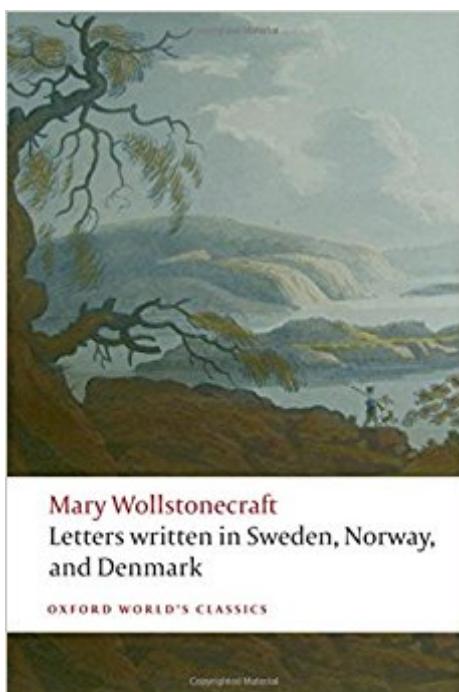


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# Letters Written In Sweden, Norway, And Denmark (Oxford World's Classics)



## Synopsis

This engaging volume was pioneering feminist Mary Wollstonecraft's most popular book during her lifetime. Difficult to categorize, it is both an arresting travel book and a moving exploration of her personal and political selves. Wollstonecraft set out for Scandinavia just two weeks after her first suicide attempt, on a mission from the lover whose affections she doubted, to recover his silver on a ship that had gone missing. With her baby daughter and a nursemaid, she traveled across the dramatic landscape and wrote sublime descriptions of the natural world, and the events and people she encountered. Fascinating appendices include Imlay's commission to recover his lost silver, Wollstonecraft's recently discovered letter to the Danish Prime Minister asking for assistance, the private letters she wrote to Imlay during her travels in Scandinavia, a chapter from Godwin's memoir of Wollstonecraft, and a selection of contemporary reviews.

**About the Series:** For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

## Book Information

Series: Oxford World's Classics

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (April 15, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199230633

ISBN-13: 978-0199230631

Product Dimensions: 7.7 x 0.7 x 5.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #268,854 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Scandinavian #29 in Books > Travel > Europe > Denmark > General #55 in Books > Travel > Europe > Sweden > General

## Customer Reviews

This collection brings to life a radical writer. \* Katie Toms, The Observer \*

These twenty-five letters, published in 1796, describe Mary Wollstonecraft's audacious trip to Scandinavia to retrieve a stolen ship for her lover Imlay. More than just a travelogue, they provide fascinating insights into the radical philosophy of this influential thinker, and the inner turmoil she was experiencing at the time. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This is an interesting and enlightening publication about Scandinavia at that time. You have to adjust your mind to her dated grammar. English was much different when she wrote this.

A great book, it puts you in Scandinavia in the late 1800's and you can feel the life. An excellent company that reproduces out of print books for the public. Highly recommended for the brain un-dead.

It has a rather narrow viewpoint and the judgements weigh on the reader but it reveals a time and era both in terms of the subject and the writing.

I admit I am biased since I am reading this in an Email group called "18th Century Worlds", which perhaps give me more insight and perception into the world of Mary Wollstonecraft. But my Penguin edition of the book is very good, including as it does both Mary's "Short Residence" and the biography of her by her widowed husband William Godwin. Richard Holmes' introduction is a delight, situating the book in its context and also making the life of Mary accessible, and the relationships between Mary and the people of her day and age very interesting. So back to the text of Mary's letters. If you have ever wondered what it was like to be an active, passionate, capable and brave woman at the latter end of the 18th century, when the French Revolution and the tides of Romanticism were sweeping over Europe, and challenging Enlightenment thought-- or even if you've never given a damn-- this is an attention-grabbing and engrossing account. Provided you can get over its prose, or approach it open-mindedly (which many easily bored illiterati might not be able to), you will be struck by its poetic qualities, and by Wollstonecraft's candid emotional intensity. In the early 1790s, a politically radical Englishwoman woman took a business trip to Scandinavia on behalf of her common-law husband, an American businessman involved in smuggling. She took with her only her young daughter, still a child, and her French maid. "Residence in Sweden" is an account of her journey written in the form of letters to the man she left behind (though this doesn't show up in the text itself, the informative introduction gives the background). Partway into her trip, she leaves her child and the nurse behind and continues on her

own to regions remote and picturesque, and foreign not only to most English women of the period, but to the majority of English men as well. Wollstonecraft goes on philosophical rambles, as the images of social life and the landscape around her remind her of her experiences in revolutionary France. The text raise many questions important to the Enlightenment philosophes, about the role of women, man's place in nature, human habits and manners. Never are we allowed to forget that we are reading the words of a flesh and blood woman who feels deeply. Many of her recollections are painful, and sometimes she is depressed. But there is always something arrestingly beautiful in what she describes, some touch of the author's vivacity and the newness and intensity of her travels, to steer one away from the melancholy, or at least to make it something more sublime. I'm taking this one with me to college, and I foresee many re-readings. Holmes calls it Mary's best literary work: it has none of the bombast of her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" but instead is something even more thoughtful and readable. For companion reading I highly recommend Claire Tomalin's "Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft".

I can't say much about this book as I don't remember buying it. It had to have been a book that my daughter needed for a college class.

Mary Wollstonecraft's Scandinavian journey lasted from June to October 1795. This book consists of letters to Gilbert Imlay. He was the father of her daughter. The descriptions of Sweden, Norway and Denmark she saw during this time are exceedingly conclusive and puts the reader there. Intrigued? A charming use of the English language; nevertheless, poignantly stimulating to a fault telling what she experienced. Truly a classic! Dag Stomberg St. Andrews, Scotland

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