



Brotherly and Sisterly Dedications in Jane Austen's Juvenilia

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JANE AUSTEN PRESERVED the writings of her childhood and youth in three manuscript notebooks, to which she gave the mock-solemn titles of “Volume the First,” “Volume the Second,” and “Volume the Third,” as though collectively they formed a three-volume novel. All four of the novels that she published during her lifetime, from *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811 to *Emma* in 1815, appeared in just such a format. Despite this ostensible resemblance to her published works, however, Austen’s juvenilia, written between about 1787 and 1793, differ from her full-length fiction in some obvious ways. First, the total length of the twenty-seven items in the three notebooks, some 74,000 words, is less than half that of either of her two longest novels, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, and considerably less than either *Sense and Sensibility* or *Pride and Prejudice*, although close to that of the two posthumously published novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. Second, unlike the numbered chapters that comprise the volumes of each of the novels, the various items in the notebooks are unnumbered and differ markedly in length: there are sixteen short pieces in “Volume the First,” nine in “Volume the Second,” including such substantial ones as “Love and Freindship” and “Lesley Castle,” and only two in “Volume the Third,” “Evelyn” and “Catharine, or the Bower.”

Another feature that distinguishes the juvenilia from five of the published novels is the presence of dedications to family members and close friends, strewn throughout the three manuscript volumes. *Emma*, of course, is

the exception among the novels. Readers of the first edition, published in December 1815, would have been struck by its very formal dedication, immediately following the title page:

To His Royal Highness The Prince Regent, This Work is, By His Royal Highness's Permission, Most Respectfully Dedicated, By His Royal Highness's Dutiful and Obedient Humble Servant, The Author.¹

This clunking sentence, with its ponderous, triple repetition of "His Royal Highness," must rank among the worst that Austen ever wrote, betraying her obvious lack of enthusiasm for the dedicatee. In 1813, she had mentioned, in a letter to Martha Lloyd, her sympathy for Princess Caroline, the Regent's estranged wife: "Poor Woman, I shall support her as long as I can, because she *is* a Woman, & because I hate her Husband" (16 February 1813).

Less than three years later, however, Austen found herself in the awkward position of presenting what is perhaps her finest novel to a philanderer whom she despised. She did so because of the well-intentioned meddling of the Prince's Librarian, James Stanier Clarke, who had informed her that she was "at liberty to dedicate any future Work to HRH the P. R. without the necessity of any Solicitation on [her] part" (15 November 1815). In response to Austen's query about the protocols of dedication, Clarke assured her, in his characteristically pompous manner, "It is certainly not *incumbent* on you to dedicate your work now in the Press to His Royal Highness: but if you wish to do the Regent that honour either now or at any future period, I am happy to send you that permission which need not require any more trouble or solicitation on your Part" (16 November 1815). Advised by her family that the Prince's offer should be taken as a royal command, Austen arranged with her publisher, John Murray, for a specially bound copy of *Emma*, complete with formal dedication, to be sent to the Prince Regent a few days before the novel's official release. All this involved her in considerable trouble and additional expense: almost two pounds by the calculations of Jan Fergus, who describes it as an "unwilling and unrewarding foray into patronage" (161).

The dedications to the juvenilia are a very different affair. Here, Austen was at liberty to dedicate what she chose to whom she chose, and to do so not in formulaic fashion but in her own exuberant and inventive prose. There are twenty-six dedications in all: two to Austen's close friends, the sisters Martha and Mary Lloyd, and the remainder to family members.² Of the twenty-four family dedications, eight are to Austen's nieces Fanny and Anna, three to her cousins Jane Cooper and Eliza de Feuillide, and one each to her father and

mother. The remaining eleven dedications are distributed among Jane Austen's siblings. Cassandra, not surprisingly, receives the lion's share, with four pieces dedicated to her. Francis and Charles Austen are both the dedicatees of two items, while James, Edward, and Henry receive one each. The shadowy George, as always, is sadly conspicuous by his absence.

