

Fincham near Stoke Ferry

Feb 24 1823    Norf[olk]

Sir,

I have new before me: a letter received yesterday by my parishioner Mr Arthy from his son, an undergraduate of your College – written under no little alarm in consequence of a late interview with you. Perhaps the best way to introduce what I have to say, is to copy what he has said, upon the subject

“I am just come from Dr. French, who sent for me, and said he had an unpleasant communication to make. He has received a letter from the old woman, saying that she and all her family have always been highly respectable – that there existed the greatest intimacy between her family and ours – that till I knew her daughter, her virtue and honesty had always been irreproachable – that by the vilest acts, and a thousand promises, I had seduced her body and mind – and had brought **ra**  
**nation?** on them all – I wish you would go to Mr Forby and read this letter and ask him to have the kindness to write to Dr. French, and state what he knows etc

I will do the young man this kindness, because when I read Mrs Parish’s extravagant assertions, I think I ought. I will take them in order.

The claim of respectability I will not discuss. I neither totally deny it, nor allow it to them all.

At the alledged great intimacy I am much

Staggered. It must have been very sudden and very short at any rate. For Mr Arthy and his p2 family came into this parish perfect strangers late on the month of October 1821 – and the young man returned to College some days before the division of term. Before Christmas the shameless young woman declared her pregnancy, and ostentatiously announced the father of her expected infant. This must of course have terminated all intimacy – but the fact is, that none ever existed beyond the casual civilities of next-door neighbours in a village.

How far this eager haste to proclaim her own shame, is consistent with the character of virtue and honesty always irreproachable. I must leave you to judge. Certainly as one in the parish or neighbourhood believes it. It is inconceivable that the mother can, though she aperts it. The young woman's great and notorious looseness of conduct for many years past (she is now in her 28<sup>th</sup> year) and her almost unparalleled and exclusive intimacy with low wenches of the most depraved and public characters, make it totally incredible.

If this young man be a practiced seducer, he must be so in a very extraordinary degree not having at all the aspect of one. His vile acts and thousand promises must have been very rapidly successful indeed – On the 10 of October he came, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November went

away – and it is not denied that the intimacy was of some continuance! Every body who knows the parties, is fully persuaded, that the woman was the seducer – and moreover, that the lad must have been very inexperienced in matters of gallantry

try, to have been so very foolishly entrap'd

As to the ruination, it is true enough, but was certain, if not publicly known, before the Arthy family came and was notoriously caused by one of the sons – the other strenuously endeavouring to retrieve it, and to support his mother and sister, notwithstanding their ingratitude and unkindness.

The young man and his family have suffered and are still suffering severely for that misconduct. They are perpetually pestered, both by mother and daughter, with abusive letters, and the most extravagant and absurd demands of compensation – though the infant lived but a very few days, and its mother has for ought any body knows

as good a reputation as she had before.

The general remark on hearing of her misfortune, being, that she had been very fortunate to escape so long. Mrs Arthy

has even been assailed in the village street by the old woman with the most opprobrious language – and this, even happened on a Sunday as my congregation was assembling – and was repeated, when they dispersed. I was obliged to

interpose, and to threaten to bind her to the good behaviour, and to commit in default of sureties, which she had little chance of finding after such outrageous conduct.

I am afraid I have been very tedious – all I know not how I could have conveyed in fewer words, the full view I wish to give you.

The young man, I find, has told you that I am soon to be in Cambridge – and last that you expressed a wish to see me. It is true I ex

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pect to be there on Tuesd[ay] Mar[ch] 4 – but I shall come from Ely that morning to take the Telegraph – so that a call at Jesus Lodge will be impossible. I expect to be there again on Sat[urday] Mar[ch] 15 – but I shall have two young ladies in charge, whom I must immediately put into a post chaise and convey to Ely. It is not comprobable that I may be there again in Easterweek – and in that case I will wait upon you. In the mean time I am ready to answer any questions you may have to propose –

I am D[ear] Sir – Y[ou]r obed[ient] serv[an]t Robert Forby