it. And plain as it may seem, there is not another in the world half as affecting. It is the masterpiece of divinity. God, if I may be allowed the expression, has exhausted upon it infinite pathos.

Fear not the rending rocks & trembling earth; fear not the gaping tombs & rising dead. No, if you hear this story, calm, unmoved, insensible, ye may shake hands with destruction”.

In the treatment of subject & the arguments of all these sermons - though they are perfectly orthodox - there is a peculiar tone - & an omission of certain topics that seem to imply that tendency to Arminianism to which in another place he alludes [.

Though certainly the works here mentioned are not worthy of the genius of Godwin - & shew that something was yet wanting to develope the embryo powers of his mind - they display in their versatility & quantity a degree of energy patience & industry highly praiseworthy.

Thrown out by through conscientious motives from the profession he had chosen, resolved to pursue the arduous career of literature - ignorant of the true scope of his talents, & what the sentiment was that would hereafter cause them to be universally acknowledged he worked hard
& thankfully in his vocation - his horns ungilded by the smiles of the great - but cheered by the intercourse of friendship. Fawcett was still his chosen intimate. And there was another man, a fellow student, & an aspirant to authorship - the booksellers of London of his day knew him well - & many a contemporary author, fallen on evil days, & many a widow & an orphan had cause to remember the benevolent disposition, the strenuous exertions & the kind & intelligent countenance of James Marshall. His talents not permitting a higher range, he became a translator & index maker, a literary jobber. But though he had not genius for original composition In a thousand ways he was useful to Godwin - he sensitive, proud & shy - whose powers of persuasion lay in the force of his reasoning, often found the more sociable & insinuating manners of his friend of use in transactions matters of business with editors & publishers. Often they shared their last shilling together & the

success of any of his friend’s plans was hailed by Marshall as a glorious triumph. Godwin whose temper was quick (& from an earnest sense of being in the right & without knowing it somewhat despotic on occasions) assumed a good deal of superiority & some authority[.] Marshall sometimes submitted - sometimes rebelled - sometimes he was wrong, sometimes right - but they were always reconciled at last & the good humoured friend was always at hand to assist to the utmost with untiring patience & labour of hand & foot - copying & walking from one end of town to the other Godwin’s more intellectual exertions.

[“] Towards the end of this year an incident occurred which I considered as a lightening in my circumstances: Mr Robinson, the bookseller, called on me, in company with my tutor at Hoxton, Dr Kippis, to inform me, that Dr Gilbert Stuart, who had undertaken to write the historical part of the New Annual Register for 1783, had thrown up his task, before it was brought to a conclusion, & to request me to write two or three short chapters to wind up the year - for this undertaking I received the compensation of ten guineas; & what I did being approved, I was installed in due form writer of the historical part of the New Annual Register at the stipend of 60
guineas & the contract was sealed by a dinner in trio between Mr Robinson, Dr Kippis, & myself at the Crown & Anchor in the Strand.”

When we remember that Mr Godwin always required twelve months & usually a year & a half for the composition of a novel we turn with surprise curiosity to these earlier productions struck off with so much haste, as if we might expect to find more fire & vigour. It is not so. An Author requires a subject for the development of his genius he requires that the right chord should be struck - We turn to the “Italian Letters” - a novel in two small volumes written in three weeks & find no story - no development of character & situation - none scarcely any of that anatomy of heart for which the imaginative writings of Mr Godwin is [sic] conspicuous. ^There is^ Occasional Energy

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of style - & a strong percept admiration of the higher & more stoical virtues, are the only characteristics that remind us of him. The story is slight. St. Julian & the Marquis of Pescara are fellow students at the university of Palermo - Pescara is recalled by the death of his father to his native town of Naples & here the correspondence begins. Pescara is a man of sensibility desiring anxious to do right admiring his friend - but easily led away by pleas evil example & the love of pleasure & recalled with difficulty to a sense of virtue by his friend. St. Julian is of nobler clay. His friend thus describes him: - “You may talk as you please of the wildness & impracticability of the sentiments of my amiable solitaire, they are at least in the highest degree amusing & beautiful. There is a voice in every heart, whose feelings have not yet been entirely warped by selfishness, responsive to them. In vain the man of pleasure & gaiety pronounces them impracticable - the generous heart gives the lie to his assertions. He must be under the poorest & most despicable of prejudices, who would reduce all human characters to a level, who would deny the reality of all those virtues which the world has idolized through revolving ages. Nothing can be disputed with less plausibility than that there are in the world certain noble & elevated spirits, that rise above vulgar notions, & the narrow conduct of the bulk of mankind, that soar to the sublimest heights of rectitude, & from time to time realize those virtues of which the liberal interested & illiberal deny the possibility[.”]

","100)
I can no more doubt than I do of the truth of these apothegms, that the Count St. Julian is one of these 'honourable' characters. He treads without the airy circle of dissipation. He is invulnerable to the temptations of folly; he is unshaken by the examples of profligacy. They are such characters as his that were formed to rescue mankind from slavery, to prop the pillars of a declining state, & to arrest Astraea in her re-ascent to heaven. They are such characters, whose virtues surprize 'astonished' mortals, & avert the vengeance of offended heaven.” - St. Julian is reduced to poverty through the knavery of his brother - he writes concerning his disaster with all the fortitude that might be expected from his exalted notions of human excellence - & he exclaims - “Why should not he who is born a nobleman be also born a Man? A Man is a character superior to all those that civilization has invented. To be a Man is the profession of a citizen of the world. A man of rank is a poor shivering exotic plant, that cannot subsist out of his native soil. If the imaginary barriers of society were thrown down, if we were reduced back again to a state of nature, the nobleman would appear a shiftless & a helpless being; he only who knew how to be a Man would shew like the creature of God, a being sent into the world with the capacities of subsistence & enjoyment. The nobleman a fantan 'artificial & fantastic creation, would then lose all that homage in which he plumed himself he would be seen without disguise & be despised of all.”

St. Julian is however in love & that takes a little from the high pitch of heroism to which he endeavours to rise. The father of the lady is a man of generous sentiments - he invites St Julian to his house & finally upon his death bed bestows the hand of his daughter upon him. Nothing prevents the happiness of the lovers except the year of mourning for the lady’s Father - but St. Julian is impatient of this restraint & to vary the scene & acquire patience he makes a journey to Madrid to further the interests of his friend Pescara - leaving Matilda to the care of this noble. What remains is a common story - the friend proves false - persuades Matilda that her lover has married in Spain & finally persuades her to accept his own hand. 'On the first intimation of this treachery,' St. Julian returns on the wings of vengeance, challenges his friend & kills him. As they were actually married it was scarcely chivalrous to make the deceived lady a widow - however in recompense he endeavours to persuade her to fulfil her former contract & to become his wife. The letter in which Matilda refuses, which is the last of the novel is better 'the best' written than any in the book. On the whole however it is to
be observed, that though the sentiments are to a great degree upon stilts, the genuine expression of passion does not appear - Except in a few sentences we are not reminded of the future creator of Falkland.

Even less can might be said in praise of Damon & Delia\textsuperscript{bxiii} which is a modern English tale though the...

sustain - an endeavour to exert the whole powers & do the best - such animated the author of Political Justice & Caleb Williams - but the soil that contained such precious seeds could [\textsuperscript{sic}] its moult & neglected seams produce works, which it would do him no honour to withdraw from oblivion

The only\textsuperscript{lxiv} interesting portion of Damon & Delia, is an account given of himself by a man of letters, derived from the authors own experience

As we a natural philosopher watches with intense curiosity the process of nature when a chrysalis expands into a butterfly - or as we sympathise in the breathless anxieties of a navigator in an unknown sea - thus is our interest awakened by the efforts of infant youthful & obscure genius struggling into self confidence & celebrity. My father’s mind, so ardent in all intellectual pursuits never permitted him to dwell carefully anxiously, especially in the outset of life, in providing for his pecuniary resources - he was at once sanguine & easily satisfied. I am sure that he suffered little of humiliation or care during the period of privation nay of almost penury he describes. His vocation he considered a noble one - & although he as yet but imperfectly saw his road to fame, & was not warmed by those principles of philosophy that afterwards governed every thought & exertion, he was not the less ambitious of literary fame, or the less callous of the strokes visitations of poverty, when he compared its power to the to him slight infliction with the reward he sought to attain.

This is no fancy picture. He describes himself in a great degree in the first novel he mentions. Damon & Delia has not much merit - it is imitative of the novels
of those times - the lovers with their separate difficulties - tyrannical fathers - impertinent rivals - & a ridiculous old maid all this are woven into a slight web of story, from the book diversified by no very novel incidents. There is one episode in it however to which I turned with interest, when I discerned that it portrayed to a certain degree the his the authors own story & his own feelings. This passage I therefore extract:

[blank]

..., [MJG hand begins]... 

101)  

“He was destined for the profession of a divine, and having finished his studies, retired upon a position curacy of forty pounds a year. His ambition was grievously mortified at the obscurity in which he was plunged; and his great talents, in spite of real modesty forcibly convinced him, that this was not the station for which nature had formed him. But he had an enthusiasm of virtue that led him for a time to overlook these disadvantages. “I am going,” said he, “to dwell among scenes of unvitiated nature. I will form the peasant to generosity and sentiment. I will teach laborious industry to look without envy and without asperity upon those above them. I will be the friend and the father of the meanest of my flock. I will give sweetness and beauty to the most rugged scenes. The man that banishes envy and introduces contentment; the man that converts the little circle in which he dwells into a terrestrial paradise that renders men innocent here, and happy for ever, may be obscure, may be despised by the superciliousness of envy; but it shall never be said that he has been a blank in creation. The supreme being will regard him with a complacency, which he will deny to kings, that oppress, and conquerors that destroy the work of his hands.”

“Such were the suggestions of youthful imagination. But Mr Godfrey soon saw the truth of that maxim, as paradoxical as it is indisputable, that the heart of man is naturally hard and unamiable. He conducted himself in his new situation with the most unexceptionable propriety and the most generous benevolence. But there were men in his audience, men who loved better to criticise, than to be amended, and women, who felt more complacency in scandal, than eulogium. He laboured unremittingly, but his labours returned to him void.
“And is it for this,” said he, “that I have sacrificed ambition and buried talents? Is humility to be rewarded only with mortification? Is obscurity and retirement the favourite scene of uneasiness, ingratitude, and impertinence? They shall be no longer my torment.

102)

In no scene can I meet with a more scanty success.”

“He now obtained a recommendation to be private tutor to the children of a nobleman who wished to be considered as the patron of men of letters.

“In this situation however, Mr Godfrey once more looked for pleasure, and found disappointment. The nobleman had more the affectation of a patron, than any real enthusiasm in the cause of literature. The abilities of Mr Godfrey were universally acknowledged. And so long as the novelty remained, he was caressed, honoured and distinguished. In a short time, however, he was completely forgotten by the patron, in the hurry of dissipation, and the pursuits of an unbounded ambition. His eldest care was universally confessed, stupid and impracticable. And in the younger he found nothing but the prating forwardness of a boy who had been flattered, without sentiment, and without meaning. Her Ladyship treated Mr Godfrey with superciliousness as an intruder at her Lord’s table. The servants caught the example, and shewed him a distinction of neglect, which the exquisiteness of his sensibility did not permit him to despise.

Mortified, irritated, depressed, he now quitted his task half finished and threw himself upon the world. “The present age”, said he, “is not an age in which talents are overlooked, and genius depressed”. He had heard much of the affluence of writers, a Churchill, a Smollet, and a Goldsmith, who had depended upon that only for their support. He saw the celebrated Dr Johnson caressed by all parties, and acknowledged to be second to no man, whatever were his rank, however conspicuous his station. Full of these ideas, he soon completed a production

fought [sic] with the fire and originality of genius, pointed in its remarks, and elegant in its style. He had now to experience exertions of which he had before entertained no idea. He carried his work from bookseller to bookseller, and was every where refused. His performance was not seasoned to the times, he was a person that nobody knew, and he had no man of rank, by his
importunities and eloquence to force him into the ranks of fashion. At length he found a
bookseller foolish enough to undertake it. But he presently perceived that the gentleman
gentlemen at the head of the concern that profession was wiser than he. All the motives they had
mentioned, and more, operated against him. The monarchs of the critic realm scouted him with
one voice because his book was not written in the same cold, phlegmatic, insupportable manner
as their own.