Austen probably devised the idea of the dedications after completing her earliest stories. The first item in "Volume the First," "Frederic and Elfrida," might date from as early as 1787, the year when Austen (in December) reached the age of twelve. The dedication to Martha Lloyd, however, written in a later hand than that of the rest of the piece, was probably added some years after Austen transcribed the story into the notebook (Southam, "Manuscript" 232 n.4). Another of the very early items in "Volume the First," "Edgar and Emma," is exceptional in having no dedicatee. All of the other stories, poems, plays, and non-fictional prose that make up the juvenilia, however, are equipped with dedications, several of which constitute miniature compositions in their own right.

The title page of the second piece in "Volume the First" reads as follows:

Jack and Alice
a novel.

Is respectfully inscribed to Francis William Austen Esqr Midshipman on board his Majesty's Ship the *Perseverance*

by his obedient humble

Servant The Author. (13)

Francis, the elder of Austen's two sailor brothers, served as a midshipman on board the ship *Perseverance* in the East Indies from December 1789 to November 1791. Born in 1774, a year before Jane, he was aged fifteen to seventeen at the time of the dedication and thus young to be given the courtesy title of "esquire," normally reserved for gentlemen. But this overly elaborate title is, I believe, part of the humor of both the story and the dedication. "Jack and Alice," after all, features a hero who is almost as elusive as Samuel Beckett's Godot. In the seventh of nine brief chapters, Austen finally deigns to mention Jack Adams, who gives his name, but little else, to the story:

It may now be proper to return to the Hero of this Novel, the brother of Alice, of whom I beleive I have scarcely ever had occasion to speak; which may perhaps be partly oweing to his unfortunate propensity to Liquor, which so compleatly deprived him of the use of those faculties Nature had endowed him with, that he never did anything worth mentioning. His Death . . . was the natural Consequence of this pernicious practice. (27)

All that Jack does in the story, in fact, is to die in an alcoholic stupor, leaving his red-cheeked, dipsomaniac sister Alice to be spurned by the glamorous Charles Adams—a figure modelled on Samuel Richardson’s Sir Charles Grandison—and to take solace in drink herself: “She flew to her Bottle and it was soon forgot” (29).

This is a remarkable story for the well-bred teenage daughter of the rector of Steventon to have written: so much so that Claire Tomalin conjectures that Jane and Francis might have “started on the story together before he went to sea. Two children intensely curious about the adult world, laughing at drunkenness, cruelty and death, seem plausible originators of *Jack and Alice*” (61). Such speculation seems unwarranted to me. The precocious genius laughing at drunkenness, cruelty, and death is Jane Austen, and part of the joke is her laughter at the brother-sister pair: ruddy-cheeked Alice standing in for the author, and Jack for the young sailor Francis. And, as Brian Southam suggests astutely, the mayhem in the story is not merely comic: this is “a tale of violence for a brother whose calling inevitably led to violence” (*Navy* 49).

The other tale dedicated to Francis, “The adventures of Mr Harley,” is a much slighter affair, consisting of only three short paragraphs. The dedication, however, has a fine sense of its own importance:

The adventures of Mr Harley

a short, but interesting Tale, is with all imaginable Respect inscribed to Mr Francis William Austen Midshipman on board his Majestys Ship the Perseverance by his Obedient Servant

The Author. (46)

The link between Francis and the hero is obvious. “Mr Harley,” we are told, was one of many Children. Destined by his father for the Church and by his Mother for the Sea, desirous of pleasing both, he prevailed on Sir John to obtain for him a Chaplaincy on board a Man of War. He accordingly, cut his Hair and sailed. (46)

As a naval chaplain, Mr. Harley combines the two Austen family professions: the Navy and the Church. And given Francis’s later reputation for piety, there is much merit in Southam’s suggestion that the tale might catch “some hint of a debate that arose at Steventon in the 1780s when the boy’s career was under discussion” (49).

