



A letter from Jane Austen to her sister, Cassandra, written on Friday, December 9th, 1808. In part of the letter she describes a ball she attended with her good friend, Martha Lloyd.

1. My dear Cassandra,  
.....Our ball was rather more amusing than I expected. Martha liked it very much, and I did not gape till the last quarter of an hour. It was past nine before we were sent for, and not twelve when we returned.
  
6. The room was tolerably full, and there were, perhaps, thirty couple of dancers. The melancholy part was, to see so many dozen young women standing by without partners, and each of them with two ugly naked shoulders.
  
12. It was the same room in which we danced fifteen years ago. I thought it all over, and in spite of the shame of being so much older, felt with thankfulness that I was quite as happy now as then. We paid an additional shilling for our tea, which we took as we chose in an adjoining and very comfortable room.
  
17. There were only four dances, and it went to my heart that the Miss Lances (one of them, too, named Emma) should have partners only for two. You will not expect to hear that I was asked to dance, but I was - by the gentleman whom we met that Sunday with Captain D'Auvergne. We have always kept up a bowing acquaintance since, and, being pleased with his black eyes, I spoke to him at the ball, which brought on me this civility; but I do not know his name, and he seems so little at home in the English language, that I believe his black eyes may be the best of him.