

Wigan Archives Service
The Edward Hall Diary Collection

**The Poetry of Littleton Powis,
Seafaring Journal, from Jamaica to Liverpool**

July – September 1789

EHC/55



Edward Hall, c.1932

Introduction

The volume is entitled, *Memorandum Book. 1789*, and was written by Littleton Powis, on board the brig, *Favourite*, sailing from Brai Harbour, Jamaica, to Liverpool, Lancashire. The diary is divided into two; half the volume is a nautical log, half the volume an anthology of Powis' original poetry, together with transcribed poetry and verse, dedicated to his lover, Martha.

The front inside cover of the manuscript is inscribed, "Littleton Powis. April the third, 1789. Written at sea. Remember, Farewell".

Editor's Note

The two halves of the manuscript have been transcribed individually, see transcriptions, The Poetry of Littleton Powis and The Ship's Log of Littleton Powis.

All diary transcripts have been produced with the intention of faithfully reproducing the text of the original manuscript exactly as it appears. All spellings and punctuation marks have been transcribed as they appear; where clarification was thought necessary by the transcriber, an explanation, current spellings or punctuation have been added in square brackets.

Page 1

Littleton Powis's/

April the third 1789/

Written at Sea. Remember/

Farewel/

Page 2

[Continuation of Poem 1]

And when the pensive

moments come,/

(For who from those are free my love!)/

Perhaps tho'lt mourn thy lover's doom,/

And lend a Tear to me, my love./

_____ /

[Poem 2]

Suspence! Thou frozen Guest, begone!/
The wretch, whose rugged bed/
So lin'd with thorns, more softly nests his head,/

Than he who sinks amid the Cygnet's down,/

If thou, tormenting fiend, be nigh,/

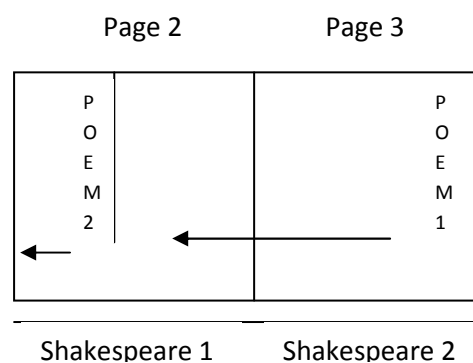
To prompt this starting tear, his ceaseless sigh,/

To prompt this starting tear, his ceaseless sigh,/

To prompt this starting tear, his ceaseless sigh,/

Wigan Archives Service, 2011

Transcript produced by Larner Taylor, Archives Volunteer and Alex Miller, Archivist



His wish, his prayer, his vow, ling'ring Certainty/

[Shakespeare]

We're all Actors on the worlds great stage's/

Some play without, some with an Equipage:/

Death drops the curtain, & the Farce is o'er/

And all distinctions cease twixt Rich & Poor./

Page 3

[Poem 1]

Thou'st play'd a false, a faithless past,/

Remorse will wait on thee my love!/
Ambition hath seduc'd the heart/
Which honour ow'd to me, my love./

2 /

The truest, tenderest flame was mine;/

What have I felt for thee, my love!/
The softest, fondest vows were thine;/

What didst thou swear to me my love!/
3 /

Tho'splendor deck thy nuptial bow'r/
Tho'pleasures round thee fly, my love!/
Each joy that makes the playful howl/

3 /

Tho'splendor deck thy nuptial bow'r/
Tho'pleasures round thee fly, my love!/
Each joy that makes the playful howl/

Tho'pleasures round thee fly, my love!/
Each joy that makes the playful howl/

Each joy that makes the playful howl/

Shall labour with a sigh, my love!/
_____ /

[Written from left to right above Shakespeare 2]

Heaven grant this may never be the case/
with you, my love!/
_____ /

[Shakespeare 2]

Now that He, who is the case of the afflicted,/
the support of the weak, the wealth of the/
poor, the teacher of the ignorant, the anchor/
of the fearfull, & the infinite reward of the faith-/
full souls, may pour out upon you all his/
richest blessings, shall always be the prayer/
of him who is entirely yours &c [etcetera]/