“The adventures of Mr Harley” is immediately followed in “Volume the First” by two stories dedicated to Charles, the youngest of the Austen siblings: “Sir William Mountague” and “Memoirs of Mr Clifford.” Born in 1779, Charles left home in July 1791 to attend the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth, just

after his twelfth birthday, but he was still living in Steventon rectory at the time these dedications were written, probably in late 1788 when he was only nine. The title page for the first tale reads as follows: “Sir William Mountague an unfinished performance is humbly dedicated to Charles John Austen Esqre, by his most obedient humble Servant The Author” (47). The “esquire” here is still less appropriate for Charles than for Frank, five years his elder. The repetition of “humble” also has a comic effect: there is rather too much stilted humbleness in this dedication by a twelve-year-old girl to her nine-year-old brother.

Young Charles would surely have relished the exploits of the tale’s eponymous hero, Sir William Mountague. He is a serial wooer, who courts numerous young women and marries one of them; a sportsman, who calls off a wedding because it would interfere with his plans for partridge-shooting on the first of September; and a murderer, who kills one of his rivals and pays fourteen shillings to the man’s sister in compensation. But the tale, as the dedication points out, is unfinished, ending with a trail of dots, just as Sir William is about to prove unfaithful to his wife.

The second tale presented to Charles, “Memoirs of Mr Clifford,” begins with the following dedication:

To Charles John Austen Esqre

Sir,

Your generous patronage of the unfinished tale, I have already taken the Liberty of dedicating to you, encourages me to dedicate to you a second, as unfinished as the first.

I am Sir with every expression
of regard for you and yr noble
Family, your most obedt
&c &c

The Author. (50)

“Patronage” here suggests financial support, which Charles would have been the least capable among Austen’s siblings of supplying, probably with a joking allusion to Samuel Johnson’s notorious dictionary definition of a patron: “a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.” The phrase “yr noble Family” jokingly implies that the wealthy patron’s family is somehow different from that of the author, which was genteel but far from being ennobled.

As for Mr. Clifford, he is “a very rich young Man and kept a great many Carriages” (51), ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous: at the high end a coach and four, and at the other, a wheelbarrow. But despite all of his expensive

and modish means of transport, Mr. Clifford proves to be as timorous a traveller as Mr. Woodhouse will be in *Emma*. Setting off in his coach and four from Bath to London, a journey of 110 miles that should take him no more than two days, he manages only about nineteen miles on the first day, and after three more days of travelling he has only got as far as Overton, three miles from Steventon, “where he was seized with a dangerous fever the Consequence of too violent Exercise” (51). After five months spent recuperating, he continues his epic journey, but four more days take him only five miles: a distance that Charles, or Jane, could walk in a couple of hours. Like most small boys, and quite a few adult males, Charles was probably fascinated by carriages of the kind that Mr. Clifford owned. His sister’s story adroitly suggests that wealth does not bring happiness, or even the ability to travel rapidly; Mr. Clifford’s journey to London, like the tale itself, is never completed.

Another of the items in “Volume the First,” “The Visit,” is dedicated to Austen’s eldest brother James. Born in 1765, ten years before Jane, James was ordained as a priest at Oxford in June 1789 and appointed curate of Stoke Charity, near Winchester, a month later. From 1782 to 1789 he directed a series of dramatic productions performed by the Austen family at Steventon, furnishing them with witty prologues and epilogues.³ Jane’s juvenile notebooks contain three miniature dramas, and not surprisingly she dedicated the first and the best of these, “The Visit,” to her theatre-loving brother James. The dedication reads as follows:

To the Revd James Austen

Sir,

The following Drama, which I humbly recommend to your Protection and Patronage, tho’ inferior to those celebrated Comedies called “The school for Jealousy” and “The travelled Man,” will I hope afford some amusement to so respectable a *Curate* as yourself; which was the end in veiw when it was first composed by your Humble Servant the Author. (61)

Since no plays entitled “The school for Jealousy” or “The travelled Man” are known to exist, these titles might be Austen’s invention, alluding to celebrated comedies by Sheridan, *The School for Scandal* (1777), and Goldsmith, *The Good-Natur’d Man* (1768). They might also, however, be actual comedies written for Austen family productions, either by James or by Jane herself. Jane originally wrote “when they was first composed”; only the later change to “it” conceals her ostensible authorship. The words “first composed” are also significant, suggesting that the play was written well before the dedication.⁴

