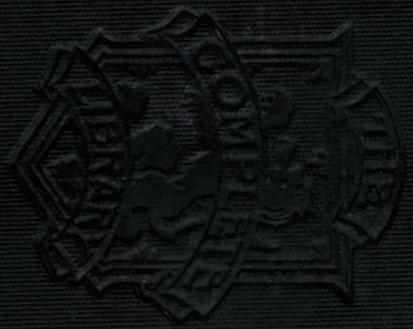
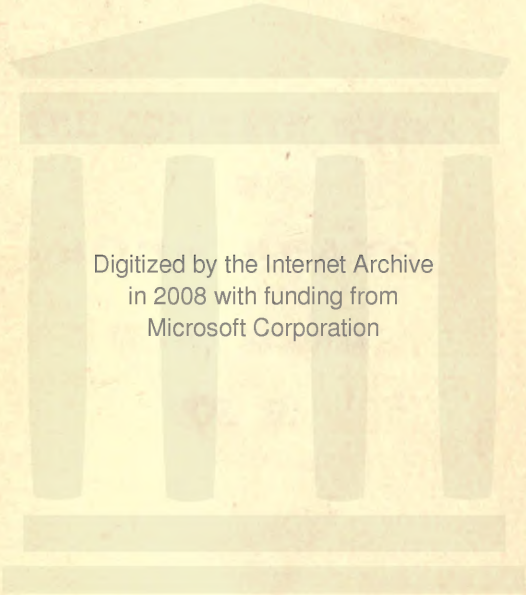




THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
JOHN KEATS
IN FIVE VOLUMES
VOL. V.

Agent for London.

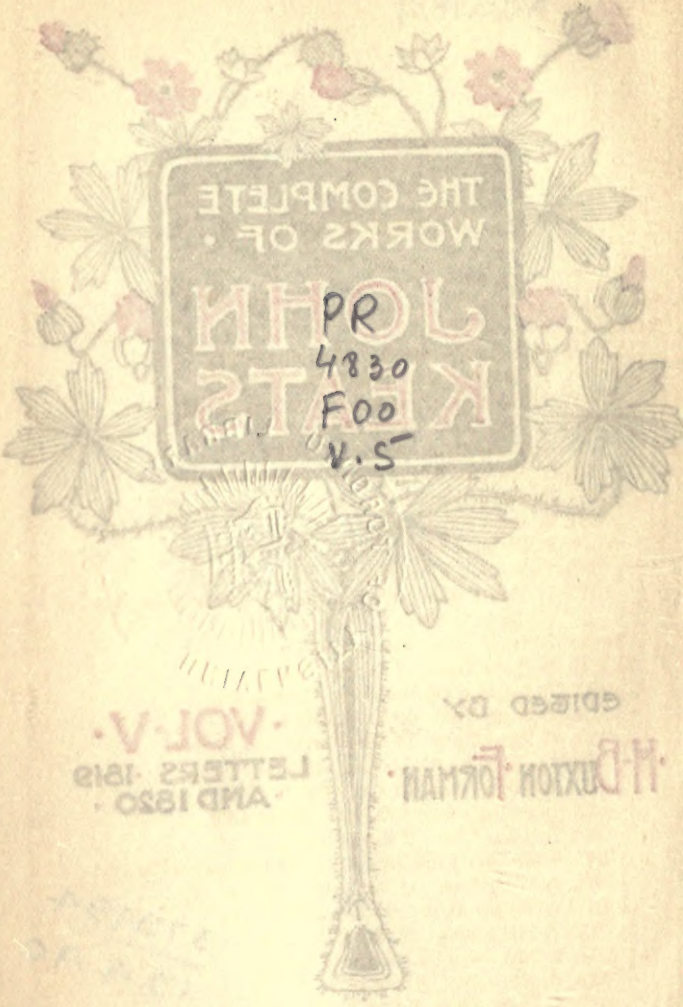
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON,
8 York Buildings,
Adelphi, W.C.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JOHN KEATS

EDITED BY
H·BUXTON·FORMAN·

·VOL·V·
LETTERS ·1819
·AND 1820·

·GOWANS & GRAY·GLASGOW·
·APR.1ST·1901·



CONTENTS OF VOLUME V.

PREFACE TO VOLUME V.

The fluctuation of dates which the reader will notice in going through the letters consecutively arises, of course, from the impossibility of interrupting the course of any one of the long journal-letters to George Keats. The first few letters in the present volume cover about the same period as the journal-letter standing last in Volume IV. It seemed better to reserve these than that for the opening of the new volume, seeing that by this arrangement the story of poor Thomas Keats is consecutively wound up. The journal-letters in the present volume are placed according to the dates up to which they extend, not on which they were begun.

The letter to William Haslam numbered CVIII and given at page 59 should have an address in the heading, namely, "Frampton & Co., Leadenhall Street"—the holograph being addressed "Mr. William Haslam, Frampton & Co., Leadenhall Street." This address suggests the explanation of Keats's statements that the Framptons behaved well to Haslam after his father's death, and that he had got his father's situation (page 39). It would seem that father and son were both employed by a firm of Framptons in Leadenhall Street. "Frampton & Co." I have not traced; but old directories reveal the existence of Frampton and Sons, wholesale grocers and tea-dealers of 34 Leadenhall Street; and, as Keats's guardian, Richard Abbey, was in that line, Keats's acquaintance with Haslam would thus be accounted for.

The intention in the present edition of Keats's Letters has been to add the address to the name of the correspondent in every case in which the holograph letter has been accessible and has borne an address. The journal-letters do not bear addresses or superscriptions of any kind, having been "dowled up" (as Keats says) in packets as occasion served for their transit to America. The letters to Fanny Brawne, which all appear in this final volume, were on the other hand almost invariably addressed to "Miss Brawne," although the greater number of them, sent by hand from house to house, have no further address, and two, whether for purposes of disguise or through inadvertence, are addressed to "Mrs. Brawne." Those which bear full directions for the postman are the ten which passed through the post to Wentworth Place, either from the Isle of Wight or Winchester or from the other side of London. This series affords an excellent example of Keats's proverbial negligence in the matter of dates; for, of the whole thirty-nine, not one is beholden to the poet's hand for a year date, only two go so

far as to specify in writing the day of the month or even the name of the month, and in one of those two Keats's written date is a day later than the date of the infallible post-mark. Hence, it is possible that the letters have not invariably been placed in their true chronological position, although I do not think that there has been any important failure in this respect.

H. B. F.

46 Marlborough Hill, St. John's Wood, London.
April 1901.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

in explanation of the different types employed.

In order to prevent a difficulty that sometimes arises of distinguishing between the author and the editor, especially when author's and editor's notes to a text both occur, the following plan has been adopted. The text of the author and its variants have been printed throughout in 'old style' type, while all notes &c. added by the editor have been set in 'condensed' type. It is hoped that this innovation will be found of no small service to the general reader as well as to the student.

LETTERS

CONTINUED

LETTERS.

LXXXVI.

To RICHARD WOODHOUSE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead,
18 December 1818.

My dear Woodhouse,

I am greatly obliged to you. I must needs feel flattered by making an impression on a set of ladies. I should be content to do so by meretricious romance verse, if they alone, and not men, were to judge. I should like very much to know those ladies—though look here, Woodhouse—I have a new leaf to turn over: I must work; I must read; I must write. I am unable to afford time for new acquaintances. I am scarcely able to do my duty to those I have. Leave the matter to chance. But do not forget to give my remembrances to your cousin.

Yours most sincerely
John Keats

LXXXVII.

To MRS. REYNOLDS.

Little Britain, Christ's Hospital.

Wentworth Place Tuesd[ay].
[*Imperfect Postmark*, De . . . 1818.]

My dear Mrs. Reynolds,

When I left you yesterday, 'twas with the conviction that you thought I had received no previous invitation for Christmas

LXXXVI. It seems likely that the "set of ladies" here alluded to was the same that Keats mentions in the letter to George and Georgiana Keats numbered LXXXV (see pages 194-5 of Volume IV). If so, Miss Porter and Miss Fitzgerald would scarcely have felt as flattered as Keats "must needs" have felt.

LXXXVII. Miss Charlotte Reynolds told me that this letter was sent to her mother a few days before Christmas-day 1818. The choice is therefore between Tuesday the 15th of December and Tuesday the 22nd of December; and the later date seems the likelier. Miss Reynolds thought that the other invitation was from Mrs. Brawne. It is worth while to observe in connexion with this letter the correspondence of thought between the final epigram and Shelley's noted saying ('Shelley Memorials,' pages 211-12), "If I die tomorrow, I have lived to be older than my father. I am ninety years of age." He *did* die tomorrow; and who shall say that his scant thirty years were not as ninety of ordinary life?

day : the truth is I had, and had accepted it under the conviction that I should be in Hampshire at the time : else believe me I should not have done so, but kept in Mind my old friends. I will not speak of the proportion of pleasure I may receive at different Houses—that never enters my head—you may take for a truth that I would have given up even what I did see to be a greater pleasure, for the sake of old acquaintanceship—time is nothing—two years are as long as twenty.

Yours faithfully
John Keats

LXXXVIII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove, Paddington.

Tuesday, Wentworth Place
[*Postmark*, 23 December 1818].

My dear Haydon,

Upon my Soul I never felt your going out of the room at all—and believe me I never rhodomontade anywhere but in your Company—my general Life in Society is silence. I feel in myself all the vices of a Poet, irritability, love of effect and admiration—and influenced by such devils I may at times say more ridiculous things than I am aware of—but I will put a stop to that in a manner I have long resolved upon—I will buy a gold ring and put it on my finger—and from that time a Man of superior head shall never have occasion to pity me, or one of inferior Nunskull to chuckle at me. I am certainly more for

LXXXVIII. The 23rd of December 1818 was a Wednesday. This letter belongs therefore to the 22nd. The following characteristic letter, from what may be a draft or rough copy, wafered into Haydon's journal, is evidently a reply to this of Keats's, and was probably written within a day or two of the 22nd of December 1818 :—

Keats ! Upon my Soul I could have wept at your letter ; to find one of real heart and feeling is to me a blessed solace ; I have met with such heartless treatment from those to whom without reserve I had given my friendship, that I expected no[t] what I wished in human Nature. There is only one besides yourself who ever offer[ed to] act and did act affection, he wa[s] of a different temperament from us ; coo[ler] but not kinder, he did his best from *moral* feeling, and not from bursting impulse ; but still he did it ; you have behaved to me as I would have behaved to you my dear fellow, and if I am constrained to come to you at last, your property shall only be a transfer for a limited time on such security as will ensure you repayment in case of my Death—that is whatever part of it you assist me with : but I will try every corner first. Ah my dear Keats my illness has been a severe touch !—I declare to God I do not feel alone in the World now you have written me that letter. If you go on writing as you [rep]eated the other night, you may wish to [live] in a sublime solitude, but you will [n]ot be allowed. I approve most completely [of] your plan of travels and study, and [s]hould suffer torture if my wants [in]terrupted it—in short they

greatness in a shade than in the open day—I am speaking as a mortal—I should say I value more the privilege of seeing great things in loneliness than the fame of a Prophet. Yet here I am sinning—so I will turn to a thing I have thought on more—I mean you[r] means till your picture be finished: not only now but for this year and half have I thought of it. Believe me Haydon I have that sort of fire in my heart that would sacrifice every thing I have to your service—I speak without any reserve—I know you would do so for me—I open my heart to you in a few words. I will do this sooner than you shall be distressed: but let me be the last stay—Ask the rich lovers of Art first—I'll tell you why—I have a little money which may enable me to study, and to travel for three or four years. I never expect to get anything by my Books: and moreover I wish to avoid publishing—I admire Human Nature but I do not like *Men*. I should like to compose things honourable to Man—but not fingerable over by *Men*. So I am anxious to exist with[out] troubling the printer's devil or drawing upon Men's or Women's admiration—in which great solitude I hope God will give me strength to rejoice. Try the long purses—but do not sell your drawing[s] or I shall consider it a breach of friendship. I am sorry I was not at home when Salmon[1] called. Do write and let me know all your present whys and wherefores.

Yours most faithfully
John Keats.

shall not [m]y dear Keats. I believe you from my soul when you say you would sacrifice all for me; and when your means are gone, if God give me means my heart and house and home and everything shall be shared with you—I mean this too. It has often occurred to me but I have never spoken of it.—My great object is the public encouragement of historical painting and the glory of England in high Art—to ensure these I would lay my head on the block this instant. My illness the consequence of early excess in study, has fatigued most of my Friends. I have no reason to complain of the lovers of Art, I have been liberally assisted; but when a man comes again with a tale of his ill health; they don't believe him my dear Keats; can I bear the thousandth part of a dry hesitation, the searching scrutiny of an apprehensi[on] of insincerity; the musing hum of a *sounding* question; the prying, petty, paltr[y,] whining doubt, that is inferred from [a request?] *for a day to consider*!——Ah Kea[ts,] this is sad work for one of my soul and Ambition. The truest thing you ever said of mortal was that I had a touch of Alexander in me!—I have, I know it, and the World shall know it, but this is the purgative drug I must first take.—Come so[on] my dear fellow—Sunday nobody is coming I believe—and I will lay Soul bare before you.

Your affectionate Friend
B. R. Haydon

[1] Haydon notes—"my Servant".

LXXXIX.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Wentworth Place [24 Dec. 1818.]

My dear Taylor

Can you lend me £30 for a short time? Ten I want for myself—and twenty for a friend—which will be repaid me by the middle of next month. I shall go to Chichester on Wednesday and perhaps stay a fortnight—I am afraid I shall not be able to dine with you before I return. Remember me to Woodhouse.

Yours sincerely

John Keats.

XC.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Pancras Lane, Queen Street, Cheapside.

Wentworth Place, Wednesday.

[*Postmark*, 31 December 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

I am confined at Hampstead with a sore throat; but I do not expect it will keep me above two or three days. I intended to have been in Town yesterday but feel obliged to be careful a little while. I am in general so careless of these trifles, that they teaze me for Months, when a few days care is all that is necessary. I shall not neglect any chance of an endeavour to let you return to School—nor to procure you a Visit to Mrs. Dilke's which I have great fears about. Write me if you can find time—and also get a few lines ready for George as the Post sails next Wednesday.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

XCI.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place.

My dear Haydon,

I had an engagement to day—and it is so fine a morning that I cannot put it off—I will be with you tomorrow—when we will thank the Gods, though you have bad eyes and I am idle.

XC. As the 31st of December 1818 was a Thursday, this letter belongs to the 30th.

XCI. This undated letter is inserted in Haydon's journal next to that postmarked the 23rd of December 1818; and on the reverse of the same leaf, immediately before the entries for the 31st of December 1818, is fastened the following letter:—

My dear Keats,

I am gone out to walk in a positive agony—my eyes are so weak I can do nothing to day—if I did to day I should be totally incapacitated to-morrow—

I regret more than anything the not being able to dine with you today. I have had several movements that way—but then I should disappoint one who has been my true friend. I will be with you tomorrow morning and stop all day—we will hate the profane vulgar and make us Wings.

God bless you
J. Keats

XCII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place
Monday Aft. [11 January 1819?]

My dear Haydon,

I have been out this morning, and did not therefore see your note till this minute, or I would have gone to town directly —it is now too late for to day. I will be in town early tomorrow, and trust I shall be able to lend you assistance noon or night. I was struck with the improvement in the architectural part of your Picture—and, now I think on it, I cannot help wondering you should have had it so poor, especially after the Solomon. Excuse this dry bones of a note: for though my pen may grow cold, I should be sorry my Life should freeze—

Your affectionate friend
John Keats

herefore you will confer a great favor on me to come to-morrow instead between en and eleven—as I shall walk about all day in the air, and perhaps will call on ou before three—I hope in God, by rest to day—to be quite adequate to it omorrow.

Yours most affectly
dear Keats
Friday Morning B. R. Haydon

Perhaps Haydon's letter should be assigned to Friday the 1st of January 1819, nd Keats's to the following day.

XCII. This letter is wafered into Haydon's journal together with the following o which it seems to be a reply. Haydon's, dated the 7th of January 1819 (a Thursday), was perhaps kept over till the following Monday, in which case the robable date of Keats's reply is the 11th of January 1819.—

My dear Keats

I now frankly tell you I will accept your friendly offer; I hope you will ardon my telling you so; but I am disappointed where I expected not to be and ay only hope for the concluding difficulties of my Picture lie[s] in *you*. I leave his in case you are not at home. Do let me hear from you how you are, and hen I shall get my bond ready for you, for that is the best way for me to do, at wo years.

I am dear Keats
Your affectionate Friend
Jany. 7th 1819. B. R. Haydon

oor as Keats was at the time, he managed to raise £30 for the painter's needs, nd lent it to him. See Volume I, page xxxix.

XCIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d. Abbey's Esq^re., Walthamstow.

My dear Fanny, Wentworth Place—

I send this to Walthamstow for fear you should not be at Pancras Lane when I call tomorrow—before going into Hampshire for a few days—I will not be more I assure you—You may think how disappointed I am in not being able to see you more and spend more time with you than I do—but how can it be helped? The thought is a continual vexation to me—and often hinders me from reading and composing—Write to me as often as you can—and believe me

Your affectionate Brother

John —

XCIV.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place

My dear Haydon, [January 1819].

We are very unlucky—I should have stopped to dine with you, but I knew I should not have been able to leave you in time for my plaguy sore throat; which is getting well.

I shall have a little trouble in procuring the Money and a great ordeal to go through—no trouble indeed to any one else—or ordeal either. I mean I shall have to go to town some thrice, and stand in the Bank an hour or two—to me worse than any thing in Dante—I should have less chance with the people around me than Orpheus had with the Stones. I have been

XCIII. The postmark of this undated letter is illegible; but the subject points to the early part of 1819—probably to January.

XCIV. This letter has no date or postmark, but clearly follows very closely on Haydon's letter of the 7th of January 1819, and precedes the following note dated the 14th of January 1819, which quotes the words "agonie ennuyeuse";—

My dear Keats, 14th January, 1819.

Your letter was every thing that is kind, affectionate and friendly. I depend on it; it has relieved my anxious mind.—The "agonie ennuyeuse" you talk of be assured is nothing but the intense searching of a glorious spirit, and the disappointment it feels at its first contact with the muddy world—but it will go off—and bye and bye you will shine through it with "fresh A[r]gent"—don't let it injure your health; for two years I felt that agony.—Write me before that I may be home when you come. God bless you my dear Keats!

Yours ever

B. R. Haydon.

The words given above as "fresh Argent" are not clearly written in the manuscript in Haydon's journal; but I think a reference was intended to one of the many instances in which Keats uses the word *argent*.

writing a little now and then lately: but nothing to speak of—being discontented and as it were moulting. Yet I do not think I shall ever come to the rope or the Pistol, for after a day or two's melancholy, although I smoke more and more my own insufficiency—I see by little and little more of what is to be done, and how it is to be done, should I ever be able to do it. On my soul, there should be some reward for that continual "agonie ennuyeuse." I was thinking of going into Hampshire for a few days. I have been delaying it longer than I intended. You shall see me soon; and do not be at all anxious, for *this* time I really will do, what I never did before in my life, business in good time, and properly.—With respect to the Bond—it may be a satisfaction to you to let me have it: but as you love me do not let there be any mention of interest, although we are mortal men—and bind ourselves for fear of death.

Your's for ever
John Keats —

XCV.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove North, Paddington.

Wentworth Place.
[January 1819.]

My dear Haydon,

My throat has not suffered me yet to expose myself to the night air: however I have been to town in the day time—have had several interviews with my guardian—have written him

XCV. The manuscript bears neither date nor dated postmark; but the letter must belong I think to January 1819, by reason of the subject. The next trace we have of the correspondence between the poet and the painter is a letter from Haydon, preserved in his journal, dated the 10th of March and postmarked 1819. It appeared, in the main, in the 'Correspondence and Table Talk'; but the following version is given in full from the manuscript:—

My dear Keats,

I have been long, long convinced of the paltry subterfuges of conversation to weaken the effect of unwelcome truth, and have left company where truth is never found; of this be assured, effect and effect only, self-consequence and dictatorial controul, are what those love who shine in conversation, at the expense of truth, principle, and every thing else which interferes with their appetite for dominion—temporary dominion. I am most happy you approve of my last Sunday's defence, I hope you will like next equally well. My dear Keats—now I feel the want of your promised assistance—as soon as it is convenient it would indeed be a great, the greatest of blessings. I shall come and see you as soon as this contest is clear of my hands. I cannot before, every moment is so precious. —Take care of your throat, and believe me my dear fellow truly and affectionately your Friend—

B. R. Haydon.

At any rate finish your present great intention of a poem—it is as fine a subject as can be—Once more adieu.—Before the 20th if you could help me it would be nectar and manna and all the blessings of gratified thirst.

rather a plain-spoken Letter—which has had its effect; and he now seems inclined to put no stumbling block in my way: so that I see a good prospect of performing my promise. What I should have lent you ere this if I could have got it, was belonging to poor Tom—and the difficulty is whether I am to inherit it before my Sister is of age; a period of six years. Should it be so I must incontinently take to Corderoy Trowsers. But I am nearly confident 'tis all a Bam. I shall see you soon—but do let me have a line to day or to morrow concerning your health and spirits.

Your sincere friend
John Keats.

XCVI.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE AND MRS. DILKE,

from Charles Armitage Brown and Keats.[1]

Bedhampton, 24 January 1819.

Dear Dilke,

This letter is for your Wife, and if you are a Gentleman, you will deliver it to her, without reading one word further. 'read thou Squire. There is a wager depending on this.

My charming dear Mrs. Dilke,

It was delightful to receive a letter from you,—but such a letter! what presumption in me to attempt to answer it! Where shall I find, in my poor brain, such gibes, such jeers, such flashes of merriment? Alas! you will say, as you read me. Alas! poor Brown! quite chop fallen! But that's not true; my chops have been beautifully plumped out since I came here: my dinners have been good & nourishing, & my inside never washed by a red herring broth. Then my mind has been so happy! I have been smiled on by the fair ones, the Lacy's, the Prices, & the Mullings's, but not by the Richards's; Old Dicky has not called here during my visit,—I have not seen him; the whole of the family are *shuffling* to carriage folks for acquaintances, *cutting* their old friends, and *dealing* out pride & folly, while we allow they have got the *odd trick*, but dispute their *honours*. I was determined to be beforehand with them, & behaved cavalierly & neglectingly to the family, & passed the girls in Havant with a slight bow.—Keats is much better, owing to a strict forbearance from a third glass of wine. He & I walked from Chichester yesterday, we were here at 3, but the Dinner was finished; a

[1] Of this joint composition Keats's portion is printed in ordinary black ink—Brown's portion in red.

brace of Muir fowl had been dressed; I ate a piece of the breast cold, & it was not tainted; I dared not venture further. Mr. Snook was nearly turned sick by being merely asked to take a mouthful. The other brace was so *high*, that the cook declined preparing them for the spit, & they were thrown away. I see your husband declared them to be in excellent order; I supposed he enjoyed them in a disgusting manner,—sucking the rotten flesh off the bones, & crunching the putrid bones. Did you eat any? I hope not, for an *ooman* should be delicate in her food. —O you Jezabel! to sit quietly in your room, while the thieves were ransacking my house! No doubt poor Ann's throat was cut; has the Coroner sat on her yet?—Mrs. Snook says she knows how to hold a pen very well, & wants no lessons from me; only think of the vanity of the *ooman!* She tells me to make honourable mention of your letter which she received at Breakfast time, but how can I do so? I have not read it; & I'll lay my life it is not a tenth part so good as mine,—pshaw on your letter to her!—On Tuesday night I think you'll see me. In the mean time I'll not say a word about spasms in the way of my profession, tho' as your friend I must profess myself very sorry. Keats & I are going to call on Mr. Butler & Mr. Burton this morning, & to-morrow we shall go to Sanstead to see Mr. Way's Chapel consecrated by the two Big-wigs of Gloucester & St. Davids. If that vile Carver & Gilder does not do me justice, I'll annoy him all his life with legal expences at every quarter, if my rent is not sent to the day, & that will not be revenge enough for the trouble & confusion he has put me to.—Mrs. Dilke is remarkably well for Mrs. Dilke[1] in winter.—Have you heard any thing of John Blagden; he is off! want of business has made him play the fool,—I am sorry—that Brown and you are getting so very witty—my modest feathered Pen frizzles like baby roast beef at making its entrance among such tantrum sentences—or rather ten senses. Brown *super* or *supper* sir named the Sleek has been getting thinner a little by pining opposite Miss Muggins —(Brown says Mullins but I beg leave to differ from him)—we sit it out till ten o'Clock—Miss M. has persuaded Brown to shave his whiskers—he came down to Breakfast like the sign of the full Moon—his Profile is quite alter'd. He looks more like an oman than I ever could think it possible—and on putting on Mrs. D's Calash the deception was complete especially as his voice is rebled by making love in the draught of a doorway. I too am metamorphosed—a young oman here in Bed - - - hampton has over persuaded me to wear my shirt collar up to my eyes. Mrs. Snook I catch smoaking it every now and then and I believe Brown does but I cannot now look sideways. Brown wants to scribble more so I will finish with a marginal note—Viz. Remem-

[1] Mrs. Dilke of Chichester, the mother of Keats's friend.

ber me to Wentworth Place and Elm Cottage—not forgetting Millamant—

Your's if possible
J. Keats—

This is abominable! I did but go up stairs to put on a clean & starched handkerchief, & that overweening rogue read my letter & scrawled over one of my sheets, and given him a counterpain,— I wish I could blank-it all over and beat him with a {k certain rod, & have a fresh one bolstered up, Ah! he may dress me as he likes but he shan't tic {k kle me pil {be low the feathers,—I would not give a tester for such puns, let us *ope* brown (erratum a large *B*—a Bumble B.) will go no further in the Bedroom & not call Mat Snook a relation to Mattrass— This is grown to a conclusion—I had excellent puns in my head but one bad one from Brown has quite upset me but I am quite set-up for more, but I'm content to be conqueror. Your's in love. Cha^s. Brown.

N.B. I beg leaf [sic] to withdraw all my Puns—they are all wash, an base uns.

XCVII.

To FANNY KEATS.

Wentworth Place—
Feby. [1819] Thursday

My dear Fanny,

Your Letter to me at Bedhampton hurt me very much,— What objection can there be to your receiving a Letter from me? At Bedhampton I was unwell and did not go out of the Garden Gate but twice or thrice during the fortnight I was there—Since I came back I have been taking care of myself—I have been obliged to do so, and am now in hopes that by this care I shall get rid of a sore throat which has haunted me at intervals nearly a twelvemonth. I had always a presentiment of not being able to succeed in persuading Mr. Abbey to let you remain longer at School—I am very sorry that he will not consent. I recommend you to keep up all that you know and to learn more by yourself however little. The time will come when you will be more pleased with Life—look forward to that time and, though it may appear a trifle be careful not to let the idle and retired Life you lead fix any awkward habit or behaviour on you—whether you sit or walk endeavour to let it be in a

XCVII. This letter bears no address beyond "Miss Keats" and no postmark.

seemly and if possible a graceful manner. We have been very little together: but you have not the less been with me in thought. You have no one in the world besides me who would sacrifice any thing for you—I feel myself the only Protector you have. In all your little troubles think of me with the thought that there is at least one person in England who if he could would help you out of them—I live in hopes of being able to make you happy.—I should not perhaps write in this manner, if it were not for the fear of not being able to see you often or long together. I am in hopes Mr. Abbey will not object any more to your receiving a letter now and then from me. How unreasonable! I want a few more lines from you for George—there are some young Men, acquaintances of a Schoolfellow of mine, going out to Birkbeck's at the latter end of this Month—I am in expectation every day of hearing from George—I begin to fear his last letters miscarried. I shall be in town to-morrow—if you should not be in town, I shall send this little parcel by the Walthamstow Coach—I think you will like Goldsmith—Write me soon—

Your affectionate Brother
John ——

Mrs. Dilke has not been very well—she is gone a walk to town to-day for exercise.

XCVIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place
Saturday Morn—
[*Postmark*, 27 February 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I intended to have not failed to do as you requested, and write you as you say once a fortnight. On looking to your letter I find there is no date; and not knowing how long it is since I received it I do not precisely know how great a sinner I am. I am getting quite well, and Mrs. Dilke is getting on pretty well. You must pay no attention to Mrs. Abbey's unfeeling and ignorant gabble. You can't stop an old woman's crying more than you can a Child's. The old woman is the greatest nuisance because she is too old for the rod. Many people live opposite a Blacksmith's till they cannot hear the hammer. I have been in Town for two or three days and came back last night. I have been a little concerned at not hearing from George—I continue in daily expectation. Keep on reading and play as much on the music and the grassplot as you

can. I should like to take possession of those Grassplots for a Month or so ; and send Mrs. A. to Town to count coffee berries instead of currant Bunches, for I want you to teach me a few common dancing steps—and I would buy a Watch box to practise them in by myself. I think I had better always pay the postage of these Letters. I shall send you another book the first time I am in Town early enough to book it with one of the morning Walthamstow Coaches. You did not say a word about your Chilblains. Write me directly and let me know about them—Your Letter shall be answered like an echo.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

XCIX.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place.
[*Postmark*, 8 March 1819.]

My dear Haydon,

You must be wondering where I am and what I am about ! I am mostly at Hampstead, and about nothing ; being in a sort of qui bono temper, not exactly on the road to an epic poem. Nor must you think I have forgotten you. No, I have about every three days been to Abbey's and to the Law[y]ers. Do let me know how you have been getting on, and in what spirits you are.

You got out gloriously in yesterday's Examiner. What a set of little people we live amongst ! I went the other day into an ironmonger's shop—without any change in my sensations—men and tin kettles are much the same in these days—they do not study like children at five and thirty—but they talk like men of twenty. Conversation is not a search after knowledge, but an endeavour at effect.

In this respect two most opposite men, Wordsworth and Hunt, are the same. A friend of mine observed the other day that if Lord Bacon were to make any remark in a party of the present day, the conversation would stop on the sudden. I am convinced of this, and from this I have come to this resolution —never to write for the sake of writing or making a poem, but from running over with any little knowledge or experience which many years of reflection may perhaps give me ; otherwise I will be dumb. What imagination I have I shall enjoy, and greatly, for I have experienced the satisfaction of having great conceptions without the trouble of sonnetteering. I will not spoil my love of gloom by writing an Ode to Darkness !

With respect to my livelihood, I will not write for it,—for I will not run with that most vulgar of all crowds, the literary. Such things I ratify by looking upon myself, and trying myself

at lifting mental weights, as it were. I am three and twenty, with little knowledge and middling intellect. It is true that in the height of enthusiasm I have been cheated into some fine passages ; but that is not the thing.

I have not been to see you because all my going out has been to town, and that has been a great deal. Write soon.

Yours constantly,
John Keats

C.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d Abbey's Esq^re Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place
March 13th [1819].

My dear Fanny,

I have been employed lately in writing to George—I do not send him very short letters, but keep on day after day. There were some young Men I think I told you of who were going to the Settlement : they have changed their minds, and I am disappointed in my expectation of sending Letters by them.—I went lately to the only dance I have been to these twelve months or shall go to for twelve months again—it was to our Brother in laws' cousin's—She gave a dance for her Birthday and I went for the sake of Mrs. Wylie. I am waiting every day to hear from George—I trust there is no harm in the silence : other people are in the same expectation as we are. On looking at your seal I cannot tell whether it is done or not with a Tassie[1] —it seems to me to be paste. As I went through Leicester Square lately I was going to call and buy you some, but not knowing but you might have some I would not run the chance of buying duplicates. Tell me if you have any or if you would like any—and whether you would rather have motto ones like that with which I seal this letter ; or heads of great Men such as Shakspeare, Milton, &c.—or fancy pieces of Art ; such as Fame, Adonis &c.—those gentry you read of at the end of the English Dictionary. Tell me also if you want any particular Book ; or Pencils, or drawing paper—anything but live stock. Though I will not now be very severe on it, remembering how fond I used to be of Goldfinches, Tomtits, Minnows, Mice, Sticklebacks, Dace, Cock salmons and all the whole tribe of the Bushes and the Brooks : but verily they are better in the Trees and the water—though I must confess even now a partiality for

[1] Tassie's imitation gems were very popular in Keats's set. Shelley (Prose Works, Volume IV, page 198) writes to Peacock to go to Leicester Square and get him two pounds' worth, "among them, the head of Alexander"; and Hunt has a laudatory article on them in one of his publications.

a handsome Globe of gold-fish—then I would have it hold 10 pails of water and be fed continually fresh through a cool pipe with another pipe to let through the floor—well ventilated they would preserve all their beautiful silver and Crimson. Then I would put it before a handsome painted window and shade it all round with myrtles and Japonicas. I should like the window to open onto the Lake of Geneva—and there I'd sit and read all day like the picture of somebody reading. The weather now and then begins to feel like spring ; and therefore I have begun my walks on the heath again. Mrs. Dilke is getting better than she has been as she has at length taken a Physician's advice. She ever and anon asks after you and always bids me remember her in my Letters to you. She is going to leave Hampstead for the sake of educating their son Charles at the Westminster school. We (Mr. Brown and I) shall leave in the beginning of May ; I do not know what I shall do or where be all the next summer. Mrs. Reynolds has had a sick house ; but they are all well now. You see what news I can send you I do—we all live one day like the other as well as you do—the only difference is being sick and well—with the variations of single and double knocks, and the story of a dreadful fire in the Newspapers. I mentioned Mr. Brown's name—yet I do not think I ever said a word about him to you. He is a friend of mine of two years standing, with whom I walked through Scotland : who has been very kind to me in many things when I most wanted his assistance and with whom I keep house till the first of May—you will know him some day. The name of the young Man who came with me is William Haslam. Ever,

Your affectionate Brother,
John.

CI.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Pancras Lane, Queen S^t^

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 24 March 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

It is impossible for me to call on you to-day—for I have particular Business at the other end of the Town this morning, and must be back to Hampstead with all speed to keep a long agreed on appointment. To-morrow I shall see you.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

CII.

To JOSEPH SEVERN.

19 Frederick Place, Goswell Street Road.

Wentworth Place
Monday-af[t].

My dear Severn,

Your note gave me some pain, not on my own account, but on yours. Of course I should never suffer any petty vanity of mine to hinder you in any wise, and therefore I should say 'put the miniature in the exhibition' if only myself was to be hurt. But, will it not hurt you? What good can it do to any future picture. Even a large picture is lost in that canting place—what a drop of water in the ocean is a Miniature. Those who might chance to see it for the most part if they had ever heard of either of us and know what we were and of what years would laugh at the puff of the one and the vanity of the other. I am however in these matters a very bad judge—and would advise you to act in a way that appears to yourself the best for your interest. As your Hermia and Helena is finished send that without the prologue of a Miniature. I shall see you soon, if you do not pay me a visit sooner —there's a Bull for you.

Yours ever sincerely
John Keats —

CII. The subject of this letter places it before the Royal Academy exhibition of 1819, in which both the portrait of Keats and the picture of "Hermia and Helena" figured. Probably the last Monday in March (the 29th) would not be far from the date: indeed the letter bears an imperfect postmark in which 29 appears to be the figure for the day; and the 29th of March is the only feasible 29th that was a Monday. "Hermia and Helena" figured in the Academy catalogue as Number 267, with a quotation from 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream,' Act III, Scene ii, lines 203-11:—

> We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
> Have with our needles created both one flower,
> Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
> Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
> As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
> Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
> Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet an union in partition;
> Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;...

The portrait of Keats was Number 940 in the catalogue.

CIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

Rd. Abbey Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place.
[*Postmark*, 13 April 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I have been expecting a Letter from you about what the Parson said to your answers. I have thought also of writing to you often, and I am sorry to confess that my neglect of it has been but a small instance of my idleness of late—which has been growing upon me, so that it will require a great shake to get rid of it. I have written nothing and almost read nothing—but I must turn over a new leaf. One most discouraging thing hinders me—we have no news yet from George—so that I cannot with any confidence continue the Letter I have been preparing for him. Many are in the same state with us and many have heard from the Settlement. They must be well however: and we must consider this silence as good news. I ordered some bulbous roots for you at the Gardener's, and they sent me some, but they were all in bud—and could not be sent—so I put them in our Garden. There are some beautiful heaths now in bloom in Pots—either heaths or some seasonable plants I will send you instead—perhaps some that are not yet in bloom that you may see them come out. Tomorrow night I am going to a rout, a thing I am not at all in love with. Mr. Dilke and his Family have left Hampstead—I shall dine with them to day in Westminster where I think I told you they were going to reside for the sake of sending their son Charles to the Westminster School. I think I mentioned the Death of Mr. Haslam's Father. Yesterday week the two Mr. Wylies dined with me. I hope you have good store of double violets—I think they are the Princesses of flowers, and in a shower of rain, almost as fine as barley sugar drops are to a schoolboy's tongue. I suppose this fine weather the lambs' tails give a frisk or two extraordinary—when a boy would cry huzza and a Girl O my! a little Lamb frisks its tail. I have not been lately through Leicester Square—the first time I do I will remember your Seals. I have thought it best to live in Town this Summer, chiefly for the sake of books, which cannot be had with any comfort in the Country—besides my Scotch journey gave me a

CIII. The postmark is not clear as to the month; but it is the 13th of some month in 1819; and, since the time is after the removal of the Dilkes from Hampstead, which took place on the 3rd of April 1819, and before news of the George Keatses had arrived from the Settlement, as it had done by the 13th of May 1819, there can be no doubt about April being the right month.

dose of the Picturesque with which I ought to be contented for some time. Westminster is the place I have pitched upon—the City or any place very confined would soon turn me pale and thin—which is to be avoided. You must make up your mind to get stout this summer—indeed I have an idea we shall both be corpulent old folks with tripple chins and stumpy thumbs.

Your affectionate Brother

John

CIV.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Tuesday [13 April 1819].

My dear Haydon,

When I offered you assistance I thought I had it in my hand; I thought I had nothing to do but to do. The difficulties I met with arose from the alertness and suspicion of Abbey: and especially from the affairs being still in a Lawyer's hand—who has been draining our Property for the last six years of every charge he could make. I cannot do two things at once, and thus this affair has stopped my pursuits in every way—from the first prospect I had of difficulty. I assure you I have harassed myself ten times more than if I alone had been concerned in so much gain or loss. I have also ever told you the exact particulars as well as and as literally as any hopes or fear could translate them: for it was only by parcels that I found all those petty obstacles which for my own sake should not exist a moment—and yet why not—for from my own

CIV. This letter is clearly a reply to the following note from Haydon:—

My dear Keats, Monday

Why did you hold out such delusive hopes every letter on such slight foundations?—You have led me on step by step, day by day; never telling me the exact circumstances; you paralyzed my exertions in other quarters—and now when I find it is out of your power to do what your heart led you to offer—I am plunged into all my old difficulties with scarcely any time to prepare for them—indeed I cannot help telling you this—because if you could not have commanded it you should have told me so at once. I declare to you I scarcely know which way to turn—

I am dear Keats

Yours ever

B. R. Haydon

I am sensible of the trouble you took—I am grateful for it, but upon my Soul I cannot help complaining because the result has been so totally unexpected and sudden—and I am floundering where I hoped to be firm.—— Don't mistake me—I am as attached to you as much and more than to any man—but really you don't know how [you] may affect me by not letting me know earlier.

The Postmark of Haydon's letter is the 13th of April 1819 (a Tuesday, though the letter is headed *Monday*); so the date of Keats's must be the 13th, I presume. The two letters are wafered into Haydon's journal together.

imprudence and neglect all my accounts are entirely in my Guardian's Power. This has taught me a Lesson. Hereafter I will be more correct. I find myself possessed of much less than I thought for and now if I had all on the table all I could do would be to take from it a moderate two years subsistence and lend you the rest; but I cannot say how soon I could become possessed of it. This would be no sacrifice nor any matter worth thinking of—much less than parting as I have more than once done with little sums which might have gradually formed a library to my taste. These sums amount together to nearly 200 [£], which I have but a chance of ever being repaid or paid at a very distant period. I am humble enough to put this in writing from the sense I have of your struggling situation and the great desire that you should [do] me the justice to credit me the unostentatious and willing state of my nerves on all such occasions. It has not been my fault. I am doubly hurt at the slightly reproachful tone of your note and at the occasion of it,—for it must be some other disappointment; you seem'd so sure of some important help when I last saw you—now you have maimed me again; I was whole, I had began reading again—when your note came I was engaged in a Book. I dread as much as a Plague the idle fever of two months more without any fruit. I will walk over the first fine day: then see what aspect your affairs have taken, and if they should continue gloomy walk into the City to Abbey and get his consent for I am persuaded that to me alone he will not concede a jot.

CV.

To FANNY KEATS.

Wentworth Place, Saturday—
[17 April 1819?]

My dear Fanny,

If it were but six o'Clock in the morning I would set off to see you to-day: if I should do so now I could not stop long enough for a how d'ye do—it is so long a walk through Hornsey and Tottenham—and as for Stage Coaching it besides that it is very expensive it is like going into the Boxes by way of the pit. I cannot go out on Sunday—but if on Monday it should promise as fair as to-day I will put on a pair of loose easy palatable boots and me rendre chez vous. I continue increasing my letter to George[1] to send it by one of Birkbeck's sons who is going out

CV. The holograph of this letter was given by Mrs. Llanos to Mr. Frederick Locker, afterwards Locker-Lampson.

[1] The reference is to the journal letter following this (No. CVI), which was not finished till the 3rd of May, though begun in February.

soon—so if you will let me have a few more lines, they will be in time. I am glad you got on so well with Mons^r. le Curé. Is he a nice clergyman?—a great deal depends upon a cock'd hat and powder—not gunpowder, lord love us, but lady-meal, violet-smooth, dainty-scented, lilly-white, feather-soft, wigsby-dressing, coat-collar-spoiling, whisker-reaching, pig-tail-loving, swans-down-puffing, parson-sweetening powder. I shall call in passing at the Tottenham nursery and see if I can find some seasonable plants for you. That is the nearest place—or by our la'kin or lady kin, that is by the virgin Mary's kindred, is there not a twig-manufacturer in Walthamstow? Mr. and Mrs. Dilke are coming to dine with us to-day. They will enjoy the country after Westminster. O there is nothing like fine weather, and health, and Books, and a fine country, and a contented Mind, and diligent habit of reading and thinking, and an amulet against the ennui—and, please heaven, a little claret wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep—with a few or a good many ratafia cakes—a rocky basin to bathe in, a strawberry bed to say your prayers to Flora in, a pad nag to go you ten miles or so ; two or three sensible people to chat with ; two or three spiteful folkes to spar with ; two or three odd fishes to laugh at and two or three mumskul[l]s to argue with—instead of using dumb bells on a rainy day—

Two or three Posies
With two or three simples—
Two or three Noses
With two or three pimples—
Two or three wise men
And two or three ninny's—
Two or three purses
And two or three guineas—
Two or three raps
At two or three doors—
Two or three naps
Of two or three hours—
Two or three Cats
And two or three mice—
Two or three sprats
At a very great price—
Two or three sandies
And two or three tabbies—
Two or three dandies
And two Mrs ——— mum![1]
Two or three Smiles
And two or three frowns—

[1] The name which Keats omitted was of course Mrs. Abbey's.

Two or three Miles
To two or three towns—
Two or three pegs
For two or three bonnets—
Two or three dove eggs
To hatch into sonnets—
Good bye I've an appointment—can't
stop pon word—good bye—now
dont get up—open the door my-
self—good bye—see ye Monday
J. K.

CVI.

To GEORGE AND GEORGIANA KEATS.

[Wentworth Place]
Sunday Morn, Feby. 24th 1819.

My Dear Brother and Sister:

How is it we have not heard from you from the Settlement yet? The letters must surely have miscarried. I am in expectation every day. Peachey wrote me a few days ago, saying some more acquaintances of his were preparing to set out for Birkbeck; therefore, I shall take the opportunity of sending you what I can muster in a sheet or two. I am still at Wentworth Place—indeed, I have kept indoors lately, resolved if possible to rid myself of my sore throat; consequently, I have not been to see your mother since my return from Chichester; but my absence from her has been a great weight upon me. I say since my return from Chichester—I believe I told you I was going thither. I was nearly a fortnight at Mr. John Snook's and a few days at old Mr. Dilke's.[1] Nothing worth speaking of happened at either place. I took down some thin paper and wrote on it a little poem call'd St. Agnes' Eve, which you shall have as it is when I have finished the blank part of the rest for you. I went out twice at Chichester to dowager Card parties. I see very little now, and very few persons, being almost tired of men and things. Brown and Dilke are very kind and con-

CVI. Of this important letter the sheets of the holograph have been more or less distributed. The sheets now in this country begin with the new paragraph dated 'Friday Feby 18.' For the opening it is necessary to rely on the Houghton-Jeffrey version and that adopted in Mr. Speed's Selection (No. 51 in my 'List of Principal Works Consulted'—see Volume I, page xxi). That opening was greatly retrenched and altered when first published by Lord Houghton. Mr. Speed says that his grandmother's second husband, Mr. John Jeffrey, who transcribed it for Lord Houghton, did not exercise a very wise discretion in his manipulations.

[1] Mr. Dilke notes, "He went with Brown on a visit to my father's at Chichester and my sister's at Bedhampton." Mr. Speed reads 'Snooks's'.

siderate towards me. The Miss R's have been stopping next door lately, but are very dull. Miss Brawne and I have every now and then a chat and a tiff. Brown and Dilke are walking round their garden, hands in pockets, making observations. The literary world I know nothing about. There is a poem from Rogers[1] dead born; and another satire is expected from Byron, called "Don Giovanni." Yesterday I went to town for the first time for these three weeks. I met people from all parts and of all sets—Mr. Towers,[2] one of the Holts, Mr. Dominie Williams, Mr. Woodhouse, Mrs. Hazlitt and son, Mrs. Webb, and Mrs. Septimus Brown. Mr. Woodhouse was looking up at a book window in Newgate street, and, being short-sighted, twisted his muscles into so queer a stage that I stood by in doubt whether it was him or his brother, if he has one, and turning round, saw Mrs. Hazlitt, with that little Nero, her son.[3] Woodhouse, on his features subsiding, proved to be Woodhouse, and not his brother. I have had a little business with Mr. Abbey from time to time; he has behaved to me with a little Brusquerie: this hurt me a little, especially when I knew him to be the only man in England who dared to say a thing to me I did not approve of without its being resented, or at least noticed—so I wrote him about it, and have made an alteration in my favour—I expect from this to see more of Fanny, who has been quite shut up from me. I see Cobbett has been attacking the Settlement, but I cannot tell what to believe, and shall be all at elbows till I hear from you. I am invited to Miss Millar's birthday dance on the 19th. I am nearly sure I shall not be able to go. A dance would injure my throat very much. I see very little of Reynolds. Hunt, I hear is going on very badly—I mean in money matters. I shall not be surprised to hear of the worst. Haydon too, in consequence of his eyes, is out at elbows. I live as prudently as it is possible for me to do. I have not seen Haslam lately. I have not seen Richards for this half year, Rice for three months, or Charles Cowden Clarke for God knows when.

When I last called in Henrietta Street Miss Millar was very unwell, and Miss Waldegrave as staid and self-possessed as usual. Henry was well. There are two new tragedies—one by the apostate Maw, and one by Miss Jane Porter. Next week I am going to stop at Taylor's for a few days, when I will see

[1] 'Human Life.'

[2] Charles Cowden Clarke had lodged at the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Towers, in Warner Street, Clerkenwell.

[3] This seems more likely to be right than the Houghton-Jeffrey version, "saw Mr. Hazlitt, with his son." In that version also Woodhouse figures as twisting his muscles into "so queer a *style*," which is certainly more likely to be what Keats wrote than *stage*, though *shape* is likelier still.

them both and tell you what they are. Mrs. and Mr. Bentley are well, and all the young carrots. I said nothing of consequence passed at Snook's—no more than this—that I like the family very much. Mr. and Mrs. Snook[1] were very kind. We used to have a little religion and politicks together almost every evening,—and sometimes about you. He proposed writing out for me his experience in farming, for me to send to you. If I should have an opportunity of talking to him about it, I will get all I can at all events; but you may say in your answer to this what value you place upon such information. I have not seen Mr. Lewis lately, for I have shrunk from going up the hill. Mr. Lewis went a few mornings ago to town with Mrs. Brawne. They talked about me, and I heard that Mr. L.[2] said a thing that I am not at all contented with. Says he, "O, he is quite the little poet." Now this is abominable. You might as well say Buonaparte is quite the little soldier. You see what it is to be under six foot and not a lord. There is a long fuzz to-day in the "Examiner" about a young man who delighted a young woman with a valentine—I think it must be Ollier's. Brown and I are thinking of passing the summer at Brussels. If we do, we shall go about the first of May. We—*i.e.* Brown and I—sit opposite one another all day authorizing. (N.B., an "s" instead of a "z" would give a different meaning.[3]) He is at present writing a story of an old woman who lived in a forest, and to whom the Devil or one of his aid-de-feus came one night very late and in disguise. The old dame sets before him pudding after pudding—mess after mess—which he devours, and moreover casts his eyes up at a side of Bacon hanging over his head, and at the same time asks whether her Cat is a Rabbit. On going he leaves her three pips of Eve's Apple, and somehow she, having lived a virgin all her life, begins to repent of it, and wished herself beautiful enough to make all the world and even the other world fall in love with her. So it happens, she sets out from her smoky cottage in magnificent apparel.—The first city she enters, every one falls in love with her, from the Prince to the Blacksmith. A young gentleman on his way to the Church to be married leaves his unfortunate Bride and follows this nonsuch. A whole regiment of soldiers are smitten at once and follow her. A whole convent of Monks in Corpus Christi procession join the soldiers. The mayor and corporation follow

[1] Mr. Speed again reads 'Snooks,' and 'Snooks's' in the line above: the mistake may be Keats's.

[2] 'Mrs. S.' and in the next line 'she' in the old version.

[3] This is a strange delusion of Keats's: to spell authorize with an *s* would not of course make it mean to give authority, nor to spell it with a *z* justify its use for to act the author as Keats and Brown were doing.

the same road. Old and young, deaf and dumb—all but the blind,—are smitten, and form an immense concourse of people, who—what Brown will do with them I know not. The devil himself falls in love with her, flies away with her to a desert place, in consequence of which she lays an infinite number of eggs—the eggs being hatched from time to time, fill the world with many nuisances, such as John Knox, George Fox, Johanna Southcote, and Gifford.

There have been within a fortnight eight failures of the highest consequence in London. Brown went a few evenings since to Davenport's, and on his coming in he talked about bad news in the city with such a face I began to think of a national bankruptcy. I did not feel much surprised and was rather disappointed. Carlisle,[1] a bookseller on the Hone principle, has been issuing pamphlets from his shop in Fleet Street called the Deist. He was conveyed to Newgate last Thursday; he intends making his own defence. I was surprised to hear from Taylor the amount of Murray the bookseller's last sale.[2] What think you of £25,000? He sold 4000 copies of Lord Byron. I am sitting opposite the Shakspeare I brought from the isle of Wight—and I never look at it but the silk tassels[3] on it give me as much pleasure as the face of the poet itself.

In my next packet, as this is one by the way, I shall send you my Pot of Basil, St. Agnes' Eve, and if I should have finished it, a little thing called the Eve of St. Mark. You see what fine Mother Radcliffe names I have—it is not my fault—I do not search for them. I have not gone on with Hyperion, for to tell the truth I have not been in great cue for writing lately—I must wait for the spring to rouse me up a little. The only time I went out from Bedhampton was to see a chapel consecrated—Brown, I, and John Snook the boy,[4] went in a chaise behind a leaden horse. Brown drove, but the horse did not mind him. This chapel is built by a Mr. Way,[5] a great Jew converter, who in that line has spent one hundred thousand pounds. He maintains a great number of poor Jews—*Of course*

[1] The person meant is Richard Carlile (without an *s*), publisher of 'The Republican' &c.

[2] Mr. Speed reads 'the amount of money of the booksellers' last sale.' Very likely Keats spelt Murray with a small *m*.

[3] The portrait had been decorated with silk tassels by his sister-in-law, before he left England.

[4] Mr. John Snook of Belmont Castle ("the boy") died on the 1st of February 1887.