Page 4

Page 5

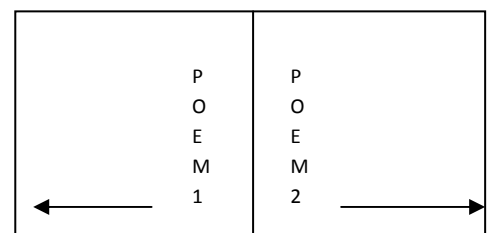
Page 4

Tho my dress as my manners is simple
and plain/

A rascal I hate and a nave I disdain/

My dealings are just and my conscience is clear/

And I value not those of a thousand a year/



The bent down with Age & for sporting uncouth;/
I feel no remorse from the follies of youth/
I still tell my tale & rejoice in my song/
And my boys think my life not a moment too long/

Let the Courtiers those dealers in grim & grimace/
Creep under dance over for title or place/
Above all the Titles that flow from a crown/
That of honest I prise [prize] & that Titles my own./

Page 5

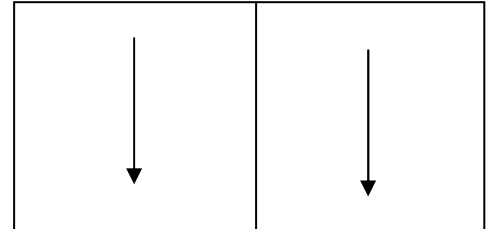
I've lost my dearest William and well I may despair/
For his presence wou'd ease me of each anxious care/
My sigh shall fill the lazy sails & swift him back convey/
Ah what can I do now my sweet William's far away/

The lads of our village all hair'd me their Queen/
My beauty proclaim'd me the toast of the green/
But grief has stole the opening rose which on my cheeks did play/
Too fatally Alas I love since my William's far away./

Ah! Fortune unrelenting you swell the misers stone/

Tho still you smile refusing to those who love adore/
Adieu delusive dreams of hope I'll seek my native day/
Bleed bleed my poor bosom for young William far away/

Page 6



T The sun sets at night &

the stars shun [shine] -----/

I If you'll consent my lovely dear ---/

H Had I a heart for falshood [falsehood] fram'd [framed] ---/

H Her mouth which a smile -----/

W When bidden to the wake or fair -----/

H How happy's the soldier that lives on ----/

M My charming girl my friend &c -----/

W When 'tis night and the midwatch is come/

D Down the bourne & thro' the mead -----/

S See the courses throng'd with Gazers &c [etcetera]/

T Thro' woodlands & forests how sweet/

H Hark forward away my brave boys to &c/

B Bright Pheabus has mounted her &c/

A A sweet scented bean & a simpering &c/

A All dripping wet in wintry night/

A Allen Brooke of Windermere --/

C Cease lovely maid ah cease to grieve/
M My bonny sailor's won my mind/
A Auld Robin gray Young Jimmy &c/
I I've lost my dearest William &c/
M My former time how brisk how gay/
I Im summer when the leaves were green/
S So sweet was young Damon/

Page 7

W Whilst happy in my native land/
D Distress me with those tears no more/
N Now my laddie is gone far away o'er the plain/
A A band of cupids t'other [the other] day/
I Jack Rathin was the ablest seaman/
T The lark proclaim'd [proclaimed] return of morn/
W When fairies are lighted by nights &c/
M Ma chere ami My charming fair/
D Dans notre lit [in our bed] that bright parterre/
F For me my fair a wreath has wove/
S Sweet poll of Plymouth was my dear/
T The moon had climbed the highest &c/
W When prudence opposes the dictates &c/

KEY

&c [etcetera]

A As thro' the grove the other day/
H How sweets the love that meets return/
T The wandering sailor ploughs the main/
W What virgin or shepherd in valley &c/
W When my money was gone which &c/
W With my jug in one hand &c/
H How sweet in the woodlands/
T The Stag thro' the Forest/
O Oh Nanny wilt thou gang with me/