“The Visit” takes place at the home of Lord Fitzgerald, a young man who

lives with his sister. Miss Fitzgerald admires her brother fervently, declaring that “From his Cradle he has always been a strict adherent to Truth” (64). Originally, this speech continued with a further panegyric: “He never told a Lie but once, and that was merely to oblige me. Indeed I may truly say there never was such a Brother!” Austen later deleted these lines, presumably feeling that the point had been made without them. Among the jokes in this play, which parodies traditional comedies of manners, is that the women are hearty drinkers, while the leading men are abstainers. Another joke concerns Miss Fitzgerald’s forwardness. At the end of the play, her brother asks one of the visitors, Sophia, for her hand in marriage. Miss Fitzgerald, not to be outdone, tells the remaining single man: “Since you Willoughby are the only one left, I cannot refuse your earnest solicitations—There is my Hand” (68). Willoughby, however, has said nothing; Miss Fitzgerald has, in effect, made the proposal herself.

Edward Austen, the third of the Austen brothers, was the dedicatee of another story in “Volume the First”: an epistolary fiction entitled, over a hundred years before Chekhov, “The Three Sisters.” The dedication here is a simple one: “To Edward Austen Esqre The following unfinished Novel is respectfully inscribed by His obedient Humble Servt The Author” (73). Born in 1767, eight years before Jane, Edward had been taken into the home of a wealthy, childless couple, Thomas and Catherine Knight, before being formally adopted in 1783. In March 1791 his engagement to Elizabeth Bridges was announced, and in the same year her two elder sisters, Fanny and Sophia, also became engaged. Fanny’s wedding to Lewis Cage took place on 14 December, and two weeks later, in a double wedding, Edward married Elizabeth while Sophia was married to William Deedes. As Jon Spence suggests, Austen might have written “The Three Sisters” as a wedding present for its dedicatee (62). One of the fictional sisters is named Sophia, although Austen did not go so far as to name the other sisters Fanny and Elizabeth—which would have made the joke too obvious. She also complicates matters by giving the fictional Stanhope sisters only a single suitor, Mr. Watts, among them. Sophia, the sharpest of the three, takes part in a debate with Watts that shows Austen’s extraordinary gift for comic dialogue, already fully developed while she was still in her mid-teens:

“I expect my Husband to be good tempered and Cheerful; to consult my Happiness in all his Actions, and to love me with Constancy and Sincerity.”

Mr Watts stared. “These are very odd Ideas truly Young Lady. You had better discard them before you marry, or you will be obliged to do it afterwards.” (83)

The last of the fraternal dedications is one to Jane's favorite brother, Henry, prefixed to another epistolary fiction, "Lesley Castle," in "Volume the Second." As with the dedication of "The Visit" to James, there is something of a mystery here:

To Henry Thomas Austen Esqre—.

Sir

I am now availing myself of the Liberty you have frequently honoured me with of dedicating one of my Novels to you. That it is unfinished, I greive; yet fear that from me, it will always remain so; that as far as it is carried, it Should be so trifling and so unworthy of you, is

another concern to your obliged humble

Servant

The Author. (142)

The fourth of the Austen sons, born in 1771, Henry graduated at Oxford in Spring 1792. Since the last of the letters in "Lesley Castle" is dated 13 April 1792, Jane might have dedicated it to Henry in honor of his graduation. Most unusually for Austen, the first sentence of the dedication is syntactically ambiguous. It could mean that, in the past, Henry has dedicated fiction to Jane, who is now reciprocating; alternatively, Jane could be responding to a repeated request from Henry that she should write a piece for him; or, it could indicate that she had already responded frequently to such a request and is now doing so again. If this third interpretation is correct, Jane must have written short fiction not transcribed into the three notebooks, just as her dedication to "The Visit" suggests that she might have written at least two lost plays.