“He had now advanced, however, too far to retreat. He had too much spirit to resume
either of those professions which for reasons so cogent in his opinion, he had already quitted. He
wrote essays, squibs and pamphlets for an extemporary support. But though these were finished
with infinite rapidity, he found that they constituted a very precarious means of subsistence. The
time of dinner often came before the production that was to purchase it was completed; and when
completed, it was frequently several days before it could find a purchaser. And his copy money
and his tailor’s bill were too little proportioned to one another.

“He now recollected, what in the gaiety of hope he had forgotten, that many a flower
only blows, with its sweetness to refresh the air of a desert. He recollected many instances of
works, raised by the breath of fashion to the very pinnacle of reputation, that sank as soon again.
He recollected instances, scarcely fewer, of works exquisite in their composition, pregnant with
beauties almost divine, that had passed from the press without notice. Many had been revived by
the cooler and more deliberate judgment of a future age; and more had been lost for ever. The
instance of Chatterton, as a proof that the universal patronage of genius was by no means the
virtue of his contemporaries, flashed in his face. And he looked forward to the same fate at no
great distance, as his own. (From page 103, of Damon & Delia) xxx

104)

(p.180) “Think not of me,” said Godfrey, “I am happy in the way that nature intended, beyond
even the power of Damon to make me. Since I saw you, a favourable change has taken place in
my circumstances. In spite of various obstacles, I have brought a tragedy upon the stage, and it
has met with distinguished success. My former crosses and mortifications are all forgotten.
Philosophers may tell us, that reputation, and the immortality of a name, are all but an airy
shadow. Enough for me, that nature from my earliest infancy led me to place my first delight in
these. I envy not kings their sceptres. I envy not statesmen their power. I envy not Damon his
love, and his Delia. Next to the pursuits of honour and truth, my soul is conscious to but one
wish, that of having my name enrolled, in however inferior a rank, with a Homer and a Horace, a Livy and a Cicero”.

[MWS hand resumes]
This last paragraph breathes the very soul of Godwin & it is a comment on some words among his memoranda these remarkable words which I find are written among his scattered memoranda

“In aeternitatem pingo” - I read that phrase of Guido in one of my vacations at Guestwick & drank in the whole force of it into my own soul”.

The Italian Letters are more characteristic of Godwin as developing with more greater energy those lofty stoical sentiments which he always admired & on which he endeavoured to form his character. There wants the admirable planning of a story & intense interest conspicuous in his later works - but there is an energy a force of style that reminds us of him Caleb Williams.

..., 102)...

“Imogen” is termed a pastoral romance. In the preface it sets out with the fabulous pretension of being translated from the Welch - & mention is made of its adherence to the customs & manners of the ancient inhabitants of that country - but in reality there is no pretense endeavour to describe those ancient times - the machinery of the piece is rather founded upon Comus - the plan of Druids & the names of the mountains & rivers are introduced & some mention of the allusion to the peculiar religion; but one of the principal personages bears the Gothic name of Roderic. The story is simple - Edwin & Imogen are brought together, they become lovers, there is no impediment to their union, till Roderic, the son of an Enchantress, & himself an Enchanter, sees & loves Imogen, & conjuring up a storm in the midst of a druidical feast bears her off to his Magic Palace - Edwin seeks her in despair - he falls in with a Druid, who explains the powers of Roderic, & relates that the overthrow of his schemes simply depends on the virtue & resolution of his victims; for if they withstand the allurements of his power, he is destined to lose it & to wander henceforth an unpitied, necessitous, & miserable vagabond outcast - The druid gives Edwin a root, such as Ulysses bore that renders the magic arts of Roderic of no avail, if he can withstand the temptations held out to
him of pleasure & luxury - and Edwin sets out to seek the palace prison of Imogen. The greater portion of the tale is engrossed by a description of the palace & of the temptations of Imogen - the style is often elevated, concise & energetic, reminding the reader of the author of Caleb Williams - There is eloquence in many of the arguments representations of Roderic & in the denials of Imogen. The description of the enchanter on his first appearance to the shepherdess is pleasing striking

“Roderic approached. While he was yet at a distance he appeared graceful & gay, as the messenger of the God that grasps lightning in his hand. His stature was above the common size. His limbs were formed with perfect symmetry; the fall of his shoulders was graceful, & the whole contour of his body was regular & pleasing. Such was the general effect of his shape that though his advance was hesitating & respectful, it was impossible to contemplate his person without the ideas being suggested of velocity & swiftness. His presence & air had the appearance of frankness, ingenuousness & manly confidence. the natural fire & haughtiness of his eye was carefully subdued, & he seemed, at least to a superficial view, the very model of good nature & disinterested complaisance. His bright & flowing hair parted on his brow, & formed into

a thousand ringlets, waved to the zephyrs as he passed along. There was something so delicate & enchanting in his whole figure, as to tempt you to compare it to the unspotted beauty of the hyacinth; at the same time that you rejoiced that it was not a flower beauty frail and transient as the tender flower, but which promised a manly ripeness & protracted duration”.

The following passage is stampt by Godwin’s peculiar style :- “Imogen stood for a moment in a sweet & ingenuous state of suspense. She had a native & indefeasible reverence for every thing that had the remotest analogy to virtue, & she could not answer a proposal that came recommended to her by that name with unhesitating promptitude. She was too good & modest to assume an air of decision where she did not feel it; & she was too simple & unaffected to disguise the hesitation to which she was really conscious”.

104)
The catastrophe of the story is simple - Edwin arrives at the enchanted palace - dashes down the magic cup & seizes the wand of the enchanter - and in a violent concussion of the elements the 'stupendous' fabric disappears - Roderic & his train fly - the lovers are left beneath the canopy of heaven & restored to each other.

Though of the nature of the story a forced & fictitious pastoral, there is less interest in Imogen than in the tales which he had already written ['sic'] there is more of the vigour of Godwin’s style & sentiments. Language is an instrument in the use of which habit alone can perfect us. My father often recommended

much writing though little publishing to any aspirant to authorship. These tales developed his style; he acquired energy & force and eloquence - he became capable of expressing in fitting language the thoughts that arose in his mind - the next thing necessary was a subject, worthy of his genius - a subject to support his style, which hitherto had supported his subject; that did not present itself so readily - & several years passed before the idea of Caleb Williams was generated conceived- & those powers ideas were yet as it were in chaos, assumed the shape which still haunts the work with forms of power & excellence.

Dec. 31 F. It was in this year that I read & criticized The Simple Story in MS. The whole in alternate letters between two confidantes: Miss Woodley relating the story of Dorriforth, & the other the story of Rushbrook.

Notwithstanding this memorandum, & the recollection I have that at his suggestion Mrs Inchbald remodelled the Simple Story there is no sign of Godwin’s being acquainted with Mrs Inchbald this year. The first time indeed that he notices having called on her was Oct. 29 - 1792

One other word only remains of this year. Mr Godwin endeavoured to obtain some post in the Museum & applied to the Bishop of Landaff for his influence. The Bishop replied by the following letter
Sir

I would not have hesitated a moment writing to the Archbishop in your favour, if I had not been of opinion that my appearing in support of a Dissenter would rather have tended to obstruct than to promote your wishes. The enclosed is written in such a manner, that if you think it can serve you, it may be as from yourself as a kind of information that you had used my name with propriety. I sincerely wish you success & am your Most obedt. Servt. R. Landaff

Tallgarth - Kendall
May 19 - 1790


Duke reel 5 lxxxviii

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The revd. William Godwin presents his most respectful compliments to lord Robert Spencer, & presumes to solicit his interest in the vacancy that has taken place in the British Museum upon the death of Mr Maty. Mr Godwin has been encouraged to offer himself as a candidate by his friends, & his interest has already been espoused by some persons capable of assisting him. The Office he solicits is a trifle in itself, but extremely eligible to him.

Mr Godwin presumes that his name will be recollected by lord Robert, as having uniformly contributed to & lately conducted the publication lxxxix that was begun by the late Doctor Gilbert Stuart. xc Mr Godwin will take the liberty of calling in Berkeley Square tomorrow twelve o’clock.

Wednesday Jan. 24

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Holcroft and Dunstan
c.606/1

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113)

The name of Holcroft at once gives rise to a crowd of recollections to every ^any reader^ who [illeg] is conversant with the history of those times & that particular circle of literary men, of which my father made one. xci The story of Holcroft is well known. He was the son of a shoemaker - and rose to literary eminence through the energy of his character & the genius with which nature had endowed him. To remember think of Holcroft as his friends remember him - & to call to mind whence he principally derives at this day his fame as an author, presents a
sufficient contrast. He was a man of stern & irascible character. From the moment that he espoused liberal principles he carried them to excess. He was tried for life as a traitor for his enthusiasm for the objects of the French Revolution. Truth & virtue, resolution & vehemence - such are He believed that Truth must prevail by force of its own powers - he advocated what he deemed truth with vehemence. He warmly asserted that Death & disease existed only through the feebleness of Man’s mind - that pain was not of him when in him Fortitude & courage were the gods of his idolatry. But the defect of his temper rendered him a susceptible friend. What he is chiefly celebrated for as an author are his comedies - his capacity of seizing & representing human nature with vivacity & truth. The Road to Ruin will always

"", 114)

- when there are actors to represent fitly its leading characters - maintain its station on the English stage as one of the best of our original comedies. Holcroft’s life had been adventurous - he painted what he had seen & the stoical philosopher & stern moralist excelled most in delineating with flexible & delicate touches the frivolous - the dissipated & even the pathetic.

At the time when Mr Godwin became acquainted with him he was chiefly distinguished as an author of several successful dramatic pieces, as a translator from the French. He was indefatigable in his industry - unwearied in his endeavours to support his family. Neither he nor Mr Godwin apparently then yet imbibed those strong political feelings which afterwards distinguished them. It required the French Revolution to kindle that ardent love of Political Justice with which both were afterwards, according to their diverse dispositions, warmed.

Of the several names here recorded as newly acquired acquaintance - many several remained as dear & valued friends for many years. Among these may be selected William Nicholson - of whose talents Mr Godwin always entertained an high esteem. In these days Nicholson would probably have risen to greater eminence. During the period when he lived he knew the world

"", 115)

was chiefly alive to the progress of mind & political science - now the external universe obtains far more consideration. As a man of invention, of acquirement - of mingled theory & practice, Nicholson would have prospered in these days of mines, tunnels, railroad & steam engines - as it was his fate was adverse.
Mr Archibald Hamilton is the Irish gentleman so well known afterwards under the name of Hamilton Rowan. He was in his youth a splendid specimen of manly beauty, joined to an ardent generous temper - he must have been in the prime of youth, when Mr Godwin first became acquainted with him. Nearly ten years afterwards he published an address to the volunteers of Ireland, setting forth the dangers with which their country was threatened by foreign & domestic foes, & inviting them to resume their arms for the preservation of the general tranquillity. This publication was prosecuted as a seditious libel - he was sentenced to fine & imprisonment - but escaped & fled to France. Curran was his advocate conducted his defence at this trial - & we may suppose that from the time Mr Godwin first knew Hamilton Rowan his ear had been familiarized with the name, talents & reputation of him whom he long after recorded as “the best friend he ever had.”

(1) Life of Curran by his son William Henry Curran

[“]1790 - my mind became more and more impregnated with the principles afterwards developed in my Political Justice - they were the almost constant topics of conversation between me and Holcroft; & he, who in his sceptic & other writing had displayed the sentiments of a courtier, speedily became no less a republican & reformer than myself - In this year I wrote a story tragedy on the tragedy story of St Dunstan, being desirous in writing a tragedy, of developing the great springs of human passion, & in the choice of a subject, of inculcating those principles on which I apprehended the welfare of the human race to depend. [“]

The giant now awoke. The mind, never torpid, but never rouzed to its full energies, received the spark which lit it into an unextinguishable flame. Who can now tell the feelings of liberal men on the first outbreak of the French Revolution? In but too short a time afterwards it became tarnished by the vices of Orleans & Mirabeau - dimmed by the want of talent of the Girondists - deformed & blood stained by the Jacobins. But in 1789 - and 1790 it was impossible for any but a courtier not to be warmed by the general glowing influence. The few had reigned, the many been subdued the choice & elect
The many men who felt that they, as well as the nobles of the land, possessed inherent rights, grasped those rights, & proclaimed them to the world.

The English had always regarded the political condition of the French with mingled pity & contempt - at first therefore this country sympathized universally with the attempt to throw off time-worn & corrupt institutions.

