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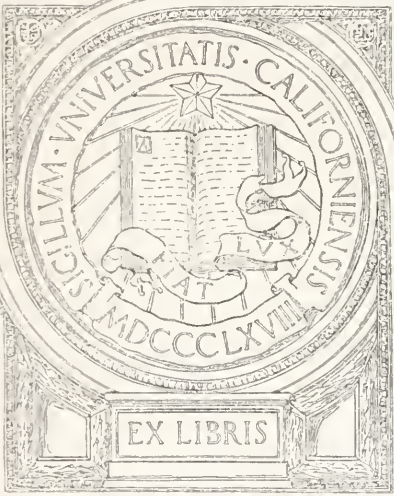

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# LETTERS OF LITERARY MEN

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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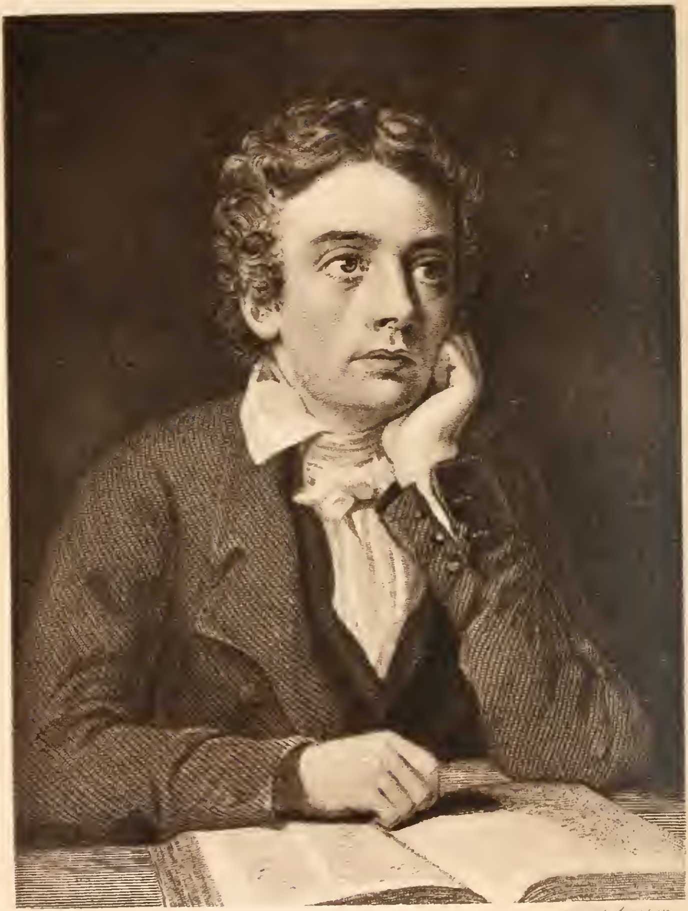

J. Severn [illegible]

JOHN KEATS.

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# LETTERS OF LITERARY MEN

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Arranged and Edited by
FRANK ARTHUR MUMBY

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# Preface

The present volume completes a work which is intended, as stated in the earlier and companion volume, to illustrate the history of English literature, by means of letters, from the end of the fifteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. The letters, now first collected, take up the story from the death of Burns, with which the first volume comes to a close, and bring it down to Ruskin and Robert Buchanan, who, alone among the authors here included, lived long enough to link the twentieth century with the literary history of the nineteenth. It has been by no means an easy task to find room for all the great writers of English literature during the last hundred years; and in some cases it has been impossible to obtain letters suitable for the purpose—which has been to follow each author through all the more important stages of his career, allowing him to relate events, and record his impressions, in his own words. For that reason no letters of living authors have been included; and questions of copyright have made it necessary to give less space to certain writers of the past than their merits deserve.

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It may be urged that the nineteenth century, in which letter-writing as an art is supposed to have vanished, does not merit nearly twice the number of pages which have been devoted to the whole of the previous three hundred years; but the best examples of the earlier ages, especially of what may be termed the golden age of letter-writing—the eighteenth century—are well known, whereas the literary letters of the last hundred years have never before been dealt with in a collected and connected form. Nor has the general history of English literature, it is believed, ever been illustrated before in this comprehensive manner by the 'more gentle and familiar way' of letters. Of the work as a whole, enough has been said in the preface to the first volume, and for the collection which follows it is only necessary to add a grateful word of acknowledgement to the many distinguished authors, publishers, and literary executors, whose courtesy and kindness have alone made the volume possible. The editor is indebted to Lord Tennyson for permission to include the letters now reprinted from the memoir of his father; to Mr. W. M. Rossetti for the letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti; to Miss Kingsley for the letters of her father, Charles Kingsley; to Mr. J. W. Cross for the letters of 'George Eliot'; to Mr. W. Aldis Wright for the letters of Edward Fitzgerald; to Mr. H. S. Salt for the letters reprinted from his life of James Thomson ('B. V.'); to Miss Harriet Jay for the letters from her life of Robert Buchanan; to Mr. Edmund Downey for the letters from his life of Charles Lever; and to Messrs. M. H. Spielmann and G. S. Layard for the letters of John Ruskin reprinted from their life of Kate Greenaway. The editor is indebted similarly to the following publishers: Mr. John Murray, Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., Messrs. Blackwood & Sons, Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., Mr. John Lane, Messrs. Methuen, Messrs. Ellis, Mr. Fisher Unwin, Mr. George Allen, Mr. Bertram Dobell, Messrs. A. and C. Black, and Mr. John Hogg. Full acknowledgement is made in the introductory notes which are printed with the letters in the body of the book.

# *PART I*

# The Age of Wordsworth and Scott

FANNY BURNEY (MADAME D'ARBLAY)—WILLIAM BLAKE—GEORGE CRABBE—SIR WALTER SCOTT—JANE AUSTEN—JAMES HOGG—THOMAS CAMPBELL—SYDNEY SMITH—FRANCIS JEFFREY—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH—S. T. COLERIDGE—ROBERT SOUTHEY—CHARLES LAMB—THOMAS DE QUINCEY

# FRANCES BURNEY (MADAME D'ARBLAY)

## 1752–1840

Madame d'Arblay makes a good bridge between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for her life was divided fairly evenly between the two, and she was a forerunner of the modern school of fiction. While her best-known novels belong to her earlier years, her *Diary and Letters*, which are now of greater value than anything else that she wrote, did not begin to appear until 1842. When Scott was introduced to her in 1822 she was 'an elderly lady, with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, a pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently fine feelings'. Sir Walter then describes how she told him of her extravagant delight when she heard that Dr. Johnson had praised her first book, *Evelina*, which had been published anonymously at the beginning of 1778. 'She said she was wild with joy at this decisive evidence of her literary success, and that she could only give vent to her rapture by dancing and skipping round a mulberry-tree in the garden. She was very young at this time' (between twenty-five and twenty-six to be exact) and she first heard of the success of her book while staying at Chessington Hall, near Kingston, to which her father's old friend, Samuel Crisp—'Daddy' Crisp, as she affectionately calls him—had retired in disgust at the failure of his tragedy of *Virginia*. Fanny Burney does not exaggerate her literary triumph in the first of the letters now reproduced, for the popularity of *Evelina* was remarkable. Her *Cecilia* was published with similar success in 1782. Four years later she took up her post at Court as second keeper of the robes, under Madame Schwellenberg, at £200 a year, and one of the letters to her sister Susan shows how keenly she felt the humiliating nature of her new duties. After 'a scene almost horrible' with Madame Schwellenberg, and protracted negotiations, she was allowed to retire in 1791 with a pension of £100 a year. The next letter finds Fanny Burney staying with her sister Susan—now the wife of Major Phillips—at Mickleham, in Surrey, where she met her future husband, General d'Arblay, among the French refugees who had settled at Juniper Hall, in the neighbourhood. Fanny Burney married d'Arblay in 1793—as she talks of doing in her next letter to her sister—on her pension of £100 a year. Her tragedy of *Edwy and Elvina* proved a dismal failure when played by Mrs. Siddons and Kemble in 1795, but in the following year she was able to add the substantial sum of £3,000 to her slender income by means of her third novel, *Camilla*. The book, however, was only a pecuniary success. The last of her letters here reprinted reveals the depth of her affection for her sister Susan, whose death occurred at the beginning of January, at the end of a journey from Dublin. 'The news of her death', writes Madame d'Arblay, 'closed the last period of my perfect happiness'. From 1802 to 1812 her home was in France, where her husband had obtained civil employment. She was at Brussels during Waterloo, and soon after the battle returned with M. d'Arblay to England, where he died in 1818. Madame d'Arblay lived twenty-two years longer, leaving her Diary to be published after her death.

### FANNY BURNEY TO SUSAN BURNEY

[*The Success of 'Evelina' and the Secret of its Authorship*]

Chessington, *July* 5, 1778.

MY DEAREST SUSY,—

Don't you think there must be some wager depending among the little curled imps who hover over us mortals, of how much flummery goes to turn the head of an authoress? Your last communication very near did my business; for, meeting Mr. Crisp ere I had composed myself, I 'tipt him such a touch of the heroics' as he had not seen since the time when I was so much celebrated for dancing 'Nancy Dawson'. I absolutely longed to treat him with one of Captain Mirvan's frolics, and to fling his wig out of the window. I restrained myself, however, from the apprehension that they would imagine I had a universal spite to that harmless piece of goods, which I have already been known to treat with no little indignity. He would fain have discovered the reason of my skittishness; and as I could not tell it him, I was obliged to assure him it would be lost time to inquire further into my flights, since 'true no meaning puzzles more than wit', and therefore, begging the favour of him to 'set me down an *ass*', I suddenly retreated.

My dear, dear Dr. Johnson! what a charming man you are! Mrs. Cholmondeley, too, I am not merely prepared but determined to admire; for really she has shown me much penetration and sound sense of late, that I think she will bring about a union between Wit and Judgment, though their separation has been so long, and though their meetings have been so few.

But, Mrs. Thrale! she—she is the goddess of my idolatry! What an *éloge* is hers!—an *éloge* that not only delights at first, but proves more and more flattering every time it is considered!

I often think, when I am counting my laurels, what a pity it would have been had I popped off in my last illness, without knowing what a person of consequence I was, and I sometimes think that, were I now to have a relapse, I could never go off with so much *éclat* ! I am now at the summit of a high hill, my prospects on one side are bright, glowing, and invitingly beautiful ; but when I turn round, I perceive, on the other side, sundry caverns, gulfs, pits, and precipices, that, to look at, make my head giddy and my heart sick. I see about me, indeed, many hills of far greater height and sublimity ; but I have not the strength to attempt climbing them ; if I move, it must be downwards. I have already, I fear, reached the pinnacle of my abilities, and therefore to stand still will be my best policy.

But there is nothing under heaven so difficult to do. Creatures who are formed for motion *must* move, however great their inducements to forbear. The wisest course I could take, would be to bid an eternal adieu to writing ; then would the cry be, ' 'Tis pity she does not go on—she might do something better by and by ', etc., etc. *Evelina*, as a first and youthful publication, has been received with the utmost favour and lenity ; but would a future attempt be treated with the same mercy ?—no, my dear Susy, quite the contrary ; there would not, indeed, be the same plea to save it ; it would no longer be a young lady's *first* appearance in public ; those who have met with less indulgence would all peck at any second work, and even those who most encouraged the first offspring might prove enemies to the second, by receiving it with expectations which it could not answer : and so, between either the friends or the foes of the eldest, the second would stand an equally bad chance, and a million of flaws which were overlooked in the former would be ridiculed as villainous and intolerable blunders in the latter.

But, though my eyes ache as I strain them to look forward, the temptations before me are almost irresistible : and what you have transcribed from Mrs. Thrale may, perhaps, prove my destruction.

So you wish to have some of the sayings of the folks here about *the book* ? I am sure I owe you all the communications I can possibly give you ; but I have nothing new to offer, for the same strain prevails here as in town ; and none will be so obliging to me as to put in a little abuse ; so that I fear you will be satiated with the sameness of people's remarks. Yet, what can I do ? If they *will* be so disagreeable and tiresome as to be all of one mind, how is it to be helped ? I can only advise you to follow my example, which is, to accommodate my philosophy to their insipidity ; and in this I have so wonderfully succeeded, that I hear their commendations not merely with patience, but even with a degree of pleasure ! Such, my dear Susy, is the effect of true philosophy.

You desire Kitty Cooke's remarks in particular. I have none to give you, for none can I get. To the serious part she indeed listens, and seems to think it may possibly be very fine ; but she is quite lost when the Branghtons and Madame Duval are mentioned ;—she hears their speeches very composedly, and as words of course ; but when she hears them followed by loud bursts of laughter from Hetty, Mr. Crisp, Mrs. Gast, and Mr. Burney, she stares with the gravest amazement, and looks so aghast, and so distressed to know where the joke can be, that I never dare trust myself to look at her for more than an instant. Were she to speak her thoughts, I am sure she would ask why such common things, that pass every day, should be printed ? And all the derision with which the party in general treat the Branghtons, I can see she feels herself, with a plentiful addition of astonishment, for the *author !*

By the way, not a human being here has the most remote suspicion of the fact ; I could not be more secure, were I literally unknown to them. And there is no end to the ridiculous speeches perpetually made to me, by all of them in turn, though quite by accident.

'An't you sorry this sweet book is done' ? said Mrs. Gast.

A silly little laugh was the answer.

'Ah', said Patty, ''tis the sweetest book—don't you think so, Miss Burney' ?

N.B. Answer as above.

'Pray, Miss Fan', says Mrs. Hamilton, 'who wrote it' ?

'Really I never heard'.

'Cute enough that, Miss Sukey !

I desired Betty to miss the verses ; for I can't sit them ; and I have been obliged to hide the first volume ever since, for fear of a discovery. But I don't know how it will end ;

for Mrs. Gast has declared she shall buy it, to take to Burford with her.

### FANNY BURNEY TO SUSAN BURNEY

### [*'Daddy Crisp' and the 'Evelina' Mystery*]

Chessington, *Sunday, July* 6, 1778.

YOUR letter, my dear Susan, and the inclosed one from Lowndes, have flung me into such a vehement perturbation, that I hardly can tell whether I wake or dream, and it is even with difficulty that I can fetch my breath. I have been strolling round the garden three or four times, in hopes of regaining a little quietness. However, I am not very angry at my inward disturbance, though it even exceeds what I experienced from the *Monthly Review.*

My dear Susy, what a wonderful affair has this been, and how extraordinary is this torrent of success, which sweeps down all before it ! I often think it too much—nay, almost wish it would happen to some other person, who had more ambition, whose hopes were more sanguine, and who could less have borne to be buried in the oblivion which I even sought. But though it might have been better bestowed, it could by no one be more gratefully received.

Indeed, I can't help being grave upon the subject ; for a success so really unexpected almost overpowers me. I wonder at myself that my spirits are not more elated. I believe half the flattery I have had would have made me madly merry ; but *all* serves only to almost depress me by the fulness of heart it occasions. . . .

I have been serving Daddy Crisp a pretty trick this morning. How he would rail if he found it all out ! I had a fancy to dive pretty deeply into the real rank in which he held my book ; so I told him that your last letter acquainted me who was reported to be the author of *Evelina.* I added that it was a profound secret, and he must by no means mention it to a human being. He bid me tell him directly, according to his usual style of command, but I insisted upon his guessing.

'I can't guess', said he ; 'may be it is *you*'.

Oddso ! thought I, what do you mean by that ?

'Pooh, nonsense', cried I, 'what should make you think of me'?

'Why, you look guilty', answered he.

This was a horrible home stroke. Deuce take my looks! thought I—I shall owe them a grudge for this! However, I found it was a mere random shot, and, without much difficulty, I laughed it to scorn.

And who do you think he guessed next?—my father!—there's for you!—and several questions he asked me, whether he had lately been shut up much—and so on. And this was not all—for he afterwards guessed Mrs. Thrale and Mrs. Greville.

There's honour and glory for you!—I assure you I grinned prodigiously.

He then would guess no more. So I served him another trick for his laziness. I read a paragraph in your last letter (which, perhaps, you may not perfectly remember), in which you say the private report is, that the author is the son of the late Dr. Friend, my likeness.

Now this son is a darling of my daddy's, who reckons him the most sensible and intelligent young man of his acquaintance; so I trembled *a few*, for I thought, ten to one but he'd say: 'He?—not he—I promise you'! But no such thing; his immediate answer was: 'Well, he's very capable of that or anything else'.

I grinned broader than before.

And here the matter rests. I shan't undeceive him, at least till he has finished the book.

### FANNY BURNEY TO SAMUEL CRISP

[*With Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson*]

Streatham, *March*, 1779.

THE kindness and honours I meet with from this charming family are greater than I can mention; sweet Mrs. Thrale hardly suffers me to leave her for a moment; and Dr. Johnson is another Daddy Crisp to me, for he has a partial goodness to your Fannikin, that has made him sink the comparative shortness of our acquaintance, and treat and think of me as one who had long laid claim to him.

If you knew these two you would love them, or I don't know you so well as I think I do. Dr. Johnson has more fun, and comical humour, and love of nonsense about him, than almost anybody I ever saw: I mean when with those he likes; for otherwise, he can be as severe and as bitter as reports relate him. Mrs. Thrale has all the gaiety of disposition and lightness of heart which commonly belong to fifteen. We are, therefore, merry enough, and I am frequently seized with the same tittering and ridiculous fits as those with which I have so often amazed and amused poor Kitty Cooke.

