



*Charlotte, Viscountess Sundon,
Mistress of the Robes to Queen Caroline.*

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MEMOIRS

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OF

VISCOUNTESS SUNDON,

Mistress of the Robes

TO

QUEEN CAROLINE,

CONSORT OF GEORGE II.;

INCLUDING

LETTERS FROM THE MOST CELEBRATED PERSONS
OF HER TIME.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS.

BY

MRS. THOMSON,

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH,"

"MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF HENRY VIII." ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

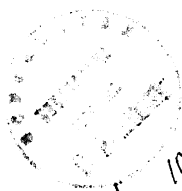
LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1847.

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PREFACE.

THE materials of this Work are supplied, chiefly, from a Collection of Autograph Letters addressed to CHARLOTTE CLAYTON, VISCOUNTESS SUNDON. This Lady was attached to the Court of our first Hanoverian Sovereign, being Lady of the Bedchamber, and eventually Mistress of the Robes, to Caroline, Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen-Consort of George the Second. Lady Sundon, long before her husband's elevation to the Peerage, and whilst she retained the appellation by which she is mentioned in much of the correspondence of the day—that of Mrs. Clayton—attained such a degree of influence over her Royal Mistress, as perhaps had hardly ever been enjoyed by any female favourite since the days of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Letters given in the present Work should contain applica-

tions from individuals of every rank and profession. Nor were the higher orders among her own sex backward in soliciting her aid, or in courting—but seldom without a selfish motive—her regard.

Hence, this Correspondence acquires a considerable interest: it affords an insight into certain portions of State machinery; it shows us how family interest was applied; how the political world acted upon the religious world; and reveals the complex workings of a great social system,—at least in its details.

In the course of this Correspondence, the reader will occasionally meet with expressions which betray a nervous anxiety as to the inspection of the Post-office. Some few are written in cipher; and almost the only unguarded epistolary friend of Lady Sundon appears to have been Lord Hervey, whose favour stood so high, that he had scarcely need to fear any disclosure, and whose character for wit was such, that he could hardly forbear maintaining it. Next to the letters of Lord Hervey, those of Miss Dyves, the niece of Lady Sundon, are the most minute in their details of passing events.

Upon the state of religious opinions in the Court of Queen Caroline, and on the contending