And France in wrath her giant limbs upreared
And with that oath which smote earth air & sea,
Stamped her strong foot & said she would be free xcix

Then did Godwin, as the poet, feel the hopes & fears - the lofty gratulation that led all young & enthusiastic hearts to hail the dawn of freedom on the world.

The first effect of this spirit was to incite him to write a tragedy where priestcraft & superstition were at war with noble & philanthropical principles. It is a pity that a tragedy drama should have been the first birth of the spirit of Liberty - probably his intimacy with Holcroft led Godwin to think of composing for the stage - but his genius was not dramatic - he often said - “Give me scope enough - three volumes in which I can turn round the power of narrative description & I think I can do something” - He asserted that Shakespeare only had entirely overcome the manifold difficulties that presented itself to the telling a story in a dramatic form - in making the personages not talk of themselves but from themselves.

St Dunstan is full of also has many defects as a drama. A want of proper concatenation of event & several leading circumstances not accounted for - an abruptness & inconsistency in the sentiments & an unsatisfactory catastrophe ^Though founded on events in Saxon history^c

By writing in verse he also shackled his style. Verse is an unmanageable weapon. There are those who “lisp in numbers for the numbers come” but for one not born a poet Yet even to these blank verse presents great difficulties at once to rise from the palpably familiar without becoming turgid. One not born a poet must practise much to erect any thing like readable blank verse -
Edward, King of England, is on the eve of marriage with Eltruda. Eltruda was the daughter of a noble who had been banished in a former reign for opposing the priesthood - Eltruda & her mother living in retirement were attacked by a band of invading ....... c.606/2

"\n
The story of the plot of Dunstan is fictitious. In old chronicles the king named Edward in the tragedy is called Edwi - He was called surnamed the fair from his the beauty of his person - & is named praised by one chronicler - while another Malmsbury a monk names him for libertinism. He married a near kinswoman, Algiva, of whom he was passionately fond. His attachment interfering with his regal duties his Barons deputed Bishop Dunstan to remonstrate - the king angry at his interference not long after sent Dunstan into banishment, caused his monastery to be rifled & became an enemy to all monks - sentence of divorce was pronounced between him & Algiva - which raised still higher his enmity of the Church - & he put such affronts on it, as caused a large part of his Kingdom to revolt, & set up his brother Edgar. Grief on this event soon after caused his death. Edgar became King of all England at sixteen years of age & called home Dunstan out of Flanders, where he lived in exile. As an enemy to the monks it is not surprising that the memory of Edwi is vilified - & it is but a fair interpretation of history to give him laudable motives for his hostility to the clergy - & to represent him as an enlightened hero.

The drama opens at the time when Edward, King of England, is on the point of marriage with Eltruda - the Algiva of the chronicles - she is his kinswoman, and the daughter of a noble who in a former reign had been banished for opposing the priesthood & who died in exile. Eltruda & her mother, living in solitude & retirement were attacked by a band of invading ....... c.606/1

"\n
thanes - and saved by Edward - the marriage is a consequence of the mutual attachment that hence arises. It is Eltruda’s wedding day - fortune smiles upon her dearest wishes - but she is
miserable haunted by a presentiment of evil - The first scene, a very long one, is between her & Athelstan, a friend of the King, who exhorts her ^vainly^ to banish these superstitious fears. They are too soon confirmed - the news arrives that St Dunstan has arrived in England - St Dunstan lately banished for “crimes that spoke the basest traitor” a proud, ambitious, scheming priest churchman - he is now returned accompanied by a train of priests & supported by all the assistance influence that can be derived from the support amity of the Roman pontiff. The multitude receive him with open arms - & the mother of King Edward is among his adherents. A good deal of obscurity hangs over this portion ^of the subject^. Edward and Eltruda always speak of St Dunstan as a traitor convicted of crimes the most heinous he is described not only as Proud, insolent, imperious - eager of revenge,
Faithless in promise, ready to surmount
All bars divine & human, for his purposes.
But as a man convicted of heinousness & banished by the sentence of the assembled nobles of the land,

while Prince Edgar, who though weak is amiable, speaks of him always as a saint - a man renowned for virtue - who had been his instructor - his second father & formed his mind to purest goodness - & these discrepancies of opinion exist through the whole tragedy & are never cleared up - Edgar never alludes to the crimes of the Saint, nor does Edward undertake to convince him that he is mistaken in his opinion of his goodness. And we are the more surprised when afterwards Eltruda seeks an interview with him & deprecates his anger - without any allusion to his crimes

Dunstan is a sort of second Wolsey - but more artful - more unprincipled. He hates the race whence King Edward is sprung & only conciliates Edgar the more surely to secure wreak his revenge. Edgar loves Eltruda - on this love Dunstan works - while at the same time the near relationship of this lady princess to the King is a pretext for forbidding the marriage & rouzing the superstitious multitude against their sovereign. He incites Edgar to murder his brother - he dooms Eltruda to the stake - he is remorseless in the prosecution of his schemes - yet there is something grand in his character. ^He is fearless.^ He lands in the kingdom of his adversary unaided except by his own trust in reliance on his own powers & the impression he is to make on the multitude - his partizans tremble for him (turn over)
but he aspiring pretending to inspiration & support from heaven; - unchecked by pity or conscience is ready to meet & surmount every obstacle - he assumes humility to cloak presumption - but his heart is always haughty & unflinching - while Edward equally brave, is generous & gentle - with no thought but for his people’s good & indignation at the assumptions of the priest.

A second trial is prepared for Dunstan he is called before the council of nobles to answer for his former crimes & return from banishment he is again sentenced to exile - & his utmost malice rouzed by this new condemnation, he again assails Edgar with persuasions to kill his king & brother promising Eltruda as the reward of the deed - the unfortunate Edgar - deluded - hurried away by passion & blinded by superstition resolves to obey. The scene that follows between him & his brother is one of the best in the drama - Edward magnanimous & noble - ready to resign his bride for England’s sake, but horrified at the miserable end that is threatened her by the priesthood on account of their marriage - Edgar devoured by remorse - fearful for Eltruda - half betrays his design & gives token of an agonizing struggle till at last he rushes away resolved to save his brother. ^Then^ worked upon

again by the dangers that threaten Dunstan - & his artful instigations - he returns & stabs the king. Thus ends the fourth act - & the fifth commences with the horror which the murder of the king has shed around - ^augmented also by^ the expected death of Eltruda who is doomed to the stake by the priests - she however is saved by Edgar who rescues her as she is being led to death & then claims her for his wife - which she The scene between them is disjointed & ill-arranged - at first she treats him with something of kindness, then all at once we discover that she is aware that he is Edward’s murderer & she overwhelsms him with the bitterest reproaches - which awaken his remorse & fill him with keen repentance for the crime he has committed. At this moment Dunstan enters to seize Eltruda - she on this - who has hitherto been more of pining maiden, assumes the heroine - one would almost guess that Mrs Siddons was in the author’s mind as the personification of his idea, as she rising with queenly Majesty addresses the people - yet most strangely she does not demand justice for murdered Edward - but allegiance for Edgar - through his brother’s death the possessor of the hour - her [?commina
expressed with heroic fervor even enter the heart of Dunstan - his courage is not fail - but his conscience is awakened - We find in him that he has hitherto been a self deceived imposter - that his assertions of support from heaven have had the avouchment of his own heart; but this fails him now - he perceives his crimes - he is struck with horror at his own deeds & rushes out having imprecated curses on his own head - Edgar attempts to stake stab himself but is prevented while Eltruda announces an intention of leaving England & taking refuge in the solitudes of Ireland.

There is much of what is eloquent & much of what is puerile in the dialogue of this drama. Godwin was not a poet - he was no adept in blank verse - There is an awkwardness & a bathos in the turns of his expression that remind us of a tyro - we do not wonder that the play was never brought out on the stage, though there are many scenes & situations which render it interesting for the closet.

His chief attempt is to render Edward interesting for his fearless heroism & his exalted patriotism joined to the softest tenderness towards his bride while the mixture of enthusiasm & cunning

Though his execution lagged no one was better aware than Godwin of the requisites of a tragedy - and in writing one he was beset by the discomfort attending the inability to write up to his conceptions. Godwin when writing was in the habit on awakening rising in the morning or on his return from a walk of putting down the thoughts that occurred to him during his ruminations. Notes of this kind we find on the subject of this tragedy

“Edward should display the most perfect simplicity & public spirit - Beware of sentences expressing a little meaning in a tedious drrawl of words - Be not misled by Holcroft: attend impartially to his criticisms, but adopt nothing except on full conviction. - The business of Edward in his first scene is to make a collected & manly confession of his views, & to probe the heart of Edgar. - Every thing must be terror, confusion, & dismay, Edward alone tranquil & serene in the midst. Edgar is ominously inane in his first scene. - Let there be no prodigies in the
first act; let them result from & not precede the impression of Dunstan on the people: they will also gradually heighten the action. - Let the second act have prodigies: the action will not then drag as it does at present.”

Mention is made in these notes of Holcroft's criticisms as a dramatist & accustomed to the theatre they were valuable. But they were unsparing. He detected every fault & laid it bare without pity. Some of the notes remain & deserve to be cited to show the acuteness of the man & the principles.

"The dread of Dunstan should be heightened as much as possible, & his landing should excite much stronger terror as well from the unexpectedness, as from the daring effrontery of the act. Tumult - hurry, dismay, terror should be excited & exhibited. Edward only should appear capable of braving the storm - while he speaks the auditor should imagine all in ^perfect^ security - the moment he is absent all should be distrust, anxiety & distraction. - There are fine traits in the character of Edgar in the first act.

"Dunstan in Act II should shew more ambition, & superstition, unmixed with honest piety, which is too prominent by much.

"Act III begins too like chit chat. The arguments of Edward, which may be made the finest in the play should be encreased in force, & Eltruda having listened, cannot doubt then, whatever she might do before or after.

"Act IV Edgar’s ^struggles & language should be stronger: his thoughts more confused & approaching madness. In scene I & II there is great excellence already. The false hope when Edgar goes off, is well imagined & should be encreased in energy of thought.

"The whole speech of Act V The spiritless insufferably tame entrance of Edgar & Eltruda, that is of the murderer of his brother & the murdered man’s wife, at the very moment he is left weltering in his blood offends beyond description. No such arrangement of scenes or sentiments must take place - the retiring of Eltruda to faint is worthy of Tom Thumb. Edgar is too paltry a scoundrel - the audience would rise & kick such a fellow off the stage as a dirty chimney sweeper, who has washed his face, & called himself a prince - line 130 - The fanatic motives.
that determined him are finely enumerated. This is sublime, but all after 1& 2, not only spiritless but wrong - that Eltruda should enter in such a vapid, whining, wanting to feel manner is impossible. She would be running frantic in search of her husband’s body - accuse all she met - seek for instruments of self destruction - & freeze & terrify her hearers. Edgar & Dunstan himself would shrink from the wildness of her sublime sarcasms. Horror would seize on the soul of Edgar & the priestly, bigotted flowing insolence of superstition would stand confounded, motionless & speechless, while she spoke of murder & all the tortures that should overtake the swollen hypocrite & incestuous parricide. She should recite all the high qualities of Edward, his valour, youth, beauty, the bridal day - but above all his patriotism, his high disinterested views, his love of liberty, the blessings he had conferred on his nation country, his expansive heart, which embraced the good not of an individual, or a single nation, or a single age, but of all times & all people. The improbabilities or rather impossibilities of the scene between Edgar & Eltruda are too numerous to repeat, though there are thoughts & passages which only require to be placed in proper company to be extremely beautiful. I have before expostulated on the denouement & the catastrophe. I can only add that my feelings are confirmed by a second reading. Eltruda could not, ought not to act thus. What [...] seat the murderer of her husband on the throne! Why not marry him too!"

^There is From this it may be gathered that there is much strength & beauty in the drama, little no poetry and considerable faults in the action. There is no trace of its ever been [sic] offered to any theatre.^

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literary London

c.606/2

"", 24) During this year Holcroft published his novel of Anna St Ives. It was the custom between the friends to criticise each other’s productions very freely. Anna St Ives had for its object the promulgation of the tenets of phylosophy to which the friends were each day more
warmly addicted. Holcroft’s dramatic talent however threw variety into the character, & interest into the situations. But still Godwin was not satisfied. A well told story was the effort of imagination that most pleased him & an awkward incident or lame catastrophe was sure to excite his disapproval. Among his papers I find the following remarks on the fourth volume Anna St Ives. I insert it not so much for its remarks on the book itself, as for the general lesson it gives concerning the means of inspiring & keeping up interest in fictitious writing.

b.227/6(b)\textsuperscript{cxi} [William Godwin to Thomas Holcroft]

25)
—I declare myself with all my heart & from the bottom of my soul, the utter and irreconcilable enemy of this fourth volume.