One thing let me not omit of this charming woman, which I believe will weigh with you in her favour; her political doctrine is so exactly like yours, that it is never started but I exclaim: 'Dear ma'am, if my Daddy Crisp was here, I believe between you, you would croak me mad'. And this sympathy of horrible foresight not a little contributes to incline her to believe the other parts of speech with which I regale her concerning you. She wishes very much to know you, and I am sure you would hit it off comfortably; but I told her what a live taste you had for shunning all new acquaintances, and shirking almost all your old ones. That I may never be among the latter, heartily hopes my dear daddy's

Ever affectionate and obliged,

F. B.

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## FANNY BURNEY TO MRS. PHILLIPS (*née* SUSAN BURNEY)

### [*Her Humiliating Position at Court*]

*August* 20, 1786.

HAS my dear Susan thought me quite dead?—not to write so long, and after such sweet converse as she has sent me. Oh, my beloved Susan, 'tis a refractory heart I have to deal with,—it struggles so hard to be sad—and silent—and fly from you entirely, since it cannot fly entirely to you. I do all I can to conquer it, to content it, to give it a taste and enjoyment for what is still attainable; but at times I cannot manage it, and it seems absolutely indispensable to my peace to occupy myself in anything rather than in writings to the person most dear to me upon earth. 'Tis strange—but such is a fact—and now I do best when I get with those who never heard of you, and who care not about me.

My dearest Mrs. Locke's visit to Kew had opened all my heart to its proper channels, and your dear—your soothing narrative had made it yearn to see you; but the cruel stroke of Mr. and Mrs. Locke coming to Windsor in my absence, has turned my mortification back into the same dry course again.

If to you alone I show myself in these dark colours, can you blame the plan that I have intentionally been forming—namely, to wean myself from myself—to lessen all my affections—to curb all my wishes—to deaden all my sensations? This design, my Susan, I formed so long ago as the first day my dear father accepted my offered appointment: I thought that what demanded a complete new system of life, required, if attainable, a new set of feelings for all enjoyment of new prospects, and for lessening regret at what were quitted, or lost. Such being my primitive idea, merely from my grief of separation, imagine but how it was strengthened and confirmed when the interior of my position became known to me!—when I saw myself expected by Mrs. Schwellenberg, not to be her colleague, but her dependent deputy! not to be her visitor at my own option, but her companion, her humble companion, at her own command! This has given so new a character to the place I had accepted under such different auspices, that nothing but my horror of disappointing, perhaps displeasing, my dearest father, has deterred me, from the moment that I made this mortifying discovery, from soliciting his leave to resign. But, oh, my Susan—kind, good, indulgent as he is to me, I have not the heart so cruelly to thwart his hopes, his views, his happiness, in the honours he conceived awaiting my so unsolicited appointment. The queen, too, is all sweetness, encouragement, and gracious goodness to me, and I cannot endure to complain to her of her old servant. You see, then, my situation; here I must remain. . . . The die is cast, and that struggle is no more.—To keep off every other, to support the loss of the dearest friends and best society, and bear, in exchange, the tyranny, the *exigeance*, the *ennui* and attempted indignities of their greatest contrast—this must be my constant endeavour.

My plan, in its full extent, I meant not to have told; but since so much of it, unhappily, burst from me in the hurry of that Friday morning, I have forced out the rest, to be a little less mysterious.

Amongst my sources of happiness in this extraordinary case is, the very favour that, in any other, might counteract it—

namely, that of the queen: for while, in a manner the most attractive, she seems inviting my confidence, and deigning to wish my happiness, she redoubles my conflicts never to shock her with murmurs against one who, however to me noxious and persecuting, is to her a faithful and truly devoted old servant. This will prevent my ever having my distress and disturbance redressed; for they can never be disclosed. Could I have, as my dear father conceived, all the time to myself, my friends, my leisure, or my own occupations, that is not devoted to my official duties, how different would be my feelings, how far more easily accommodated to my privations and sacrifices! Little does the queen know the slavery I must either resist or endure. And so frightful is hostility, that I know not which part is hardest to perform.

What erasures! Can you read me? I blot, and rewrite—yet know not how to alter or what to send; I so fear to alarm your tender kindness.

### Fanny Burney to her Father

[*Madame de Staël and the French Refugees at Juniper Hall*]

Mickleham, *February* 29, 1793.

Have you not begun, dearest sir, to give me up as a lost sheep? Lasanna's [1] temporary widowhood, however, has tempted me on, and spelled me with a spell I know not how to break. It is long, long since we have passed any time so completely together; her three lovely children only knit us the closer.

The wiowhood, however, we expect now quickly to expire, and I had projected my return to my dearest father for Wednesday next, which would complete my fortnight here; but some circumstances are intervening that incline me to postpone it another week.

Madame de Staël, daughter of M. Necker, and wife of the Swedish ambassador to France, is now head of the little French colony in this neighbourhood. M. de Staël, her husband, is at present suspended in his embassy, but not recalled; and it is yet uncertain whether the present Duke of Sudermania will send him to Paris, during the present horrible Convention, or order him home. He is now in Holland, waiting for commands.

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[1] Fanny's sister, Mrs. Phillips.

Madame de Staël, however, was unsafe in Paris, though an ambassadress, from the resentment owed her by the Commune, for having received and protected in her house various destined victims of August 10 and September 2. She was even once stopped in her carriage, which they called aristocratic, because of its arms and ornaments, and threatened to be murdered, and only saved by one of the worst wretches of the Convention, Tallien, who feared provoking a war with Sweden, from such an offence to the wife of its ambassador. She was obliged to have this same Tallien to accompany her, to save her from massacre, for some miles from Paris when compelled to quit it.

She is a woman of the first abilities, I think, I have ever seen; she is more in the style of Mrs. Thrale than of any other celebrated character, but she has infinitely more depth, and seems an even profound politician and metaphysician. She has suffered us to hear some of her works in MS., which are truly wonderful, for powers both of thinking and expression. She adores her father, but is much alarmed at having had no news from him since he has heard of the massacre of the martyred Louis; and who can wonder it should have overpowered him?

Ever since her arrival she has been pressing me to spend some time with her before I return to town. She wanted Susan and me to pass a month with her, but, finding that impossible, she bestowed all her entreaties upon me alone, and they are grown so urgent upon my preparation for departing, and acquainting her my furlough of absence was over, that she not only insisted upon my writing to you, and telling why I deferred my return, but declares she will also write herself, to ask your permission for the visit. She exactly resembles Mrs. Thrale in the ardour and warmth of her temper and partialities. I find her impossible to resist, and therefore, if your answer to her is such as I conclude it must be, I shall wait upon her for a week. She is only a short walk from hence, at Juniper Hall.

There can be nothing imagined more charming, more fascinating than this colony; between their sufferings and their *agrémens* they occupy us almost wholly. M. de Narbonne, alas! has no thousand pounds a year! he got over only four thousand pounds at the beginning from a most splendid fortune; and little forseeing how all has turned out, he has lived, we fear, upon the principal; for he says if all remittance is withdrawn, on account of the war, he shall soon be as ruined as those companions of his misfortunes with whom, as yet, he has shared his little all. He bears the highest character for goodness, parts, sweetness of manners, and ready wit. You could not keep your heart from him if you saw him only for half an hour. He has not yet recovered from the black blow of the king's death, but he is better, and less jaundiced; and he has had a letter which, I hear, has comforted him, though at first it was almost heart-breaking, informing him of the unabated regard for him of the truly saint-like Louis. This is communicated in a letter from M. de Malesherbes.

M. d'Arblay is one of the most singularly interesting characters that can ever have been formed. He has a sincerity, a frankness, an ingenuous openness of nature, that I had been unjust enough to think could not belong to a Frenchman. With all this, which is his military portion, he is passionately fond of literature, a most delicate critic in his own language, well versed in both Italian and German, and a very elegant poet. He has just undertaken to become my French master for pronunciation, and he gives me long daily lessons in reading. Pray expect wonderful improvements! In return, I hear him in English; and for his theme this evening he has been writing an English address, 'à Mr. Burney' (i.e. M. le Docteur), joining in Madame de Staël's request.

I hope your last club was more congenial. M. de Talleyrand insists on conveying this letter for you. He has been on a visit here, and returns again on Wednesday. He is a man of admirable conversation, quick, terse, *fin*, and yet deep, to the extreme of those four words. They are a marvellous set for excess of agreeability.

### FANNY BURNEY TO MRS. PHILLIPS (*née* SUSAN BURNEY)

[*To marry M. d'Arblay on her* £100 *a year*]

Chessington, May 31, 1793.

MY heart so smites me this morning with making no answer to all I have been requested to weigh and decide, that I feel I cannot with any ease return to town without at least complying with one demand, which first, at parting yesterday, brought me to write fully to you, my Susan, if I could not elsewhere to my satisfaction.

Much indeed in the course of last night and this morning has occurred to me, that now renders my longer silence as to prospects and proceedings unjustifiable to myself. I will, therefore now address myself to both my beloved confidants, and open to them all my thoughts, and entreat their own with equal plainness in return.

M. d'Arblay's last three letters convince me he is desperately dejected when alone, and when perfectly natural. It is not that he wants patience, but he wants rational expectation of better times; expectation founded on something more than mere aerial hope, that builds one day upon what the next blasts; and then has to build again, and again to be blasted.

What affects me most in this situation is that his time may as completely be lost as another's peace by waiting for the effects of distant events, vague, bewildering, and remote, and quite as likely to lead to ill as to good. The very waiting, indeed, with the mind in such a state, is in itself an evil scarce to be recompensed. . . .

My dearest Fredy, in the beginning of her knowledge of this transaction, told me that Mr. Locke was of opinion that one hundred pounds per annum [1] might do, as it does for many a curate. M. d'Arblay also most solemnly and affectingly declares that *le simple nécessaire* is all he requires, and here, in your vicinity, would unhesitatingly be preferred by him to the most brilliant fortune in another *séjour*. If *he* can say that, what must *I* be not to echo it? I, who in the bosom of my own most chosen, most darling friends——

I need not enter more upon this; you all know that to me a crust of bread, with a little roof for shelter, and a fire for warmth, near you, would bring me to peace, to happiness, to all that my heart holds dear, or even in any situation could prize. I cannot picture such a fate with dry eyes; all else but kindness and society has to me so always been nothing.

With regard to my dear father, he has always left me to myself; I will not therefore speak to him while thus uncertain what to decide. It is certain, however, that, with peace of mind and retirement, I have resources that I could bring forward to amend the little situation, as well as that, once thus undoubtedly established and naturalized, M. d'Arblay would have claims for employment.

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[1] This, as stated in our introductory note, was the amount of Fanny Burney's pension from Queen Charlotte.

These reflections, with a mutual freedom from ambition, might lead to a quiet road, unbroken by the tortures of applications, expectations, attendance, disappointment, and time-wasting hopes and fears, if there were not apprehensions the one hundred pounds might be withdrawn. I do not think it likely, but it is a risk too serious in its consequences to run. M. d'Arblay protests he could not answer to himself the hazard.

How to ascertain this, to clear the doubt, or to know the fatal certainty before it should be too late, exceeds my powers of suggestion. His own idea, write to the queen, much as it has startled me, and wild as it seemed to me, is certainly less wild than to take the chance of such a blow in the dark. Yet such a letter could not even reach her. His very name is probably only known to her through myself.

In short, my dearest friends, you will think for me, and let me know what occurs to you, and I will defer my answer till I hear your opinions.

Heaven ever bless you ! And pray for me at this moment.

### MADAME D'ARBLAY TO DR. BURNEY

[*The Last of the d'Arblays*]

Brookham, *August* 10, 1797.

MY dearest father will, I know, be grieved at any grief of M. d'Arblay's, though he will be glad his own truly interesting letter should have arrived by the same post. You know, I believe, with what cruel impatience and uncertainty my dear companion has waited for some news of his family, and how terribly his expectations were disappointed upon a summons to town some few months since, when the hope of intelligence carried him thither under all the torment of his recently wounded foot, which he could not then put to the ground : no tidings, however, could he procure, nor has he ever heard from any part of it till last Saturday morning, when two letters arrived by the same post, with information of the death of his only brother.

Impossible as it has long been to look back to France without fears amounting even to expectation of horrors, he had never ceased cherishing hopes some favourable turn would, in the end, unite him with this last branch of his house ; the shock, therefore, has been terribly severe, and has cast a gloom upon his mind and spirits which nothing but his kind anxiety to avoid involving mine can at present suppress. He is now the last of a family of seventeen, and not one relation of his own name now remains, but his own little English son.[1] His father was the only son of an only son, which drives all affinity on the paternal side into fourth and fifth kinsmen. On the maternal side, however, he has the happiness to hear that an uncle, who is inexpressibly dear to him, who was his guardian and best friend through life, still lives, and has been permitted to remain unmolested in his own house, at Joigny, where he is now in perfect health, save from rheumatic attacks, which, though painful, are not dangerous. A son, too, of this gentleman, who was placed as a *commissaire-de-guerre* by M. d'Arblay during the period of his belonging to the War Committee, still holds the same situation, which is very lucrative, and which M. d'Arblay had concluded would have been withdrawn as soon as his own flight from France was known.

He hears, too, that M. de Narbonne is well and safe, and still in Switzerland, where he lives, says the letter, *très modistement, obscurément, et tranquillement,* with a chosen small society forced into similar retreat. This is consolatory, for the long and unaccountable silence of his beloved friend had frequently filled him with the utmost uneasiness. The little property of which the late Chevalier d'Arblay died possessed, this same letter says, has been *vendu pour la nation,* because his next heir was an *émigré*. though there is a little niece, Mlle. Girardin, daughter of an only sister, who is in France, and upon whom the succession was settled, if her uncle died without immediate heirs.

Some little matter, however, what we know not, has been reserved by being bought in by this respectable uncle, who sends M. d'Arblay word he has saved him what he may yet live upon, if he can find means to return without personal risk, and who solicits to again see him with urgent fondness, in which he is joined by his aunt with so much warmth as if she also was his relation by blood, not alliance. The letter is written from Switzerland by a person who passed through Joigny, from Paris, at the request of M. d'Arblay, to inquire the fate of his family, and to make known his own. The commission though so lately executed was given before the birth of our little Alex. The letter adds that no words can express the tender joy of this excellent uncle and his wife in hearing M. d'Arblay was alive and well.

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[1] The only child of Madame and M. d'Arblay lived to become tenth wrangler at Cambridge and to take orders, but he died of decline in 1837.

The late Chevalier, my M. d'Arblay says, was a man of the softest manners and most exalted honour ; and he was so tall and so thin, he was often nicknamed Don Quixote ; but he was so completely aristocratic with regard to the Revolution, at its very commencement, that M. d'Arblay has heard nothing yet with such unspeakable astonishment as the news that he died, near Spain, of his wounds from a battle in which he had fought for the Republic. 'How strange', says M. d'Arblay, 'is our destiny ! that that Republic which I quitted, determined to be rather a hewer of wood and drawer of water all my life than serve, he should die for'. The secret history of this may some day come out, but it is inexplicable, for the mere fact, without the smallest comment, is all that has reached us. In the period, indeed, in which M. d'Arblay left France, there were but three steps possible for those who had been bred to arms—flight, the guillotine, or fighting for the Republic. 'The former, this brother', M. d'Arblay says, 'had not energy of character to undertake in the desperate manner in which he risked it himself, friendless and fortuneless, to live in exile as he could. The guillotine no one could elect ; and the continuing in the service, though in a cause he detested, was, probably, his hard compulsion. No one was allowed to lay down his arms and retire'.

A gentleman born in the same town as M. d'Arblay, Joigny, has this morning found a conductor to bring him to our Hermitage. He confirms the account that all in that little town has been suffered to remain quiet, his own relations there still existing undisturbed. M. d'Arblay is gone to accompany him back as far as Ewell. He has been evidently much relieved by the visit, and the power of talking over, with an old townsman as well as countryman, early scenes and connexions. It is a fortunately timed rencounter, and I doubt not but he will return less sad.

F. D'A.

### MADAME D'ARBLAY TO MRS. LOCK

[*The Death of Susan Burney* (*née Mrs. Phillips*]

*January* 9, 1800.

'*As a Guardian Angel!*'—Yes, my dearest Fredy, as such in every interval of despondence I have looked up to the sky to see her; but my eyes cannot pierce through the thick atmosphere, and I can only represent her to me seated on a chair of sickness, her soft hand held partly out to me as I approach her; her softer eyes so greeting me as never welcome was expressed before; and a smile of heavenly expression speaking the tender gladness of her grateful soul that God at length should grant our reunion. From our earliest moments, when no misfortune happened to our dear family, we wanted nothing but each other. Joyfully as others were received by us—loved by us—all that was necessary to our happiness was fulfilled by our simple junction. This I remember with my first remembrance; nor do I recollect a single instance of being affected beyond a minute by any outward disappointment, if its result was leaving us together.

She was the soul of my soul!—and 'tis wonderful to me, my dearest Fredy, that the first shock did not join them immediately by the flight of mine—but that over—that dreadful, harrowing, never-to-be-forgotten moment of horror that made me wish to be mad—the ties that after that first endearing period have shared with her my heart, come to my aid. Yet I was long incredulous; and still sometimes I think it is not—and that she will come—and I paint her by my side—by my father's—in every room of these apartments, destined to have chequered the woes of her life with rays of comfort, joy, and affection.

Oh, my Fredy, not selfish is the affliction that repines her earthly course of sorrow was allowed no shade!—that at the instant soft peace and consolation awaited her she should breathe her last! You would understand all the hardship of resignation for me were you to read the joyful opening of her letter, on her landing, to my poor father, and her prayer at the end to be restored to him. Oh, my Fredy! could you indeed think of me—be alarmed for me on that dreadful day!—I can hardly make that enter my comprehension; but I thank you from my soul; for that is beyond any love I had thought possible, even from your tender heart. Tell me you all keep well, and forgive me my distraction. I write so fast I fear you can hardly read ; but you will see I am conversing with you, and that will show you how I turn to you for the comfort of your tenderness. Yes, you have all a loss indeed !

