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DAVID HUME AND JOHN HOME. TWO NEW LETTERS.

While doing research in the University Library, Edinburgh, I discovered two as yet unpublished letters from Hume. Both are addressed to John Home, just a few weeks before Hume's death. Although I believe the content of the letters throws no light on any puzzles concerning Hume's life and thought, they are worthy in themselves of attention, for their particular humanity. I would like to thank Peter Jones, University of Edinburgh, who generously checked the two letters for me and assured me that both are in Hume's own hand, though unsigned.

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Letter from David Hume to John Home of Kilduff
16 July 1776
University Library DK 6.27/3

Edinburgh 16 of July 1776

It is even so, Dear John, as I told you: Sunday very ill, yesterday very ill, to day very well, to morrow I shall be tolerably: But on the whole, I find it impracticable for me to stir from this place; and even my Physicians have agreed to my Suspension of Exercise. They are now beginning to give me Pills, as in Duty bound, which I swallow without Enquiry, from the same Motive. I see today, from my windows, fine dry airy Weather, which will put all your Hay in a good Condition; and instead of grudging that I cannot partake, directly, of this Pleasure; Mr Smith tells me, that I ought to enjoy it by Sympathy, which I endeavour to do. It is by Sympathy only I can partake of a Dinner which Ferguson gives to several of our Friends to day, and which,

I suppose, will be a Feast, because all Misers Dinners are such: For I believe, that I told you already of this happy Change, that has been produced on our Friend in this particular; scarcely less than that of the Conversion of St. Paul. I hope you have good Accounts of Mrs Home.

Letter from David Hume to John Home of Kilduff

23 July 1776

University Library DK 6.27/4

Edinburgh 23 of July 1776

You are very good natured, My Dear John, to desire the Journal of an infirm Person, which can supply you with nothing but an account of Relapses, Recoveries, and the long Train of lingering ailments, which sometimes a sick Person likes to talk of, but which is a Subject, that he ought by no means to indulge. But since you have not only the Patience to bear it, but the Curiosity to desire it, I shall make no Scruple in giving it you. Yesterday Morning, I had a severe Colic; it diminished gradually towards evening; I slept well, and find myself very easy at present, fit either for reading, or conversation, and only disqualified for Motion. Every body that I see congratulates me upon the Reports, spread abroad by my Physicians, that I am to recover; which is the more agreeable to me as it is perfectly new. I can only say, that, as my Distemper is likely to prove of a lingering kind, and not so rapid in its progress as last Spring, it is not impossible but my habit of Body may change, and I may have a species of Recovery, which I must make the best of, and call by the Appellation of good Health. I hope to have an Interval of this kind towards the End of the Week and beginning of the next, that I may more perfectly enjoy the Pleasure of your Company. Your Accounts from Buxton, I hope, continue favourable.

Note by Mr John Home: M^{RS} Home was at Bath when we came there and (Mr) David took a large house where we lived together. When Mr Home left Bath M^{RS} Home came with us as far as Buxton, ~~at~~ remained there when we went on to Edinburgh.