

"How long we shall stay at Oxford, or what we shall do when we leave it, neither Bozzy nor I have settled: he is for his part resolved to remove his family to London, and try his fortune at the English bar; let us all wish him success."]

In the midst of his own diseases and pains, he was ever compassionate to the distresses of others, and actively earnest in procuring them aid, as appears from a note to Sir Joshua Reynolds, of June, in these words:

"I am ashamed to ask for some relief for a poor man, to whom I hope I have given what I can be expected to spare. The man importunes me, and the blow goes round. I am going to try another air on Thursday."

[The following letter from Miss Reynolds shows that he was not a solicitor for the poor of his own acquaintance only. It seems to have been given to some poor woman as an introduction to Dr. Johnson:]

"Dover-street, Jul. 26th.

Beyn. ["MY GOOD SIR,—I could not for-
Mss. bear to communicate to the poor woman the hope you had given me of using your interest with your friends to raise her a little sum to enable her to see her native country again; nor could I refuse to write a line to procure her the pleasure of the confirmation of that hope.

"I am, and *always have been*, very troublesome to you; but you are, and *always have been*, very good to your obliged humble servant,

"FRANCES REYNOLDS."

On Thursday, June 3, the Oxford post coach took us up in the morning at Bolt-court. The other two passengers were Mrs. Beresford and her daughter, two very agreeable ladies from America: they were going to Worcestershire, where they then resided. Frank had been sent by his master the day before to take places for us; and I found from the way-bill that Dr. Johnson had made our names be put down. Mrs. Beresford, who had read it, whispered me, "Is this the great Dr. Johnson?" I told her it was; so she was then prepared to listen. As she soon happened to mention, in a voice so low that Johnson did not hear it, that her husband had been a member of the American Congress, I cautioned her to beware of introducing that subject, as she must know how very violent Johnson was against the people of that country. He talked a great deal; but I am sorry I have preserved little of the conversation. Miss Beresford was so much charmed, that she said to me aside, "How he does talk! Every sentence is an essay." She amused

herself in the coach with knotting. He would scarcely allow this species of employment any merit. "Next to mere idleness (said he), I think knotting is to be reckoned in the scale of insignificance; though I once attempted to learn knotting¹: Dempster's sister (looking to me) endeavoured to teach me it, but I made no progress."

I was surprised at his talking without reserve in the publick post-coach of the state of his affairs: "I have (said he) about the world I think above a thousand pounds, which I intend shall afford Frank an annuity of seventy pounds a year." Indeed his openness with people at a first interview was remarkable. He said once to Mr. Langton, "I think I am like Squire Richard² in 'The Journey to London,' *I'm never strange in a strange place.*" He was truly *social*. He strongly censured what is much too common in England among persons of condition,—maintaining an absolute silence when unknown to each other; as, for instance, when occasionally brought together in a room before the master or mistress of the house has appeared. "Sir, (that is being so uncivilized as not to understand the common rights of humanity."

At the inn where we stopped he was exceedingly dissatisfied with some roast mutton which we had for dinner. The ladies, I saw, wondered to see the great philosopher, whose wisdom and wit they had been admiring all the way, get into ill-humour from such a cause. He scolded the waiter, saying, "It is as bad as bad can be: it is ill-fed, ill-killed, ill-kept, and ill-drest."

He bore the journey very well, and seemed to feel himself elevated as he approached Oxford, that magnificent and venerable seat of learning, orthodoxy, and toryism. Frank came in the heavy coach, in readiness to attend him; and we were received with the most polite hospitality at the house of his old friend Dr. Adams, Master of Pembroke College, who had given us a kind invitation. Before we were set down, I communicated to Johnson my having engaged to return to London directly for the reason I have mentioned, but that I would hasten back to him again. He was pleased that I had made this journey merely to keep him company. He was easy and placid, with Dr. Adams, Mrs. and Miss Adams, and Mrs. Kennicot, widow

¹ [See ante, p. 149, n.; but this repetition of the same renders the Editor doubtful as to the suggestion made in that note, though he cannot discover where or when Dr. Johnson could have been so familiarized with Mr. Dempster's family.—Ed.]

² [The remark is made by Miss Jenny, and not by her brother. It would have been ill suited to one who was originally described in the dramatic personae as "a mere whelp."—J. H. MARRLAND]