FRANCES D'ARBLAY.

## WILLIAM BLAKE

### 1757–1827

BLAKE the visionary believed in the divine origin of his work with the faith which convinced him that he ' wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life.' ' And those works ', he adds, in the following letter to Flaxman, his ' Dear Sculptor of Eternity ', ' are the delight and study of archangels. Why then should I be anxious about the riches and fame of mortality ' ? Little enough fame came Blake's way in his lifetime, and poverty was never far distant from his door ; but he met his fate manfully, did the work he felt called to do, and died like a saint —bursting into song just before he passed away, ' of the things he saw in heaven '. ' I have been at the death, not of a man, but of a blessed angel ', said his wife's only other companion. The majority of the following letters of Blake are addressed to his friend and patron, Thomas Butts, who for thirty years was his chief supporter—who often, indeed, provided the bare means of subsistence when no other means existed. It is to Butts that we owe the familiar story of the Adam and Eve incident : of how he called on the Blakes one day and found husband and wife sitting in their summer-house, ' freed from those troublesome disguises which have prevailed since the Fall. " Come in " ! cried Blake ; " it's only Adam and Eve, you know " ! Husband and wife had been reciting passages from *Paradise Lost*, in character, and the garden of Hercules Buildings had to represent the Garden of Eden '. Both Blake and his wife apparently were serenely unconscious that they were doing anything which might shock the susceptibilities of their more conventional neighbours. The garden incident, as Gilchrist remarks, illustrates forcibly the strength of Blake's influence over his wife, and the unquestioning manner in which she fell in with all he did or said. That Blake is at last reaping his share of fame is shown by the steadily increasing interest in his life and works. and the extraordinary prices recently fetched for some of his illustrated books—£5,600 for the illustrations to the Book of Job, £300 for the ' Songs of Innocence ', and so on. All this fulfils the prophecy of John Thomas Smith (the biographer of Nollekens), who knew Blake personally, and as Keeper of the Prints in the British Museum took a deep interest in his work. ' A time will come ', he wrote in his *Book for a Rainy Day*. ' when the numerous, though now very rare, works of Blake (in consequence of his taking very few impressions from the plates before they were rubbed out to enable him to use them for other subjects) will be sought after with the most intense avidity. He was considered by Stothard and

Flaxman (and will be by those of congenial minds, if we can reasonably expect such again) with the highest admiration. These artists allowed him their most unqualified praise, and were ever anxious to recommend him and his productions to the patrons of the Arts ; but alas ! they were not so sufficiently appreciated as to enable Blake, as every one could wish, to provide an independence for his surviving partner Kate, who adored his memory '.

## WILLIAM BLAKE TO JOHN FLAXMAN

[*Settling Down at Felpham*]

Felpham, *September* 21, 1800.[1]

DEAR SCULPTOR OF ETERNITY,—

We are safe arrived at our cottage, which is more beautiful than I thought it, and more convenient. It is a perfect model for cottages, and I think for palaces of magnificence, only enlarging not altering its proportions and adding ornaments and not principles. Nothing can be more grand than its simplicity and usefulness. Simple without intricacy, it seems to be the spontaneous expression of humanity, congenial to the wants of man. No other formed house can ever please me so well, nor shall I ever be persuaded, I believe, that it can be improved either in beauty or use.

Mr. Hayley received us with his usual brotherly affection. I have begun to work. Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates : her windows are not obstructed by vapours ; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard and their forms more distinctly seen ; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses. My wife and sister are both well, courting Neptune for an embrace.

Our journey was very pleasant, and though we had a great deal of luggage no grumbling. All was cheerfulness and good humour on the road, and yet we could not arrive at our cottage before half-past eleven at night, owing to the necessary shifting of our luggage from one chaise to another, for we had seven different chaises and as many different drivers. We set out between six and seven in the morning of Thursday, with sixteen heavy boxes and portfolios full of prints.

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[1] Blake had come down to Felpham, in Sussex, in order to engrave the illustrations for the *Life of Cowper* upon which Hayley—then living in the same village—was engaged.

And now begins a new life, because another covering of earth is shaken off. I am more famed in heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and those works are the delight and study of archangels. Why then should I be anxious about the riches and fame of mortality? The Lord our Father will do for us and with us according to His divine will.

You, O dear Flaxman, are a sublime archangel—my friend and companion from eternity. In the divine bosom is our dwelling-place. I look back into the regions of reminiscence, and behold our ancient days before this earth appeared in its vegetative mortality to my mortal vegetated eyes. I see our houses of eternity which can never be separated, though our mortal vehicles should stand at the remotest corners of heaven from each other.

Farewell, my best Friend;—remember me and my wife in love and friendship to our dear Mrs. Flaxman, whom we ardently desire to entertain beneath our thatched roof of rusted gold. And believe me for ever to remain your grateful and affectionate

William Blake.

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### William Blake to Thomas Butts

[*A Year in 'a Land of Abstraction'*]

*September* 11, 1801.

My dear Sir,—

I hope you will continue to excuse my want of steady perseverance, by which want I am still your debtor, and you so much my creditor; but such as I can be, I will: I can be grateful, and I can soon send you some of your designs which I have nearly completed. In the meantime, by my sister's hands, I transmit to Mrs. Butts an attempt at your likeness, which, I hope, she who is the best judge will think like. Time flies faster (as it seems to me here) than in London. I labour incessantly, and accomplish not one-half of what I intended, because my abstract folly hurries me often away while I am at work, carrying me over the mountains and valleys which are not real, in a land of abstraction where spectres of the dead wander. This I endeavour to prevent, and with my whole might chain my feet to the world of duty and reality. But in vain! the faster I bind, the better is the ballast; for I, so far from being bound down, take the world with me in my flights, and often it seems lighter than a ball of wool rolled by the wind. Bacon and Newton would prescribe ways of making the world heavier to me, and Pitt would prescribe distress for a medical potion. But as none on earth can give me mental distress, and I know that all distress inflicted by Heaven is a mercy, a fig for all corporeal! Such distress is my mock and scorn. Alas! wretched, happy, ineffectual labourer of Time's moments that I am! who shall deliver me from this spirit of abstraction and improvidence? Such, my dear sir, is the truth of my state, and I tell it you in palliation of my seeming neglect of your most pleasant orders. But I have not neglected them; and yet a year is rolled over, and only now I approach the prospect of sending you some, which you may expect soon. I should have sent them by my sister; but, as the coach goes three times a week to London, and they will arrive as safe as with her, I shall have an opportunity of enclosing several together which are not yet completed. I thank you again and again for your generous forbearance, of which I have need; and now I must express my wishes to see you at Felpham, and to show you Mr. Hayley's library,[1] which is still unfinished, but is in a finishing way and looks well. I ought also to mention my extreme disappointment at Mr. Johnson's forgetfulness, who appointed to call on you but did not. He is also a happy extract, known by all his friends as the most innocent forgetter of his own interests. He is nephew to the late Mr. Cowper, the poet. You would like him much. I continue painting miniatures, and I improve more and more as all my friends tell me. But my principal labour at this time is engraving plates for *Cowper's Life*, a work of magnitude, which Mr. Hayley is now labouring with all his matchless industry, and which will be a most valuable acquisition to literature, not only on account of Mr. Hayley's composition, but also as it will contain letters of Cowper to his friends—perhaps, or rather certainly, the very best letters that ever were published.

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[1] While at Felpham, Blake decorated Hayley's library with eighteen heads of the poets, including Homer, Shakespeare, Cowper and Hayley himself.

My wife joins with me in love to you and Mrs. Butts, hoping that her joy is now increased, and yours also, in an increase of family and of health and happiness.

I remain, dear Sir,
Ever yours sincerely,
WILLIAM BLAKE.

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### WILLIAM BLAKE TO THOMAS BUTTS

### [‘*Under the Direction of Messengers from Heaven*’]

Felpham, *January* 10, 1802.

DEAR SIR,—

Your very kind and affectionate letter, and the many kind things you have said in it, called upon me for an immediate answer. But it found my wife and myself so ill, and my wife so very ill, that till now I have not been able to do this duty. The ague and rheumatism have been almost her constant enemies, which she has combated in vain almost ever since we have been here, and her sickness is always my sorrow of course. But what you tell me about your sight afflicted me not a little, and that about your health, in another part of your letter, makes me entreat you to take due care of both. It is a part of our duty to God and man to take due care of His gifts ; and though we ought not to think *more* highly of ourselves, yet we ought to think as highly of ourselves as immortals ought to think.

When I came down here, I was more sanguine than I am at present ; but it was because I was ignorant of many things which have since occurred, and chiefly the unhealthiness of the place. Yet I do not repent of coming on a thousand accounts ; and Mr. Hayley, I doubt not, will do ultimately all that both he and I wish—that is, to lift me out of difficulty. But this is no easy matter to a man who, having spiritual enemies of such formidable magnitude, cannot expect to want natural hidden ones.

Your approbation of my pictures is a multitude to me, and I doubt not that all your kind wishes in my behalf shall in due time be fulfilled. Your kind offer of pecuniary assistance I can only thank you for at present, because I have enough to serve my present purpose here. Our expenses are small, and our income, from our incessant labour, fully adequate to these at present. I am now engaged in engraving six small plates for a new edition of Mr Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper*, from drawings by Maria Flaxman, sister to my friend the sculptor. And it seems that other things will follow in course, if I do but copy these well. But patience ! If great things do not turn out, it is because such things depend on the spiritual and not on the natural world ; and if it was fit for me, I doubt not that I should be employed in greater things ; and when it is proper, my talents shall be properly exercised in public, as I hope they are now in private. For till then I leave no stone unturned, and no path unexplored that leads to improvement in my beloved art. One thing of real consequence I have accomplished by coming into the country, which is to me consolation enough : namely, I have re-collected all my scattered thoughts on art, and resumed my primitive and original ways of execution in both painting and engraving, which in the confusion of London I had very much lost and obliterated from my mind. But whatever becomes of my labours, I would rather that they should be preserved in your greenhouse (not, as you mistakenly call it, dunghill) than in the cold gallery of fashion. The sun may yet shine, and then they will be brought into open air.

But you have so generously and openly desired that I will divide my griefs with you that I cannot hide what it has now become my duty to explain. My unhappiness has arisen from a source which, if explored too narrowly, might hurt my pecuniary circumstances ; as my dependence is on engraving at present, and particularly on the engravings I have in hand for Mr. Hayley, and I find on all hands great objections to my doing anything but the mere drudgery of business, and intimations that, if I do not confine myself to this, I shall not live. This has always pursued me. You will understand by this the source of all my uneasiness. This from Johnson and Fuseli brought me down here, and from this Mr. Hayley will bring me back again. For that I cannot live without doing my duty to lay up treasures in heaven is certain and determined, and to this I have long made up my mind. And why this should be made an objection to me, while drunkenness, lewdness, gluttony, and even idleness itself, does not hurt other men, let Satan himself explain. The thing I have most at heart—more than life, or all that seems to make life comfortable without—is the interest of true religion and science. And whenever anything appears to affect that interest (especially if I myself omit any duty to my station as a soldier of Christ), it gives me the greatest of torments. I am not ashamed, afraid, or averse to tell you what ought to be told—that I am under the direction of messengers from heaven, daily and nightly. But the nature of such things is not, as some suppose, without trouble or care. Temptations are on the right hand and on the left. Behind, the sea of time and space roars and follows swiftly. He who keeps not right onwards is lost ; and if our footsteps slide in clay, how can we do otherwise than fear and tremble ? But I should not have troubled you with this account of my spiritual state, unless it had been necessary in explaining the actual sense of my uneasiness, into which you are so kind as to inquire : for I never obtrude such things on others unless questioned, and then I never disguise the truth. But if we fear to do the dictates of our angels, and tremble at the tasks set before us ; if we refuse to do spiritual acts because of natural fears or natural desires ; who can describe the dismal torments of such a state !—I too well remember the threats I heard ! —' If you, who are organized by Divine Providence for spiritual communion, refuse, and bury your talent in the earth, even though you should want natural bread—sorrow and desperation pursue you through life, and after death shame and confusion of face to eternity. Every one in eternity will leave you, aghast at the man who was crowned with glory and honour by his brethren, and betrayed their cause to their enemies. You will be called the base Judas who betrayed his friend ' ! Such words would make any stout man tremble, and how then could I be at ease ? But I am now no longer in that state, and now go on again with my task, fearless though my path is difficult. I have no fear of stumbling while I keep it.

My wife desires her kindest love to Mrs. Butts, and I have permitted her to send it to you also. We often wish that we could unite again in society, and hope that the time is not distant when we shall do so, being determined not to remain another winter here, but to return to London.

I hear a Voice you cannot hear, that says I must not stay,
I see a Hand you cannot see, that beckons me away.

Naked we came here—naked of natural things—and naked we shall return: but while clothed with the Divine mercy, we are richly clothed in spiritual, and suffer all the rest gladly. Pray, give my love to Mrs. Butts and your family.

I am yours sincerely,
WILLIAM BLAKE.

PS.—Your obliging proposal of exhibiting my two pictures likewise calls for my thanks; I will finish the others, and then we shall judge of the matter with certainty.

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### WILLIAM BLAKE TO THOMAS BUTTS

[*An Allegorical Letter*]

Felpham, *November*, 1802.

DEAR SIR,—

After I had finished my letter,[1] I found that I had not said half what I intended to say, and in particular I wish to ask what subject you choose to be painted on the remaining canvas which I brought down with me (for there were three) and to tell you that several of the drawings were in great forwardness. You will see by the enclosed account that the remaining number of drawings which you gave me orders for is eighteen. I will finish these with all possible expedition, if indeed I have not tired you, or, as it is politely called, *bored* you too much already; or, if you would rather, cry out, Enough, off, off! Tell me in a letter of forgiveness if you were offended, and of accustomed friendship if you were not. But I will bore you more with some verses which my wife desires me to copy out and send you with her kind love and respect. They were composed above a twelvemonth ago, while walking from Felpham to Lavant, to meet my sister:—

With happiness stretched across the hills,
In a cloud that dewy sweetness distils,
With a blue sky spread over with wings,
And a mild sun that mounts and sings;

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[1] Blake sent this as a sort of addendum to a letter dated November 22, written on hearing that Thomas Butts was offended with him—probably for delay in executing some of his commissions. Blake begged for 'a letter of forgiveness if you were offended, or of accustomed friendship if you were not'. Butts appears to have responded in a way which greatly pleased the artist-poet.

With trees and fields, full of fairy elves,
And little devils who fight for themselves,
Remembering the verses that Hayley sung
When my heart knocked against the root of my tongue,
With angels planted in hawthorn bowers,
And God Himself in the passing hours ;
With silver angels across my way,
And golden demons that none can stay ;
And my father hovering upon the wind,
And my brother Robert just behind,
And my brother John, the evil one,
In a black cloud making his moan ;
Though dead, they appear upon my path,
Notwithstanding my terrible wrath :
They beg, they entreat, they drop their tears,
Filled full of hopes, filled full of fears ;
With a thousand angels upon the wind,
Pouring disconsolate from behind
To drive them off, and before my way
A frowning Thistle implores my stay.
What to others a trifle appears
Fills me full of smiles or tears ;
For double the vision my eyes do see,
And a double vision is always with me.
With my inward eye, 'tis an old man grey ;
With my outward, a thistle across my way.
'If thou goest back ', the Thistle said,
'Thou art to endless woe betrayed ;
For here does Theotormon lower,
And here is Enitharmon's bower,
And Los the Terrible thus hath sworn,
Because thou backward dost return,
Poverty, envy, old age and fear,
Shall bring thy wife upon a bier.
And Butts shall give what Fuseli gave,
A dark black rock, and a gloomy cave.'
I struck the thistle with my foot,
And broke him up from his delving root ;
'Must the duties of life each other cross ?
May every joy be dung and dross ?
Must my dear Butts feel cold neglect
Because I give Hayley his due respect ?
Must Flaxman look upon me as wild,
And all my friends be with doubts beguiled ?
Must my wife live in my sister's bane,
Or my sister survive on my Love's pain ?
The curses of Los the terrible shade,
And his dismal terror make me afraid '.

So I spoke, and struck in my wrath,
The old man weltering upon the path.

Then Los appeared in all his power :
In the sun he appeared descending before
My face in fierce flames ; in my double sight,
'Twas outward a sun—inward, Los in his might.
'My hands are laboured day and night,
And ease comes never in my sight.
My wife has no indulgence given,
Except what comes to her from Heaven.
We eat little, we drink less ;
This earth breeds not our happiness.
Another sun feeds our life's streams
We are not warmèd with thy beams.
Thou measurest not the time to me,
Nor yet the space that I do see :
My mind is not with thy light arrayed ;
Thy terrors shall not make me afraid '.

When I had my defiance given,
The sun stood trembling in heaven :
The moon, that glowed remote below,
Became leprous and white as snow ;
And every soul of man on the earth
Felt affliction, and sorrow, and sickness, and dearth.
Los flamed in my path, and the sun was hot
With the bows of my mind, and the arrows of thought :
My bowstring fierce with ardour breathes,
My arrows glow in their golden sheaves ;
My brother and father march before,
The heavens drop with human gore.

Now I a fourfold vision see
And a fourfold vision is given to me ;
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight,
And threefold in soft Beulah's night,
And twofold always. May God us keep
From single vision, and Newton's sleep.