[5] From Brown's part of the joint letter written by him and Keats to Mr. and Mrs. Dilke on the 24th of January 1819 (page 11 *ante*), it appears that the consecration was fixed for the 25th, to be performed by the Bishops of Gloucester and St. Davids, and that the chapel was at a place called Sanstead.

his communion plate was stolen. He spoke to the clerk about it. The clerk said he was very sorry, adding, "*I dare shay, your honour, it's among ush.*"

The chapel is built in Mr. Way's park. The consecration was not amusing. There were numbers of carriages—and his house crammed with clergy. They sanctified the chapel, and it being a wet day, consecrated the burial-ground through the vestry window. I begin to hate parsons ; they did not make me love them that day, when I saw them in their proper colours. A parson is a Lamb in a drawing-room, and a Lion in a vestry. The notions of Society will not permit a parson to give way to his temper in any shape—so he festers in himself—his features get a peculiar, diabolical, self-sufficient, iron stupid expression. He is continually acting—his mind is against every man, and every man's mind is against him. He is an hypocrite to the Believer and a coward to the unbeliever. He must be either a knave or an idiot—and there is no man so much to be pitied as an idiot parson. The soldier who is cheated into an Esprit de Corps by a red coat, a band, and colours, for the purpose of nothing, is not half so pitiable as the parson who is led by the nose by the bench of bishops and is smothered in absurdities—a poor necessary subaltern of the Church.

Friday Feby 18.—The day before yesterday I went to Romney Street—your Mother was not at home—but I have just written her that I shall see her on wednesday. I call'd on Mr. Lewis this morning—he is very well—and tells me not to be uneasy about Letters, the chances being so arbitrary. He is going on as usual among his favorite democrat papers. We had a chat as usual about Cobbett and the Westminster electors. Dilke has lately been very much harassed about the manner of educating his son—he at length decided for a public school—and then he did not know what school—he at last has decided for Westminster ; and as Charley is to be a day boy, Dilke will remove to Westminster. We lead very quiet lives here—Dilke is at present in Greek history and antiquities, and talks of nothing but the electors of Westminster and the retreat of the ten-thousand. I never drink now above three glasses of wine—and never any spirits and water. Though by the bye, the other day Woodhouse took me to his coffee house and ordered a Bottle of Claret—now I like Claret, whenever I can have Claret I must drink it,—'tis the only palate affair that I am at all sensual in. Would it not be a good spec. to send you some vine roots—could it be done? I'll inquire. If you could make some wine like Claret, to drink on summer evenings in an arbour! For really 'tis so fine—it fills one's mouth with a gushing freshness—then goes down cool and feverless—then you do not feel it quarrelling with your liver—no, it is rather a Peacemaker, and lies as quiet as it did in the grape; then it is as fragrant as the Queen Bee,

and the more ethereal Part of it mounts into the brain, not assaulting the cerebral apartments like a bully in a bad-house looking for his trull and hurrying from door to door bouncing against the wainscot, but rather walks like Aladdin about his enchanted palace so gently that you do not feel his step. Other wines of a heavy and spirituous nature transform a man into a Silenus : this makes him a Hermes—and gives a Woman the soul and immortality of an Ariadne, for whom Bacchus always kept a good cellar of claret—and even of that he could never persuade her to take above two cups. I said this same claret is the only palate-passion I have—I forgot game—I must plead guilty to the breast of a Partridge, the back of a hare, the backbone of a grouse, the wing and side of a Pheasant, and a Woodcock *passim*. Talking of game (I wish I could make it), the Lady whom I met at Hastings and of whom I said something in my last[1] I think has lately made me many presents of game, and enabled me to make as many. She made me take home a Pheasant the other day, which I gave to Mrs. Dilke : on which to-morrow Rice, Reynolds and the Wentworthians will dine next door. The next I intend for your Mother. These moderate sheets of paper are much more pleasant to write upon than those large thin sheets which I hope you by this time have received—though that can't be now I think of it. I have not said in any Letter a word about my own affairs—in a word I am in no despair about them—my poem has not at all succeeded ; in the course of a year or so I think I shall try the public again—in a selfish point of view I should suffer my pride and my contempt of public opinion to hold me silent—but for yours and Fanny's sake I will pluck up a spirit and try again. I have no doubt of success in a course of years if I persevere—but it must be patience—for the Reviews have enervated and made indolent men's minds—few think for themselves. These Reviews too are getting more and more powerful, especially the Quarterly—they are like a superstition which the more it prostrates the Crowd and the longer it continues the more powerful it becomes just in proportion to their increasing weakness. I was in hopes that when people saw, as they must do now, all the trickery and iniquity of these Plagues they would scout them, but no, they are like the spectators at the Westminster cock-pit—they like the battle—and do not care who wins or who loses. Brown is going on this morning with the story of his old woman and the Devil. He makes but slow progress. The fact is it is a Libel on the Devil, and as that person is Brown's Muse, look ye, if he libels his own Muse how can he expect to write. Either Brown or his muse must turn sale [sic]. Yesterday was Charley Dilke's birthday. Brown and

[1] He means the last but one. See page 186 of Volume IV.

I were invited to tea. During the evening nothing passed worth notice but a little conversation between Mrs. Dilke and Mrs. Brawne. The subject was the Watchman. It was ten o'Clock, and Mrs. Brawne who lived during the summer in Brown's house and now lives in the Road, recognized her old Watchman's voice and said that he came as far as her now: "indeed" said Mrs. D. "does he turn the Corner?" There have been some Letters pass between me and Haslam but I have not seen him lately—the day before yesterday—which I made a day of Business—I called upon him—he was out as usual. Brown has been walking up and down the room a-breeding—now at this moment he is being delivered of a couplet—and I dare say will be as well as can be expected.—Gracious—he has twins!

I have a long story to tell you about Bailey—I will say first the circumstances as plainly and as well as I can remember, and then I will make my comment. You know that Bailey was very much cut up about a little Jilt in the country somewhere. I thought he was in a dying state about it when at Oxford with him: little supposing as I have since heard that he was at that very time making impatient Love to Mariane Reynolds—and guess my astonishment at hearing after this that he had been trying at Miss Martin. So Matters have been—So Matters stood—when he got ordained and went to a Curacy near Carlisle, where the family of the Gleigs reside. There his susceptible heart was conquered by Miss Gleig—and thereby all his connections in town have been annulled—both male and female. I do not now remember clearly the facts. These however I know—He showed his correspondence with Marian[e] to Gleig—returned all her Letters and asked for his own—he also wrote very abrupt Letters to Mrs. Reynolds. I do not know any more of the Martin affair than I have written above. No doubt his conduct has been very bad. The great thing to be considered is—whether it is want of delicacy and principle or want of knowledge and polite experience. And again weakness—yes, that is it; and the want of a Wife—yes, that is it—and then Mariane made great Bones of him although her Mother and sister have teased her very much about it. Her conduct has been very upright throughout the whole affair—She liked Bailey as a Brother but not as a Husband—especially as he used to woo her with the Bible and Jeremy Taylor under his arm—they walked in no grove but Jeremy Taylor's. Mariane's obstinacy is some excuse—but his so quickly taking to Miss Gleig can have no excuse—except that of a Ploughman who wants a wife. The thing which sways me more against him than anything else is Rice's conduct on the occasion; Rice would not make an immature resolve; he was ardent in his friendship for Bailey, he examined the whole for and against minutely; and he has

abandoned Bailey entirely. All this I am not supposed by the Reynoldses to have any hint of. It will be a good lesson to the Mother and Daughters—nothing would serve but Bailey. If you mentioned the word Teapot some one of them came out with an à propos about Bailey—noble fellow—fine fellow! was always in their mouths—This may teach them that the man who ridicules romance is the most romantic of Men—that he who abuses women and slights them loves them the most—that he who talks of roasting a Man alive would not do it when it came to the push—and above all, that they are very shallow people who take every thing literally. A Man's life of any worth is a continual allegory, and very few eyes can see the Mystery of his life—a life like the scriptures, figurative—which such people can no more make out than they can the Hebrew Bible. Lord Byron puts a figure but he is not figurative—Shakespeare led a life of Allegory: his works are the comments on it.

March 12. Friday. I went to town yesterday chiefly for the purpose of seeing some young Men who were to take some Letters for us to you—through the medium of Peachey. I was surprised and disappointed at hearing they had changed their minds, and did not purpose going as far as Birkbeck's. I was much disappointed, for I had counted upon seeing some persons who were to see you—and upon your seeing some who had seen me—I have not only lost this opportunity—but the sail of the Post-Packet to New York or Philadelphia—by which last your Brothers have sent some Letters. The weather in town yesterday was so stifling that I could not remain there though I wanted much to see Kean in Hotspur. I have by me at present Hazlitt's Letter to Gifford[1]—perhaps you would like an extract or two from the high-seasoned parts. It begins thus "Sir, You 'have an ugly trick of saying what is not true of any one you 'do not like; and it will be the object of this Letter to cure 'you of it. You say what you please of others; it is time you 'were told what you are. In doing this give me leave to 'borrow the familiarity of your style:—for the fidelity of the 'picture I shall be answerable. You are a little person but a 'considerable cat's paw; and so far worthy of notice. Your 'clandestine connection with persons high in office constantly 'influences your opinions and alone gives importance to them. 'You are the government critic, a character nicely differing 'from that of a government spy—the invisible link which con-'nects literature with the Police." Again—"Your employers, 'Mr. Gifford, do not pay their hirelings for nothing—for con-

[1] The pamphlet from which these passages are quoted is extremely scarce. It consists of 87 pages and is entitled 'A Letter to William Gifford Esq.' (1819). There is another edition dated 1820; and Extracts from the work are appended to Leigh Hunt's equally scarce poem 'Ultra-Crepidarius' (1823).

"descending to notice weak and wicked sophistry; for pointing "out to contempt what excites no admiration; for cautiously "selecting a few specimens of bad taste and bad grammar where "nothing else is to be found. They want your invincible pertness, "your mercenary malice, your impenetrable dulness, your bare-"faced impudence, your pragmatical self-sufficiency, your "hypocritical zeal, your pious frauds to stand in the gap of their "Prejudices and pretensions to fly blow and taint public opinion, "to defeat independent efforts, to apply not the touch of the "scorpion but the touch of the Torpedo to youthful hopes, to crawl "and leave the slimy track of sophistry and lies over every work "that does not 'dedicate its sweet leaves' to some Luminary of "the treasury bench, or is not fostered in the hot bed of corrup-"tion. This is your office; 'this is what is look'd for at your "'hands, and this you do not baulk'—to sacrifice what little "honesty and prostitute what little intellect you possess to any "dirty job you are commission'd to execute. 'They keep you "'as an ape does an apple in the corner of his jaw, first mouth'd "'to be at last swallow'd.' You are by appointment literary "toadeater to greatness and taster to the court. You have a "natural aversion to whatever differs from your own preten-"sions, and an acquired one for what gives offence to your "superiors. Your vanity panders to your interest, and your "malice truckles only to your love of Power. If your instruc-"tive or premeditated abuse of your enviable trust were found "wanting in a single instance; if you were to make a single "slip in getting up your select committee of enquiry and green "bag report of the state of Letters, your occupation would be "gone. You would never after obtain a squeeze of the hand "from a great man, or a smile from a Punk of Quality. The "great and powerful (whom you call wise and good) do not like "to have the privacy of their self love startled by the obtrusive "and unmanageable claims of Literature and Philosophy, "except through the intervention of people like you, whom, "if they have common penetration, they soon find out to be with-"out any superiority of intellect; or if they do not, whom they "can despise for their meanness of soul. You 'have the office "'opposite to saint Peter.' You keep a corner in the public "mind for foul prejudice and corrupt power to knot and gender "in; you volunteer your services to people of quality to ease "scruples of mind and qualms of conscience; you lay the "flattering unction of venal prose and laurell'd verse to their "souls. You persuade them that there is neither purity of "morals, nor depth of understanding except in themselves and "their hangers on; and would prevent the unhallow'd names of "Liberty and humanity from ever being whispered in ears "polite! You, sir, do you not all this? I cry you mercy then: "I took you for the Editor of the Quarterly Review!" This is

the sort of feu de joie he keeps up—there is another extract or two—one especially which I will copy tomorrow—for the candles are burnt down and I am using the wax taper—which has a long snuff on it—the fire is at its last click—I am sitting with my back to it with one foot rather askew upon the rug and the other with the heel a little elevated from the carpet—I am writing this on the Maid's tragedy which I have read since tea with Great pleasure. Besides this volume of Beaumont and Fletcher—there are on the table two volumes of Chaucer and a new work of Tom Moore's called "Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress"[1]—nothing in it. These are trifles but I require nothing so much of you but that you will give me a like description of yourselves, however it may be when you are writing to me. Could I see the same thing done of any great Man long since dead it would be a great delight: As to know in what position Shakespeare sat when he began "To be or not to be"—such things become interesting from distance of time or place. I hope you are both now in that sweet sleep which no two beings deserve more than you do—I must fancy you so—and please myself in the fancy of speaking a prayer and a blessing over you and your lives—God bless you—I whisper good night in your ears and you will dream of me.

Saturday 13 March [1819]. I have written to Fanny this morning and received a note from Haslam. I was to have dined with him to-morrow: he gives me a bad account of his Father who has not been in Town for 5 weeks—and is not well enough for company—Haslam is well—and from the prosperous state of some love affair he does not mind the double tides he has to work. I have been a walk past Westend—and was going to call at Mr. Monkhouse's—but I did not, not being in the humour. I know not why Poetry and I have been so distant lately—I must make some advances soon or she will cut me entirely. Hazlitt has this fine Passage in his Letter: Gifford in his Review of Hazlitt's characters of Shakespeare's plays attacks the Coriolanus critique. He says that Hazlitt has slandered Shakespeare in saying that he had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question. Hazlitt thus defends himself "My words are 'Coriolanus "is a storehouse of political common-places. The Arguments "for and against aristocracy and democracy on the Privileges "of the few and the claims of the many, on Liberty and slavery, "power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably "handled, with the spirit of a Poet and the acuteness of a "Philosopher. Shakespeare himself seems to have had a

[1] It is, however, an amusing *jeu d'esprit*, and probably suggested to Reynolds his still better 'Peter Corcoran' book—'The Fancy,' published in the following year.

"'leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from "'some feeling of contempt for his own origin, and to have "'spared no occasion of bating the rabble. What he says of "'them is very true; what he says of their betters is also very "'true, though he dwells less upon it.' I then proceed to account "for this by showing how it is that 'the cause of the people is "'but little calculated for a subject for poetry; or that the "'language of Poetry naturally falls in with the language of "'power.' I affirm, Sir, that Poetry, that the imagination "generally speaking, delights in power, in strong excitement, as "well as in truth, in good, in right, whereas pure reason and the "moral sense approve only of the true and good. I proceed to "show that this general love or tendency to immediate excite- "ment or theatrical effect no matter how produced gives a "Bias to the imagination often consistent with the greatest good, "that in Poetry it triumphs over principle, and bribes the passions "to make a sacrifice of common humanity. You say that it does "not, that there is no such original Sin in Poetry, that it makes "no such sacrifice or unworthy compromise between poetical "effect and the still small voice of reason. And how do you "prove that there is no such principle giving a bias to the "imagination and a false colouring to poetry? Why by asking "in reply to the instances where this principle operates, and "where no other can with much modesty and simplicity—'But "'are these the only topics that afford delight in Poetry &c.?' "No; but these objects do afford delight in poetry, and they "afford it in proportion to their strong and often tragical effect, "and not in proportion to the good produced, or their desirable- "ness in a moral point of view. Do we read with more pleasure "of the ravages of a beast of prey than of the Shepherd's pipe "upon the Mountain? No, but we do read with pleasure of "the ravages of a beast of prey, and we do so on the principle I "have stated, namely from the sense of power abstracted from "the sense of good; and it is the same principle that makes us "read with admiration and reconciles us in fact to the triumphant "progress of the conquerors and mighty Hunters of mankind, "who come to stop the Shepherd's Pipe upon the Mountains "and sweep away his listening flock. Do you mean to deny that "there is anything imposing to the imagination in power, in "grandeur, in outward show, in the accumulation of individual "wealth and luxury, at the expense of equal justice and the "common weal? Do you deny that there is anything in the "'Pride, Pomp, and Circumstance of glorious war, that makes "'ambition virtue' in the eyes of admiring multitudes? Is this a "new theory of the pleasures of the imagination, which says that "the pleasures of the imagination do not take rise solely in the "calculation of the understanding? is it a paradox of my creating "that 'one murder makes a villain, millions a Hero'! or is it not

"true, that here as in other cases, the enormity of the evil over-
"powers and makes a convert of the imagination by its very
"magnitude? You contradict my reasoning because you know
"nothing of the question, and you think that no one has a right
"to understand what you do not. My offence against purity in
"the passage alluded to 'which contains the concentrated
"'venom of my malignity' is that I have admitted that there are
'tyrants and slaves abroad in the world; and you would hush
'the matter up and pretend that there is no such thing in order
'that there may be nothing else. Farther I have explained the
'cause, the subtle sophistry of the human mind, that tolerates
'and pampers the evil in order to guard against its approaches;
'you would conceal the cause in order to prevent the cure and
'to leave the proud flesh about the heart to harden and ossify
'into one impenetrable mass of selfishness and hypocrisy, that
'we may not 'sympathise in the distresses of suffering virtue'
'in any case in which they come in competition with the
'fictitious wants and 'imputed weaknesses of the great.'
'You ask 'are we gratified by the cruelties of Domitian or
'Nero?' No not we—they were too petty and cowardly to
'strike the imagination at a distance; but the Roman senate
'tolerated them, addressed their perpetrators, exalted them into
"gods, the fathers of the people, they had pimps and scribblers
"of all sorts in their pay, their Senecas, &c., till a turbulent
"rabble thinking there were no injuries to Society greater than
"the endurance of unlimited and wanton oppression, put an end
"to the farce and abated the nuisance as well as they could.
"Had you and I lived in those times we should have been
"what we are now, I 'a sour mal content,' and you 'a sweet
"courtier.'" The manner in which this is managed: the force
and innate power with which it yeasts and works up itself—the
feeling for the costume of society; is in a style of genius. He
has a demon, as he himself says of Lord Byron. We are to
have a party this evening. The Davenports from Church row
— I don't think you know anything of them—they have paid me
a good deal of attention. I like Davenport himself. The
names of the rest are Miss Barnes, Miss Winter with the
Children.[1]

On Monday we had to dinner Severn and Cawthorn, the
Bookseller and print-virtuoso; in the evening Severn went
home to paint, and we other three went to the play, to see

At this point there is a break in the manuscript arising from the fact that Keats overlooked a sheet when he despatched the budget to his brother and sister-in-law. Fortunately, however, some sort of transcript was made by Mr. Jeffrey, and from that the missing passage can be tolerably well restored. Keats ultimately discovered his omission, and sent the omitted sheet on with another batch, having first added an explanatory paragraph under a new date, as will be seen later on.

Sheil's new tragedy ycleped "Evadne." In the morning Severn and I took a turn round the Museum—there is a sphinx there of a giant size, and most voluptuous Egyptian expression, I had not seen it before. The play was bad even in comparison with 1818, the Augustan age of the Drama, "comme on sait," as Voltaire says, the whole was made up of a virtuous young woman, an indignant brother, a suspecting lover, a libertine prince, a gratuitous villain, a street in Naples, a Cypress grove, lilies and roses, virtue and vice, a bloody sword, a spangled jacket, one Lady Olivia, one Miss O'Neil alias Evadne, alias Bellamira, alias—(Alias—Yea, and I say unto you a greater than Elias—There was Abbot, and talking of Abbot his name puts me in mind of a spelling book lesson, descriptive of the whole Dramatis personae—Abbot—Abbess—Actor—Actress—). The play is a fine amusement, as a friend of mine once said to me—"Do what you will," says he, "a poor gentleman who wants a guinea cannot spend his two shillings better than at the playhouse." The pantomime was excellent, I had seen it before and I enjoyed it again. Your mother and I had some talk about Miss ——. Says I, Will Henry have that Miss ——, a lath with a boddice, she who has been fine-drawn—fit for nothing but to cut up into Cribbage pins, to the tune of 15-2, one who is all muslin; all feathers and bone; once in travelling she was made use of as a lynch-pin; I hope he will not have her, though it is no uncommon thing to be *smitten with a staff;* though she might be very useful as his walking-stick, his fishing-rod, his tooth-pick, his hat-stick (she runs so much in his head) —let him turn farmer, she would cut into hurdles; let him write poetry, she would be his turnstyle. Her gown is like a flag on a pole; she would do for him if he turn freemason; I hope she will prove a flag of truce; when she sits languishing with her one foot on a stool, and one elbow on the table, and her head inclined, she looks like the sign of the crooked billet—or the frontispiece to Cinderella or a tea-paper wood-cut of Mother Shipton at her studies; she is a make-believe—She is bona *side* a thin young 'oman—But this is mere talk of a fellow creature; yet pardie I would not that Henry have her—Non volo ut eam possideat, nam, for, it would be a bam, for it would be a sham—

Don't think I am writing a petition to the Governors of St. Luke—no, that would be in another style. May it please your Worships; forasmuch as the undersigned has committed, transferred, given up, made over, consigned, and aberrated himself, to the art and mystery of poetry; forasmuch as he hath cut, rebuffed affronted, huffed, and shirked, and taken stint, at all other employments, arts, mysteries and occupations, honest, middling, and dishonest; forasmuch as he hath at sundry times and in diverse places, told truth unto the men of

this generation, and eke to the women; moreover, forasmuch as he hath kept a pair of boots that did not fit, and doth not admire Sheil's play, Leigh Hunt, Tom Moore, Bob Southey and Mr. Rogers; and does admire Wm. Hazlitt; more overer for as more as he liketh half of Wordsworth, and none of Crabbe; more over-est for as most as he hath written this page of penmanship—he prayeth your Worships to give him a lodging —Witnessed by Rd. Abbey and Co. cum familiaribus & consanguiniis (signed) Count de Cockaigne.

The nothing of the day is a machine called the velocipede. It is a wheel carriage to ride cock-horse upon, sitting astride and pushing it along with the toes, a rudder-wheel in hand—they will go seven miles an hour. A handsome gelding will come to eight guineas; however they will soon be cheaper, unless the army takes to them. I look back upon the last month, and find nothing to write about; indeed, I do not recollect any thing particular in it. It's all alike; we keep on breathing. The only amusement is a little scandal, of however fine a shape, a laugh at a pun—and then after all we wonder how we could enjoy the scandal or laugh at the pun.

I have been at different times turning it in my head whether I should go to Edinburgh and study for a physician; I am afraid I should not take kindly to it; I am sure I could not take fees—and yet I should like to do so; it's not worse than writing poems, and hanging them up to be fly-blown on the Review shambles. Every body is in his own mess: Here is the Parson at Hampstead quarrelling with all the world, he is in the wrong by this same token; when the black cloth was put up in the Church for the Queen's mourning,[1] he asked the workmen to hang it the wrong side outwards, that it might be better when taken down, it being his perquisite.—Parsons will always keep up their character, but as it is said there are some animals the ancients knew which we do not, let us hope our posterity will miss the black badger with tri-cornered hat; who knows but some Reviewer of Buffon or Pliny may put an account of the parson in the Appendix; No one will then believe it any more than we believe in the Phoenix. I think we may class the lawyer in the same natural history of Monsters; a green bag will hold as much as a lawn sleeve. The only difference is that one is fustian and the other flimsy; I am not unwilling to read Church history—at present I have Milner in my eye—his is reckoned a very good one.

18th September [1819]. In looking over some of my papers I found the above specimen of my carelessness. It is a sheet you ought to have had long ago—my letter must have appeared very unconnected, but as I number the sheets you must have

[1] Queen Charlotte had died on the 17th of November 1818.

discovered how the mistake happened. How many things have happened since I wrote it. How have I acted contrary to my resolves. The interval between writing this sheet and the day I put this supplement to it, has been completely filled with generous and most friendly actions of Brown towards me. How frequently I forget to speak of things which I think of and feel most. 'Tis very singular, the idea about Buffon above has been taken up by Hunt in the Examiner, in some papers which he calls "A Preternatural History."[1]

Friday, 19th March [1819].—This morning I have been reading "The False One." Shameful to say, I was in bed at ten—I mean this morning. The Blackwood Reviewers have committed themselves to a scandalous heresy—they have been putting up Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, against Burns: the senseless villains! The Scotch cannot manage themselves at all, they want imagination, and that is why they are so fond of Hogg, who has so little of it. This morning I am in a sort of temper, indolent and supremely careless—I long after a stanza or two of Thomson's Castle of Indolence—my passions are all asleep, from my having slumbered till nearly eleven, and weakened the animal fibre all over me, to a delightful sensation, about three degrees on this side of faintness. If I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lilies I should call it languor, but as I am* I must call it laziness. In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable power. Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me; they seem rather like figures on a Greek vase —a Man and two women whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguisement.[2] This is the only happiness, and is a rare instance of the advantage of the body overpowering the Mind. I have this moment received a note from Haslam, in which he expects the death of his Father, who has been for some time in a state of insensibility; his mother bears up, he says, very well—I shall go to town to-morrow to see

* Especially as I have a black eye.

[1] After this point the holograph recommences, and shows again curious variations from the Jeffrey-Houghton version. In line 27 of this page 'frown' was substituted for 'power'; and three lines lower down, the unwarrantable liberty was taken of changing Keats's words from 'a Man and two women' to 'two men and a woman.' After the allusion to the impending death of Haslam's father, in the next paragraph, editorial propriety removed the harmless statement 'his mother bears up, he says, very well.' A little further on, after 'injuring society' the words 'which it would do I fear pushed to an extremity,' were left out.

[2] Compare this passage with the 'Ode on Indolence,' Volume III, pages 13-16.

him. This is the world—thus we cannot expect to give away many hours to pleasure. Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting. While we are laughing, the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events—while we are laughing it sprouts, it grows, and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck. Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends; our own touch us too nearly for words. Very few men have ever arrived at a complete disinterestedness of Mind: very few have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of others,—in the greater part of the Benefactors of Humanity some meretricious motive has sullied their greatness—some melodramatic scenery has fascinated them. From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortune I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness. Yet this feeling ought to be carried to its highest pitch, as there is no fear of its ever injuring society—which it would do, I fear, pushed to an extremity. For in wild nature the Hawk would lose his Breakfast of Robins and the Robin his of Worms—the Lion must starve as well as the Swallow. The greater part of Men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk. The Hawk wants a Mate, so does the Man—look at them both, they set about it and procure one in the same manner. They want both a nest and they both set about one in the same manner—they get their food in the same manner.[1] The noble animal Man for his amusement smokes his pipe—the Hawk balances about the clouds—that is the only difference of their leisures. This it is that makes the Amusement of Life—to a speculative Mind—I go among the Fields and catch a glimpse of a Stoat or a fieldmouse peeping out of the withered grass—the creature hath a purpose, and its eyes are bright with it. I go amongst the buildings of a city and I see a man hurrying along—to what? the creature has a purpose and his eyes are bright with it. But then, as Wordsworth says, "we have all one human heart——" There is an electric fire in human nature tending to purify—so that among these human creatures there is continually some birth of new heroism. The pity is, that we must wonder at it, as we should at finding a pearl in rubbish. I have no doubt that thousands of people never heard of have had hearts completely disinterested: I can remember but two—Socrates and Jesus—Their histories evince it. What I heard a little time ago, Taylor observe with respect to Socrates, may be said of Jesus—That he was so great a man that though he transmitted no writing of his own to posterity, we have his Mind and his

[1] These eight words were omitted in the old version.

sayings and his greatness handed to us by others. It is to be lamented that the history of the latter was written and revised by Men interested in the pious frauds of Religion. Yet through all this I see his splendour.[1] Even here, though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of, I am, however young, writing at random, straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion. Yet may I not in this be free from sin? May there not be superior beings, amused with any graceful, though instinctive, attitude my mind may fall into as I am entertained with the alertness of the Stoat or the anxiety of a Deer? Though a quarrel in the Streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest Man shows a grace in his quarrel. By a superior Being our reasonings may take the same tone—though erroneous they may be fine. This is the very thing in which consists Poetry, and if so it is not so fine a thing as philosophy—for the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth. Give me this credit—Do you not think I strive—to know myself? Give me this credit, and you will not think that on my account I repeat Milton's lines—

> "How charming is divine Philosophy
> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose
> But musical as is Apollo's lute"—

No—no for myself—feeling grateful as I do to have got into a state of mind to relish them properly. Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced—even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your Life has illustrated it. I am ever afraid that your anxiety for me will lead you to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet—but look over the two last pages and ask yourselves whether I have not that in me which will bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet; it will show you that it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of anything but Knowledge when pushed to the point though the first steps to it were through my human passions—they went away and I wrote with my Mind—and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart—

> Why did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell:
> No God, no Demon of severe response
> Deigns to reply from heaven or from Hell.—
> Then to my human heart I turn at once—
> Heart! thou and I are here sad and alone;
> Say, wherefore did I laugh? O mortal pain!

[1] These few lines were desperately garbled in the old version.

O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan
To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain!
Why did I laugh? I know this being's lease
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads:
Yet could I on this very midnight cease
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds.
Verse, fame and Beauty are intense indeed
But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed.

I went to bed and enjoyed uninterrupted sleep. Sane I went to bed and sane I arose.

[15 April 1819] This is the 15th of April—you see what a time it is since I wrote; all that time I have been day by day expecting Letters from you. I write quite in the dark. In hopes of a Letter daily I have deferred that I might write in the light. I was in town yesterday, and at Taylor's heard that young Birkbeck had been in Town and was to set forward in six or seven days—so I shall dedicate that time to making up this parcel ready for him. I wish I could hear from you to make me "whole and general as the casing air."[1] A few days after the 19th of April[2] I received a note from Haslam containing the news of his father's death. The Family has all been well. Haslam has his father's situation. The Frampton's have behaved well to him. The day before yesterday I went to a rout at Sawrey's[3]—it was made pleasant by Reynolds being there and our getting into conversation with one of the most beautiful Girls I ever saw. She gave a remarkable prettiness to all those commonplaces which most women who talk must utter—I liked Mrs. Sawrey very well. The Sunday before last your Brothers were to come by a long invitation—so long that for the time I forgot it when I promised Mrs. Brawne to dine with her on the same day. On recollecting my engagement with your Brothers I immediately excused myself with Mrs. Brawne, but she would not hear of it, and insisted on my bringing my friends with me. So we all dined at Mrs. Brawne's. I have been to Mrs. Bentley's this morning, and put all the letters to and from you and poor Tom and me [*sic*]. I found some of the correspondence between him and that degraded Wells and Amena. It is a wretched business; I do not know the rights of it—but what I do know would, I am

[1] This phrase is condensed from a passage in the third Act of 'Macbeth' (Scene iv):—

Then comes my Fit againe:
I had else been perfect;
Whole as the Marble, founded as the Rocke,
As broad, and generall, as the casing Ayre.

[2] Keats of course meant the 19th of March: it was only the 15th of April when he was writing.

[3] The doctor who had attended poor Tom.

sure, affect you so much that I am in two Minds whether I will tell you anything about it. And yet I do not see why—for anything, tho' it be unpleasant, that calls to mind those we still love has a compensation in itself for the pain it occasions—so very likely to-morrow I may set about copying the whole of what I have about it: with no sort of a Richardson self-satisfaction—I hate it to a sickness—and I am afraid more from indolence of mind than anything else. I wonder how people exist with all their worries. I have not been to Westminster but once lately, and that was to see Dilke in his new Lodgings—I think of living somewhere in the neighbourhood myself. Your mother was well by your Brothers' account. I shall see her perhaps to-morrow —yes I shall. We have had the Boys here lately—they make a bit of a racket—I shall not be sorry when they go. I found also this morning, in a note from George to you my dear sister a lock of your hair which I shall this moment put in the miniature case. A few days ago Hunt dined here and Brown invited Davenport to meet him. Davenport from a sense of weakness thought it incumbent on him to show off—and pursuant to that never ceased talking and boaring [*sic*] all day till I was completely fagged out. Brown grew melancholy—but Hunt perceiving what a complimentary tendency all this had bore it remarkably well—Brown grumbled about it for two or three days. I went with Hunt to Sir John Leicester's gallery—there I saw Northcote—Hilton—Bewick, and many more of great and Little note. Haydon's picture is of very little progress this year.[1] He talks about finishing it next year. Wordsworth is going to publish a Poem called Peter Bell—what a perverse fellow it is! Why will he talk about Peter Bells—I was told not to tell—but to you it will not be telling—Reynolds hearing that said Peter Bell was coming out, took it into his head to write a skit upon it called Peter Bell. He did it as soon as thought on, it is to be published this morning, and comes out before the real Peter Bell, with this admirable motto from the "Bold stroke for a Wife" "I am the real Simon Pure." It would be just as well to trounce Lord Byron in the same manner.[2] I am still at a stand in versifying —I cannot do it yet with any pleasure—I mean however to look

[1] Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

[2] This juxtaposition of the names of Byron and Wordsworth in such a context tempts one to recall an epigram by another poet who shared Keats's opinion that those two luminaries were not altogether free from reproach. Landor, in his 'Dry Sticks,' has the following lines "To Recruits"—

> Ye who are belted and alert to go
> Where bays, won only in hard battles, grow,
> Asthmatic Wordsworth, Byron piping-hot,
> Leave in the rear, and march with manly Scott.
> Along the coast prevail malignant heats,
> Halt on high ground behind the shade of Keats.

round on my resources and means—and see what I can do without poetry. To that end I shall live in Westminster. I have no doubt of making by some means a little to help on or I shall be left in the Lurch—with the burden of a little Pride—However I look in time. The Dilkes like their Lodgings at Westminster tolerably well. I cannot help thinking what a shame it is that poor Dilke should give up his comfortable house and garden for his Son, whom he will certainly ruin with too much care. The boy has nothing in his ears all day but himself and the importance of his education. Dilke has continually in his mouth "My Boy." This is what spoils princes: it may have the same effect with Commoners. Mrs. Dilke has been very well lately. But what a shameful thing it is that for that obstinate Boy Dilke should stifle himself in Town Lodgings and wear out his Life by his continual apprehension of his Boy's fate in Westminster school with the rest of the Boys and the Masters. Every one has some wear and tear. One would think Dilke ought to be quiet and happy—but no—this one Boy makes his face pale, his society silent and his vigilance jealous. He would I have no doubt quarrel with anyone who snubb'd his Boy. With all this he has no notion how to manage him. O what a farce is our greatest cares! Yet one must be in the pother for the sake of Clothes, food and Lodging. There has been a squabble between Kean and Mr. Bucke. There are faults on both sides—on Bucke's the faults are positive to the Question: Kean's fault is a want of genteel knowledge and high Policy. The former writes knavishly foolish and the other silly bombast. It was about a Tragedy written by said Mr. Bucke which it appears Mr. Kean kick'd at—it was so bad. After a little struggle of Mr. Bucke's against Kean drury Lane had the policy to bring it out and Kean the impolicy not to appear in it. It was damn'd. The people in the Pit had a favourite call on the night of "Buck Buck rise up" and "Buck Buck how many horns do I hold up." [1] Kotzebue the German Dramatist and traitor to his country was murdered lately by a young student whose name I forget [2]—he stabbed himself immediately after crying out Germany! Germany! I was unfortunate to miss Richards the only time I have been for many months to see him. Shall I treat you with a little extempore [?]

> When they were come into the Faery's Court
> They rang—no one at home—all gone to sport
> And dance and kiss and love as faerys do
> For Faries be as humans lovers true—

[1] Charles Bucke, the author of 'The Italians; or the Fatal Accusation,' gave his account of the affair in a long preface to that play as printed at the time (1819).

[2] The name of Kotzebue's murderer was Sandt.

Amid the woods they were so lone and wild
Where even the Robin feels himself exil'd
And where the very brooks as if afraid
Hurry along to some less magic shade.
'No one at home'! the fretful princess cry'd
'And all for nothing such a drery ride
And all for nothing my new diamond cross
No one to see my persian feathers toss
No one to see my Ape, my Dwarf, my Fool
Or how I pace my Otaheitan mule.
Ape, Dwarf and Fool why stand you gaping there
Burst the door open, quick—or I declare
I'll switch you soundly and in pieces tear'.
The Dwarf began to tremble and the Ape
Star'd at the Fool, the Fool was all agape
The Princess grasp'd her switch but just in time
The dwarf with piteous face began to rhyme.
" O mighty Princess did you ne'er hear tell
What your poor servants know but too too well
Know you the three great crimes in faery land
The first alas! poor Dwarf I understand
I made a whipstock of a faery's wand
The next is snoring in their company
The next the last the direst of the three
Is making free when they are not at home.
I was a Prince—a baby prince—my doom
You see, I made a whipstock of a wand
My top has henceforth slept in faery land.
He was a Prince, the Fool, a grown up Prince
But he has never been a King's son since
He fell a snoring at a faery Ball—
Your poor Ape was a Prince and he poor thing
Picklock'd a faery's boudour—now no king
But ape—so pray your highness stay awhile
'Tis sooth indeed we know it to our sorrow—
Persist and *you* may be an ape tomorrow—
While the Dwarf spake the Princess all for spite
Peal'd the brown hazel twig to lilly white
Clench'd her small teeth, and held her lips apart
Try'd to look unconcern'd with beating heart.
They saw her highness had made up her mind
And quaver'd like the reeds before the wind
And they had had it, but O happy chance
The Ape for very fear began to dance
And grin'd as all his ugliness did ache—
She staid her vixen fingers for his sake
He was so very ugly: then she took
Her pocket ~~glass~~-mirror and began to look

First at herself and [then] at him and then
She smil'd at her own beauteous face again.
Yet for all this—for all her pretty face
She took it in her head to see the place.
Women gain little from experience
Either in Lovers, husbands or expense.
The more the beauty the more fortune too
Beauty before the wide world never knew.
So each fair reasons—tho' it oft miscarries.
She thought *her* pretty face would please the faries.
"My darling Ape I wont whip you today
Give me the Picklock sirrah and go play."
They all three wept—but counsel was as vain
As crying cup biddy to drops of rain.
Yet lingeringly did the sad Ape forth draw
The Picklock from the Pocket in his Jaw.
The Princess took it and dismounting straight
Trip'd in blue silver'd slippers to the gate
And touch'd the wards, the Door ~~ope~~ full cou[r]teou[s]ly
Opened—she enter'd with her servants three.
Again it clos'd and there was nothing seen
But the Mule grazing on the herbage green.

End of Canto xii

Canto the xiii

The Mule no sooner saw himself alone
Than he prick'd up his Ears—and said 'well done
At least unhappy Prince I may be free—
No more a Princess shall side saddle me
O King of Othaietè—tho' a Mule
'Aye every inch a King'—tho' 'Fortune's fool'
Well done—for by what Mr. Dwarfy said
I would not give a sixpence for her head'.
Even as he spake he trotted in high glee
To the knotty side of an old Pollard tree
And rub['d] his sides against the mossed bark
Till his Girths burst and left him naked stark
Except his Bridle—how get rid of that
Buckled and tied with many a twist and plait.
At last it struck him to pretend to sleep
And then the thievish Monkies down would creep
And filch the unpleasant trammels quite away.
No sooner thought of than adown he lay
Sham'd a good snore—the Monkey-men descended
And whom they thought to injure they befriended.
They hung his Bridle on a topmost bough
And of[f] he went run, trot, or anyhow—

Brown is gone to bed—and I am tired of rhyming—there is a north wind blowing playing young gooseberry with the trees —I don't care so it helps even with a side wind a Letter to me—for I cannot put faith in any reports I hear of the Settlement; some are good and some bad. Last Sunday I took a walk towards Highgate and in the lane that winds by the side of Lord Mansfield's park I met Mr. Green our Demonstrator at Guy's in conversation with Coleridge—I joined them, after enquiring by a look whether it would be agreeable—I walked with him at his alderman-after-dinner pace for near two miles I suppose. In those two Miles he broached a thousand things—let me see if I can give you a list—Nightingales, Poetry—on Poetical Sensation—Metaphysics—Different genera and species of Dreams—Nightmare—a dream accompanied with a sense of touch—single and double touch—a dream related—First and second consciousness—the difference explained between will and Volition—so many metaphysicians from a want of smoking the second consciousness—Monsters—the Kraken—Mermaids—Southey believes in them—Southey's belief too much diluted—a Ghost story—Good morning—I heard his voice as he came towards me—I heard it as he moved away—I had heard it all the interval—if it may be called so. He was civil enough to ask me to call on him at Highgate. Good night![1] It looks so much like rain, I shall not go to town to-day, but put it off till to-morrow. Brown this morning is writing some Spenserian stanzas against Mrs., Miss Brawne and me; so I shall amuse myself with him a little: in the manner of Spenser—

He is to weet a melancholy Carle
Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair
As hath the seeded thistle when in parle
It holds the Zephyr ere it sendeth fair
Its light balloons into the summer air
Thereto his beard had not began to bloom
No brush had touch'd his chin or razor sheer
No care had touch['d] his cheek with mortal doom
But new he was and bright as scarf from persian loom.

Ne cared he for wine, or half and half
Ne cared he for fish or flesh or fowl
And sauces held he worthless as the chaff
He 'sdeign'd the swine head at the wassail bowl
Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl
Ne with sly Lemans in the scorner's chair
But after water brooks this Pilgrim's soul
Panted, and all his food was woodland air
Though he would ofttimes feast on gilliflowers rare—

[1] Though the same paragraph is continued, what follows was begun with a fresh pen, and internal evidence indicates that it belongs to the next day.

The slang of cities in no wise he knew
Tipping the wink to him was heathen greek ;
He sipp'd no olden Tom or ruin blue
Or nantz or cherry brandy drank full meek
By many a damsel hoarse and rouge of cheek
Nor did he know each aged watchman's beat—
Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek
For curled Jewesses with ankles neat
Who as they walk abroad making tinkling with their feet.

This character would ensure him a situation in the establishment of patient Griselda. The servant has come for the little Browns this morning—they have been a toothache to me which I shall enjoy the riddance of. Their little voices are like wasps' stings—Sometimes am I all wound with Browns.[1] We had a claret feast some little while ago. There were Dilke, Reynolds, Skinner, Mancur, John Brown, Martin, Brown and I. We all got a little tipsy—but pleasantly so—I enjoy Claret to a degree. I have been looking over the correspondence of the pretended Amena and Wells this evening—I now see the whole cruel deception. I think Wells must have had an accomplice in it—Amena's Letters are in a Man's language and in a Man's hand imitating a woman's. The instigations to this diabolical scheme were vanity, and the love of intrigue. It was no thoughtless hoax—but a cruel deception on a sanguine Temperament, with every show of friendship. I do not think death too bad for the villain. The world ~~will~~ would look upon it in a different light should I expose it—they would call it a frolic—so I must be wary—but I consider it my duty to be prudently revengeful. I will hang over his head like a sword by a hair. I will be opium to his vanity—if I cannot injure his interests. He is a rat and he shall have ratsbane to his vanity—I will harm him all I possibly can—I have no doubt I shall be able to do so. Let us leave him to his misery alone except when we can throw in a little more. The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more—it is that one in which he meets with Paulo and Francesca. I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind, and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life. I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined, as it seemed for an age—and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm—even flowery tree-tops sprung up, and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a sonnet upon it—there

[1] Compare 'The Tempest,' Act II, Scene ii :

sometime am I
All wound with Adders.

are fourteen lines but nothing of what I felt in it—O that I could dream it every night—

> As Hermes once took to his feathers light
> When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept
> So on a delphic reed my idle spright
> So play'd, so charm'd so conquer'd, so bereft
> The dragon world of all its hundred eyes
> And seeing it asleep, so fled away:—
> Not to pure Ida with its snow-~~clad~~ cold skies,
> Nor unto Tempe where Jove grieved that day,
> But to that second circle of sad hell,
> Where in the gust, the whirlwind and the flaw
> Of Rain and hailstones lovers need not tell
> Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw
> Pale were the lips I kiss'd and fair the form
> I floated with about that melancholy storm.

I want very much a little of your wit, my dear Sister—a Letter of yours just to bandy back a pun or two across the Atlantic, and send a quibble over the Floridas. Now you have by this time crumpled up your large Bonnet, what do you wear—a cap? do you put your hair in papers of a night? do you pay the Miss Birkbecks a morning visit—have you any tea? or do you milk-and-water with them?—What place of Worship do you go to—the Quakers, the Moravians, the Unitarians, or the Methodists? Are there any flowers in bloom you like—any beautiful heaths—any streets full of Corset Makers? What sort of shoes have you to fit those pretty feet of yours? Do you desire Compliments to one another? Do you ride on Horseback? What do you have for breakfast, dinner, and supper? without mentioning lunch and bever, and wet and snack—and a bit to stay one's stomach? Do you get any Spirits?—now you might easily distil some whisky—and going into the woods, set up a whisky-shop for the Monkeys. Do you and the Miss Birkbecks get groggy on anything—a little so-so-ish so as to be obliged to be seen home with a Lanthorn? You may perhaps have a game at puss in the corner—Ladies are warranted to play at this game though they have not whiskers. Have you a fiddle in the Settlement—or at any rate a Jew's harp—which will play in spite of one's teeth?—When you have nothing else to do for a whole day I tell you how you may employ it—First get up and when you are dressed, as it would be pretty early with a high wind in the woods, give George a cold Pig, with my Compliments. Then you may saunter into the nearest coffee-house, and after taking a dram and a look at the "Chronicle"—go and frighten the wild boars upon the strength—you may as well bring one home for breakfast, serving up the hoofs garnished with bristles and a grunt or two to accompany the

singing of the kettle—then if George is not up give him a colder Pig always with my Compliments. When you are both set down to breakfast I advise you to eat your full share—but leave off immediately on feeling yourself inclined to anything on the other side of the puffy—avoid that for it does not become young women. After you have eaten your breakfast keep your eye upon dinner—it is the safest way—you should keep a Hawk's eye over your dinner and keep hovering over it till due time, then pounce taking care not to break any plates. While you are hovering with your dinner in prospect you may do a thousand things—put a hedgehog into George's hat—pour a little water into his rifle—soak his boots in a pail of water—cut his jacket round into shreds like a Roman kilt or the back of my grandmother's stays—Sew *off* his buttons——

Yesterday I could not write a line I was so fatigued for the day before I went to town in the morning called on your Mother, and returned in time for a few friends we had to dinner. These were Taylor, Woodhouse, Reynolds—we began cards at about 9 o'Clock, and the night coming on and continuing dark and rainy they could not think of returning to town. So we played at Cards till very daylight—and yesterday I was not worth a sixpence. Your Mother was very well but anxious for a Letter. We had half an hour talk and no more for I was obliged to be home. Mrs. and Miss Millar were well and so was Miss Waldegrave. I have asked your Brothers here for next Sunday. When Reynolds was here on Monday—he asked me to give Hunt a hint to take notice of his Peter Bell[1] in the Examiner—the best thing I can do is to write a little notice of it myself which I will do here and copy out if it should suit my Purpose.—

"*Peter Bell.* There have been lately advertized two Books both Peter Bell by name; what stuff the one was made of might be seen by the motto 'I am the real Simon Pure.' This false florimel has hurried from the press and obtruded herself into public notice while for ought we know the real one may be still wandering about the woods and mountains. Let us hope she may soon ~~make her~~ appear~~ance~~ and make good her right to the magic girdle. The Pamphleteering Archimage we can perceive has rather a splenetic love than a downright hatred to real florimels—if indeed they had been so christened—or had even a pretention to play at bob cherry with Barbara Lewthwaite: but he has a fixed aversion to those three rhyming Graces Alice Fell, Susan Gale and Betty Foy ~~and who can wonder at~~ it?—and now at length especially to Peter Bell—

[1] See page 40 *ante*. The review was printed with some slight changes in 'The Examiner' for April 25, 1819; the modified version is in Volume III of this edition of Keats's Works. It was partly this that led Shelley to write 'Peter Bell the Third.'

fit Apollo. The ~~writer of this little skit from understanding~~ It may be seen from one or two Passages of in this little skit, that the writer of it has felt the finer parts of Mr. Wordsworths ~~Poetry,~~ and perhaps expatiated with his more remote and sublimer muse ; ~~who sits aloof in a cheerful sadness, and~~ This as far as it relates to Peter Bell is unlucky. The more he may love the sad embroidery of the Excursion ; the more he will hate the coarse Samplers of Betty Foy and Alice Fell ; and as they come from the same hand, the better will be able to imitate that which can be imitated, to wit Peter Bell—as far as can be imagined from the obstinate name. We repeat it is very unlucky—this real Simon Pure is in parts the very Man—there is a pernicious likeness in the scenery, a 'pestilent humour' in the rhymes and an inveterate cadence in some of the Stanzas that must be lamented. If we are one part ~~pleased~~ amused with this we are three parts sorry that an appreciator of Wordsworth should show so much temper at this really provoking name of Peter Bell—!" This will do well enough—I have copied it and enclosed it to Hunt. You will call it a little politic—seeing I keep clear of all parties—I say something for and against both parties—and suit it to the tune of the Examiner—I meant to say I do not unsuit it—and I believe I think what I say—nay I am sure I do—I and my conscience are in luck to day—which is an excellent thing. The other night I went to the Play with Rice, Reynolds and Martin—we saw a new dull and half damn'd opera call'd "the Heart of Mid Lothian"—that was on Saturday—I stopt at Taylor's on Sunday with Woodhouse—and passed a quiet sort of pleasant day. I have been very much pleased with the Panorama of the Ship at the north Pole—with the icebergs, the Mountains, the Bears, the Wolves—the seals, the Penguins—and a large whale floating back above water—it is impossible to describe the place—Wednesday Evening—

La belle dame sans merci—

O what can ail thee Knight at arms
Alone and palely loitering ?
The sedge is withered from the Lake
And no birds sing !

O what can ail thee Knight at arms
So haggard, and so woe begone ?
The squirrel's granary is full
And the harvest's done.

I see ~~death's~~ a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast Withereth too—

I met a Lady in the ~~Wilds~~ Meads
Full beautiful, a faery's child
Her hair was long, her foot was light
And her eyes were wild—

I made a Garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant Zone
She look'd at me as she did love
And made sweet moan—

I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long
For sidelong would she bend and sing
A faery's song—

She found me roots of relish sweet
And honey wild and ~~honey~~ manna dew
And sure in language strange she said
I love thee true—

She took me to her elfin grot
And there she wept { and sigh'd full sore,
~~and there she sighed~~
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four—

And there she lulled me asleep
And there I dream'd Ah Woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side

I saw pale Kings, and Princes too
Pale warriors death pale were they all
Who cried La belle dame sans merci
Thee hath in thrall.

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam
~~All tremble~~
With horrid warning { gaped wide,
~~wide agape~~
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side

And this is why I ~~wither~~ sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering;
Though the sedge is withered from the Lake
And no birds sing—.....

Why four kisses—you will say—why four because I wish to restrain the headlong impetuosity of my Muse—she would have fain said "score" without hurting the rhyme—but we must temper the Imagination as the Critics say with Judgment. I

was obliged to choose an even number that both eyes might have fair play, and to speak truly I think two a piece quite sufficient. Suppose I had said seven there would have been three and a half a piece—a very awkward affair and well got out of on my side—

Chorus of Faeries ~~three~~ 4 Fire, air, earth, and water—
Salamander, Zephyr, Dusketha Breama—

Sal. Happy happy glowing fire!
Zep. Fragrant air, delicious light!
Dusk. Let me to my glooms retire.
Bream. I to ~~my~~ greenweed rivers bright.

Salam.

Happy, happy glowing fire
Dazzling bowers of soft retire!
Ever let my nourish'd wing
Like a bat's still wandering
~~Ever beat~~ Faintly fan your fiery spaces
Spirit sole in deadly places
In unhaunted roar and blaze
Open eyes that never daze.
Let me see the myriad shapes
Of Men and Beasts and Fish and apes,
Portray'd in many a fiery den,
And wrought by spumy bitumen
On the deep intenser roof
Arched every way aloof.
Let me breathe upon my skies,
And anger their live tapestries
Free from cold and every care
Of chilly rain and shivering air.

Zephyr.

Spirit of fire away away!
Or your very roundelay
Will sear my plumage ~~all~~ newly budded
From its quilled sheath ~~and~~ all studded
With the selfsame dews that fell
On the May-grown Asphodel.
Spright of fire away away!

Breama.

Spright of fire away away!
Zephyr blue eyed faery turn
And see my cool sedge shaded urn
Where it rests its mossy brim
Mid water mint and cresses dim;

~~Where~~ And the flowers ~~amid~~ in sweet troubles
Lift their eyes above the bubbles
Like our Queen when she would please
To sleep and Oberon will tease—
Love me blue eyed Faery true
Soothly I am
~~For in seeth I'm~~ } sick for you.