Another remarkable feature of the dedication to "Lesley Castle" is a witty reply, written and signed by the dedicatee:

Messrs Demand and Co—please to pay Jane Austen Spinster the sum of one hundred guineas on account of your Humbl. Servant.

H. T. Austen.

£105.0.0. (142)

In this mock bank-order, Henry is requesting Messrs Demand and Co. to transfer one hundred guineas, or £105, as payment for the story. He probably wrote the note at some point after he began his banking career in 1801, and perhaps as late as November 1812, when Jane sold the copyright of her most popular novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, for £110. Henry's joke, in that case, would be the suggestion that his sister's unfinished, juvenile manuscript was worth almost as much as the three-volume novel newly purchased by the publisher Thomas Egerton.

“Lesley Castle” is narrated in a series of letters exchanged among five of the characters. In the opening letter, Margaret Lesley tells her confidante, Charlotte Lutterell, about the distresses of her beloved brother:

Never was there a better young Man! Ah! how little did he deserve the misfortunes he has experienced in the Marriage State. So good a Husband to so bad a Wife!, for you know my dear Charlotte that the Worthless Louisa left him, her Child and reputation a few weeks ago in company with Danvers and dishonour. (143)

Unlike the still unmarried Henry, Mr. Lesley has been jilted by his wife, who has also abandoned their child. But by the end of the story, his fortunes have mended. He has, we are told, travelled to Naples, “has turned Roman-catholic, obtained one of the Pope’s Bulls for annulling his 1st Marriage and has since actually married a Neapolitan Lady of great Rank and Fortune” (174). His story thus reverses that of the hero of Austen’s favorite novel, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-54), who is betrothed to an Italian Catholic, Clementina della Porretta, but eventually marries an English Protestant, Harriet Byron. The well-read Henry would surely have enjoyed Austen’s deft nod to Richardson here, and twenty-five years later, in the “Biographical Notice of the Author” that he prefixed to *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, he noted that “Richardson’s power of creating, and preserving the consistency of his characters, as particularly exemplified in ‘Sir Charles Grandison,’ gratified the natural discrimination of her mind” (141).

Austen’s beloved elder sister, Cassandra, appears as the dedicatee of items in all three manuscript notebooks: two in “Volume the First” and one each in “Volume the Second” and “Volume the Third.” The first of the four, “The Beautifull Cassandra,” is among the shortest of all the juvenilia, but its dedication, “by permission to Miss Austen,” is splendidly verbose:

Madam

You are a Phoenix. Your taste is refined, Your Sentiments are noble, and your Virtues innumerable. Your Person is lovely, your Figure, elegant, and your Form, magestic. Your Manners, are polished, your Conversation is rational and your appearance singular. If therefore the following Tale will afford one moment’s amusement to you, every wish will be gratified of

your most obedient

humble Servant

The Author. (53)

Juliet McMaster suggests that “The Beautifull Cassandra,” with its London

setting, was probably inspired by an Austen family journey to Kent in summer 1788, with a return via London, when Cassandra was still a teenage girl, rather than the phoenix of legend. Jane and Cassandra were visiting a cousin in Orchard Street, and McMaster conjectures that they might then have gone window-shopping in nearby Bond Street, lighting upon “a beautiful and desirable bonnet,” the inspiration for this story (Afterword).

The heroine, Austen’s only fictional Cassandra, is sixteen, about the same age as the dedicatee. In other respects, however, the two Cassandras obviously differ, as the story’s first sentence suggests: “Cassandra was the Daughter and the only Daughter of a celebrated Millener in Bond Street” (54). This milliner’s daughter walks alone through the streets of London, until she comes to a pastry-cook’s shop: here “she devoured six ices, refused to pay for them, knocked down the Pastry Cook and walked away” (54). She then takes a hackney coach to Hampstead and back, cannot pay the coachman, and places her bonnet on his head instead of giving him his fee, which would have been about five shillings for a round-trip of some eight miles. When she returns to her parents’ home, after an absence of seven hours, “Cassandra smiled and whispered to herself ‘This is a day well spent’” (56). That Cassandra Austen enjoyed the exploits of her feisty fictional counterpart is suggested by an apparent allusion to the story in one of her letters to Jane, written in September 1804. The letter, like all of Cassandra’s to her sister, has not survived, but in her reply Jane feigns horror at Cassandra’s report that no ices can be obtained in Weymouth, declaring that it “is altogether a shocking place . . . without recommendation of any kind” (14 September 1804).