I also enclose you some ballads by Mr. Hayley, with prints to them by your humble servant. I should have sent them before now, but could not get anything done for you to please myself ; for I do assure you that I have truly studied the two little pictures I now send, and do not repent of the time I have spent upon them.

God bless you !

Yours,
W. B.

## William Blake to Thomas Butts

### [*Hayley's Attitude towards the Artist-Poet*]

Felpham, *July* 6, 1803.

I ought to tell you that Mr. Hayley is quite agreeable to our return, and that there is all the appearance in the world of our being fully employed in engraving for his projected works, particularly Cowper's *Milton*—a work now on foot by subscription, and I understand that the subscription goes on briskly. This work is to be a very elegant one, and to consist of all Milton's Poems with Cowper's Notes, and translations by Cowper from Milton's Latin and Italian Poems. These works will be ornamented with engravings from designs by Romney, Flaxman, and your humble servant, and to be engraved also by the last-named. The profits of the work are intended to be appropriated to erect a monument to the memory of Cowper in St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. Such is the project ; and Mr. Addington and Mr. Pitt are both among the subscribers, which are already numerous and of the first rank. The price of the work is six guineas. Thus I hope that all our three years' trouble ends in good-luck at last, and shall be forgot by my affections and only remembered by my understanding, to be a memento in time to come, and to speak to future generations by a sublime allegory, which is now perfectly completed into a grand poem. I may praise it, since I dare not pretend to be any other than the secretary ; the authors are in Eternity. I consider it as the grandest Poem that this world contains. Allegory addressed to the intellectual powers, while it is altogether hidden from the corporeal understanding, is my definition of the most sublime Poetry. It is also somewhat in the same manner defined by Plato. This Poem shall, by Divine assistance, be progressively printed and ornamented with prints, and given to the Public. But of this work I take care to say little to Mr. Hayley, since he is as much averse to my Poetry as he is to a chapter in the Bible. He knows that I have writ it, for I have shown it to him, and he has read part by his own desire, and has looked with sufficient contempt to enhance my opinion of it. But I do not wish to imitate by seeming too obstinate in poetic pursuits. But if all the world should set their faces against this, I have orders to set my face like a flint (Ezek. iii. 8) against their faces, and my forehead against their foreheads.[1]

As to Mr. Hayley, I feel myself at liberty to say as follows upon this ticklish subject. I regard fashion in Poetry as little as I do in Painting; so, if both Poets and Painters should alternately dislike (but I know the majority of them will not), I am not to regard it at all. But Mr. Hayley approves of my designs as little as he does of my Poems, and I have been forced to insist on his leaving me, in both, to my own self-will; for I am determined to be no longer pestered with his genteel ignorance and polite disapprobation. I know myself both Poet and Painter, and it is not his affected contempt that can move to anything but a more assiduous pursuit of both arts. Indeed, by my late firmness, I have brought down his affected loftiness, and he begins to think I have some genius; as if genius and assurance were the same thing! But his imbecile attempts to depress me only deserve laughter. I say thus much to you, knowing that you will not make a bad use of it. But it is a fact too true that, if I had only depended on mortal things, both myself and my wife must have been lost. I should leave every one in the country astonished at my patience and forbearance of injuries upon injuries; but I do assure you that, if I could have returned to London a month after my arrival here, I should have done so. But I was commanded by my spiritual friends to bear all and be silent, and to go through without murmuring, and, in fine, [to] hope till my three years should be almost accomplished; at which time I was set at liberty to remonstrate against former conduct, and to demand justice and truth; which I have done in so effectual a manner that my antagonist is silenced completely, and I have compelled what should have been of freedom—my just right as an artist and as a man. And if any attempt should be made to refuse me this I am inflexible, and will relinquish any engagement of designing at all, unless altogether left to my own judgment, as you, my dear friend, have always left me; for which I shall never cease to honour and respect you.

When we meet, I will perfectly describe to you my conduct and the conduct of others towards me, and you will see that I have laboured hard indeed, and have been borne on angels' wings. Till we meet I beg of God our Saviour to be with you and me, and yours and mine. Pray give my and my wife's love to Mrs. Butts and family, and believe me to remain

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[1] 'Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads'.

Yours in truth and sincerity,
WILLIAM BLAKE.

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## WILLIAM BLAKE TO THOMAS BUTTS

[*Blake's Arrest for High Treason*]

Felpham, *August* 16, 1803.

I GO on with the remaining subjects which you gave me commission to execute for you; but I shall not be able to send any more before my return, though, perhaps, I may bring some with me finished. I am at present in a bustle to defend myself against a very unwarrantable warrant from a justice of peace at Chichester, which was taken out against me by a private in Captain Leathes' troop of 1st or Royal Dragoons, for an assault and seditious words. The wretched man has terribly perjured himself, as has his comrade; for, as to sedition, not one word relating to the King or Government was spoken by either him or me. His enmity arises from my having turned him out of my garden, into which he was invited as an assistant by a gardener at work therein, without my knowledge that he was so invited. I desired him, as politely as possible, to go out of the garden; he made me an impertinent answer. I insisted on his leaving the garden; he refused. I still persisted in desiring his departure. He then threatened to knock out my eyes, with many an abominable imprecation, and with some contempt for my person; it affronted my foolish pride. I therefore took him by the elbows, and pushed him before me till I had got him out. Then I intended to have left him; but he, turning about, put himself into a posture of defiance, threatening and swearing at me. I, perhaps foolishly and perhaps not, stepped out of the gate, and, putting aside his arms, took him again by the elbows, and, keeping his back to me, pushed him forward down the road about fifty yards—he all the while endeavouring to turn round and strike me, and raging and cursing, which drew out several neighbours. At length when I had got him to where he was quartered, which was very quickly done, we were met at the gate by the master of the house—the *Fox Inn*—(who is the proprietor of my cottage) and his wife and daughter, and the man's comrade, and several other people. My landlord compelled the soldiers to go indoors, after many abusive threats against me and my wife from the two soldiers; but no word of threat on account of sedition was uttered at the time. This method of revenge was planned between them after they had got together into the stable. This is the whole outline. I have for witnesses: the gardener, who is ostler at the *Fox*, and who evidences that to his knowledge no word of the remotest tendency to Government or sedition was uttered; our next-door neighbour, a miller's wife (who saw me turn him before me down the road, and saw and heard all that happened at the gate of the inn), who evidences that no expression of threatening on account of sedition was uttered in the heat of their fury by either of the dragoons. This was the woman's own remark, and does high honour to her good sense, as she observes that, whenever a quarrel happens, the offence is always repeated. The landlord of the inn and his wife and daughter will evidence the same, and will evidently prove the comrade perjured, who swore that he heard me, while at the gate, utter seditious words and d—— the K——, without which perjury I could not have been committed, and I had no witnesses with me before the justices who could combat his assertion, as the gardener remained in the garden all the while, and he was the only person thought necessary to take with me. I have been before a bench of justices at Chichester this morning; but they, as the lawyer who wrote down the accusation told me in private, are compelled by the military to suffer a prosecution to be entered into, although they must know, and it is manifest that the whole is a fabricated perjury. I have been forced to find bail. Mr. Hayley was kind enough to come forward, and Mr. Seagrave, printer at Chichester; Mr. Hayley in £100, and Mr. Seagrave in £50, and myself am bound in £100 for my appearance at the quarter sessions, which is after Michaelmas.[1] So I shall have the satisfaction to see my friends in town before this contemptible business comes on. I say contemptible, for it must be manifest to every one that the whole accusation is a wilful perjury. Thus you see, my dear friend, that I cannot leave this place without some adventure. It has struck consternation through all the villages around. Every man is now afraid of speaking to, or looking at a soldier: for the peaceable villagers have always been forward in expressing their kindness for us, and they express their sorrow at our departure as soon as they hear of it. Every one here is my evidence for peace and good neighbourhood; and yet, such is the present state of things, this foolish accusation must be tried in public. Well, I am content, I murmur not, and doubt not that I shall receive justice, and am only sorry for the trouble and expense. I have heard that my accuser is a disgraced sergeant; his name is John Scholfield. Perhaps it will be in your power to learn somewhat about the man. I am very ignorant of what I am requesting of you; I only suggest what I know you will be kind enough to excuse if you can learn nothing about him, and what I as well know, if it is possible, you will be kind enough to do in this matter.

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[1] The trial took place in Chichester in January, 1804, but the trumpery nature of the charge was so manifest that Blake was acquitted. The verdict, according to a newspaper account of the trial, 'so gratified the auditory that the court was, in defiance of all decency, thrown into an uproar by their noisy exultations'. The Felpham arrest had already decided Blake to return to London, where all the remaining years of his life were spent.

Dear Sir, this perhaps was suffered to clear up some doubts, and to give opportunity to those whom I doubted to clear themselves of all imputation. If a man offends me ignorantly, and not designedly, surely I ought to consider him with favour and affection. Perhaps the simplicity of myself is the origin of all offences committed against me. If I have found this, I shall have learned a most valuable thing, well worth three years' perseverance. I *have* found it. It is certain that a two passive manner, inconsistent with my physiognomy, had done me much mischief. I must now express to you my conviction that all is come from the spiritual world for good and not for evil.

Give me your advice in my perilous adventure. Burn what I have peevishly written about any friend. I have been very much degraded and injuriously treated; but if it all arise from my own fault, I ought to blame myself.

O why was I born with a different face?
Why was I not born like the rest of my race?
When I look, each one starts; when I speak, I offend;
Then I am silent and passive, and lose every friend.
Then my verse I dishonour, my pictures despise;

My person degrade, and my temper chastise;
And the pen is my terror, the pencil my shame;
All my talents I bury, and dead is my fame.
I am either too low or too highly priz'd;
When elate I'm envy'd, when meek I'm despis'd.

This is but too just a picture of my present state. I pray God to keep you and all men from it, and to deliver me in His own good time. Pray write to me, and tell me how you and your family enjoy health. My much terrified wife joins me in love to you and Mrs. Butts and all your family. I again take the liberty to beg of you to cause the enclosed letter to be delivered to my brother, and remain sincerely and affectionately,

Yours,
William Blake.

## GEORGE CRABBE

### 1754–1832

George Crabbe, like Fanny Burney and William Blake, lived longer in the eighteenth than the nineteenth century; but he is quite at home in the company of Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, and other great contemporaries of his later years. In 1780, when he was twenty-six, he abandoned his struggles as an imperfectly qualified surgeon at Aldeburgh, and set out for London with £3 in his pocket to seek fame and fortune in literature—just as poor Chatterton had done ten years before. His sorrows and disappointments were as bitter as Chatterton's until he made his desperate case known to Edmund Burke early in the following year. From that hour he was 'a made man',—according to his son, in the Memoir prefixed to the collected edition of his father's poems in 1834, though the biographer, apparently, was unaware of all the circumstances of the case. 'He went into Mr. Burke's room', writes the poet's son, 'a poor young adventurer, spurned by the opulent and rejected by the publishers, his last shilling gone, and all but his last hope with it; he came out virtually secure of almost all the good fortune that, by successive steps, afterwards fell to his lot; his genius acknowledged by one whose verdict could not be questioned; his character and manners appreciated and approved by a noble and capacious heart, whose benevolence knew no limits but its power—that of a giant in intellect, who was, in feeling, an unsophisticated child—a bright example of the close affinity between superlative talents, and the warmth of the generous affections. Mr. Crabbe had afterwards many other friends, kind, liberal, and powerful, who assisted him in his professional career; but it was one hand alone that rescued him when he was sinking '. This was true enough, so far as Crabbe's future prospects were concerned; but that Crabbe was 'a made man' from the hour of that first interview, that the meeting had 'entirely, and for ever, changed the nature of his worldly fortunes', is disproved by Crabbe's second letter to Burke, written several months later, and first printed in an appendix to the *Memoir and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Hanmer* in 1838—four years after the publication of the Memoir of Crabbe by his son. The letter is of great length, but we give it in full because it has never, to our knowledge, been reprinted before. It might have remained for ever buried with the other miscellaneous letters which Sir Henry Bunbury added to the *Memoir of Hanmer*, but for the exhaustive researches of M. René Huchon, who, though a Frenchman, is one of the leading authorities on Crabbe and his times. M. Huchon, whose new *Life of Crabbe* is in the Press while these lines are being written, called Canon Ainger's attention to the letter in question, and the importance of the discovery was pointed out in Ainger's study of Crabbe in the *English Men of Letters* series (1903), in which a short extract from it is printed. The letter, as Canon Ainger observes, also throws light upon the blank space in Crabbe's history during the darkest days of his struggles in London, before Burke came to his rescue. 'It tells the story of a period of humiliation and distress, concerning which it is easy to understand that even in the days of his fame and prosperity Crabbe may well have refrained from speaking with his children'. The first of the poet's letters now reprinted is from the copy which he enclosed on June 6, 1780, in his Journal to Mira (Sarah Elmy, his future wife). Crabbe's repeated applications to Lord Shelburne for assistance were in vain, 'and he often contrasted in later times', writes his son, 'his reception at this nobleman's doors in 1780 with the courteous welcome which he received at a subsequent period in that same mansion, now Lansdowne House'. Another great man who refused Crabbe a helping hand when he needed it most was Lord Chancellor Thurlow, but Thurlow hastened to make some amends by handing him a banknote for £100 as soon as *The Library* appeared in 1781. Taking Orders before the end of that year, Crabbe was able to return to his native Aldeburgh as curate of the parish, and with the reputation of a successful author, who had been patronized by some of the most distinguished men in the kingdom. Of his later writings and literary work he tells us something in his letters to Sir Walter Scott—whom he met both in London and Edinburgh—and to Mary Leadbeater, to whom many charming letters from his rectory at Trowbridge were written. Here Crabbe, leaving Muston after his wife's death in 1813, spent the last eighteen years of his life, broken by his annual visits to the Hoares at Hampstead, and his trips with them to the coast or Clifton. We can leave Thomas Campbell and Thomas Moore to complete this rough outline of the poet's life with their recollections, printed on pp. 107–9, and 266–70.

## GEORGE CRABBE TO LORD SHELBURNE

[*An Appeal for 'Patronage and Bread'*]

*About June*, 1780

*To the Right Honourable the Earl of Shelburne.*

Ah ! Shelburne, blest with all that's good or great,
T' adorn a rich, or save a sinking state.
If public ills engross not all thy care.
Let private woe assail a patriot's ear,
Pity confined, but not less warm impart,
And unresisted win thy noble heart :
Nor deem I rob thy soul of Britain's share,
Because I hope to have some interest there ;
Still wilt thou shine on all a fostering sun,
Though with more fav'ring beams enlight'ning one,—
As Heaven will oft make some more amply blest,
Yet still in general bounty feeds the rest.
Oh hear the virtue thou reverest plead ;
She'll swell thy breast, and there applaud the deed.
She bids thy thoughts one hour from greatness stray,
And leads thee on to fame a shorter way ;
Where, if no withering laurel's thy reward,
There's shouting Conscience, and a grateful bard—
A bard untrained in all but misery's school,
Who never bribed a knave or praised a fool.
'Tis glory prompts, and as thou read'st attend,
She dictates pity, and becomes my friend ;
She bids each cold and dull reflection flee,
And yields her Shelburne to distress and me !

Forgive, my lord, a free, and, perhaps, unusual address ; misfortune has in it, I hope, some excuse for presumption. Your lordship will not, cannot, be greatly displeased with an unfortunate man, whose wants are the most urgent ; who wants a friend to assist him, and bread.

I will not tire your lordship with a recital of the various circumstances which have led to this situation. It would be too long a tale ; though there are parts in it which, I will venture to assure your lordship, would not only affect your compassion, but, I hope, engage your approbation. It is too dull a view of the progression from pleasing, though moderate expectation, to unavoidable penury.

Your lordship will pardon me the relation of a late and unsuccessful attempt to become useful to myself and the community I live in. Starving as an apothecary, in a little venal borough in Suffolk, it was there suggested to me that Lord North, the present Minister, was a man of that liberal disposition, that I might hope success from a representation of my particular circumstances to him. This I have done, and laid before his lordship, I confess a dull, but a faithful account of my misfortunes. My request had bounds the most moderate. I asked not to feed upon the spoils of my country, but by an honest diligence and industry to earn the bread I needed. The most pressing part of my prayer entreated of his lordship his speedy determination, as my little stock of money was exhausted, and I was reduced to live in misery and on credit.

Why I complain of his lordship is not that he denied this, though an humble and moderate petition, but for his cruel and unkind delay. My lord, you will pardon me a resentment expressed in one of the little pieces I have taken the liberty of enclosing, when your lordship considers the inhumanity I was treated with : my repeated prayers for my sentence were put off by a delay ; and at length a lingering refusal, brought me by an insolent domestic, determined my suit, and my opinion of his lordship's private virtues.

My lord, I now turn to your lordship, and entreat to be heard. I am ignorant what to ask, but feel forcibly my wants—patronage and bread. I have no other claim on your lordship than my necessities, but they are great, unless my Muse, and she has, I am afraid, as few charms ; nor is it a time for such to flourish : in serener days, my lord, I have produced some poetical compositions the public might approve, and your lordship not disdain to patronize. I would not, my lord, be vain farther than necessity warrants, and I pray your lordship to pardon me this. May I not hope it will occur to you how I may be useful ? My heart is humbled to all but villainy, and would live, if honestly, in any situation. Your lordship has my fortune in your power, and I will, with respect and submission, await your determination. I am, my lord, etc. etc.[1]

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[1] 'You see, my dear Miras,' writes Crabbe in sending his copy of this letter to his *fiancée* 'to what our situation here may reduce us. Yet am I not conscious of losing the dignity becoming a man : some respect is due to the superiority of station ; and that I will always pay, but I cannot flatter or fawn, nor shall my humblest request be so presented. If respect will not do, adulation shall not ; but I hope it will ; as I'm sure he must have a poor idea of greatness, who delights in a supple knee bending to him, or a tongue voluble in paltry praise, which conscience says is totally undeserved '.