“I feared as much. I said at the end of the third volume; No; mortal man cannot support it; it would be better than Julie or Clarissa.

“There are two objections, both insuperable.

1. The catastrophe turns not upon incident, but reasoning. Perhaps in the fifth monarchy & the reign of the saints, such catastrophes will be excellent. But at present certain it is, either you are not wise enough to write them, or I am not wise enough to be pleased with them. I believe the first is true, & that neither you nor any other man existing is able to write them. As to the second, God send you ten millions of readers wiser, more refined & more speculative than your humble servant. To all the rest, not all the sillKickabies of the republican doctor’s table in Peregrine Pickle would be so irresistible a provocation to nausea, as Volume the Fourth. If you wished to impress on your countrymen an abhorrence of the very name of Political Philosophy, you could not have done your business in any way so effectually, as by obtruding it upon them, when their passions were roused, & imagination was on tiptoe for events.

“2. Your object is to render sophistry victorious. If over Anna, how will are you be sure that it will not extend its conquests over the whole mass of your female readers? In the first volume you were for a time guilty of the error of supposing Frank’s arguments inferior to Anna’s; you are here falling into the same error respecting Clifton. There it was comparatively of little consequence; here it is of the utmost magnitude. It is at least very problematical whether, when property & all its modes are abolished, the commerce of the sexes will be accompanied by any species of marriage. You say, “Women must not be so mad as to make laws for themselves in direct contradiction to the institutes under which they live.” Are you sure they ought not? Are you sure it cannot be proved
to be vicious, “to act according to a bad system, when there is a better?” Tout au contraire I suspect, a true heroine ought not even “in these times of prejudice & vice” to marry.

“How is the defect of your catastrophe to be cured? Of that judge for yourself. Perhaps by wholly changing it. By the ultimate rejection of Clifton, & the total success of Frank. I have a confused prospect of endless beauties attendant on such a change; & your total failure in your present catastrophe after such laborious study, leads me to suspect the tragical catastrophe to be radically wrong. Oh, what a glorious third volume! & oh, what an abortive fourth! The fourth volume rises for the most part till towards the close of Letter 79, & convalesces again in Letter 87, &c.”

c.606/4

1) [blank]

Library occupation & the interests of private life were the make the history of this year. He Godwin continued in Charlton St. He rented the whole of a small house of which he had only furnished a part & restricted his expenditure in the narrowest limits. Believing that no duty is so serious or so beset with mistakes & disappointment as the just disbursement of money, he narrowed his views to earning little & spending little. He lived the first three years in Charton St. & spent necessarily £110 - 120 & [?shillings] 13d in the three successive years.

His manner habits of life was exceedingly regular & remained the same to the end of his life. He rose between

2) seven & eight, & read some classic author before breakfast - that meal was dispatched at nine - & from that hour till twelve or one he employed himself with his pen. He found that he could not exceed this measure of labour with any advantage to his own health or the work in hand - (turn over)

14 Old Jekyll the barrister executor to Mary Robinson?
15 C Lamb’s letter sent to [illeg.] published on the 1st May - June - 1837.

The rest of the day morning was spent in calls reading & seeing his friends - When at home he
dined at four - but during his batchelor life he frequently dined out. His dinner at home at this
time was simple enough. He had no servant an old woman came in the morning to clean &
arange his appartments. If necessary she prepared a mutton chop which was put in a Dutch
oven.

While writing Political Justice there was one sentence paragraph which he wrote eight times
over before he could satisfy himself with the strength & perspicuity of his expressions. On this
occasion a sense of confusion of the brain came over him, & he applied to his friend Mr Carlisle
now Sir Anthony Carlisle, the celebrated surgeon, who warned him that he had exerted his
intellectual faculties to their limit, & that whenever he felt the approaches to similar sensations in
his head he must desist from his employment. In compliance with this direction Mr. Godwin
limited his hours of composition & study into what many may deem narrow bounds. But
when we hear of the melancholy results of taxing the brain with excessive labour, of which
several deplorable instances has occurred in our time we admire at once the sagacity of the
physician & the docility of his patient.

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c.606/1

81)
A few other letters occur during this year 1793; the most singular of these may be introduced by
the following memorandum of Mr Godwin’s own

Mr Godwin has made a note to the memoranda of the year 1793 to the following effect

“When I had published written nearly three fourths of the volume of Caleb Williams, I was prevailed upon with much reluctance, by the importunity of a very old friend to entrust him with the perusal of my manuscript. In three days he returned it to me with a note nearly in these words.”

[blank]

As the original note is preserved among Mr Godwin’s papers it [sic] here presented
entire. It is to be remarked that the writer was a fellow Collegian of Mr Godwin. A man of
warm heart & strong sense - his partner & assister in every money difficulty & often the sharer
of his privation, poor as himself - but more alert, more capable of competing with this sort of
embarrassment - a man of the kindliest feelings and readiest friendship - but not always willing
to submit to the tone of superiority which Godwin sometimes unconsciously & sometimes as a matter of right assumed.

","[81v]

Mr Godwin adds -
It is so hardly necessary to say that the receipt of this note was the means of disturbing me. It was three days[^ sic] I fully recovered the elasticity & fervent tone of mind required for the prosecution of my work" -

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b.214/5cxx [James Marshall to William Godwin]

","[1r]

I inclose you three guineas; the rest you will have very shortly.

I take the opportunity of saying a word or two on the affair of Tuesday. It was not I, but somebody else, who exhibited marks of intoxication, or more properly of insanity; for upon no principle of sound intellect is it to be accounted for. I came, like a rational being, from motives of the purest kind, to discharge what I conceived to be a duty. But Sir Fretful was in a humour to hear nothing but commendation, & tyrant Procrustes would admit no duty in another of which he should himself be the object, & which did not square precisely with his ideas. Yet this is a philosopher teaching the firm discharge of duty to mankind? Whip me such philosophers, whose precepts & practice are eternally at variance.

So far from being told twenty times, that previous to reading the MS, that I was not to give my opinion, I do not remember being once told it: but had it been so, I do not see that it ought at all to have altered my conduct.

One word respecting the MS itself, &

","[1v]

I have done. - the incidents are ill-chosen; the characters irrational, distorted; the phraseology intended to mark the humourous ones, un-appropriate; the style uncouth; every thing upon stilts; the whole uninteresting; written as a man would make a chair or a table who had never handled a tool. I got through it, but it was as I get over a piece of ploughed-up ground, with labour & toil. - By the way, judging from the work in question, one might suppose some minds not to be unlike a piece of ground. Having produced a rich crop, it must lie fallow for a season, that it may gain sufficient vigour for a new crop. - You were speaking of a motto for this work: the best motto in my opinion would be a Hic facet; for depend upon it the world will suppose you to be exhausted; or rather, what a few only think at present, will become a general opinion, that the Hercules you have fathered, is not of your begetting.

Your note to me is written to justify yourself from a charge of weakness; &

","[2r]
it contains an additional confirmation of that weakness. The meaning of it is, that, if I cannot have the forbearance to avoid mentioning a syllable, or breathing a censure upon this “work of works”, I must not approach you till it is finished. Fie! Fie! what name does this deserve?

Friday May 31. 93

Jas. Marshal

[bottom of page, MJG hand]

How extraordinary! This novel was ---- Caleb Williams!

M. J. G.

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c.606/4

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17)

Godwin commenced this year his acquaintance with a man known to himself & all his literary contemporaries as the most generous the most amiable of men. Thomas Wedgwood of Etruria in Staffordshire a name dear to all who reverence virtue & goodness. His enthusiasm in the cause of Knowledge - his earnest desire to serve his fellows rank him high among good men. He was afflicted with bad health which acted on his nerves and ^frequently^ rendered him low spirited to a painful degree. The commencement history of his intercourse with Godwin is so well pourtrayed in their correspondance that no further observation need be made. It will be seen that at one time they meditated making common household together.

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18)

Their establishment was to be conducted on the most economical plan as suited the narrow circumstances of the one, & the generous views of the other which led him to limit his personal expences that he might have more to spare for others. It will be seen what prevented the execution of this project.

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[unnumbered]

Wedgwood projected at this time taking a house conjointly with Godwin and making common household. This establishment was to be conducted on the most economical footing, as suited to
the circumstances of the one, & the generous views of the other, which led him to limit his personal expences, that he might have more to spare to others. I find the following notes on the subject

[blank]

....

","41)\textsuperscript{cxxxiii}

I add a few letters written to Godwin this year. The one from Holcroft is so exceedingly characteristic that it demands insertion. From this date, Mr Godwins own letters will be more frequent He accepted and made use of the copying machine\textsuperscript{cxxxiv} & to this we owe the preservation of very many of his letters. Some of the copies were obliterated or damaged by time, but on the whole the machine succeeded. It did not in the least damage the originals. Mr Josiah Wedgewood at my request most kindly sent such letters as he could find from Mr Godwin to his brothers, & those that underwent the operation of being copied are as well preserved as the rest.

....

","[unnumbered]

There was much of method in the objects Mr Godwin proposed to himself through life - & much of method also in his the mode with which he looked on the habits of his life - One of his objects was to see new people who at all deserved attention from talent. I find in one of his journals a list of his acquaintances made out under the year in which such were formed. I find the name of Coleridge thus marked from as far back as 1794\textsuperscript{cxxxv} - After that I believe he went abroad and I do not find him mentioned till 1800 - when there is a particular record of Coleridge, visit, March 29, 30, 31, 1800. His intimate acquaintance with

....

","[unnumbered]

It was early in 1799\textsuperscript{cxxxvi} that Mr Godwin first knew Coleridge - he particularly marks in his journal, Coleridge, visit, March 29, 30

........
The four principal oral instructors to whom I feel my mind indebted for improvement, were Joseph Fawcet, Thomas Holcroft, George Dyson, & Samuel Taylor Coleridge. I made their acquaintance at the following periods: Fawcet in 1778  Holcroft in 1786  Dyson in 1788  Coleridge I first casually knew in 1794; but the familiar acquaintance to which I feel myself particularly deeply indebted, did not begin till 1799.

.........[end chapter 1: literature]
My dear Wm,

I’m a poor letter writer at best but now worse than ever, after thanking yo for yr genteel present of the Memoirs of yr Wife. Excuse me saying Providence certainly knows best the fountain of wisdom can’t err. I hope you are taught by reflection your mistake concerning marriage there might have been two children that had no lawful wright to anything yet was their fathers with a thousand other bad consequences, children & wives crying about streets without a protector, You wish I dare say to keep your own opinion, therefore I shall say no more, but wish you & dear babes happy does little Mary thrive is she weaned you will follow your wives direction give them a great deal of air & have a good opportunity as you live out of the smoke of the city [...]

I have been burning a great number of old letters; but when I came to yours it was with great reluctance that I destroyed yours there is such a kind & benevolent spirit towards your dear S & J in their necessities, what a burden has Jo been to you. poor creature what will become of him I tremble to think; [...]'.

Dear Wm,

Your broken resolution in regard to matrimony encourages me to hope that you will ere long embrace the Gospel [...] you might have been so good as told me a few more particulars about your conjugal state as when you were married as being a father as well as husband, I hope you will fill up your place with propriety in both relations [...] & I may say all your friends & mine wish your happiness, & shall be glad to see you & your wife in Norfolk if be spared.

*document Life of Chatham*

c.607/2

[cxxix]

I have just been saying my prayers; & with the greatest earnestness did I thank God that the life of Lord Chatham was finished, & added, with equal earnestness, From all such undertakings in the future, - Good Lord deliver me. O that mine enemy would publish a book! When Job & Shylock said this, I believe It is the greatest curse that can be uttered, & would very properly conclude the chapter of curses in the com. prayer. When Job & Shylock uttered it I believe they were more plagued with printers than reviewers. I include not Kearsley in the denomination of printers. He is a clever fellow & as much preferable to the puppy Newberry, as the The history of the life of Lord Chatham is to the history of Tom Thumb. As a bookseller he has some acquaintance with great men. This morning the late attorney general came into his shop. Kearsley put a copy of your Chatham into his hands.
The Att. Gen opened it at Lord Chatham’s “great soul brooding over the obscurity” & said, “the stile is good; If his materials are equally good, it will have an extensive sale, for the public has for some time thirsted after such a work.” Camden, Chatham, Cavendish, Shelburne, Burke, Fox, Johnson, recd. their copies yesterday morning. Johnson lives in Kearsley’s neighbourhood. He sees him nearly every day & means in a day or two to ask his opinion regarding your performance. I want to see you but cannot as yet. The

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[v]

boy is as averse to the comming into the world, as we all are to the going out of it. I have sent you the morning Chronicle. I have marked an advertisement in it, to which you must give, for me, a clever ans.

