

23 Aug 1823 Diana Beaumont to Christopher Bird

[Notes: This is taken from a typed transcript of an incomplete original letter found at Capheaton Hall. The transcript is headed 'Beaumont letter. The following letter is taken from a box of Enderby Papers and is transcribed prior to the sorting and hand listing of the remaining items in the box.' The mention of a letter received from Sir John Swinburne at Capheaton dated 22nd August confirms that the writer was Diana Beaumont as the Swinburne letters is mentioned in William Lee's letter to Lord Fitzwilliam of 8th September. The recipient is Rev Christopher Bird, Thos Wentworth Beaumont's erstwhile tutor and minder, who was supposed to have been keeping TWB out of trouble during the ill-fated weekend at Capheaton which ended with the broken engagement between TWB and Miss Elizabeth Swinburne. We are grateful to Mr J. Browne-Swinburne for giving us permission to include the transcript in Dukesfield Documents, and to Keith Jewitt for alerting us to its existence.]

Bretton Hall 23 August 1823

Sir

I have received your letter of the 19th inst and on the same day I received the most cruel and extraordinary Letter that any son ever addressed to a Mother, and in answer to one of kindness and attention; his conduct afflicts me deeply for on him was placed my fodest hopes and ambition, it appears he has lost every feeling of Duty and honor. In common justice he cannot refuse to send by you the Draft of the Deed which was drawn out by Mr P Fenwick under the direction of Mr Hopper Williamson, and from the directions received from Mr Wentworth Beaumont and myself respecting the <...> and the resettling of the Estates which were connected together, and not possible that one could be done without the other. I have all the Letters that passed at the time, but it is useless I know to enter into any further discussion on this subject with him or yourself, only I must request the favour to bring me the Draft of the Deed from Bywell, which is most improperly detained. When I paid Mr P Fenwick's bill I desired he would deliver into Mr Thomas's hands all the Papers in his possession that belonged to Colonel B and myself and I then paid his Bill in which was the charge of making out this Draft, and surely it is my property and I have a Right to it, and no man of honour can detain it. My Son obtained them (all the Papers) by some means from Mr P Fenwick. He told me the papers were at Bradley and I requested he would send them to me or my Agent, which I believed he would do from what passed at Hastings, as soon as he arrived at Bradley, as he has frequently threatened me with a Chancery suit which I am prepared to meet from my most unnatural Son, and not afraid to encounter. Interrogatories may then draw from Mr H Williamson and Mr Fenwick the Words and intent of the Deed which I know they have the heads of. I have this morning received from Capheaton a Letter dated August 22nd. Sir John Swinburne says 'I am perfectly sensible of your very liberal Conduct from the outset to this moment, and I assure you it is not from any difficulties of pecuniary arrangements that I have been induced to break off the Match. Mr Wentworth Beaumont's conduct and Language to me have

been such as to render it absolutely and indispensably necessary that I should, tho' with very great reluctance, put an end to the connexion as it would be very painful for me to enter into any particulars. I must beg to refer you to Mr Bird, who happened to be there at the time, for any further explanation.' Nothing can be more kind or polite than Sir John Swinburne's Letter to me, and he signs himself my very sincerely obliged. I feel much for Miss Elizabeth if she is as my Son says greatly attached to him, which I now trust may not be the case as Sir John says Elizabeth entirely concurs in his sentiments. Poor Young Lady only 17 years of Age; his conduct to her is cruel in the extreme and her Death may be the consequence of his Violence and intemperance, what could she expect after the Ill Conduct and Language to her Parents tho' she was Ignorant of the Menaces and Ill treatment his Mother has so often received from him, who had no one to protect her from his Violence, and Lady Swinburne has a Husband differently situated, who was able to defend her and himself from Insult. I am greatly distressed at the Idea that a son of mine should be capable of such improper Conduct and Language as Sir John says it would be very painful for him to enter into. I confess with extreme mortification that I have experienced from him every species of Insult except a Blow, but I did hope he did have more command over himself than to expose himself to the Parents of the Lady he was going to marry, and which you are unwilling to name to me. Unpleasant reports have already arrived from Northumberland. Mrs Wentworth and I had a Walk in her Garden on Saturday when she told me the Stanhopes informed them of the Rupture that has taken place; which surprised me for on Mrs S asking me when the Marriage would be I merely answered I had not heard from my Son lately and I desired my Daughter would say the same, but Miss J Stanhope's answer to her convinced me they knew more. Mrs Wentworth said it was highly necessary that my Friends should be prepared to answer by stating the facts, there were so many unpleasant reports, when I related every circumstance to her. And yesterday I sent her the copy of that part of Sir J Swinburnes's Letter to me received yesterday morning, which states he was perfectly Sensible of my very Liberal Conduct &c. Mr Wentworth Beaumont's last Letter of Yours of 20th Inst