### George Crabbe to Edmund Burke

*[The Letter that Saved Him.]*

[*No date, but written early in* 1781]

Sir,—

I am sensible that I need even your talents to apologize for the freedom I now take; but I have a plea which, however simply urged, will, with a mind like yours, Sir, procure me pardon: I am one of those outcasts on the world, who are without a friend, without employment, and without bread. Pardon me a short preface. I had a partial father, who gave me a better education than his broken fortune would have allowed; and a better than was necessary, as he could give me that only. I was designed for the profession of physic; but not having wherewithal to complete the requisite studies, the design but served to convince me of a parent's affection, and the error it had occasioned. In April last, I came to London with three pounds, and flattered myself this would be sufficient to supply me with the common necessaries of life, till my abilities should procure me more: of these I had the highest opinion, and a poetical vanity contributed to my delusion. I knew little of the world, and had read books only: I wrote, and fancied perfection in my compositions; when I wanted bread they promised me affluence, and soothed me with dreams of reputation, whilst my appearance subjected me to contempt.

Time, reflection, and want, have shown me my mistake. I see my trifles in that which I think the true light; and, whilst I deem them such, have yet the opinion that holds them superior to the common run of poetical publications.

I had some knowledge of the late Mr. Nassau, the brother of Lord Rochford; in consequence of which, I asked his lordship's permission to inscribe my little work to him. Knowing it to be free from all political allusions and personal abuse, it was no very material point to me to whom it was dedicated. His lordship thought it none to him, and obligingly consented to my request. I was told that a subscription would be the more profitable method for me, and therefore endeavoured to circulate copies of the enclosed Proposals.

I am afraid, Sir, I disgust you with this very dull narration, but believe me punished in the misery that occasions it. You will conclude, that, during this time, I must have been at more expense than I could afford; indeed, the most parsimonious could not have avoided it. The printer deceived me, and my little business has had every delay. The people with whom I live perceive my situation, and find me to be indigent and without friends. About ten days since, I was compelled to give a note for seven pounds, to avoid an arrest for about double that sum which I owe. I wrote to every friend I had, but my friends are poor likewise ; the time of payment approached, and I ventured to represent my case to Lord Rochford. I begged to be credited for this sum till I received it of my subscribers, which, I believe, will be within one month : but to this letter I had no reply, and I have probably offended by my importunity. Having used every honest means in vain, I yesterday confessed my inability, and obtained, with much entreaty, and as the greatest favour a week's forbearance, when I am positively told, that I must pay the money, or prepare for a prison.

You will guess the purpose of so long an introduction. I appeal to you, Sir, as a good, and, let me add, a great man. I have no other pretensions to your favour than that I am an unhappy one. It is not easy to support the thoughts of confinement ; and I am coward enough to dread such an end to my suspense.

Can you, Sir, in any degree, aid me with propriety ? Will you ask any demonstration of my veracity ? I have imposed upon myself, but I have been guilty of no other imposition. Let me, if possible, interest your compassion. I know those of rank and fortune are teased with frequent petitions, and are compelled to refuse the requests even of those whom they know to be in distress ; it is therefore, with a distant hope I ventured to solicit such favour ; but you will forgive me, Sir, if you do not think proper to relieve. It is impossible that sentiments like yours can proceed from any but a humane and generous heart.

I will call upon you, Sir, to-morrow, and if I have not the happiness to obtain credit with you, I must submit to my fate. My existence is a pain to myself, and every one near and dear to me are distressed in my distresses.

My connexions, once the source of happiness, now embitter the reverse of my fortune, and I have only to hope a speedy end to a life so unpromisingly begun : in which (though it ought not to be boasted of) I can reap some consolation from looking to the end of it. I am, Sir, with the greatest respect,

Your obedient and most humble servant,

GEORGE CRABBE.

### GEORGE CRABBE TO EDMUND BURKE

[*The Full Story of his Humiliation and Distress in London*][1]

Bishopsgate Street, *June* 26 [1781].

SIR,—

It is my wish that this letter may reach you at a time when you are disengaged, but if otherwise, I entreat that it may not be immediately read, as it is sufficient to try your patience without the additional circumstance of asking your attention at an improper time. I think it right to lay before you, Sir, a further account of myself, and lest my present or future conduct should appear in a light that they ought not, I venture to inform you more particularly of the past; nor is this my sole motive; it is painful to me to be conscious that I have given you only partial information, though the part I gave was strictly true. Nor can I, with propriety, beg your advice in my present difficult situation, without relating the steps which led to it; on the other hand I consider how much I have troubled you, and that you probably know as much of me as you desire; I am apprehensive too that I shall not rise in your opinion by what I write, and it is my constant fear that, kind and benevolent as you are, these repeated attacks upon your patience may compel you to withdraw your assistance and leave me to lament the importunity of my applications. These reasons, however, do not balance their opposite ones; they oblige me to fear, but not to relinquish my purpose, and this long account is the result of a painful deliberation on the propriety of writing it.

I do not recollect the particulars of my first letter, but I believe, Sir, it informed you that my father has a place in the Custom House at Aldborough, that he has a large family, a little income, and no economy; he kept me two years at a country boarding school, and then plac'd me with an apothecary, who was poor and had little business, but the premium he demanded was small. I continued two years with this man, I read romances and learned to bleed; my master was also a farmer, and I became useful to him in this his principal occupation; there was indeed no other distinction between the boy at the farm and myself, but that he was happy in being an annual servant, and I was bound by indentures. I do not mean, Sir, to trifle with you, but it is by no means a small matter with me, how I stand in your opinion, and now when I speak of my mingled follies and misfortunes, I wish to say all I can consistently with truth in vindication of the former. I rebelled in my servitude, for it became grievous. My father was informed of his son's idleness and disobedience; he came, and was severe in his correction of them: I knew myself then injur'd and became obstinate, and a second visit of my father's put an end to my slavery; he took me home with him, and with me two-thirds of the money he had advanced. He then placed me on very easy terms with a man of large business in a more reputable line; but I was never considered as a regular apprentice, and was principally employed in putting up prescriptions and compounding medicines. I was, notwithstanding, well treated in every respect but the principal one, for no pains were taken to give me an idea of the profession I was to live by. I read novels and poetry, and began to contribute to magazines and diaries. My master occasionally prophesy'd my ruin, and my father advised me to quit such follies; but the former would sometimes laugh at the things he condemned, and my father was a rhymer himself. I therefore paid little attention to these instructions, but was happy to find my signature in the *Lady's Magazine* was known to all the ladies round about the place where I liv'd in. After four years I left my master according to our agreement: he is a man much esteemed in his profession and I believe he knows something of it, but I had not the good fortune to find it communicated to me. My father was at this time much distressed, and could not send me to London for the usual improvements. I meant to serve in a shop, but an unlucky opportunity offer'd itself at Aldborough; the apothecary there was become infamous by his bad conduct, and his enemies invited me to fix there immediately. My father urged it, and my pride assented; I was credited for the shatter'd furniture of an apothecary's shop, and the drugs that stocked it. I began to assume my late master's manner, and having some conscientious scruples I began to study also: I read much, collected extracts, and translated Latin books of Physic with a view of double improvement: I studied the Materia Medica and made some progress in Botany. I dissected dogs and fancied myself an anatomist, quitting entirely poetry, novels and books of entertainment. After one year, I left my little business to the care of a neighbouring surgeon, and came to London, where I attended the lectures of Messrs. Orme and Lowder on Midwifery, and occasionally stole round the hospitals to observe those remarkable cases, which might indeed, but which probably would never occur to me again. On my return I found my substitute had contracted a close intimacy with my rival. He cheated me and lost my business. The second woman who committed herself to my care, died before the month after her delivery was expired, and the more I became qualified for my profession, the less occasion I found for these qualifications. My business was the most trifling, and lay among the poor. I had a sister who starved with me: and on her account, it nows pains me to say we often wanted bread; we were unwilling to add to my father's distress by letting him see ours, and we fasted with much fortitude. Every one knew me to be poor; I was dunned for the most trifling sums, and compelled to pay the rent of my hut weekly, for my landlord was Justice of the Corporation and a man of authority. My druggist, a good-natured Quaker, gave me some friendly hints. My friends and advisers who had been zealous for my fixing in this place, entirely deserted me, for this reason only, that I had not been successful by following their advice. After three years spent in the misery of successless struggle, I found it necessary for me to depart, and I came to London.

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[1] First published by Sir Henry Bunbury in an appendix to the *Memoir of Sir Thomas Hanmer* in 1838, and now reprinted in full for the first time.

The part of my conduct which I am about to relate, I am afraid will be greatly disapproved, and I shall be happy to find Sir, you think it not more than foolish and inconsiderate. I knew the wages of a journeyman apothecary were trifling, and that nothing could be saved from them towards discharging the obligations I lay under. It became me to look for something more; I was visionary, and looked to him from whom no help cometh.

My father, some years since, attended at the House of Commons, on some election business, and he was also with the minister; I recollected to have heard him speak with some pleasure of Lord North's condescension and affability; and renouncing physic, I resolved to apply for employment in any department that I should be thought qualified for; I drew up a long and labour'd account of my motives for this application, and to prove my ignorance in the proper method of managing such applications, I accompanied my petition with a volume of verses, which I beg'd leave to submit to his lordship's perusal. I was admitted to Lord North on my second calling, and treated with more attention than I should now expect, though with none of that affability I had been led to hope for ; what I still wonder at, is the civil part of his lordship's behaviour ; my request was idle and unreasonable ; he might, with the greatest propriety, have dismiss'd me instantly, but whether through want of thought, or with an inclination to punish me, he gave me hope, was sorry for my circumstances, inquired who could recommend me, and was satisfied with those I named ; he ordered me to apply again, and fixed a day. I am even now astonished at this unnecessary and cruel civility ; it has greatly added to the inconveniences I now labour under, besides the anxiety of a long attendance growing daily more hopeless ; for not only on the day fixed, but on all other days I went regularly to Downing Street, but from my first to my last interview with his lordship were three months. I had only a variation in the mode of answer as the porter was more or less inclined to be civil ; the purport of all was the same : I wrote and entreated his lordship to accept or refuse me : I related my extreme poverty and my want of employment, but without effect. I again begg'd him to give some message to his servant, by which I might be certain that I had nothing further to hope for : this also was ineffectual. At last I had courage to offer so small a sum as half a crown, and the difficulty vanished : His lordship's porter was now civil, and his lordship surly : he dismiss'd me instantly and with some severity.

I had now recourse to my rhymes, and sent a hasty production to Mr. Dodsley, who returned it, observing that he could give no consideration for it, not because it wanted merit, but the town wanted attention ; he was very obliging in his reply, for I am now convinced that it does want merit. Mr. Becket returned me a similar answer to an application of the same kind. I yet indulged a boyish opinion of my productions, and determined to publish ; fortunately, however, I had hitherto conceal'd my name, and I continued to do so. Nicols, who had printed some remains of Dryden and other poets was for this reason fixed upon to usher my piece on the world; he printed 250 copies of *An Epistle to the Authors of the Monthly Review*, which, I believe, are now in the warehouse of Mr. Payne the bookseller, as I never heard of any sale they had. My patrons spoke of my poem favourably; but Messrs. the Critical Reviewers trimm'd me handsomely, and though I imputed this in a great measure to envy, I was very glad that I had not exposed my name on the occasion.

I now began to think more humbly of my talents: disappointment diminished my pride and increased my prudence. I solicited a subscription. Mr. Nassau, the late member for Malden, was well known to me, and this led me to apply to his brother for a permission to prefix his name to a dedication. Lord Rochford assented, but bade me hope more from the merit of my productions than that permission. I conveyed my proposals to my friends and obtained about 150 names, chiefly at Beccles, which are since increased, and are something more than 200. I have acquainted these people with the alteration in my intention, but I am desired to send my poem in whatever manner it comes out, and this is what certainly I spoke of to Mr. Dodsley. During a long interval betwixt my disappointment at Downing Street and that necessity which compelled me to write to you, to relate the distress I felt and the progress of my despair; I knew that my subscribers would not more than pay for the printing their volumes. I was contracting new debts, and unable to satisfy old demands. I lived in terror, was imposed upon, and submitted to insults, and at length so threatened, that I was willing to make use of any expedient that would not involve me in guilt as well as vexation. I could accuse myself but of folly and imprudence and these lessen'd by inexperience, and I thought that if my circumstances were known, there would be found some to relieve me. I looked as well as I could into every character that offered itself to my view, and resolved to apply where I found the most shining abilities, for I had learnt to distrust the humanity of weak people in all stations. You, Sir, are well acquainted with the result of my deliberation, and I have in one instance at least reason to applaud my own judgment.

It will perhaps be asked how I could live near twelve months a stranger in London and coming without money: it is not to be supposed that I was immediately credited—it is not—my support arose from another source. In the very early part of my life I contracted some acquaintance, which afterwards became a serious connexion, with the niece of a Suffolk gentleman of large fortune. Her mother lives with her three daughters at Beccles; her income is but the interest of £1,500, which at her decease is to be divided betwixt her children. The brother makes her annual income about £100: he is a rigid economist, and though I have the pleasure of his approbation, I have not had the good fortune to obtain more, nor from a prudent man could I perhaps expect so much. But from the family at Beccles I have every mark of their attention, and every proof of their disinterested regard. They have from time to time supplied me with such sums as they could possibly spare, and that they have not done more arose from my concealing the severity of my situation, for I would not involve in my errors or misfortunes a very generous and very happy family by which I am received with unaffected sincerity, and where I am treated as a son by a mother who can have no prudential reason to rejoice that her daughter has formed such a connexion. It is this family I lately visited, and by which I am pressed to return, for they know the necessity there is for me to live with the utmost frugality, and hopeless of my succeeding in town they invite me to partake of their little fortune, and as I cannot mend my prospects, to avoid making them worse. This, Sir, is my situation: I have added—I have suppressed nothing; I am totally at a loss how to act, and what to undertake. I cannot think of living with my friends without a view of some employment or design, and I can form none, and I cannot continue in town without such, where the expense is (to me) much greater; my present undertaking can be of no material service I find, and the unlucky circumstance of printing so much of my miscellany renders it less so. I finish this tedious account by entreating your consideration on my present state and my future prospects. I cease to flatter myself, Sir; I only wish to live and be as little a burden as possible to my friends, but my indiscretion and my ill fortune have so carried me away that it requires a better judgment than my own to determine what is right for me to do; I do not wish, Sir, to obtrude my affairs too much upon you, but you have assisted and advised me, and even exclusive of the advantage I reap from your directions, I judged it right to give you this account ; for all that is past I most sincerely thank you ; you have comforted, you have relieved, you have honoured me ; what is to come is in a situation like mine particularly mysterious ; but whatever comes I will be grateful, and with a remembrance of the benefits I have received I will ever cherish the highest respect for the name and virtues of my generous benefactor.

I will wait upon you, Sir, as soon as possible with a fresh copy of my poem, correct as I have power to make it. In this I shall yet presume to ask your opinion ; on any other subject it will now become me to be silent ; thus far I feel a satisfaction from what I have written, that it is entirely unreserved, and that it goes to one who knows how to allow for indiscretion and to pity misfortune.

I am, Sir,
Most respectfully,
Your much oblig'd and obedt. servant,
GEO. CRABBE.

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## GEORGE CRABBE TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

[*One of the 'Old Race'*]

Muston, *June*, 1812.[1]

ACCEPT my very sincere congratulations on your clerkship and all things beside which you have had the goodness to inform me of. It is indeed very pleasant to me to find that the author of works that give me and thousands delight, is so totally independent of the midwives you speak of. Moreover, I give you joy of an honourable intercourse with the noble family of Buccleugh,[2] whom you happily describe to me, and by whose notice, or rather notice of my book, I am much favoured. With respect to my delightful situation in the Vale of Belvoir, and under the very shade of the castle, I will not say that your imagination has created its beauties, but I must confess it has enlarged and adorned them. The Vale of Belvoir is flat and unwooded, and save that an artificial, straight-lined piece of water, and one or two small streams, intersect it, there is no other variety than is made by the different crops, wheat, barley, beans. The castle, however, is a noble place, and stands on one entire hill, taking up its whole surface, and has a fine appearance from the window of my parsonage, at which I now sit, at about a mile and a half distance. The duke also is a duke-like man, and the duchess a very excellent lady. They have great possessions, and great patronage, *but*—you see this unlucky particle, in one or other of Horne Tooke's senses, will occur—*but* I am now of the *old race*. And what then ? Well, I will explain. Thirty years since I was taken to Belvoir by its late possessor, as a domestic chaplain. I read the service on a Sunday, and fared sumptuously every day. At that time, the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, gave me a rectory in Dorsetshire, small, but a living : this the duke taught me to disregard as a provision, and promised better things. While I lived with him on this pleasant footing, I observed many persons in the neighbourhood, who came occasionally to dine, and were civilly received. 'How do you do, Dr. Smith ? How is Mrs. Smith ?' 'I thank your grace, well'; and so they took their venison and claret. 'Who are these ?' said I to a young friend of the duke's. 'Men of the *old race*, sir ; people whom the *old duke* was in the habit of seeing ; for some of them he had done something, and had he yet lived, all had their chance. They now make way for us, but keep up a sort of connexion'. The son of the *old duke* of that day and I were of an age to a week ; and with the wisdom of a young man, I looked distantly on his death and my own. I went into Suffolk and married, with decent views, and prospects of views more enlarging. His grace went into Ireland—and died. Mrs. Crabbe and I philosophized as well as we could ; and after some three or four years, Lord Thurlow, once more at the request of the duchess dowager, gave me the crown livings I now hold, on my resignation of that in Dorsetshire. They were at that time worth about £70 or £80 a year more than that, and now bring me about £400 ; but a long minority ensued—new connexions were formed ; and when, some few years since, I came back into this country, and expressed a desire of inscribing my verses to the duke, I obtained leave, indeed, but I almost repented the attempt, from the coldness of the reply. Yet, recollecting that great men are beset with applicants of all kinds, I acquitted the duke of injustice, and determined to withdraw myself as one of the *old race*, and give way to stronger candidates for notice. To this resolution I kept strictly, and left it entirely to the family whether or no I should consider myself as a stranger, who, having been disappointed in his expectation, by unforeseen events, must take his chance, and ought to take it patiently. For reasons I have no inclination to canvass, his grace has obligingly invited me, and I occasionally meet his friends at the castle, without knowing whether I am to consider that notice as the promise of favour, or as favour in itself. I have two sons, both in Orders, partly from a promise given to Mrs. Crabbe's family, that I would bring them up precisely alike, and partly because I did not know what else to do with them. They will share a family property that will keep them from pining upon a curacy. And what more ?—I must not perplex myself with conjecturing. You find, sir, that you are much the greater man ; for except what Mr. Hatchard puts into my privy purse, I doubt whether £600 be not my total receipts ; but he at present helps us, and my boys being no longer at college, I can take my wine without absolutely repining at the enormity of the cost. I fully agree with you respecting the necessity of a profession for a youth of moderate fortune. Woe to the lad of genius without it ! and I am flattered by what you mention of my *Patron.*[1] Your praise is current coin.