Zephyr.

Gentle Brema by the first
Violet young nature nurst
I will bathe myself with thee
So you sometimes follow me
To my home far far in west
~~Far beyond thee~~
Far beyond the search and quest
Of the golden browed sun—
Come with me oer tops of trees
To my fragrant Palaces
Where they ever-floating are
Beneath the cherish of a star
~~Who with~~ Call'd Vesper—who with silver veil
~~Hides his brightness~~
Ever Hides his brilliance pale
Ever gently drows'd doth keep
Twilight of the Fays to sleep
Fear not that your watry hair
Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there—
Clouds of stored summer rains
Thou shalt taste before the stains
Of the mountain soil they take
And too unlucent for thee make
I love thee chrystal faery true
Sooth I am as sick for you

Salam—

Out ye agueish Faeries out!
~~Chillier than the water~~
Chilly Lovers what a rout,
Keep ye with your frozen breath
Colder than the mortal death—
Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak
Shall we leave these spr and go seek
In the Earths wide Entrails old
Couches warm as theirs is cold
O for a fiery gloom and thee
Dusketha so enchantingly
Freckle-wing'd and lizard-sided!

Dusketha.

By thee Spright will I be guided
I ~~to~~ care not for cold or heat
Frost and Flame or Sparks or sleet
To my essence are the same—
But I honour more the flame—
Spright of fire I follow thee
Wheresoever it may be,
To the ~~very fire~~ torrid spouts and fountains,
Underneath earth quaked mountains
Or at thy supreme desire
Touch the very pulse of fire
With my bare unlidded eyes

Salam.

Sweet Dusketha ; Paradise !
Off ye icy Spirits fly
Frosty creatures of Sky.

Dusketha.

Breathe upon them fiery Spright

Zephyr Breama to each other

~~Ah, my love, my life~~
~~Ah let us fly~~
Away Away to our delight

Salam.

Go feed on icicles ~~will we~~ while we
Bedded in tongued-flames will be

Dusketha

Lead me to those fevrous glooms
Spright of fire

Breama

Me to the blooms
~~Soft~~-Blue eyed Zephyr of those flowers
Far in the west where the May cloud lours
And the beams of still vesper where winds are all wist
Are shed through the rain and the milder mist
And twilight your floating bowers—

I have been reading lately two very different books, Robertson's America and Voltaire's Siècle de Louis xiv. It is like walking arm and arm between Pizarro and the great-little Monarch. In how lamentable a case do we see the great body of the people in both instances ; in the first when Men might seem to inherit quiet of Mind from unsophisticated senses ; from uncontamination of civilization and especially from their being as it were estranged from the mutual helps

of Society and its mutual injuries—and thereby more immediately under the Protection of Providence—even there they had mortal pains to bear as bad, or even worse than Bailiffs, Debts and Poverties of civilized Life. The whole appears to resolve into this—that Man is originally a poor forked creature subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other. If he improves by degrees his bodily accommodations and comforts—at each stage, at each ascent there are waiting for him a fresh set of annoyances—he is mortal and there is still a heaven with its Stars above his head. The most interesting question that can come before us is, How far by the persevering endeavours of a seldom appearing Socrates Mankind may be made happy—I can imagine such happiness carried to an extreme—but what must it end in?—Death—and who could in such a case bear with death? The whole troubles of life which are now frittered away in a series of years, would the[n] be accumulated for the last days of a being who instead of hailing its approach would leave this world as Eve left Paradise. But in truth I do not at all believe in this sort of perfectibility—the nature of the world will not admit of it—the inhabitants of the world will correspond to itself. Let the fish Philosophise the ice away from the Rivers in winter time and they shall be at continual play in the tepid delight of summer. Look at the Poles and at the Sands of Africa, whirlpools and volcanoes. Let men exterminate them and I will say that they may arrive at earthly Happiness. The point at which Man may arrive is as far as the parallel state in inanimate nature and no further. For instance suppose a rose to have sensation, it blooms on a beautiful morning, it enjoys itself, but then comes a cold wind, a hot sun—it cannot escape it, it cannot destroy its annoyances—they are as native to the world as itself—no more can man be happy in spite, the worldly elements will prey upon his nature. The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is "a vale of tears" from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven. What a little circumscribed straightened [*sic*] notion! Call the world if you please "The vale of Soul-making." Then you will find out the use of the world (I am speaking now in the highest terms for human nature admitting it to be immortal which I will here take for granted for the purpose of showing a thought which has struck me concerning it) I say "*Soul-making*"—Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence. There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions—but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. Intelligences are atoms of perception—they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God.—How then are Souls to be made?

How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them—so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How but by the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider because I think it a grander system of salvation than the christian religion—or rather it is a system of Spirit creation. This is effected by three grand materials acting the one upon the other for a series of years. These three materials are the *Intelligence*—the *human heart* (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the *World* or *Elemental space* suited for the proper action of *Mind and Heart* on each other for the purpose of forming the *Soul* or *Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity*. I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive—and yet I think I perceive it—that you may judge the more clearly I will put it in the most homely form possible. I will call the *world* a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read—I will call the *human heart* the *horn Book* read in that School—and I will call the *Child able to read, the Soul* made from that *School* and its *horn book*. Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways. Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, It is the Mind's Bible, it is the Mind's experience, it is the text from which the Mind or Intelligence sucks its identity. As various as the Lives of Men are—so various become their Souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the sparks of his own essence. This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of Salvation which does not offend our reason and humanity—I am convinced that many difficulties which christians labour under would vanish before it—there is one which even now strikes me—the salvation of Children. In them the spark or intelligence returns to God without any identity—it having had no time to learn of and be altered by the heart—or seat of the human Passions. It is pretty generally suspected that the christian scheme has been copied from the ancient Persian and Greek Philosophers. Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the heathen mythology abstractions are personified? Seriously I think it probable that this system of Soul-making may have been the Parent of all the more palpable and personal schemes of Redemption among the Zoroastrians, the Christians and the Hindoos. For as one part of the human species must have their carved Jupiter; so another part must have the palpable and named Mediator and Saviour, their Christ, their Oromanes and their Vishnu. If what I have said should not be plain

enough, as I fear it may not be, I will put you in the place where I began in this series of thoughts—I mean I began by seeing how man was formed by circumstances—and what are circumstances but touchstones of his heart? and what are touchstones but provings of his heart, but fortifiers or alterers of his nature? and what is his altered nature but his Soul?—and what was his Soul before it came into the world and had these provings and alterations and perfectionings?—An intelligence without Identity—and how is this Identity to be made? Through the medium of the Heart? and how is the heart to become this Medium but in a world of Circumstances? There now I think what with Poetry and Theology you may thank your stars that my pen is not very long winded. Yesterday I received two Letters from your Mother and Henry which I shall send by young Birkbeck with this.

Friday—April 30—Brown has been here rummaging up some of my old sins—that is to say sonnets. I do not think you remember them so I will copy them out as well as two or three lately written. I have just written one on Fame—which Brown is transcribing and he has his book and mine. I must employ myself perhaps in a sonnet on the same subject—

On Fame.

You cannot eat your cake and have it too.—Proverb.

~~How is that Man mixed~~ }
How fever'd is that Man } who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood
Who vexes all the leaves of his Life's book
And robs his fair name of its maidenhood
It is as if the rose should pluck herself
Or the ripe plumb finger its misty bloom
As if a clear Lake meddling with itself
Should ~~fill~~ cloud its pureness with a muddy gloom.
But the rose leaves herself upon the Briar
For winds to kiss and grateful Bees to ~~taste~~ feed
And the ripe plumb ~~will wear~~ still wears its dim attire,
The undisturbed Lake has crystal space—
Why then should man { teasing the world for grace
{ ~~his own bright name deface~~
And { ~~spoil~~ } ~~our pleasures in his selfish fire~~
{ ~~burn~~ }
Spoil his salvation by a fierce miscreed?

Another on Fame

Fame like a wayward girl will still be coy
To those who woo her with too slavish knees
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease—

She is a Gipsey will not speak to those
  Who have not learnt to be content without her
A Jilt whose ear was never whisper'd close
  Who think they scandal her who talk about her—
A very Gipsey is she Nilus born,
Sister in law to jealous Potiphar.
Ye lovesick Bards, repay her scorn for scorn.
Ye lovelorn Artists madmen that ye are,
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu
Then if she likes it she will follow you.

To Sleep.

O soft embalmer of the still midnight
  Shutting with careful fingers and benign
Our gloom-pleas'd eyes embowered from the light,
  Enshaded in forgetfulness divine—
O soothest sleep, if so it please the[e] close
  In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
  Around my bed its dewy Charities—
Then save me or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow breeding many woes:
  Save me from curious conscience, that still lord—
Its strength for darkness, borrowing like ~~the~~ a Mole
  Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards
And seal the hushed Casket of my soul.

This sonnet as here given raises a most curious point. These much travelled holographs are not always easy to read; but a very careful re-examination in this case leaves no doubt that Keats really wrote out for George the debased version printed above. His word *lord* at the end of the eleventh line, and the need of a rhyme for *wards* in the thirteenth, account for the current reading 'lords.' At page 11 of Volume III I suggested that 'hoards' was the right reading and that Keats had omitted the *a*. I now find on referring again to Woodhouse's transcript that he actually gives 'hoards'; and as Woodhouse was absolutely trustworthy, no doubt he made the word out in a manuscript of Keats's. What happened, then, was this: Keats copying the sonnet as an old abandoned thing just for his brother, mechanically and without poetic heat, checked at his own draft, read *hords* as *lords*, saw it did not make sense, and gave it a new sense by dropping the *s* and making conscience a *still lord* (a quiet tyrant) *borrowing* its strength for use in the darkness! He had forgotten what he meant when he wrote it; but with *hoards* he had really made excellent sense. The only difficulty then remaining is the *passed day* of line 9; it was the coming day he had in view. Here the unfinished rough draft helps us out. In that he speaks of morn coming "Bright tressed"; and his mental picture was clearly of the young day with flowing hair—'the tressed day.' Both words, 'hoards' and 'tressed,' should unhesitatingly be adopted in the text in Volume III. The sonnet is then free from blemish: the peculiarity of the rhyme system—the sestet opening with rhymes from the close of the first quatrain and beginning of the second, being clearly one of those experiments he speaks of immediately after the 'Ode to Psyche' (page 58, *post*).

The following Poem—the last I have written—is the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have for the most part dash'd off my lines in a hurry. This I have done leisurely—I think it reads the more richly for it, and will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit. You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour—and perhaps never thought of in the old religion—I am more orthodox than to let a heathen Goddess be so neglected—

Ode to Psyche.

O Goddess hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even ~~to~~ into thine own soft-chonched ear!
Surely I dreamt to-day; or did I see
The winged Psyche, with awaked eyes?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair Creatures couched side by side
In deepest grass beneath the whisp'ring fan
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A Brooklet scarce espied
'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant eyed,
Blue, freckle-pink, and budded Syrian
They lay, calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
Their arms embraced and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bid adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye dawn of aurorian love.
The winged boy I knew:
But who was ~~t~~thou O~~p~~happy happy dove?
His Psyche true?

O latest born, and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus faded Hierarchy!
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper amorous glow worm of the sky;
Fairer than these though Temple thou hadst none,
Nor Altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung Censer teeming—
No shrine, no grove, no Oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd Prophet dreaming!

O Bloomiest! though too late for antique vows;
Too, too late for the fond believing Lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the Air, the water and the fire:
Yet even in these days so far retir'd
From happy Pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing by my own eyes inspired.
O let me be thy Choir and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swinged Censer teeming;
Thy Shrine, thy Grove, thy Oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd Prophet dreaming!
Yes I will be thy Priest and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my Mind,
Where branched thoughts new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind.
Far, far around shall those dark cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep,
And there by Zephyrs streams and birds and bees
The moss-lain Dryads shall be ~~charm'd~~ lull'd to sleep.
And in the midst of this wide-quietness
A rosy Sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain;
With buds and bells and stars without a name;
With all the gardener, fancy e'er could ~~frame~~ feign
Who breeding flowers will never breed the same—
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win;
A bright torch and a casement ope at night
To let the warm Love in.

Here endethe y^e^ Ode to Psyche.

Incipit altera Sonneta.

I have been endeavouring to discover a better Sonnet Stanza than we have. The legitimate does not suit the language over well from the pouncing rhymes—the other appears too elegaic[1] —and the couplet at the end of it has seldom a pleasing effect— I do not pretend to have succeeded—it will explain itself.

If by dull rhymes our English must be chaind
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet,
Fetterd, in spite of pained Loveliness;
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,[2]

[1] He wrote 'elegaiac' and struck out the last *a* instead of the first.

[2] The holograph ends with this line.

Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of poesy;
Let us inspect the Lyre, and weigh the stress
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
By ear industrious, and attention meet;
Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown,
So, if we may not let the muse be free,
She will be bound with Garlands of her own.

This is the third of May, and everything is in delightful forwardness; the violets are not withered before the peeping of the first rose. You must let me know everything—how parcels go and come—what papers you have, and what newspapers you want, and other things. God bless you, my dear brother and sister,

Your ever affectionate brother,
John Keats.

CVII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 13 May 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I have a Letter from George at last—and it contains, considering all things, good news—I have been with it to day to Mrs. Wylie's, with whom I have left it. I shall have it again as soon as possible and then I will walk over and read it to you. They are quite well and settled tolerably in comfort after a great deal of fatigue and harrass. They had the good chance to meet at Louisville with a Schoolfellow of ours. You may expect me within three days. I am writing to night several notes concerning this to many of my friends.[1] Good night! god bless you.

John Keats —

CVIII.

To WILLIAM HASLAM.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 13 May 1819.]

My dear Haslam,

We have news at last—and tolerably good—they have not gone to the Settlement—they are both in good Health—I read the letter to Mrs. Wylie to day and requested her after

[1] As far as I am aware, this and the next are all of the "several notes" which have as yet come to the surface; but it is possible that others may be extant, and will be brought to light sooner or later.

her Sons had read it—they would enclose it to you immediately which was faithfully promised. Send it me like Lightning that I may take it to Walthamstow.

Yours ever and amen
John Keats

CIX.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d Abbey Esq^re Walthamstow.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 26 May 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I have been looking for a fine day to pass at Walthamstow: there has not been one Morning (except Sunday and then I was obliged to stay at home) that I could depend upon. I have I am sorry to say had an accident with the Letter—I sent it to Haslam and he returned it torn into a thousand pieces. So I shall be obliged to tell you all I can remember from Memory. You would have heard from me before this but that I was in continual expectation of a fine Morning—I want also to speak to you concerning myself. Mind I do not purpose to quit England, as George [h]as done; but I am afraid I shall be forced to take a voyage or two. However we will not think of that for some Months. Should it be a fine morning tomorrow you will see me.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

CX.

To MISS JEFFREY.

Teignmouth.

C. Brown Esq^re's
Wentworth Place—Hampstead—
[*Postmark*, 31 May 1819.]

My Dear Lady,

I was making a day or two ago a general conflagration of all old Letters and Memorandums, which had become of no interest to me—I made however, like the Barber-inquisitor in Don Quixote some reservations—among the rest your and your Sister's Letters. I assure you you had not entirely vanished from my Mind, or even become shadows in my remembrance: it only needed such a memento as your Letters to bring you back to me. Why have I not written before? Why did I not answer your Honiton Letter? I had no good news for you—

CIX. I have not come upon anything explanatory of the reasons which Mr. William Haslam may have had for tearing "into a thousand pieces" the letter entrusted to him by his friend.

every concern of ours, (ours I wish I could say) and still I must say *ours*—though George is in America and I have no Brother left. Though in the midst of my troubles I had no relation except my young sister—I have had excellent friends. M^r^ B. at whose house I now am, invited me,—I have been with him ever since. I could not make up my mind to let you know these things. Nor should I now—but see what a little interest will do—I want you to do me a Favor; which I will first ask and then tell you the reasons. Enquire in the Villages round Teignmouth if there is any Lodging commodious for its cheapness; and let me know where it is and what price. I have the choice as it were of two Poisons (yet I ought not to call this a Poison) the one is voyaging to and from India for a few years; the other is leading a fevrous life alone with Poetry—This latter will suit me best; for I cannot resolve to give up my Studies.

It strikes me it would not be quite so proper for you to make such inquiries—so give my love to your Mother and ask her to do it. Yes, I would rather conquer my indolence and strain my nerves at some grand Poem—than be in a dunderheaded indiaman. Pray let no one in Teignmouth know any thing of this. Fanny must by this time have altered her name—perhaps you have also—are you all alive? Give my comp^ts^ to M^rs^ —— your Sister. I have had good news, (tho' 'tis a queerish world in which such things are call'd good) from George—he and his wife are well. I will tell you more soon. Especially don't let the Newfoundland fishermen know it—and especially no one else. I have been always till now almost as careless of the world as a fly—my troubles were all of the Imagination—My Brother George always stood between me and any dealings with the world. Now I find I must buffet it—I must take my stand upon some vantage ground and begin to fight—I must choose between despair and Energy—I choose the latter—though the world has taken on a quakerish look with me, which I once thought was impossible—

> 'Nothing can bring back the hour
> Of splendour in the grass and glory in the flower.'[1]

I once thought this a Melancholist's dream—

But why do I speak to you in this manner? No believe me I do not write for a mere selfish purpose—the manner in which I have written of myself will convince you. I do not do so to Strangers. I have not quite made up my mind. Write me on the receipt of this—and again at your Leisure; between whiles you shall hear from me again—

Your sincere friend
John Keats

[1] Slightly misquoted from Wordsworth's Ode, 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.'

CXI.

To MISS JEFFREY.

Teignmouth.

Wentworth Place.
[*Postmark*, 9 June 1819.]

My Dear young Lady,

I am exceedingly obliged by your two letters—Why I did not answer your first immediately was that I have had a little aversion to the South of Devon from the continual remembrance of my Brother Tom. On that account I do not return to my old Lodgings in Hampstead though the people of the house have become friends of mine—This however I could think nothing of, it can do no more than keep one's thoughts employed for a day or two. I like your description of Bradley very much and I dare say shall be there in the course of the summer; it would be immediately but that a friend with ill health and to whom I am greatly attached call'd on me yesterday and proposed my spending a Month with him at the back of the Isle of Wight. This is just the thing at present—the morrow will take care of itself—I do not like the name of Bishop's Teigntown[1]—I hope the road from Teignmouth to Bradley does not lie that way—Your advice about the Indiaman is a very wise advice, because it just suits me, though you are a little in the wrong concerning its destroying the energies of Mind: on the contrary it would be the finest thing in the world to strengthen them—To be thrown among people who care not for you, with whom you have no sympathies forces the Mind upon its own resources, and leaves it free to make its speculations of the differences of human character and to class them with the calmness of a Botanist. An Indiaman is a little world. One of the great reasons that the English have produced the finest writers in the world is, that the English world has ill-treated them during their lives and foster'd them after their deaths. They have in general been trampled aside into the bye paths of life and seen the festerings of Society. They have not been treated like the Raphaels of Italy. And where is the Englishman and Poet who has given a magnificent Entertainment at the christening of one of his Hero's Horses as Boyardo did? He had a Castle in the Appenine. He was a noble Poet of Romance; not a miserable and mighty Poet of the human Heart. The middle age of Shakspeare was all c[l]ouded over; his days were not

[1] Bishopsteignton—generally spelt in one word—is on the old road to Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot. Bradley and its beautiful woods lie a little to the west of Newton. If Miss Jeffrey had suggested a stay at Bradley, she knew how to choose a spot for a poet.

more happy than Hamlet's who is perhaps more like Shakspeare himself in his common every day Life than any other of his Characters—Ben Johnson [*sic*] was a common Soldier and in the Low countries, in the face of two armies, fought a single combat with a french Trooper and slew him—For all this I will not go on board an Indiaman, nor for example's sake run my head into dark alleys: I dare say my discipline is to come, and plenty of it too. I have been very idle lately, very averse to writing; both from the overpowering idea of our dead poets and from abatement of my love of fame. I hope I am a little more of a Philosopher than I was, consequently a little less of a versifying Pet-lamb.[1] I have put no more in Print or you should have had it. You will judge of my 1819 temper when I tell you that the thing I have most enjoyed this year has been writing an ode to Indolence. Why did you not make your long-haired sister put her great brown hard fist to paper and cross your Letter? Tell her when you write again that I expect chequer-work—My friend Mr. Brown is sitting opposite me employed in writing a Life of David. He reads me passages as he writes them stuffing my infidel mouth as though I were a young rook—Infidel Rooks do not provender with Elisha's Ravens. If he goes on as he has begun your new Church had better not proceed, for parsons will be superseeded [*sic*]—and of course the Clerks must follow. Give my love to your Mother with the assurance that I can never forget her anxiety for my Brother Tom. Believe also that I shall ever remember our leave-taking with *you*.

Ever sincerely yours
John Keats.

CXII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R. Abbey's Esq.re Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place.
[*Postmark*, 9 June 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I shall be with you next monday at the farthest. I could not keep my promise of seeing you again in a week because I am in so unsettled a state of mind about what I am to do—I have given up the Idea of the Indiaman;[2] I cannot resolve to

[1] 'A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!' See the Ode on Indolence, Volume III, page 16.

[2] The idea mentioned here and in the two previous letters was, of course that of taking an appointment as surgeon on board a vessel trading to the East Indies—an idea which was revived later on: see the last letter which he wrote to Mr. Dilke before leaving for Italy.

give up my favorite studies: so I purpose to retire into the Country and set my Mind at work once more. A Friend of Mine who has an ill state of health[1] called on me yesterday and proposed to spend a little time with him at the back of the Isle of Wight where he said we might live very cheaply. I agreed to his proposal. I have taken a great dislike to Town—I never go there—some one is always calling on me and as we have spare beds they often stop a couple of days. I have written lately to some acquaintances in Devonshire concerning a cheap Lodging and they have been very kind in letting me know all I wanted. They have described a pleasant place which I think I shall eventually retire to. How came you on with my young Master Yorkshire Man? Did not Mrs. A. sport her Carriage and one? They really surprised me with super civility—how did Mrs. A. manage it? How is the old tadpole gardener and little Master next door? it is to be hop'd they will both die some of these days. Not having been to Town I have not heard whether Mr. A. purposes to retire from business. Do let me know if you have heard any thing more about it. If he should not I shall be very disappointed. If any one deserves to be put to his shifts it is that Hodgkinson—as for the other he would live a long time upon his fat and be none the worse for a good long lent. How came miledi to give one Lisbon wine—had she drained the Gooseberry? Truly I cannot delay making another visit—asked to take Lunch, whether I will have ale, wine, take sugar,—objection to green—like cream—thin bread and butter—another cup—agreeable—enough sugar—little more cream—too weak—12 shillin &c &c &c—Lord I must come again. We are just going to Dinner—I must must[2] with this to the Post—

Your affectionate Brother
John—

CXIII.

To JAMES ELMES.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead—
[Saturday Evening, 12 June 1819.]

Sir,

I did not see your Note till Saturday evening, or I should have answered it sooner—However as it happens I have but just

[1] This must of course have been James Rice, of whose ill health when in the Isle of Wight with him Keats wrote later on.

[2] Doubtless the second 'must' was wrongly written for 'run', 'rush', or some such word.

CXIII. The original letter, in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum (Add. MS. 22130 f. 88), bears a note signed "J. E." that the letter is "about a sonnet to Haydon." But I do not think this is the case, and scarcely

received the Book which contains the only copy of the verses in question. I have asked for it repeatedly ever since I promised Mr. Haydon and could not help the delay; which I regret. The verses can be struck out in no time, and will I hope be quite in time. If you think it at all necessary a proof may be forwarded; but as I shall transcribe it fairly perhaps there may be no need.

I am

Sir

Your obed^{t}. Serv^{t}

John Keats

CXIV.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^{d} Abbey Esq^{re} Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place

[*Postmark*, Lombard Street, 14 June 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I cannot be with you to-day for two reasons—1st I have my sore-throat coming again to prevent my walking. 2^{dly} I do not happen just at present to be flush of silver so that I might ride. To-morrow I am engaged—but the day after you shall see me. Mr. Brown is waiting for me as we are going to Town together, so good bye.

Your affectionate Brother

John

CXV.

To FANNY KEATS.

Wentworth Place

[16 June 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

Still I cannot afford to spend money by Coach-hire and still my throat is not well enough to warrant my walking. I

doubt that the real subject is the 'Ode to a Nightingale,' which appeared in the 'Annals of the Fine Arts,' under the editorship of James Elmes, in July 1819. I do not think Keats would call a sonnet or sonnets "the verses in question"; but he would very likely apply to the Ode both that term and the term "those lines," which he uses in the next letter to Haydon in regard, as it seems to me, to the same poem as he here mentions to Elmes. Supposing the date to which I have assigned that letter to be right,—and I have no doubt about it,—this one clearly belongs to the 12th of June 1819. The letter has no address outside—merely 'James Elmes Esq^{re}' at the foot of the page.

CXIV. It may be assumed that it was a walk home at night that Keats feared to undertake in consequence of the state of his throat. Otherwise this little note would seem to indicate a more serious premonitory condition of things than we have any warrant to suppose, seeing that the time was the middle of June, when, if at all, one would suppose, a walk to Walthamstow and back might have been safely undertaken.

CXV. This letter has no address or postmark. The second sentence evidently refers to the visit to Abbey that is mentioned in the next letter to Haydon as having

went yesterday to ask Mr. Abbey for some money; but I could not on account of a Letter he showed me from my Aunt's solicitor. You do not understand the business. I trust it will not in the end be detrimental to you. I am going to try the Press once more, and to that end shall retire to live cheaply in the country and compose myself and verses as well as I can. I have very good friends ready to help me—and I am the more bound to be careful of the money they lend me. It will all be well in the course of a year I hope. I am confident of it, so do not let it trouble you at all. Mr. Abbey showed me a Letter he had received from George containing the news of the birth of a Niece for us—and all doing well—he said he would take it to you—so I suppose to day you will see it. I was preparing to enquire for a situation with an apothecary, but Mr. Brown persuades me to try the press once more; so I will with all my industry and ability. Mr. Rice a friend of mine in ill health has proposed ret[i]ring to the back of the Isle of Wight—which I hope will be cheap in the summer—I am sure it will in the winter. Thence you shall frequently hear from me and in the Letters I will copy those lines I may write which will be most pleasing to you in the confidence you will show them to no one. I have not run quite aground yet I hope, having written this morning to several people to whom I have lent money requesting repayment. I shall henceforth[1] shake off my indolent fits, and among other reformation be more diligent in writing to you, and mind you always answer me. I shall be obliged to go out of town on Saturday[2] and shall have no money till to-morrow, so I am very sorry to think I shall not be able to come to Walthamstow. The Head Mr. Severn did of me is now too dear, but here inclosed is a very capital Profile done by Mr. Brown. I will write again on Monday or Tuesday—Mr. and Mrs. Dilke are well.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

taken place "the day before yesterday". If therefore the 17th of June is the right date for that letter, the 16th is the right date for this—of which the original has no date or postmark.

[1] In the original, 'hencefore.'

[2] The 16th of June 1819 was a Wednesday; so that he would seem to infer that he wanted the rest of the time, after getting his money, for preparations to depart. I do not know what day he and Rice actually started; but the first letter to Fanny Brawne shows that they were in the Isle of Wight on the 1st of July and probably on the 29th of June, if no earlier.

CXVI.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place
Thursday Morning [17 June 1819].

My dear Haydon,

I know you will not be prepared for this, because your Pocket must needs be very low having been at ebb tide so long: but what can I do? mine is lower. I was the day before yesterday much in want of Money: but some news I had yesterday has driven me into necessity. I went to Abbey's for some Cash, and he put into my hand a letter from my Aunt's Solicitor containing the pleasant information that she was about to file a Bill in Chancery against us. Now in case of a defeat Abbey will be very undeservedly in the wrong box; so I could not ask him for any more money, nor can I till the affair is decided; and if it goes against him I must in conscience make over to him what little he may have remaining. My purpose is now to make one more attempt in the Press—if that fail, "ye hear no more of me" as Chaucer says. Brown has lent me some money for the present. Do borrow or beg some how what you can for me. Do not suppose I am at all uncomfortable about the matter in any other way than as it forces me to apply to the needy. I could not send you those lines, for I could not get the only copy of them before last Saturday evening. I sent them Mr. Elmes on Monday. I saw Monkhouse on Sunday—he told me you were getting on with the Picture. I would have come over to you to-day, but I am fully employed—

Yours ever sincerely
John Keats—

CXVII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead, Middx.

Shanklin,
Isle of Wight, Thursday [1 July 1819].
[*Postmark*, Newport, 3 July 1819.]

My dearest Lady,

I am glad I had not an opportunity of sending off a letter which I wrote for you on Tuesday night—'twas too much like one out of Ro[u]sseau's Heloise. I am more reasonable

CXVI. The original manuscript of this letter is wafered into Haydon's journal in the next leaf to that whereto the letters of the 12th and 13th of April are fastened. This one has an imperfect postmark: the day of the month is 17—the year 1819; and there can be no doubt the month is June. The circumstances are clearly those detailed in the previous letter to his sister, which, as clearly, comes after the one postmarked the 14th of June and before that of the 6th of July from

this morning. The morning is the only proper time for me to write to a beautiful Girl whom I love so much: for at night, when the lonely day has closed, and the lonely, silent, unmusical Chamber is waiting to receive me as into a Sepulchre, then believe me my passion gets entirely the sway, then I would not have you see those R[h]apsodies which I once thought it impossible I should ever give way to, and which I have often laughed at in another, for fear you should [think me [1]] either too unhappy or perhaps a little mad. I am now at a very pleasant Cottage window, looking onto a beautiful hilly country, with a glimpse of the sea; the morning is very fine. I do not know how elastic my spirit might be, what pleasure I might have in living here and breathing and wandering as free as a stag about this beautiful Coast if the remembrance of you did not weigh so upon me. I have never known any unalloy'd Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of some one [2] has always spoilt my hours—and now when none such troubles oppress me, it is you must confess very hard that another sort of pain should haunt me. Ask yourself my love whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom. Will you confess this in the Letter you must write immediately and do all you can to console me in it—make it rich as a draught of poppies to intoxicate me—write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been. For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair. I almost wish we were butterflies and liv'd but three summer days—three such days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain. But however selfish I may feel, I am sure I could never act selfishly: as I told you a day or two before I left Hampstead, I will never return to London if my Fate does not turn up Pam [3] or at least a Court-card. Though I could centre

Shanklin. It will be borne in mind that Keats was only seeking from Haydon the return of money lent: that the correspondence already given eventuated in a small loan to Haydon there can be no doubt, seeing that Keats gives his brother an account of the affair later on, in the Winchester journal-letter of September 1819.

[1] These two words are wanting in the original. As regards laughter at lovers, see what Keats wrote to his brother George in the Winchester journal-letter, further on, beside the "nonsense verses" about a Party of Lovers.

[2] It will be remembered that Thomas Keats had died about seven months before the date of this letter.

[3] Pam is the knave of clubs in the game of loo.

> Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,
> And mow'd down armies in the fights of Loo,
> Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
> Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade!—
>
> Pope's 'Rape of the Lock,' III, 61-4.

my Happiness in you, I cannot expect to engross your heart so entirely—indeed if I thought you felt as much for me as I do for you at this moment I do not think I could restrain myself from seeing you again tomorrow for the delight of one embrace. But no—I must live upon hope and Chance. In case of the worst that can happen, I shall still love you—but what hatred shall I have for another! Some lines I read the other day are continually ringing a peal in my ears:

> To see those eyes I prize above mine own
> Dart favors on another—
> And those sweet lips (yielding immortal nectar)
> Be gently press'd by any but myself—
> Think, think Francesca, what a cursed thing
> It were beyond expression!

J.

I o write immediately. There is no Post from this Place, so you must address Post Office, Newport, Isle of Wight. I know before night I shall curse myself for having sent you so cold a Letter; yet it is better to do it as much in my senses as possible. Be as kind as the distance will permit to your

J. Keats.

Present my Compliments to your mother, my love to Margaret and best remembrances to your Brother—if you please so.[1]

CXVIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

Rd Abbey Esqre Walthamstow near London.

Shanklin,
Isle of Wight,
Tuesday, July 6th
[*Postmark*, Newport, 8 July 1819].

My dear Fanny,

I have just received another Letter from George—full of as good news as we can expect. I cannot inclose it to you as I could wish because it contains matters of Business to which I must for a Week to come have an immediate reference. I think I told you the purpose for which I retired to this place—to try the fortune of my Pen once more, and indeed I have some con-

[1] Fanny's father, Mr. Samuel Brawne, a gentleman of independent means, had died while she was still a child; and Mrs. Brawne resided at Hampstead, with her three children, Fanny, Samuel, and Margaret. Samuel, being next in age to Fanny, was a youth going to school in 1819; and Margaret was many years younger than her sister, being in fact a child at this time.

fidence in my success: but in every event, believe me my dear sister, I shall be sufficiently comfortable, as, if I cannot lead that life of competence and society I should wish, I have enough knowledge of my gallipots[1] to ensure me an employment and maintenance. The Place I am in now I visited once before[2] and a very pretty place it is were it not for the bad weather. Our window looks over house-tops and Cliffs onto the Sea, so that when the Ships sail past the Cottage chimneys you may take them for weathercocks. We have Hill and Dale, forest and Mead, and plenty of Lobsters. I was on the Portsmouth Coach the Sunday before last in that heavy shower—and I may say I went to Portsmouth by water—I got a little cold, and as it always flies to my throat I am a little out of sorts that way. There were on the Coach with me some common French people but very well behaved—there was a woman amongst them to whom the poor Men in ragged coats were more gallant than ever I saw gentleman to Lady at a Ball. When we got down to walk up hill—one of them pick'd a rose, and on remounting gave it to the woman with 'Ma'mselle voila une bell[e] rose!' I am so hard at work that perhaps I should not have written to you for a day or two if George's Letter had not diverted my attention to the interests and pleasure of those I love—and ever believe that when I do not behave punctually it is from a very necessary occupation, and that my silence is no proof of my not thinking of you, or that I want more than a gentle fillip[3] to bring your image with every claim before me. You have never seen mountains, or I might tell you that the hill at Steephill is I think almost of as much consequence as Mount Rydal on Lake Winander. Bonchurch too is a very delightful Place—as I can see by the Cottages, all romantic—covered with creepers and honeysuckles, with roses and eglantines peeping in at the windows. Fit abodes for the people I guess live in them, romantic old maids fond of novels, or soldiers' widows with a pretty jointure—or any body's widows or aunts or anythings given to Poetry and a Piano-forte—as far as in 'em lies—as people say. If I could play upon the Guitar I might make my fortune with an old song—and get t[w]o blessings at once—a Lady's heart and the Rheumatism. But I am almost afraid to peep at those little windows—for a pretty window should show a pretty face, and as the world goes chances are against me. I am living with a very good fellow indeed, a Mr. Rice. He is unfortunately labouring under a complaint which has for some years been a burthen to him. This is a pain to me. He has a

[1] His own good-tempered use of this term from 'Blackwood' (see page 164 of Volume IV, line 6 from foot) does not look much as if Lockhart's vulgar ribaldry rankled in his mind.

[2] In April 1817. [3] In the original, 'philip'.

greater tact in speaking to people of the village than I have, and in those matters is a great amusement as well as good friend to me. He bought a ham the other day for say[s] he Keats, I don't think a Ham is a wrong thing to have in a house.' Write to me, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, as soon as you can; for a Letter is a great treat to me here—believing me ever

Your affectionate brother, John —

CXIX.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place. Hampstead, Middx.

July 8th.

[*Postmark*, Newport, 10 July 1819.]

My sweet Girl,

Your Letter gave me more delight than any thing in the world but yourself could do; indeed I am almost astonished that any absent one should have that luxurious power over my senses which I feel. Even when I am not thinking of you I receive your influence and a tenderer nature stealing[1] upon me. All my thoughts, my unhappiest days and nights, have I find not at all cured me of my love of Beauty, but made it so intense that I am miserable that you are not with me: or rather breathe in that dull sort of patience that cannot be called Life. I never knew before, what such a love as you have made me feel, was; I did not believe in it; my Fancy was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up. But if you will fully love me, though there may be some fire, 'twill not be more than we can bear when moistened and bedewed with Pleasures. You mention "horrid people" and ask me whether it depend upon them whether I see you again. Do understand me, my love, in this. I have so much of you in my heart that I must turn Mentor when I see a chance of harm befalling[2] you. I would never see any thing but Pleasure in your eyes, love on your lips, and Happiness in your steps. I would wish to see you among those amusements suitable to your inclinations and spirits; so that our loves might be a delight in the midst of Pleasures agreeable enough, rather than a resource from vexations and cares. But I doubt much, in case of the worst, whether I shall be philosopher enough to follow my own Lessons: if I saw my resolution give you a pain I could not. Why may I not speak of your Beauty, since without that I could never have lov'd you?

[1] In the original 'steeling'.

[2] In the original 'beffaling'.

—I cannot conceive any beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty. There may be a sort of love for which, without the least sneer at it, I have the highest respect and can admire it in others: but it has not the richness, the bloom, the full form, the enchantment of love after my own heart. So let me speak of your Beauty, though to my own endangering; if you could be so cruel to me as to try elsewhere its Power. You say you are afraid I shall think you do not love me—in saying this you make me ache the more to be near you. I am at the diligent use of my faculties here, I do not pass a day without sprawling some blank verse or tagging some rhymes; and here I must confess, that (since I am on that subject) I love you the more in that I believe you have liked me for my own sake and for nothing else. I have met with women whom I really think would like to be married to a Poem and to be given away by a Novel. I have seen your Comet, and only wish it was a sign that poor Rice would get well whose illness makes him rather a melancholy companion: and the more so as to conquer his feelings and hide them from me, with a forc'd Pun. I kiss'd your writing over in the hope you had indulg'd me by leaving a trace of honey. What was your dream? Tell it me and I will tell you the interpretation thereof.

Ever yours, my love!
John Keats

Do not accuse me of delay—we have not here an opportunity of sending letters every day. Write speedily.

CXX.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Shanklin,
12 July 1819.

* * * * * *

You will be glad to hear, under my own hand (though Rice says we are like Sauntering Jack and Idle Joe), how diligent I have been, and am being. I have finished the Act,[1] and in the interval of beginning the 2d have proceeded pretty well with Lamia, finishing the 1st part, which consists of about four hundred lines. * * * I have great hopes of success, because I make use of my judgment more deliberately than I have yet done; but in case of failure with the world, I shall find my content. And here (as I know you have my good at heart as much as a Brother), I can only repeat to you what I have said to George—that however I should like to enjoy what the

[1] Act I of 'Otho the Great.'

competencies of life procure, I am in no wise dashed at a different prospect. I have spent too many thoughtful days and moralized through too many nights for that, and fruitless would they be indeed, if they did not by degrees make me look upon the affairs of the world with a healthy deliberation. I have of late been moulting: not for fresh feathers and wings: they are gone, and in their stead I hope to have a pair of patient sublunary legs. I have altered, not from a Chrysalis into a butterfly, but the contrary; having two little loopholes, whence I may look out into the stage of the world: and that world on our coming here I almost forgot. The first time I sat down to write, I could scarcely believe in the necessity for so doing. It struck me as a great oddity. Yet the very corn which is now so beautiful, as if it had only took to ripening yesterday, is for the market; so, why should I be delicate?[1]

CXXI.

To PANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead, Middx.

Shanklin
Thursday Evening
[15 July 1819?]

My love,

I have been in so irritable a state of health these two or three last days, that I did not think I should be able to write this week. Not that I was so ill, but so much so as only to be capable of an unhealthy teasing letter. To night I am greatly recovered only to feel the languor I have felt after you touched with ardency. You say you perhaps might have made me better: you would then have made me worse: now you could quite effect a cure: What fee my sweet Physician would I not

[1] Lord Houghton says at this point—"Sir James Mackintosh, who had openly protested against the mode of criticism employed against 'Endymion,' and had said, in a letter still extant, that 'such attacks will interest every liberal mind in the author's success,' writing to Messrs. Taylor, on the 19th of July in this year, enquires, 'Have you any other literary novelties in verse? I very much admire your young poet, with all his singularities. Where is he? and what high design does he meditate?'"

CXXI. This letter appears to belong between those of the 8th and 25th of July 1819; and of the two Thursdays between those dates it seems likelier that the 15th would be the one than that the letter should have been written so near the 25th as on the 22nd. The original having been mislaid, I have not been able to take the evidence of the postmark. It will be noticed that at the close he speaks of a weekly exchange of letters with Miss Brawne; and by placing this letter at the 15th this programme is pretty nearly realized so far as Keats's letters from the Isle of Wight are concerned.

give you to do so. Do not call it folly, when I tell you I took your letter last night to bed with me. In the morning I found your name on the sealing wax obliterated. I was startled at the bad omen till I recollected that it must have happened in my dreams, and they you know fall out by contraries. You must have found out by this time I am a little given to bode ill like the raven; it is my misfortune not my fault; it has proceeded from the general tenor of the circumstances of my life, and rendered every event suspicious. However I will no more trouble either you or myself with sad Prophecies; though so far I am pleased at it as it has given me opportunity to love your disinterestedness towards me. I can be a raven no more; you and pleasure take possession of me at the same moment. I am afraid you have been unwell. If through me illness have touched you (but it must be with a very gentle hand) I must be selfish enough to feel a little glad at it. Will you forgive me this? I have been reading lately an oriental tale of a very beautiful color[1]—It is of a city of melancholy men, all made so by this circumstance. Through a series of adventures each one of them by turns reach some gardens of Paradise where they meet with a most enchanting Lady; and just as they are going to embrace her, she bids them shut their eyes—they shut them—and on opening their eyes again find themselves descending to the earth in a magic basket. The remembrance of this Lady and their delights lost beyond all recovery render them melancholy ever after. How I applied this to you, my dear; how I palpitated at it; how the certainty that you were in the same world with myself, and though as beautiful, not so talismanic as that Lady; how I could not bear you should be so you must believe because I swear it by yourself. I cannot say when I shall get a volume ready. I have three or four stories half done, but as I cannot write for the mere sake of the press, I am obliged to let them progress or lie still as my fancy chooses. By Christmas perhaps they may appear,[2] but I am not yet sure they ever will. 'Twill be no matter, for Poems are as common as newspapers and I do not see why it is a greater crime in me than in another to let

[1] The story in question is one of the many derivatives from the Third Calender's Story in 'The Thousand and One Nights' and the somewhat similar tale of "The Man who laughed not," included in the notes to Lane's 'Arabian Nights' and in the text of Payne's magnificent version of the complete work. I am indebted to Dr. Reinhold Köhler, Librarian of the Grand-ducal Library of Weimar, for identifying the particular variant referred to by Keats, as the "Histoire de la Corbeille," in the 'Nouveaux Contes Orientaux' of the Comte de Caylus. William Morris's beautiful poem "The Man who never laughed again," in 'The Earthly Paradise,' has familiarized to English readers one variant of the legend.

[2] It will of course be remembered that no such collection appeared until the following summer, when 'Lamia, Isabella' &c. was published.

the verses of an half-fledged brain tumble into the reading-rooms and drawing room windows. Rice has been better lately than usual: he is not suffering from any neglect of his parents who have for some years been able to appreciate him better than they did in his first youth, and are now devoted to his comfort. To-morrow I shall, if my health continues to improve during the night, take a look fa[r]ther about the country, and spy at the parties about here who come hunting after the picturesque like beagles. It is astonishing how they raven down scenery like children do sweetmeats. The wondrous Chine here is a very great Lion: I wish I had as many guineas as there have been spy-glasses in it. I have been, I cannot tell why, in capital spirits this last hour. What reason? What reason? When I have to take my candle and retire to a lonely room, without the thought as I fall asleep, of seeing you to-morrow morning? or the next day, or the next—it takes on the appearance of impossibility and eternity—I will say a month—I will say I will see you in a month at most, though no one but yourself should see me; if it be but for an hour. I should not like to be so near you as London without being continually with you: after having once more kissed you Sweet I would rather be here alone at my task than in the bustle and hateful literary chitchat. Meantime you must write to me—as I will every week—for your letters keep me alive. My sweet Girl I cannot speak my love for you. Good night! and

Ever yours
John Keats

CXXII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead, Middx.

Sunday Night [2ℰ July 1819].
[*Postmark*, 27 July 1819.[1]]

My sweet Girl,

I hope you did not blame me much for not obeying your request of a Letter on Saturday: we have had four in our small room playing at cards night and morning leaving me no undisturb'd opportunity to write. Now Rice and Martin[2] are gone I am at liberty. Brown to my sorrow confirms the account you give of your ill health. You cannot conceive how I ache to be with you: how I would die for one hour——for what is in the world? I say you cannot conceive; it is impossible you should look with such eyes upon me as I have upon you: it cannot be. Forgive

[1] The word 'Newport' is not stamped on this letter, as on previous ones; but it is pretty evident that Keats and his friend were still at Shanklin.

[2] John Martin sometime of Holles Street, Cavendish Square, publisher. He was now in partnership with Rodwell, in Bond Street.

me if I wander a little this evening, for I have been all day employ'd in a very abstr[a]ct Poem[1] and I am in deep love with you—two things which must excuse me. I have, believe me, not been an age in letting you take possession of me ; the very first week I knew you I wrote myself your vassal ; but burnt the Letter as the very next time I saw you I thought you manifested some dislike to me. If you should ever feel for Man at the first sight what I did for you, I am lost. Yet I should not quarrel with you, but hate myself if such a thing were to happen—only I should burst if the thing were not as fine as a Man as you are as a Woman. Perhaps I am too vehement, then fancy me on my knees, especially when I mention a part of your Letter which hurt me ; you say speaking of Mr. Severn " but you must be satisfied in knowing that I admired you much more than your friend." My dear love, I cannot believe there ever was or ever could be any thing to admire in me especially as far as sight goes—I cannot be admired, I am not a thing to be admired. You are, I love you ; all I can bring you is a swooning admiration of your Beauty. I hold that place among Men which snubnos'd brunettes with meeting eyebrows do among women—they are trash to me—unless I should find one among them with a fire in her heart like the one that burns in mine. You absorb me in spite of myself—you alone : for I look not forward with any pleasure to what is call'd being settled in the world ; I tremble at domestic cares—yet for you I would meet them, though if it would leave you the happier I would rather die than do so. I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death. O that I could have possession of them both in the same minute. I hate the world : it batters too much the wings of my self-will, and would I could take a sweet poison from your lips to send me out of it. From no others would I take it. I am indeed astonish'd to find myself so careless of all cha[r]ms but yours—rememb[e]ring as I do the time when even a bit of ribband was a matter of interest with me. What softer words can I find for you after this—what it is I will not read. Nor will I say more here, but in a Postscript answer any thing else you may have mentioned in your Letter in so many words—for I am distracted with a thousand thoughts. I will imagine you Venus to-night and pray, pray, pray to your star like a He[a]then.

Your's ever, fair Star,
John Keats

My seal is mark'd like a family table cloth with my Mother's initial F for Fanny : put between my Father's initials. You will soon hear from me again. My respectful Comp[limen]ts to

[1] This may have reference to some passage in either 'Lamia' or 'Hyperion.'

your Mother. Tell Margaret I'll send her a reef of best rocks and tell Sam[1] I will give him my light bay hunter if he will tie the Bishop hand and foot and pack him in a hamper and send him down for me to bathe him for his health with a Necklace of good snubby stones about his Neck.[2]

CXXIII.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

Shanklin, Saturday Evening
[*Postmark*, 2 August 1819.]

My dear Dilke,

I will not make my diligence an excuse for not writing to you sooner—because I consider idleness a much better plea. A Man in the hurry of business of any sort is expected and ought to be expected to look to every thing—his mind is in a whirl, and what matters it—what whirl? But to require a Letter of a Man lost in idleness is the utmost cruelty; you cut the thread of his existence, you beat, you pummel him, you sell his goods and chattels, you put him in prison; you impale him; you crucify him. If I had not put pen to paper since I saw you this would be to me a vi et armis taking up before the Judge; but having got over my darling lounging habits a little, it is with scarcely any pain I come to this dating from Shanklin and D[ea]r Dilke. The Isle of Wight is but so so &c. Rice and I passed rather a dull time of it.[3] I hope he will not repent coming with me. He was unwell, and I was not in very good health: and I am afraid we made each other worse by acting upon each other's spirits. We would grow as melancholy as need be. I confess I cannot bear a sick person in a House, especially alone—it weighs upon me day and night—and more so when perhaps the Case is irretrievable. Indeed I think Rice is in a dangerous state. I have had a Letter from him which speaks favourably of his health at present. Brown and I are pretty well harnessed again to our dog-cart. I mean the Tragedy, which goes on sinkingly. We are thinking of introducing an Elephant, but have not historical reference within reach to determine us as to Otho's Menagerie. When Brown first mentioned this I took it for a joke; however he brings such plausible reasons, and discourses so eloquently on the dramatic

[1] Fanny Brawne's brother and young sister.

[2] I am unable to obtain any positive explanation of the allusion made in this strange sentence. It is not, however, impossible that "the Bishop" was merely a nickname of some one in the Hampstead circle,—or perhaps the name of a dog.

[3] Rice had gone away by the 25th of July: see page 75 *ante*.

effect that I am giving it a serious consideration. The Art of Poetry is not sufficient for us, and if we get on in that as well as we do in painting, we shall by next winter crush the Reviews and the Royal Academy. Indeed, if Brown would take a little of my advice, he could not fail to be first pallet[te] of his day. But odd as it may appear, he says plainly that he cannot see any force in my plea of putting skies in the background, and leaving Indian ink out of an ash tree. The other day he was sketching Shanklin Church, and as I saw how the business was going on, I challenged him to a trial of skill—he lent me Pencil and Paper—we keep the Sketches to contend for the Prize at the Gallery. I will not say whose I think best—but really I do not think Brown's done to the top of the Art.

A word or two on the Isle of Wight. I have been no further than Steephill. If I may guess, I should [say] that there is no finer part in the Island than from this Place to Steephill. I do not hesitate to say it is fine. Bonchurch is the best. But I have been so many finer walks, with a back ground of lake and mountain instead of the sea, that I am not much touch'd with it, though I credit it for all the Surprise I should have felt if it had taken my cockney maidenhead. But I may call myself an old Stager in the picturesque, and unless it be something very large and overpowering, I cannot receive any extraordinary relish.

I am sorry to hear that Charles[1] is so much oppress'd at Westminster, though I am sure it will be the finest touchstone for his Metal in the world. His troubles will grow day by day less, as his age and strength increase. The very first Battle he wins will lift him from the Tribe of Manasseh. I do not know how I should feel were I a Father—but I hope I should strive with all my Power not to let the present trouble me. When your Boy shall be twenty, ask him about his childish troubles and he will have no more memory of them than you have of yours. Brown tells me Mrs. Dilke sets off to-day for Chichester. I am glad—I was going to say she had a fine day—but there has been a great Thunder cloud muttering over Hampshire all day—I hope she is now at supper with a good appetite.

So Reynolds's Piece[2] succeeded—that is all well. Papers have with thanks been duly received. We leave this place on the 13th, and will let you know where we may be a few days after—Brown says he will write when the fit comes on him. If you will stand law expenses I'll beat him into one before his time. When I come to town I shall have a little talk with you

[1] Dilke's only son, afterwards Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, first Baronet of the name.

[2] 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five: by Advertisement,' a Musical Entertainment in one Act.

about Brown and one Jenny Jacobs.[1] Open daylight! he don't care. I am afraid there will be some more feet for little stockings—[*of Keats' making.* (*I mean the feet.*)] Brown here tried at a piece of Wit but it failed him, as you see, though long a brewing—[*this is a 2d. lie.*] Men should never despair—you see he has tried again and succeeded to a miracle.—He wants to try again, but as I have a right to an inside place in my own Letter—I take possession.

Your sincere friend
John Keats——

CXXIV.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead, Middx.

Shanklin, Thursday Night [5 August 1819].
[*Postmark*, Newport, 9 August 1819.]

