

THE LETTERS OF PLEASANT HARTLAND TO SUSANNA KNIGHT 1797-1803¹

1. High Street, Berwick, 9th March 1797²

Dear Miss Night³

The goodness of your Hart will, I am sure, forgive the trouble I am going to give you but it is from a knowledge of that Richness of doing good that I wish to make you my Advocate with Lord Delaval;⁴ and I flatter myself with such an Advocate I cannot fail of success if his Lordship has it in his power to grant the favour. You have heard me say that I had two Sons-in-Law Clergymen. One lives at Wells, Somersetshire, the Revd Wm Mairis, a worthy good Man. He is very Desirous of having the Honor of being appointed Chaplain to some Nobleman, as every Nobleman has a rite to a certain number of Chaplains. If his Lordship has a vacancy I shall ever Consider it as the greatest Honor done my family if his Lordship would be so good as to appoint the Revd Wm Mairis one of his domestick Chaplains, as by that means he will be Enabled to hold two livings. I received the Patterns you was so kind as to send me for which I return my sincearest thanks. I have not made the Flowerboxes yet, having not a room to put them into.

We have taken a House in the backway near Mr Constables and shall go into it at Whitsontide, where I shall be Happy to see you when you come into the country. Mrs Thompson is in a verry poor way.

I am, Dear Miss Night, with great sincerity
Yours Pleasant Hartland

2. Berwick, 28th June 1797⁵

Dear Miss Knight

Permit me to return you my sincear thanks for your verry kind & Obliging letter, which I should have answered before this time but was prevented by Illness and great unesiness of mind. I have but one Son. He lives No. 7 Grange Court, Carey Street, Chancery Lane. He is in the law line & for these two months past his life has been despaired of. London does not agree with his constitution. Would to God he was in the country as then he might have some chance of better health. Should you, my Dear Friend, for so I shall ever esteem you, here amongst the circle of my Lords

¹ Pleasant Hartland played fast and loose with commas in her letters. Her punctuation has been rationalised to aid understanding.

² Northumberland Archives, Ashington (hereafter NA), 2DE/43/4/13.

³ Susanna Elizabeth Knight (c.1762-1822).

⁴ John Hussey Delaval, 1st Baron Delaval (1728-1808).

⁵ NA, 2DE/43/4/23.

acquaintance anyone that should want a Steward. It will ad much to the Obligation would you get my Lord to recommend him. I would answer with my Life for his Honor and integrity. He would prefer one Hundred a year in the Country to three in London. He has a wife, a worthy good young Woman but no children.

I was much Disappointed in not having Pallinsburn⁶. Mr Thompsons now the person we employ'd to take it but I do not know how it was we left it, and Mr Thompson has never called on us since; what is his reason I know not. I have a great regard for them both. Mrs Thompson has been verry Ill is now much better and gon to the farm.

I am got into my new house but has not slept in it yet for fear of the damp. I look forward with Pleasure for the time of your coming into the Country which I hope will not be long. First, your kind offer I will ever remember with gratitude but cannot think of being so troublesum. I have that which I will keep for your sake.

please accept of my best wishes for your Health and happiness.

from you much obliged and sincear Friend

Pleasant Hartland

3. Berwick, 30th August 1797⁷

Dear Miss Knight

How much obliged am I to you for your kind and Simpathiseing letter, which convinces me more and more that I am not disapointed in the Opinion I formed of the goodness of your Hart. Permit me therefore, my Dear Miss Knight, to return you my most sincear thanks for your Interest in the behalf of my Son, and I must further intreat you to be so good as to Present our united and grateful Thanks to his Lordship for his goodness in saying he will recommend our Son. I sopose it will not be long before you will be at Foord Castle, as the Shouting season is coming in. I know you do not like the B__' any better than myself, therefore when you come to see me I will take care you shall not meet any of them at my home. If my Lord will Honor us with his Presence it will give us great Pleasure.

I have not seen Mr nor Mrs Thompson, nor heard from them altho I wrote to them some weeks past. I cannot think the reason. I should have been verry happy to have been your neighbour, I make no doubt, but we should have spent many agreeable hours together.

I am, Dear Miss,

Yours sincearly

P. Hartland

⁶ A large house at Ford, close to Ford Castle one of the homes of Lord Delaval.

⁷ NA, 2DE/43/4/22.

4. Berwick, 18th November 1797⁸

Dear Miss Knight

Having just now being informed of your being in the Country I take the first Opportunity of Enquiring after your health and, at the same time, to Return you my sincear thanks for your verry kind present of a beautiful Tea Chest and inkstand. I hope it will not be long before I shall have the Pleasure of seeing you hear.

I am, Dear Miss Knight,
Most sincearly yours
P. Hartland

5. Berwick, 24th November 1797⁹

My Dear Friend

It will make me exceedingly Happy to know if it will be agreeable to you to come into Berwick. If it should, be so good as to drop me a Line to inform me of the Day you will come as I may be in the way to receive you but if you should have any Objections to come here I will take a ride out to see you any Day you shall appoint.