The second item presented to Cassandra in “Volume the First” is a poem entitled “Ode to Pity,” the title alluding to William Collins’s well-known “Ode to Pity” (1746), of which Austen owned a copy.⁵ Here the dedication is brief: “To Miss Austen, the following Ode to Pity is dedicated, from a thorough knowledge of her pitiful Nature, by her obedt humle Servt The Author” (96). “Pitiful” has none of its negative modern connotations; Cassandra is simply being commended for her compassionate nature. But in the two-stanza ode itself, pity is strikingly absent. The poem begins tenderly enough, with the speaker musing

On disappointed Love.
While Philomel on airy hawthorn Bush
Sings sweet and Melancholy, And the Thrush
Converses with the Dove.

But the tone changes in the second stanza, in which such exquisite sensibility is ridiculed:

Gently brawling down the turnpike road,
Sweetly noisy falls the Silent Stream (97)

As so often in the juvenilia, Austen is playing with literary conventions; disappointed lovers need murmuring streams, not gently brawling, sweetly noisy, or even silent ones.⁶

The third item dedicated to Cassandra, “The History of England” in “Volume the Second,” is a special case, since here Cassandra is also Jane’s collaborator, illustrating the “History” with thirteen medallion portraits and signing all but one (the portrait of Henry VIII) “C. E. Austen pinx” (*pinxit*: painted by). The newly published Juvenilia Press edition of “The History” emphasizes Cassandra’s key role by making her part of the title: “Jane Austen’s *The History of England & Cassandra’s Portraits*.” Austen’s own title-page, however, says nothing about Cassandra’s role; it pays tribute to her as dedicatee, without mentioning her collaboration as illustrator:

The History of England
from the reign of
Henry the 4th
to the death of
Charles the 1st.

By a partial, prejudiced, and ignorant Historian
To Miss Austen eldest daughter of the Revd George Austen, this
Work is inscribed with all due respect by

The Author.

N.B. There will be very few Dates in this History. (176)

Within the text of “The History of England,” in contrast, the collaborative work of author and illustrator, dedicator and dedicatee, is clearly apparent. Consider, for example, the opening of the chapter on Edward IV: “This Monarch was famous only for his Beauty and his Courage, of which the Picture we have here given of him, and his undaunted Behaviour in marrying one Woman while he was engaged to another, are sufficient proofs” (178). Cassandra’s portrait of Edward, to which Jane here refers, adds to the joke by making him, with protruding lips, turned-up nose, and staring eyes, perhaps the least attractive of all the “History’s” monarchs. He is dressed, moreover, like an eighteenth-century peasant, rather than a fifteenth-century king. Cassandra also took an active role in redressing the historical imbalance between England’s male and female monarchs: omitting to portray Edward V but instead inserting a most attractive portrait of a non-English monarch, Jane’s beloved Mary Queen of Scots. And Jane joins in the joke on Edward V, writing that “This un-

fortunate Prince lived so little a while that no body had time to draw his picture” (179).

“Catharine,” the final item dedicated to Cassandra, runs to some fifty pages in modern editions: considerably more than any other of the juvenilia. It is also the closest of any of Austen’s juvenile writings to her mature fiction. Its dedication, however, shows the young writer at her most fanciful:

To Miss Austen

Madam

Encouraged by your warm patronage of The beautiful Cassandra, and The History of England, which through your generous support, have obtained a place in every library in the Kingdom, and run through threescore Editions, I take the liberty of begging the same Exertions in favour of the following Novel, which I humbly flatter myself, possesses Merit beyond any already published, or any that will ever in future appear, except such as may proceed from the pen of Your Most Grateful Humble Servt.