My dear Girl,

You say you must not have any more such Letters as the last: I'll try that you shall not by running obstinate the other way. Indeed I have not fair play—I am not idle enough for proper downright love-letters—I leave this minute a scene in our Tragedy and see you (think it not blasphemy) through the mist of Plots, speeches, counterplots and counterspeeches. The Lover is madder than I am—I am nothing to him[2]—he has a figure like the Statue of Meleager[3] and double distilled fire in his heart. Thank God for my diligence! were it not for that I should be miserable. I encourage it, and strive not to think of you—but when I have succeeded in doing so all day and as far as midnight, you return, as soon as this artificial excitement goes off, more severely from the fever I am left in. Upon my soul I cannot say what you could like me for. I do not think myself a fright any more than I do Mr. A., Mr. B., and Mr. C.—yet if I were a woman I should not like A. B. C. But enough of this. So you intend to hold me to my promise of seeing you in a

[1] The patronymic recalls a passage in Keats's Spenserian stanzas on Brown (page 45, *ante*)—

> Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek
> For curled Jewesses with ankles neat,
> Who, as they walk abroad, make tinkling with their feet.

The interpolations printed above in italics within brackets are of course by Brown. They stand in his writing in the original letter still in the collection of Sir Charles Dilke.

[2] Few Lovers in literature are "anything" to Ludolph in 'Otho the Great' for sheer hysterical abandonment. Probably a great deal of the torture which that wretched prince is depicted as undergoing was painfully studied from experience.

[3] In the original, 'Maleager.'

short time. I shall keep it with as much sorrow as gladness: for I am not one of the Paladins of old who liv'd upon water grass and smiles for years together. What though would I not give to-night for the gratification of my eyes alone? This day week we shall move to Winchester; for I feel the want of a Library.[1] Brown will leave me there to pay a visit to Mr. Snook at Bedhampton: in his absence I will flit to you and back. I will stay very little while, for as I am in a train of writing now I fear to disturb it—let it have its course bad or good—in it I shall try my own strength and the public pulse. At Winchester I shall get your Letters more readily; and it being a cathedral City I shall have a pleasure always a great one to me when near a Cathedral, of reading them during the service up and down the Aisle.

Friday Morning [6 August 1819].—Just as I had written thus far last night, Brown came down in his morning coat and nightcap, saying he had been refresh'd by a good sleep and was very hungry. I left him eating and went to bed, being too tired to enter into any discussions. You would delight very greatly in the walks about here; the Cliffs, woods, hills, sands, rocks, &c. about here. They are however not so fine but I shall give them a hearty good bye to exchange them for my Cathedral.—Yet again I am not so tired of Scenery as to hate Switzerland. We might spend a pleasant year at Berne[2] or Zurich—if it should please Venus to hear my "Beseech thee to hear us O Goddess." And if she should hear, God forbid we should what people call, *settle*—turn into a pond, a stagnant Lethe—a vile crescent, row or buildings. Better be imprudent moveables than prudent fixtures. Open my Mouth at the Street door like the Lion's head at Venice to receive hateful cards, letters, messages. Go out and wither at tea parties; freeze at dinners; bake at dances; simmer at routs. No my love, trust yourself to me and I will find you nobler amusements, fortune favouring. I fear you will not receive this till Sunday or Monday: as the irishman[3] would write do not in the mean while hate me. I long to be off for Winchester, for I begin to dislike the very door-posts here—the names, the pebbles. You ask after my health, not telling me

[1] He did not find one; for, in his letter to Haydon from Winchester, dated the 3rd of October 1819, he says: "I came to this place in the hopes of meeting with a Library, but was disappointed."

[2] Not 'Rome,' as printed in the memoir prefixed to the Aldine Edition of Keats, at page xxv of which there is a reference to this letter.

[3] This spelling of 'irishman' with a small *i* must not be hastily regarded as "another injustice to Ireland," seeing that Keats, though very lavish of his capitals in common nouns, frequently wrote proper names without them—occasionally spelt even 'God' with a small *g*, in the next letter but one 'Romeo' with a small *r*, and in Letter Number CXXXII 'French' with a small *f*.

whether you are better. I am quite well. You going out is no proof that you are: how is it? Late hours will do you great harm. What fairing is it? I was alone for a couple of days while Brown went gadding over the country with his ancient knapsack. Now I like his society as well as any Man's, yet regretted his return—it broke in upon me like a Thunderbolt. I had got in a dream among my Books—really luxuriating in a solitude and silence you alone should have disturb'd.

Your ever affectionate
John Keats.

CXXV.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Winchester [15 August 1819].

We removed to Winchester for the convenience of a library, and find it an exceeding pleasant town, enriched with a beautiful Cathedral, and surrounded by a fresh-looking country. We are in tolerably good and cheap lodgings. Within these two months I have written 1500 lines, most of which, besides many more of prior composition, you will probably see by next winter. I have written 2 tales, one from Boccaccio, called the Pot of Basil, and another called St. Agnes's Eve, on a popular superstition, and a 3rd called Lamia (half finished). I have also been writing parts of my "Hyperion," and completed 4 acts of a tragedy. It was the opinion of most of my friends that I should never be able to write a scene. I will endeavour to wipe away the prejudice—I sincerely hope you will be pleased when my labours, since we last saw each other, shall reach you. One of my Ambitions is to make as great a revolution in modern dramatic writing as Kean has done in acting. Another, to upset the drawling of the blue-stocking literary world—if in the Course of a few years I do these two things, I ought to die content, and my friends should drink a dozen of claret on my tomb. I am convinced more and more every day that (excepting the human friend philosopher), a fine writer is the most genuine being in the world. Shakspeare and the Paradise lost every day become greater wonders to me. I look upon fine phrases like a lover. I was glad to see by a passage of one of Brown's letters, some time ago, from the North that you were in such good spirits.[1] Since that you have been married, and

[1] Mr. Dilke makes the following note against this passage:—"As before mentioned Bailey made an offer to Marianne Reynolds which was declined. He entreated her to take time and think over his proposal. Meanwhile he went to Scotland, fell in love with Gleig's sister, and married; much to the surprise of the Reynolds family, who thought he had behaved ill, and it led to a discussion and a quarrel."

in congratulating you I wish you every continuance of them. Present my respects to Mrs. Bailey. This sounds oddly to me, and I dare say I do it awkwardly enough: but I suppose by this time it is nothing new to you. Brown's remembrances to you. As far as I know, we shall remain at Winchester for a goodish while.

Ever your sincere friend,

John Keats.

CXXVI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead, Middx.

Winchester, August 17th.[1]

[*Postmark*, 18 August 1819.]

My dear Girl—what shall I say for myself? I have been here four days and not yet written you—'tis true I have had many teasing letters of business to dismiss—and I have been in the Claws, like a serpent in an Eagle's, of the last act of our Tragedy.[2] This is no excuse; I know it; I do not presume to offer it. I have no right either to ask a speedy answer to let me know how lenient you are—I must remain some days in a Mist—I see you through a Mist: as I daresay you do me by this time. Believe in the first Letters I wrote you: I assure you I felt as I wrote—I could not write so now. The thousand images I have had pass through my brain—my uneasy spirits—my unguess'd fate—all spread as a veil between me and you. Remember I have had no idle leisure to brood over you—'tis well perhaps I have not. I could not have endured the throng of jealousies that used to haunt me before I had plunged so deeply into imaginary interests. I would fain, as my sails are set, sail on without an interruption for a Brace of Months longer—I am in complete cue—in the fever; and shall in these four Months do an immense deal. This Page as my eye skims over it I see is excessively unloverlike and ungallant—I cannot help it—I am no officer in yawning quarters; no Parson-romeo. My Mind is heap'd to the full; stuff'd like a cricket ball—if I strive to fill it more it would burst. I know the generality[3] of women would hate me for this; that I should have so unsoften'd, so

[1] The discrepancy between the date written by Keats and that given in the postmark is curious as a comment on his frequent confessions of ignorance as to the date.

[2] Act V of 'Otho the Great' was, it will be remembered, wholly Keats's, as regards both matter and manner, and not, like the rest, a joint production schemed out by Brown and executed by Keats.

[3] In the original, 'generallity'.

hard a Mind as to forget them ; forget the brightest realities for the dull imaginations of my own Brain. But I conjure you to give it a fair thinking ; and ask yourself whether 'tis not better to explain my feelings to you, than write artificial Passion. —Besides, you would see through it. It would be vain to strive to deceive you. 'Tis harsh, harsh, I know it. My heart seems now made of iron—I could not write a proper answer to an invitation to Idalia. You are my Judge : my forehead is on the ground. You seem offended at a little simple innocent childish playfulness in my last. I did not seriously mean to say that you were endeavouring to make me keep my promise. I beg your pardon for it. 'Tis but *just* you[r] Pride should take the alarm —*seriously*. You say I may do as I please—I do not think with any conscience I can ; my cash resources are for the present stopp'd ; I fear for some time. I spend no money, but it increases my debts. I have all my life thought very little of these matters—they seem not to belong to me. It may be a proud sentence ; but by Heaven I am as entirely above all matters of interest as the Sun is above the Earth—and though of my own money I should be careless ; of my Friends' I must be spare. You see how I go on—like so many strokes of a hammer. I cannot help it—I am impell'd, driven to it. I am not happy enough for silken Phrases, and silver sentences. I can no more use soothing words to you than if I were at this moment engaged in a charge of Cavalry. Then you will say I should not write at all.—Should I not? This Winchester is a fine place : a beautiful Cathedral and many other ancient building[s] in the Environs. The little coffin of a room at Shanklin is changed for a large room, where I can promenade at my pleasure—looks out onto a beautiful—blank side of a house. It is strange I should like it better than the view of the sea from our window at Shanklin. I began to hate the very posts there —the voice of the old Lady over the way was getting a great Plague. The Fisherman's face never altered any more than our black teapot—the [k]nob however was knock'd off to my little relief. I am getting a great dislike of the picturesque ; and can only relish it over again by seeing you enjoy it. One of the pleasantest things I have seen lately was at Cowes. The Regent in his Yatch[1] (I think they spell it) was anchored opposite[2]—a beautiful vessel—and all the Yatchs and boats on the coast were passing and repassing it ; and circuiting[3] and

[1] This indefensible orthography was not in Keats's time wholly unauthorized. To substitute the preferable spelling 'yacht' would be to represent Keats as thinking what he did not think.

[2] In the original, 'oppoisite'.

[3] What Keats wrote was 'curcuiting'; but no doubt 'circuiting' was the word intended.

tacking about it in every direction—I never beheld anything so silent, light, and graceful.—As we pass'd over to Southampton, there was nearly an accident. There came by a Boat, well mann'd, with t[w]o naval officers at the stern. Our Bow-lines took the top of their little mast and snapped it off close by the bo[a]rd. Had the mast been a little stouter they would have been upset. In so trifling an event I could not help admiring our seamen—neither officer nor man in the whole Boat mov'd a muscle—they scarcely notic'd it even with words. Forgive me for this flint-worded Letter, and believe and see that I cannot think of you without some sort of energy—though mal à propos. Even as I leave off it seems to me that a few more moments' thought of you would uncrystallize and dissolve me. I must not give way to it—but turn to my writing again—if I fail I shall die hard. O my love, your lips are growing sweet again to my fancy—I must forget them. Ever your affectionate

Keats.

CXXVII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Winchester,
23 August, 1819.

My dear Taylor,

. . . Brown and I have together been engaged (this I should wish to remain secret) on a Tragedy which I have just finished and from which we hope to share moderate profits. . . . I feel every confidence that, if I choose, I may be a popular writer. That I will never be ; but for all that I will get a livelihood. I equally dislike the favour of the public with the love of a woman. They are both a cloying treacle to the wings of Independence. I shall ever consider them (People) as debtors to me for verses, not myself to them for admiration—which I can do without. I have of late been indulging my spleen by composing a preface AT them : after all resolving never to write a preface at all. "There are so many verses," would I have said to them, "give so much means for me to buy pleasure with, as a relief to my hours of labour."—You will observe at the end of this, if you put down the letter, "How a solitary life engenders pride and egotism!" True—I know it does : but this pride and egotism will enable me to write finer things than anything else could—so I will indulge it. Just so much as I am humbled by the genius above my grasp am I exalted and look with hate and contempt upon the literary world.—A drummer-boy who holds out his hand familiarly to a field Marshal,—that drummer-boy with me is the good word and favour of the public. Who could wish to be among the common-place crowd of the little famous—who are each

individually lost in a throng made up of themselves? Is this worth louting or playing the hypocrite for? To beg suffrages for a seat on the benches of a myriad-aristocracy in letters? This is not wise—I am not a wise man. 'Tis pride—I will give you a definition of a proud man. He is a man who has neither Vanity nor Wisdom—one filled with hatreds cannot be vain, neither can he be wise. Pardon me for hammering instead of writing. Remember me to Woodhouse, Hessey, and all in Percy Street.

Ever yours sincerely
John Keats

CXXVIII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Winchester,
25 August [1819].

My dear Reynolds,

By this post I write to Rice, who will tell you why we have left Shanklin; and how we like this place. I have indeed scarcely anything else to say, leading so monotonous a life, except I was to give you a history of sensations, and day-nightmares. You would not find me at all unhappy in it, as all my thoughts and feelings which are of the selfish nature, home speculations, every day continue to make me more iron—I am convinced more and more, every day, that fine writing is, next to fine doing, the top thing in the world; the Paradise Lost becomes a greater wonder. The more I know what my diligence may in time probably effect, the more does my heart distend with Pride and Obstinacy—I feel it in my power to become a popular writer—I feel it in my power to refuse the poisonous suffrage of a public. My own being which I know to be becomes of more consequence to me than the crowds of Shadows in the shape of men and women that inhabit a kingdom. The soul is a world of itself, and has enough to do in its own home. Those whom I know already, and who have grown as it were a part of myself, I could not do without: but for the rest of mankind, they are as much a dream to me as Milton's Hierarchies. I think if I had a free and healthy and lasting organization of heart, and lungs as strong as an ox's, so as to be able to bear unhurt the shock of extreme thought and sensation without weariness, I could pass my life very nearly alone though it should last eighty years. But I feel my body too weak to support me to the height, I am obliged continually to check myself, and be nothing. It would be vain for me to endeavour after a more reasonable manner of writing to you. I have nothing to speak of but myself, and what can I say but what I feel? If you should have any reason to regret this state of

excitement in me, I will turn the tide of your feelings in the right Channel, by mentioning that it is the only state for the best sort of Poetry—that is all I care for, all I live for. Forgive me for not filling up the whole sheet; Letters become so irksome to me, that the next time I leave London I shall petition them all to be spared me. To give me credit for constancy, and at the same time waive letter writing will be the highest indulgence I can think of. Ever your affectionate friend

John Keats

CXXIX.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Walthamstow near London.

Winchester, August 28th
[*Postmark*, 29 August 1819].

My dear Fanny,

You must forgive me for suffering so long a space to elapse between the dates of my letters. It is more than a fortnight since I left Shanklin chiefly for the purpose of being near a tolerable Library, which after all is not to be found in this place. However we like it very much: it is the pleasantest Town I ever was in, and has the most recommendations of any. There is a fine Cathedral which to me is always a source of amusement, part of it built 1400 years ago; and the more modern by a magnificent Man, you may have read of in our History, called William of Wickham. The whole town is beautifully wooded. From the Hill at the eastern extremity you see a prospect of Streets, and old Buildings mixed up with Trees. Then there are the most beautiful streams about I ever saw—full of Trout. There is the Foundation of St. Croix about half a mile in the fields—a charity greatly abused. We have a Collegiate School, a Roman catholic School; a chapel ditto and a Nunnery! And what improves it all is, the fashionable inhabitants are all gone to Southampton. We are quiet—except a fiddle that now and then goes like a gimlet through my Ears—our Landlady's son not being quite a Proficient. I have still been hard at work, having completed a Tragedy I think I spoke of to you. But there I fear all my labour will be thrown away for the present, as I hear Mr. Kean is going to America. For all I can guess I shall remain here till the middle of October—when Mr. Brown will return to his house at Hampstead: whither I shall return with him. I some time since sent the Letter I told you I had received from George to Haslam with a request to let you and Mrs. Wylie see it: he sent it back to me for very insufficient reasons without doing so; and I was so irritated by it that I would not send it

travelling about by the post any more: besides the postage is very expensive. I know Mrs. Wylie will think this a great neglect. I am sorry to say my temper gets the better of me—I will not send it again. Some correspondence I have had with Mr. Abbey about George's affairs—and I must confess he has behaved very kindly to me as far as the wording of his Letter went. Have you heard any further mention of his retiring from Business? I am anxious to hear whether Hodgkinson, whose name I cannot bear to write, will in any likelihood be thrown upon himself. The delightful Weather we have had for two Months is the highest gratification I could receive—no chill'd red noses—no shivering—but fair atmosphere to think in—a clean towel mark'd with the mangle and a basin of clear Water to drench one's face with ten times a day: no need of much exercise—a Mile a day being quite sufficient. My greatest regret is that I have not been well enough to bathe though I have been two Months by the sea side and live now close to delicious bathing—Still I enjoy the Weather—I adore fine Weather as the greatest blessing I can have. Give me Books, fruit, French wine and fine weather and a little music out of doors, played by somebody I do not know—not pay the price of one's time for a jig[1]—but a little chance music: and I can pass a summer very quietly without caring much about Fat Louis,[2] fat Regent or the Duke of Wellington. Why have you not written to me? Because you were in expectation of George's Letter and so waited? Mr. Brown is copying out our Tragedy of Otho the Great in a superb style—better than it deserves—there as I said is labour in vain for the present. I had hoped to give Kean another opportunity to shine. What can we do now? There is not another actor of Tragedy in all London or Europe. The Covent Garden Company is execrable. Young is the best among them and he is a ranting coxcombical tasteless Actor—a Disgust, a Nausea—and yet the very best after Kean. What a set of barren asses are actors! I should like now to promenade round your Gardens—apple-tasting—pear-tasting—plum-judging—apricot nibbling—peach-scrunching—nectarine-sucking and Melon-carving. I have also a great feeling for antiquated cherries full of sugar cracks—and a white currant tree kept for company. I admire lolling on a lawn by a water lillied pond to eat white currants and see gold fish: and go to the Fair in the Evening if I'm good. There is not hope for that—one is sure to get into some mess before evening. Have these hot days I brag of so much been well or ill for your health? Let me hear soon—

Your affectionate Brother

John ——

[1] In the holograph, 'gig'.

[2] Louis XVIII of France.

CXXX.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Winchester, Sept. 1 1819.

My dear Taylor

Brown and I have been employed for these 3 weeks past from time to time in writing to our different friends—a dead silence is our only answer—we wait morning after morning. Tuesday is the day for the Examiner to arrive, this is the 2^{d} Tuesday which has been barren even of a Newspaper—Men should be in imitation of Spirits "responsive to each other's note".[1] Instead of that I pipe and no one hath danced. We have been cursing like Mandeville and Lisle.[2] With this I shall send by the same post a 3^{d} letter to a friend of mine

[1] Misquoted from 'Paradise Lost,' Book IV, line 683—

Sole, or responsive each to other's note.

[2] The reading world has so completely abandoned William Godwin's powerful but unsympathetic book 'Mandeville—a Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England' (3 volumes 1817) that the force of the comparison is likely enough to be lost. The allusion is to Mandeville's account of his Oxford life, and of young Lisle, with whom he formed a friendship at the University. At pages 68 to 71 of the second volume is the following passage:—

"Sometimes we would sit silent together for hours, like what I have heard of a Quakers' meeting; and then, suddenly seized with that passion for change which is never utterly extinguished in the human mind, would cry out as by mutual impulse, Come, now let us curse a little! In the art of cursing we were certainly no ordinary proficients; and if an indifferent person could have heard us, he would probably have been considerably struck, with the solemnity, the fervour, the eloquence, the richness of style and imagination, with which we discharged the function. The fulminations of Lisle were directed against Cromwel, his assistants and abettors, against Bradshaw and the regicides, and against the whole body of the Republican and King-killing party. The favourite object of my comminations were the pope, and the cardinals, and the jesuits, and all those, who, from the twelfth century downwards, had devoted the reformers, and the preachers of the pure religion of Christ, to massacre and the flames. My companion recited, with all the sacred emotions of revenge, the massacre of Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle; while I, with equal agitation of feature and limb, commemorated the last fatal day of my father and my mother, and swore to avenge their catastrophe, upon every the humblest adherent of the Catholic religion that should ever fall within the sphere of my power. While we were thus engaged, we seemed to ourselves to be discharging an indispensible duty; and our eyes sparkled, and our hearts attained a higher degree of complacency, in proportion as we thus proceeded, to 'unpack our hearts with curses.' Lisle however, I must with contrition confess, was much my superior on these occasions. Not in feeling; but he was blessed in a surprising degree with copiousness of speech, in which faculty I was deficient. So that we were something like Queen Margaret, and the mother of the two young princes, in the play of Richard the Third: when the first had poured forth her astonishing and heart-withering execrations, the other could only say,

Though far more cause, yet much less speech to curse,
Abides in me: I say Amen to her.

who though it is of consequence has neither answered right or left. We have been much in want of news from the Theatres having heard that Kean is going to America—but no—not a word. Why should I come on you with all these complaints I cannot explain to myself, especially as I suspect you must be in the country. Do answer me soon for I really must know something. I must steer myself by the rudder of Information. . . .

ever yours sincerely
John Keats.

CXXXI.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Winchester,
5 September [1819].

My dear Taylor,

This morning I received yours of the 2d, and with it a letter from Hessey inclosing a Bank post Bill of £30, an ample sum I assure you—more I had no thought of.—You should not have delayed so long in Fleet St[reet]—leading an inactive life as you did was breathing poison: you will find the country air do more for you than you expect. But it must be proper country air. You must choose a spot. What sort of a place is Retford? You should have a dry, gravelly, barren, elevated country, open to the currents of air, and such a place is generally furnished with the finest springs. The neighbourhood of a rich inclosed fulsome manured arable land, especially in a valley and almost as bad on a flat, would be almost as bad as the smoke of Fleet St[reet].—Such a place as this was Shanklin, only open to the south-east, and surrounded by hills in every other direction. From this south-east came the damps of the sea; which, having no egress, the air would for days together take on an unhealthy idiosyncrasy altogether enervating and weakening as a city smoke—I felt it very much. Since I have been here at Winchester I have been improving in health—it is not so confined—and there is on one side of the City a dry chalky down, where the air is worth Sixpence a pint. So if you do not get better at Retford, do not impute it to your own weakness before you have well considered the Nature of the air and soil—especially as

In this respect however the comparison failed. If the torrent of his curses was louder and more foaming, mine certainly did not come behind them in bitterness."

I have often wondered whether Shelley's Eton reputation as a proficient in the art of cursing furnished Godwin with this idea, or whether the finished picture of the two young cursers at Oxford was itself the source from which the poet's biographer, Hogg, drew his inspiration for the Eton legend. The problem is the more attractive from the fact that Shelley wrote an excellent paper entitled 'Remarks on "Mandeville" and Mr. Godwin' (Prose Works, 1880, Volume III, pages 3 to 8).

Autumn is encroaching—for the Autumn fog over a rich land is like the steam from cabbage water. What makes the great difference between valesmen, flatlandmen and mountaineers? The cultivation of the earth in a great measure. Our health, temperament and disposition, are taken more (notwithstanding the contradiction of the history of Cain and Abel) from the air we breathe, than is generally imagined. See the difference between a Peasant and a Butcher.—I am convinced a great cause of it is the difference of the air they breathe: the one takes *his* mingled with the fume of slaughter, the other from the dank exhalement from the glebe: the teeming damp that comes up from the plough-furrow is of more effect in taming the fierceness of a strong man—more than his labour. Let him be mowing furze upon a mountain, and at the day's end his thoughts will run upon a pick-axe if he ever had handled one; —let him leave the plough, and he will think quietly of his supper. Agriculture is the tamer of men—the steam from the earth is like drinking their Mother's milk—it enervates their nature. This appears a great cause of the imbecility of the Chinese: and if this sort of atmosphere is a mitigation to the energy of a strong man, how much more must it injure a weak one unoccupied, unexercised. For what is the cause of so many men maintaining a good state in Cities, but occupation? An idle man, a man who is not sensitively alive to self-interest in a city cannot continue long in good health. This is easily explained. If you were to walk leisurely through an unwholesome path in the fens, with a little horror of them, you would be sure to have your ague. But let Macbeth cross the same path, with the dagger in the air leading him on, and he would never have an ague or anything like it. You should give these things a serious consideration. Notts, I believe, is a flat county. You should be on the slope of one of the dry barren hills in Somersetshire. I am convinced there is as harmful air to be breathed in the country as in town. I am greatly obliged to you for your letter. Perhaps, if you had had strength and spirits enough, you would have felt offended by my offering a note of hand, or rather expressed it. However, I am sure you will give me credit for not in anywise mistrusting you; or imagining that you would take advantage of any power I might give you over me. No—it proceeded from my serious resolve not to be a gratuitous borrower, from a great desire to be correct in money matters, to have in my desk the Chronicles of them to refer to, and know my worldly non-estate: besides in case of my death such documents would be but just, if merely as memorials of the friendly turns I had done to me. Had I known of your illness I should not have written in such fiery phrase in my first letter. I hope that shortly you will be able to bear six times as much. Brown likes the tragedy very much: but he is not a fit judge of it, as

I have only acted as midwife to his plot; and of course he will be fond of his child. I do not think I can make you any extracts without spoiling the effect of the whole when you come to read it—I hope you will then not think my labour misspent. Since I finished it, I have finished Lamia, and am now occupied in revising St. Agnes's Eve, and studying Italian. Ariosto I find as diffuse, in parts, as Spenser—I understand completely the difference between them. I will cross the letter with some lines from Lamia.[1] Brown's kindest remembrances to you—and I am ever your most sincere friend,

John Keats.

A haunting Music sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the fairy roof made moan
Throughout as fearful the whole charm might fade.
Fresh Carved Cedar mimicking a glade
Of Palm and Plantain met from either side
In the high midst in honour of the Bride—
Two Palms, and then two plantains and so on
From either side their stems branch'd one to one
All down the aisled place—and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.
So canopied lay an untasted feast
Teeming a perfume. Lamia regal drest
Silverly paced about and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The splendid finish of each nook and niche—
Between the tree stems wainscoated at first
Came jasper panels—then anon there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees
And with the larger wove in small intricacies—
And so till she was sated—then came down
Soft lighting on her head a brilliant crown
Wreath'd turban-wise of tender wannish fire
And sprinkled o'er with stars like Ariadne's tiar.
Approving all—she faded at self will,
And shut the Chamber up close hush'd and still;
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude.

This is a good sample of the story. Brown is gone to Chichester a-visiting—I shall be alone here for 3 weeks, expecting accounts of your health.

[1] The holograph of this letter not being at present available for reference, it is not certain what was the state of the passage he "cross-scribed." An early manuscript in Lord Houghton's collection has been drawn on to supply the passage, with its variations from the finished poem, as far as possible. See 'Poetry and Prose by John Keats' (1890), pages 5 to 9.

CXXXII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead.

Fleet Street, Monday Morn [13 September 1819].
[*Postmark*, Lombard Street, 14 September 1819.]

My dear Girl,

I have been hurried to town by a Letter from my brother George; it is not of the brightest intelligence. Am I mad or not? I came by the Friday night coach and have not yet been to Hampstead. Upon my soul it is not my fault. I cannot resolve to mix any pleasure with my days: they go one like another, undistinguishable. If I were to see you to-day it would destroy the half comfortable sullenness I enjoy at present into downright perplexities. I love you too much to venture to Hampstead, I feel it is not paying a visit, but venturing into a fire. *Que feraije?* as the french novel writers say in fun, and I in earnest: really what can I do? Knowing well that my life must be passed in fatigue and trouble, I have been endeavouring to wean myself from you: for to myself alone what can be much of a misery? As far as they regard myself I can despise all events: but I cannot cease to love you. This morning I scarcely know what I am doing. I am going to Walthamstow. I shall return to Winchester to-morrow;[1] whence you shall hear from me in a few days. I am a Coward, I cannot bear the pain of being happy: 'tis out of the question: I must admit no thought of it.

Yours ever affectionately
John Keats

CXXXIII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Winchester,
22nd Sept. 1819.

My dear Reynolds,

I was very glad to hear from Woodhouse that you would meet in the country. I hope you will pass some pleasant time together. Which I wish to make pleasanter by a brace of letters, very highly to be estimated, as really I have had very bad luck with this sort of game this season. I "kepen in solitarinesse,"[2] for Brown has gone a-visiting. I am surprised myself at the pleasure I live alone in. I can give you no news

[1] He must, I think, have waited till the day after: he would seem to have gone to Winchester again on the 15th of September. See page 101, *post*.

[2] See 'The Eve of St. Mark,' page 115, *post*.

of the place here, or any other idea of it but what I have to this effect written to George. Yesterday I say to him was a grand day for Winchester. They elected a mayor. It was indeed high time the place should receive some sort of excitement. There was nothing going on: all asleep: not an old maid's sedan returning from a card-party: and if any old women got tipsy at Christenings they did not expose it in the streets. The first night tho' of our arrival here there was a slight uproar took place at about 10 o' the Clock. We heard distinctly a noise pattering down the High Street as of a walking cane of the good old Dowager breed; and a little minute after we heard a less voice observe "What a noise the ferril made—it must be loose." Brown wanted to call the constables, but I observed it was only a little breeze, and would soon pass over.—The side streets here are excessively maiden-ladylike: the door-steps always fresh from the flannel. The knockers have a staid, serious, nay almost awful quietness about them. I never saw so quiet a collection of Lions' and Rams' heads. The doors are most part black, with a little brass handle just above the keyhole, so that in Winchester a man may very quietly shut himself out of his own house. How beautiful the season is now —How fine the air—a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies—I never liked stubble-field so much as now—Aye better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble-field looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.[1]

I hope you are better employed than in gaping after weather. I have been at different times so happy as not to know what weather it was—No I will not copy a parcel of verses. I always somehow associate Chatterton with autumn. He is the purest writer in the English Language. He has no French idiom or particles, like Chaucer—'tis genuine English Idiom in English words. I have given up Hyperion—there were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or rather, artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up. It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from Hyperion, and put a mark + to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one || to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul 'twas imagination—I cannot make the distinction—Every now and then there is a Miltonic intonation—But I cannot make the division properly. The fact is, I must take a walk; for I am writing a long letter to George: and have been employed at it all the morning. You will ask, have I heard from George. I am sorry to say not the

[1] He composed the ode 'To Autumn' and had written it out in a letter to Woodhouse of the same day, which is not known to be extant.

best news—I hope for better. This is the reason, among others, that if I write to you it must be in such a scrap-like way. I have no meridian to date interests from, or measure circumstances. To-night I am all in a mist; I scarcely know what's what. But you knowing my unsteady and vagarish disposition, will guess that all this turmoil will be settled by to-morrow morning. It strikes me to-night that I have led a very odd sort of life for the two or three last years—Here and there—no anchor—I am glad of it.—If you can get a peep at Babbicombe before you leave the country, do.—I think it is the finest place I have seen, or is to be seen, in the South. There is a Cottage there I took warm water at, that made up for the tea. I have lately shirk'd some friends of ours, and I advise you to do the same, I mean the blue-devils—I am never at home to them. You need not fear them while you remain in Devonshire.—There will be some of the family waiting for you at the Coach office—but go by another Coach.

I shall beg leave to have a third opinion in the first discussion you have with Woodhouse—just half-way, between both. You know I will not give up my argument—In my walk to-day I stoop'd under a railing that lay across my path, and asked myself "Why I did not get over." "Because," answered I, "no one wanted to force you under." I would give a guinea to be a reasonable man—good sound sense—a says what he thinks and does what he says man—and did not take snuff. They say men near death, however mad they may have been, come to their senses—I hope I shall here in this letter—there is a decent space to be very sensible in—many a good proverb has been in less—nay, I have heard of the statutes at large being changed into the Statutes at Small and printed for a watch paper.

Your sisters, by this time, must have got the Devonshire "ees"—short ees—you know 'em—they are the prettiest ees in the language. O how I admire the middle-sized delicate Devonshire girls of about fifteen. There was one at an inn door holding a quartern of brandy—the very thought of her kept me warm a whole stage—and a 16 miler too—"You'll pardon me for being jocular."

Ever your affectionate friend
John Keats

[1] It will be noticed that the humourous account of Winchester given on page 93 is literally a scrap copied out of the long letter which Keats was writing to his brother George: see page 112, *post*, where the passage appears under the date 20 September 1819.

[2] This and the passage at the end of the letter about Devonshire read as if Keats had after all carried away a much more lasting impression of the beauties and advantages of the county than might be expected from his invectives against the moisture of the climate when he was at Teignmouth with Tom.

CXXXIV.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

Winchester, Wednesday Eve.
[22 September 1819.]

My dear Dilke,

Whatever I take to for the time I cannot l[e]ave off in a hurry; letter writing is the go now; I have consumed a quire at least. You must give me credit, now, for a free Letter when it is in reality an interested one, on two points, the one requestive, the other verging to the pros and cons. As I expect they will lead me to seeing and conferring with you in a short time, I shall not enter at all upon a letter I have lately received from George, of not the most comfortable intelligence: but proceed to these two points, which if you can theme out into sexions and subsexions, for my edification, you will oblige me. The first I shall begin upon, the other will follow like a tail to a Comet. I have written to Brown on the subject, and can but go over the same Ground with you in a very short time, it not being more in length than the ordinary paces between the Wickets. It concerns a resolution I have taken to endeavour to acquire something by temporary writing in periodical works. You must agree with me how unwise it is to keep feeding upon hopes, which depending so much on the state of temper and imagination, appear gloomy or bright, near or afar off, just as it happens. Now an act has three parts—to act, to do, and to perform—I mean I should *do* something for my immediate welfare. Even if I am swept away like a spider from a drawing room, I am determined to spin—homespun any thing for sale. Yea, I will traf[f]ic. Anything but Mortgage my Brain to Blackwood. I am determined not to lie like a dead lump. If Reynolds had not taken to the law, would he not be earning something? Why cannot I [?] You may say I want tact—that is easily acquired. You may be up to the slang of a cock pit in three battles. It is fortunate I have not before this been tempted to venture on the common. I should a year or two ago have spoken my mind on every subject with the utmost simplicity. I hope I have learned a little better and am confident I shall be able to cheat as well as any literary Jew of the Market and shine up an article on any thing without much knowledge of the subject, aye like an orange. I would willingly have recourse to other means. I cannot; I am fit for nothing

CXXXIV. I suppose the original letter, though in Sir Charles Dilke's possession, was not sent; for it bears no trace of any postmark; and Keats talks of not sending it, in his second letter to Brown of the 23rd of September 1819. It seems likely that the short letter of the 1st of October to Dilke was sent instead of this longer one.

but literature. Wait for the issue of this Tragedy? No—there cannot be greater uncertainties east, west, north, and south than concerning dramatic composition. How many months must I wait! Had I not better begin to look about me now? If better events supersede this necessity what harm will be done? I have no trust whatever on Poetry. I don't wonder at it—the ma[r]vel is to me how people read so much of it. I think you will see the reasonableness of my plan. To forward it I purpose living in cheap Lodging in Town, that I may be in the reach of books and information, of which there is here a plentiful lack. If I can [find] any place tolerably comfortable I will settle myself and fag till I can afford to buy Pleasure—which if [I] never can afford I must go without. Talking of Pleasure, this moment I was writing with one hand, and with the other holding to my Mouth a Nectarine—good God how fine. It went down soft, pulpy, slushy, oozy—all its delicious embonpoint melted down my throat like a large beatified Strawberry. I shall certainly breed. Now I come to my request. Should you like me for a neighbour again? Come, plump it out, I won't blush. I should also be in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Wylie, which I should be glad of, though that of course does not influence me. Therefore will you look about Marsham, or Rodney[1] Street for a couple of rooms for me. Rooms like the gallant's legs in Massinger's time, "as good as the times allow, Sir." I have written to-day to Reynolds, and to Woodhouse. Do you know him? He is a Friend of Taylor's at whom Brown has taken one of his funny odd dislikes. I'm sure he's wrong, because Woodhouse likes my Poetry—conclusive. I ask your opinion and yet I must say to you as to him, Brown, that if you have any thing to say against it I shall be as obstinate and heady as a Radical. By the Examiner coming in your handwriting you must be in Town. They have put me into spirits. Notwithstand[ing] my aristocratic temper I cannot help being very much pleased with the present public proceedings. I hope sincerely I shall be able to put a Mite of help to the Liberal side of the Question before I die. If you should have left Town again (for your Holidays cannot be up yet) let me know when this is forwarded to you. A most extraordinary mischance has befallen two letters I wrote Brown—one from London whither I was obliged to go on business for George; the other from this place since my return. I can't make it out. I am excessively sorry for it. I shall hear from Brown and from you almost together, for I have sent him a Letter to-day: you must positively agree with me or by the delicate toe nails of the virgin I will not open your Letters. If they are as David says

[1] Mr. Dilke puts a quære against this name, and suggests 'Romney.' That was probably what Keats meant; but what he wrote was 'rodney,' with a small *r*.

"suspicious looking letters" I won't open them. If St. John had been half as cunning he might have seen the revelations comfortably in his own room, without giving angels the trouble of breaking open seals. Remember me to Mrs. D.—and the Westmonasteranian and believe me

Ever your sincere friend
John Keats—

CXXXV.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Winchester,
23 September 1819.

* * * * * *

Now I am going to enter on the subject of self. It is quite time I should set myself doing something, and live no longer upon hopes. I have never yet exerted myself. I am getting into an idle-minded, vicious way of life, almost content to live upon others. In no period of my life have I acted with any self-will but in throwing up the apothecary profession. That I do not repent of. Look at Reynolds,[1] if he was not in the law, he would be acquiring, by his abilities, something towards his support. My occupation is entirely literary: I will do so, too. I will write, on the liberal side of the question, for whoever will pay me. I have not known yet what it is to be diligent. I purpose living in town in a cheap lodging, and endeavouring, for a beginning, to get the theatricals of some paper. When I can afford to compose deliberate poems, I will. I shall be in expectation of an answer to this. Look on my side of the question. I am convinced I am right. Suppose the tragedy should succeed,—there will be no harm done. And here I will take an opportunity of making a remark or two on our friendship, and on all your good offices to me. I have a natural timidity of mind in these matters; liking better to take the feeling between us for granted, than to speak of it. But, good God! what a short while you have known me! I feel it a sort of duty thus to recapitulate, however unpleasant it may be to you. You have been living for others more than any man I know. This is a vexation to me, because it has been depriving you, in the very prime of your life, of pleasures which it was your duty to procure. As I am speaking in general terms, this may appear nonsense; you, perhaps, will not understand it; but if you can go over, day by day, any month of the last year, you will know what I mean. On the whole however this is a

[1] Brown left the name blank in the transcript he gave Lord Houghton, but that Reynolds was referred to is certain. See page 95, *ante*.

subject that I cannot express myself upon—I speculate upon it frequently; and believe me the end of my speculations is always an anxiety for your happiness. This anxiety will not be one of the least incitements to the plan I purpose pursuing. I had got into a habit of mind of looking towards you as a help in all difficulties. This very habit would be the parent of idleness and difficulties. You will see it as a duty I owe myself to break the neck of it. I do nothing for my subsistence—make no exertion. At the end of another year you shall applaud me, not for verses, but for conduct. If you live at Hampstead next winter——I like * * * * * * * * and I cannot help it. On that account I had better not live there. While I have some immediate cash,[1] I had better settle myself quietly, and fag on as others do. I shall apply to Hazlitt, who knows the market as well as any one, for something to bring me in a few pounds as soon as possible. I shall not suffer my pride to hinder me. The whisper may go round; I shall not hear it. If I can get an article in the "Edinburgh," I will. One must not be delicate. Nor let this disturb you longer than a moment. I look forward with a good hope that we shall one day be passing free, untrammelled, unanxious time together. That can never be if I continue a dead lump. . . . I shall be expecting anxiously an answer from you. If it does not arrive in a few days this will have miscarried, and I shall come straight to [Bedhampton?] before I go to town, which you I am sure will agree had better be done while I still have some ready cash. By the middle of October I shall expect you in London. We will then set at the theatres. If you have anything to gainsay, I shall be even as the deaf adder which stoppeth her ears.

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CXXXVI.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Winchester,
23 September 1819.

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Do not suffer me to disturb you unpleasantly: I do not mean that you should not suffer me to occupy your thoughts, but to

[1] "The cash," observes Mr. Dilke, "borrowed from Taylor—£30 a fortnight before—on the 5th." See page 89, *ante*.

CXXXVI. Lord Houghton says:—"The gloomy tone of this correspondence soon brought Mr. Brown to Winchester. Up to that period Keats had always expressed himself most averse to writing for any periodical publication. The short contributions to the 'Champion' were rather acts of friendship than literary labours. But now Mr. Brown, knowing what his pecuniary circumstances were,

occupy them pleasantly; for I assure you I am as far from being unhappy as possible. Imaginary grievances have always been more my torment than real ones. You know this well. Real ones will never have any other effect upon me than to stimulate me to get out of or avoid them. This is easily accounted for—Our imaginary woes are conjured up by our passions, and are fostered by passionate feeling: our real ones come of themselves, and are opposed by an abstract exertion of mind. Real grievances are displacers of passion. The imaginary nail a man down for a sufferer, as on a cross; the real spur him up into an agent. I wish, at one view, you would see my heart towards you. 'Tis only from a high tone of feeling that I can put that word upon paper—out of poetry. I ought to have waited for your answer to my last before I wrote this. I felt however compelled to make a rejoinder to yours. I had written to Dilke on the subject of my last, I scarcely know whether I shall send my letter now. I think he would approve of my plan; it is so evident. Nay, I am convinced, out and out, that by prosing for a while in periodical works, I may maintain myself decently.

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CXXXVII.

To GEORGE KEATS.

Winchester, September, Friday.
[17 September 1819.]

My dear George:

I was closely employed in reading and composition in this place, whither I had come from Shanklin for the convenience of a library, when I received your last dated 24th July. You will have seen by the short letter I wrote from Shanklin how matters stand between us and Mr. Jennings. They had

and painfully conscious that the time spent in the creation of those works which were destined to be the delight and solace of thousands of his fellow-creatures, must be unprofitable to him in procuring the necessities of life, and, above all, estimating at its due value that spirit of independence which shrinks from materialising the obligations of friendship into daily bread, gave every encouragement to these designs, and only remonstrated against the project" of taking a solitary lodging in Westminster, "on account of the pain he would himself suffer from the privation of Keats's society," and "from the belief that the scheme of life would not be successful."

CXXXVII. This important letter had the ill hap to be first given in the New York 'World' of the 25th and 26th of June 1877, in which it was cut up and scattered about with so much mystification and so many blunders arising from simple ignorance that doubts not unnaturally arose as to its genuineness. As to that I never had the remotest doubt, nor as to the dates of its composition. Mr.

not at all moved, and I knew no way of overcoming the inveterate obstinacy of our affairs. On receiving your last, I immediately took a place in the same night's coach for London. Mr. Abbey behaved extremely well to me, appointed Monday evening at seven to meet me, and observed that he should drink tea at that hour. I gave him the enclosed note and showed him the last leaf of yours to me. He really appeared anxious about it, and promised he would forward your money as quickly as possible. I think I mentioned that Walton was dead. He will apply to Mr. Gliddon the partner, endeavor to get rid of Mr. Jennings's claim, and be expeditious. He has received an answer from my letter to Fry. That is something. We are certainly in a very low estate—I say we, for I am in such a situation, that were it not for the assistance of Brown and Taylor, I must be as badly off as a man can be. I could not raise any sum by the promise of any poem, no, not by the mortgage of my intellect. We must wait a little while. I really have hopes of success. I have finished a tragedy,[1] which if it succeeds will enable me to sell what I may have in manuscript to a good advantage. I have passed my time in reading, writing, and fretting—the last I intend to give up, and stick to the other two. They are the only chances of benefit to us. Your wants will be a fresh spur to me. I assure you you shall more than share what I can get whilst I am still young. The time may come when age will make me more selfish. I have not been well treated by the world, and yet I have, capitally well. I do not know a person to whom so many purse-strings would fly open as to me, if I could possibly take advantage of them, which I cannot do, for none of the owners of these purses are rich. Your present situation I will not suffer myself to dwell upon. When misfortunes are so real, we are glad enough to escape them and the thought of them. I cannot help thinking Mr. Audubon[2] a dishonest man. Why did he make you believe that he was a man of property? How is it his circumstances have altered so suddenly? In truth, I do not believe you fit to deal with the world, or at least the American world. But, good God! who can avoid these chances? You have done your best. Take matters as coolly as you can; and confidently expecting help from England, act as if no help was

Speed, in reprinting it in his selection from his great-uncle's works, reproduced most of the mistakes of the 'World' version, and introduced a few fresh ones, as well as several new passages. The text here given is amended within the limits of safety; but it is a pity the holograph did not come to England with the rest.

1 'Otho the Great.'

2 Mr. Speed says "Audubon, the naturalist, sold to George Keats a boat loaded with merchandise, which at the time of the sale Audubon knew to be at the bottom of the Mississippi River."

nigh. Mine, I am sure, is a tolerable tragedy; it would have been a bank to me, if just as I had finished it, I had not heard of Kean's resolution to go to America. That was the worst news I could have had. There is no actor can do the principal character[1] besides Kean. At Covent Garden there is a great chance of its being damn'd. Were it to succeed even there it would lift me out of the mire; I mean the mire of a bad reputation which is continually rising against me. My name with the literary fashionables is vulgar. I am a weaver-boy to them. A tragedy would lift me out of this mess, and mess it is as far as regards our pockets. But be not cast down any more than I am; I feel I can bear real ills better than imaginary ones. Whenever I find myself growing vapourish, I rouse myself, wash, and put on a clean shirt, brush my hair and clothes, tie my shoestrings neatly, and in fact adonize as if I were going out. Then, all clean and comfortable, I sit down to write. This I find the greatest relief. Besides I am becoming accustomed to the privations of the pleasures of sense. In the midst of the world I live like a hermit. I have forgot how to lay plans for enjoyment of any pleasure. I feel I can bear anything,—any misery, even imprisonment, so long as I have neither wife nor child. Perhaps you will say yours are your only comfort; they must be. I returned to Winchester the day before yesterday,[2] and am now here alone, for Brown, some days before I left, went to Bedhampton, and there he will be for the next fortnight. The term of his house[3] will be up in the middle of next month when we shall return to Hampstead. On Sunday, I dined with your mother and Hen and Charles in Henrietta Street. Mrs. and Miss Miller were in the country. Charles had been but a few days returned from Paris. I dare say you will have letters expressing the motives of his journey. Mrs. Wylie and Miss Waldegrave seem as quiet as two mice there alone. I did not show your last. I thought it better not, for better times will certainly come, and why should they be unhappy in the meantime? On Monday morning I went to Walthamstow. Fanny looked better than I had seen her for some time. She complains of not hearing from you, appealing to me as if it was half my fault. I have been so long in retirement that London appeared a very odd place. I could not make out I had so many acquaintance, and it was a whole

[1] The part of Ludolph.

[2] He told Fanny Brawne on the 13th that he should return the next day; but I presume he had to postpone his return till the 15th.

[3] It will be remembered that Brown was in the habit of letting his house in Wentworth Place, where he and Keats domesticated together, and that he generally arranged to go off on country trips during those terms for which the house was thus profitably employed.

day before I could feel among men. I had another strange sensation. There was not one house I felt any pleasure to call at. Reynolds was in the country, and, saving himself, I am prejudiced against all that family.[1] Dilke and his wife and child were in the country. Taylor was at Nottingham. I was out, and everybody was out. I walked about the streets as in a strange land. Rice was the only one at home. I passed some time with him. I know him better since we have lived a month together in the Isle of Wight. He is the most sensible and even wise man I know. He has a few John Bull prejudices, but they improve him. His illness is at times alarming. We are great friends, and there is no one I like to pass a day with better. Martin called in to bid him good-bye before he set out for Dublin. If you would like to hear one of his jokes, here is one which, at the time, we laughed at a good deal: A Miss ——, with three young ladies, one of them Martin's sister, had come a-gadding in the Isle of Wight and took for a few days a cottage opposite ours. We dined with them one day, and as I was saying they had fish. Miss —— said she thought *they tasted of the boat.* "No" says Martin, very seriously, "they haven't been kept long enough." I saw Haslam. He is very much occupied with love and business, being one of Mr. Saunders' executors and lover to a young woman. He showed me her picture by Severn. I think she is, though not very cunning, too cunning for him. Nothing strikes me so forcibly with a sense of the ridiculous as love. A man in love I do think cuts the sorriest figure in the world; queer, when I know a poor fool to be really in pain about it, I could burst out laughing in his face. His pathetic visage becomes irresistible. Not that I take Haslam as a pattern for lovers; he is a very worthy man and a good friend. His love is very amusing. Somewhere in the Spectator is related an account of a man inviting a party of stutterers and squinters to his table. It would please me more to scrape together a party of lovers—not to dinner, but to tea. There would be no fighting as among Knights of old.

> Pensive they sit, and roll their languid eyes,
> Nibble their toast and cool their tea with sighs;
> Or else forget the purpose of the night,
> Forget their tea, forget their appetite.
> See, with cross'd arms they sit—Ah! hapless crew,
> The fire is going out and no one rings
> For coals, and therefore no coals Betty brings.
> A fly is in the milk-pot. Must he die
> Circled by a humane society?

[1] The matter of Miss Cox was probably still fresh in his recollection. See pages 178-81 of Volume IV.

No, no ; there, Mr. Werter takes his spoon,
Inserts it, dips the handle, and lo ! soon
The little straggler, sav'd from perils dark,
Across the teaboard draws a long wet mark.
Romeo ! Arise, take snuffers by the handle,
There's a large cauliflower in each candle.
A winding sheet—ah, me ! I must away
To No. 7, just beyond the circus gay.
Alas, my friend, your coat sits very well ;
Where may your Tailor live ? I may not tell.
O pardon me. I'm absent now and then.
Where *might* my Tailor live ? I say again
I cannot tell, let me no more be teazed ;
He lives in Wapping, might live where he pleased.

You see, I cannot get on without writing, as boys do at school, a few nonsense verses. I begin them, and before I have written six the whim has passed—if there is anything deserving so respectable a name in them. I shall put in a bit of information anywhere, just as it strikes me. Mr. Abbey is to write to me as soon as he can bring matters to bear, and then I am to go to town and tell him the means of forwarding to you through Capper and Hazlewood. I wonder I did not put this before. I shall go on to-morrow ; it is so fine now I must take a bit of a walk.

Saturday [18 September 1819].—With my inconstant disposition it is no wonder that this morning, amid all our bad times and misfortunes, I should feel so alert and well-spirited. At this moment you are perhaps in a very different state of mind. It is because my hopes are ever paramount to my despair. I have been reading over a part of a short poem I have composed lately, called Lamia, and I am certain there is that sort of fire in it which must take hold of people in some way. Give them either pleasant or unpleasant sensation—what they want is a sensation of some sort. I wish I could pitch the key of your spirits as high as mine is ; but your organ-loft is beyond the reach of my voice.

I admire the exact admeasurement of my niece in your mother's letter—O ! the little span-long elf. I am not the least a judge of the proper weight and size of an infant. Never trouble yourselves about that. She is sure to be a fine woman. Let her have only delicate nails both on hands and feet, and both as small as a May-fly's, who will live you his life on a 3 square inch of oak-leaf ; and nails she must have quite different from the market-women here, who plough into butter and make a quarter-pound taste of it. I intend to write a letter to your wife, and there I may say more on this little plump subject—I hope she's plump. "Still harping on my daughter !"[1] This

[1] 'Hamlet,' Act II, Scene ii.

