

# From Family to Philosophy

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Letter-Writers from  
the Pastons to  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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Henry Summerfield



A cultural change in the Renaissance freed talented European writers to compose letters rivalling the finest that survived from ancient Rome. This book traces the lives and outlooks of distinguished Britons as revealed in their correspondence. The subjects range from the fierce satirist Jonathan Swift to the long-lived, all-observing Horace Walpole and from the poet and freedom fighter Lord Byron to the tormented but brilliant Jane Carlyle. Accompanying the self-portraits these writers unwittingly create are their many sketches of their contemporaries. Moreover, the views they express on forms of government, feminism, literature, theology, religious toleration, and other topics serve to relate their lives to the progression from the Age of Reason through the Romantic period to the Victorian era.