I am Your Much Obliged Humble Servant
P. Hartland

6. Berwick, 1st March 1798¹⁰

Dear Miss Knight

I received your kind letter Dated Seaton Delaval Dec 1st. I was much disappointed in not seeing you when in the Country as I did expect Mrs Thompson would have shown you the way as I wrote to her to request she would do so, and I think she must have received it as it was sent by Mr Darling shopkeeper here who assures me it was sent but I have never heard of her since. She was one I ever loved and treated as my Sister. I have been confined to my Roome for these two months with the Gout and a sweling in my joints but thanks to the Almighty I am much better.

⁸ NA, 2DE/43/4/14.

⁹ NA, 2DE/43/4/8.

¹⁰ NA, 2DE/43/4/18.

I must now request of you to accept of half a dozen Seaweed Pictures as a mark of my esteem and regards. In so doing you will much oblige

your sincere Friend and well wisher

P. Hartland

This day it was shipped on Board the Lo[n]don Pacquett, John Ramsey Master, Directed for Rt H Lord Delaval Portland place London

7. Bishop Lydeard, 9th December 1798¹¹

Dear Miss Knight

I can no longer deny myself the pleasure of enquiring after your health, which I hope you enjoy in the fullest extent, a circumstance which will ever afford me the sincearest pleasure to hear. Our leaving Berwick was as sudden as it was disagreeable from the circumstances which accasioned it. Mr Hartland's health being very bad, a friend of ours advised him to apply for leave to retire upon the Lieutenancy, and to sell the Adjutancy having purchased his first commission. As such things had been done we flattered ourselves a forty years ill requited service would have entitled him to such indulgence. But you will judge our astonishment when I inform you that without any previous notice Mr H saw himself superceded in the Adjutancy and received leave to retire upon his Lieutenancy. It is most people's opinion the Duke of York is not properly acquainted with the state of the case. We waited three days at the Horse Guards to see his Grace, but tho' Mr H was the third on the list, he was not call'd on till three o'clock on the last day, and then by Colonel Brownrig. I have mention'd it to several General Officers who all think it a very hard case, & that it never was properly represented to the Duke of York. Trusting to the unerring hand of providence, I resign myself to the hope I shall never materially feel the loss, tho' the least of our tailment to a small income at such times as these, particularly when infirmities incident to age are coming on, is certainly to be lamented.

I have had some thoughts of taking a House at Camberwell Surry, where I had pleas'd myself with the hope of seeing my Friend, but at present I am unfix'd in my plan being with one of my Daughters who expects to be confin'd early in March. I shall not leave her until that event is over. After that I shall determine what plan to persue. Whatever that plan may be I shall at times feel happy in hearing that you enjoy health and happiness

And am in the meantime Miss Knight's very sincere friend

P. Hartland

Your favor will find me directed at the Rev'd Mr Mairis's, Bishops Lydeard near Taunton, Somerset.

¹¹ NA, 2DE/43/4/20.

8. Bishops Lydeard, 27th December 1798¹²

I take the earliest opportunity of acknowledging with thanks your kind favor as likewise your very handsome present of a Bonnet which I shall wear with additional pleasure when I reflect it is the gift of a person for whom I feel an high esteem. Be assured, in the North or South, I shall feel happy in your friendship and shall not fail on visiting your part of the world as personally assuring you of the same. Mr H. begs his respects, and thanks for your kind wishes & unites me in wishing you health & every agreeable the approaching new year can afford, & many happy returns.

I am with sincerity Miss Knight's oblig'd Friend
P. Hartland

9. 12 Denmark Row, Camberwell, 18th June 1799¹³

Dear Madam

On the sixteenth of May I arrived at my Son's house in Camberwell, and the week following I did myself the pleasure of calling at Portland Place, but to my great disappointment the servant informed me that you had left Town near two months. I had flattered myself that I should have had the happiness of seeing you before you left London but my stay in the Country was much longer than I expected owing to my Daughters long illness, she, poor creature, being like most of they Clergymens wives, very prolific, having presented her husband with two Daughters. That, of course, detained me still longer, and by that means deprived me of that happiness. But I hope when you come to Town you will honour me with your company at my Sons.

Mr Hartland unites with me in kind respects.

I remain, Dear Madam, your much obliged friend
P. Hartland

10. Newent, 26th January 1803¹⁴

My Dear Madam

I should be wanting in gratitude, and appear deficient in esteem and respect, did I not seize the earliest opportunity of offering my congratulations on an event which I hope, and I doubt not, will be productive of mutual happiness to yourself and the Noble Lord, who had the good sense to

¹² NA, 2DE/43/4/21.

¹³ NA, 2DE/43/4/25.

¹⁴ NA, 2DE/43/5/3.

discriminate your Ladyships worth, and to set a proper value on it.¹⁵ Your Ladyship will, I trust, pardon the effusion of a grateful breast, nor deem me too intrusive for taking the liberty of saying how respectfully

I have the honor to remain your Ladyships Obedient Humble Servt
P. Hartland

¹⁵ Susanna Knight had married Lord Delaval on 3rd January 1803.