Sat. Morg.

........

*document Fawcett*

[Joseph Fawcett to William Godwin]

""

I thank you for your honest opinion upon the question on which I consulted you. It has not, I confess, determined me. The ground of your dislike, so far as your explanation lets me into it, certainly does not accord with my judgment. I likewise recollect to have remarked a difference, in more than one instance, between your opinion respecting the merit of poetry, & the popular judgment. Before I come to a resolution, I shall exercise a little more consideration of my own & avail myself of additional counsel. In the mean time, I shall be much obliged to you, if you will point out to me, in a line to Sledgegrove (where I now am, although, as I send this by a friend, you will have it by the Penny Post) those particular faults in the elegy to which you allude: as, though I should determine not to subjoin it to the Art of War, I shall make no scruple of inserting it in a collection of poems whenever I publish one.

Joseph Fawcet
*document Criticisms
Duke reel 5

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Remember there are such things as great & enviable talents, virtues of the purest kind which always more or less are associated with these talents, and attachments arising out of this association so strong & so delightful that they are known only to our private feelings. I say remember these facts which you so well understand and for god’s sake do not let any sense of obligation oppress your mind. It has been a source of supreme happiness to me that I had so unequivocal an opportunity of shewing you my heart. If the piece succeed all our desires I hope will be gratified. I only request you not to make essential alterations with out a conference: we may mutually perceive reasons which had escaped the other:

Sepr 23d. 1804
T Holcroft

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It is impossible to write any thing in a style of greater kindness & affection than my three last notes. To attempt to add anything to that, would be absurd.

You understand me as insinuating that you had “prescribed to me the law”, Permit the revision of the tragedy by me, or starve.” It is foolish in me to put down in black & white, that I never dreamed of such a meaning. Circumstances may prescribe to me that law, without any concurrence of yours. I wish I were sure that I should never starve or go to prison, till you had put your name on the back of the writ.

I said in my last, that “it was some other sentiment than friendship that which dictated the restriction that, in revising my play according to my own judgment, I should not make use of your words.” I adhere to that assertion. It might be as noble a sentiment, it might be nobler, but I say again, “it was not friendship.” If I am to receive any more ^notes^ equally perversive of the real state of the question as the one before me, do me the favour to explain how it could be friendship.

But, in the name of everything holy in friendship, or honourable in man, do not let us by such idle comments slur one of the most generous actions that ever man performed for man. I have

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said already that “I feel a sense of obligation in the case that no words can express.” I have said that “I am persuaded that what you have done will be of infinite service to me.” And I swear that when I said this, they were not words of course, but the religious & unchangeable sentiments of my mind. Allow me to repose in this delicious feeling, without interruption from unintelligible & deplorable altercations.

Wednesday evening,
Oct. 3, 1804.
Notes on the Biographical Sketch of WG inserted in the Monthly Mirror for Jan & Feb 1805

I once conceived the design of composing the narrative of my own life, & have actually brought it down as far as the twelfth year of my age. But I shall probably never complete it. My feelings on the subject are not what they were. I was always an infinite lover of ingenuousness. I sat down with the intention of being nearly as explicit as Rousseau in the composition of his Confessions. I think I have no wish to be understood by the present age or by posterity, if posterity should care anything about me, as anything better than I am.

But ingenuousness has not always the effect of truth. Truth, practically speaking, arises from the relative characters & dispositions of the persons or things, the speaker & the hearer, the words uttered, & the temper of him by whom the words are received. To say that I performed such an action, & felt myself prompted to it by such or such a motive, however faithful the statement may be, does by no means necessarily convey a true impression to the mind of the hearer or speaker. I have heard it asserted by an eminent artist, that on full examination it will be found out that every portrait painter will be found to paint more of himself, his own conceptions & intellectual turn, into his delineations, than of the person who sits [for] him. The case is paralleled in the matter of which I am speaking. The reader no sooner peruses the little section of narrative alluded to, than he exclaims according to his own preconceptions, How honourable a proceeding! how arrogant a folly! how glorious a virtue! how obvious a vice!

I am willing to confess of myself that I am a lover of fame, honourably formed, that last infirmity of noble minds. I am ready in this respect to adopt the sentiment of Plutarch, & to say, that I had rather posterity should never know that there had been such a man as Godwin, than that they should believe of me, that Godwin was a being, immoral, degenerate & unjust.

I am an author. In that character the world has enough of me, upon which to fasten its misrepresentations & its criticisms. As an individual, I have never been a man of the world. I have seen a portion of human society in most of its various classes; but that is a circumstance which has risen incidentally, & not out of any bustling & [illeg] of my own. I am of a retiring, not an intrusive disposition. My sensibilities are too great, & I am too sceptical & diffident as to how I shall acquit myself, & how I shall be received, to be by any means qualified, as the phrase is, to make my way in the world. The half of human life I spent in & for the most part in solitude; & since have lived principally in the bosom of my family. My personal transactions have been too insignificant to merit the public attention, & too independent for me to wish to expose them to the cavils of the many-headed multitude.

I am an author. By my works I am content to be judged. I am perhaps as well acquainted as most men with their faults & their follies; but, having
Mr Marshall 1817
Without any eminent share of intellectual power, he has perhaps as liberal a mind as perhaps any person of
intellectual power I ever knew & has proved it through the whole course of his life
I received a letter this morning by the post, informing me of the death of my only sister, which took place yesterday.
Mary I think must remember her by the name of Aunt Godwin, who was most unremittingly kind to her and Fanny
in their childhood.

My dear Sir,
It is now many years since I have ceased to write to you on any subject but myself, and I do not know what
is the state of your feelings and habits as to such a general subject as will form the topic of this letter.
I remember once Addressing your late brother on some such occasion as I have now before me. But
feelings which then met his, and I believe your approval, the lapse of time may have altered, and they may now be
deemed romantic.
I said to him, among a number of reasons why I regret that I have occasion to be under pecuniary obligation
to you, this is one: You have wealth, more than you find a necessity of applying to your own wants, and you would
gladly apply some of your superfluity in acts of benevolence. [...] and abstractly considered there would be a sort of
propriety in my sometimes stating such a case to you, and inviting your ability to supply what the narrowness of my
means took from me the power of effecting. This, I added, I should do without ceremony, but that the consciousness
that I am under pecuniary obligations to you checks me and makes me feel as if there were an indelicacy in my
doing what, under other circumstances it would be my duty to do.
In answer to this representation, your brother assured me, that I was wrong in my scruple [...] I have entered into this preface as an apology for what is the express purpose of this letter.
The person whose interest is at this moment the subject of my thoughts, is a person nearly of the same age as
myself, whom I first became acquainted with when I was seventeen, and whom from that time I have never lost
sight [...] His career in the world has been similar to my own, except that he wanted that originality of talent, that
the world has been good `natured` enough to impute to me. In my outset in literature, I was engaged with the
booksellers in obscure la-
bour, reviews, compilations, translations, etc. and during that time this gentleman was for several years my coadjutor. Afterwards, when I was engaged in writings of a superior cast, he set up for himself, and now for twenty five years, he has subsisted respectably by the compilation of Indexes, the correction of English in works written by foreigners in our language, translations, and the superintendence of works in their passage through the press; [...] useful labours [...] indefatigable.

He has one son only [...] he has just now finished his education, and is fifteen years of age [...] my friend now, as he is going down the descent of life, and is full sixty years of age, finds himself for the first time oppressed with debts which he is unable to discharge. [...]

Mr Marshal (that is his name) has spent the greater part of his life in disinterested service of others [...] his indefatigable exertions [...] a few years ago for the widow and six young children of Mr Holcroft, who by his death were left pennyless in the worldcxlii [...] Mr Marshal is well known to Mr Basil Montagu [...] well thought of by many persons [...] anxious to raise for him 200£ or 300£ [...]

On Tuesday evening at nine o’clock at his apartments at Brompton died the right Honorable John Philpot Curran. He is almost the last of that brilliant phalanx, the contemporaries & fellow-labourers of Mr Fox in the cause of general liberty. Lord Erskine in this country, & Mr Grattan in Ireland, still survive.

Mr Curran is one of those characters which the lover of human nature, & of its intellectual capacities, delights to contemplate. He rose from nothing. He derived no aid from rank & fortune. He ascended by his own energies to an eminence, which throws rank & fortune into comparative scorn. Mr Curran was the great ornament of his time of the Irish bar, & in forensic eloquence has certainly never been exceeded in modern times. His rhetoric was the pure emanation of his spirit, a warming and lighting up of the soul, that poured conviction & astonishment on his hearers. It flashed in his eye, & revelled in the melodious & powerful accents of his voice. His thoughts almost always shafted themselves into imagery, & if his eloquence had any fault, it was that his images were too frequent. But they were at the same time so exquisitely beautiful, that he must have been a rigorous critic, that could have determined which of them to part with. [...] 

Mr Curran had his foibles & his faults. Which of us has not? At this awful moment it becomes us to dwell on his excellencies. And as his life has been illustrious, & will leave a trail of glory behind, this is the part of him that
every man of a pure mind will chuse to contemplate. We may any of us have his faults: it is his excellences that we would wish, for the sake of human nature, to excite every man to copy in proportion to his ability to do so.

....
For full citations see Bibliography.

1 Dep. c.606/1: 1) and 2), from the Abinger collection deposited at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, are MWS transcriptions of Godwin’s ‘Autobiography’ and ‘Autobiographical fragments’. Godwin’s holograph drafts, in b.226/1 and b.226/2, some with MWS marginalia and chapter headings, were given these titles, and published for the first time in William Godwin, Collected Novels and Memoirs, i, ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1992) [MP]. Philp notes that MWS transcriptions in c.606/1 and c.606/2, of the fragments for 1781, 1782, 1790, 1791, 1792, and part of that for 1788, are now the sole extant version. Philp’s introduction reports (MP 58-9), that the papers of the 3-chapter ‘Autobiography 1756-1772 ’ (MP 3-38), in b.226/1, and the ‘Autobiographical fragments 1772-1796’ (MP 39-51), in b.226/2, bear watermarks of differing dates between 1796 and 1819. These ‘fragments’ on near-contemporary events represent Godwin’s first foray into autobiography, ending in 1796, at the time of Godwin’s fortieth birthday, when he attended Lord Lauderdale’s parties for Whig supporters, along with ‘Mrs Wollstonecraft’ and other friends (MP 51).

ii MWS holograph, pages numbered in MWS style, single quarto sheet, laid paper, written r and v, watermark J Green & Son. On this sheet the date 1835 has been cut from the watermark when the paper was trimmed. As page numbers 1) and 2), and 1835 paper indicate, these pages open MWS account of Godwin’s early life. It is characteristic that on her first page she quotes Godwin’s declaration, ‘that ... great & happy improvements might be achieved without anarchy & confusion’, and on her second, that in 1791, Godwin declared ‘it was my first determination to tell all that I apprehended to be truth’. *document Monthly Mirror.


iv Godwin recalls his decision to break away from political journalism ‘in the summer of 1791’, to concentrate on serious literature, in the Preface to the 1st edition of Enquiry concerning Political Justice, dated 7 January 1793 : ‘It [Political Justice] was projected in the month of May 1791: the composition was begun in the following September, and has therefore occupied a space of sixteen months’. For both Godwin and Mary Shelley, the point is that Godwin’s Political Justice (published February 1793) has intellectual priority of Mary Wollstonecraft’s Vindication of the Rights of Woman (published July 1792), and of Godwin’s first meeting with Tom Paine and Wollstonecraft (in November 1791).

v A column of numbers in the margin of c.606/1: 1), in MWS hand, lists ‘85 86 87 88 89 90 91’, the years 1785-
1791 in which Godwin wrote the historical sections of Robinson’s *New Annual Register*. See 2: politics.

viiiThis was Godwin’s working title for what became his major work, *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* (2 vols.; London: Robinson, 1793. 2nd ed. 1796. 3rd rev. ed. 1798). See 2: politics.

xiiMontesquieu’s treatise of 1748, translated into English in 1752, *The Spirit of Laws*.

viThis was Godwin’s working title for what became his major work, *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* (2 vols.; London: Robinson, 1793. 2nd ed. 1796. 3rd rev. ed. 1798). See 2: politics.