Page 8

The wealthy fool with Gold in store/
When freedom has banish'd [banished] &c/
Dear Tom this brown jug which &c/
_____ /

I swear never to forsake her; no tho' [though] I were/
Sure to make all men my enemies: Her/
I desired; Her I have obtain'd [obtained]; over hu-/
Mours agree: Perish all those who wou'd [would]/
Separate us? Death alone shall deprive/
Me of my affectionate faithfull [faithful] Arms/
_____ /

There's none but has some fault & he's the best/
Most virtuous he, that's spotted with the least/
_____ /

An excellent receipt for sixteen Gallons of/
Santow as drank in Jamaica/
Two gallons of lime or lemon jice/
Two ~ [ditto]— of Sugar/
Two ~ [ditto]— of Rum/
Two ~ [ditto]— of Water/
_____ /

Page 9

I sign & lament me in Vain/
These walls can but echo my moan/
Alas it increases my pain/
When I think of the days that are flown/
Thro' the Grate of my prison I see/
The Birds as they wanton in air/
My heart how it pants to see free/
My looks they are wild with despair/
Above tho oprrest [oppressed] by my fate/
Wigan Archives Service, 2011

I burn with contempt for my foes/
Tho' Fortune has alter'd my state/
The meer can subdue me to those/
False woman in Ages to come/
Thy malice detested shall be/
And when we are cold in the Tomb/
Some heart still will sorrow for me/

Ye roofs were cold damps and dismay/
With silence and solitude [solitude] dwell/
How comfortless passes the day/
How sad tolls the evening Bell/
The owls from the battlements cry/
Hollow winds seem to mumor [murmur] asound/
O! Mary prepare thee to die/
My blood it runs cold at the Sound./

Page 10

Again Britannia Smile/
Smile on each threat'ning foe/
To save this drooping isle/
See Rodney strikes the low/

For Rodney quickly will regain/
Thy soverign [sovereign] empire for the main/

Against thee treacherous foes/
And false allies combine/
But va___ they oppose/
If Rodney still is thine/
For Gallant Rodney will maintain/
The British Empire oer [over] the main/

Long may he plough the main/
Long may he victor prove/
Rewards still sure to gain/
Of Kings & Peoples love/
For Gallant Rodney will maintain/
The British Empire oer [over] the main./

Wrote this far on my voyage out all the/
Remainder on my homeward bound/
Passage from the Island of Jamaica./

A real story/

When first fair Nancy caught mine eye,/

As on the beach she rov'd;/

At once awake to sympathy!/
I sigh'd [sighed], I gaz'd [gazed], I lov'd [loved]./

Love to my lips new utt'rance [utterance] gave,/

I press'd her lilly hand; /

For ever vow'd myself her slave, /

The ever to command/

Attentive to my plaintive strain,/

Her cheeks with blushes spread;/

She sigh'd then view'd the wat'ny main,/

When all her colour fled./

What means my love that sudden sigh,/

Why start that chrystal Tear?/

Think'st thou because I'm doom'd to range,/

True love don't harbour here./

“View you translucent placid wave,/

See oceans bosom heave;/

(Just emblem of each other have/
Ye flatter to deceive)”/

Page 12

“While now it court, the yielding Barque,/

“And all is calm serene;

“Yet e'er anon heeds my remark!/
“And view the varied scene./

“These curling waves that kiss the sand,/

“And fears to wet our feet;/

“In dreadfull [dreadful] surge will lash the strand,/

“And o'er [over] their barriers beat./

“Too late th' [the] unwary seaman then,/

“Like love-lorn maiden left;/

“Bewails his hapless fate – no Friend,/

“Of every hope bereft./

“Appall'd [appalled] aghast! on ~~heaven~~ he/

"Implores the mighty aid;/"

"O'erwhelm'd [overwhelmed] at last, a victim dies,/"