Winchester is a place tolerably well suited to me: there is a fine cathedral, a college, a Roman Catholic chapel, a Methodist do., an Independent do.; and there is not one loom, or anything like manufacturing beyond bread and butter, in the whole city. There are a number of rich Catholics in the place. It is a respectable, ancient, aristocratic place, and moreover it contains a nunnery. Our set are by no means so hail fellow well met on literary subjects as we were wont to be. Reynolds has turn'd to the law. By the bye, he brought out a little piece at the Lyceum call'd "One, Two, Three, Four: by Advertisement."[1]

[1] The title of the piece in question is 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five: By Advertisement, a Musical Entertainment in one Act.' It held the stage firmly enough to be included in Cumberland's 'British Theatre,' where it is stated that the play was written for John Reeve, and brought out at the English Opera, with him in the principal part, on the 17th of July 1819. The following abstract of the fable is added:—"Mr. Coupleton wishing to retire from the bustle and turmoil of a city life, and enjoy the country and springtide, '*solus cum sola* with his lovely May,' advertises for a husband for his daughter; a young lady of *a thousand* in point of *mental* accomplishments, and of *ten thousand* in a *pecuniary* sense. Miss Sophy, however, anticipating her papa, has secured to herself a lover, in the person of Harry Alias, a theatrical amateur. To punish the match-maker for his indecorous mode of proceeding in an affair of so much delicacy, and promote his own views, Mr. Alias resolves to answer the advertisement, by waiting upon Old Coupleton in a variety of characters; and Sir Peter Teazle, Dr. Endall, Sam Dabbs, and Buskin, appear successively before him, in the persons of 'Farren,' 'Harley,' 'Munden,' and 'Mathews,' all of whom were aped with wonderful fidelity. In Buskin, 'Mr. Reeve' also introduced imitations of 'John Kemble,' 'Kean,' and 'Liston'; and sang 'Hope told a flattering tale' more musically, but with the peculiar *affettuoso*, vis-comica, and grotesque expression of the last-named incomparable droll. Perplexed and puzzled with the pertinacity of Sir Peter, the physical ferocity of Endall, the vulgarity of Sam Dabbs, and the eternal bustle and chatter of Buskin, Mr. Coupleton commands Harry Alias to be called up, and bestows upon him his daughter in marriage. The farce concludes with a wedding, and the old gentleman's forgiveness (for Alias is too vain of his prowess to keep his secret), for the hoax played off at his expense." Like most of Reynolds's work, this trifle is sprightly and brilliant. In the opening scene Sophy sings the following dainty song:—

When lovers' eyes are young and light,
  This world is all a world of dreams;
Where all is tremulous and bright,
  Like moonlight on the summer streams:
The trees a softer music make,
  The sky is of a sweeter blue;
Oh, lovers' eyes, for beauty's sake,
  See fairy stars in evening's dew.
And light romantic dreams are mine,
  In the green shadow of these leaves;
And fancy in the day's decline
  Her airy web of beauty weaves:
A music in the winds I hear,
  A sweeter blue is in the skies;
Ah, mine's a lover's heart, I fear,—
  And mine, I fear, are lover's eyes!

t met with complete success. The meaning of this odd title is explained when I tell you the principal actor is a mimic, who takes off four of our best performers in the course of the farce. Our stage is loaded with mimics. I did not see the piece, being out of town the whole time it was in progress. Dilke is entirely swallowed up in his boy. 'Tis really lamentable to what a pitch he carries a sort of parental mania. I had a letter from him at Shanklin. He went on a word or two about the Isle of Wight, which is a bit of [a] hobby horse of his, but he soon deviated to his boy. "I am sitting," says he, "at the window, expecting my boy from school." I suppose I told you somewhere that he lives in Westminster, and his boy goes to school there, where he gets beaten, and every bruise he has, and I dare say deserves, is very bitter to Dilke. The place I am speaking of puts me in mind of a circumstance which occurred lately at Dilke's. I think it very rich and dramatic and quite illustrative of the little quiet fun that he will enjoy sometimes. First I must tell you that their house is at the corner of Great Smith Street, so that some of the windows look into one street, and the back windows into another round the corner. Dilke had some old people to dinner —I know not who, but there were two old ladies among them. Brown was there—they had known him from a child. Brown is very pleasant with old women, and on that day it seems behaved himself so winningly that they became hand and glove together, and a little complimentary. Brown was obliged to depart early. He bid them good-bye and passed into the passage. No sooner was his back turned than the old women began lauding him. When Brown had reached the street door, and was just going, Dilke threw up the window and call'd: "Brown! Brown! They say you look younger than ever you did." Brown went on, and had just turned the corner into the other street when Dilke appeared at the back window, crying: "Brown! Brown! By God, they say you're handsome!" You see what a many words it requires to give any identity to a thing I could have told you in half a minute.

I have been reading lately Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, and I think you will be very much amused with a page I here copy for you. I call it a Feu de Joie round the batteries of Fort St. Hyphen-de-Phrase on the birthday of the Digamma. The whole alphabet was drawn up in a phalanx on the corner of an old dictionary, band playing, "Amo, amas," &c.

"Every lover admires his mistress, though she be very "deformed of her self, ill-favored, wrinkled, pimpled, pale, red, "yellow, tan'd, tallow-faced, have a swoln juglers platter face, or "a thin, lean, chitty face, have clouds in her face, be crooked, "dry, bald, goggle-ey'd, blear-ey'd or with staring eys, she looks "like a squis'd cat, hold her head still awry, heavy, dull, hollow- "ey'd, black or yellow about the eys, or squint-ey'd, sparrow- "mouthed, Persean hook-nosed, have a sharp fox nose, a red

"nose, China flat, great nose, *nare simo patuloque*, a nose like a "promontory, gubber-tushed, rotten teeth, black, uneven, brown "teeth, beetle browed, a witches beard, her breath stink all over "the room, her nose drop winter and summer, with a Bavarian "poke under her chin, a sharp chin, lave eared, with a long "cranes neck, which stands awry too, *pendulis mammis, her "dugs like two double jugs*, or else no dugs in the other extream, "bloody faln fingers, she have filthy long unpaired nailes, "scabbed hands or wrists, a tan'd skin, a rotten carcass, crooked "back, she stoops, is lame, splea-footed, *as slender in the middle "as a cow in the wast*, gowty legs, her ankles hang over her "shooes, her feet stink, she breed lice, a meer changeling, a "very monster, an aufe imperfect, her whole complexion savours, "an harsh voyce, incondite gesture, vile gate, a vast virago, or "an ugly tit, a slug, a fat fustilugs, a trusse, a long lean rawbone, "a skeleton, a sneaker (*si qua latent meliora puta*), and to thy "judgment looks like a Mard in a lanthorn, whom thou couldst "not fancy for a world, but hatest, loathest, and wouldst have "spit in her face, or blow thy nose in her bosome, *remedium "amoris* to another man, a dowdy, a slut, a scold, a nasty, rank, "rammy, filthy, beastly quean, dishonest peradventure, obscene, "base, beggerly, rude, foolish, untaught, peevish, Irus' daughter, "Thersites sister, Grobians scholler; if he love her once, he "admires her for all this, he takes no notice of any such errours, "or imperfections of body or mind."[1]

There's a dose for you. Fire!! I would give my favourite leg to have written this as a speech in a play. With what effect could Matthews popgun it at the pit! This I think will amuse you more than so much poetry. Of that I do not like to copy any, as I am afraid it is too mal à propos for you at present; and yet I will send you some, for by the time you receive it, things in England may have taken a different turn. When I left Mr. Abbey on Monday evening I walk'd up Cheapside, but returned to put some letters in the post, and met him again in Bucklersbury. We walked together through the Poultry as far as the hatter's shop he has some concern in. He spoke of it in such a way to me, I thought he wanted me to make an offer to assist him in it. I do believe if I could be a hatter I might be

[1]Mr. Speed says "Here follows a page taken from Part III. Sec. 2, on the Symptoms of Love,—'Every lover admires his mistress,' etc. etc." But whether a page of Keats's letter, or a page of Burton's book, and if so of what edition, he says nothing. However, the matter is settled by Keats's marked copy of the 1813 edition. See Volume III, page 271. If Keats would have given his "favourite leg" to have written Burton's string of dreadful phrases, what, one wonders, would he have given for the authorship of that superb passage towards the close of the fourth book of Lucretius in which Burton had been digging, not only for his line of thought, but also for many of the illustrations in the section from which the passage quoted in the text is taken?

one. He seems anxious about me. He began blowing up Lord Byron while I was sitting with him: "However, may be the fellow says true things now and then," at which he took up a magazine, and read me some extracts from Don Juan (Lord Byron's last flash poem), and particularly one against literary ambition. I do think I must be well spoken of among sets, for Hodgkinson is more than polite, and the coffee German[1] endeavoured to be very close to me the other night at Covent Garden, where I went at half price before I tumbled into bed. Every one, however distant an acquaintance, behaves in the most conciliating manner to me. You will see I speak of this as a matter of interest. On the next sheet I will give you a little politics.

In every age there has been in England, for two or three centuries subjects of great popular interest on the carpet, so that however great the uproar, one can scarcely prophesy any material change in the Government, for as loud disturbances have agitated this country many times. All civilized countries become gradually more enlightened, and there should be a continual change for the better. Look at this country at present, and remember it when it was even impious to doubt the justice of a trial by combat. From that time there has been a gradual change. Three great changes have been in progress: first for the better, next for the worst, and a third time for the better once more. The first was the gradual annihilation of the tyranny of the nobles, when kings found it their interest to conciliate the common people, elevate them, and be just to them. Just when baronial power ceased, and before standing armies were so dangerous, taxes were few, kings were lifted by the people over the heads of their nobles, and those people held a rod over kings. The change for the worse in Europe was again this: the obligation of kings to the multitude began to be forgotten. Custom had made noblemen the humble servants of kings. Then kings turned to the nobles as the adorners of their power, the slaves of it, and from the people as creatures continually endeavouring to check them. Then in every kingdom there was a long struggle of kings to destroy all popular privileges. The English were the only people in Europe who made a grand kick at this. They were slaves to Henry VIII., but were freemen under William III. at the time the French were abject slaves under Louis XIV. The example of England, and the liberal writers of France and England, sowed the seed of opposition to this tyranny, and it was swelling in the ground till it burst out in the French Revolution. That has had an unlucky termination. It put a stop to the rapid progress of free sentiments in England, and gave our Court hopes of turning back to the despotism of the eighteenth century. They have

[1] Perhaps some one in the employ of Abbey, tea and coffee dealer.

made a handle of this event in every way to undermine our freedom. They spread a horrid superstition against all innovation and improvement. The present struggle in England of the people is to destroy this superstition. What has roused them to do it is their distress. Perhaps, on this account, the present distresses of this nation are a fortunate thing though so horrid in their experience. You will see I mean that the French Revolution put a temporary stop to this third change—the change for the better—Now it is in progress again, and I think it an effectual one. This is no contest between Whig and Tory, but between right and wrong. There is scarcely a grain of party spirit now in England. Right and wrong considered by each man abstractedly, is the fashion. I know very little of these things. I am convinced, however, that apparently small causes make great alterations. There are little signs whereby we may know how matters are going on. This makes the business of Carlile the bookseller of great moment in my mind. He has been selling deistical pamphlets, republished Tom Paine and many other works held in superstitious horror. He even has been selling, for some time, immense numbers of a work called The Deist, which comes out in weekly numbers. For this conduct he, I think, has had above a dozen indictments issued against him, for which he has found bail to the amount of many thousand pounds. After all, they are afraid to prosecute. They are afraid of his defence; it would be published in all the papers all over the empire. They shudder at this. The trials would light a flame they could not extinguish. Do you not think this of great import? You will hear by the papers of the proceedings at Manchester, and Hunt's triumphal entry into London.[1] It would take me a whole day and a quire of paper to give you anything like detail. I will merely mention that it is calculated that 30,000 people were in the streets waiting for him. The whole distance from the Angel at Islington to the Crown and Anchor was lined with multitudes.

As I passed Colnaghi's window I saw a profile portrait of Sandt,[2] the destroyer of Kotzebue. His very look must interest

[1] The mention of Henry Hunt's entry into London has been adduced as an anachronism in evidence against the genuineness of this letter. It is true that the "Orator" of Manchester Massacre fame ended an imprisonment of two years and a half on the 30th of October 1822 and made an "entry into London" on the 11th of November 1822; but the trial of which his imprisonment was the issue had not taken place till the spring of 1820; and the entry alluded to by Keats was made between the Massacre and the trial. Carlile, in 'The Republican,' speaks of 300,000 people as taking part in the demonstration.

[2] The democratic party was greatly interested in this young man, whose assassination of a conservative champion, and expiation of his crime on the scaffold, gave him a place in the democratic martyrology, notwithstanding his attempt to commit suicide.

every one in his favor. I suppose they have represented him in his college dress. He seems to me like a young Abelard—a fine mouth, cheek bones (and this is no joke) full of sentiment, a fine, unvulgar nose and plump temples.

On looking over some old letters I found the one I wrote, intended for you, from the foot of Helvellyn to Liverpool; but you had sailed, and therefore it was returned to me. It contained, among other nonsense, an acrostic of my sister's name—and a pretty long name it is. I wrote it in a great hurry which you will see. Indeed I would not copy it if I thought it would ever be seen by any but yourselves.

Give me your patience, sister, while I frame
Exact in capitals your golden name,
Or sue the fair Apollo, and he will
Rouse from his heavy slumber and instil
Great love in me for thee and Poesy.
Imagine not that greatest mastery
And kingdom over all the Realms of verse
Nears more to heaven in aught than when we nurse
And surety give to love and Brotherhood.

Anthropophagi in Othello's mood;
Ulysses storm'd, and his enchanted belt
Glowed with the Muse: but they are never felt
Unbosom'd so, and so eternal made,
Such tender incense in their laurel shade
To all the regent sisters of the Nine,
As this poor offering to you, sister mine.

Kind sister! aye, this third name says you are;
Enchanted has it been the Lord knows where;
And may its taste to you, like good old wine,
Take you to real happiness, and give
Sons, daughters and a home like honied hive.

Foot of Helvellyn, June 27.

I sent you in my first packet some of my Scotch letters. I find I have one kept back, which was written in the most interesting part of our tour, and will copy parts of it in the hope you will not find it unamusing. I would give now anything for Richardson's power of making mountains of molehills.

Incipit epistola caledoniensa.
"Dunancullen."[1]

(I did not know the day of the month, for I find I have not added it. Brown must have been asleep.) "Just after my last

[1] As regards the inconsistencies between this and the Derrynaculen letter to Thomas Keats (more supposed evidence against the genuineness of the whole affair).

"had gone to the post," (before I go any further, I must premise that I would send the identical letter, instead of taking the trouble to copy it; I do not do so, for it would spoil my notion of the neat manner in which I intend to fold these three genteel sheets. The original is written on coarse paper, and the soft ones would ride in the post bag very uneasy. Perhaps there might be a quarrel) "in came one of the men with whom "we endeavoured to agree about going to Staffa. He said "what a pity it was we should turn aside and not see the "curiosities. So we had a little talk, and finally agreed that "he should be our guide across the Isle of Mull. We set "out, crosssd two ferries—one to the isle of Kerrera, of a short "distance, the other from Kerrera to Mull, nine miles across. "We did it in forty minutes with a fine breeze. The road, "or rather the track, through the island is the most dreary you "can think of—between dreary mountains, over bog and rock "and river, with our trousers tucked up and our stockings in "hand. About 8 o'clock we arrived at a shepherd's hut, into "which we could scarcely get for the smoke, through a door "lower than my shoulders. We found our way into a little "compartment, with the rafters and turf-thatch blackened with "smoke, the earth floor full of hills and dales. We had some "white bread with us, made a good supper and slept in "our clothes in some blankets; our guide snored in another "little bed about an arm's length off. This next morning we "have come about six miles to breakfast by rather a better "path and are now, by comparison, in a mansion. Our guide is "a very obliging fellow. In our way this morning he sang us "two Gaelic songs—one made by a Mrs. Brown on her husband "being drowned, the other a Jacobite one on Charles Stuart.

"July 26 [1818].—We had a most wretched walk across the "island of Mull, and then we crossed to Iona, or Icolmkill. "From Icolmkill we took a boat at a bargain to take us to "Staffa and after to land us at the head of Loch Nakeal, "whence we should only have to walk half the distance to "Oban again and by a better road. All this is well passed "and done with this singular piece of luck that there took "place an intermission in the bad weather just as we came "in sight of Staffa, on which it is impossible to land but in "a tolerably calm sea. The old schoolmaster, an ignorant little "man, but reckoned very clever, showed us about. He is a "Maclean, and is as much above four foot as he is under

it should be remembered that Keats is only copying *parts* of a longer letter, fourteen months after the events related took place, and may very well have even transferred the "old schoolmaster" from Iona to Staffa—if indeed the Maclean of four feet one and a half inches high did not go with them from the one place to the other.

'four foot three. He stops at one glass of whiskey unless 'you press a second, and at the second, unless you press 'a third. I am puzzled how to give you an idea of Staffa. 'It can only be represented by a first-rate drawing. One may 'compare the surface of the island to a roof. The roof is 'supported by grand pillars of basalt standing together as thick 'as honeycombs. The finest thing is Fingal's Cave; it is 'entirely a breaking away of basalt pillars. Suppose, now, the 'giants who came down to the daughters of men had taken 'a whole mass of these columns and bound them together 'like bunches of matches, and then with immense axes had 'made a cavern in the body of these columns. Such is Fingal's 'Cave, except that the sea has done this work of excavation and 'is continually dashing there. So that we walk along the sides 'of the cave on the heads of the shortest pillars which are left 'as for convenient stairs. The roof is arched somewhat Gothic-'wise, and the length of some of the entire pillars is fifty feet. 'About the island you might seat an army of men, one man 'on the extremity of each pillar snapped off at different 'heights. The length of the cave is 120 feet, and from its 'extremity the view of the sea through the large arch at 'the entrance is very grand. The colour of the columns is 'a sort of black, with a lurking gloom of purple therein. For 'solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest cathedral. 'As we approached in the boat there was such a fine swell 'of the sea that the columns seemed rising immediately out of 'the waves; it is impossible to describe it. I find I must keep 'memorandums of the verses I send you, for I do not remember 'whether I have sent the following lines upon Staffa. I hope 'not; 't would be a horrid bore to you, especially after reading 'this dull specimen of description. For myself I hate descrip-'tions. I would not send it if it were not mine:

Incipit Poema Lyricum de Staffa Fracturis.

"Not Aladdin magian
Ever such a work began;" &c.[1]

I ought to make a large "?" here; but I had better take the opportunity of telling you I have got rid of my haunting sore throat, and conduct myself in a manner not to catch another.

You speak of Lord Byron and me. There is this great difference between us: he describes what he sees—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task; now see the immense difference. The Edinburgh Review are afraid to touch upon my poem. They do not know what to make of it; they do not like to condemn it, and they will not praise it for fear.

[1] For the poem see Volume IV, pages 150 and 151.

They are as shy of it as I should be of wearing a Quaker's hat. The fact is they have no real taste. They dare not compromise their judgments on so puzzling a question. If on my next publication they should praise me, and so lug in Endymion, I will address them in a manner they will not at all relish. The cowardliness of the Edinburgh is more than the abuse of the Quarterly.

Monday [20 September 1819].—This day is a grand day for Winchester. They elect the Mayor. It was indeed high time the place should have some sort of excitement. There was nothing going on—all asleep. Not an old maid's sedan returning from a card party; and if any old women have got tipsy at christenings, they have not exposed themselves in the street. The first night, tho', of our arrival here there was a slight uproar took place at about ten of the clock. We heard distinctly a noise patting down the street, as of a walking-cane of the good old dowager breed; and a little minute after we heard a less voice observe, "What a noise the ferril made—it must be loose." Brown wanted to call the constables, but I observed it was only a little breeze, and would soon pass over. The side streets here are excessively maiden-lady-like, the door-steps always fresh from the flannel. The knockers have a very staid, serious, nay almost awful quietness about them. I never saw so quiet a collection of lions' and rams' heads. The doors most part black, with a little brass handle just above the key-hole, so that you may easily shut yourself out of your own house. He! he! There is none of your Lady Bellaston ringing and rapping here; no thundering Jupiter-footmen, no opera-treble tattoos, but a modest lifting up of the knocker by a set of little wee old fingers that peep through the gray mittens, and a dying fall thereof. The great beauty of poetry is that it makes everything, every place, interesting. The palatine Venice and the abbotine Winchester are equally interesting. Some time since I began a poem called "The Eve of St. Mark," quite in the spirit of town quietude. I think it will give you the sensation of walking about an old country town in a coolish evening. I know not whether I shall ever finish it; I will give it as far as I have gone. Ut tibi placeat—

The Eve of St. Mark.

Upon a Sabbath-day it fell;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains;
And, when on western window panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatured green vallies cold,

Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fireside orat'ries;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries;
Perplex'd her with a thousand things,—
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings,
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of Saint Mark,
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in the old Minster-square;
From her fire-side she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leav'd the forest had out-stript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose, and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she try'd, and then again,
Until the dusk eve left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
She lifted up her soft warm chin,

With aching neck and swimming eyes,
And dazed with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
Save now and then the still footfall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate.
The clamorous daws, that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in ancient belfry-nest,
Where asleep they fall betimes,
To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room :
Down she sat, poor cheated soul !
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal ;
Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
And slant book, full against the glare.
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
Hover'd about, a giant size,
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,
The parrot's cage, and panel square ;
And the warm angled winter-screen,
On which were many monsters seen,
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
And legless birds of Paradise,
Macaw and tender Avadavat,
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
Untir'd she read, her shadow still
Glower'd about, as it would fill
The room with wildest forms and shades,
As though some ghostly queen of spades
Had come to mock behind her back,
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
Untir'd she read the legend page,
Of holy Mark, from youth to age,
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
Rejoicing for his many pains.
Sometimes the learned eremite,
With golden star, or dagger bright,
Referr'd to pious poesies
Written in smallest crow-quill size
Beneath the text ; and thus the rhyme
Was parcelled out from time to time :
"... Als writith he of swevenis,
Men han beforne they wake in bliss,
Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound

In crimped shroude farre under grounde;
And how a litling child mote be
A saint er its nativitie,
Gif that the modre (God her blesse!)
Kepen in solitarinesse,
And kissen devoute the holy croce.
Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force,—
He writith; and thinges many mo
Of swiche thinges I may not show.
Bot I must tellen verilie
Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
And chieflie what he auctorethe
Of Saintè Markis life and dethe:"
At length her constant eyelids come
Upon the fervent martyrdom;
Then lastly to his holy shrine,
Exalt amid the tapers' shine
At Venice,—

I hope you will like this for all its carelessness. I must take an opportunity here to observe that though I am writing *to* you, I am all the while writing *at* your wife. This explanation will account for my speaking sometimes hoity-toity-ishly, whereas if you were alone, I should sport a little more sober sadness. I am like a squinty gentleman, who, saying soft things to one lady, ogles another, or what is as bad, in arguing with a person on his left hand, appeals with his eye to one on the right. His vision is elastic; he bends it to a certain object, but having a patent spring it flies off. Writing has this disadvantage of speaking—one cannot write a wink, or a nod, or a grin, or a purse of the lips, or a *smile—O law!* One cannot put one's finger to one's nose, or yerk ye in the ribs, or lay hold of your button in writing; but in all the most lively and titterly parts of my letter you must not fail to imagine me, as the epic poets say, now here, now there; now with one foot pointed at the ceiling, now with another; now with my pen on my ear, now with my elbow in my mouth. O, my friends, you lose the action, and attitude is everything, as Fuseli said when he took up his leg like a musket to shoot a swallow just darting behind his shoulder. And yet does not the word "mum" go for one's finger beside the nose? I hope it does. I have to make use of the word "mum" before I tell you that Severn has got a little baby—all his own, let us hope. He told Brown he had given up painting, and had turned modeller. I hope sincerely 'tis not a party concern—that no Mr. —— or —— is the real Pinxit and Severn the poor Sculpsit to this work of art. You know he has long studied in the life Academy. Haydon—"yes," your wife will say, "Here is a sum total account of Haydon again. I

wonder your brother don't put a monthly bulletin in the Philadelphia papers about him. I won't hear—no. Skip down to the bottom, and there are some more of his verses—skip (lullaby-by) them too."—"No, let's go regularly through." "I won't hear a word about Haydon—bless the child, how rioty she is—there, go on there."

Now, pray go on here, for I have a few words to say about Haydon. Before this chancery threat had cut off every legitimate supply of cash from me, I had a little at my disposal. Haydon being very much in want, I lent him £30 of it. Now in this see-saw game of life, I got nearest to the ground, and this chancery business riveted me there, so that I was sitting in that uneasy position where the seat slants so abominably. I applied to him for payment. He could not. That was no wonder; but Goodman Delver, where was the wonder then? Why marry in this: he did not seem to care much about it, and let me go without my money with almost nonchalance, when he ought to have sold his drawings to supply me. I shall perhaps still be acquainted with him, but for friendship, that is at an end. Brown has been my friend in this. He got him to sign a bond, payable at three months. Haslam has assisted me with the return of part of the money you lent him.

Hunt—"there," says your wife, "there's another of those dull folk! Not a syllable about my friends? Well, Hunt—What about Hunt? You little thing, see how she bites my finger! My! is not this a tooth?" Well, when you have done with the tooth, read on. Not a syllable about your friends! Here are some syllables. As far as I could smoke things on the Sunday before last, thus matters stood in Henrietta Street. Henry was a greater blade than ever I remember to have seen him. He had on a very nice coat, a becoming waistcoat, and buff trousers. I think his face has lost a little of the Spanish-brown, but no flesh. He carved some beef exactly to suit my appetite, as if I had been measured for it. As I stood looking out of the window with Charles, after dinner, quizzing the passengers,—at which I am sorry to say he is too apt,—I observed that his young son of a gun's whiskers had begun to curl and curl, little twists and twists, all down the sides of his face, getting properly thickest on the angles of the visage. He certainly will have a notable pair of whiskers. "How shiny your gown is in front," says Charles. "Why don't you see? 'tis an apron," says Henry; whereat I scrutinized, and behold your mother had a purple stuff gown on, and over it an apron of same colour, being the same cloth that was used for the lining. And furthermore to account for the shining, it was the first day of wearing. I guessed as much of the gown—but that is entre nous. Charles likes England better than France. They've got a fat, smiling, fair cook as ever you saw; she is a little lame,

but that improves her; it makes her go more swimmingly. When I asked "Is Mrs. Wylie within?" she gave such a large five-and-thirty-year-old smile, it made me look round upon the fourth stair—it might have been the fifth; but that's a puzzle. I shall never be able, if I were to set myself a recollecting for a year, to recollect. I think I remember two or three specks in her teeth, but I really can't say exactly. Your mother said something about Miss Keasle—what that was is quite a riddle to me now, whether she had got fatter or thinner, or broader or longer, straiter, or had taken to the zigzags—whether she had taken to or had left off asses' milk. That, by the by, she ought never to touch. How much better it would be to put her out to nurse with the wise woman of Brentford. I can say no more on so spare a subject. Miss Millar now is a different morsel, if one knew how to divide and subdivide, theme her out into sections and subsections,[1] lay a little on every part of her body as it is divided in common with all her fellow-creatures, in Moor's Almanack. But, alas, I have not heard a word about her, no cue to begin upon: there was indeed a buzz about her and her mother's being at old Mrs. So and So's, *who was like to die*, as the Jews say. But I daresay, keeping up their dialect, *she was not like to die.* I must tell you a good thing Reynolds *did.* 'Twas the best thing he ever *said.* You know at taking leave of a party at a doorway, sometimes a man dallies and foolishes and gets awkward, and does not know how to make off to advantage. Good-bye, well—good-bye—and yet he does not go; good-bye, and so on,—well, god bless you—you know what I mean. Now Reynolds was in this predicament, and got out of it in a very witty way. He was leaving us at Hampstead. He delayed, and we were joking at him, and even said "be off," at which he put the tails of his coat between his legs and sneaked off as nigh like a Spaniel as could be. He went with flying colours. This is very clever. I must, being on the subject, tell you another good thing of him. He began, for the service it might be of to him in the law, to learn French; he had lessons at the cheap rate of 2 and 6 per fag, and observed to Brown, "Gad," says he, "the man sells his lessons so cheap he must have stolen 'em." You have heard of Hook, the farce writer. Horace Smith said to one who asked him if he knew Hook, "Oh yes, Hook and I are very intimate." There's a page of wit for you, to put John Bunyan's emblems out of countenance.

Tuesday [21 September 1819].—You see I keep adding a sheet daily till I send the packet off, which I shall not do for a few days, as I am inclined to write a good deal; for there can

[1] Keats was reading Burton's Anatomy, be it remembered—a book divided into Parts, Sections, Members, and Subsections.

be nothing so remembrancing and enchaining as a good long letter, be it composed of what it may. From the time you left me our friends say I have altered completely—am not the same person. Perhaps in this letter I am, for in a letter one takes up one's existence from the time we last met. I dare say you have altered also—every man does—our bodies every seven years are completely fresh material'd. Seven years ago it was not this hand that clenched itself against Hammond.[1] We are like the relict garments of a saint—the same and not the same, for the careful monks patch it and patch it till there's not a thread of the original garment left, and still they show it for St. Anthony's shirt. This is the reason why men who have been bosom friends, on being separated for any number of years meet coldly, neither of them knowing why. The fact is they are both altered.

Men who live together have a silent moulding and influencing power over each other. They interassimilate. 'Tis an uneasy thought, that in seven years the same hands cannot greet each other again. All this may be obviated by a wilful and dramatic exercise of our minds towards each other. Some think I have lost that poetical ardour and fire 'tis said I once had—The fact is, perhaps I have; but, instead of that, I hope I shall substitute a more thoughtful and quiet power. I am more frequently now contented to read and think, but now and then haunted with ambitious thoughts. Quieter in my pulse, improved in my digestion, exerting myself against vexing speculations, scarcely content to write the best verses for the fever they leave behind. I want to compose without this fever. I hope I one day shall. You would scarcely imagine I could live alone so comfortably—"Kepen in solitarinesse."[2] I told Anne, the servant here, the other day, to say I was not at home if any one should call. I am not certain how I should endure loneliness and bad weather together. Now the time is beautiful. I take a walk every day for an hour before dinner, and this is generally my walk: I go out the back gate across one street into the cathedral yard, which is always interesting; there I pass under the trees along a paved path, pass the beautiful front of the cathedral, turn to the left under a stone doorway,—then I am on the other side of the building,—which leaving behind me, I pass on through two college-like squares, seemingly built for the dwelling-place of deans and prebendaries, garnished with grass and shaded with

[1] This phrase points to a serious rupture as the cause of his quitting his apprenticeship to Hammond. Lord Houghton, in originally giving the extract, printed—"Mine is not the same hand I clenched at Hammond." In the 'Life and Letters' (1867) the words 'at Hammond' give place to 'at Hammond's.'

[2] These words from 'The Eve of St. Mark' seem to have pleased their author specially: he quotes them in his letter to Reynolds of the 22nd September 1819 also (page 92, *ante*).

rees; then I pass through one of the old city gates, and then ou are in one college street, through which I pass, and at the nd thereof crossing some meadows, and at last a country alley f gardens, I arrive, that is my worship arrives, at the founda- ion of St. Cross, which is a very interesting old place, both for ts gothic tower and alms square and for the appropriation of its ich rents to a relation of the Bishop of Winchester. Then I ass across St. Cross meadows till you come to the most beauti- ully clear river—now this is only one mile of my walk. I will pare you the other two till after supper, when they would do you nore good. You must avoid going the first mile just after dinner.

I could almost advise you to put by this nonsense until you re lifted out of your difficulties; but when you come to this art, feel with confidence what I now feel, that though there an be no stop put to troubles we are inheritors of, there can e, and must be, an end to immediate difficulties. Rest in the confidence that I will not omit any exertion to benefit you by ome means or other. If I cannot remit you hundreds, I will ens, and if not that, ones. Let the next year be managed by you as well as possible—the next month, I mean, for I trust you will soon receive Abbey's remittance. What he can send you will not be a sufficient capital to ensure you any command in America. What he has of mine I have nearly anticipated by debts, so I would advise you not to sink it, but to live upon it, in hopes of my being able to increase it. To this end I will devote whatever I may gain for a few years to come, at which period I must begin to think of a security for my own comfort, when quiet will become more pleasant to me than the world. Still, I would have you doubt my success. 'Tis at present the cast of a die with me. You say, "These things will be a great torment to me." I shall not suffer them to be so. I shall only exert myself the more, while the seriousness of their nature will prevent me from nursing up imaginary griefs. I have not had the blue devils once since I received your last. I am advised not to publish until it is seen whether the tragedy will or not succeed. Should it, a few months may see me in the way of acquiring property. Should it not, it will be a drawback and I shall have to perform a longer literary pilgrimage. You will perceive that it is quite out of my interest to come to America. What could I do there? How could I employ myself out of reach of libraries? You do not mention the name of the gentleman who assists you. 'Tis an extraordinary thing. How could you do without that assistance? I will not trust myself with brooding over this. The following is an extract from a etter of Reynolds to me:

"I am glad to hear you are getting on so well with your writings. I hope you are not neglecting the revision of your poems for the press, from which I expect more than you do."

The first thought that struck me on reading your last was to mortgage a poem to Murray, but on more consideration, I made up my mind not to do so; my reputation is very low; he would not have negotiated my bill of intellect, or given me a very small sum. I should have bound myself down for some time. 'Tis best to meet present misfortunes; not for a momentary good to sacrifice great benefits which one's own untrammelled and free industry may bring one in the end. In all this do never think of me as in any way unhappy: I shall not be so. I have a great pleasure in thinking of my responsibility to you, and shall do myself the greatest luxury if I can succeed in any way so as to be of assistance to you. We shall look back upon these times, even before our eyes are at all dim—I am convinced of it. But be careful of those Americans. I could almost advise you to come, whenever you have the sum of £500, to England. Those Americans will, I am afraid, still fleece you. If ever you think of such a thing, you must bear in mind the very different state of society here,—the immense difficulties of the times, the great sum required per annum to maintain yourself in any decency. In fact the whole is with Providence. I know not how to advise you but by advising you to advise with yourself. In your next tell me at large your thoughts about America—what chance there is of succeeding there, for it appears to me you have as yet been somehow deceived. I cannot help thinking Mr. Audubon has deceived you. I shall not like the sight of him. I shall endeavour to avoid seeing him. You see how puzzled I am. I have no meridian to fix you to, being the slave of what is to happen. I think I may bid you finally remain in good hopes, and not tease yourself with my changes and variations of mind. If I say nothing decisive in any one particular part of my letter, you may glean the truth from the whole pretty correctly. You may wonder why I had not put your affairs with Abbey in train on receiving your letter before last, to which there will reach you a short answer dated from Shanklin. I did write and speak to Abbey, but to no purpose. Your last, with the enclosed note, has appealed home to him. He will not see the necessity of a thing till he is hit in the mouth. 'Twill be effectual.

I am sorry to mix up foolish and serious things together, but in writing so much I am obliged to do so, and I hope sincerely the tenor of your mind will maintain itself better. In the course of a few months I shall be as good an Italian scholar as I am a French one. I am reading Ariosto at present, not managing more than six or eight stanzas at a time. When I have done this language, so as to be able to read it tolerably well, I shall set myself to get complete in Latin, and there my learning must stop. I do not think of venturing upon Greek. I would not go even so far if I were not persuaded of the power

he knowledge of any language gives one. The fact is I like to be acquainted with foreign languages. It is, besides, a nice way of filling up intervals, &c. Also the reading of Dante is vell worth the while; and in Latin there is a fund of curious iterature of the Middle Ages, the works of many great men—Aretino and Sannazaro and Machiavelli. I shall never become ittached to a foreign idiom, so as to put it into my writings. The Paradise Lost, though so fine in itself, is a corruption of our language. It should be kept as it is, unique, a curiosity, a beautiful and grand curiosity, the most remarkable production of the world; a northern dialect accommodating itself to Greek and Latin inversions and intonations. The purest English, I think—or what ought to be the purest—is Chatterton's. The anguage had existed long enough to be entirely incorrupted of Chaucer's Gallicisms, and still the old words are used. Chatterton's language is entirely northern. I prefer the native music of it to Milton's, cut by feet. I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. Life to him would be death to me. Miltonic verse cannot be written, but is the verse of art. I wish to devote myself to another verse alone.

Friday [24 September 1819]. I have been obliged to intermit your letter for two days (this being Friday morning) from having had to attend to other correspondence. Brown, who was at Bedhampton, went thence to Chichester, and I am still directing my letters Bedhampton. There arose a misunderstanding about them. I began to suspect my letters had been stopped from curiosity. However, yesterday Brown had four letters from me all in a lump, and the matter is cleared up. Brown complained very much in his letter to me of yesterday of the great alteration the disposition of Dilke has undergone. He thinks of nothing but political justice and his boy. Now, the first political duty a man ought to have a mind to is the happiness of his friends. I wrote Brown a comment on the subject, wherein I explained what I thought of Dilke's character, which resolved itself into this conclusion that Dilke is a man who cannot feel he has a personal identity unless he has made up his mind about everything. The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up one's mind about nothing—to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts, not a select party. The genus is not scarce in population; all the stubborn arguers you meet with are of the same brood. They never begin upon a subject they have not preresolved on. They want to hammer their nail into you, and if you turn the point, still they think you wrong. Dilke will never come at a truth as long as he lives, because he is always trying it. He is a Godwin Methodist.

I must not forget to mention that your mother show'd me the lock of hair—'tis of a very dark color for so young a creature.

When it is two feet in length, I shall not stand a barleycorn higher. That's not fair; one ought to go on growing as well as others. At the end of this sheet I shall stop for the present and send it off. You may expect another letter immediately after it. As I never know the day of the month but by chance, I put here that this is the 24th September.

I would wish you here to stop your ears, for I have a word or two to say to your wife.

My dear sister, in the first place I must quarrel with you for sending me such a shabby piece of paper, though that is in some degree made up for by the beautiful impression of the seal. You should like to know what I was doing the 1st of May. Let me see—I cannot recollect. I have all the Examiners ready to send—they will be a great treat to you when they reach you. I shall pack them up when my business with Abbey[1] has come to a good conclusion, and the remittance is on the road to you. I have dealt round your best wishes to our friends like a pack of cards, but being always given to cheat myself, I have turned up ace. You see I am making game of you. I see you are not at all happy in that America. England, however, would not be over happy for you if you were here. Perhaps 'twould be better to be teased here than there. I must preach patience to you both. No step hasty or injurious to you must be taken. You say let one large sheet be all to me. You will find more than that in different parts of this packet for you. Certainly, I have been caught in rains. A catch in the rain occasioned my last sore throat; but as for red-haired girls, upon my word, I do not recollect ever having seen one. Are you quizzing me or Miss Waldegrave when you talk of promenading? As for pun-making, I wish it were as good a trade as pin-making. There is very little business of that sort going on now. We struck for wages, like the Manchester weavers, but to no purpose. So we are all out of employ. I am more lucky than some, you see, by having an opportunity of exporting a few—getting into a little foreign trade, which is a comfortable thing. I wish one could get change for a pun in silver currency. I would give three and a half any night to get into Drury pit, but they won't ring at all. No more will notes you will say; but notes are differing things, though they make together a pun-note as the term goes. If I were your son, I shouldn't mind you, though you rapt me with the scissors. But, Lord! I should be out of favor sin' the little 'un be comm'd. You have made an uncle of me, you have, and

[1] Opposite Lord Houghton's variation of this passage Mr. Dilke notes—"The business for George mentioned P 19 [page 100, *ante*] and this with Abbey, related I have no doubt to a settlement of Tom's property. To settle with Abbey was a difficult thing—and must have been particularly so while George was abroad. John I think got money for himself, as I have before mentioned, though only in part."

I don't know what to make of myself. I suppose next there'll be a nevey. You say in May last, write directly. I have not received your letter above ten days. The thought of your little girl puts me in mind of a thing I heard Mr. Lamb say. A child in arms was passing by his chair toward its mother, in the nurse's arms. Lamb took hold of the long clothes, saying: "Where, God bless me, where does it leave off?"

If you would prefer a joke or two to anything else, I have two for you, fresh hatched, just ris, as the bakers' wives say by the rolls. The first I played off on Brown; the second I played on myself. Brown, when he left me,[1] "Keats," says he, "my good fellow" (staggering upon his left heel and fetching an irregular pirouette with his right); "Keats," says he (depressing his left eyebrow and elevating his right one), though by the way at the moment I did not know which was the right one; "Keats," says he (still in the same posture, but furthermore both his hands in his waistcoat pockets and jutting out his stomach), "Keats—my—go-o-ood fell-o-o-ooh," says he (interlarding his exclamation with certain ventriloquial parentheses),—no, this is all a lie—He was as sober as a judge, when a judge happens to be sober, and said: "Keats, if any letters come for me, do not forward them, but open them and give me the marrow of them in a few words." At the time I wrote my first to him no letter had arrived. I thought I would invent one, and as I had not time to manufacture a long one, I dabbed off a short one, and that was the reason of the joke succeeding beyond my expectations. Brown let his house to a Mr. Benjamin—a Jew. Now, the water which furnishes the house is in a tank, sided with a composition of lime, and the lime impregnates the water unpleasantly. Taking advantage of this circumstance, I pretended that Mr. Benjamin had written the following short note—

"Sir: By drinking your damn'd tank water I have got the gravel. What reparation can you make to me and my family?
Nathan Benjamin."

By a fortunate hit, I hit upon his right—heathen name—his right prenomen. Brown in consequence, it appears, wrote to the surprised Mr. Benjamin the following—

"Sir: I cannot offer you any remuneration until your gravel shall have formed itself into a stone—when I will cut you with pleasure. C. Brown."

This of Brown's Mr. Benjamin has answered, insisting on an explanation of this singular circumstance. B. says: "When I read your letter and his following, I roared; and in came Mr.

[1] To go "a visiting" to Chichester: see page 91, *ante*.

Snook, who on reading them seemed likely to burst the hoops of his fat sides." So the joke has told well.

Now for the one I played on myself. I must first give you the scene and the dramatis personæ. There are an old major and his young wife living in the next apartments to me. His bedroom door opens at an angle with my sitting-room door. Yesterday I was reading as demurely as a parish clerk, when I heard a rap at the door. I got up and opened it; no one was to be seen. I listened, and heard some one in the major's room. Not content with this, I went upstairs and down, looked in the cupboards and watch'd. At last I set myself to read again, not quite so demurely, when there came a louder rap. I was determined to find out who it was. I looked out; the staircases were all silent. "This must be the major's wife," said I. "At all events I will see the truth." So I raps me at the major's door and went in, to the utter surprise and confusion of the lady, who was in reality there. After a little explanation, which I can no more describe than fly, I made my retreat from her, convinced of my mistake. She is to all appearance a silly body, and is really surprised about it. She must have been, for I have discovered that a little girl in the house was the rappee. I assure you she has nearly made me sneeze. If the lady tells tits, I shall put a very grave and moral face on the matter with the old gentleman, and make his little boy a present of a humming top.

[27 September 1819.] My dear George, this (Monday) morning, the 27th, I have received your last, dated July 12.[1] You say you have not heard from England for three months. Then my letter from Shanklin, written, I think, at the end of June, has not reached you. You shall not have cause to think I neglect you. I have kept this back a little time in expectation of hearing from Mr. Abbey. You will say I might have remained in town to be Abbey's messenger in these affairs. That I offered him, but he in his answer convinced me he was anxious to bring the business to an issue. He observed, that by being himself the agent in the whole, people might be more expeditious. You say you have not heard for three months, and yet your letters have the tone of knowing how our affairs are situated, by which I conjecture I acquainted you with them in a letter previous to the Shanklin one. That I may not have done. To be certain, I will here state that it is in consequence of Mr. Jennings threatening a chancery suit that you have been kept from the receipt of monies, and myself deprived of any help

[1] This would seem to be a slip of Keats's, unless by 'last' he means 'last to arrive', because at the beginning of this letter he mentions one from George dated the 24th of July, previously received. Probably the later letter was sent from the Settlement by speedier means than the earlier one.

from Abbey. I am glad you say you keep up your spirits. I hope you make a true statement on that score. Still keep them up, for we are all young. I can only repeat here that you shall hear from me again immediately. Notwithstanding this bad intelligence, I have experienced some pleasure in receiving so correctly two letters from you, as it gives me, if I may so say, a distant idea of proximity. This last improves upon my little niece—kiss her for me. Do not fret yourself about the delay of money on account of my[1] immediate opportunity being lost, for in a new country whoever has money must have an opportunity of employing it in many ways. The report runs now more in favour of Kean stopping in England. If he should I have confident hopes of our tragedy. If he invokes the hot-blooded character of Ludolph,—and he is the only actor that can do it, —he will add to his own fame and improve my fortune. I will give you a half-dozen lines of it before I part as a specimen—

> Not as a swordsman would I pardon crave,
> But as a son: the bronzed Centurion,
> Long-toil'd in foreign wars, and whose high deeds
> Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,
> Known only to his troop, hath greater plea
> Of favor with my sire than I can have.

Believe me, my dear brother and sister, your affectionate and anxious Brother

John Keats.

CXXXVIII.

To ————.

* * * * *

If George succeeds it will be better, certainly, that they should stop in America; if not, why not return? It is better in all luck to have at least the comfort of one's friends than to be shipwrecked among Americans. But I have good hopes, as far as I can judge from what I have heard from George. He should by this time be taught alertness and carefulness. If they should stop in America for five or six years let us hope they may have about three children. Then the eldest will be getting old enough to be society. The very crying will keep their ears employed and their spirits from being melancholy.

* * * * *

[1] Probably we should read 'any' for 'my'.

CXXXIX.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

Winchester,
Friday, Oct. 1st [1819].

My dear Dilke,

For sundry reasons, which I will explain to you when I come to Town, I have to request you will do me a great favour as I must call it knowing how great a Bore it is. That your imagination may not have time to take too great an alarm I state immediately that I want you to hire me a couple of rooms (a Sitting Room and bed room for myself alone) in Westminster. Quietness and cheapness are the essentials: but as I shall with Brown be returned by next Friday you cannot in that space have sufficient time to make any choice selection, and need not be very particular as I can when on the spot suit myself at leisure. Brown bids me remind you not to send the Examiners after the third. Tell Mrs. D. I am obliged to her for the late ones which I see are directed in her hand. Excuse this mere business letter for I assure you I have not a syllable at hand on any subject in the world.

Your sincere friend,
John Keats.

CXL.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Winchester, Sunday Morn
[*Postmark*, 3 October 1819.]

My dear Haydon,

Certainly I might: but a few Months pass away before we are aware. I have a great aversion to letter writing, which grows more and more upon me; and a greater to summon up circumstances before me of an unpleasant nature. I was not willing to trouble you with them. Could I have dated from my Palace of Milan you would have heard from me. Not even now will I mention a word of my affairs—only that "I Rab am here" but shall not be here more than a Week more, as I

CXXXIX. Lord Houghton, referring here to Keats and Brown, says—"The friends returned to town together, and Keats took possession of his new abode. But he had miscalculated his own powers of endurance: the enforced absence from his friends was too much for him, and a still stronger impulse drew him back again to Hampstead."

CXL. It will be observed that, while Keats's attitude towards the genius of Haydon shows no change in this letter, there is, when we compare it with former letters, a certain reserve of tone, quite corresponding with the altered personal attitude referred to in the letter to George Keats (page 116, *ante*).

purpose to settle in Town and work my way with the rest. I hope I shall never be so silly as to injure my health and industry for the future by speaking, writing or fretting about my non-estate. I have no quarrel, I assure you, of so weighty a nature with the world, on my own account as I have on yours. I have done nothing—except for the amusement of a few people who refine upon their feelings till any thing in the ununderstandable way will go down with them—people predisposed for sentiment. I have no cause to complain because I am certain any thing really fine will in these days be felt. I have no doubt that if I had written Othello I should have been cheered by as good a mob as Hunt.[1] So would you be now if the operation of painting was as universal as that of Writing. It is not: and therefore it did behove men I could mention among whom I must place Sir George Beaumont to have lifted you up above sordid cares. That this has not been done is a disgrace to the country. I know very little of Painting, yet your pictures follow me into the Country. When I am tired of reading I often think them over and as often condemn the spirit of modern Connoisseurs. Upon the whole, indeed, you have no complaint to make, being able to say what so few Men can, "I have succeeded." On sitting down to write a few lines to you these are the uppermost in my mind, and, however I may be beating about the arctic while your spirit has passed the line, you may lay-to a minute and consider I am earnest as far as I can see. Though at this present "I have great dispositions to write" I feel every day more and more content to read. Books are becoming more interesting and valuable to me. I may say I could not live without them. If in the course of a fortnight you can procure me a ticket to the British Museum I will make a better use of it than I did in the first instance. I shall go on with patience in the confidence that if I ever do any thing worth remembering the Reviewers will no more be able to stumble-block me than the Royal Academy could you. They have the same quarrel with you that the Scotch nobles had with Wallace. The fame they have lost through you is no joke to them. Had it not been for you Fuseli would have been not as he is major but maximus domo. What Reviewers can put a hindrance to must be—a nothing—or mediocre which is worse. I am sorry to say that since I saw you I have been guilty of——a practical joke upon Brown which has had all the success of an innocent Wildfire among people.[2] Some day in the next week you shall hear it from me by word of Mouth. I have not seen the por-

[1] The reference is to the mob which cheered Henry Hunt as he entered London: see page 108, *ante*.

[2] See the account of this at page 123, *ante*.

tentous Book which was skummer'd[1] at you just as I left town. It may be light enough to serve you as a Cork Jacket and save you for awhile the trouble of swimming. I heard the Man went raking and rummaging about like any Richardson. That and the Memoirs of Menage are the first I shall be at. From Sr. G. B's, Lord Ms[2] and particularly Sr. John Leicesters good lord deliver us. I shall expect to see your Picture plumped out like a ripe Peach—you would not be very willing to give me a slice of it. I came to this place in the hopes of meeting with a Library but was disappointed. The High Street is as quiet as a Lamb. The knockers are dieted to three raps per diem. The walks about are interesting from the many old Buildings and archways. The view of the High Street through the Gate of the City in the beautiful September evening light has amused me frequently. The bad singing of the Cathedral I do not care to smoke—being by myself I am not very coy in my taste. At St. Cross there is an interesting picture of Albert Dürer's—who living in such warlike times perhaps was forced to paint in his Gauntlets—so we must make all allowances.

I am my dear Haydon

Yours ever

John Keats

Brown has a few words to say to you and will cross this.[3]

[1] The middle of this word has been torn away with the seal of the letter; but I have no doubt it was the expressive provincialism restored in the text, used in much the same sense as in the lines from John Davies' 'Commendatory Verses,'—

> And for a monument to after-commers
> Their picture shall continue (though Time scummers
> Upon th' Effigie ...).

The late Frank Scott Haydon identified the book for me,—'A Desultory Exposition of an Anti-British System of Incendiary Publication,' &c. (London, 1819). The author, William Carey, appears to have been an art-critic, and to have criticized Haydon's Dentatus in 'The Champion.' The book was described by Frank Haydon as "an answer to certain statements in the 'Annals of the Fine Arts,'" containing "a very fair, though bitter, criticism of the tone of that remarkable periodical, and of the misstatements in it a thorough exposure."

[2] Sir George Beaumont and Lord Mulgrave. Perhaps Haydon had been recalling the rejection of the picture of Macbeth commissioned some ten years before—an affair concerning which he declared thirty-one years after its occurrence that he was "still suffering from its fatal effects." Lord Mulgrave and Sir John Leicester were both among Haydon's patrons; but I do not know what particular offence they had committed in Keats's eyes in 1819.

[3] Brown's few words are as follows:—

My dear Sir,

I heard yesterday you had written to me at Hampstead. I have not recd. your letter. You must, I think, accuse me of neglect, but indeed I do not merit it. This many worded Keats has left me no room to say more.—I shall be in Town in a few days.— Your's truly

Chas. Brown.

CXLI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead.

College Street.
[*Postmark*, 11 October 1819.]

My sweet Girl,

I am living today in yesterday: I was in a complete fascination all day. I feel myself at your mercy. Write me ever so few lines and tell me[1] you will never for ever be less kind to me than yesterday.—You dazzled me. There is nothing in the world so bright and delicate. When Brown came out with that seemingly true story against me last night, I felt it would be death to me if you ever had believed it—though against any one else I could muster up my obstinacy. Before I knew Brown could disprove it I was for the moment more miserable. When shall we pass a day alone? I have had a thousand kisses, for which with my whole soul I thank love—but if you should deny me the thousand and first—'twould put me to the proof how great a misery I could live through. If you should ever carry your threat yesterday into execution—believe me 'tis not my pride, my vanity or any petty passion would torment me—really 'twould hurt my heart—I could not bear it. I have seen Mrs. Dilke this morning; she says she will come with me any fine day.

Ever yours
John Keats

Ah hertè mine![2]

CXLI. It would seem to have been in College street that Mr. Dilke obtained for Keats the rooms which the poet asked him to find in the letter of the 1st of October, from Winchester, *ante*. How long Keats remained in those rooms I have been unable to determine, to a day; but in Letter Number CXLIII, headed "Wentworth Place," and postmarked the 16th of October 1819 (*post*) he speaks of having "returned to Hampstead," after lodging "two or three days" "in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Dilke." In Letter Number CXLIV (*post*) he writes from Great Smith Street (the address of the Dilkes) of his *purpose* to live at Hampstead. I suppose the "three days dream" there referred to was a visit to Mrs. Brawne's house, from which he proceeded to Mrs. Dilke's—there to come to a final resolution of living at Hampstead.