Duke reel 2, MWS transcription of ‘Chapter II’, one of three chapter headings in Godwin’s manuscript autobiography. In the Philp edition of the *Autobiography* [MP], the relevant passages, from ‘removal from Wisbeach’ (MP 13) and ‘residence at Guestwick’ (MP 13-20) to ‘the man placed us on the top of the organ’ (in Norwich Cathedral) (MP 27) cover the years 1758-1765. Philp’s Introduction (MP 58) notes MWS marginalia and her heading ‘Memoir’ on the manuscript b.226/1.

William Godwin’s father’s cousin, called Aunt Godwin, was Godwin’s first tutor, or ‘Schoolmistress’. She married and became Mrs Sothren in the year of his father’s death in 1772 (MP 11). After she was widowed she lived at Dalling, Norfolk with Godwin’s widowed mother, Ann Godwin, and died 12 December 1796. The incident of ‘the Cat’ that made the boy desire to run away, was on a Sunday when Godwin stroked the family pet and was rebuked by his father (MP 18). The heading ‘Schoolmaster’ may refer to Akers’s village school at Hilderston [Hindolveston], which Godwin attended in 1765, or to Newton’s senior school at Norwich where Godwin became a pupil in September 1767 (MP 29). For Newton, see 2: politics. On the same page of the autobiography (MP 27) that Godwin recalls the ‘visit to Norwich - the seat on the top of the organ’, he also writes of the later occasion when he paid an advance visit to Newton’s school, where his elder brothers were already pupils, on a day trip to Norwich with his mother, and ‘how I was struck with the insignificant figure I made, compared with Mr Aker’s school, where I was universally considered the most promising boy it had to boast’. The temporal overlaps that structure Godwin’s reminiscent ‘history of mentalities’ are replicated in MWS script.

xiiiSoon after Godwin’s seventeenth birthday on 3 March 1773, his recently widowed mother had tried to enrol him at the leading dissenting academy, Homerton in the London borough of Hackney, but had to settle for Hoxton, and she made a rare trip to London to place him at the start of his five-year term of residence.

xivMark Philp’s editorial notes to Dep. b.227/1(i) quote Godwin MS note to ‘My Literary Executor’, dated 30 June, 1834: ‘[T]he most faultless book I ever printed, is probably the Thoughts on Man. It contains some
egotism, but kept perhaps within proper bounds’ (MP 60).


xvi1798’ cancelled and ‘1796’ substituted, as latest date covered by Godwin’s ‘brief annals’. The two year period 1796-1798 is crucial, as these are the years of Godwin’s relationship with Mary Wollstonecraft.

xviiOne such ‘future history’ was the ‘Biographical Sketch of William Godwin, Esq.’, published in *Monthly Mirror* (31 Jan. 1805), 5-7; and (Feb. 1805), 85-93. Cf. *document Monthly Mirror* (Duke reel 13), containing Godwin’s notes to assist the *Monthly Mirror’s* journalist and ‘prevent material mistakes’;

xviii c.606/1: [58v], consists of one heavily cancelled paragraph on verso of list of early works in c.606/1: 57).

xix c.606/2, MWS holograph script, matching pinholes on every sheet in folder, no dated watermarks. See *Bodleian rubric c.606/2.

xx‘This year’ is probably 1792.

xxiAnn Godwin’s letters to Godwin from Dalling, Norfolk, are in c.516, together with an undated draft letter from Godwin to his mother (below). See *Bodleian rubric c.516.

xxiiInternal evidence of Godwin’s letter (below) makes it clear that it was not an ‘answer’ to Ann’s 1792 letter to which MWS attaches it, but of earlier date, c.1785, after James Marshall’s trip to St Vincent’s in 1784, to finance which Godwin had borrowed money, probably from Felix Vaughan.

xxiii c.516/1, numbered MWS style 19) and 20), Ann Godwin letter dated from Dalling, Norfolk, 5 April 1792, single sheet, written r and v, bluish laid paper, no watermark. Another blank sheet forms outer, addressed ‘Mr Wm Godwin/No 39/Devoshire [sic] Street/Portland Place/London’. Wax seal has torn through paper and several words have been mended in unidentified hand. Matching pinholes left top corner in both sheets.


xxv An unnumbered large sheet in Ann Godwin’s hand was formerly pinned to her letter. It is a paraphrase of a sermon on the biblical text, ‘I am become a stranger unto my brethren & an alien unto my mothers children’. Ann Godwin heads her first page: ‘Christ’s charge against his professing People Ps 69 & 8’.

xxvi c.516/1, draft of letter [to Ann Godwin], Godwin hand, quarto fold, unnumbered pages, laid paper, lacks signature, undated watermark, pinhole left top corner matches Ann Godwin’s 1792 letter (above). In a different hand, ‘Mrs Godwin, Sen.’, heads second page.


xxviii There is an apparent caret in my transcription of this passage. In Pamela Clemit, ‘Godwin’, *Lives of the Great Romantics* III, i (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999) [Clemit 1999], 101, the next sentence in c.606/1 reads: ‘She carried on the business of a dressmaker.’

xxix ‘your dear sister and J’ are Godwin’s sister Hannah and brother Joseph. On the manuscript letter in c.516/1, Mary Shelley marked out the final paragraph she quotes with a large black cross and vertical wavy lines in the left margin. The letter patently is not ‘dated 1797’. It has outer postmark ‘10 April 1798’, and Ann Godwin refers to Godwin’s *Memoirs of Wollstonecraft*, published 10 January 1798. Also in c.516/1, another Ann
Godwin letter to Godwin dated 30 May 1797. Possibly MWS confuses the dates 1797 and 1798 of these two letters, one written during Wollstonecraft’s pregnancy, the other after her death. *document Ann Godwin.

The editorial ‘we’ and ‘us’ may be merely formal, or may be inclusive of Mary Jane Godwin.

Philp (MP 48, note b), notes of this ‘Autobiographical fragment’ for 1788, in b.226/2, that the MWS transcription of the concluding sentences is now the sole extant version.

In ‘Analysis of own character begun Sep 26, 1798’ (MP 59, 55-60) Godwin writes of Thomas Holcroft, ‘our acquaintance began in 1786, and our intimacy in 1788’ (MP 59). In his Memoirs of Holcroft vol. ii, Chap. vi, Hazlitt had written, ‘In the year 1786, Mr Holcroft first became acquainted with Mr Godwin. This friendship lasted for near twenty years’. “Memoirs of the Late Thomas Holcroft”, The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in Twenty-One Volumes, ed. P. P. Howe, after the edition of A.R. Waller and Arnold Glover, iii (London and Toronto, 1932), [Howe], 163.

William St Clair, The Godwins and the Shelleys: the biography of a family (London and Boston, 1989) [C], writes that Godwin began keeping a journal on 6 April 1788 (C55), and that the last entry in Godwin’s journal is dated 26 Mar. 1836 (C487).

8 May 1776 was annually commemorated as publication date of Vol. i of Edward Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

By 1788, Dr Andrew Kippis, formerly Godwin’s tutor at Hoxton Dissenting Academy, was now an editor of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and had started a Whig oppositionist journal New Annual Register [NAR], published by G. G. and J. Robinson, in 1781. Kippis was a family friend and mentor of Welsh writer Helen Maria Williams. Cf. Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1783/4 and 1787: ‘towards the end of the year [1787] I was introduced by the desire of Helen Maria Williams into the coterie of that lady’ (MP 45, 47).

The title of polite address ‘Mrs’ for an unmarried older woman was not unusual in Godwin’s London circle. Nevertheless, in transcribing from MWS transcription of Godwin’s journals, I may have misread ‘Miss’ as ‘Mrs’. In the same folder c.606/1, MWS transcription of Godwin’s journal entry for Friday 11 December 1789, gives ‘Tea Miss Williams’s’, and ‘Miss Williams’ is again presumably Helen Maria Williams. See 2: politics.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, MP, as Manager of the House of Commons proceedings against Warren Hastings, delivered a marathon speech in favour of impeachment on 3 June 1788, and three subsequent days, 6 June, 10 June, 13 June (My dates from ‘Sheridan, Richard Brinsley (1751-1816)’, [W.F.R.], Dictionary of National Biography (1922), xviii, 81.

MWS cancellations indicate her reservations about the degree of intimacy in the relationship. Godwin-Holcroft correspondence in c.607/1 and b.214/6.

See below, Holcroft’s criticisms of Godwin’s St Dunstan, transcribed by MWS in c.606/2: 159) to 161). Godwin and Holcroft exchanged sharp criticisms about another play in progress during the autumn of 1804. This was probably Godwin’s Faulkener, a Tragedy in Prose, staged at Drury Lane in December 1807. Their exchange produced a letter from Godwin, almost certainly to Holcroft, dated Wednesday evening, Oct. 3, 1804, in c.607/1. *document Criticisms.

The Irish-born history painter and academician James Barry, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, suffered mental distress when his ambitions were frustrated in the London art world of the 1780s.

xii. Professor Dr Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738), Dutch medical scientist, Fellow of the Royal Society (London), author of a treatise on scurvy, reputed to have discovered a cure for syphilis by experimenting with mercury and magnetism. British Library Catalogue of Printed Books lists numerous 18th-century English translations of Boerhaave’s *Aphorisms concerning the Knowledge and Cure of Diseases*, first published in Latin (Leyden 1709).

xiii. In b.214/6, Holcroft’s letter to Godwin of 24 July 1788, was addressed to ‘Mr Godwin/At Mr - - Upholsterer/Guilford [sic]/Surrey’. Holcroft had added, ‘P. S. You forgot to send your address’. Godwin had apparently forgotten to give Holcroft the address of his lodgings in Guildford where he had probably gone to collect Tom Cooper who was to live with him in London until 1791 (C59). See above, Godwin’s journal entry for 1788, ‘July 27 Su. T. Cooper at Guildford’, transcribed by MWS in c.606/1: 124). In b.214/6, a letter from Holcroft to Godwin dated 6 Sep. 1788, ends with ‘P.S. My best respects to Mr Marshal and Master Cooper’.

xiv. Gerard van Swieten (1700-1772), a student of Herman Boerhaave and succeeded him as Professor of Medicine at the University of Leyden. His Latin *Commentaries on Boerhaave’s Aphorisms* were published and republished from 1745 to 1772.

xv. Godwin’s encomium on Herman Boerhaave (‘mynheer van Haaven’) echoes the eulogy by Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, translated into English by Dr William Burton in 1743.

xvi. In 1788 Holcroft was canvassing support for the liberal Whig Lord John Townshend in forthcoming elections.

xvii. (ten me ) inserted in MWS hand at bottom of page.

xviii. MWS spelling ‘Southern’ for Miss Godwin’s married name, ‘Sothren’.


*li* MWS page numbers in c.606/1: 90 and seq. are in error for 60) and seq. Page 90) is verso of page 59).

*li* In c.606/1: 92) to 94), the paragraphs in double quotation marks are transcribed by MWS from Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1778, 1779, and 1780 (MP 42-3). See below, c.606/2 ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1781 and 1782 (MP 44).

*li* Samuel Clarke *A Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God ... Being sixteen sermons ... in ... 1704, and 1705, at the lecture founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq; ...* (London: James and John Knapton, 1732).

*li* Hindolveston in Norfolk.

*li* Scottish M.P. William Adam.

*lii* St Clair’s Chapter 4 (C37-8) dates the friendly debates with Fawcett to the late 1780s, Godwin’s years as a political journalist, coinciding with his awakening interest in the parliamentary debaters Charles James Fox and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. See 2: politics.

*liii* As the regular spelling ‘Fawcett’ indicates, this paragraph is MWS commentary on Godwin’s autobiographical notes. The heading ‘1780’ resumes in Godwin’s first-person but the double quotation marks have been accidentally omitted from the script. This paragraph ‘1780’ is repeated in c.606/2 (below).

*liii* [Joseph Fawcett’s] opinions. The “immorality of the private affections” is given a context in dissenter orthodoxy by St Clair (C75).

*lv* William Hazlitt, *Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft, written by himself, and continued to the time of his death, from his diary, notes, and other papers* (3 vols.; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1816).