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[1] In 1787, after the death of the fourth Duke of Rutland, whose domestic chaplain he had been, Crabbe became Rector of Muston, Leicestershire, and the neighbouring parish of Allington, in Lincolnshire, but absented himself from the rectory for many years, until recalled by the Bishop in 1805.

[2] The Duke of Buccleugh had helped Scott 'to exchange my toils as a barrister for the lucrative and respectable situation of one of the clerks of our Supreme Court'.

### George Crabbe to Mary Leadbeater [2]

[*Renews an Old Acquaintanceship*]

Trowbridge, 1*st of the* 12*th month*, 1816.

Mary Leadbeater !—Yes, indeed, I do well remember you. Not Leadbeater then, but a pretty demure lass, standing a timid auditor while her own verses were read by a kind friend, but a keen judge. And I have in my memory your father's person and countenance, and you may be sure that my vanity retained the compliment which he paid me in the moment when he permitted his judgment to slip behind his good-humour and desire of giving pleasure :—Yes, I remember all who were present ; and, of all, are not you and I the only survivors ? It was the day—was it not ?—when I introduced my wife to my friend. And now both are gone, and your father and Richard Burke, who was present (yet again I must ask—was he not ?) and Mrs. Burke ! All departed—and so, by and by, they will speak of us. But, in the meantime, it was good of you to write. Oh, very—very good.

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[1] The *Patron* was one of Crabbe's newly-published *Tales in Verse*.

[2] Mary Leadbeater was the Quaker authoress and daughter of Richard Shackleton, the intimate friend of Burke, at whose house she had first met Crabbe in 1784, when, as she reminds him in her letter, her father paid him a graceful compliment on his poems. Mary Leadbeater's own 'Poems' appeared in 1806, but her best work, *Annals of Ballitore*, which gives an excellent picture of Irish village life in her day, was not presented until 1862.

But, are you not your father's own daughter ? Do you not flatter after his manner ? How do you know the mischief that you may do in the mind of a vain man, who is but too susceptible of praise, even while he is conscious of so much to be placed against it ? I am glad that you like my verses : it would have mortified me much if you had not, for you can judge as well as write. . . . Yours are really very admirable things ; and the morality is as pure as the literary merit is conspicuous. I am not sure that I have read all that you have given us ; but what I have read has really that rare and almost undefinable quality, genius ; that is to say, it seizes on the mind, and commands attention, and on the heart, and compels its feelings.

How could you imagine that I could be otherwise than pleased—delighted rather—with your letter ? And let me not omit the fact, that I reply the instant I am at liberty, for I was enrobing myself for church. You are a child of simplicity, I know, and do not love robing ; but you are a pupil of liberality, and look upon such things with a large mind, smiling in charity. Well ! I was putting on the great black gown, when my servant—(you see I can be pompous, to write of gowns and servants with such familiarity)—when he brought me a letter first directed, the words yet legible, to 'George Crabbe, at Belvoir Castle ', and then by Lord Mendip to ' the Reverend ' at Trowbridge ; and at Trowbridge I hope again to receive these welcome evidences of your remembrance, directed in all their simplicity, and written, I trust, in all sincerity. The delay was occasioned by a change in my place of residence. I now dwell in the parsonage of a busy, populous, clothing town, sent thither by ambition, and the Duke of Rutland. It is situated in Wiltshire, not far from Bath. . . .

But your motive for writing to me was your desire of knowing whether my men and women were really existing creatures, or beings of my own imagination? Nay, Mary Leadbeater, yours was a better motive: you thought that you should give pleasure by writing—and yet you will think me very vain—you felt some pleasure yourself in renewing the acquaintance that commenced under such auspices. Am I not right? My heart tells me that I am, and hope that you will confirm it. Be asssured that I feel a very cordial esteem for the friend of my friend—the virtuous, the worthy character whom I am addressing. Yes, I will tell you readily about my creatures, whom I endeavoured to paint as nearly as I could and dared, for, in some cases, I dared not. This you will readily admit: besides charity bade me be cautious. Thus far you are correct: there is not one of whom I had not in my mind the original; but I was obliged, in some cases, to take them from their real situations, in one or two instances to change even the sex, and, in many, the circumstances. The nearest to real life was the proud ostentatious man in the *Borough*,[1] who disguises an ordinary mind by doing great things, but the others approach to reality at greater or less distances. Indeed, I do not know that I could paint merely from my own fancy; and there is no cause why we should. Is there not diversity sufficient in society? and who can go, even but a little, into the assemblies of our fellow-wanderers from the way of perfect rectitude, and not find characters so varied and so pointed, that he need not call upon his imagination?

Will *you* not write again? Write *to* the or *for* the public? wilt thou not ask? *To* me and *for* as many as love you can discern the union of strength and simplicity, purity and good sense. *Our* feeling and *our* hearts are the language you can adopt. Alas, *I* cannot with propriety use it—*our* I too could once say; but I am alone now: and since my removing into a busy town among the multitude, the loneliness is but more apparent and more melancholy. But this is only at certain times; and then I have, though at considerable distances, six female friends, unknown to each other, but all dear, very dear, to me. With men I do not much associate; not as deserting, and much less disliking, the male part of society, but as being unfit for it; not hardy or grave, not knowing enough, nor sufficiently acquainted with the everyday concerns of men. But my beloved creatures have minds with which I can better assimilate. Think of you I must ; and for me, I must entreat that you would not be unmindful. Thine, dear lady, very truly,

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[1] Published 1810.

GEORGE CRABBE.

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## GEORGE CRABBE TO MARY LEADBEATER

### [*Village Life and 'a Great Fat Rector'*]

Trowbridge, 1817.

A DESCRIPTION of your village society would be very gratifying to me—how the manners differ from those in larger societies or in those under different circumstances. I have observed an extraordinary difference in village manners in England, especially between those places otherwise nearly alike, when there was and when there was not a leading man, or a squire's family, or a manufactory near, or a populous, vitiated town, etc. All these, and many other circumstances, have great influence. *Your* quiet village, with such influencing minds, I am disposed to think highly of. No one, perhaps, very rich—none miserably poor. No girls, from six years to sixteen, sent to a factory, where men, women, and children of all ages are continually with them breathing contagion. Not all, however : we are not so evil—there is a resisting power, and it is strong ; but the thing itself, the congregation of so many minds, and the intercourse it occasions, will have its powerful and visible effect. But these you have not ; yet, as you mention your schools of both kinds, you must be more populous and perhaps not so happy as I was giving myself to believe.

I will write my name and look for two lines ; but complying with you, my dear lady, is a kind of vanity.[1] I find, however, no particular elevation of spirit, and will do as you desire ; indeed, your desire must be very unlike yours, if I were not glad to comply with it ; for the world has not spoiled you, Mary, I do believe : now it has me. I have been absorbed in its mighty vortex, and gone into the midst of its greatness, and joined in its festivities and frivolities, and been intimate with its children. You may like me very well, my kind friend, while the purifying water, and your more effectual imagination, is between us ; but come you to England, or let me be in Ireland, and place us where mind becomes acquainted with mind—and then ! ah, Mary Leadbeater ! you would have done with your friendship with me. Child of simplicity and virtue, how can you let yourself be so deceived ? Am I not a great fat rector, living upon a mighty income, while my poor curate starves with six hungry children, upon the scraps that fall from the luxurious table ? Do I not visit that horrible London, and enter into its abominable dissipations ? Am I not this day going to dine on venison and drink claret ? Have I not been at election dinners, and joined the Babel-confusion of a town-hall ? Child of simplicity ! am I fit to be a friend to you, and to the peaceful, mild, pure, gentle people about you ? One thing only is true—I wish I had the qualification ; but I am of the world, Mary. Though I hope to procure a free cover for you, yet I dare not be sure, and so must husband my room. I am very sorry for your account of the fever among your poor. Would I could suggest anything. I shall dine with one of our representatives to-day ; but such subjects pass off : all say, ' Poor people, I am sorry ', and there it ends. My new tales are not yet entirely ready, but do not want much that I can give them. I return all your good wishes, think of you, and with much regard, more than, indeed, belongs to *a man of the world* ! Still, let me be permitted to address thee.—O ! my dear Mrs. Leadbeater, this is so humble that I am afraid it is vain. Well ! write soon, then, and believe me to be most sincerely, and affectionately yours,

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[1] Mrs. Leadbeater had requested Crabbe to give an autograph for Wilkinson, the Quaker poet.

GEORGE CRABBE.

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### GEORGE CRABBE TO MARY LEADBEATER

[*Closing Years—the Annual Visit to Hampstead*]

Hampstead, *June*, 1825.

MY time passes I cannot tell how pleasantly, when the pain leaves me. To-day I read one of my long stories to my friends, and Mrs. Joanna Baillie[1] and her sister. It was a task ; but they encouraged me, and were, or seemed, gratified. I rhyme at Hampstead with a great deal of facility, for nothing interrupts me but kind calls to something pleasant ; and though all this makes parting painful, it will, I hope, make me resolute to enter upon my duties diligently when I return.—I am too much indulged. Except a turn of pain, and that not severe, I have good health, and if my walks are not so long, they are more frequent. I have seen many things and many people ; have seen Mr. Southey and Mr. Wordsworth ; have been some days with Mr. Rogers, and at last have been at the Athenaeum, and purpose to visit the Royal Institution ; and have been to Richmond in a steamboat ; seen, also, the picture galleries, and some other exhibitions : but I passed one Sunday in London with discontent, doing no duty myself nor listening to another ; and I hope my uneasiness proceeded not merely from breaking a habit. We had a dinner social and pleasant, if the hours before it had been rightly spent : but I would not willingly pass another Sunday in the same manner. I have my home with my friends here (Mrs. Hoare's) and exchange it with reluctance for the Hummums occasionally. Such is the state of the garden here, in which I walk and read, that, in the morning like this, the smell of the flowers is fragrant beyond anything I ever perceived before. It is what I can suppose may be in Persia, or other oriental countries—a Paradisaical sweetness.

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[1] Joanna Baillie, the Scottish dramatist and poetess, lived at Hampstead from 1806 until her death in 1851.

I am told that I or my verses, or perhaps both, have abuse in a book of Mr. Colburn's publishing, called *The Spirit of the Times.*[1] I believe I felt something indignant : but my engraved seal dropped out of the socket and was lost, and I perceived this vexed me much more than the "spirit" of Mr. Hazlitt.

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

1771–1832

SCOTT would probably have wished for nothing better in this collection than to be placed next to George Crabbe, the favourite poet of his youth—as he tells him in one of the following letters—and the solace of his last illness, as Lockhart informs us in his biography. Crabbe preceded Sir Walter to the grave only by seven months. The romance of Scott's life began before he had occasion to write the letter, announcing his matrimonial plans to his mother, with which our selection opens.

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[1] William Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age, or Contemporary Portraits*, published, 1825.

The earlier love affair to which he alludes left him, as he says in his diary nearly thirty years later, 'broken-hearted for two years'. His heart was 'handsomely pieced again, but the crack will remain till my dying day'. Scott, however, was happy in his marriage with Charlotte Carpenter, who for thirty years, he writes on the day of her death in 1826, 'was the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone. Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections'. This was just after his financial crash in the downfall of the three houses of Hurst and Robinson, Constable, and Ballantyne; and his letters show how bravely he rose from his sorrows to face the catastrophe which threatened to overwhelm him. We have made no attempt to re-tell the whole complicated story of Scott's financial embarrassments, thinking it better to leave his letters to follow the course of his literary work—as far as possible in the space at our disposal—from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which made him the most popular author of his generation, to the last books on which he toiled so bravely in the hope of wiping off every penny of his debts. This his labour succeeded in doing, but not in his lifetime.

### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO HIS MOTHER

[*Engaged in a Matrimonial Plan*]

*1797.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

I should very ill deserve the care and affection with which you have ever regarded me, were I to neglect my duty as far as to omit consulting my father and you in the most important step which I can possibly take in life, and upon the success of which my future happiness must depend. It is with pleasure I think that I can avail myself of your advice and instructions in an affair of so great importance as that which I have at present on my hands. You will probably guess from this preamble that I am engaged in a matrimonial plan, which is really the case. Though my acquaintance with the young lady has not been of long standing, this circumstance is in some degree counterbalanced by the intimacy in which we have lived, and by the opportunities which that intimacy has afforded me of remarking her conduct and sentiments on many different occasions, some of which were rather of a delicate nature, so that in fact I have seen more of her during the few weeks we have been together than I could have done after a much longer acquaintance, shackled by the common forms of ordinary life. You will not expect from me a description of her person—for which I refer you to my brother, as also for a fuller account of all the circumstances attending the business than can be comprised in the compass of a letter. Without flying into raptures, for I must assure you that my judgment as well as my affections are consulted upon this occasion—without flying into raptures, then, I may safely assure you, that her temper is sweet and cheerful, her understanding good, and, what I know will give you pleasure, her principles of religion very serious. I have been very explicit with her upon the nature of my expectations, and she thinks she can accommodate herself to the situation which I should wish her to hold in society as my wife, which, you will easily comprehend, I mean should neither be extravagant nor degrading. Her fortune, though partly dependent upon her brother, who is high in office in Madras, is very considerable—at present £500 a year. This, however, we must, in some degree, regard as precarious—I mean to the full extent; and indeed when you know her, you will not be surprised that I regard this circumstance chiefly because it removes those prudential considerations which would otherwise render our union impossible for the present. Betwixt her income and my own professional exertions, I have little doubt we will be enabled to hold the rank in society which my family and situation entitle me to fill.

My dear mother, I cannot express to you the anxiety I have that you will not think me flighty nor inconsiderate in this business. Believe me, that experience, in one instance—you cannot fail to know to what I allude [1]—is too recent to permit my being so hasty in my conclusions as the warmth of my temper might have otherwise prompted. I am also most anxious that you should be prepared to show her kindness, which I know the goodness of your own heart will prompt, more especially when I tell you that she is an orphan, without relations, and almost without friends. Her guardian is—I should say *was*, for she is of age, Lord Downshire, to whom I must write for his consent—a piece of respect to which he is entitled for his care of her—and there the matter rests at present. I think I need not tell you that if I assume the new character which I threaten, I shall be happy to find that in that capacity I may make myself more useful to my brothers, and especially to Anne, than I could in any other. On the other hand, I shall certainly expect that my friends will endeavour every attention in their power to a woman who forsakes for me prospects much more splendid than what I can offer, and who comes into Scotland without a single friend but myself. I find I could write a great deal more upon this subject, but as it is late, and as I must write to my father, I shall restrain myself. I think (but you are best judge) that in the circumstances in which I stand, you should write to her, Miss Carpenter, under cover to me at Carlisle.

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[1] An allusion to his first love affair, which terminated in 1796 by the lady of his vows promising her hand to a rival, who lived to act the part of a most generous friend to Scott throughout the trials of 1826 and 1827.

Write to me very fully upon this important subject—send me your opinion, your advice, and above all, your blessing; you will see the necessity of not delaying a minute in doing so, and in keeping this business *strictly private*, till you hear further from me, since you are not ignorant that even at this advanced period, an objection on the part of Lord Downshire, or many other accidents, may intervene; in which case, I should little wish my disappointment to be public.

Believe me, my dear mother,
Ever your dutiful and affectionate son,
WALTER SCOTT.

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## SIR WALTER SCOTT TO MISS SEWARD

['*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*']

Edinburgh, *March* 21, 1805.