[1] Keats wrote 'tell you you will' &c.; but there can be no doubt what he meant.

[2] The word *hertè* for *heart*, with the final *e* pronounced, is of course common in old literature with which Keats was familiar; and 'hertè mine' may well have been in common use between him and his lady. It recalls for instance such lines from Clanvowe's beautiful poem 'The Cuckow and the Nightingale,' as

She kest a sighe out of her hertè depe,

Alas! quoth she, my hertè wol to breke ...

CXLII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead.

25 College Street.
[*Postmark*, 13 October 1819].

My dearest Girl,

This moment I have set myself to copy some verses out fair. I cannot proceed with any degree of content. I must write you a line or two and see if that will assist in dismissing you from my Mind for ever so short a time. Upon my Soul I can think of nothing else. The time is passed when I had power to advise and warn you against the unpromising morning of my Life. My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of everything but seeing you again —my Life seems to stop there—I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I was dissolving—I should be exquisitely miserable without the hope of soon seeing you. I should be afraid to separate myself far from you. My sweet Fanny, will your heart never change? My love, will it? I have no limit now to my love. . . . . Your note came in just here. I cannot be happier away from you. 'Tis richer than an Argosy of Pearles. Do not threat me even in jest. I have been astonished that Men could die Martyrs for religion—I have shudder'd at it. I shudder no more—I could be martyr'd for my Religion—Love is my religion—I could die for that. I could die for you. My Creed is Love and you are its only tenet. You have ravish'd me away by a Power I cannot resist; and yet I could resist till I saw you; and even since I have seen you I have endeavoured often "to reason against the reasons of my Love." I can do that no more—the pain would be too great. My love is selfish. I cannot breathe without you.

Yours for ever
John Keats.

CXLIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place
[*Postmark*, 16 October 1819].

My dear Fanny,

My Conscience is always reproaching me for neglecting you for so long a time. I have been returned from Winchester this fortnight and as yet I have not seen you. I have no excuse to offer—I should have no excuse. I shall expect to see you the

next time I call on Mr. A about George's affairs which perplex me a great deal—I should have to day gone to see if you were in town—but as I am in an industrious humour (which is so necessary to my livelihood for the future) I am loath to break through it though it be merely for one day, for when I am inclined I can do a great deal in a day—I am more fond of pleasure than study (many men have prefer'd the latter) but I have become resolved to know something which you will credit when I tell you I have left off animal food that my brains may never henceforth be in a greater mist than is theirs by nature—I took lodgings in Westminster for the purpose of being in the reach of Books, but am now returned to Hampstead being induced to it by the habit I have acquired in this room I am now in and also from the pleasure of being free from paying any petty attentions to a diminutive house-keeping. Mr. Brown has been my great friend for some time—without him I should have been in, perhaps, personal distress—as I know you love me though I do not deserve it, I am sure you will take pleasure in being a friend to Mr. Brown even before you know him.—My lodgings for two or three days were close in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Dilke who never sees me but she enquires after you—I have had letters from George lately which do not contain, as I think I told you in my last, the best news—I have hopes for the best—I trust in a good termination to his affairs which you please God will soon hear of—It is better you should not be teased with the particulars. The whole amount of the ill news is that his mercantile speculations have not had success in consequence of the general depression of trade in the whole province of Kentucky and indeed all America.—I have a couple of shells for you you will call pretty.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

CXLIV.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead.

Great Smith Street,
Tuesday Morn.
[*Postmark*, College Street, 19 October 1819.]

My sweet Fanny,

On awakening from my three days dream ("I cry to dream again") I find one and another astonish'd at my idleness and thoughtlessness. I was miserable last night—the morning is always restorative. I must be busy, or try to be so. I have several things to speak to you of tomorrow morning. Mrs. Dilke I should [illegible] will tell you that I purpose living at Hampstead. I must [illegible]pose chains upon myself. I shall be able to do

nothing. I should like to cast the die for Love or death. I have no Patience with any thing else—if you ever intend to be cruel to me as you say in jest now but perhaps may sometimes be in earnest, be so now—and I will—my mind is in a tremble, I cannot tell what I am writing.

Ever my love yours
John Keats.

CXLV.

To JOSEPH SEVERN.

6 Goswell Street Road, opposite Spencer Street.

Wentworth Place
Wednesday [October 1819?]

Dear Severn,

Either your joke about staying at home is a very old one or I really call'd. I don't remember doing so. I am glad to hear you have finish'd the Picture and am more anxious to see it than I have time to spare: for I have been so very lax, unemployed, unmeridian'd, and objectless these two months that I even grudge indulging[1] (and that is no great indulgence considering the Lecture is not over till 9 and the lecture room seven miles from Wentworth Place) myself by going to Hazlitt's Lecture. If you have hours to the amount of a brace of dozens to throw away you may sleep nine of them here in your little Crib and chat the rest. When your Picture is up and in a good light I shall make a point of meeting you at the Academy if you will let me know when. If you should be at the Lecture tomorrow evening I shall see you—and congratulate you heartily—Haslam I know "is very Beadle to an amorous sigh."[2]

Your sincere friend
John Keats.

CXLV. The original letter bears no legible dated postmark; but it is inscribed "1819" in Severn's writing. It probably belongs to the end of October 1819. The picture was that of the Cave of Despair: see letter CXLVIII, *post*.

[1] In the original, 'indulding.'

[2] Misquoted from a speech of Biron's in 'Love's Labour's Lost' (Act III, Scene i, lines 176-7)—

> And I, forsooth in love! I, that have been love's whip;
> A very beadle to a humorous sigh;

but it is not clear in what way Keats means to apply the words—whether in Biron's sense or the reverse,—probably the reverse, as Haslam was referred to as not "a pattern for lovers" in the Winchester letter to George Keats (page 102, *ante*).

CXLVI.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d Abbey's Esq^re Pancras Lane, Queen Street, Cheapside.

Wednesday Morn.
[*Postmark*, 17 November 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I received your letter yesterday Evening and will obey it o-morrow. I would come to-day—but I have been to Town so frequently on George's Business it makes me wish to employ o-day at Hampstead. So I say Thursday without fail. I have no news at all entertaining—and if I had I should not have time o tell them as I wish to send this by the morning Post.

Your affectionate Brother
John.

CXLVII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Wentworth Place,
Wednesday [*Postmark*, Hampstead, 17 November 1819.]

My dear Taylor,

I have come to a determination not to publish any thing have now ready written; but for all that to publish a Poem before long and that I hope to make a fine one. As the marvellous is the most enticing and the surest guarantee of harmonious numbers I have been endeavouring to persuade myself to untether Fancy and to let her manage for herself. I and myself cannot agree about this at all. Wonders are no wonders to me. I am more at home amongst Men and women. would rather read Chaucer than Ariosto. The little dramatic skill I may as yet have how ever badly it might show in a Drama would I think be sufficient for a Poem. I wish to diffuse the colouring of St. Agnes eve throughout a poem in which Character and Sentiment would be the figures to such drapery. Two or three such Poems, if God should spare me, written in the course of the next six years, would be a famous gradus ad Parnassum altissimum. I mean they would nerve me up to the writing of a few fine Plays—my greatest ambition—when I do feel ambitious. I am sorry to say that is very seldom. The subject we have once or twice talked of appears a promising one, The Earl of Leicester's history. I am this morning reading Holingshed's Elizabeth. You had some Books awhile ago, you promised to lend me, illustrative of my subject. If you can lay hold of them or any others which may be serviceable to me I now you will encourage my low-spirited muse by sending them

—or rather by letting me know when our Errand cart Man shall call with my little Box. I will endeavour to set my self selfishly at work on this Poem that is to be.

Your sincere friend
John Keats—

CXLVIII.

To JOSEPH SEVERN.

Wentworth Place
Monday Morn [6 December 1819?]

My dear Severn,

I am very sorry that on Tuesday I have an appointment in the City of an undeferable nature; and Brown on the same day has some business at Guildhall. I have not been able to figure your manner of executing the Cave of despair, therefore it will be at any rate a novelty and surprise to me—I trust on the right side. I shall call upon you some morning shortly early enough to catch you before you can get out—when we will proceed to the Academy. I think you must be suited with a good painting light in your Bay window. I wish you to return the Compliment by going with me to see a Poem I have hung up for the Prize in the Lecture Room of the Surry Institution. I have many Rivals—the most threatening are An Ode to Lord Castlereagh, and a new series of Hymns for the New, new Jerusalem Chapel. You had best put me into your Cave of despair.

Ever yours sincerely
John Keats

CXLVIII. This letter is given from a manuscript without date, address, or postmark; but I think there can be no doubt the proposed visit to the Academy was for the purpose of seeing Severn's "Cave of Despair" "hung up for the prize." If so, probably the Monday on which the letter was written was the 6th of December 1819; for among Severn's Keats relics was an outside leaf of a letter bearing a Hampstead postmark of that date, addressed by Keats to "Joseph Severn Esqre., 6 Goswell Street Road, Near Northampton Square," and probably belonging to this very letter. The pictures for the "Cave of Despair" competition were to be in the Academy by the 1st of November 1819; and some one from 'The Literary Gazette' had seen them by the 10th of December, the day on which the premiums were to be distributed. The critic professes not to know the decision, but gives his voice in favour of "a Mr. Severn, who has produced a very clever and unexaggerated picture." When the picture appeared at the Academy exhibition of the next year, there was the following note on it in 'Annals of the Fine Arts':—"This picture, it appears obtained the medal last year; and we are sorry that of all their students such as this should be the best. Their regulations drive the able from their schools, and humble mediocrity is all that is left them." In the Academy catalogue for 1820 the title of the picture (Number 398) is "Una and the Red Cross Knight in the Cave"; and an extract is given from 'The Faerie Queene' (Book I, Canto ix, stanzas 48-52),—the passage in which Una seizes the dagger from the Red Cross Knight, and prevents his using it against himself.

CXLIX.

To JAMES RICE.

Wentworth Place.
[December 1819.]

My dear Rice

As I want the coat on my back mended, I would be obliged if you would send me the one Brown left at your house by the Bearer—During your late contest I had regular reports of you, how that your time was completely taken up and your health improving—I shall call in the course of a few days, and see whether your promotion has made any difference in your Behaviour to us. I suppose Reynolds has given you an account of Brown and Elliston. As he has not rejected our Tragedy, I shall not venture to call him directly a fool; But as he wishes to put it off till next season, I cannot help thinking him little better than a knave.—That it will not be acted this season is yet uncertain. Perhaps we may give it another furbish and try it at Covent Garden. 'Twould do one's heart good to see Macready in Ludolph. If you do not see me soon it will be from the humour of writing, which I have had for three days continuing. I must say to the Muses what the maid says to the Man—"Take me while the fit is on me."—Would you like a true story? "There was a man and his wife who being to go a long Journey on foot, in the course of their travels came to a river which rolled knee-deep over the pebbles—In these cases the man generally pulls off his shoes and stockings, and carries the woman over on his back. This man did so. And his wife being pregnant and troubled, as in such cases is very common, with strange longings, took the strangest that ever was heard of. Seeing her husband's foot, a handsome one enough, looked very clean and tempting in the clear water, on their arrival at the other bank, she earnestly demanded a bit of it. He being an affectionate fellow, and fearing for the comeliness of his child, gave her a bit which he cut off with his clasp knife.—Not satisfied, she asked for another morsel. Supposing there might be twins, he gave her a slice more. Not yet contented she craved another piece. 'You wretch,' cries the man, 'would you wish me to kill myself?—Take that'—upon which he stabbed her with the knife, cut her open, and found three children in her Belly: two of them very comfortable with their mouths shut, the third with its eyes and mouth stark staring wide open. 'Who would have thought it,' cried the Widower, and pursued his Journey—". Brown has a little rumbling in his stomach this morning—

Ever yours sincerely,
John Keats.—

CL.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place
Monday Morn—
[*Postmark*, 20 December, 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

When I saw you last, you ask'd me whether you should see me again before Christmas. You would have seen me if I had been quite well. I have not, though not unwell enough to have prevented me—not indeed at all—but fearful lest the weather should affect my throat which on exertion or cold continually threatens me.—By the advice of my Doctor I have had a warm great Coat made and have ordered some thick shoes—so furnish'd I shall be with you if it holds a little fine before Christmas day.—I have been very busy since I saw you, especially the last Week, and shall be for some time, in preparing some Poems to come out in the Spring, and also in brightening the interest of our Tragedy.—Of the Tragedy I can give you but news semigood. It is accepted at Drury Lane with a promise of coming out next season: as that will be too long a delay we have determined to get Elliston to bring it out this Season or to transfer it to Covent Garden. This Elliston will not like, as we have every motive to believe that Kean has perceived how suitable the principal Character will be for him. My hopes of success in the literary world are now better than ever. Mr. Abbey, on my calling on him lately, appeared anxious that I should apply myself to something else—He mentioned Tea Brokerage. I supposed he might perhaps mean to give me the Brokerage of his concern which might be executed with little trouble and a good profit; and therefore said I should have no objection to it, especially as at the same time it occurred to me that I might make over the business to George—I questioned him about it a few days after. His mind takes odd turns. When I became a Suitor he became coy. He did not seem so much inclined to serve me. He described what I should have to do in the progress of business. It will not suit me. I have given it up. I have not heard again from George, which rather disappoints me, as I wish to hear before I make any fresh remittance of his property. I received a note from Mrs. Dilke a few days ago inviting me to dine with her on Xmas day which I shall do. Mr. Brown and I go on in our old dog trot of Breakfast, dinner (not tea, for we have left that off), supper, Sleep, Confab, stirring the fire and reading. Whilst I was in the Country last Summer, Mrs. Bentley tells me, a woman in mourning call'd on me,—and talked something of an

aunt of ours—I am so careless a fellow I did not enquire, but will particularly: On Tuesday I am going to hear some Schoolboys Speechify on breaking up day—I'll lay you a pocket piece we shall have "My name is Norval." I have not yet look'd for the Letter you mention'd as it is mixed up in a box full of papers—you must tell me, if you can recollect, the subject of it. This moment Bentley brought a Letter from George for me to deliver to Mrs. Wylie—I shall see her and it before I see you. The Direction was in his best hand written with a good Pen and sealed with a Tassie's Shakspeare[1] such as I gave you—We judge of people's hearts by their Countenances; may we not judge of Letters in the same way?—if so, the Letter does not contain unpleasant news—Good or bad spirits have an effect on the handwriting. This direction is at least unnervous and healthy. Our Sister is also well, or George would have made strange work with Ks and Ws. The little Baby is well or he would have formed precious vowels and Consonants—He sent off the Letter in a hurry, or the mail bag was rather a warm berth, or he has worn out his Seal, for the Shakespeare's head is flattened a little. This is close muggy weather as they say at the Ale houses—

I am, ever, my dear Sister,
Yours affectionately
John Keats —

CLI.

To FANNY KEATS.

Rd. Abbeys—Esqre Pancras Lane, Queen Street, Cheapside.

Wentworth Place,
Wednesday—
[*Postmark*, 22 December 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I wrote to you a Letter directed Walthamstow the day before yesterday wherein I promised to see you before Christmas day. I am sorry to say I have been and continue rather unwell, and therefore shall not be able to promise certainly. I have not seen Mrs. Wylie's Letter. Excuse my dear Fanny this very shabby note.

Your affectionate Brother
John.

[1] See foot-note to Letter C, page 15, *ante*.

CLII.

To GEORGIANA AUGUSTA KEATS, born Wylie.

Thursday, January 13, 1820.

My dear Sis. :

By the time that you receive this your troubles will be over. I wish you knew they were half over. I mean that George is safe in England and in good health. To write to you by him is almost like following one's own letter in the mail. That it may not be quite so, I will leave common intelligence out of the question, and write wide of him as I can. I fear I must be dull, having had no good-natured flip from Fortune's finger since I saw you, and no sideway comfort in the success of my friends. I could almost promise that if I had the means I would accompany George back to America, and pay you a visit of a few months. I should not think much of the time, or my absence from my books ; or I have no right to think, for I am very idle. But then I ought to be diligent, and at least keep myself within the reach of materials for diligence. Diligence, that I do not mean to say ; I should say dreaming over my

CLII. This brilliant letter written to Keats's brilliant sister-in-law in America gave rise to some controversy, when the greater part of it was published in the New York 'World' of the 25th of June 1877. Lord Houghton had given a different version of a part of it from Mr. Jeffrey's transcript; but the grounds on which some students doubted the genuineness of the fuller version were not very real. In the Library edition I accepted the 'World' version with revision, and restored from No. 9 of 'The Philobiblion' (New York, August 1862) a portion of which the manuscript had got astray—a portion which internal evidence alone suffices to stamp as authentic. It is the part from the new heading *Friday 27th* to the end: Lord Houghton had printed the last three lines with Mr. Jeffrey's variations of phrase. The correspondent of the 'World' seemed to have used Lord Houghton's pages for "copy" where a cursory examination indicated that they gave the same matter as the original letter,—transcribing what presented itself as new matter from the original. The fragment of *Friday 27th* was, on this supposition, in its place when the copies were made for Lord Houghton, because there is the close; but between that time and 1862 it must have been separated from the letter, and got into the portfolio of the collector who contributed it to 'The Philobiblion.' Keats explains under the inaccurate and unexplicit date *Friday 27th*, that he has been writing a letter for George to take back to his wife, has unfortunately forgotten to bring it to town, and will have to send it on to Liverpool, whither George has departed that morning "by the coach," at six o'clock. The 27th of January 1820 was a Thursday, not a Friday; and there can be hardly any doubt that George Keats left London on the 28th of January 1820, because John, who professed to know nothing of the days of the month, seems generally to have known the days of the week; and this Friday cannot have been in any other month: it was after the 13th of January, and before the 16th of February, on which day Keats wrote to Rice, referring to his illness. Ultimately Mr. Speed published a still fuller text in his selection—rejecting the passage from the 'Philobiblion'! The present text is a repetition of that which I gave in the illustrated edition—consolidated from the sources indicated above.

books, or rather other people's books. George has promised to bring you to England when the five years have elapsed. I regret very much that I shall not be able to see you before that time, and even then I must hope that your affairs will be in so prosperous a way to induce you to stop longer. Yours is a hardish fate, to be so divided from your friends and settled among a people you hate. You will find it improve. You have a heart that will take hold of your children; even George's absence will make things better. His return will banish what must be your greatest sorrow, and at the same time minor ones with it. Robinson Crusoe, when he saw himself in danger of perishing on the waters, looked back to his island as to the haven of his happiness, and on gaining it once more was more content with his solitude.[1] We smoke George about his little girl. He runs the common beaten road of every father, as I dare say you do of every mother: there is no child like his child, so original,—original forsooth! However, I take you at your words. I have a lively faith that yours is the very gem of all children. Ain't I its uncle?

On Henry's marriage there was a piece of bride cake sent me. It missed its way. I suppose the carrier or coachman was a conjuror, and wanted it for his own private use. Last Sunday George and I dined at Millar's. There were your mother and Charles with Fool Lacon, Esq., who sent the sly, disinterested shawl to Miss Millar, with his own heathen name engraved in the middle. Charles had a silk handkerchief belonging to a Miss Grover, with whom he pretended to be smitten, and for her sake kept exhibiting and adoring the handkerchief all the evening. Fool Lacon, Esq., treated[2] it with a little venturesome, trembling contumely, whereupon Charles set him quietly down on the floor,[3] from where he as quietly got up. This process was repeated at supper time, when your mother said, "If I were you, Mr. Lacon, I would not let him do so." Fool Lacon, Esq., did not offer any remark. He will undoubtedly die in his bed. Your mother did not look quite so well on Sunday. Mrs. Henry Wylie is excessively quiet before people. I hope she is always so. Yesterday we dined at Taylor's, in

[1] Note the evidence of Keats's familiarity with De Foe's great work: since issuing this edition of Keats in 1883, a reperusal of 'Robinson Crusoe' in the orthography of the first edition has convinced me that the book must be taken into account among the sources of Keats's English. There is great similarity of spelling, capitalling, inflexion, &c., between Keats's writings and the first edition of 'Robinson Crusoe'; and this direct evidence of familiarity with the book is satisfactory.

[2] Presumably what Keats wrote was 'treated'; but Mr. Speed prints 'heated.'

[3] This phrase may be either literal or figurative. "To set a man down" is of course a common phrase enough; but "to set a man down on the floor" is certainly not a common form of the figure.

Fleet Street. George left early after dinner to go to Deptford; he will make all square there for me. I could not go with him —I did not like the amusement. Haslam is a very good fellow indeed; he has been excessively anxious and kind to us. But is this fair? He has an innamorata at Deptford, and he has been wanting me for some time past to see her. This is a thing which it is impossible not to shirk. A man is like a magnet—he must have a repelling end. So how am I to see Haslam's lady and family, if I even went? for by the time I got to Greenwich I should have repell'd them to Blackheath, and by the time I got to Deptford they would be on Shooter's Hill; when I came to Shooter's Hill they would alight at Chatham, and so on till I drove them into the sea, which I think might be indictable. The evening before yesterday we had a pianoforte hop at Dilke's. There was very little amusement in the room, but a Scotchman to hate.[1] Some people, you must have observed, have a most unpleasant effect upon you when you see them speaking in profile. This Scotchman is the most accomplished fellow in this way I ever met with. The effect was complete. It went down like a dose of bitters, and I hope will improve my digestion. At Taylor's too, there was a Scotchman,—not quite so bad, for he was as clean as he could get himself. Not having succeeded in Drury Lane with our tragedy, we have been making some alterations, and are about to try Covent Garden. Brown has just done patching up the copy—as it is altered. The reliance I had on it was in Kean's acting. I am not afraid it will be damn'd in the Garden. You said in one of your letters that there was nothing but Haydon & Co. in mine. There can be nothing of him in this, for I never see him or Co. George has introduced to us an American of the name of Hart. I like him in a moderate way. He was at Mrs. Dilke's party—and sitting by me; we began talking about English and American ladies. The Miss —— and some of their friends made not a very enticing row opposite us. I bade him mark them and form his judgement of them. I told him I hated Englishmen because they were the only men I knew. He does not understand this. Who would be Braggadochio to Johnny Bull? Johnny's house is his castle—and a precious dull castle it is; what a many Bull castles there are in so-and-so crescent! I never wish myself a general visitor and newsmonger but when I write to you. I should like for a day or two to have somebody's knowledge—Mr. Lacon's for instance—of all the different folks of a wide acquaintance, to tell you about. Only let me have his knowledge of family minutiæ and I would set them in a proper light; but, bless me, I never go anywhere.

[1] Mr. Dilke writes, "This I think must have been a Mr. Webster who resided at Hampstead as a teacher and gave Wentworth lessons."

My pen is no more garrulous than my tongue. Any third person would think I was addressing myself to a lover of scandal. But we know we do not love scandal, but fun; and if scandal happens to be fun, that is no fault of ours. There were very good pickings for me in George's letters about the prairie settlement, if I had any taste to turn them to account in England. I knew a friend of Miss Andrews, yet I never mentioned her to him; for after I had read the letter I really did not recollect her story. Now I have been sitting here half an hour with my invention at work, to say something about your mother or Charles or Henry, but it is in vain. I know not what to say. Three nights since, George went with your mother to the play. I hope she will soon see mine acted. I do not remember ever to have thanked you for your tassels to my Shakspeare—there he hangs so ably supported opposite me. I thank you now. It is a continual memento of you. If you should have a boy, do not christen him John, and persuade George not to let his partiality for me come across. 'Tis a bad name, and goes against a man. If my name had been Edmund I should have been more fortunate.

I was surprised to hear of the state of society at Louisville; it seems you are just as ridiculous there as we are here—three-penny parties, halfpenny dances. The best thing I have heard of is your shooting; for it seems you follow the gun. Give my compliments to Mrs. Audubon, and tell her I cannot think her either good-looking or honest. Tell Mr. Audubon he's a fool, and Briggs that 'tis well I was not Mr. A.

Saturday, January 15th [1820].

It is strange that George having to stop so short a time in England, I should not have seen him for nearly two days. He has been to Haslam's and does not encourage me to follow his example. He had given promise to dine with the same party to-morrow, but has sent an excuse which I am glad of, as we shall have a pleasant party with us to-morrow. We expect Charles here to-day. This is a beautiful day. I hope you will not quarrel with it if I call it an American one. The sun comes upon the snow and makes a prettier candy than we have on twelfth-night cakes. George is busy this morning in making copies of my verses. He is making one now of an Ode to the Nightingale which is like reading an account of the Black Hole at Calcutta on an iceberg.

You will say this is a matter of course. I am glad it is—I mean that I should like your brothers more the more I know them. I should spend much more time with them if our lives were more run in parallel; but we can talk but on one subject—that is you.

The more I know of men the more I know how to value

entire liberality in any of them. Thank God, there are a great many who will sacrifice their worldly interest for a friend. I wish there were more who would sacrifice their passions. The worst of men are those whose self-interests are their passion; the next, those whose passions are their self-interest. Upon the whole I dislike mankind. Whatever people on the other side of the question may advance, they cannot deny that they are always surprised at hearing of a good action, and never of a bad one. I am glad you have something to like in America—doves. Gertrude of Wyoming and Birkbeck's book[1] should be bound up together like a brace of decoy ducks —one is almost as poetical as the other. Precious miserable people at the prairie. I have been sitting in the sun while I wrote this till it's become quite oppressive—this is very odd for January. The Vulcan fire is the true natural heat for winter. The sun has nothing to do in winter but to give a little glooming light much like shade. Our Irish servant has piqued me this morning by saying that her father in Ireland is very much like my Shakespeare,[2] only he had more colour than the engraving. You will find on George's return that I have not been neglecting your affairs. The delay was unfortunate, not faulty. Perhaps by this time you have received my three last letters, not one of which had reached before George sailed. I would give two-pence to have been over the world as much as he has. I wish I had money enough to do nothing but travel

[1] In the same number of 'The Quarterly Review' which contained the notice of 'Endymion' there had appeared an article of over twenty-four pages on Morris Birkbeck's 'Notes on a Journey in America, from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois.' Some of the concluding sentences certainly adopt the "decoy-duck" view of the book. On the last page of the article we read thus:—"On the whole, detesting, as we most cordially do, all the principles avowed by Mr. Birkbeck, moral and political, (religious, as we have seen, he has none,) we are ready to give him the credit of having written an entertaining little volume of 'Notes,' in which we are presented with an interesting and in some measure a faithful picture of the country through which he travelled, and the people with whom he had any intercourse. His 'Letters from Illinois' are of a different character: there is nothing in them that can excite the least degree of interest, except, perhaps, in those unfortunate persons whom he may succeed in seducing from the land of their fathers, in order to dispose of that property, which, with all its cheapness, is evidently a dead weight upon his hands. One word more, and we have done. Whatever 'New America' may have gained by the name of Birkbeck having ceased to be found in the list of the citizens of Old England, the latter has no reason to regret the loss. Many more of the same stamp may well be spared to wage war with the bears and red Indians of the 'back-woods' of America." The editor of 'The Quarterly' might have been pleased to know that the author of 'Endymion,' the friend of the detested Leigh Hunt, had a brother destined for that back-woods war, and even entertained the idea of joining in it himself.

[2] Probably this refers to the portrait given to him by his landlady at Carisbrooke in 1817, and hung with tassels to it. (See page 141, *ante*.) But it may possibly be the portrait in the folio of 1808, a book which Keats possessed,—a print copied from that by Martin Droeshout in the folio of 1623.

about for years. Were you now in England I dare say you would be able (setting aside the pleasure you would have in seeing your mother) to suck out more amusement from society than I am able to do. To me it is all as dull here as Louisville could be. I am tired of the theatres. Almost all parties I may chance to fall into I know by heart. I know the different styles of talk in different places, what subjects will be started, how it will proceed like an acted play, from the first to the last act. If I go to Hunt's, I run my head into many tunes heard before, old puns and old music; to Haydon's worn-out discourses of poetry and painting. The Miss R[eynolds]'s I am afraid to speak to, for fear of some sickly reiteration of phrase or sentiment. When they were at the dance the other night I tried manfully to sit near and talk to them, but to no purpose; and if I had it would have been to no purpose still. My question or observation must have been an old one, and the rejoinder very antique indeed. At Dilke's I fall foul of politics. 'Tis best to remain aloof from people and like their good parts without being eternally troubled with the dull process of their every-day lives. When once a person has smoked the vapidness of the routine of society he must either have self-interest or the love of some sort of distinction to keep him in good humour with it. All I can say is that, standing at Charing Cross and looking east, west, north, and south I see nothing but dulness. I hope while I am young to live retired in the country. When I grow in years and have a right to be idle, I shall enjoy cities more. If the American ladies are worse than the English they must be very bad. You say you should like your Emily brought up here. You had better bring her up yourself. You know a good number of English ladies; what encomium could you give of half a dozen of them? The greater part seem to me downright American. I have known more than one Mrs. Audubon. Her affectation of fashion and politeness cannot transcend ours. Look at our Cheapside tradesmen's sons and daughters—only fit to be taken off by a plague. I hope now soon to come to the time when I shall never be forced to walk through the city and hate as I walk.

Monday, Jan. 17 [1820].

George had a quick rejoinder to his letter of excuse to Haslam, so we had not his company yesterday, which I was sorry for as there was our old set. I know three witty people, all distinct in their excellence—Rice, Reynolds, and Richards.[1] Rice is the

[1] I have not met with any documents enabling me to state positively who this Richards was, or with any one whose personal recollection would stand in the stead of documents. It will be remembered that Keats's first volume of Poems (1817) was printed by C. Richards; and there is an extant copy of the volume

wisest, Reynolds the playfullest, Richards the out-o'-the-wayest. The first makes you laugh and think, the second makes you laugh and not think, the third puzzles your head. I admire the first, I enjoy the second, I stare at the third. The first is claret, the second ginger-beer, the third crême de Byrapymdrag. The first is inspired by Minerva, the second by Mercury, the third by Harlequin Epigram, Esq. The first is neat in his dress, the second slovenly, the third uncomfortable. The first speaks adagio, the second allegretto, the third both together. The first is Swiftean, the second Tom Cribean,[1] the third Shandean. And yet these three eans are not three eans but one ean.[2]

Charles came on Saturday but went early; he seems to have schemes and plans and wants to get off. He is quite right; I am glad to see him employed at business. You remember I wrote you a story about a woman named Alice[3] being made young again, or some such stuff. In your next letter tell me whether I gave it as my own, or whether I gave it as a matter Brown was employed upon at the time. He read it over to George the other day, and George said he had heard it all before. So Brown suspects I have been giving you his story as my own. I should like to set him right in it by your evidence.

with an inscription, in Keats's writing, to his friend Thomas Richards. Whether he was related to C. Richards, I know not, or whether he was identical with Thomas Richards of the Storekeeper's Office of the Ordnance Department in the Tower and of 9 Providence (or Sydney) Place, who was executor to the will of Charles Armitage Brown and guardian to his son.

[1] Thomas Moore's 'Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress, with a Preface, Notes, and an Appendix, by one of the Fancy' (1819) was very popular at the time. Even Crabb Robinson calls it "an amusing volume"; but he confesses with due decorum that he "would rather read than have written it," adding ('Diary,' third edition, Volume I, page 329)—"It is really surprising that a gentleman (for so Moore is in station and connections) should so descend as to exhibit the Prince Regent and the Emperor of Russia at a boxing match, under the names of Porpus and Long Sandy. The boxing cant language does not amuse me, even in Moore's gravely burlesque lines." The epithet 'Tom Cribean' might be applied to Reynolds's clever *jeu d'esprit*, 'The Fancy'; but it is curious to note how the objects with which these three wits are compared come out on the whole to the advantage of the other two as against Reynolds, the only one who has left any mark. It is a pity Keats has not recorded any sample of Richards's wit.

[2] To the paragraph about Rice, Reynolds, and Richards Mr. Speed adds, after the words "The first is Swiftean, the second Tom Cribean, the third Shandean," the words, "And yet these three eans are not three eans but one ean." This is nonsense: what Keats wrote was, of course, "And yet these three eans are not three eans but one ean," meaning that, although there is a distinction between the wit of Swift, of Tom Moore (as exemplified in 'Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress'), and of Sterne in 'Tristram Shandy,' the essential quality of the wit is the same in all three.

[3] Presumably the name of the old woman referred to in the passage about a story of Brown's. (See page 24, *ante*.)

George has not returned from town; when he does I shall tax his memory. We had a young, long, raw, lean Scotchman with us yesterday, called Thornton. Rice, for fun or for mistake, would persist in calling him Stevenson. I know three people of no wit at all, each distinct in his excellence—A, B, and C. A is the foolishest, B the sulkiest, C is a negative. A makes you yawn, B makes you hate, as for C you never see him at all though he were six feet high.—I bear the first, I forbear the second, I am not certain that the third is. The first is gruel, the second ditch-water, the third is spilt—he ought to be wiped up. A is inspired by Jack-o'-the-clock, B has been drilled by a Russian serjeant, C, they say, is not his mother's true child, but she bought him of the man who cries, Young lambs to sell.

Twang-dillo-dee—This you must know, is the amen to nonsense. I know a good many places where Amen should be scratched out, rubbed over with po[u]nce made of Momus's little finger bones, and in its place Twang-dillo-dee written. This is the word I shall be tempted to write at the end of most modern poems. Every American book ought to have it. It would be a good distinction in society. My Lords Wellington and Castlereagh, and Canning, and many more, would do well to wear Twang-dillo-dee on their backs instead of Ribbons at their button-holes: how many people would go side-ways along walls and quickset hedges to keep their "Twang-dillo-dee" out of sight, or wear large pigtails to hide it. However there would be so many that the Twang-dillo-dees would keep one another in countenance—which Brown cannot do for me—I have fallen away lately. Thieves and murderers would gain rank in the world, for would any one of them have the poorness of spirit to condescend to be a Twang-dillo-dee? "I have robbed many a dwelling-house; I have killed many a fowl, many a goose, and many a Man (would such a gentleman say) but, thank Heaven, I was never yet a Twang-dillo-dee." Some philosophers in the moon, who spy at our globe as we do at theirs, say that Twang-dillo-dee is written in large letters on our globe of earth; they say the beginning of the "T" is just on the spot where London stands, London being built within the flourish; "wan" reaches downwards and slants as far as Timbuctoo in Africa; the tail of the "g" does slap across the Atlantic into the Rio della Plata; the remainder of the letters wrap around New Holland, and the last "e" terminates in land we have not yet discovered. However, I must be silent; these are dangerous times to libel a man in—much more a world.

Friday, 27th [28 January 1820]. I wish you would call me names: I deserve them so much. I have only written two sheets for you, to carry by George, and those I forgot to bring to town and have therefore to forward them to Liverpool. George went this morning at 6 o'clock by the Liverpool coach,

His being on his journey to you prevents my regretting his short stay. I have no news of any sort to tell you. Henry is wife bound in Camden Town; there is no getting him out. I am sorry he has not a prettier wife: indeed 'tis a shame: she is not half a wife. I think I could find some of her relations in Buffon, or Capt[n] Cook's voyages or the hie*rogue*glyphics in Moor's Almanack, or upon a Chinese clock door, the shepherdesses on her own mantlepiece, or in a *cruel* sampler in which she may find herself worsted, or in a Dutch toy shop window, or one of the daughters in the ark,[1] or in any picture shop window. As I intend to retire into the country where there will be no sort of news, I shall not be able to write you very long letters. Besides I am afraid the postage comes to too much; which till now I have not been aware of.

People in military[2] bands are generally seriously occupied. None may or can laugh at their work but the Kettle Drum, Long Drum, Do. Triangle and Cymbals. Thinking you might want a rat catcher I put your mother's old quaker-colour'd cat into the top of your bonnet. She's wi' kitten, so you may expect to find a whole family. I hope the family will not grow too large for its lodging. I shall send you a close written sheet on the first of next month, but for fear of missing the Liverpool Post I must finish here. God bless you and your little girl.

Your affectionate Brother,
John Keats.

CLIII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place
4 February 1820?]

Dearest Fanny, I shall send this the moment you return. They say I must remain confined to this room for some time. The consciousness that you love me will make a pleasant prison of the house next to yours. You must come and see me frequently: this evening, without fail—when you must not mind about my speaking in a low tone for I am ordered to do so though I *can* speak out.

Yours ever
sweetest love.—
turn over J. Keats.

[1] It would seem from this description that Mr. Henry Wylie was constant to his preference for the young lady described by Keats nearly a year before. See page 34, *ante*. [2] In 'The Philobiblion,' 'milatary'.

CLIII. This and later letters to Fanny Brawne up to No. CLXXXV seem to have been written at Brown's house in Wentworth Place and taken next door by hand. This one was probably written the day after Keats was taken ill.

Perhaps your Mother is not at home and so you must wait till she comes. You must see me to-night and let me hear[1] you promise to come to-morrow.

Brown told me you were all out. I have been looking for the stage the whole afternoon. Had I known this I could not have remain'd so silent all day.

CLIV.

To FANNY KEATS.

Rd. Abbey Esq^re Pancras Lane, Queen Street, Cheapside.

Wentworth Place
Sunday Morning.
[*Postmark*, 7 February 1820.]

My dear Sister,

I should not have sent those Letters without some notice if Mr. Brown had not persuaded me against it on account of an illness with which I was attack'd on Thursday. After that I was resolved not to write till I should be on the mending hand; thank God, I am now so. From imprudently leaving off my great coat in the thaw I caught cold which flew to my Lungs. Every remedy that has been applied has taken the desired effect, and I have nothing now to do but stay within doors for some time. If I should be confined long I shall write to Mr. Abbey to ask permission for you to visit me. George has been running great chance of a similar attack, but I hope the sea air will be his Physician in case of illness—the air out at sea is always more temperate than on land—George mentioned, in his Letters to us, something of Mr. Abbey's regret concerning the silence kept up in his house. It is entirely the fault of his Manner. You must be careful always to wear warm cloathing not only in frost but in a Thaw.—I have no news to tell you. The half built houses opposite us stand just as they were and seem dying of old age before they are brought up. The grass looks very dingy, the Celery is all gone, and there is nothing to enliven one but a few Cabbage Sta[l]ks that seem fix'd on the supera[n]nuated List. Mrs. Dilke has been ill but is better. Several of my friends have been to see me. Mrs. Reynolds was here this morning and the two Mr. Wylie's. Brown has been very alert about me, though a little wheezy himself this weather. Every body is ill. Yesterday evening Mr. Davenport, a gentleman of Hampstead, sent me an invitation to supper, instead of his coming to see us, having so bad a cold he could

[1] In the original 'have' is cancelled in favour of 'hear'.

CLIV. Thursday the 3rd of February 1820 was the date upon which Keats was taken ill; and by Sunday the 6th he was writing this letter to his sister.

not stir out—so you [see] 'tis the weather and I am among a thousand. Whenever you have an inflam[m]atory fever never mind about eating. The day on which I was getting ill I felt this fever to a great height, and therefore almost entirely abstained from food the whole day. I have no doubt experienc'd a benefit from so doing—The Papers I see are full of anecdotes of the late King[1]: how he nodded to a Coal-heaver and laugh'd with a Quaker and lik'd boiled Leg of Mutton. Old Peter Pindar is just dead: what will the old King and he say to each other? Perhaps the King may confess that Peter was in the right, and Peter maintain himself to have been wrong. You shall hear from me again on Tuesday.

Your affectionate Brother
John.

CLV.

To FANNY KEATS.

Rd Abbey Esqre Pancras Lane, Queen Street, Cheapside.

Wentworth Place,
Tuesday morn [8 February 1820].
[*Postmark*, 9 February 1820.]

My dear Fanny—

I had a slight return of fever last night, which terminated favourably, and I am now tolerably well, though weak from [the] small quantity of food to which I am obliged to confine myself: I am sure a mouse would starve upon it. Mrs. Wylie came yesterday. I have a very pleasant room for a sick person. A Sopha bed is made up for me in the front Parlour which looks on to the grass plot as you remember Mrs. Dilke's does. How much more comfortable than a dull room up stairs, where one gets tired of the pattern of the bed curtains. Besides I see all that passes—for instance now, this morning—if I had been in my own room I should not have seen the coals brought in. On sunday between the hours of twelve and one I descried a Pot boy. I conjectured it might be the one o'clock beer—Old women with bobbins and red cloaks and unpresuming bonnets I see creeping about the heath. Gipseys after hare skins and silver spoons. Then goes by a fellow with a wooden clock under his arm that strikes a hundred and more. Then comes the old French emigrant (who has been very well to do in France) with his hands joined behind on his hips, and his face full of political schemes. Then passes Mr. David Lewis, a very good-natured, good-looking old gentleman who has[2] been very

[1] George III died on the 29th of January 1820. Dr. Wolcot had, I believe, died over a year before that date,—according to several Encyclopædias on the 14th of January 1819. [2] In the manuscript 'whas has'.

kind to Tom and George and me. As for those fellows the Brickmakers they are always passing to and fro. I mus'n't forget the two old maiden Ladies in Well Walk who have a Lap dog between them that they are very anxious about. It is a corpulent Little beast whom it is necessary to coax along with an ivory-tipp'd cane. Carlo our Neighbour Mrs. Brawne's dog and it meet sometimes. Lappy thinks Carlo a devil of a fellow and so do his Mistresses. Well they may—he would sweep 'em all down at a run; all for the Joke of it. I shall desire him to peruse the fable of the Boys and the frogs: though he prefers the tongues and the Bones. You shall hear from me again the day after to-morrow—

Your affectionate Brother
John Keats

CLVI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place
10 February 1820?]

My dearest Girl,

If illness makes such an agreeable variety in the manner of your eyes I should wish you sometimes to be ill. I wish I had read your note before you went last night that I might have assured you how far I was from suspecting any coldness. You had a just right to be a little silent to one who speaks so plainly to you. You must believe—you shall, you will—that I can do nothing, say nothing, think nothing of you but what has its spring in the Love which has so long been my pleasure and torment. On the night I was taken ill—when so violent a rush of blood came to my Lungs that I felt nearly suffocated—I assure you I felt it possible I might not survive, and at that moment though[t] of nothing but you. When I said to Brown 'this is unfortunate"[1] I thought of you. 'Tis true that since the first two or three days other subjects have entered my head.[2] I shall be looking forward to Health and the Spring and a regular routine of our old Walks.

Your affectionate
J. K.

[1] It may be that consideration for his correspondent induced this moderation of speech: presumably the scene here referred to is that so graphically given by Lord Houghton (Volume II of the 'Life, Letters' &c.),—where we read, not that he merely "felt it possible" he "might not survive," but that he said to his friend, "I know the colour of that blood,—it is arterial blood—I cannot be deceived in that colour; that drop is my death-warrant. I must die."

[2] This sentence indicates the lapse of perhaps about a week from the 3rd of February 1820.

CLVII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place
February 1820?]

My sweet love, I shall wait patiently till to-morrow before I see you, and in the mean time, if there is any need of such a thing, assure you by your Beauty, that whenever I have at any time written on a certain unpleasant subject, it has been with your welfare impress'd upon my mind. How hurt I should have been had you ever acceded to what is, notwithstanding, very reasonable! How much the more do I love you from the general result! In my present state of Health I feel too much separated from you and could almost speak to you in the words of Lorenzo's Ghost to Isabella

> Your Beauty grows upon me and I feel
> A greater love through all my essence steal.

My greatest torment since I have known you has been the fear of you being a little inclined to the Cressid; but that suspicion I dismiss utterly and remain happy in the surety of your Love, which I assure you is as much a wonder to me as a delight. Send me the words "Good night" to put under my pillow.

Dearest Fanny,
Your affectionate
J. K.

CLVIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey Esq^re^ Pancras Lane, Queen Street, Cheapside.

Wentworth Place
[*Postmark*, 11 February 1820.[1]]

My dear Fanny,

I am much the same as when I last wrote. I hope a little more verging towards improvement. Yesterday morning

[1] On the same day Brown wrote to "Master Henry Snook, at Mr. Lord's Academy, Tooting, Surrey," a letter from which the following passage is extracted as having a certain value in connexion with Keats's story:—"Mr. Keats fell very ill yesterday week, and my office of head Nurse has too much employed me to allow of my answering your letter immediately; he is somewhat better, but I'm in a very anxious state about him.—I was in hopes of you and Jack being able, during Easter, to go to the Theatre to witness our Tragedy; but no,—at Drury Lane they engaged to play it *next* Season, and I, not liking the delay, took it home.—Here, to amuse myself, I began to copy some of my favorite Hogarth's heads; they were in Indian ink as usual; when Mr. Severn (I think you know him) put me on another plan, and I hope to succeed. I must tell you about Mr. Severn, whether you know him or not: he is a young Artist, who lately strove with his fellow students for a gold medal, which the Royal Academy gives annually

being very fine, I took a walk for a quarter of an hour in the garden and was very much refresh'd by it. You must consider no news, good news—if you do not hear from me the day after tomorrow—

Your affectionate Brother
John

CLIX.

To FANNY KEATS.

Rd Abbey Esqre Pancras Lane, Queen St Cheapside.

Wentworth Place.
Monday Morn—
[*Postmark*, 14 February 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

I am improving but very gradually and suspect it will be a long while before I shall be able to walk six miles—The Sun appears half inclined to shine; if he obliges us I shall take a turn in the garden this morning. No one from Town has visited me since my last. I have had so many presents of jam and jellies that they would reach side by side the length of the sideboard. I hope I shall be well before it is all consumed. I am vex'd that Mr. Abbey will not allow you pocket money sufficient. He has not behaved well—By detaining money from me and George when we most wanted it he has increased our expences. In consequence of such delay George was obliged to take his voyage to England which will be £150 out of his pocket. I enclose you a note—You shall hear from me again the day after tomorrow.

Your affectionate Brother
John

CLX.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dearest Girl,

According to all appearances I am to be separated from you as much as possible. How I shall be able to bear it, or

or the best historical painting; the subject was fixed to be the Cave of Despair as described in Spencer's poem; it was Mr. Severn's *second* attempt in *oil* colours, and therefore it might have been supposed he stood no chance of success, and yet he won it!—it has been so much approved of that he will have his expenses paid for three years during his travels on the Continent, and his Majesty is to furnish him with letters of recommendation. What think you of this? I tell it you as a proof there is still some good reward in the world for superior talent; now and then a man of talent is disregarded, but it is an error to believe that such is the common fate of true desert. This does not apply solely to genius in the arts, but to you and me and all of us, as to our general character and capability."

whether it will not be worse than your presence now and then, I cannot tell. I must be patient, and in the mean time you must think of it as little as possible. Let me not longer detain you from going to Town—there may be no end to this imprisoning of you. Perhaps you had better not come before tomorrow evening : send me however without fail a good night.

You know our situation——what hope is there if I should be recovered ever so soon—my very health will[1] not suffer me to make any great exertion. I am recommended not even to read poetry, much less write it. I wish I had even a little hope. I cannot say forget me—but I would mention that there are impossibilities in the world. No more of this. I am not strong enough to be weaned—take no notice of it in your good night.

Happen what may I shall ever be my dearest Love

Your affectionate

J. K.

CLXI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dearest Girl, how could it ever have been my wish to forget you? how could I have said such a thing? The utmost stretch my mind has been capable of was to endeavour to forget you for your own sake seeing what a chance[2] there was of my remaining in a precarious state of health. I would have borne it as I would bear death if fate was in that humour : but I should as soon think of choosing to die as to part from you. Believe too my Love that our friends think and speak for the best, and if their best is not our best it is not their fault. When I am better I will speak with you at large on these subjects, if there is any occasion—I think there is none. I am rather nervous to-day perhaps from being a little recovered and suffering my mind to take little excursions beyond the doors and windows. I take it for a good sign, but as it must not be encouraged you had better delay seeing me till tomorrow. Do not take the trouble of writing much : merely send me my good night.

Remember me to your Mother and Margaret.

Your affectionate

J. K.

[1] In the original, 'with' is written instead of 'will'.

[2] Keats wrote here 'change' instead of 'chance'.

CLXII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place
February 1820?]

My dearest Fanny,

Then all we have to do is to be patient. Whatever violence I may sometimes do myself by hinting at what would appear to any one but ourselves a matter of necessity, I do not think I could bear any approach of a thought of losing you. I slept well last night, but cannot say that I improve very fast. I shall expect you tomorrow, for it is certainly better that I should see you seldom. Let me have your good night.

Your affectionate
J. K.

CLXIII.

To JAMES RICE.

Wentworth Place,
16 February 1820.

My dear Rice,

I have not been well enough to make any tolerable rejoinder to your kind letter. I will, as you advise, be very chary of my health and spirits. I am sorry to hear of your relapse and hypochondriac symptoms attending it. Let us hope for the best, as you say. I shall follow your example in looking to the future good rather than brooding upon the present ill. I have not been so worn with lengthened illnesses as you have, therefore cannot answer you on your own ground with respect to those haunting and deformed thoughts and feelings you speak of. When I have been, or supposed myself in health, I have had my share of them, especially within the last year. I may say, that for six months before I was taken ill I had not passed a tranquil day. Either that gloom overspread me, or I was suffering under some passionate feeling, or if I turned to versify, that acerbated the poison of either sensation. The beauties of nature had lost their power over me. How astonishingly (here I must premise that illness, as far as I can judge in so short a time, has relieved my mind of a load of deceptive thoughts and images, and makes me perceive things in a truer light),—how astonishingly does the chance of leaving

CLXII. Friends both of Keats and of Miss Brawne naturally regarded the engagement as an imprudent one from the first; and the entire break-down of the poet's health must have brought all possible prudential considerations home very poignantly to his own mind as well as the minds of his friends. Some hint beyond what is expressed in the last letter had perhaps fallen from Keats in conversation,—some hint of readiness at all costs to release Miss Brawne from her engagement if she on her part were prepared to follow prudent counsels and accept such release.

the world impress a sense of its natural beauties upon us! Like poor Falstaff, though I do not "babble," I think of green fields; I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from my infancy—their shapes and colours are as new to me as if I had just created them with a superhuman fancy. It is because they are connected with the most thoughtless and the happiest moments of our lives. I have seen foreign flowers in hothouses, of the most beautiful nature, but I do not care a straw for them. The simple flowers of our Spring are what I want to see again.

Brown has left the inventive and taken to the imitative art. He is doing his forte, which is copying Hogarth's heads. He has just made a purchase of the Methodist Meeting picture, which gave me a horrid dream a few nights ago. I hope I shall sit under the trees with you again in some such place as the Isle of Wight. I do not mind a game of cards in a saw-pit or waggon, but if ever you catch me on a stage-coach in the winter full against the wind, bring me down with a brace of bullets, and I promise not to 'peach. Remember me to Reynolds, and say how much I should like to hear from him; that Brown returned immediately after he went on Sunday, and that I was vexed at forgetting to ask him to lunch; for as he went towards the gate, I saw he was fatigued and hungry.

I am, my dear Rice,
Ever most sincerely yours,
John Keats.

I have broken this open to let you know I was surprised at seeing it on the table this morning, thinking it had gone long ago.

CLXIV.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey Esq^re^ Pancras Lane, Queen S^t^ Cheapside.

[*Postmark*, 19 February 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

Being confined almost entirely to vegetable food and the weather being at the same time so much against me, I cannot say I have much improved since I wrote last. The Doctor tells me there are no dangerous Symptoms about me and quietness of mind and fine weather will restore me. Mind my advice to be very careful to wear warm cloathing in a thaw.[1] I will write again on Tuesday when I hope to send you good news.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

[1] This brotherly insistence on prudence in the matter of dress is quite in character with the tender consideratenes of the whole series of letters to his sister.

CLXV.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dearest Fanny,

I read your note in bed last night, and that might be the reason of my sleeping so much better. I think Mr. Brown is right in supposing you may stop too long with me, so very nervous as I am. Send me every evening a written Good night. If you come for a few minutes about six it may be the best time. Should you ever fancy me too low-spirited I must warn you to ascribe it to the medicine I am at present taking which is of a nerve-shaking nature. I shall impute any depression I may experience to this cause. I have been writing with a vile old pen the whole week, which is excessively ungallant. The fault is in the Quill: I have mended it and still it is very much inclin'd to make blind es. However these last lines are in a much better style of penmanship, thof a little disfigured by the smear of black currant jelly; which has made a little mark on one of the Pages of Brown's Ben Jonson, the very best book he has. I have lick'd it but it remains very purple. I did not know whether to say purple or blue so in the mixture of the thought wrote purplue which may be an excellent name for a colour made up of those two, and would suit well to start next spring. Be very careful of open doors and windows and going without your duffle grey. God bless you Love!