*lv* Fawcett published *Sermons Delivered at the Evening Lectures at the Old Jewry* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1795), and *The Art of War: A Poem* (London, 1795), changing the latter title in *Poems* (1798) to ‘Civilised War’. The poem contrasts ‘the wild Indian’s war’, which is part of a state of uncivilised savagery, with ‘This ... dreadful scene/Acted on literate Europe’s lucid stage; /Civiliz’d war!’ The scant sympathy shown for ‘the wild Indian’ (‘In man no more than muscle he discerns’), may be protecting the reputation of George Washington, whose speech to both houses of Congress on 5 December 1793 declared that ‘every reasonable effort has been made to adjust the causes of dissension with the Indians north of the Ohio’, but that, ‘amicable negotiations having been frustrated’, military action against them is now required to secure ‘the essential interest and dignity of the United States.’ (Washington quoted in ‘Public Papers’, *New Annual Register*, 1793 (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1794), 111-115). Despite the warlike title, Fawcett’s poem is preoccupied with English home affairs, civil dissent and its political suppression, reflecting the recent trials of his contemporaries and friends for high treason: ‘The conscience-wither’d wretch a witness comes/Against himself .../... before his country’s bar/When pale he stands, a crowd of curious eyes/The hall of justice choak ...’. *document Fawcett

*lviii* My reading ‘Hedgegrove’in MWS script c.606/2: 95 is cast in doubt by letter from Joseph Fawcett in c.607/2: n. p., which I read ‘Sledgegrove’. See *document Fawcett.


*lv* In vol. ii, *Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft* (1816), Holcroft’s diary entry for 24th June 1798 reads in part:
‘Dined, Godwin and R_ce [Reece] present. Godwin mentioned a Mr.- - whom he and Mr. Fawcett, on a pedestrian ramble, went to visit at Ipswich: Godwin saying, that perhaps he would give them beds; if not, he would ask them to supper, and besides they would have the pleasure of seeing the beautiful Cicely, his daughter. They went, stayed some time, but received no invitation. ... and [did not see] Miss Cicely (who had not appeared)’ (Howe 171). Godwin’s anecdote recalls 1778-1779, the ‘particularly lonely year’ after graduation from Hoxton, that Godwin spent as a candidate for the pulpit in Ware, Hertfordshire (C10, 14).

Texts of French Enlightenment philosophy were lent to the young minister, William Godwin, by Frederick Norman at Stowmarket (C59, 126, 320).

Godwin’s History of the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (London, Printed for the author, 1783) *
document Life of Chatham.

Sketches of History in Six Sermons (London, T. Cadell, 1784). In 1836 ‘Mary Jane Godwin borrowed ... a copy of Sketches of History in Six Sermons (1783) from Sir Charles Aldiss, who noted that Mary Shelley ‘declared she did not know [Godwin] had ever written any’ (Bennett, ii, 272, citing Pforzheimer Library MS). St Clair notes that only some copies carried Godwin’s name as author (C519). Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragment’ for 1783, for which no MWS transcription has been located, writes: ‘Murray published my Herald of Literature for which I received nothing - and Cadel published on the same terms, and with the same effect, a small volume of my Sermons: this volume was dedicated to Dr Watson, bishop of Llandaff’ (MP 44). The same fragment also announces the three novels published in 1784, and emphasises the haste with which they were composed, ‘ten days (Damon and Delia) ... three weeks (Italian Letters)... and in the first four months of 1784 (Imogen)’. MWS apparently refers in c.606/1: 98) to this fragment: ‘When we remember that Mr Godwin always required twelve months & usually a year & a half for the composition of a novel we turn with surprize curiosity to these earlier productions struck off with so much haste’ [my emphasis].


MWS faithfully reproduces Godwin’s assessment of the superiority of his own talents to Marshall’s.

*document Marshall 1817.

This year 1784, when Godwin commenced as author of the British and Foreign History section of New Annual Register for 1783. Mark Philp dates this fragment ‘1783/4’ and notes that the following entry in b.226/2 is for 1785 (MP 45-6). Philp dates Godwin’s contributions to NAR ‘from 1784 to 1791’, in the alphabetical entry ‘Godwin, William’, Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832 (Oxford, 1999), 525. St Clair (C54, 55) writes that Godwin’s ‘last contribution’ was finished on 4 September 1791 for the New Annual Register for 1790, and that Godwin then began preparations for writing Enquiry concerning Political Justice. But elsewhere St Clair speculates that Godwin contributed ‘Possibly also part of volume for 1791’ (C519), and that ‘Helen Maria Williams[s] ... volumes of letters describing the exuberant days of 1790 had found their way into Godwin’s New Annual Register narratives’ (C158). This raises the question whether Godwin continued to contributed as late as 1792, a period when Mary Wollstonecraft and Helen Maria Williams were in Paris, the Girondins were brought down, and British public opinion firmly against the Revolution; or whether, as St Clair
writes, that was left to his ‘successors at the [New Annual] Register’ (C158). See 2: politics

[William Godwin], Italian Letters; or The History of the Count de St Julian (London: Robinson, 1784).

[William Godwin], Damon and Delia: a Tale (London: T. Hookham, 1784) [BL 1784].

The only’ is run on’ from page 101).

c.606/5, four pages in Mary Jane Godwin hand [MJG], numbered in MWS style 101)-104). Page 101) is engraved ‘Bath’ in top left-hand corner. MJG excerpts Mr Godfrey’s story from BL 1784, 102-112; 180.

MJG copy omits the beginning of Mr Godfrey’s account, which he is persuaded to narrate as ‘a piecemeal story’ to the ingénue couple, Damon and Delia. It begins: ‘Mr Godfrey was not born to affluent circumstances. At a proper age he had been placed at the university of Oxford … and here his abilities had been universally admired. … But Mr Godfrey had a stiffness and unyieldingness of temper’ (BL 1784, 102-3).

MJG omits Mr Godfrey’s further reflection that: ‘My talents perhaps point me higher than to the business of forming the minds of youth. But, at least, the youth under my care are destined to fill the most conspicuous stations in future life’ (BL 1784, 106). Godwin’s anonymously-published pamphlet An Account of the Academy that will be opened on Monday the Fourth day of August at Epsom in Surrey (London: T. Hookham, 1783), advertised a school for boys on modern reformed principles, but failed to secure an establishment or attract pupils. As an Oxford graduate and Church of England clergyman, the fictional Mr Godfrey tastes both the sweet and the bitter of tutoring boys of the ruling class.

BL 1784, 107, in line with Godwin’s spelling reform, lops the double consonant in both names: ‘a Churchil, a Smollet’. MJG perhaps balked at lopping the Churchill name in her copy script.

A faint number 180) is legible beside 103). This page 103) of MJG copy amalgamates pages 109-110 in BL 1784. Page 180 in BL 1784 is page 104) in MJG script.

BL 1784, 111-12, continues: ‘[W]ith much difficulty Damon prevailed upon him to accept of an assistance, that he assured him would be but temporary, if it were in the power of him, or any of his connections, to render him respectable and independent. … Mr Godfrey inveighed with warmth, and sometimes with partiality, against the coldness and narrowness of the age … [H]e had still the same warmth in the cause of virtue … reverenced the divinity of innocence … believed in a God’.

[William Godwin], Things as They Are; or the Adventures of Caleb Williams (London, B. Crosby, 1794).

MWS number sequence in c.606/5 had allowed only one page number, 101), for four pages of MJG copy from BL 1784 to be inserted.


Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragment’ for 1783, not located in MWS transcriptions, gives publication details of this and his other early novels (MP 44).

c.606/1: [unnumbered] is verso page of an unnumbered leaf. The recto page of this unnumbered leaf, see 2: politics.

Godwin’s journal entry of 31 Dec. 1790 is queried by MWS, drawing attention to Godwin’s habit of ‘writing-up’ annual summaries on New Year’s Eve in his journal from (sometimes unreliable) memory. J.M.S. Tompkins’ introduction to her edition of Elizabeth Inchbald, A Simple Story (Oxford, 1977, x-xi), writes that Holcroft and Godwin both read the novel and offered criticisms before its publication in 1791. St Clair writes
that Godwin first met Inchbald ‘through his friendship with Holcroft’, and that she herself ‘in 1791 asked [Godwin] to read over the manuscript of her novel *A Simple Story*, which was published, with great success, soon afterwards’. But Pamela Clemit’s edition of *A Simple Story* (Harmondsworth, 1996, xiii), offers more detail: ‘At the end of 1790 Inchbald sent the book to George Robinson, her regular publisher, who passed it on to Godwin for his opinion, and then bought it for £200’ (xiii, n20 citing Inchbald biographer James Boaden, and James Marshall). Clemit also confirms MWS statement that Godwin and Inchbald first met in October 1792 (this rests on the evidence of Godwin’s journal entry for 29 October that year).

The British Library at the British Museum in Bloomsbury, London.

Richard Watson, Anglican bishop of Llandaff, Wales, a liberal churchman supporting religious toleration, dedicatee of Godwin’s volume of sermons in 1783.

In b.227/2, another draft of this letter dated 24 January [?1787] .

The *Political Herald and Review*, to which Godwin contributed as temporary editor in 1785-6. See 2: politics.

Godwin recalls meeting Dr Gilbert Stuart in 1783 (MP 44-5), and underlines the name ‘Stuart’ ‘among people he knew best’ in 1784 (C37) .

See above, c.606/1: 112): ‘Summary 1786 - Literary Parties - Thomas Holcroft’.

See 3: law, MWS commentary on Holcroft’s trial for high treason and subsequent acquittal in October/November 1794.


Thomas Holcroft records meetings with ‘Hamilton’ in his journal for 14 July 1788 (c.606/1) and in his letter of 5 August 1788 to Holcroft (b.227/a). R. B. McDowell (*A New History of Ireland* ( Oxford, 1986) iv 343-53), writes that in 1794, with Habeas Corpus suspended in an England at war, the Irish administration were determined to repress political activism and freedoms of the press. Archibald Hamilton Rowan was arrested in 1794 and convicted of distributing a seditious libel, the address of the Dublin Society of the United Irishmen to the Volunteers. Convicted and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment, Hamilton Rowan escaped from Newgate and fled abroad. Godwin claimed in his 1794 pamphlet, *Cursory Strictures*, that civil liberties and the freedom of the press were historically defective in Ireland. See 3: law.

John Philpot Curran, Irish barrister, famous for his defense of those charged with political offenses, was Godwin’s host on his visit to Ireland in 1800. Draft MS obituary for Curran by Godwin in b.214/8 *document Curran obit.  Godwin’s novel *Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England* (1817), is dedicated to Curran who died as it was going to press.

MWS note (1), in lefthand margin, refers to William Henry Curran, *The Life of the Right Honourable John Philpott Curran, late Master of the Rolls in Ireland* (1819). In his lifetime Curran’s Speeches in the Irish Parliament were published in Dublin (Stockdale & Sons, 1805), and New York (Isaac Riley, 1809). Publication by the prestigious London firm Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown was posthumous in 1817.

MWS holograph, is a sequence of quarto pages numbered in MWS style and on bluish laid paper, most sheets written r and v, matching pinholes on all sheets in top left corner, watermark J Green & Son 1835. Page 150) quotes from Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1790 (MP
Dunstan, historical adviser to a Saxon king, mythologised as a Saxon saint, the patron saint of Friar Tuck in Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1819). Godwin’s verse tragedy *St Dunstan* was never published or performed; the unique MS is in the British Library. Godwin revised the MS at intervals from c.1791 to c.1795 (C116).

The sentence inserted in carets is continued to: ‘The story of the plot of Dunstan is fictitious’, on page c.606/2: 153). The remarks about ‘writing in verse ... an unmanageable weapon’ are written sideways in the left margin of page c.606/1: 152).

The Saxon names ‘Edwi’ ‘Edgar’ and ‘Eltruda’ recall Helen Maria Williams’s verse tale ‘Edwin and Eltruda: a legendary tale’ (London, 1782), dedicated to Dr Andrew Kippis.

MWS comment on the severity of Holcroft’s criticisms of Godwin’s plays in manuscript might usefully be compared with Holcroft’s diary record of a conversation with Godwin on 13 January 1799 (Howe 219-20). These excerpts from Holcroft’s diary were published in vol. ii of Hazlitt’s *Memoirs of Holcroft*, against Godwin’s stated objections; and references in MWS script skirt the question they raise about Godwin’s criticisms of Holcroft.

Holcroft’s note follows in double quotation marks.

Holcroft’s note follows in double quotation marks.