The Author. (241)

“Generous support” of the kind mentioned here would normally consist of buying multiple copies of a work published by subscription, although none of Austen’s juvenilia—nor of her published novels—appeared in subscription form. The primary target of her parody in the “History,” Oliver Goldsmith’s four-volume *History of England, from the Earliest Times to the Death of George II* (1771), was popular enough to find a place in many of the libraries of England, in contrast to Austen’s miniature, known only to her family and close friends in Steventon and extant in only a single holograph copy. And even this notebook would have been read in the family drawing room, not in the rectory library, the preserve of Austen’s father. As for the “threescore editions,” even the most popular works of fiction, such as Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* or Richardson’s *Pamela*, went through far fewer than sixty editions in the eighteenth century. The novel, regrettably, is unfinished, and Austen’s abandoning it suggests that she was well aware of its limitations, despite her mocking claims for greatness in the dedication.

“Catharine” is subtitled “the Bower.” At the outset we are told that this shady retreat had been created by the heroine, in her maiden aunt’s garden, together with two of her girlhood friends. These girls are the Wynne sisters, Cecilia and Mary, who, orphaned upon the death of their clergyman father, are now experiencing everything that Cassandra and Jane must have most wished to avoid in their own lives. The elder sister had been dispatched to Bengal to

find a husband, “and she had now been married nearly a twelvemonth. Splendidly, yet unhappily married. United to a Man of double her own age, whose disposition was not amiable, and whose Manners were displeasing” (244). The marriage resembles that of Jane and Cassandra’s aunt Philadelphia, who had married Tysoe Saul Hancock, an East India Company surgeon, in 1753, and who had also endured a loveless union. The younger sister, Mary, is no more fortunate: living as a humble companion “in a family where, tho’ all were her relations she had no freind, she wrote usually in depressed Spirits, which her separation from her Sister and her Sister’s Marriage had greatly contributed to make so” (245).

The relationships between the brother and sister dedicatees of Austen’s juvenilia and their fictional counterparts are as varied as her relationships with her siblings themselves. At one extreme is her affectionate impudence in dedicating “The Beautifull Cassandra” to Cassandra, or her irreverence in presenting a story about three quarrelsome sisters to her brother Edward, marrying into a family of three sisters. At the other is a story such as “Catharine,” in which the Wynne sisters serve as a chilling reminder of what could befall the Austen sisters should they become orphans too. But in every case, I believe, Austen thought hard about who should be the dedicatee of a particular piece and how the dedication should be worded: a far more agreeable task than her later one, in which she felt compelled to dedicate *Emma* to the Prince Regent against her will. And in a pleasing twist of fate, while the elaborately bound presentation copy of *Emma* has long been immured in the Royal Library at Windsor, inaccessible to all but the most persistent, or well connected, of enquirers, the three small, fragile notebooks are now in libraries that have made them available to readers.⁷ Jane Austen’s private dedications have thus become public at last.

NOTES

1. A facsimile of this dedication is printed in the Cambridge Edition of *Emma*. For their invaluable suggestions and corrections, I am much indebted to Susan Allen Ford, Juliet McMaster, and my research assistant, Katie Gemmill.
2. See the chart listing the dedicatees in *Juvenilia* (xxxiv-xxxv). All quotations from the juvenilia will be taken from this edition.
3. These juvenile productions, together with all of James's verse—which he continued to write until his death in 1819—were published as *The Complete Poems of James Austen: Jane Austen's Eldest Brother*, ed. David Selwyn (Chawton: Jane Austen Society, 2003).
4. Paula Byrne speculates that “The Visit” might have been performed by the Austen family as a burlesque afterpiece to their production of James Townley's farce *High Life Below Stairs* during the Christmas holiday season, 1788-1789 (13-14); the dedication could then have been added after James became a curate the following summer.
5. In Robert Dodsley's *A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes by Several Hands* (1758), which Austen sold for ten shillings in May 1801 (21-22 May 1801).
6. At the end of the poem, Austen wrote the date “June 3rd 1793,” the latest that she gives for any of her juvenilia.
7. Volume the First is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; Volume the Second and Volume the Third are in the British Library, London.

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