"So dies the uncautious [incautious] maid."/

Convinc'd by reason, more by love/

I to the maid replied;/"

The faithless sea, too long I've prov'd [proved],/"

Consent to be my bride./

Page 13

No never then from you I'll stray,/"

In your soft bosom moor'd [moored];/"

See love and Hymen lead the way/

And peace will crown our board./

A tender look adorn'd [adorned] her brow,/"

Her eyes agreed consent;/"

I pleg'd [pledged] ,my troth, my oath, my vow,/"

So to the Church he went./

_____ /

The sincere attachment./

_____ /

Young Damon of the vale is dead,/"

Ye [the] lowland hamlets moan:/
A dewy Turf lies o'er [over] his head,/
And at his feet a stone!/

His shroud which deaths cold damps destroy/
Of snow white threads was made;/
All mourn'd [mourned] to see so sweet a boy,/
In earth for ever laid./

Page 14

Pale pansies o'er his corpse were plac'd [placed]/
Which, pluck'd [plucked] before their Time,/
Bestrew'd [bestrewed] the Boy, like him to waste,/
And whither in their prime./

But will he ne'er [never] return whose tongue,/
Could tune the rural lay?/
Ah, no! his bell of peace is rung;/
His lips are cold as day./

They bore him out at twilight how,/
The youth who lov'd [loved] so well:/

Ah, me! how many a true love shown/
Of kind remembrance fell!/

Each maid was woe_ but Nancy chief,/
Her grief o'er [over] all was tried,/
Within his Grave she droop'd [dropped] in Grief,/
And o'er [over] her lov'd [loved] one died/

July 21/

1789/

Page 15

The Wish/

Give me ye Gods come lonely cot/
Surrounded by the shade:/
And let retirement be my lot,/
Till nature's bloom doth fade./

Unknown to pride or pompous state,/
Give me plenty at my board;/
That I may give to him whose fate/
A plenty don't afford./

Welcome to him by hunger prest,/
My purse his friend in need;/
To cherish man by grief distrest, [distressed]/
And hungry orphans feed./

Page 16

My spot of ground bedeck'd [be laid] with flowers,/
A murmuring brook hard by;/
With these to amuse my idle hours,/
And spend the irksome sigh./

My household small. Yet happy few/
Their natural wants supply'd; [supplied]/
In every trust quite firm and true,/
With reason for their guide./

With these, bestow some virtuous fair/
With mind divinely great;/
To sympathize in all my care,/
And ev'ry [every] sorrow wait./

In habit plain and meat not gay,/

To fashions not a friend;/
Teach one to live in humble sway!
Until my life doth end./

Written at sea on the 22nd of July 1789./
In my passage from Jamaica to Liverpool./

Page 17

Written at sea in a heavy Gale of Wind./

Happy the man, who, safe on shore,/ /
Now trims at home his evening fire,/ /
Unmov'd [unmoved], he hears the Tempests roar,/ /
That on the tufted groves expire.

Alas'. on us they doubly fall;

Our feeble brig bust bear them all./

2 /

Now to their haunts the birds retreat,
The squirrel seeks his hollow tree:/
Wolves in their shaded caverns meet:/
All, all are blest- but wretched we./

Foredoom'd [foredoomed] a strager to repose,/

No rest th' [the] unsettled ocean knows./

What comfort in an angry sea?/

6 /

Our brig, accustom'd [accustomed]to obey,/

No more the trembling pilots guide:/

Alone she gropes her trackless way,/

While mountains burst on ev'ry [every] side:/

Thus skill & science both must fall,/

And ruin is the Lot of all./

Page 19

Oh say dear Nancy, lovely angel say,/

When shall my days be blest [blessed] as those of youre; [yours]/

When on your lovely breast my head I lay,/

And heav'nly [heavenly] rapture felt thro' every pore./

2 /

How many live-long nights oft [often] have we sat;/

The silent hours beguiling sweet away;/

All nature hush'd [hushed], save but our amorous chat,/

Oh! then what pleasure did your tongue convey./

3 /

By moonlight pale, beneath th'embow'ring [the embowering]
trees,/

At solemn time of night how oft' [often] we've stray'd; [strayed]/
Not one invading thought, disturb'd [disturbed] our ease./
Secur'd [secured] by virtuous love not easily dismay'd.
[dismayed]/