Holcroft----------------------------------------

Holcroft’s *Anna St Ives: A Novel* (7 vols.; London: Shepperson and Reynolds, 1792). The seven-volume first edition was set in small-format duodecimo. If Godwin was commenting on the MS of a novel-in-progress it remains possible that Holcroft added to or altered the text after Godwin’s criticisms. My copy, in the British Library, bound in three [1-2, 3-4, 5-6-7] (London, 1886-1888).

Godwin’s ‘unsympathetic criticisms’ of *Anna St Ives* (C118), have been separated from MWS script and are given here from b.227/6(b).

b.227/6(b), Godwin hand, single quarto sheet, written r and v, numbered MWS style 25) and 26), in sequence with c.606/2: 24). See *Bodleian rubric b.227/6(b). This is a handwritten copy with deletions and corrections, made by Godwin for his files, some time before 1795, when Tom Wedgwood made him a gift of a wet-press copier. Opening double quotation marks before each paragraph, closed at bottom page 26). Godwin may be jotting down from memory a previous conversation with Holcroft. It confirms MWS comment that Godwin and Holcroft conducted a running dialogue in person and in writing. The contentiousness of Holcroft’s novel for Godwin arose from their conversations about the as yet unpublished *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, which was to establish Godwin’s priority in ‘Political Philosophy’.

Same error presumably means ‘of supposing Anna’s arguments inferior to Clifton’s’, since Anna’s arguments against Coke Clifton echo the sentiments that she shares with Frank Henley. Frank’s arguments in favour of rational sexual choice win Anna’s regard (and Godwin’s) but do not prevail against her father Sir Arthur St Ives’s upper class prejudices, or (it would seem) against Holcroft’s and his readers’ conservatism with
regard to sexual morality.

The fourth volume rises for the most part till towards the close of Letter 79, & convalesces again in Letter 87, &c’. This indicates Letters 80 (Vol. iv) through 86 (in Vol. v in my copy), as unsatisfactory. Godwin’s journal entry Dec 17 [1791], ‘Read Anna-5’, was transcribed by MWS in c.606/1: 14). In Letters 80 through 86 Anna is tempted to accept Clifton’s proposals, swayed by his rhetoric and pressured by her father. For Godwin, this section of the novel is an invidious representation of doctrines of sexual emancipation in the mouth of the aristocrat libertine Clifton (a Lovelace/Rakewell figure). In Letter 87 (‘Anna Wenbourne St Ives to Louisa Clifton’), Anna is suddenly challenged by the news that her disappointed admirer Henley is about to emigrate to America, and this provokes her to urgent reexamination of her relations with Clifton and begins her ‘convalescence’ in Godwin’s good opinion.

cxiiic.606/4, MWS holograph, wove paper, watermark Joynson 1839, with one large rusty pinhole matching on all sheets. See *Bodleian rubric c.606/4. Pages numbered 3-16 and 19-40, covering events and letters of 1793, are missing from folder, see below, note to c.606/4: 41).

cxivSt Clair dates the move to Chalton Street, Somers Town, in 1791, ‘as soon as [Tom] Cooper left’ (C59). Variable MWS spelling of Chalton Street, sometimes ‘Charton’ sometimes ‘Charlton’.

cxvItems 14 and 15, written upside down in MWS hand on c.606/4: 2), on 1839 watermark paper, are continued from a list, numbered 1 to 13, written sideways, and headed ‘Mrs G’s Letters’, in c.532/8, also on 1839 watermark paper. See 5: women.

cxviItem 14: Mary ‘Perdita’ Robinson, poet and actor, and friend of both Wollstonecraft and Godwin, died in December 1800. See 5: women. Joseph Jekyll, who administered the annuity granted her in 1782 after her affair with George, Prince of Wales, was appointed solicitor-general and King’s Counsel in 1805, and died in 1837. Item 15: Edward Moxon published Thomas Noon Talfourd’s edition of The Letters of Charles Lamb, with an introduction dated June 26, 1837. The illegible word (C Lamb’s letter sent to [illeg.]) may be ‘Coleridge’, as Talfourd prints none of Lamb’s letters to Godwin, and one only substantial mention of Godwin, in Lamb’s letter to S. T. Coleridge of 16-17 [April] 1800 (Talfourd 1837: i 160). In 1839-1840 Mary Shelley may have jotted down these references to Jekyll and Lamb in the letters that Mary Jane Godwin (“Mrs G”) had made available to her while she was composing Life of William Godwin. See 5: women.

cxviiCf. Godwin, Thoughts on Man (1831), 130: ‘In most instances two or three hours are as much as an author can spend at a time in delivering the first fruits of his field, his choicest thoughts, before his intellect becomes in some degree clouded, and his vital spirits abate of their elasticity’.

cxviiiGodwin published a retrospective account of the interrupted composition, end-to-beginning narration, and changed conclusion, of Caleb Williams, in his Introduction to the revised edition of Fleetwood: or The New Man of Feeling (London, Colburn and Bentley, 1832). See also St Clair, who judges that the successive revisions and alterations still manage to ‘flow ... credibly from the characters’ (C121).


cxxb.214/5, ‘Godwin-Marshall correspondence’, Marshall hand, small fold, laid paper, decorative watermark, outer addressed ‘Mr Godwin’, seal, no postmark, pinhole at left top corner. See *Bodleian rubric b.214/5
cxxi b.214/5, letter from Marshall dated May 31 [17]93. Note that in c.606/1:[101v] MWS transcribes Godwin’s journal entries of 1793, ‘May 25 - Prosecution of Political Justice debated this week’. Writing on 31 May, a Friday, Marshall refers to ‘the affair of Tuesday’. Tuesday 28 May 1793 was the day - or day after - Pitt’s famous remark in the House of Commons debate, that the booksellers’ high price of ‘three guineas’ would be sufficient guarantee that Godwin’s *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* would not be read by working class agitators. These dates indicate a close fit between the composition of *Caleb Williams* and the public reception of *Political Justice*. See 2: politics.

cxxii ‘This year’, 1793. ‘Tom Wedgwood ... first made [Godwin’s] acquaintance at tea on 21 May 1793 when [Wedgwood] was twenty-two’ (C99). Wedgwood-Godwin correspondence, see 4: pedagogy.

cxxiii The missing pages of c.606/4, numbered 36 to 40), are probably those so numbered in b.227/2(b), the draft of a 1793 letter from Godwin to the barrister Thomas Erskine following the first trial *in absentia* of Tom Paine in December 1792. See 2: politics.

cxxiv ‘This year’ is probably 1795, when Tom Wedgwood gave Godwin a copying machine. Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield, of the Bodleian Library, tells me that it used the wet-press method, and could copy only a freshly written recto page. In Duke reel 12, letter of Nov. 1795 from Tom Wedgwood to Godwin, gives detailed instructions about ink and copying paper to Godwin. See 4: pedagogy.


cxxvi MWS cancels 1799 as the date of Godwin’s renewed acquaintance with Coleridge. According to Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: a biography*, i (Harmondsworth, 1989), Coleridge began planning his trip to Germany in 1796 (117), left England on 16 Sept 1798 (204) and returned at the end of July 1799 (238). Charles Kegan Paul quotes Godwin: ‘It was in the close of this year [1794] that I first met with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, my acquaintance with whom was ripened in the year 1800 into a high degree of affectionate intimacy’ (CKP, i, 119). St Clair (C225), gives details of their renewed friendship when Coleridge returned from Germany, just about the time that Holcroft, badly scarred after a laboratory accident with sulphuric acid, left for Germany.

*endnotes to documents*

cxxvii c.516/1, Ann Godwin letter to Godwin. On the outer of this letter is a postmark ‘10 April 1798’.

cxxviii c.516/1, Ann Godwin letter to Godwin, dated 30 May 1797.

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In 1744 the publisher John Newbery started to specialize in children’s literature, including the perennial favourite, *The History of Goody Two Shoes* (c.1765), and the traditional tale of Tom Thumb.

The publisher Joseph Johnson.

Apparently, Mrs Marshall was in labour at the time of writing with the Marshalls’ child, but apparently only a son, Lucas (Luke), born c.1801, survived infancy, see b.214/5, ‘Godwin-Marshall Correspondence’. Also in b.214/5, Marshall writes to Godwin, 7 Jan. 1783, ‘We go on triumphantly, Kearsley has been very officious. ... The paper I have chosen is beautifully white. But, O dreadful but! it is eighteen shillings a rheam. ... Mrs M. is as you left her. As soon as she is delivered of her stripling, and I am delivered of yours, you shall see’. Marshall signs this letter, ‘Father Paul’.

Undated copy of letter from Joseph Fawcett to Godwin, laid paper, written recto only, undated watermark. See *Bodleian rubric c.607/2. Signature ‘Joseph Fawcet’ [sic] appears to be in different ink and hand. Godwin’s reformist spelling system omits unsounded double consonants in proper names. Contents date the letter 1795, more than a decade after the acquaintance between Godwin and Fawcett commenced. See above c.606/2: 95, MWS account of Fawcett’s friendship with Godwin.

Duke reel 5, single page only, ‘T Holcroft’, dated Sepr. 23d. ?1804. The word ‘essential’ is underlined in the script. St Clair (C276-8), writes that ‘after Holcroft’s return from Germany in 1802’ he and Godwin resumed close friendship but began to strain apart in ‘the autumn of 1804’ when ‘they exchanged merciless comments’. Hazlitt dates Holcroft’s return from the continent ‘in the summer of 1803’, and ‘an unhappy misunderstanding’ leading to the estrangement of the two men ‘some time after’ that (Howe, 163, 234).

The tragedy in contention is likely to have been Godwin’s *Faulkener; A Tragedy*. St Clair writes that ‘in December 1807 ... it ran for three performances with no disaster beyond occasional outbreaks of laughing’ (C237, and n. 35). This epistolary exchange between Godwin and Holcroft in 1804 casts before it an ominous shadow of the quarrel by letter over Godwin’s novel *Fleetwood; or the New Man of Feeling*, completed in February 1805 (C275-6).
b.214/5, single sheet, MWS hand, wove paper, written r only, watermark Joynson 1839. Described in the Bodleian folder as ‘Copy of a note almost certainly written originally by Godwin’, this is a composite transcription of two extracts from Godwin’s letter or letters [to Percy Bysshe Shelley] in 1817. Above a line of dashes is a sample of Godwin’s activity in soliciting financial help for James Marshall. Below the line is an extract from Godwin’s letter on c.29 December 1817, announcing Hannah Godwin’s death. 30 December 1817 was the first wedding anniversary of the Shelley couple and until 11 March 1818 when they embarked at Dover for Italy, Godwin wrote frequently to Shelley imploring money for himself, and to Josiah Wedgwood asking it on Marshall’s behalf (C445-6). This single sheet in MWS hand appears to have been intended for inclusion, either in a second volume of the Life of Godwin, covering his life after 1800, or (more probably) as annotations to her first volume’s description of Godwin’s strong family feelings and solicitude for his friend Marshall.

As children, Mary and Fanny (Imlay) Godwin had known Godwin’s only sister Hannah, who lived and worked in London. I have found no reference elsewhere to their calling her ‘Aunt Godwin’, which is the name by which the boy Godwin had known Mrs Sothren before her marriage. Hannah Godwin’s death occurred on 28 December 1817 (C446).

Josiah Wedgwood’s younger brother, Tom Wedgwood, died in 1805. See 4: pedagogy.

Howe 289, n91, and 300, n201, citing F. K. Brown, Life of Godwin (1926), 247, lists William Nicholson, William Godwin, and George Leman Tuthill as the ad hoc committee assisting Holcroft’s widow after his death in 1809, and ‘which undertook to supervise the publication of Holcroft’s autobiography, and presumably entrusted the task to Hazlitt’. Godwin’s advice in 1817 to Josiah Wedgwood that Marshall had performed ‘indefatigable exertions’ on behalf of Holcroft’s family in 1809-1810 was presumably correct, as he had certainly done so in 1797 for Godwin himself after Mary Wollstonecraft died, and in 1799 for Maria Reveley when her first husband died. See 5: women.

b.214/8, quarto fold, unidentified hand, undated fair copy, no page numbers, no signature, watermark OWilmott, 1813. A comparison with other 1817 letters in folder suggests this may be MJG copy. St Clair writes (C445-6): ‘In October 1817 John Philpot Curran had died in London after a long illness. ... Godwin ... was at his home on the day he died’. Philp’s Chronology lists Godwin as author of ‘Obituary notice of J. P. Curran, Morning Chronicle, 16 October, 1817’ (MP 51).