

TO MISS JOANNA BAILLIE, HAMPSTEAD.

January 17, 1812.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — The promise of the purse has flattered my imagination so very agreeably, that I cannot help sending you an ancient silver mouth-piece, so which, if it pleases your taste, you may adapt your intended labors: this, besides, is a genteel way of tying you down to your promise; and to bribe you still farther, I assure you it shall not be put to the purpose of bolding bank-notes or vulgar bullion, but reserved as a place of deposit for some of my pretty little medals and nick-nackatories. When I do make another poetical effort, I shall certainly expect the sum you mention from the booksellers, for they have had too good hargains of me hitherto, and I fear I shall want a great deal of money to make my cottage exactly what I should like it. Meanwhile, between ourselves, my income has been very much increased since I wrote to you, in a different way. My predecessor in the office of Clerk of Session retired to make room for me, on the amiable condition of retaining all the emoluments during his life, which, from my wish to retire from the Bar and secure a certain though distant income, I was induced to consent to; and considering his advanced age and uncertain health, the bargain was really not a bad one. But alas, like Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea, my coadjutor's strength increased prodigiously after he had fairly settled himself on my shoulders, so that after five years' gratuitous labor I began to tire of my burden. Fortunately, Mr. Bankes's late superannuation act provides a ratable pension for office-bolders obliged to retire after long and faithful services; and my old friend very handsomely consented to be transferred from my galled shoulders to the broad back of the public, although he is likely to sustain a considerable diminution of income by the exchange, to which he has declared himself willing to submit as a penalty for having lived longer than he or I expected. To me