4

/

What tears have oft [often] bedew'd [bedewed] my youthfull
[youthful] cheeks/

Tears of pure love unfeign'd [unfeigned], untainted joy;/

Tears which alone pure love unfeign'd [unfeigned], bespeaks,/

When sure pure love's return'd [returned] without alloy./

5

/

What cruel pangs did absence give my mind,/

When from your presence I was doom'd [doomed] to fly;/

I moan'd, [moaned] & sigh'd, [sighed] but sigh'd [sighed] unto
[into] the wind,/

For wind, nor seas, nor shores, have made/

reply/

Page 20

6

/

As when with mutual love, a tender pair,

Of feather'd [feathered] songsters innocently join;/

And seek to build a habitation where/

The ties of love and duty may entwine./

7

/

Her mate abroad to seek with pious care,/

Materials fit to build the lone retreat;/

With bird-lime caught – his hopes are lost in air,/

And plaintive sings;-scarce echo dare repeat./

8

/

Yet still with fluttering wings his cage he beats/

Eager for pristine liberty and love,/

'Till [Until] quite o'erspent [overspent] & tir'd [tired] he calmly
waits/

The fair decision of the powers above.

There are in the World some circumspect/

Friends who, fearfull [fearful] of getting into/

trouble, refuse their assistance on diffe-/

rent occassions, [occasions] and whose service decreases/

with the danger of their Friend; but/

real Friendship knows nothing of/

these timid precautions. _____/

An Ode to Health./

Be thou my guest, fair daughter of the skies,/ /
Whose blooming face can greater joys bestow /
Than all the flaming treasures that arise, /
From the refulgent bosom of Peru.

2 /

An humble suppliant at thy shrine I'm laid, /
For who thy smiles celestial can withstand? /
Bring with thy rosy lips the balmy aid, /
My drooping head asks thy enlivening hand. /

3 /

Content I'd dwell on you bleak mountain's side, /
Or hide within the deepest shade below; /
So thou [you] but watch the circling purple tide, /
Breathe thy [your] perfume, & bid my bosom glow. /

4 /

Hark, how the rusties [a bird?] chear [cheer] the evening ray, /
Join'd [joined] by the village nymphs in jovial bands! /
Exulting, o'er [over] the uncloath'd [uncloathed?] mead they
stray, /

'Till [Until] leres golden gifts shall deck their hands./

5 /

Depriv'd [deprived] of thee, the splendour of a Throne,/

With all the charms of royalty are fled,/

All sunk beneath the Monarch's languid frown;/

In vain the Di'dem [diadem] sparkles on his head./

Page 22

6 /

No harmony in sound, no sweets in spring,/

No varying pleasures, as the seasons roll,/

No banquet to the mind the muses bring,/

Till [Until] thou [you] arise, the sunshine of the soul.

7 /

Come then, gay Goddess, leave thy bright abode,

Since thou canst [can] give of all our joys the best,/

I'll ask no treasures of this earthly globe,/

Let me but on thy downy pinions rest./

It is said that the conversation of Friends is/

never exhausted. It is true, the tongue fur-/

nishes an easy prattle to weak attachment./
But, oh, Friendship! thou [you] lively and celestial/
sentiment, what discourses are worthy thee!/
What tongue dares by thy interpreter! Never/
can what we feel when by his side. Great God!/
how much more forcibly; does a squeeze of the/
hand, an animated look, an affectionate embrace,/and the sigh which follows it, speak, & how inspired/
is the first word that is utter'd after all this!

[UPSIDE DOWN]

May you be blest with all that Heaven can send/
Long life long health long pleasure & a Friend -/