MY DEAR MISS SEWARD,—

I am truly happy that you found any amusement in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. It has great faults, of which no one can be more sensible than I am myself. Above all, it is deficient in that sort of continuity which a story ought to have, and which, were it to be written again, I would endeavour to give it. But I began and wandered forward, like one in a pleasant country, getting to the top of one hill to see a prospect, and to the bottom of another to enjoy a shade; and what wonder if my course has been devious and desultory, and many of my excursions altogether unprofitable to the advance of my journey? The Dwarf Page is also an excrescence, and I plead guilty to all the censures concerning him. The truth is, he has a history, and it is this :—The story of Gilpin Horner was told by an old gentleman to Lady Dalkeith, and she, much diverted with his actually believing so grotesque a tale, insisted that I should make it into a Border ballad. I don't know if ever you saw my lovely chieftainess—if you have, you must be aware that it is impossible for any one to refuse her request, as she has more of the angel in face and temper than any one alive ; so that if she had asked me to write a ballad on a broomstick, I must have attempted it. I began a few verses to be called the Goblin Page ; and they lay long by me, till the applause of some friends whose judgment I valued induced me to resume the poem, so on I wrote, knowing no more than the man in the moon how I was to end. At length the story appeared so uncouth, that I was fain to put it into the mouth of my old ministrel, lest the nature of it should be misunderstood, and I should be suspected of setting up a new school of poetry, instead of a feeble attempt to imitate the old. In the process of the romance, the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities, I suppose) to slink downstairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there.

I mention these circumstances to you, and to any one whose applause I value, because I am unwilling you should suspect me of trifling with the public in *malice prepense.* As to the herd of critics, it is impossible for me to pay much attention to them ; for, as they do not understand what I call poetry, we talk in a foreign language to each other. Indeed, many of these gentlemen appear to me to be a sort of thinkers, who, unable to make pots and pans, set up for menders of them, and, God knows, often make two holes in patching one. The sixth canto is altogether redundant ; for the poem should certainly have closed with the union of the lovers, when the interest, if any, was at an end. But what could I do ? I had my book and my page still on my hands, and must get rid of them at all events. Manage them as I would, their catastrophe must have been insufficient to occupy an entire canto ; so I was fain to eke it out with songs of the Minstrels. I will now descend from the confessional, which I think I have occupied long enough for the patience of my fair confessor. I am happy you are disposed to give me absolution, notwithstanding all my sins.

We have a new poet come forth amongst us—James Grahame,[1] author of a poem called the Sabbath, which I admire very much. If I can find an opportunity, I will send you a copy. Your affectionate humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

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## SIR WALTER SCOTT TO HIS BROTHER, THOMAS SCOTT

### [*The Starting of the 'Quarterly Review'*]

*November* 19, 1808.

DEAR TOM,—

Owing to certain pressing business, I have not yet had time to complete my collection of Shadwell[2] for you, though it is now nearly ready. I wish you to have all the originals to collate with the edition in 8vo. But I have a more pressing employment for your pen, and to which I think it particularly suited. You are to be informed, but under the seal of the strictest secrecy, that a plot has been long hatching by the gentlemen who were active in the Anti-Jacobin paper, to countermine the *Edinburgh Review*, by establishing one which should display similar talent and independence, with a better strain of politics. The management of this work was much pressed upon me, but though great prospects of emolument were held out, I declined so arduous a task, and it has devolved upon Mr. Gifford, author of the *Baviad*, with whose wit and learning you are well acquainted. He made it a stipulation, however, that I should give him all the assistance in my power, especially at the commencement; to which I am, for many reasons, nothing loth. Now, as I know no one who possesses more power of humour or perception of the ridiculous than yourself, I think your leisure hours might be most pleasantly passed in this way. Novels, light poetry, and quizzical books of all kinds, might be sent you by the packet; you glide back your Reviews in the same way, and touch, upon the publication of the number (quarterly), ten guineas per printed sheet of sixteen pages. If you are shy of communicating directly with Gifford, you may, for some time at least, send your communications through me, and I will revise them. We want the matter to be a *profound secret* till the first number is out. If you agree to try your skill I will send you a novel or two. You must understand, as Gadshill tells the Chamberlain, that you are to be leagued with 'Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace', and thus far I assure you, that if by paying attention to your style and subject you can distinguish yourself creditably, it may prove a means of finding you powerful friends were anything opening in your island. Constable, or rather that Bear his partner, has behaved to me of late not very civilly, and I owe Jeffrey a flap with a fox-tail on account of his review of *Marmion*, and thus doth 'the whirligig of time bring about my revenges'. The late articles on Spain have given general disgust, and many have given up the *Edinburgh Review* on account of them.

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[1] James Grahame, author of *The Sabbath*. He had been originally a member of the Scottish Bar, and was one of Scott's early friends. Failing in the law, he took orders in the Church of England, obtained a curacy in the county of Durham, and died there in 1811, in his forty-seventh year.

[2] Thomas Scott (then living in the Isle of Man) was meditating an edition of Shadwell's plays.

My mother holds out very well, and talks of writing by this packet. Her cask of herrings as well as ours, red and white, have arrived safe, and prove most excellent. We have been both dining and supping upon them with great gusto, and are much obliged by your kindness in remembering us. Yours affectionately,

W. S.

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### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO GEORGE CRABBE

[*The Freemasonry of Authorship*]

Ashestiel, *October* 21, 1809.

DEAR SIR,—

I am just honoured with your letter, which gives me the more sensible pleasure, since it has gratified a wish of more than twenty years' standing. It is, I think, fully that time since I was for great part of a very snowy winter the inhabitant of an old house in the country, in a course of poetical study, so very like that of your admirably-painted 'Young Lad', that I could hardly help saying, 'That's me'! when I was reading the tale to my family. Among the very few books which fell under my hands was a volume or two of Dodsley's *Annual Register*, one of which contained copious extracts from *The*

*Village* and *The Library*, particularly the conclusion of book first of the former, and an extract from the latter, beginning with the description of the old romancer. I committed them most faithfully to my memory, where your verses must have felt themselves very strangely lodged in company with ghost stories, border riding ballads, scraps of old plays, and all the miscellaneous stuff which a strong appetite for reading, with neither means nor discrimination for selection, had assembled in the head of a lad of eighteen. New publications at that time were very rare in Edinburgh, and my means of procuring them very limited ; so that, after a long search for the poems which contained these beautiful specimens, and which had afforded me so much delight, I was fain to rest contented with the extracts from the *Register*, which I could repeat at this moment. You may, therefore, guess my sincere delight when I saw your poems at a later period assume the rank in the public consideration which they so well deserve. It was a triumph to my own immature taste to find I had anticipated the applause of the learned and of the critical, and I became very desirous to offer my *gratulor*, among the more important plaudits which you have had from every quarter. I should certainly have availed myself of the freemasonry of authorship (for our trade may claim to be a mystery as well as Abhorson's), to address to you a copy of a new poetical attempt which I have now upon the anvil, and esteem myself particularly obliged to Mr. Hatchard and to your goodness acting upon his information, for giving me the opportunity of paving the way for such a freedom. I am too proud of the compliments you honour me with, to affect to decline them ; and with respect to the comparative view I have of my own labours and yours, I can only assure you that none of my little folks, about the formation of whose taste and principles I may be supposed naturally solicitous, have ever read any of my own poems, while yours have been our regular evening's amusement. My eldest girl begins to read well, and enters as well into the humour as into the sentiment of your admirable descriptions of human life. As for rivalry, I think it has seldom existed among those who know by experience that there are much better things in the world than literary reputation, and that one of the best of these good things is the regard and friendship of those deservedly and generally esteemed for their worth or their talents. I believe many dilettanti authors do cocker themselves up into a great jealousy of anything that interferes with what they are pleased to call their fame, but I should as soon think of nursing one of my own fingers into a whitlow for my private amusement, as encouraging such a feeling. I am truly sorry to observe you mention bad health. Those who contribute so much to the improvement as well as the delight of society should escape this evil. I hope, however, that one day your state of health may permit you to view this country. I have very few calls to London, but it will greatly add to the interest of those which may occur, that you will permit me the honour of waiting upon you in my journey, and assuring you, in person, of the early admiration and sincere respect with which I have the honour to be, dear Sir, yours, etc.

WALTER SCOTT.

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### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO LORD BYRON

[*'Marmion' and 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'*]

Edinburgh, *July* 3, 1812.

MY LORD,—

I am uncertain if I ought to profit by the apology which is afforded me, by a very obliging communication from our acquaintance, John Murray of Fleet Street, to give your lordship the present trouble. But my intrusion concerns a large debt of gratitude due to your lordship, and a much less important one of explanation, which I think I owe to myself, as I dislike standing low in the opinion of any person whose talents rank so highly in my own, as your lordship's most deservedly do.

The first *count*, as our technical language expresses it, relates to the high pleasure I have received from the *Pilgrimage of Childe Harold*, and from its precursors ; the former with all its classical associations, some of which are lost on so poor a scholar as I am, possesses the additional merit of vivid and animated description, mingled with original sentiment :—but beside this debt which I owe your lordship in common with the rest of the reading public, I have to acknowledge my particular thanks for your having distinguished by praise, in the work which your lordship rather dedicated in general to satire,[1] some of my own literary attempts. And this leads me to put your lordship right in the circumstances respecting the sale of *Marmion*, which had reached you in a distorted and misrepresented form, and which, perhaps, I have some reason to complain, were given to the public without more particular inquiry. The poem, my lord, was not written upon contract for a sum of money—though it is too true that it was sold and published in a very unfinished state (which I have since regretted) to enable me to extricate myself from some engagements which fell suddenly upon me, by the unexpected misfortunes of a very near relation. So that, to quote statute and precedent, I really come under the case cited by Juvenal, though not quite in the extremity of the classic author—

> Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.

And so much for a mistake into which your lordship might easily fall, especially as I generally find it the easiest way of stopping sentimental compliments on the beauty, etc., of certain poetry, and the delights which the author must have taken in the composition, by assigning the readiest reason that will cut the discourse short, upon a subject where one must appear either conceited, or affectedly rude and cynical.

As for my attachment to literature, I sacrificed for the pleasure of pursuing it very fair chances of opulence and professional honours, at a time of life when I fully knew their value: and I am not ashamed to say, that in deriving advantages in compensation from the partial favour of the public, I have added some comforts and elegancies to a bare independence. I am sure your lordship's good sense will easily put this unimportant egotism to the right account, for—though I do not know the motive would make me enter into controversy with a fair or an *unfair* literary critic—I may be well excused for a wish to clear my personal character from any tinge of mercenary or sordid feeling in the eyes of a contemporary of genius. Your lordship will likewise permit me to add, that you would have escaped the trouble of this explanation, had I not understood that the satire alluded to had been suppressed, not to be reprinted. For in removing a prejudice on your lordship's own mind, I had no intention of making any appeal by or through you to the public, since my own habits of life have rendered my defence as to avarice or rapacity rather too easy.

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[1] *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, published in 1809.

Leaving this foolish matter where it lies, I have to request your lordship's acceptance of my best thanks for the flattering communication which you took the trouble to make Mr. Murray on my behalf, and which could not fail to give me the gratification which I am sure you intended. I dare say our worthy bibliopolist overcoloured his report of your lordship's conversation with the Prince Regent,[1] but I owe my thanks to him nevertheless, for the excuse he has given me for intruding these pages on your lordship. Wishing you health, spirit, and perseverance, to continue your pilgrimage through the interesting countries which you have still to pass with Childe Harold, I have the honour to be, my lord, your lordship's obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

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### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO JOHN BALLANTYNE

[*'I love you with all your failings'*]

May 18, 1813.

DEAR JOHN,—

After many *offs* and *ons*, and as many *projets* and *contre-projets* as the Treaty of Amiens, I have at length concluded a treaty with Constable, in which I am sensible he has gained a great advantage ; but what could I do amidst the disorder and pressure of so many demands ? The arrival of your long-dated bills decided my giving in, for what could James or I do with them ? I trust this sacrifice has cleared our way, but many rubs remain ; nor am I, after these hard skirmishes, so able to meet them by my proper credit. Constable, however, will be a zealous ally ; and for the first time these many weeks, I shall lay my head on a quiet pillow, for now I do think that, by our joint exertions, we shall get well through the storm, save *Beaumont* [2] from depreciation, get a partner in our heavy concerns, reef our topsails, and move on securely under an easy sail. And if, on the one hand, I have sold my gold too cheap, I have, on the other, turned my lead to gold. Brewster and Singers are the only heavy things to which I have not given a blue eye. Had your news of Cadell's sale reached us here, I could not have harpooned my grampus as deeply as I have done, as nothing but *Rokeby* would have barbed the hook.

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[1] The Prince Regent had praised Scott's works to Lord Byron in enthusiastic terms.

[2] The poor edition of *Beaumont and Fletcher*, by H. W. Weber, Sir Walter's amanuensis in Edinburgh. Weber became insane in 1813.

Adieu, my dear John. I have the most sincere regard for you, and you may depend on my considering your interest with quite as much attention as my own. If I have ever expressed myself with irritation in speaking of this business, you must impute it to the sudden, extensive, and unexpected embarrassments in which I found myself involved all at once. If to your real goodness of heart and integrity, and to the quickness and acuteness of your talents, you added habits of more universal circumspection, and above all, the courage to tell disagreeable truths to those whom you hold in regard, I pronounce that the world never held such a man of business. These it must be your study to add to your other good qualities. Meantime, as some one says to Swift, I love you with all your failings. Pray make an effort, and love me with all mine.

Yours truly,

W. S.

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## SIR WALTER SCOTT TO J. B. S. MORRITT [1]

### ['*These Vile Cash Matters*']

Edinburgh, *November* 20, 1813.

I DID not answer your very kind letter, my dear Morritt, until I could put your friendly heart to rest upon the report you have heard, which I could not do entirely until this term of Martinmas was passed. I have the pleasure to say that there is no truth whatever in the Ballantynes' reported bankruptcy. They have had severe difficulties for the last four months to make their resources balance the demands upon them, and I, having the price of *Rokeby* and other moneys in their hands, have had considerable reason for apprehension, and no slight degree of plague and trouble. They have, however, been so well supported that I have got out of hot water upon their account. They are winding up their bookselling concern with great regularity, and are to abide hereafter by the printing office, which, with its stock, etc., will revert to them fairly.

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[1] J. B. S. Morritt, of Rokeby—the scene of the poem for which the Ballantyne advanced Scott £2,000 towards the purchase of the original farm of Abbotsford. Morritt was a distinguished traveller and classical scholar, and one of Scott's most intimate friend.

I have been able to redeem the offspring of my brain, and they are like to pay me like grateful children. This matter has set me a thinking about money more seriously than ever I did in my life, and I have begun by insuring my life for £4,000, to secure some ready cash to my family should I slip girths suddenly. I think my other property, library, etc., may be worth about £12,000, and I have not much debt.

Upon the whole, I see no prospect of any loss whatever. Although in the course of human events I may be disappointed, there certainly *can* be none to vex your kind and affectionate heart on my account. I am young, with a large official income, and if I lose anything now, I have gained a great deal in my day. I cannot tell you, and will not attempt to tell you, how much I was affected by your letter—so much, indeed, that for several days I could not make my mind up to express myself on the subject. Thank God ! all real danger was yesterday put over ; and I will write, in two or three days, a funny letter, without any of these vile cash matters, of which it may be said there is no living with them nor without them.

Ever yours most truly,
WALTER SCOTT.

### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO J. B. S. MORRITT

[*The Progress and Authorship of 'Waverley'*]

Abbotsford, *July* 24, 1814.

MY DEAR MORRITT,—

I am going to say my *vales* to you for some weeks, having accepted an invitation from a committee of Commissioners for the Northern Lights (I don't mean the Edinburgh Reviewers, but the *bonâ fide* commissioners for the beacons) to accompany them upon a nautical tour round Scotland, visiting all that is curious on continent and isle. The party are three gentlemen with whom I am very well acquainted, William Erksine[1] being one. We have a stout cutter, well fitted up and manned for the service by Government, and to make assurance double sure, the admiral has sent a sloop of war to cruise in the dangerous points of our tour, and sweep the sea of the Yankee privateers which sometimes annoy our northern latitudes. I shall visit the Clephanes in their solitude, and let you know all that I see that is rare and entertaining, which, as we are masters of our time and vessel, should add much to my stock of knowledge.

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[1] Afterwards promoted to the bench as Lord Kinneder.

As to *Waverley*,[1] I will play Sir Fretful for once, and assure you that I left the story to flag in the first volume on purpose; the second and third have rather more bustle and interest. I wished (with what success Heaven knows) to avoid the ordinary error of novel writers, whose first volume is usually their best. But since it has served to amuse Mrs. Morritt and you *usque ab initio*, I have no doubt you will tolerate it even unto the end. It may really boast to be a tolerably faithful portrait of Scottish manners, and has been recognized as such in Edinburgh. The first edition of a thousand instantly disappeared, and the bookseller informs me that the second, of double the quantity, will not supply the market for long. As I shall be very anxious to know how Mrs. Morritt is, I hope to have a few lines from you on my return, which will be about the end of August or beginning of September. I should have mentioned that we have the celebrated engineer, Stevenson, along with us. I delight in these professional men of talent; they always give you some new lights by the peculiarity of their habits and studies, so different from the people who are rounded, and smoothed, and ground down for conversation, and who can say all that every other person says, and—nothing more.

What a miserable thing it is that our royal family cannot be quiet and decent at least, if not correct and moral in their deportment. Old Farmer George's manly simplicity, modesty of expense, and domestic virtue saved this country at its most perilous crisis; for it is inconceivable the number of persons whom these qualities united in his behalf, who would have felt but feebly the abstract duty of supporting a crown less worthily worn.

I had just proceeded thus far when your kind favour of the 21st reached Abbotsford. I am heartily glad you continued to like *Waverley* to the end. The hero is a sneaking piece of imbecility, and if he had married Flora, she would have set him up upon the chimneypiece, as Count Borowlaski's wife used do with him.[1] I am a bad hand at depicting a hero properly so called, and have an unfortunate propensity for the dubious characters of Borderers, buccaneers, Highland robbers, and all others of a Robin Hood description. I do not know why it should be, as I am myself, like Hamlet, indifferent honest; but I suppose the blood of the old cattle-drivers of Teviotdale continues to stir in my veins.