J. Keats.

P.S. I am sitting in the back room. Remember me to your Mother.

CLXVI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dear Fanny,

Do not let your mother suppose that you hurt me by writing at night. For some reason or other your last night's note was not so treasureable as former ones. I would fain that you call me *Love* still. To see you happy and in high spirits[1] is a great consolation to me—still let me believe that you are not half so happy as my restoration would make you. I am nervous,

[1] Miss Brawne had much natural pride and buoyancy, and was quite capable of acting higher spirits and less concern than she really felt. But as to the genuineness of her attachment to Keats some of those who knew her personally have no doubt whatever.

I own, and may think myself worse than I really am; if so you must indulge me, and pamper with that sort of tenderness you have manifested towards me in different Letters. My sweet creature when I look back upon the pains and torments I have suffer'd for you from the day I left you to go to the isle of Wight; the extasies in which I have pass'd some days and the miseries in their turn, I wonder the more at the Beauty which has kept up the spell so fervently. When I send this round I shall be in the front parlour watching to see you show yourself for a minute in the garden. How illness stands as a barrier betwixt me and you! Even if I was well——I must make myself as good a Philosopher as possible. Now I have had opportunities of passing nights anxious and awake I have found other thoughts intrude upon me. "If I should die," said I to myself, "I have left no immortal work behind me—nothing to make my friends proud of my memory—but I have lov'd the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remember'd. Thoughts like these came very feebly whilst I was in health and every pulse beat for you—now you divide with this (may *I* say it?) "last infirmity of noble minds"[1] all my reflection.

God bless you, Love.
J. Keats.

CLXVII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dearest Girl,

You spoke of having been unwell in your last note: have you recover'd? That note has been a great delight to me. I am stronger than I was: the Doctors say there is very little the matter with me, but I cannot believe them till the weight and tightness of my Chest is mitigated. I will not indulge or pain myself by complaining of my long separation from you. God alone knows whether I am destined to taste of happiness with you: at all events I myself know thus much, that I consider it no mean Happiness to have lov'd you thus far—if it is to be no further I shall not be unthankful—if I am to recover, the day of

[1] See 'Lycidas,' lines 70 to 76:—

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.

my recovery shall see me by your side from which nothing shall separate me. If well you are the only medicine that can keep me so. Perhaps, aye surely, I am writing in too depress'd a state of mind—ask your Mother to come and see me—she will bring you a better account than mine.

Ever your affectionate
John Keats.

CLXVIII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[*Postmark*, 23 or 25 February 1820.]

My dear Reynolds,

I have been improving since you saw me: my nights are better which I think is a very encouraging thing. You mention your cold in rather too slighting a manner—if you travel outside have some flannel against the wind—which I hope will not keep on at this rate when you are in the Packet boat. Should it rain do not stop upon deck though the Passengers should vomit themselves inside out. Keep under Hatches from all sort of wet.

I am pretty well provided with Books at present, when you return I may give you a commission or two. Mr. B. C. has sent me not only his Sicilian Story but yesterday his Dramatic Scenes—this is very polite and I shall do what I can to make him sensible I think so. I confess they teaze me—they are composed of amiability, the Seasons, the Leaves, the Moon &c. upon which he rings (according to Hunt's expression) triple bob majors. However that is nothing—I think he likes poetry for its own sake, not his.[1] I hope I shall soon be well enough to

[1] Keats wrote of this attention of Procter's both to Fanny Brawne and to Dilke; but he seems to have reserved for his intimate kindred spirit Reynolds his estimate of the merits of Procter's books, while sharing between Reynolds and others his appreciation of the author's politeness. The 'Dramatic Scenes' compose the second division of the volume of which 'Marcian Colonna' forms the first; and this volume is the one referred to in the letter of the 4th of March (*post*) to Dilke as Procter's "first publish'd book." Keats's opinion of these books is interesting to compare with that of Shelley, whom they "teazed" even more than Keats, or at all events to more violent result. "The man", he writes to Peacock (Prose Works, Volume IV, pages 194-7), "whose critical gall is not stirred up by such ottava rimas as Barry Cornwall's, may safely be conjectured to possess no gall at all. The world is pale with the sickness of such stuff....I had much rather, for my own private reading, receive political, geological, and moral treatises than this stuff in *terza*, *ottava*, and *tremillissima rima* whose earthly baseness has attracted the lightning of your undiscriminating censure upon the temple of immortal song. Procter's verses enrage me far more than those of Codrus did Juvenal, and with better reason. Juvenal need not have been stunned unless he had liked it; but my boxes are packed with this trash to the exclusion of what I want to see." I do not know whether the excellent expression *triple bob majors* is still retained in the vocabulary of chime ringing. Keats's reference to his 'faeries" is of course to 'The Cap and Bells.'

proceed with my fa[e]ries and set you about the notes on Sundays and Stray-days. If I had been well enough I should have liked to cross the water with you. Brown wishes you a pleasant voyage—Have fish for dinner at the sea ports, and don't forget a bottle of Claret. You will not meet with so much to hate at Brussels as at Paris. Remember me to all my friends. If I were well enough I would paraphrase an ode of Horace's for you, on your embarking in the seventy years ago style. The Packet will bear a comparison with a Roman galley at any rate.

Ever yours affectionately
J. Keats

CLXIX.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
24 February 1820 ?.]

My dearest Girl,

Indeed I will not deceive you with respect to my health. This is the fact as far as I know. I have been confined three weeks and am not yet well—this proves that there is something wrong about me which my constitution will either conquer or give way to. Let us hope for the best. Do you hear the Thrush singing over the field? I think it is a sign of mild weather—so much the better for me. Like all Sinners now I am ill I philosophize, aye out of my attachment to every thing, Trees, flowers, Thrushes, Spring, Summer, Claret, &c. &c.—aye every thing but you.—My sister would be glad of my company a little longer. That Thrush is a fine fellow. I hope he was fortunate in his choice this year. Do not send any more of my Books home. I have a great pleasure in the thought of you looking on them.

Ever yours
my sweet Fanny
J. K.

CLXX.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place, Thursday [24 February 1820].
[*Postmark*, 25 February 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

I am sorry to hear you have been so unwell: now you are better, keep so. Remember to be very careful of your cloathing —this climate requires the utmost care. There has been very little alteration in me lately. I am much the same as when I

wrote last. When I am well enough to return to my old diet I shall get stronger. If my recovery should be delay'd long I will ask Mr. Abbey to let you visit me—keep up your Spirits as well as you can. You shall hear soon again from me—

Your affectionate Brother
John—

CLXXI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
25 February 1820?]

My dearest Fanny,

I had a better night last night than I have had since my attack, and this morning I am the same as when you saw me. I have been turning over two volumes of Letters written between Rousseau and two Ladies in the perplexed strain of mingled finesse and sentiment in which the Ladies and gentlemen of those days were so clever, and which is still prevalent among Ladies of this Country who live in a state of reasoning[1] romance. The likeness however only extends to the mannerism, not to the dexterity. What would Rousseau have said at seeing our little correspondence! What would his Ladies have said! I don't care much—I would sooner have Shakespeare's opinion about the matter. The common gossiping of washerwomen must be less disgusting than the continual and eternal fence and attack of Rousseau and these sublime Petticoats. One calls herself Clara and her friend Julia, two of Ro[u]sseau's heroines—they all[2] the same time christen poor Jean Jacques St. Preux—who is the pure cavalier of his famous novel. Thank God I am born in England with our own great Men before my eyes. Thank God that you are fair and can love me without being Letter-written and sentimentaliz'd into it.—Mr. Barry Cornwall[3] has sent me another Book, his first, with a polite note. I must do what I can to make him sensible of the esteem I have for his kindness. If this north east would take a turn it would be so much the better for me. Good bye, my love, my dear love, my beauty—

love me for ever.
J. K.

[1] In the original 'resoning'.

[2] So in the original; but probably *at* was the word Keats meant to write.

[3] The reference to Barry Cornwall indicates that this letter was written about the 23rd or 25th of February 1820; for to John Hamilton Reynolds (see page 157, *ante*) Keats recounts this same affair of Procter's first book as having happened "yesterday."

CLXXII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dearest Girl,

I continue much the same as usual, I think a little better. My spirits are better also, and consequently I am more resign'd to my confinement. I dare not think of you much or write much to you. Remember me to all.

Ever your affectionate
John Keats.

CLXXIII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dear Fanny,

I think you had better not make any long stay with me when Mr. Brown is at home. Whenever he goes out you may bring your work. You will have a pleasant walk to-day. I shall see you pass. I shall follow you with my eyes over the Heath. Will you come towards evening instead of before dinner? When you are gone, 'tis past—if you do not come till the evening I have something to look forward to all day. Come round to my window for a moment when you have read this. Thank your Mother, for the preserves, for me. The raspberry will be too sweet not having any acid; therefore as you are so good a girl I shall make you a present of it. Good bye

My sweet Love!
J. Keats.

CLXXIV.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
February 1820?]

My dearest Fanny,

The power of your benediction is of not so weak a nature as to pass from the ring in four and twenty hours—it is like a sacred Chalice once consecrated and ever consecrate. I shall kiss your name and mine where your Lips have been—Lips! why should a poor prisoner as I am talk about such things? Thank God, though I hold them the dearest pleasures in the universe, I have a consolation independent of them in the certainty of your affection. I could write a song in the style of

Tom Moore's Pathetic about Memory[1] if that would be any relief to me. No 'twould not. I will be as obstinate as a Robin, I will not sing in a cage. Health is my expected heaven and you are the Houri—this word I believe is both singular and plural—if only plural, never mind—you are a thousand of them.

Ever yours affectionately
my dearest,

You had better not come to-day. J. K.

CLXXV.

To PANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

My dearest Love,

You must not stop so long in the cold—I have been suspecting that window to be open.—Your note half-cured me. When I want some more oranges I will tell you—these are just à propos. I am kept from food so feel rather weak—otherwise very well. Pray do not stop so long upstairs—it makes me uneasy—come every now and then and stop a half minute. Remember me to your Mother. Your ever affectionate

J. Keats.

[1] It can scarcely be doubtful that the particular poem of Moore's to which allusion is here made is the charming song without a title, headed with the words from Aristotle's Rhetoric (Book III, Chapter 4), λιβανοτῳ εικασεν, ὁτι απολλυμενον ὠφαινει. It belonged originally to the collection of 'Epistles, Odes &c.', and was placed among the 'Odes to Nea, written at Bermuda.' No doubt the poem was much more generally known in Keats's days than it is now; and I shall be pardoned for placing it here:—

There's not a look, a word of thine
My soul hath e'er forgot;
Thou ne'er hast bid a ringlet shine,
Nor given thy looks one graceful twine,
Which I remember not!

There never yet a murmur fell
From that beguiling tongue,
Which did not, with a lingering spell,
Upon my charmed senses dwell,
Like something Heaven had sung!

Ah! that I could, at once, forget
All, all that haunts me so—
And yet, thou witching girl!—and yet,
To die were sweeter than to let
The loved remembrance go!

No, if this slighted heart must see
Its faithful pulse decay,
Oh! let it die, remembering thee,
And, like the burnt aroma, be
Consumed in sweets away!

CLXXVI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

Sweetest Fanny,

You fear, sometimes, I do not love you so much as you wish? My dear Girl I love you ever and ever and without reserve. The more I have known you the more have I lov'd. In every way—even my jealousies have been agonies of Love, in the hottest fit I ever had I would have died for you. I have vex'd you too much. But for Love! Can I help it? You are always new. The last of your kisses was ever the sweetest; the last smile the brightest; the last movement the gracefullest. When you pass'd my window home yesterday, I was fill'd with as much admiration as if I had then seen you for the first time. You uttered a half complaint once that I only lov'd your Beauty.[1] Have I nothing else then to love in you but that? Do not I see a heart naturally furnish'd with wings imprison itself with me? No ill prospect has been able to turn your thoughts a moment from me. This perhaps should be as much a subject of sorrow as joy—but I will not talk of that. Even if you did not love me I could not help an entire devotion to you: how much more deeply then must I feel for you knowing you love me. My Mind has been the most discontented and restless one that ever was put into a body too small for it. I never felt my Mind repose upon anything with complete and undistracted enjoyment—upon no person but you. When you are in the room my thoughts never fly out of window: you always concentrate my whole senses. The anxiety shown about our Loves in your last note is an immense pleasure to me: however you must not suffer such speculations to molest you any more: nor will I any more believe you can have the least pique against me. Brown is gone out—but here is Mrs. Wylie[2]—when she is gone I shall be awake for you.—Remembrances to your Mother.

Your affectionate
J. Keats.

[1] See the letter of the 8th of July 1819 from the Isle of Wight (page 71, *ante*) in which Keats answers some remarks of Miss Brawne's on this subject.

[2] The significant *but* indicates that the absence of Brown was still, as was natural, more or less a condition of the presence of Miss Brawne. That Keats had, however, or thought he had, some reason for this condition, beyond the mere delicacy of lovers, is dimly shadowed by the cold *My dear Fanny* with which in Letter CLXXIII the condition was first expressly prescribed, and more than shadowed by the agonized expression of a morbid sensibility in two letters which will be found further on. Probably a man in sound health would have found the cause trivial enough.

CLXXVII.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 4 March 1820.]

My dear Dilke,

Since I saw you I have been gradually, too gradually perhaps, improving; and though under an interdict with respect to animal food, living upon pseudo victuals, Brown says I have pick'd up a little flesh lately. If I can keep off inflammation for the next six weeks I trust I shall do very well. You certainly should have been at Martin's dinner for making an index is surely as dull work as engraving. Have you heard that the Bookseller is going to tie himself to the manger eat or not as he pleases. He says Rice shall have his foot on the fender notwithstanding. Reynolds is going to sail on the salt seas. Brown has been mightily progressing with his Hogarth.[1] A damn'd melancholy picture it is, and during the first week of my illness it gave me a psalm-singing nightmare, that made me almost faint away in my sleep. I know I am better, for I can bear the Picture. I have experienced a specimen of great politeness from Mr. Barry Cornwall. He has sent me his books. Some time ago he had given his first publish'd book to Hunt for me; Hunt forgot to give it and Barry Cornwall thinking I had received it must have though[t] me [:] very neglectful fellow.[2] Notwithstanding he sent me his second book and on my explaining that I had not received his first he sent me that also. I am sorry to see by Mrs. L.'s note that she has been so unwell with the spasms. Does she continue the Medicines that benefited her so much?

[1] See pages 154, *ante*.

[2] The following appears to be the letter sent by Procter on this occasion: the date would be the 22nd or 24th of February 1820. It appeared in the Memoir of M. Dilke in 'The Papers of a Critic':

Friday.
25, Store Street, Bedford Square.

My Dear Sir,

I send you "Marcian Colonna," which think as well of as you can. There is, I think (at least in the second and third parts), a stronger infusion of poetry in it than in the Sicilian story, but I may be mistaken. I am looking forward with some impatience to the publication of your book. Will you write my name in an early copy, and send it to me?* Is not this a "prodigious bold request?" I hope that you are getting quite well.

Believe me very sincerely yours,
B. W. Procter.

*This was written before I saw you the other day. Some time ago I scribbled half a dozen lines, under the idea of continuing and completing a poem, to be called "The Deluge,"—what do you think of the subject? The Greek deluge, I mean. I wish you would set me the example of leaving off the word "Sir."

To John Keats, Esq.

I am afraid not. Remember me to her and say I shall not expect her at Hampstead next week unless the Weather changes for the warmer. It is better to run no chance of a supernumer[ar]y cold in March. As for you you must come. You must improve in your penmanship; your writing is like the speaking of a child of three years old, very understandable to its father but to no one else. The worst is it looks well—no that is not the worst—the worst is, it is worse than Bailey's. Bailey's looks illegible and may perchance be read; yours looks very legible, and may perchance not be read. I would endeavour to give you a fac-simile of your word Thistlewood if I were not minded on the instant that Lord Chesterfield has done some such thing to his son. Now I would not bathe in the same River with Lord C. though I had the upper hand of the stream. I am grieved that in writing and speaking it is necessary to make use of the same particles as he did. Cobbet[t] is expected to come in. O that I had two double plumpers for him. The ministry are not so inimical to him but ~~they~~ it would like to put him out of Coventry. Casting my eye on the other side I see a long word written in a most vile manner,[1] unbecoming a Critic. You must recollect I have served no apprenticeship to old plays. If the only copies of the Greek and Latin authors had been made by you, Bailey and Haydon they were as good as lost. It has been said that the Character of a Man may be known by his handwriting—if the Character of the age may be known by the average goodness of said, what a slovenly age we live in. Look at Queen Elizabeth's Latin exercises and blush. Look at Milton's hand. I can't say a word for Shakespeare's.

Your sincere friend
John Keats

CLXXVIII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820]

My dear Fanny,

I am much better this morning than I was a week ago: indeed I improve a little every day. I rely upon taking a walk with you upon the first of May: in the mean time undergoing a babylonish captivity I shall not be jew enough to hang up my harp upon a willow, but rather endeavour to clear up my arrears in versifying, and with returning health begin upon something new: pursuant to which resolution it will be necessary to have

[1] Doubtless the word 'supernumerary,' from which Keats had dropped the penultimate *ar*. The next sentence has reference, I presume, to Dilke's continuation of Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays.

ny or rather Taylor's manuscript,[1] which you, if you please, will send by my Messenger either today or tomorrow. Is Mr. D.[2] with you today? You appeared very much fatigued last night: you must look a little brighter this morning. I shall not suffer my little girl ever to be obscured like glass breath'd upon, but always bright as it is her *nature to.* Feeding upon sham victuals and sitting by the fire will completely annul me. I have no need of an enchanted wax figure to duplicate me, for I am melting in my proper person before the fire.[3] If you meet with anything better (worse) than common in your Magazines let me see it.

Good bye my sweetest Girl.

J. K.

CLXXIX.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

My dearest Fanny, whe[ne]ver you know me to be alone, come, no matter what day. Why will you go out this weather? I shall not fatigue myself with writing too much I promise you. Brown says I am getting stouter. I rest well and from last night do not remember any thing horrid in my dream, which is a capital symptom, for any organic derangement always occasions a Phantasmagoria. It will be a nice idle amusement to hunt after a motto for my Book which I will have if lucky enough to hit upon a fit one—not intending to write a preface. I fear I am too late with my note—you are gone out—you will be as cold as a topsail in a north latitude—I advise you to furl yourself and come in a doors.

Good bye Love.

J. K.

1 Presumably the manuscript of 'Lamia, Isabella' &c., then about to be sent to press.

2 I suppose the reference is to Mr. Dilke.

3 The superstition that a person's death might be compassed by melting a waxen image of the person before a fire was not so well known in Keats's day as now. It is just such a phase of imaginative psychology as would have appealed powerfully to the mind of the author of 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and 'The Eve of St. Mark'; and it is noteworthy that Dante Gabriel Rossetti embodied this superstition in one of his finest poems, 'Sister Helen,' memorable alike for its forcible expression of the terrible and for its artistic beauty.

CLXXX.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

My dearest Fanny, I slept well last night and am no worse this morning for it. Day by day if I am not deceived I get a more unrestrain'd use of my Chest. The nearer a racer gets to the Goal the more his anxiety becomes; so I lingering upon the borders of health feel my impatience increase. Perhaps on your account I have imagined my illness more serious than it is: how horrid was the chance of slipping into the ground instead of into your arms—the difference is amazing Love. Death must come at last; Man must die, as Shallow says;[1] but before that is my fate I fain[2] would try what more pleasures than you have given, so sweet a creature as you can give. Let me have another op[p]ortunity of years before me and I will not die without being remember'd. Take care of yourself dear that we may both be well in the Summer. I do not at all fatigue myself with writing, having merely to put a line or two here and there, a Task which would worry a stout state of the body and mind, but which just suits me as I can do no more.

Your affectionate
J. K.

CLXXXI.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

My dearest Fanny,

Though I shall see you in so short a time I cannot forbear sending you a few lines. You say I did not give you yesterday a minute account of my health. To-day I have left off the Medicine which I took to keep the pulse down and I find I can do very well without it, which is a very favourable sign, as it shows that there is no inflammation remaining. You think I may be wearied at night you say: it is my best time; I am at my best about eight o'Clock. I received a Note from Mr. Procter[3] to-day. He says he cannot pay me a visit this

[1] "Certain, 't is certain; very sure, very sure: death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all; all shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?"
'Second Part of King Henry IV,' Act III, Scene ii.

[2] In the original, 'feign.'

[3] Misspelt 'Proctor' in the original. Probably Procter's note was a rejoinder to what Keats had written "to make him sensible of the esteem" he had "for his kindness" in sending 'Marcian Colonna' &c. (see page 159).

weather as he is fearful of an inflammation in the Chest. What a horrid climate this is? or what careless inhabitants it has? You are one of them. My dear girl do not make a joke of it: do not expose yourself to the cold. There's the Thrush again—I can't afford it—he'll run me up a pretty Bill for Music—besides he ought to know I deal at Clementi's. How can you bear so long an imprisonment at Hampstead? I shall always remember it with all the gusto that a monopolizing carle should. I could build an Altar to you for it.

Your affectionate
J. K.

CLXXXII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey^s^ Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

[*Postmark*, 20 March 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

According to your desire I write to-day. It must be but few lines for I have been attack'd several times with a palpitation at the heart and the Doctor says I must not make the slightest exertion. I am much the same to-day as I have been for a week past. They say 'tis nothing but debility and will entirely cease on my recovery of my strength which is the object of my present diet. As the Doctor will not suffer me to write I shall ask Mr. Brown to let you hear news of me for the future if I should not get stronger soon. I hope I shall be well enough to come and see your flowers in bloom—

Ever your most
affectionate Brother
John —

CLXXXIII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

My dearest Girl,

As, from the last part of my note you must see how gratified I have been by your remaining at home, you might perhaps conceive that I was equally bias'd the other way by your going to Town, I cannot be easy to-night without telling you you would be wrong to suppose so. Though I am pleased with the one, I am not displeased with the other. How do I dare to write in this manner about my pleasures and displeasures? I will tho' whilst I am an invalid, in spite of you. Good night, Love!

J. K.

CLXXXIV.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

My dearest Girl,

In consequence of our company I suppose I shall not see you before to-morrow. I am much better to-day—indeed all I have to complain of is want of strength and a little tightness in the Chest. I envied Sam's walk with you to-day; which I will not do again as I may get very tired of envying. I imagine you now sitting in your new black dress which I like so much and if I were a little less selfish and more enthusiastic[1] I should run round and surprise you with a knock at the door. I fear I am too prudent for a dying kind of Lover. Yet, there is a great difference between going off in warm blood like Romeo, and making one's exit like a frog in a frost. I had nothing particular to say to-day, but not intending that there shall be any interruption to our correspondence (which at some future time I propose offering to Murray)[2] I write something. God bless you my sweet Love! Illness is a long lane, but I see you at the end of it, and shall mend my pace as well as possible.

J. K.

CLXXXV.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Wentworth Place,
March 1820?]

Dear Girl,

Yesterday you must have thought me worse than I really was. I assure you there was nothing but regret at being obliged to forego an embrace which has so many times been the highest gust[3] of my Life. I would not care for health without it. Sam would not come in—I wanted merely to ask him how you were this morning. When one is not quite well we turn for

[1] In the original, 'enthousiastic.'

[2] One is a little surprised at the elasticity which, after so much illness and so much spiritual misery, was still capable of a joke of this kind—mild enough and not very witty, it is true, but still implying a certain rebound.

[3] This striking expression, though very unusual for a nineteenth century writer, is not uncommon with Keats. In the sense of this passage it is redolent of the great period to which Keats's vocabulary is indebted for so much. Indeed the word 'Gust' with the same surroundings is to be found in Dryden's works, admittedly studied by Keats at this time. In "glorious John's" translation of the Nineteenth Elegy of Ovid is the couplet—

> With what a Gust, ye Gods, we then imbrac'd!
> How every kiss was dearer than the last!

relief to those we love: this is no weakness of spirit in me: you know when in health I thought of nothing but you; when I shall again be so it will be the same. Brown has been mentioning to me that some hint from Sam, last night, occasions him some uneasiness. He whispered something to you concerning Brown and old Mr. Dilke which had the complexion of being something derogatory to the former. It was connected with an anxiety about Mr. D. Sr's death and an anxiety to set out for Chichester. These sort of hints point out their own solution: one cannot pretend to a delicate ignorance on the subject: you understand the whole matter. If any one, my sweet Love, has misrepresented, to you, to your Mother or Sam, any circumstances which are at all likely, at a tenth remove, to create suspicions among people who from their own interested notions slander others, pray tell me: for I feel the least attaint on the disinterested character of Brown very deeply. Perhaps Reynolds or some other of my friends may come towards evening, therefore you may choose whether you will come to see me early to-day before or after dinner as you may think fit. Remember me to your Mother and tell her to drag you to me if you show the least reluctance—

[Signature missing.]

CLXXXVI.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place,
April 1st. [1820.]

My dear Fanny—

I am getting better every day and should think myself quite well were I not reminded every now and then by faintness and a tightness in the Chest. Send your Spaniel over to Hampstead for I think I know where to find a Master or Mistress for him. You may depend upon it if you were even to turn it loose in the common road it would soon find an owner. If I keep improving as I have done I shall be able to come over to you in the course of a few weeks. I should take the advantage of your being in Town but I cannot bear the City though I have already ventured as far as the west end for the purpose of seeing Mr. Haydon's Picture which is just finished and has m[ade it]s appearance.[1] I have not heard from George

[1] This no doubt refers to the private view of the picture of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem. The picture was exhibited at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly; and the private view was on Saturday the 25th of March 1820. In Haydon's account of the triumphs of that day ('Autobiography,' first edition of Taylor's 'Life,' Volume I, page 371), he says—"The room was full. Keats and Hazlitt were up in a corner, really rejoicing."

yet since he left Liverpool. Mr. Brown wrote to him as from me the other day—Mr. B. wrote two Letters to Mr. Abbey concerning me—Mr. A. took no notice and of course Mr. B. must give up such a correspondence when as the man said all the Letters are on one side. I write with greater ease than I had thought, therefore you shall soon hear from me again.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

CLXXXVII.

To FANNY KEATS.

[April 1820.]

My dear Fanny

Mr. Brown is waiting for me to take a walk. Mr[s]. Dilke is on a visit next door and desires her love to you. The Dog shall be taken care of and for his name I shall go and look in the parish register where he was born—I still continue on the mending hand.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

CLXXXVIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R[d] Abbey Esq[re] Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place
12 April [1820].

My dear Fanny—

Excuse these shabby scraps of paper I send you—and also from endeavouring to give you any consolation just at present, for though my health is tolerably well I am too nervous

CLXXXVII. Although this letter has neither date nor postmark, being addressed simply "Miss Keats", there is little doubt that it was written between the 1st and 12th of April 1820, and was intended as an acknowledgment of the due receipt of "the dog"—probably to go back to Walthamstow by the person who brought the dog. On the 1st Keats wrote to his sister to send her spaniel to Hampstead, and on the 12th that it was "being attended to like a Prince."

It was probably in reference to a letter of Brown's written about this time to George Keats that the following letter was sent:—

Louisville June 18th 1820

My dear John

Where will our miseries end? so soon as the Thursday after I left London you were attacked with a dangerous illness, an hour after I left this for England my little Girl became so ill as to approach the Grave dragging our dear George after her. You are recovered (thank [God?] I hear the bad and good news together) they are recovered, and yet I feel gloomy instead of grateful. Perhaps from the consideration that so short a time will serve to deprive me of every

to enter into any discussion in which my heart is concerned. Wait patiently and take care of your health, being especially careful to keep yourself from low spirits which are great enemies to health. You are young and have only need of a little patience. I am not yet able to bear the fatigue of coming to Walthamstow though I have been to Town once or twice. I have thought of taking a change of air. You shall hear from me immediately on my moving any where. I will ask Mrs. Dilke to pay you a visit if the weather holds fine, the first time I see her. The Dog is being attended to like a Prince.

Your affectionate Brother
John

object that makes life pleasant. Brown says you are really recovered, that you eat, drink, sleep, and walk five miles without uneasiness, this is positive, and I believe you nearly recovered but your perfect recovery depends on the future. You must go to a more favorable clime, must be easy in your mind, the former depends on me the latter on yourself. My prospect of being able to send you 200£ very soon is pretty good, I have an offer for the Boat which I have accepted, but the party who lives at Natches (near New Orleans 300 miles only) will not receive information that I have accepted his offer for some weeks since the Gentleman who was commissioned to make it has gone up the Country and not yet returned, the only chance against us is that the purchasing party may change his mind; this is improbable since he has already purchased one fifth and to my knowledge is very anxious to obtain mine, but it is not impossible. I will direct my Agent at New Orleans to send you 200£ instantly on receiving the proceeds of the sale and should no unexpected delay occur it will arrive within 2 or 3 weeks of this letter. It shall be addressed to you at Abbey & Co's, the first of exchange directly from New Orleans, the second and third by way of New York and this place. I have no other means of raising anything like that Sum, scarcely a man in the town could borrow such a sum. I might suggest means of raising the money on this hope immediately but Brown being on the spot will advise what is best. Since your health requires it to Italy you must and shall go. Make your mind easy and place confidence in my success, I cannot ensure it, but will deserve it. I have a consignment of goods to sell by commission, which helps me a little, if this parcel does well I shall have more. When I have received the price offered for the Boat I shall have been no loser by the purchase. This considering the alteration in times is doing wonders. George desires her love and thinks that if you were with us our nursing would soon bring you to rights, but I tell her you cannot be in better hands than Brown's, she joins me in grateful thanks to him. I will write to him next post, repeating what is important in this, lest one should miscarry. Our love to Fanny and Mrs. W. and Brothers. Yesterday's Post, with Brown's letter brought us one from Henry Wylie acquainting us with the death of Mrs. Miller. Our love to Mary Miller if you should see her, George will write her in a few days. I will write again soon. I made up a packet to Haslam containing letters to Fanny, Mr. Abbey and Mrs. W: to go by private hand, the Gentleman has postponed his voyage. Take the utmost care of yourself my dear John for the sake of your most affectionate and alarmed Brother and Sister.

I am
Your very affectionate Brother
George.

CLXXXIX.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d Abbey Esq^re Walthamstow.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 21 April 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

I have been slowly improving since I wrote last. The Doctor assures me that there is nothing the matter with me except nervous irritability and a general weakness of the whole system which has proceeded from my anxiety of mind of late years and the too great excitement of poetry. Mr. Brown is going to Scotland by the Smack, and I am advised for change of exercise and air to accompany him and give myself the chance of benefit from a Voyage. Mr. H. Wylie call'd on me yesterday with a letter from George to his mother: George is safe at the other side of the water, perhaps by this time arrived at his home. I wish you were coming to town that I might see you; if you should be coming write to me, as it is quite a trouble to get by the coaches to Walthamstow. Should you not come to Town I must see you before I sail, at Walthamstow. They tell me I must study lines and tangents and squares and angles[1] to put a little Ballast into my mind. We shall be going in a fortnight and therefore you will see me within that space. I expected sooner, but I have not been able to venture to walk across the country. Now the fine Weather is come you will not find[2] your time so irksome. You must be sensible how much I regret not being able to alleviate the unpleasantness of your situation, but trust my dear Fanny that better times are in wait for you.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

CXC.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d Abbey Esq^re Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place
Thursday—
[*Postmark*, 4 May 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

I went for the first time into the City the day before yesterday, for before I was very disinclined to encounter the scuffle, more from nervousness than real illness; which notwithstanding I should not have suffered to conquer me if I had not made up my mind not to go to Scotland, but to remove to

[1] In the original letter 'ancles' is inadvertently written for 'angles.'
[2] In the manuscript, 'fine.'

Kentish Town till Mr. Brown returns. Kentish Town is a mile nearer to you than Hampstead—I have been getting gradually better but am not so well as to trust myself to the casualties of rain and sleeping out which I am liable to in visiting you. Mr. Brown goes on Saturday, and by that time I shall have settled in my new lodging, when I will certainly venture to you. You will forgive me I hope when I confess that I endeavour to think of you as little as possible and to let George dwell upon my mind but slightly. The reason being that I am afraid to ruminate on any thing which has the shade of difficulty or melancholy in it, as that sort of cogitation is so pernicious to health, and it is only by health that I can be enabled to alleviate your situation in future. For some time you must do what you can of yourself for relief; and bear your mind up with the consciousness that your situation cannot last for ever, and that for the present you may console yourself against the reproaches of Mrs. Abbey. Whatever obligations you may have had to her you have none now, as she has reproached you. I do not know what property you have, but I will enquire into it: be sure however that beyond the obligation that a lodger may have to a landlord you have none to Mrs. Abbey. Let the surety of this make you laugh at Mrs. A's foolish tattle. Mrs. Dilke's Brother has got your Dog. She is now very well—still liable to Illness. I will get her to come and see you if I can make up my mind on the propriety of introducing a stranger into Abbey's house. Be careful to let no fretting injure your health as I have suffered it—health is the greatest of blessings—with *health* and *hope* we should be content to live, and so you will find as you grow older—I am

my dear Fanny
your affectionate Brother
John—

CXCI.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

[Wentworth Place,
May 1820.]

My dear Dilke,

As Brown is not to be a fixture at Hampstead,[1] I have at last made up my mind to send home all lent books. I should

CXCI. The manuscript of this letter, which bears no date, postmark, or further address than "C. W. Dilke Esq.", has on it a pencilled memorandum assigning it to the year 1820. It would therefore seem to belong to the time just before the departure of Brown for Scotland on the 7th of May 1820. Mr. Dilke notes that "Brown let his house, as he was accustomed to do in the summer—and therefore Keats was obliged to remove." As regards the scheme of becoming Surgeon on board an Indiaman, see pages 61, 62, and 63, *ante*.

[1] Brown was starting for a second Scotch walk—alone this time, except so far as the voyage down the river to Gravesend was concerned.

have seen you before this, but my mind has been at work all over the world to find out what to do. I have my choice of three things, or at least two,—South America, or Surgeon to an Indiaman ; which last, I think, will be my fate. I shall resolve in a few days. Remember me to Mrs. D. and Charles, and your father and mother.

Ever truly yours
John Keats

CXCII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Kentish Town,
May 1820.]

My dearest Girl,

I endeavour to make myself as patient as possible. Hunt amuses me very kindly—besides I have your ring on my finger and your flowers on the table. I shall not expect to see you yet because it would be so much pain to part with you again. When the Books you want come you shall have them. I am very well this afternoon. My dearest . . .

[Signature cut off.[1]]

CXCIII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Tuesday Afternoon.
[Kentish Town, May 1820?]

My dearest Fanny,

For this Week past I have been employed in marking the most beautiful passages in Spenser, intending it for you, and comforting myself in being somehow occupied to give you however small a pleasure. It has lightened my time very much. I am much better. God bless you.

Your affectionate
J. Keats

[1] The piece cut off the original letter is so small that nothing can well be wanting except the signature,—probably given to an autograph-collector. This letter was of course written after Keats's removal from Wentworth Place to Wesleyan Place, Kentish Town, which, according to the letter written by the poet to his sister on the 4th of May 1820, was to have been accomplished by the 6th. See page 173, *ante*. The rest of the letters to Fanny Brawne all appear to have been written at Kentish Town, either at Wesleyan Place where Keats lodged up to the 23rd of June, or at Hunt's house in Mortimer Terrace to which he seems to have moved on that day.

CXCIII. The book referred to in this letter was lost in Germany.

CXCIV.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

[Kentish Town, 15 May 1820.]

My dear Brown,

You must not expect me to date my letter from such a place as this: you have heard the name; that is sufficient, except merely to tell you it is the 15th inst. You know I was very well in the Smack; I have continued much the same, and am well enough to extract much more pleasure than pain out of the summer, even though I should get no better. I shall not say a word about the stanza you promised yourself through my medium, and will swear, at some future time, I promised. Let us hope I may send you more than one in my next.

* * * * *

CXCV.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

Tuesday Morn.
[Kentish Town, May 1820.]

My dearest Girl,

I wrote a letter[1] for you yesterday expecting to have seen your mother. I shall be selfish enough to send it though I know it may give you a little pain, because I wish you to see how unhappy I am for love of you, and endeavour as much as I can to entice you to give up your whole heart to me whose whole existence hangs upon you. You could not step or move an eyelid but it would shoot to my heart—I am greedy of you. Do not think of anything but me. Do not live as if I was not existing. Do not forget me—But have I any right to say you forget me? Perhaps you think of me all day. Have I any right to wish you to be unhappy for me? You would forgive me for wishing it if you knew the extreme passion I have that you

CXCIV. "It was his choice," says Brown (Houghton Papers), "during my absence, to lodge at Kentish Town, that he might be near his friend, Leigh Hunt, in whose companionship he was ever happy. He went with me in the Scotch smack as far as Gravesend. This was on the 7th of May. I never saw him afterwards. As evidence of his well being I had requested him to send me some new stanzas to his comic faery poem; for, since his illness, he had not dared the exertion of composing. At the end of eight days he wrote in good spirits..." The fragment printed above is all that Brown gave of the letter "in good spirits." The pleasantry about not dating is characteristic enough as addressed to one punctilious in such matters.

[1] I do not find among the extant letters any one which I can regard as the particular letter referred to in the opening sentence. If the next letter were headed *Tuesday* and this *Wednesday*, that might well be the peccant document which appears to be missing.

should love me—and for you to love me as I do you, you must think of no one but me, much less write that sentence. Yesterday and this morning I have been haunted with a sweet vision —I have seen you the whole time in your shepherdess dress. How my senses have ached at it! How my heart has been devoted to it! How my eyes have been full of tears at it! I[n]deed I think a real love is enough to occupy the widest heart. Your going to town alone when I heard of it was a shock to me—yet I expected it—*promise me you will not for some time till I get better.* Promise me this and fill the paper full of the most endearing names. If you cannot do so with good will, do my love tell me—say what you think—confess if your heart is too much fasten'd on the world. Perhaps then I may see you at a greater distance, I may not be able to appropriate you so closely to myself. Were you to lose a favorite bird from the cage, how would your eyes ache after it as long as it was in sight; when out of sight you would recover a little. Perhaps if you would, if so it is, confess to me how many things are necessary to you besides me, I might be happier; by being less tantaliz'd. Well may you exclaim, how selfish, how cruel not to let me enjoy my youth! to wish me to be unhappy. You must be so if you love me. Upon my soul I can be contented with nothing else. If you would really what is call'd enjoy yourself at a Party—if you can smile in people's faces, and wish them to admire you *now*—you never have nor ever will love me. I see *life* in nothing but the certainty of your Love—convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not somehow convinced I shall die of agony. If we love we must not live as other men and women do—I cannot brook the wolfsbane of fashion and foppery and tattle—you must be mine to die upon the rack if I want you. I do not pretend to say that I have more feeling than my fellows, but I wish you seriously to look over my letters kind and unkind and consider whether the Person who wrote them can be able to endure much longer the agonies and uncertainties which you are so peculiarly made to create. My recovery of bodily health will be of no benefit to me if you are not mine when I am well. For God's sake save me—or tell me my passion is of too awful a nature for you. Again God bless you.

J. K.

No—my sweet Fanny—I am wrong—I do not wish you to be unhappy—and yet I do, I must while there is so sweet a Beauty—my loveliest, my darling! good bye! I kiss you—O the torments![1]

[1] This terrible letter calls forcibly to mind the little fragment descriptive of the Benou-Azra which the late James Thomson prefixed to his story of 'Weddah and Om-el-Bonain,' one of the best tragic stories written in English verse since Keats

CXCVI.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

My dear Taylor, 11 June [1820].

In reading over the proof of "St. Agnes' Eve" since I left Fleet Street, I was struck with what appears to me an alteration in the seventh stanza very much for the worse. The passage I mean stands thus—

her maiden eyes incline
Still on the floor, while many a sweeping train
Pass by.

'Twas originally written—

her maiden eyes divine
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by.

My meaning is quite destroyed in the alteration. I do not use *train* for *concourse of passers by*, but for *skirts* sweeping along the floor.

In the first stanza my copy reads, second line—

bitter *chill* it was,

to avoid the echo *cold* in the second line.

Ever yours sincerely
John Keats

CXCVII.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

[Kentish Town,
My dear Brown, June 1820.]

I have only been to ——'s once since you left, when —— could not find your letters. Now this is bad of me. I should, in this instance, conquer the great aversion to breaking up my regular habits, which grows upon me more and more. True, I have an excuse in the weather, which drives one from shelter to shelter in any little excursion. I have not heard from George.

wrote to the wonderful 'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil.' "The Benou-Azra are a tribe famous for love among all the tribes of Arabia. So that the manner in which their love has passed into a proverb, and God has not made any other creatures so tender in loving as are they. Sahid, son of Agba, one day asked an Arab, Of what people art thou? I am of the people who die when they love, answered the Arab. Thou art then of the tribe of Azra? said Sahid. Yes, by the master of the Caaba! replied the Arab. Whence comes it, then, that you thus love? asked Sahid. Our women are beautiful and our young men are chaste, answered the Arab." I give the extract as I find it, at page 58 of 'Vane's Story, Weddah and Om-el-Bonain, and other Poems' (London: Reeves and Turner, 1881).

CXCVII. This undated letter belongs to the time between the 7th of May 182[illegible], when Brown left for Scotland, and the 23rd of June, when Keats wrote to his sister that he *had* heard from George.

My book[1] is coming out with very low hopes, though not spirits, on my part. This shall be my last trial; not succeeding, I shall try what I can do in the apothecary line. When you hear from or see —— it is probable you will hear some complaints against me, which this notice is not intended to forestall. The fact is, I did behave badly; but it is to be attributed to my health, spirits, and the disadvantageous ground I stand on in society. I could go and accommodate matters if I were not too weary of the world. I know that they are more happy and comfortable than I am; therefore why should I trouble myself about it? I foresee I shall know very few people in the course of a year or two. Men get such different habits that they become as oil and vinegar to one another. Thus far I have a consciousness of having been pretty dull and heavy, both in subject and phrase; I might add, enigmatical. I am in the wrong, and the world is in the right, I have no doubt. Fact is, I have had so many kindnesses done me by so many people, that I am cheveaux-de-frised with benefits, which I must jump over or break down. I met —— in town, a few days ago, who invited me to supper to meet Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, Haydon, and some more; I was too careful of my health to risk being out at night. Talking of that, I continue to improve slowly, but, I think, surely. All the talk at present. . . . There is a famous exhibition in Pall-Mall of the old English portraits by Vandyck and Holbein, Sir Peter Lely, and the great Sir Godfrey. Pleasant countenances predominate; so I will mention two or three unpleasant ones. There is James the First, whose appearance would disgrace a "Society for the Suppression of Women;" so very squalid and subdued to nothing he looks. Then, there is old Lord Burleigh, the high-priest of economy, the political save-all, who has the appearance of a Pharisee just rebuffed by a Gospel *bon-mot*. Then, there is George the Second, very like an unintellectual Voltaire, troubled with the gout and a bad temper. Then, there is young Devereux, the favourite, with every appearance of as slang a boxer as any in the Court; his face is cast in the mould of blackguardism with jockey-plaster. . . . I shall soon begin upon "Lucy Vaughan Lloyd."[2] I do not begin composition yet, being willing, in case of a relapse, to have nothing to reproach myself with. I hope the weather will give you the slip; let it show itself and steal out of your company. . . . . When I have sent off this, I shall write another to some place about fifty miles in advance of you.

Good morning to you.

Yours ever sincerely
John Keats

[1] 'Lamia, Isabella,' &c.

[2] The pen-name, it will be remembered, under which he projected to publish 'The Cap and Bells.'

CXCVIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbeys Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Friday Morn [23 June 1820].
[*Postmark*, Kentish Town, 26 June 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

I had intended to delay seeing you till a Book which I am now publishing was out, expecting that to be the end of this week when I would have brought it to Walthamstow: on receiving your Letter of course I set myself to come to town, but was not able, for just as I was setting out yesterday morning a slight spitting of blood came on which returned rather more copiously at night. I have slept well and they tell me there is nothing material to fear. I will send my Book soon with a Letter which I have had from George who is with his family quite well.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

CXCVIII. This letter would seem to have been written the morning after the attack of blood-spitting to which it refers. If so, the attack in question had taken place, like the former attack, on a Thursday. The letter must have been delayed, for the postmark is as distinctly as possible that of the 26th of June 1820, which was a Monday. On the same day that Keats was writing to his sister, Friday the 23rd of June 1820, Mrs. Gisborne wrote thus in her private journal in my possession:—"Yesterday evening we drank tea at Mr. Hunt's; we found him ill, as he had been attacked with a bilious fever, soon after we last saw him, and was not recovered. His nephew was with him; he appears grave, and very attentive to his uncle, listening to all his words, in silence. Mr. Keats was introduced to us the same evening; he had lately been ill also, and spoke but little; the Endymion was not mentioned, this person might not be its author; but on observing his countenance and his eyes I persuaded myself that he was the very person. We talked of music, and of Italian and English singing; I mentioned that Farinelli had the art of taking breath imperceptibly, while he continued to hold one single note, alternately swelling out and diminishing the power of his voice like waves. Keats observed that this must in some degree be painful to the hearer, as when a diver descends into the hidden depths of the sea you feel an apprehension lest he may never rise again. These may not be his exact words as he spoke in a low tone." Probably the slight blood-spitting of the morning had made him careful; but to no effect. Mrs. Gisborne records later that she called at Hunt's the following Saturday and learnt from Mrs. Hunt that Hunt was worse and "that Mr. Keats was also ill in the house; he had burst a blood vessel the very night after we had seen him, and in order to be well attended, he had been moved from his lodgings in the neighbourhood, to Mr. Hunt's house." The "night after" must mean the night of the same day – the 22nd; and probably Keats moved from Wesleyan Place to Mortimer Terrace on the 23rd of June 1820.

CXCIX.
To FANNY BRAWNE.

Wednesday Morn[in]g.
[Kentish Town, 5 July 1820?]

My dearest Girl,

I have been a walk this morning with a book in my hand, but as usual I have been occupied with nothing but you: I wish I could say in an agreeable manner. I am tormented day and night. They talk of my going to Italy. 'Tis certain I shall never recover if I am to be so long separate from you: yet with all this devotion to you I cannot persuade myself into any confidence of you. Past experience connected with the fact of my long separation from you gives me agonies which are scarcely to be talked of. When your mother comes I shall be very sudden and expert in asking her whether you have been to Mrs. Dilke's, for she might say no to make me easy. I am literally worn to death, which seems my only recourse. I cannot forget what has pass'd. What? nothing with a man of the world, but to me dreadful. I will get rid of this as much as possible. When you were in the habit of flirting with Brown you would have left off, could your own heart have felt one half of one pang mine did. Brown is a good sort of Man—he did not know he was doing me to death by inches. I feel the effect of every one of those hours in my side now; and for that cause, though he has done me many services, though I know his love and friendship for me, though at this moment I should be without pence were it not for his assistance, I will never see or speak to him[1] until we are both old men, if we are to be. I *will* resent my heart having been made a football. You will call this madness. I have heard you say that it was not unpleasant to wait a few years—you have amusements—your mind is away—you have not brooded over one idea as I have, and how should you? You are to me an object intensely desirable[2]—the air I breathe in a room empty of you is unhealthy. I am not the same to you—no—you can wait—you have a thousand activities—you can be happy without me. Any party, any thing to fill up the day has been enough. How have you pass'd this month?[3] Who have

[1] This extreme bitterness of feeling must have supervened, one would think, in increased bodily disease; for the letter was clearly written after the parting of Keats and Brown at Gravesend, which took place on the 7th of May 1820, and on which occasion there is every reason to think that the friends were undivided in attachment. I imagine Keats would gladly have seen Brown within a week of this time had there been any opportunity.

[2] In the original, 'desireable.'

[3] This question might be taken to indicate the lapse of about a month from the time when Keats left the house at Hampstead next door to Miss Brawne's, where he probably knew her employments well enough from day to day; but I am inclined to think that a longer time had passed.

you smil'd with? All this may seem savage in me. You do not feel as I do—you do not know what it is to love—one day you may—your time is not come. Ask yourself how many unhappy hours Keats has caused you in Loneliness. For myself I have been a Martyr the whole time, and for this reason I speak; the confession is forc'd from me by the torture. I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ you believe in: Do not write to me if you have done anything this month which it would have pained me to have seen. You may have altered—if you have not—if you still behave in dancing rooms and other societies as I have seen you—I do not want to live—if you have done so I wish this coming night may be my last. I cannot live without you, and not only you but *chaste you; virtuous you.* The Sun rises and sets, the day passes, and you follow the bent of your inclination to a certain extent—you have no conception of the quantity of miserable feeling that passes through me in a day.—Be serious! Love is not a plaything—and again do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience. I would sooner die for want of you than——

Yours for ever
J. Keats.

CC.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d Abbey Esq^re Walthamstow.

Mortimer Terrace
Wednesday
[*Postmark*, 6 July 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

I have had no return of the spitting of blood, and for two or three days have been getting a little stronger. I have no hopes of an entire reestablishment of my health under some months of patience. My Physician tells me I must contrive to pass the Winter in Italy. This is all very unfortunate for us—we have no recourse but patience, which I am now practicing better than ever I thought it possible for me. I have this moment received a Letter from Mr. Brown, dated Dunvegan Castle, Island of Skye. He is very well in health and spirits. My new publication has been out for some days and I have directed a Copy to be bound for you, which you will receive

CC. Between the date of this letter and the probable date of the next, Mrs. Gisborne made the following entry in her journal:—"Wednesday 12 July. We drank tea at Mr. Hunt's; I was much pained by the sight of poor Keats, under sentence of death from Dr. Lamb. He never spoke and looks emaciated." It was perhaps immediately upon this visit that Mr. Gisborne wrote to Shelley the communication which induced his letter to Keats dated the 27th of July 1820.

shortly. No one can regret Mr. Hodgkinson's ill fortune: I must own illness has not made such a Saint of me as to prevent my rejoiceing at his reverse. Keep yourself in as good hopes as possible; in case my illness should continue an unreasonable time many of my friends would I trust for my sake do all in their power to console and amuse you, at the least word from me—You may depend upon it that in case my strength returns I will do all in my power to extricate you from the Abbeys.[1] Be above all things careful of your health which is the corner stone of all pleasure.

Your affectionate Brother
John —

CCI.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d. Abbey Esq^re Walthamstow.

[*Postmark*, 22 July 1820.[2]]

My dear Fanny,

I have been gaining strength for some days: it would be well if I could at the same time say I [am] gaining hopes of a speedy recovery. My constitution has suffered very much for two or three years past, so as to be scarcely able to make head against illness, which the natural activity and impatience of my Mind renders more dangerous. It will at all events be a very tedious affair, and you must expect to hear very little alteration of any sort in me for some time. You ought to have received a copy of my Book ten days ago—I shall send another message to the Booksellers. One of the Mr. Wylie's will be here to day or to morrow when I will ask him to send you George's Letter. Writing the smallest note is so annoying to me that I have waited till I shall see him. Mr. Hunt does every thing in his power to make the time pass as agreeably with me as possible. I read the greatest part of the day, and generally take two half hour walks a day up and down the terrace which is very much pester'd with cries, ballad singers, and street music. We have been so unfortunate for so long a time, every event has been of so depressing a nature that I must persuade myself to think some change will take place in the aspect of our affairs. I shall be upon the look out for a trump card.

Your affectionate
Brother, John —

[1] In the original, 'Abbies.'

[2] The postmark is that of Hampstead; but Keats was certainly still at Kentish Town, whence the letter must have been carried to Hampstead and posted.

CCII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Kentish Town,
July 1820?]

My dearest Fanny,

My head is puzzled this morning, and I scarce know what I shall say though I am full of a hundred things. 'Tis certain I would rather be writing to you this morning, notwithstanding the alloy of grief in such an occupation, than enjoy any other pleasure, with health to boot, unconnected with you. Upon my soul I have loved you to the extreme. I wish you could know the Tenderness with which I continually brood over your different aspects of countenance, action and dress. I see you come down in the morning: I see you meet me at the Window—I see every thing over again eternally that I ever have seen. If I get on the pleasant clue I live in a sort of happy misery, if on the unpleasant 'tis miserable misery. You complain of my illtreating you in word, thought and deed —I am sorry,—at times I feel bitterly sorry that I ever made you unhappy—my excuse is that those words have been wrung from me by the sharpness of my feelings. At all events and in any case I have been wrong; could I believe that I did it without any cause, I should be the most sincere of Penitents. I could give way to my repentant feelings now, I could recant all my suspicions, I could mingle with you heart and Soul though absent, were it not for some parts of your Letters. Do you suppose it possible I could ever leave you? You know what I think of myself and what of you. You know that I should feel how much it was my loss and how little yours. My friends laugh at you! I know some of them—when I know them all I shall never think of them again as friends or even acquaintance. My friends have behaved well to me in every instance but one, and there they have become tattlers, and inquisitors into my conduct: spying upon a secret I would rather die than share it with any body's confidence. For this I cannot wish them well, care not to see any of them again. If I am the Theme, I will not be the Friend of idle Gossips. Good gods what a shame it is our Loves should be so put into the microscope of a Coterie. Their laughs should not affect you (I may perhaps give you reasons some day for these laughs, for I suspect a few people to hate me well enough, *for reasons I know of*, who have pretended a great friendship for me) when in competition with one, who if he never should see you again would make you the Saint of his memory. These Laughers, who do not like you, who envy you for your Beauty, who would have God-bless'd me from you for ever: who were plying me with disencouragements with respect to you eternally. People are revengeful—do not mind them—

do nothing but love me—if I knew that for certain life and health will in such event be a heaven, and death itself will be less painful. I long to believe in immortality. I shall never be able to bid you an entire farewell. If I am destined to be happy with you here—how short is the longest Life. I wish to believe in immortality[1]—I wish to live with you for ever. Do not let my name ever pass between you and those laughers; if I have no other merit than the great Love for you, that were sufficient to keep me sacred and unmentioned in such society. If I have been cruel and unjust I swear my love has ever been greater than my cruelty which last[s] but a minute whereas my Love come what will shall last for ever. If concession to me has hurt your Pride god knows I have had little pride in my heart when thinking of you. Your name never passes my Lips—do not let mine pass yours. Those People do not like me. After reading my Letter you even then wish to see me. I am strong enough to walk over—but I dare not. I shall feel so much pain in parting with you again. My dearest love, I am afraid to see you; I am strong, but not strong enough to see you. Will my arm be ever round you again, and if so shall I be obliged to leave you again? My sweet Love! I am happy whilst I believe your first Letter. Let me be but certain that you are mine heart and soul, and I could die more happily than I could otherwise live. If you think me cruel—if you think I have sleighted you—do muse it over again and see into my heart. My love to you is "true as truth's simplicity and simpler than the infancy of truth"[2] as I think I once said before. How could I sleight you? How threaten to leave you? not in the spirit of a Threat to you—no—but in the

[1] He was seemingly in a different phase of belief from that in which the death of his brother Tom found him. See Volume IV, page 191. A further indication of his having shifted from the moorings of orthodoxy may be found in the expression in Letter CXCIX, "I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ you believe in:"—not "*we* believe in."

[2] No apology is necessary for quoting here the relative passage from the play so much read by Keats, 'Troilus and Cressida' (Act III, Scene ii):—

> O that I thought it could be in a woman—
> As, if it can, I will presume in you—
> To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;
> To keep her constancy in plight and youth,
> Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind
> That doth renew swifter than blood decays!
> Or that persuasion could but thus convince me,
> That my integrity and truth to you
> Might be affronted with the match and weight
> Of such a winnow'd purity in love;
> How were I then uplifted! but, alas!
> I am as true as truth's simplicity
> And simpler than the infancy of truth.

spirit of Wretchedness in myself. My fairest, my delicious, my angel Fanny! do not believe me such a vulgar fellow. I will be as patient in illness and as believing in Love as I am able.

Yours for ever my dearest
John Keats.

CCIII.

To FANNY BRAWNE.

[Kentish Town,
August 1820?]

I do not write this till the last
that no eye may catch it.[1]

My dearest Girl,

I wish you could invent some means to make me at all happy without you. Every hour I am more and more concentrated in you; every thing else tastes like chaff in my Mouth. I feel it almost impossible to go to Italy—the fact is I cannot leave you, and shall never taste one minute's content until it pleases chance to let me live with you for good. But I will not go on at this rate. A person in health as you are can have no conception of the horrors that nerves and a temper like mine go through. What Island do your friends propose retiring to? I should be happy to go with you there alone, but in company I should object to it; the backbitings and jealousies of new colonists who have nothing else to amuse themselves, is unbearable. Mr. Dilke came to see me yesterday, and gave me a very great deal more pain than pleasure. I shall never be able any more to endure the society of any of those who used to meet at Elm Cottage and Wentworth Place. The last two years taste like brass upon my Palate.[2] If I cannot live with you I will live alone. I do not think my health will improve much while I am separated from you. For all this I am averse to seeing you—I cannot bear flashes of light and return into my

[1] This seems to mean that he wrote the letter to the end, and then filled in the words 'My dearest Girl,' left out lest any one coming near him should chance to see them. These words are written more heavily than the beginning of the letter, and indicate a state of pen corresponding with that shown by the words 'God bless you' at the end. Probably the tone of this letter may have had something to do with the return of Keats to Wentworth Place instead of Well Walk when the letter-opening affair at Hunt's (pages 187 and 194, *post*) induced him to insist on leaving Kentish Town. It seems likely that this was the last letter Keats ever wrote to Fanny Brawne; for Mr. Severn told me that his friend was absolutely unable to write to her either on the voyage or in Italy. To her mother, he wrote from Naples the letter given at pages 198-9 of this volume, adding a few pathetic words of farewell to Fanny herself.

[2] Compare this striking phrase with Hyperion's experience (Book I, lines 188-9)—

Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:...

glooms again. I am not so unhappy now as I should be if I had seen you yesterday. To be happy with you seems such an impossibility! it requires a luckier Star than mine! it will never be. I enclose a passage from one of your letters which I want you to alter a little—I want (if you will have it so) the matter express'd less coldly to me. If my health would bear it, I could write a Poem which I have in my head, which would be a consolation for people in such a situation as mine. I would show some one in Love as I am, with a person living in such Liberty as you do. Shakespeare always sums up matters in the most sovereign manner. Hamlet's heart was full of such Misery as mine is when he said to Ophelia "Go to a Nunnery, go, go!" Indeed I should like to give up the matter at once—I should like to die. I am sickened at the brute world which you are smiling with. I hate men, and women more. I see nothing but thorns for the future—wherever I may be next winter, in Italy or nowhere, Brown will be living near you with his indecencies. I see no prospect of any rest. Suppose me in Rome—well, I should there see you as in a magic glass going to and from town at all hours,———— I wish you could infuse a little confidence of human nature into my heart. I cannot muster any—the world is too brutal for me—I am glad there is such a thing as the grave—I am sure I shall never have any rest till I get there. At any rate I will indulge myself by never seeing any more Dilke or Brown or any of their Friends. I wish I was either in your arms full of faith or that a Thunder bolt would strike me.

God bless you.
J. K.

CCIV.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Mrs. Brawne's Next door to Brown's
Wentworth Place
Hampstead
[August] 1820

My dear Haydon,

I am much better this morning than I was when I wrote the note: that is my hopes and spirits are better which are

CCIV. Probably this note belongs to the 14th of August 1820, as one of the many Keats was writing that day. Writing of Keats after his death, Haydon says—"The last time I ever saw him was at Hampstead, lying in a white bed with a book, hectic and on his back, irritable at his weakness and wounded at the way he had been used. He seemed to be going out of life with a contempt for the world and no hopes of the other. I told him to be calm, but he muttered that if he did not soon get better he would destroy himself. I tried to reason against such violence, but it was no use; he grew angry, and I went away deeply affected." Had the painter but followed his own counsel!

generally at a very low ebb from such a protracted illness. I shall be here for a little time and at home all and every day. A journey to Italy is recommended me, which I have resolved upon and am beginning to prepare for. Hoping to see you shortly

I remain
Your affectionate friend
John Keats

CCV.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place.
[*Postmark*, 4 o'Clock, 14 August 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

'Tis a long time since I received your last. An accident of an unpleasant nature occur[r]ed at Mr. Hunt's and prevented me from answering you, that is to say made me nervous. That you may not suppose it worse I will mention that some one of Mr. Hunt's household opened a Letter of mine—upon which I immediately left Mortimer Terrace, with the intention of taking to Mrs. Bentley's again; fortunately I am not in so lone a situation, but am staying a short time with Mrs. Brawne who lives in the House which was Mrs. Dilke's. I am excessively nervous: a person I am not quite used to entering the room half choaks me. 'Tis not yet Consumption I believe, but it would be were I to remain in this climate all the Winter: so I am thinking of either voyaging or travelling to Italy. Yesterday I received an invitation from Mr. Shelley, a Gentleman residing at Pisa, to spend the Winter with him: if I go I

CCV. The beginning of this letter does not quite explain itself, as the incident of the opened letter at Hunt's had occurred as recently as the 10th of August, and had not been known by Keats till the 12th. This is quite clear from Mrs. Gisborne's manuscript journal, wherein it is mentioned that the Gisbornes were at Hunt's on Thursday the 10th, and that the Hunts promised to come to the Gisbornes on Saturday the 12th. On Saturday the 19th "Mrs. Hunt came in to tea; she called to apologise for herself and Mr. Hunt, for not having kept their appointment on the Saturday before; they were prevented by an unpleasant circumstance that happened to Keats. While we [were] there on Thursday a note was brought to him after he had retired to his room to repose himself; Mrs. Hunt being occupied with the child desired her upper servant to take it to him, and thought no more about it. On Friday the servant left her, and on Saturday Thornton produced this note open (which contained not a word of the least consequence), telling his mother that the servant had given it him before she left the house with injunctions not to shew it to his mother till the following day. Poor Keats was affected by this inconceivable circumstance beyond what can be imagined; he wept for several hours, and resolved, notwithstanding Hunt's entreaties, to leave the house; he went to Hampstead that same evening."

must be away in a Month or even less. I am glad you like the Poems, you must hope with me that time and health will produce you some more. This is the first morning I have been able to sit to the paper and have many Letters to write if I can manage them. God bless you my dear Sister.

Your affectionate Brother,
John —

CCVI.

To PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Hampstead, August 1820.

My dear Shelley,

I am very much gratified that you, in a foreign country, and with a mind almost overoccupied, should write to me in the strain of the letter beside me. If I do not take advantage of your invitation, it will be prevented by a circumstance I have very much at heart to prophesy. There is no doubt that an English winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering, hateful manner. Therefore, I must either voyage or journey to Italy, as a soldier marches up to a battery. My nerves at present are the worst part of me, yet they feel soothed that, come what extreme may, I shall not be destined to remain in one spot long

CCVI. As to the date and place inscribed at the head of this letter, some explanation must be offered. In the 'Shelley Memorials' it is fully dated the 10th of August. Now Keats had not on the 10th of August returned to Hampstead; and according to his letter of the 14th to his sister he only received Shelley's invitation on the 13th. As the 14th was the first day he had sat down to write since his recent attack, that is the earliest date assignable to the reply; and this to Shelley was probably one of the several letters he had to write that day; but it seems safer to leave the day blank for the present. Shelley's letter written at Pisa on the 27th of July should in the natural course, if posted at once, have reached Keats about a fortnight later, and would probably be answered promptly. It is as follows:—

Pisa, 27th July, 1820.

My dear Keats,

I hear with great pain the dangerous accident you have undergone, and Mr. Gisborne, who gives me the account of it, adds that you continue to wear a consumptive appearance. This consumption is a disease particularly fond of people who write such good verses as you have done, and with the assistance of an English winter it can often indulge its selection. I do not think that young and amiable poets are bound to gratify its taste; they have entered into no bond with the muses to that effect. But seriously (for I am joking on what I am very anxious about) I think you would do well to pass the winter in Italy and avoid so tremendous an accident, and if you think it as necessary as I do, so long as you continue to find Pisa or its neighbourhood agreeable to you, Mrs. Shelley unites with myself in urging the request that you would take up your residence with us. You might come by sea to Leghorn (France is not worth seeing, and the sea is particularly good for weak lungs), which is within a few miles of us. You ought, at all events, to see Italy, and your health, which I suggest as a motive, may be an excuse to you. I spare declamation about the statues, and paintings,

enough to take a hatred of any four particular bedposts. I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor poem, which I would willingly take the trouble to unwrite, if possible, did I care so much as I have done about reputation. I received a copy of the *Cenci*, as from yourself, from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of—the poetry and dramatic effect, which by many spirits now-a-days is considered the Mammon. A modern work, it is said, must have a purpose, which may be the God. An artist must serve Mammon; he must have "self-concentration"—selfishness, perhaps. You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furled for six months together. And is not this extraordinary talk for the writer of *Endymion*, whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards? I am picked up and sorted to a pip. My imagination is a monastery, and I am its monk. I am in expectation of *Prometheus* every day. Could I have my own wish effected, you would have it still in manuscript, or be but now putting an end to the second act. I remember you advising me not to publish my first blights, on Hampstead Heath. I am returning advice upon your hands. Most of the poems in the volume I send

and ruins, and what is a greater piece of forbearance, about the mountains and streams, the fields, the colours of the sky, and the sky itself.

I have lately read your 'Endymion' again, and even with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion. This people in general will not endure, and that is the cause of the comparatively few copies which have been sold. I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will. I always tell Ollier to send you copies of my books. 'Prometheus Unbound' I imagine you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter. 'The Cenci' I hope you have already received—it was studiously composed in a different style.

Below the *good* how far! but far above the *great!*

In poetry I have sought to avoid system and mannerism. I wish those who excel me in genius would pursue the same plan.

Whether you remain in England, or journey to Italy, believe that you carry with you my anxious wishes for your health, happiness, and success wherever you are, or whatever you undertake, and that I am,

Yours sincerely,
P. B. Shelley.

On the 11th of November 1820 Shelley wrote to Leigh Hunt (Hunt's Correspondence, Volume I, page 159):

"Where is Keats now? I am anxiously expecting him in Italy, when I shall take care to bestow every possible attention on him. I consider his a most valuable life, and I am deeply interested in his safety. I intend to be the physician both of his body and his soul, to keep the one warm, and to teach the other Greek and Spanish. I am aware, indeed, in part, that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me; and this is an additional motive, and will be an added pleasure."

you[1] have been written above two years, and would never have been published but for hope of gain; so you see I am inclined enough to take your advice now. I must express once more my deep sense of your kindness, adding my sincere thanks and respects for Mrs. Shelley. In the hope of soon seeing you,

I remain most sincerely yours,

John Keats.

CCVII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Wentworth Place

Saty. Morn. [*Postmark*, 14 August 1820].

My dear Taylor,

My chest is in such a nervous state, that anything extra, such as speaking to an unaccustomed person, or writing a note, half suffocates me. This journey to Italy wakes me at daylight every morning, and haunts me horribly. I shall endeavour to go, though it be with the sensation of marching up against a battery.[2] The first step towards it is to know the expense of a journey and a year's residence, which if you will ascertain for me, and let me know early, you will greatly serve me. I have more to say, but must desist, for every line I write increases the tightness of my chest, and I have many more to do. I am convinced that this sort of thing does not continue for nothing. If you can come, with any of our friends, do.

Your sincere friend,

John Keats.

CCVIII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

[Wentworth Place, 15 August 1820.]

My dear Haydon,

I am sorry to be obliged to try your patience a few more days when you will have the Book sent from Town. I am glad

[1] 'Lamia, Isabella,' &c. It will be remembered that it was a copy of this book, belonging to Hunt, that was found doubled back in the drowned Shelley's pocket, and that Hunt cast upon the burning relics of his friend.

[2] This curiously characteristic expression, which occurs in almost the same words in the foregoing letter to Shelley (page 188), may be compared with a somewhat similar one at page 83, *ante*, where Keats writes to Fanny Brawne that he can "no more use soothing words" to her than if he were "engaged in a charge of Cavalry."

CCVIII. This pathetic little note, the manuscript of which is preserved in Haydon's journal without date, superscription, or address, is almost certainly a reply to the two following letters. It is to be noted in passing that the picture referred to is recorded by Frederick Haydon to have been the Lazarus now in the National Gallery; and further that the words printed as 'my mind' stand in

to hear you are in progress with another Picture. Go on. I am afraid I shall pop off just when my mind is able to run alone.

Your sincere friend
John Keats

CCIX.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Wentworth Place
[15 August 1820].

My dear Taylor,

I do not think I mentioned anything of a Passage to Leghorn by Sea. Will you join that to your enquiries, and,

the original as 'I mind'. The first of Haydon's two letters appears to have been written in Keats's lodgings at Kentish Town towards the end of his stay in them; for beside the internal evidence that Haydon had come over and found his friend out, there is the fact that the latter is only addressed "John Keats Esq", and is written on a piece of the same paper that Keats was using—a different paper from what Haydon used:

My dear Keats,

I have been coming every day for months to see you, and determined this morning as I heard you were still ill or worse to walk over in spite of all pestering hindrances. I regret my very dear Keats to find by your landlady's account that you are very poorly. I hope you have Darling's advice, on whose skill I have the greatest reliance—certainly I was as bad as anybody could be, and I have recovered, therefore, I hope, indeed I have no doubt, you will ultimately get round again, if you attend strictly to yourself, and avoid cold and night air.—I wish you would write me a line to say how you really are.—I have been sitting for some little time in your Lodgings, which are clean, airy, and quiet. I wish to God you were sitting with me—I am sorry to hear Hunt has been laid up too—take care of yourself my dear Keats.

Believe me
Ever most affectionately and sincerely
your friend
B. R. Haydon.

The second letter, which has the year-date very indistinctly written, but which must belong to 1820, as Keats's 1817 volume of poems was ready long before July 1817, gives us the precise locality of the lodgings, for it is addressed "John Keats Esq, Wesleyan Place, Kentish Town"—whence it is to be presumed Haydon did not know Keats had removed in the meantime to Mortimer Terrace:—

My dear Keats,

When I called the other morning, I did not know your Poems were out, or should have read them before I came in order to tell you my opinion—I have done so since, and really I cannot tell you how very highly I estimate them—they justify the assertions of all your Friends regarding your poetical powers. I can assure you, whatever you may do, you will not exceed my opinion of them. Have you done with Chapman's Homer? I want it very badly at this moment; will you let the bearer have it, as well as let me know how you are?

I am dear Keats
ever yours
July 14 1820 B. R. Haydon.

CCIX. Mr. Taylor endorsed this letter as follows:—

"Inclosed in this Letter I received a Testamentary Paper in John Keats's

if you can, give a peep at the Berth if the Vessel is [in] our river.

Your sincere friend
John Keats.

P.S. Somehow a copy of Chapman's Homer, lent to me by Haydon, has disappeared from my Lodgings—it has quite flown I am afraid, and Haydon urges the return of it so that I must get one at Longman's and send it to Lisson Grove—or you must—or as I have given you a job on the River—ask Mistessey.[1] I had written a Note to this effect to Hessey some time since but crumpled it up in hopes that the Book might come to light. This morning Haydon has sent another messenger. The copy was in good condition with the head. Damn all thieves! Tell Woodhouse I have not lost his Blackwood.

Testamentary Paper enclosed in the foregoing.

My Chest of Books divide among my friends.[2]

In case of my death this scrap of paper may be serviceable in your possession.

All my Estate real and personal consists in the hopes of the sale of books publish'd or unpublish'd. Now I wish *Brown* and you to be the first paid Creditors—the rest is in nubibus—but in case it should shower pay my Taylor the few pounds I owe him.

Handwriting without date on which I have endorsed a memorandum to this effect for the purpose of identifying it & for better security it is hereunto annexed.

22 Sept 1820 John Taylor"

The endorsement on the Testamentary Paper runs thus:—

"N.B. On the 14th August or the 15th 1820 I received this paper which is in John Keats's Handwriting inclosed in the annexed Letter which came by the 3d7 post.

22 Sept 1820 John Taylor"

[1] Mr. Hessey.

[2] Whether this testamentary wish was carried out I do not know; but, from the following passage in a letter of George Keats's dated the 20th of April 1825, it seems likely that it was:—"Since it has fallen on me to pay my Brother's debts I should in Justice have some books or other relicks he may have left behind him. My conduct has been liberally censured, I have been industriously made acquainted with demands against the estate but not a single volume, Picture, bust, Cast—is reserved for me, who I have no hesitation in saying am more nearly allied to poor John in feeling as I am more closely connected in Blood than any other in the whole circle of his Friendships.... Those effects in the possession of Friends who value them as having been once John's are most heartily welcome to them, I however hope some trifles may be collected for me so that I be not left entirely relickless!"

The Shakespeare folio of 1808, containing his manuscript notes and the Sonnet on Sitting down to read 'King Lear' once again was in Mrs. Lindon's possession

CCX.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

My dear Brown,

You may not have heard from ——, or ——, or in any way, that an attack of spitting of blood, and all its weakening consequences, has prevented me from writing for so long a time. I have matter now for a very long letter, but not news: so I must cut everything short. I shall make some confession, which you will be the only person, for many reasons, I shall trust with. A winter in England would, I have not a doubt, kill me; so I have resolved to go to Italy, either by sea or land.

up to the time of her death; and the Shakespeare's Poems containing Keats's last sonnet was similarly guarded by Severn. Both are now the property of Sir Charles Dilke, who allows them to be exhibited in the Chelsea Free Library with the rest of his priceless collection of Keats relics. These include a folio Livy with the inscription "B. Bailey, Magdalen Hall, Oxon, presents this volume to his friend John Keats, July 1818"; a much damaged copy of Bacon's 'Advancement of Learning,' possessed by Keats when young, and containing many manuscript notes; a copy of Lemprière's Classical Dictionary formerly Keats's but without his autograph; and an Ovid of 1806 with his autograph. Then of course there is the Milton which he annotated and gave to Mrs. Dilke; and the Beaumont and Fletcher volumes given to Keats by his brother George. These are three volumes out of a set of four containing the dramatic works of Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher. Volume II has the inscription "Geo. Keats to his affectionate brother John"; and in Volume IV are the holograph poems 'Bards of Passion and of Mirth' and 'Spirit here that reignest.' The volumes accompanied Brown to New Zealand, as did the annotated volume of Burton's 'Anatomy' described in Volume III of this edition. They were sent to Sir Charles Dilke by Brown's son, Major Charles Brown of Taranaki.

Now and again books formerly owned by Keats fall into the hands of collectors; but it is not often that they are to be had. Some forty years ago a copy of Lemprière's Classical Dictionary bearing his autograph was acquired for a trifle by one who did not value it much, and who is now dead. Where the book is I know not. It would seem however that he must have had two copies in his time. In my own collection, besides the little Dante and Hunt's *Foliage* given by Keats to Fanny Brawne, and therefore not left in the Chest, is a beautiful folio which probably was from the Chest. It is of the third edition of Selden's *Titles of Honour* (1672), has the autograph "John Keats 1819" on the title-page, and, more interesting, the commencement of a manuscript index. On a blank leaf at the beginning he has made a complete set of capitals, duly spaced out for the entries to be added; but only two entries were made.

CCX. This letter, which first appeared in 'Papers of a Critic' (Volume I, pages 90), clearly belongs to the latter part of August. If Keats heard from Shelley on the 13th, as indicated in his letter of the 14th to Fanny Keats, it may reasonably be supposed that the letter to Brown was written about the 20th of August 1820 from Hampstead. Referring to the last sentence but one, it is to be recorded that, on Keats's return from Kentish Town, Hunt sent him the following letter from Mortimer Terrace, addressed to "Mrs. Brawn[e]'s, Wentworth Place":—

Novani Mio,

I shall see you this afternoon, and most probably every day. You judge rightly when you think I shall be glad at your putting up awhile where

Not that I have any great hopes of that, for, I think, there is a core of disease in me not easy to pull out. . . . . If I should die . . . . I shall be obliged to set off in less than a month. Do not, my dear Brown, teaze yourself about me. You must fill up your time as well as you can, and as happily. You must think of my faults as lightly as you can. When I have health I will bring up the long arrears of letters I owe you. . . . My book has had good success among the literary people, and I believe has a moderate sale. I have seen very few people we know. —— has visited me more than any one. I would go to —— and make some inquiries after you, if I could with any bearable sensation ; but a person I am not quite used to causes an oppression on my chest. Last week I received a letter from Shelley, at Pisa, of a very kind nature, asking me to pass the winter with him. Hunt has behaved very kindly to me. You shall hear from me again shortly.

Your affectionate friend
John Keats

CCXI.

To FANNY KEATS.

R^d^ Abbey's Esq^re^ Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place
Wednesday Morning
[*Postmark*, 23 August 1820.]

My dear Fanny,

It will give me great Pleasure to see you here, if you can contrive it ; though I confess I should have written instead of calling upon you before I set out on my journey, from the wish of avoiding unpleasant partings. Meantime I will just notice some parts of your Letter. The seal-breaking business is over blown. I think no more of it. A few days ago I wrote to Mr. Brown, asking him to befriend me with his company to Rome. His answer is not yet come, and I do not know when it will, not being certain how far he may be from the Post Office to which my communication is addressed. Let us hope he will go with me. George certainly ought to have written to you: his

you are, instead of that solitary place. There are humanities in the house; and if wisdom loves to live with children round her knees (the tax-gatherer apart), sick wisdom, I think, should love to live with arms about it's waist. I need not say how you gratify me by the impulse that led you to write a particular sentence in your letter, for you must have seen by this time how much I am attached to yourself.

I am indicating at as dull a rate as a battered finger-post in wet weather. Not that I am ill: for I am very well altogether.

Your affectionate Friend
Leigh Hunt.

troubles, anxieties and fatigues are not quite a sufficient excuse. In the course of time you will be sure to find that this neglect, is not forgetfulness. I am sorry to hear you have been so ill and in such low spirits. Now you are better, keep so. Do not suffer your Mind to dwell on unpleasant reflexions—that sort of thing has been the destruction of my health. Nothing is so bad as want of health—it makes one envy scavengers and cinder-sifters. There are enough real distresses and evils in wait for every one to try the most vigorous health. Not that I would say yours are not real—but they are such as to tempt you to employ your imagination on them, rather than endeavour to dismiss them entirely. Do not diet your mind with grief, it destroys the constitution; but let your chief care be of your health, and with that you will meet your share of Pleasure in the world—do not doubt it. If I return well from Italy I will turn over a new leaf for you. I have been improving lately, and have very good hopes of "turning a Neuk" and cheating the consumption. I am not well enough to write to George myself —Mr. Haslam[1] will do it for me, to whom I shall write to day, desiring him to mention as gently as possible your complaint. I am my dear Fanny

Your affectionate Brother
John.

CCXII.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

[Wentworth Place
August 1820.]

My dear Brown,

. . . . I ought to be off at the end of this week, as the cold winds begin to blow towards evening;—but I will wait till I have your answer to this. I am to be introduced, before I set out, to a Dr. Clark, a physician settled at Rome, who promises to befriend me in every way there. The sale of my book is very slow, though it has been very highly rated. One of the causes, I understand from different quarters, of the unpopularity of this new book, and the others also, is the offence the ladies take at

[1] Not, one would have thought, an over fortunate choice, seeing that Mr. Haslam was under monetary obligations to George Keats (page 116 of this volume), and had already shown a not very reassuring attitude in tearing up a letter from George entrusted to him by John (page 60).

CCXII. The date upon which Keats left Hampstead on his journey to Italy is somewhat doubtful. He possessed and used a copy of Leigh Hunt's 'Literary Pocket-book' for 1819, which he left in the possession of Miss Brawne; and she also wrote memoranda in it. These latter were probably written in 1820; and one, under the 8th of September, is "Mr. Keats left Hampstead". On the 8th of September 1819 he was at Winchester. On the other hand the 18th of September 1820 is the date recorded at Lloyd's as that of the departure of the "Maria Crowther," on board which Keats and Severn left London.

me. On thinking that matter over, I am certain that I have said nothing in a spirit to displease any woman I would care to please; but still there is a tendency to class women in my books with roses and sweetmeats,—they never see themselves dominant. If ever I come to publish "Lucy Vaughan Lloyd," there will be some delicate picking for squeamish stomachs. I will say no more, but, waiting in anxiety for your answer, doff my hat, and make a purse as long as I can.

Your affectionate friend,
John Keats.

CCXIII.

To ———————.

[September 1820.]

The passport arrived before we started. I don't think I shall be long ill. God bless you—farewell.

John Keats

CCXIV.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead.

Saturday, Sept. 28 [1820]
Maria Crowther,
Off Yarmouth, Isle of Wight.

My dear Brown,

The time has not yet come for a pleasant letter from me. I have delayed writing to you from time to time, because I felt how impossible it was to enliven you with one heartening hope of my recovery; this morning in bed the matter struck me in a different manner; I thought I would write "while I was in some liking," or I might become too ill to write at all; and then if the desire to have written should become strong it would be a great affliction to me. I have many more letters to write, and I bless my stars that I have begun, for time seems to press,—this may be my best opportunity. We are in a calm, and I am easy enough this morning. If my spirits seem too low you may in some degree impute it to our having been at sea a fortnight without making any way. I was very disappointed at

CCXIII. The scrap of paper with these few words written upon it bears no date, address, or other indication as to what point of his journey Keats had reached when he wrote it, or as to the person for whom it was destined.

CCXIV. The original letter is in the possession of Mr. F. Locker. I give the text from it.

not meeting you at Bedhampton, and am very provoked at the thought of you being at Chichester to-day.[1] I should have delighted in setting off for London for the sensation merely,—for what should I do there? I could not leave my lungs or stomach or other worse things behind me. I wish to write on subjects that will not agitate me much—there is one I must mention and have done with it. Even if my body would recover of itself, this would prevent it. The very thing which I want to live most for will be a great occasion of my death. I cannot help it. Who can help it? Were I in health it would make me ill, and how can I bear it in my state? I dare say you will be able to guess on what subject I am harping—you know what was my greatest pain during the first part of my illness at your house. I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains which are better than nothing. Land and sea, weakness and decline, are great separators, but death is the great divorcer for ever. When the pang of this thought has passed through my mind, I may say the bitterness of death is passed. I often wish for you that you might flatter me with the best. I think without my mentioning it for my sake you would be a friend to Miss Brawne when I am dead. You think she has many faults—but, for my sake, think she has not one. If there is anything you can do for her by word or deed I know you will do it. I am in a state at present in which woman merely as woman can have no more power over me than stocks and stones, and yet the difference of my sensations with respect to Miss Brawne and my sister is amazing. The one seems to absorb the other to a degree incredible. I seldom think of my brother and sister in America. The thought of leaving Miss Brawne is beyond everything horrible—the sense of darkness coming over me—I eternally see her figure eternally vanishing. Some of the phrases she was in the habit of using during my last nursing at Wentworth Place ring in my ears. Is there another life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be, we cannot be created for this sort of suffering. The receiving this letter is to be one of yours. I will say nothing about our friendship, or rather yours to me, more than that, as you deserve to escape, you will never be so unhappy as I am. I should think of—you in my last moments. I shall endeavour to write to Miss Brawne if possible to-day. A sudden stop to my life in the middle of one of these letters would be no bad thing, for it keeps one in a sort of fever awhile. Though fatigued with

[1] Lord Houghton records that, "when Keats's ship was driven back into Portsmouth by stress of weather, Mr. Brown was staying in the neighbourhood within ten miles, when Keats landed and spent a day on shore." Mr. Dilke adds "when Keats landed and went to my sisters [Mrs. Snook's] at Bedhampton—Brown was staying at my father's at Chichester."

a letter longer than any I have written for a long while, it would be better to go on for ever than awake to a sense of contrary winds. We expect to put into Portland Roads to-night. The captain, the crew, and the passengers, are all ill-tempered and weary. I shall write to Dilke. I feel as if I was closing my last letter to you.[1]

My dear Brown,

Your affectionate friend,

John Keats.

CCXV.

To MRS. BRAWNE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead.

My dear Mrs. Brawne, Oct. 24 [1820], Naples Harbour.

A few words will tell you what sort of a Passage we had, and what situation we are in, and few they must be on account of the Quarantine, our Letters being liable to be opened for the purpose of fumigation at the Health Office.[2] We have to remain in the vessel ten days and are at present shut in a tier of ships. The sea air has been beneficial to me about to as great an extent as squally weather and bad accommodations and provisions has done harm. So I am about as I was. Give

[1] The following paragraphs from Lord Houghton's 'Life' &c. serve to connect this letter with the next:

"A violent storm in the Bay of Biscay lasted for thirty hours, and exposed the voyagers to considerable danger. 'What awful music!' cried Severn, as the waves raged against the vessel. 'Yes,' said Keats, as a sudden lurch inundated the cabin, 'Water parted from the sea.' After the tempest had subsided, Keats was reading the description of the storm in 'Don Juan,' and cast the book on the floor in a transport of indignation. 'How horrible an example of human nature,' he cried, 'is this man, who has no pleasure left him but to gloat over and jeer, at the most awful incidents of life. Oh! this is a paltry originality, which consists in making solemn things gay, and gay things solemn, and yet it will fascinate thousands, by the very diabolical outrage of their sympathies. Byron's perverted education makes him assume to feel, and try to impart to others, those depraved sensations which the want of any education excites in many.'

"The invalid's sufferings increased during the latter part of the voyage and a ten-days' miserable quarantine at Naples. But, when once fairly landed and in comfortable quarters, his spirits appeared somewhat to revive, and the glorious scenery to bring back, at moments, his old sense of delight. But these transitory gleams, which the hopeful heart of Severn caught and stored up, were in truth only remarkable as contrasted with the chronic gloom that overcame all things, even his love. What other words can tell the story like his own? What fiction could colour more deeply this picture of all that is most precious in existence becoming most painful and destructive? What profounder pathos can the world of tragedy exhibit than this expression of all that is good and great in nature writhing impotent in the grasp of an implacable destiny?"

[2] The original letter, in the possession of Sir C. Dilke, is very much discoloured, perhaps through the operations of the Health Office. The letter was first printed in the Library Edition.

my Love to Fanny and tell her, if I were well there is enough in this Port of Naples to fill a quire of Paper—but it looks like a dream—every man who can row his boat and walk and talk seems a different being from myself. I do not feel in the world. It has been unfortunate for me that one of the Passengers is a young Lady in a Consumption—her imprudence has vexed me very much—the knowledge of her complaints[1]—the flushings in her face, all her bad symptoms have preyed upon me—they would have done so had I been in good health.[2] Severn now is a very good fellow but his nerves are too strong to be hurt by other people's illnesses—I remember poor Rice wore me in the same way in the Isle of Wight—I shall feel a load off me when the Lady vanishes out of my sight. It is impossible to describe exactly in what state of health I am—at this moment I am suffering from indigestion very much, which makes such stuff of this Letter. I would always wish you to think me a little worse than I really am; not being of a sanguine disposition I am likely to succeed. If I do not recover your regret will be softened—if I do your pleasure will be doubled. I dare not fix my Mind upon Fanny, I have not dared to think of her. The only comfort I have had that way has been in thinking for hours together of having the knife she gave me put in a silver-case—the hair in a Locket—and the Pocket Book in a gold net. Show her this. I dare say no more. Yet you must not believe I am so ill as this Letter may look, for if ever there was a person born without the faculty of hoping I am he. Severn is writing to Haslam, and I have just asked him to request Haslam to send you his account of my health. O what an account I could give you of the Bay of Naples if I could once more feel myself a Citizen of this world—I feel a spirit in my Brain would lay it forth pleasantly—O what a misery it is to have an intellect in splints! My Love again to Fanny—tell Tootts[3] I wish I could pitch her a basket of grapes—and tell Sam the fellows catch here with a line a little fish much like an anchovy, pull them up fast. Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Dilke—mention to Brown that I wrote him a letter at Port[s]mouth which I did not send and am in doubt if he ever will see it.

my dear Mrs. Brawne
Yours sincerely and affectionate
John Keats —

Good bye Fanny! God bless you.

[1] So in the manuscript, but 'complaint' was probably what was meant.

[2] Before this letter was published Medwin quoted some half dozen lines from this part of it, altered to suit the purpose of the moment, in his Life of Shelley Volume II, page 96).

[3] Margaret Brawne, Fanny's younger sister, I presume; but I have no certain knowledge that she bore that pet-name: "Sam" was certainly her brother.

CCXVI.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Naples,
1 November [1820].

My dear Brown,

Yesterday we were let out of Quarantine, during which my health suffered more from bad air and the stifled cabin than it had done the whole voyage. The fresh air revived me a little, and I hope I am well enough this morning to write to you a short calm letter;—if that can be called one, in which I am afraid to speak of what I would fainest dwell upon. As I have gone thus far into it, I must go on a little;—perhaps it may relieve the load of WRETCHEDNESS which presses upon me. The persuasion that I shall see her no more will kill me. I cannot q—[1] My dear Brown, I should have had her when I was in health, and I should have remained well. I can bear to die—I cannot bear to leave her. O, God! God! God! Everything I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear. The silk lining she put in my travelling cap scalds my head. My imagination is horribly vivid about her—I see her—I hear her. There is nothing in the world of sufficient interest to divert me from her a moment. This was the case when I was in England; I cannot recollect, without shuddering, the time that I was a prisoner at Hunt's, and used to keep my eyes fixed on Hampstead all day. Then there was a good hope of seeing her again—Now!—O that I could be buried near where she lives! I am afraid to write to her—to receive a letter from her—to see her handwriting would break my heart—even to hear of her anyhow, to see her name written, would be more than I can bear. My dear Brown, what am I to do? Where can I look for consolation or ease? If I had any chance of recovery, this passion would kill me. Indeed, through the whole of my illness, both at your house and at Kentish Town, this fever has never ceased wearing me out. When you write to me, which you will do immediately, write to Rome (*poste restante*)—if she is well and happy, put a mark thus + ; if——

Remember me to all. I will endeavour to bear my miseries patiently. A person in my state of health should not have such miseries to bear. Write a short note to my sister, saying you have heard from me. Severn is very well. If I were

[1] Brown makes the following note upon this passage:—

"He could not go on with this sentence nor even write the word "quit",—as I suppose. The word WRETCHEDNESS above he himself wrote in large characters."

in better health I would urge your coming to Rome. I fear there is no one can give me any comfort. Is there any news of George? O, that something fortunate had ever happened to me or my brothers!—then I might hope,—but despair is forced upon me as a habit. My dear Brown, for my sake, be her advocate for ever. I cannot say a word about Naples; I do not feel at all concerned in the thousand novelties around me. I am afraid to write to her—I should like her to know that I do not forget her. Oh, Brown, I have coals of fire in my breast. It surprises me that the human heart is capable of containing and bearing so much misery. Was I born for this end? God bless her, and her mother, and my sister, and George, and his wife, and you, and all!

Your ever affectionate friend,
John Keats.

Thursday [2 November 1820].—I was a day too early for the Courier. He sets out now. I have been more calm to-day, though in a half dread of not continuing so. I said nothing of my health; I know nothing of it; you will hear Severn's account, from [Haslam]. I must leave off. You bring my thoughts too near to Fanny. God bless you!

Lord Houghton adds here:—

"Little things, that at other times might have been well passed over, now struck his susceptible imagination with intense disgust. He could not bear to go to the opera, on account of the sentinels who stood constantly on the stage, and whom he at first took for parts of the scenic effect. 'We will go at once to Rome,' he said; 'I know my end approaches, and the continual visible tyranny of this government prevents me from having any peace of mind. I could not lie quietly here. I will not leave even my bones in the midst of this despotism.'"

In an undated holograph letter of Shelley's to Claire Clairmont (*penes me*) there is the following postscript:—

"Keats is very ill at Naples—I have written to him to ask him to come to Pisa, without however inviting him into our own house. We are not rich enough for that sort of thing. Poor fellow!"

The paper on which this postscript is written was originally destined to go to Keats, for it bears the cancelled words—

My dear Keats,
I learn this moment that you are at Naples and that...

Severn told me of a letter "of touching interest," received by Keats from Shelley in Italy—a letter which was stolen from Severn in later years, and which I have never succeeded in tracing.

Lord Houghton says:—

"He had received at Naples a most kind letter from Mr. Shelley, anxiously inquiring about his health, offering him advice as to the adaptation of diet to the climate, and concluding with an urgent invitation to Pisa, where he could ensure him every comfort and attention. But for one circumstance, it is unfortunate that this offer was not accepted, as it might have spared at least some annoyances to the sufferer, and much painful responsibility, extreme anxiety, and unrelieved distress to his friend."

CCXVII.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Rome, 30 November 1820.

My dear Brown,

'Tis the most difficult thing in the world to me to write a letter. My stomach continues so bad, that I feel it worse on opening any book,—yet I am much better than I was in quarantine. Then I am afraid to encounter the pro-ing and coning of anything interesting to me in England. I have an habitual feeling of my real life having passed, and that I am leading a posthumous existence. God knows how it would have been—but it appears to me—however, I will not speak of that subject. I must have been at Bedhampton nearly at the time you were writing to me from Chichester—how unfortunate—and to pass on the river too! There was my star predominant! I cannot answer anything in your letter, which followed me from Naples to Rome, because I am afraid to look it over again. I am so weak (in mind) that I cannot bear the sight of any handwriting of a friend I love so much as I do you. Yet I ride the little horse, and, at my worst, even in quarantine, summoned up more puns, in a sort of desperation, in one week than in any

Lord Houghton records that, on arriving at Rome, Keats delivered a letter of introduction to Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Clark. "The circumstances of the young patient were such as to ensure compassion from any person of feeling, and perhaps sympathy and attention from superior minds. But the attention he received was that of all the skill and knowledge that science could confer, and the sympathy was of the kind which discharges the weight of obligation for gratuitous service, and substitutes affection for benevolence and gratitude. All that wise solicitude and delicate thoughtfulness could do to light up the dark passages of mortal sickness and soothe the pillow of the forlorn stranger was done, and, if that was little, the effort was not the less. In the history of most professional men this incident might be remarkable, but it is an ordinary sample of the daily life of this distinguished physician, who seems to have felt it a moral duty to make his own scientific eminence the measure of his devotion to the relief and solace of all men of intellectual pursuits, and to have applied his beneficence the most effectually to those whose nervous susceptibility renders them the least fit to endure that physical suffering to which, above all men, they are constantly exposed.

"The only other introduction Keats had with him, was from Sir T. Lawrence to Canova, but the time was gone by when even Art could please, and his shattered nerves refused to convey to his intelligence the impressions by which a few months before he would have been rapt into ecstasy. Dr. Clark procured Keats a lodging in the Piazza di Spagna, opposite to his own abode; it was in the first house on your right hand as you ascend the steps of the 'Trinità del Monte.' Rome, at that time, was far from affording the comforts to the stranger that are now so abundant, and the violent Italian superstitions respecting the infection of all dangerous disease, rendered the circumstances of an invalid most harassing and painful. Suspicion tracked him as he grew worse, and countenances darkened round as the world narrowed about him; ill-will increased just when sympathy

year of my life. There is one thought enough to kill me; I have been well, healthy, alert, &c., walking with her, and now—the knowledge of contrast, feeling for light and shade, all that information (primitive sense) necessary for a poem, are great enemies to the recovery of the stomach. There, you rogue, I put you to the torture; but you must bring your philosophy to bear, as I do mine, really, or how should I be able to live? Dr. Clark is very attentive to me; he says, there is very little the matter with my lungs, but my stomach, he says, is very bad. I am well disappointed in hearing good news from George, for it runs in my head we shall all die young. I have not written to Reynolds yet, which he must think very neglectful; being anxious to send him a good account of my health, I have delayed it from week to week. If I recover, I will do all in my power to correct the mistakes made during sickness; and if I should not, all my faults will be forgiven. Severn is very well, though he leads so dull a life with me. Remember me to all friends, and tell Haslam I should not have left London without taking leave of him, but from being so low in body and mind. Write to George as soon as you receive this, and tell him how I am, as far as you can guess; and also a note to my sister—who walks about my imagination like a ghost—she is so like Tom.

was most wanted, and the essential loneliness of the death-bed was increased by the alienation of all other men; the last grasp of the swimmer for life was ruthlessly cast off by his stronger comrade, and the affections that are wont to survive the body were crushed down in one common dissolution. At least from this desolation Keats was saved by the love and care of Mr. Severn and Dr. Clark."

Of Sir James Clark's career, a few details will be of interest to the reader. Born on the 14th of December 1788 at Cullen in Banffshire, Clark had at first taken to the legal profession; but, having abandoned it in favour of medicine in 1809, he entered the navy as an assistant surgeon. His first and second ships were wrecked; but he afterwards had better luck and assisted Parry of Arctic fame in experiments on the temperature of the Gulf Stream. Being put on half-pay, he graduated M.D. of Edinburgh in 1817, and next year accompanied a consumptive patient to the Continent. In Switzerland he commenced a special study of the influence of climate on pulmonary consumption; he settled at Rome in 1819, and was in practice there at the time of Keats's arrival. In 1826 he returned to London, and in 1834 became physician to the Duchess of Kent, and in 1837 physician in ordinary to the Queen, who conferred a baronetcy on him. Sir James Clark had the misfortune to be consulted in 1839 about the state of Lady Flora Hastings, a lady in waiting of the Duchess of Kent, and gave an erroneous opinion as to the nature of what was really a fatal internal tumour. Lady Flora's death created a very painful impression throughout the country; and Clark's private practice decreased after this event; but he still enjoyed the confidence of the Court. He was a member of several Royal Commissions, of the Senate of the London University, and of the General Medical Council. In 1860 he retired from practice. The Queen lent him as a residence Bagshot Park, where he died on the 29th of June 1870. He published several contributions to medical literature, none of which could be said to advance the science; but he was as conscientious, able, and considerate both as a physician and as a public servant as those of us who respect his memory for Keats's sake could wish.

I can scarcely bid you good-bye, even in a letter. I always made an awkward bow.

God bless you!

John Keats.

Of this letter Lord Houghton says:—"I have now to give the last letter of Keats in my possession; probably the last he wrote. One phrase in the commencement of it became frequent with him; he would continually ask Dr. Clark, 'When will this posthumous life of mine come to an end?' Yet when this was written, hope was evidently not extinguished within him..."

The following letter, though it bears no address, appears to be a reply to one from Severn, written three weeks later than the above:—

Louisville March 3rd 1821

Sir,

I am obliged for your's of the Decr 21st informing me that my Brother is in Rome, and that he is better. The coldness of your letter explains itself; I hope John is not impressed with the same sentiments, it may be an amiable resentment on your part and you are at liberty to cherish it; whatever errors you may fall into thro' kindness for my Brother however injurious to me, are easily forgiven. I might have reasonably hoped a longer seige of doubts would be necessary to destroy your good opinion of me. In many letters of distant and late dates to John, to you and to Haslam unanswered, I have explained my prospects, my situation. I have a firm faith that John has every dependance on my honour and affection, and altho' the chances have gone against me, my disappointments having been just as numerous as my risques, I am still above water and hope soon to be able to releive him.

I once more thank you most fervently for your kindness to John, and am Sir

Your Obt Hbl serv

George Keats.

FIRST LINES OF POEMS SCATTERED THROUGH THE LETTERS.

GENERAL INDEX.

[As the writings of Keats have not been fully indexed before, save in the Library edition, the aim here has been to furnish as nearly as possible a complete subject index, not only of all his poems and letters, but also of the numerous biographic and illustrative *data* in the Memoir, Notes, &c. The Roman figures show the volume, the Arabic figures the page; but, in the few references to preliminary matter paged in Roman figures, both volume and page are shown by Roman figures, the higher number being, however, always that of the page. A complete index of first lines will be found in Volume III.—H. B. F.]

GENERAL INDEX.

ADDITIONS TO GENERAL INDEX.

CORRECTIONS.

Volume I.

Page xlii, line 6, for '20th' read '10th'.
„ 38, „ 2, delete comma after 'warm'd'.
„ 85, „ 444, for 'Poena' read 'Peona'.
„ 87, „ 6, from foot (notes), for 'five-syllable' read 'six-syllable'.

Volume II.

Page 48, line 4 of stanza xxxiv, for 'pal' read 'pall'.
„ 241, „ 4 of foot-note, for 'Sothby' read 'Sotheby'.

Volume III.

Page 4, line 36, for 'Convenantal' read 'Covenantal'.
„ 89, „ 36, for 'lord' read 'lord!'.
„ 94, „ 92, for 'distracted?' read 'distracted!'.
„ 94, insert foot-note—"92. Previous editions read 'distracted?'."
„ 120, line 106, for 'A' read 'a'.
„ 120, insert foot-note—"106. Previous editions read 'A wittol——'."
„ 251, line 3, for 'coblers' read 'cobblers'.

Volume IV.

Page xvi, line 4 of 'Leigh Hunt', for '1794' read '1784'.
„ 9, „ 4 from foot of text, for 'by' read 'bye'.
„ 13, date of Letter X, delete comma after 'May'.
„ 26, line 11 from foot, for 'everything' read 'every thing'.
„ 36, „ 1 of letter, for 'name' read 'Name'.
„ 41, insert six asterisks above line 1 of Letter XXII.
„ 45, line 29, for 'thing' read 'thing'.
„ 51, „ 12 of Letter XXVII, for 'enquiries' read 'inquiries'.
„ 52, „ 4, for 'Hunts' read 'Hunts'.
„ 52, „ 3 from foot of text, for 'Feath' read 'Feathˢ'.
„ 58, „ 15, for 'sometime' read 'some time'.
„ 59, „ 12 of Letter XXXI, 'What' should begin a new paragraph.
„ 66, „ 2, delete comma after 'as'.
„ 66, „ 12 from end of letter, for 'when' read 'then'.
„ 71, „ 18, insert 'it' after 'startle'.
„ 76, „ 3 from end of letter, insert comma after 'articles'.

Page 83, line 7 from foot, insert '[?]' after 'feminine'.
„ 87, „ 8 from end of letter, substitute colon for semi-colon.
„ 90, „ 6 from end of letter, insert a dash before 'wholesale'.
„ 99, „ 4, insert comma after 'Hazlitt'.
„ 104, „ 10 from foot, for 'it' read 'It'.
„ 107, „ 16 „ for 'ere' read 'here'.
„ 113, „ 20 „ of text for 'Cap^n' read 'Capt^n'.
„ 118, „ 3, insert comma after 'Lake'.
„ 128, „ 17, for 'the' read 'that'.
„ 143, „ 22, delete comma after 'Society'
„ 143, „ 23, insert 'fair' before 'friends'
„ 147, last line but one of poem, for 'birthplace' read 'birth-place'.
„ 149, line 11, for 'is' read 'in'
„ 152, „ 28, delete full point after 'Fanny'.
„ 152, „ 29, „ „ 'alone'.
„ 152, „ 30, substitute dash for full point after 'Bentley'.
„ 153, „ 1, insert 'had' before 'nothing'.
„ 155, „ 4 of prose, substitute comma for full point after 'began'.
„ 169, „ 4, for 'critique' read 'critic'.
„ 172, „ 7 of Letter LXXIX, for 'falsehood' read 'fa[l]shood'.
„ 181, „ 7, for 'Moon' read 'moon'.
„ 186, „ 2, for 'Covent' read 'covent'.
„ 186, „ 18, insert colon after 'Islington'.
„ 196, „ 9, for 'bazarre' read 'bizarre'.

Volume V.

Page 22, date of Letter CVI, for '24th' read '14th'.
„ 51, line 6 from foot, for 'spr' read 'spr',
„ 71, heading of Letter CXIX, substitute comma for full point after 'Place'.
„ 140, line 13 from foot of text, for 'The Miss ——' read 'The Miss Reynolds'.
„ 143, line 11, for 'The Miss R[eynolds]'s' read 'The Miss Reynolds'.
„ 146, line 3, for 'Camden' read 'Cambden', that being the spelling of 'The Philobiblion,' and presumably Keats's.
„ 163, „ 1 of notes, for 'pages' read 'page'.
„ 193, „ 3 from foot, for 'Giovani' read 'Giovanni'.
„ 221, under 'Bailey, Keats's letters to,' add '; v, 81'.
„ 263, „ 'Reynolds (J. H.), Keats's letters to,' add '; v, 72, 85, 92, 157'.
„ 262, „ 'Taylor (John), Keats's letters to,' add '; v, 6, 84, 88, 89, 133, 177, 190, 191'.

In the above list these entries should read

Volume IV.

Page 45, line 29, for 'thing' read '~~thing~~'.

Volume V.

Page 51, line 6 from foot, for 'spr' read '~~spr~~'.

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