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[1] *Waverley* was published anonymously on the 7th of this month.

I shall *not* own *Waverley*; my chief reason is, that it would prevent me of the pleasure of writing again. David Hume, nephew of the historian, says the author must be of a Jacobite family and predilections, a yeoman-cavalry man, and a Scottish lawyer, and desires me to guess in whom these happy attributes are united. I shall not plead guilty, however; and, as such seems to be the fashion of the day, I hope charitable people will believe my *affidavit* in contradiction to all other evidence. The Edinburgh faith now is, that *Waverley* is written by Jeffrey, having been composed to lighten the tedium of his late Transatlantic voyage. So you see the unknown infant is like to come to preferment. In truth, I am not sure it would be considered quite decorous for me, as a Clerk of Session, to write novels. Judges being monks, clerks are a sort of lay brethren, from whom some solemnity of walk and conduct may be expected. So, whatever I may do of this kind, I shall whistle it down the wind to prey on fortune. I will take care, in the next edition, to make the corrections you recommend. The second is, I believe, nearly through the press. It will hardly be printed faster than it was written; for though the first volume was begun long ago, and actually lost for a time, yet the other two were begun and finished between June 4 and July 1, during all which I attended my duty in court, and proceeded without loss of time or hindrance of business.

I wish, for poor auld Scotland's sake, and for the *manes* of Bruce and Wallace, and for the living comfort of a very worthy and ingenious dissenting clergyman, who has collected a library and medals of some value, and brought up, I believe, sixteen or seventeen children (his wife's ambition extended to twenty) upon about £150 a year—I say I wish, for all these reasons, you could get me among your wealthy friends a name or two for the enclosed proposals. The price is, I think, too high: but the booksellers fixed it two guineas above what I proposed. I trust it will be yet lowered to five guineas, which is a more comeatable sum than six. The poems themselves are great curiosities, both to the philologist and antiquary, and that of Bruce is invaluable—even to the historian. They have been hitherto wretchedly edited.

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[1] Count Borowlaski was a Polish dwarf, who, after realizing some money as an itinerant object of exhibition, settled, married, and died at Durham. He was a well-bred creature, and much noticed by the clergy and other gentry of that city. Indeed, even when travelling the country as a show, he had always maintained a sort of dignity. I remember him as going from house to house, when I was a child, in a sedan chair, with a servant in livery following him, who took the fee; M. le Comte himself, dressed in a scarlet coat and bag-wig, being ushered into the room like any ordinary visitor.—*Lockhart.*

I am glad you are not to pay for this scrawl.

Ever yours,
WALTER SCOTT.

PS.—I do not see how my silence can be considered as imposing on the public. If I give my name to a book without writing it, unquestionably that would be a trick. But, unless in the case of his averring facts which he may be called upon to defend or justify, I think an author may use his own discretion in giving or withholding his name. Harry Mackenzie never put his name in a title-page till the last edition of his works; and Swift only owned one out of his thousand and one publications. In point of emolument, everybody knows that I sacrifice much money by withholding my name; and what should I gain by it, that any human being has a right to consider as an unfair advantage? In fact, only the freedom of writing trifles with less personal responsibility, and perhaps more frequently than I otherwise might do.

W. S.

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### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO JOHN MURRAY

[*An Equivocal Denial*]

Edinburgh, *December* 18, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I give you heartily joy of the success of the *Tales*,[1] although I do not claim that paternal interest in them which my friends do me the credit to assign me. I assure you I have never read a volume of them until they were printed, and can only join with the rest of the world in applauding the true and striking portraits which they present of old Scottish manners. I do not expect implicit reliance to be placed on my disavowal, because I know very well that he who is disposed not to own a work must necessarily deny it, and that otherwise his secret would be at the mercy of all who choose to ask the question, since silence in such a case must always pass for consent, or rather assent. But I have a mode of convincing you that I am perfectly serious in my denial—pretty similar to that by which Solomon distinguished the fictitious from the real mother—and that is, by reviewing the work, which I take to be an operation equal to that of quartering the child. But this is only on condition that I can have Mr. Erskine's assistance, who admires the work greatly more than I do, though I think the painting of the second tale both true and powerful. I knew Old Mortality very well; his name was Paterson, but few knew him otherwise than by his nickname. The first tale is not very original in its concoction, and lame and impotent in its conclusion. My love to Gifford. I have been over head and ears in work this summer, or I would have sent the Gipsies;[1] indeed, I was partly stopped by finding it impossible to procure a few words of their language.

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[1] The first series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, published anonymously on December 1.

Constable wrote to me about two months since, desirous of having a new edition of *Paul*,[2] but not hearing from you, I conclude you are still on hand. Longman's people had then only sixty copies.

Kind compliments to Heber, whom I expected at Abbotsford this summer; also to Mr. Croker and all your four o'clock visitors. I am just going to Abbotsford to make a small addition to my premises there. I have now about 700 acres, thanks to the booksellers and the discerning public.

Yours truly,
WALTER SCOTT.

PS.—I have much to ask about Lord Byron, if I had time. The third canto of the *Childe* is inimitable. Of the last poems, there are one or two which indicate rather an irregular play of imagination. What a pity that a man of such exquisite genius will not be contented to be happy on the ordinary terms! I declare my heart bleeds when I think of him, self-banished from the country to which he is an honour.

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[1] A disquisition on the Gipsies, incorporated in the critical estimate of the Waverley novels, the offer of which Mr. Murray gladly embraced, though he persuaded Scott to take a wider scope than he suggested in his letter.

[2] *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, published at the beginning of 1815.

### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO DANIEL TERRY [1]

### [*The Origin of 'The Doom of Devorgoil'*]

Edinburgh, *March* 12, 1817.

DEAR TERRY,—

I am now able to write to you on your own affairs, though still as weak as water from the operations of the medical faculty,[2] who, I think, treated me as a recusant to their authority, and having me once at advantage, were determined I should not have strength to rebel again in a hurry. After all, I believe it was touch and go; and considering how much I have to do for my own family and others, my elegy might have been that of the 'Auld Man's Mare'—

> The peats and turf are all to lead,
> What ail'd the beast to die?

You don't mention the nature of your undertaking in your last, and in your former you spoke both of the *Black Dwarf* and of *Triermain*. I have some doubts whether the town will endure a second time the following up a well-known tale with a dramatic representation, and there is no *vis comica* to redeem the Black Dwarf, as in the case of Dominie Sampson. I have thought of two subjects for you, if, like the archbishop's homilies, they do not smell of the apoplexy. The first is a noble and very dramatic tradition preserved in Galloway, which runs briefly thus:—The Barons of Plenton (the family name, I think, was —— by Jupiter, forgot!) boasted of great antiquity, and formerly of extensive power and wealth, to which the ruins of their huge castle, situated on an inland loch, still bear witness. In the middle of the seventeenth century, it is said, these ruins were still inhabited by the lineal descendant of this powerful family. But the ruinous halls and towers of his ancestors were all that had descended to him, and he cultivated the garden of the castle, and sold its fruits for a subsistence. He married in a line suitable rather to his present situation than the dignity of his descent, and was quite sunk into the rank of peasantry, excepting that he was still called—more in mockery, or at least in familiarity, than in respect—the Baron of Plenton. A causeway connected the castle with the mainland ; it was cut in the middle, and the moat only passable by a drawbridge which yet subsisted, and which the poor old couple contrived to raise every night by their joint efforts, the country being very unsettled at the time. It must be observed that the old man and his wife occupied only one apartment in the extensive ruins, a small one adjoining to the drawbridge ; the rest was waste and dilapidated. As they were about to retire one night to rest, they were deterred by a sudden storm, which, rising in the wildest manner possible, threatened to bury them under the ruins of the castle. While they listened in terror to the complicated sounds of thunder, wind, and rain, they were astonished to hear the clang of hoofs on the causeway, and the voices of people clamouring for admittance. This was a request not rashly to be granted. The couple looked out, and dimly discerned through the storm that the causeway was crowded with riders. 'How many of you are there'? demanded John. 'Not more than the hall will hold,' was the answer ; 'but open the gate, lower the bridge, and do not keep the *ladies* in the rain'. John's heart was melted for the *ladies*, and, against his wife's advice, he undid the bolts, sunk the drawbridge, and bade them enter in the name of God. Having done so, he instantly retired into his *sanctum sanctorum* to await the event, for there was something in the voices and language of his guests that sounded mysterious and awful. They rushed into the castle, and appeared to know their way through all its recesses. Grooms were heard hurrying their horses to the stables, sentinels were heard mounting guard, a thousand lights gleamed from place to place through the ruins, till at length they seemed all concentrated in the baronial hall, whose range of broad windows threw a resplendent illumination on the moss-grown court below. After a short time, a domestic, clad in a rich but very antique dress, appeared before the old couple, and commanded them to attend his lord and lady in the great hall. They went with tottering steps, and to their great terror found themselves in the midst of a most brilliant and joyous company ; but the fearful part of it was, that most of the guests resembled the ancestors of John's family, and were known to him by their resemblance to pictures which mouldered in the castle, or by traditionary description. At the head, the founder of the race, dressed like some mighty baron, or rather some Galwegian prince, sat with his lady. There was a difference of opinion between these ghostly personages concerning our honest John. The chief was inclined to receive him graciously; the lady considered him, from his mean marriage, as utterly unworthy of their name and board. The upshot is, that the chief discovers to his descendant the means of finding a huge treasure concealed in the castle; the lady assures him that the discovery shall never avail him. In the morning no trace can be discovered of the singular personages who had occupied the hall. But John sought for and discovered the vault where the spoils of the Southrons were concealed, rolled away the covering stone, and feasted his eyes on a range of massy chests of iron, filled doubtless with treasure. As he deliberated on the best means of bringing them up, and descending into the vault, he observed it began slowly to fill with water. Baling and pumping were resorted to, and when he had exhausted his own and his wife's strength they summoned the assistance of the neighbourhood. But the vengeance of the visionary lady was perfect: the waters of the lake had forced their way into the vault, and John, after a year or two spent in draining and so forth, died broken-hearted, the last Baron of Plenton.

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[1] Daniel Terry, the actor and playwright, was another close friend and correspondent of Scott, who thought highly of his acting and took his advice on the building of Abbotsford.

[2] After his first attack of cramp in the stomach.

Such is the tale,[1] of which the incidents seem new, and the interest capable of being rendered striking; the story admits of the highest degree of decoration, both by poetry, music, and scenery, and I propose (in behalf of my godson) to take some pains in dramatizing it. As thus, you shall play John, as you can speak a little Scotch; I will make him what the Baron of Bradwardine would have been in the circumstances, and he shall be alternately ludicrous from his family pride and prejudices, contrasted with his poverty, and respectable from his just and independent tone of feeling and character. I think

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[1] This is the origin of *The Fortunes of Devorgoil*—'a piece', writes Lockhart, which, though completed soon afterward, and submitted by Terry to many manipulations with a view to the stage, was never received by any manager, and was first published, towards the close of the author's life, under the title, slightly altered for an obvious reason, of *The Doom of Devorgoil*.'

Scotland is entitled to have something on the stage to balance Macklin's two worthies.[1] You understand the dialect will be only tinged with the national dialect—not that the baron is to speak broad Scotch, while all the others talk English. His wife and he shall have one child, a daughter, suitored unto by the conceited young parson or schoolmaster of the village, whose addresses are countenanced by her mother, and by Halbert the hunter, a youth of unknown descent. Now this youth shall be the rightful heir and representative of the English owners of the treasure, of which they had been robbed by the baron's ancestors, for which unjust act their spirits still walked the earth. These, with a substantial character or two, and the ghostly personages, shall mingle as they may; and the discovery of the youth's birth shall break the spell of the treasure-chamber. I will make the ghosts talk as never ghosts talked in the body or out of it; and the music may be as unearthly as you can get it. The rush of the shadows into the castle shall be seen through the window of the baron's apartment in the flat scene. The ghosts' banquet and many other circumstances may give great exercise to the scene-painter and dresser. If you like this plan, you had better suspend any other for the present. In my opinion it has the infinite merit of being perfectly new in plot and structure, and I will set about the sketch as soon as my strength is restored in some measure by air and exercise. I am sure I can finish it in a fortnight then.

Ever yours truly,
W. Scott.

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## Sir Walter Scott to Lord Montagu

[*Prince Leopold's visit to Abbotsford*]

Abbotsford, *October* 3, 1819.

My dear Lord,—

I am honoured with your Buxton letter. . . . *Anent* Prince Leopold,[2] I only heard of his approach at eight o'clock in the morning, and he was to be at Selkirk by eleven. The magistrates sent to ask me to help them to receive him. It occurred to me he might be coming to Melrose to see the abbey, in which case I could not avoid asking him to Abbotsford, as he must pass my very door. I mentioned this to Mrs. Scott, who was lying quietly in bed, and I wish you had heard the scream she gave on the occasion. 'What have we to offer him'? 'Wine and cake', said I, thinking to make all things easy; but she ejaculated, in a tone of utter despair, 'Cake! where am I to get cake'? However, being partly consoled with the recollection that his visit was a very improbable incident, and curiosity, as usual, proving too strong for alarm, she set out with me in order not to miss a peep at the great man. James Skene and his lady were with us, and we gave our carriages such additional dignity as a pair of leaders could add, and went off to meet him in full puff. The Prince very civilly told me, that, though he could not see Melrose on this occasion, he wished to come to Abbotsford for an hour. New despair on the part of Mrs. Scott, who began to institute a domiciliary search for cold meat through the whole city of Selkirk, which produced *one shoulder of cold lamb*. In the meanwhile, his Royal Highness received the civic honours of the birse[1] very graciously. I had hinted to Bailie Lang[2] that it ought only to be licked *symbolically* on the present occasion; so he flourished it three times before his mouth, but without touching it with his lips, and the Prince followed his example as directed. Lang made an excellent speech, sensible, and feeling, and well delivered. The Prince seemed much surprised at this great propriety of expression and behaviour in a magistrate, whose people seemed such a rabble, and whose whole band of music consisted in a drum and fife. I question if any magistrates in the kingdom, lord mayors and aldermen not excepted, could have behaved with more decent and quiet good-breeding. Prince Leopold repeatedly alluded to this during the time he was at Abbotsford. I do not know how Mrs. Scott ultimately managed; but with broiled salmon, and blackcock, and partridges, she gave him a very decent lunch; and I chanced to have some very fine old hock, which was mighty germain to the matter.

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[1] Sir Archy MacSarcasm and Sir Pertinax MacSycophant.

[2] Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, afterwards King of the Belgians.

The Prince seems melancholy, whether naturally or from habit I do not pretend to say ; but I do not remember thinking him so at Paris, where I saw him frequently, then a much poorer man than myself ; yet he showed some humour, for, alluding to the crowds that followed him everywhere, he mentioned some place where he had gone out to shoot, but was afraid to proceed for fear of ‘ bagging a boy ’. He said he really thought of getting some shooting-place in Scotland, and promised me a longer visit on his return. If I had had a day's notice to have *warned the waters*, we could have met him with a very respectable number of the gentry ; but there was no time for this, and probably he liked it better as it was. There was only young Clifton who could have come, and he was shy and cubbish, and would not, though requested by the Selkirk people. He was perhaps ashamed to march through Coventry with them. It hung often and sadly on my mind that *he* was wanting who could and would have received him like a prince indeed ; and yet the meeting betwixt them, had they been fated to meet, would have been a very sad one. I think I have now given your lordship a very full, true, and particular account of our royal visit, unmatched even by that of King Charles at the Castle of Tillietudlem. That we did not speak of it for more than a week after it happened, and that that emphatic monosyllable, *The Prince*, is not heard amongst us more than ten times a day, is, on the whole, to the credit of my family's understanding. The piper is the only one whose brain he seems to have endangered ; for, as the Prince said he preferred him to any he had heard in the Highlands (which, by the way, shows his Royal Highness knows nothing of the matter), the fellow seems to have become incapable of his ordinary occupation as a forester, and has cut stick and stem without remorse to the tune of *Phail Phranse*, i.e., the Prince's welcome.

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[1] A birse, or bunch of hog's bristles, plays a curious part in the ceremony connected with the making of a 'soutar' of Selkirk. 'When a new burgess is admitted into their community,' writes Lockhart, 'the birse passes round with the cup of welcome, and every elder brother dips it into the wine, and draws it through his mouth, before it reaches the happy Neophyte, who, of course, pays it similar respect.'

[2] Scott's friend, Mr. Andrew Lang, Procurator-Fiscal for Selkirkshire, then chief magistrate of the county town.

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## SIR WALTER SCOTT TO THE COUNTESS PURGSTALL [1]

### [*The Past and the Present*]

1820.

MY DEAR AND MUCH VALUED FRIEND,—

You cannot imagine how much I was interested and affected by receiving your token of your kind recollection, after the interval of so many years. Your brother Henry breakfasted with me yesterday, and gave me the letter and book, which served me as matter of much melancholy reflection for many hours. Hardly anything makes the mind recoil so much upon itself as the being suddenly and strongly recalled to times long past, and that by the voice of one whom we have so much loved and respected. Do not think I have forgotten you, or the many happy days I passed in Frederick Street, in society which fate separated so far, and for so many years. The little volume was particularly acceptable to me, as it acquainted me with many circumstances, of which distance and imperfect communication had left me either entirely ignorant, or had transmitted only inaccurate information. Alas, my dear friend! what can the utmost efforts of friendship offer you, beyond the sympathy which, however sincere, must sound like an empty compliment in the ear of affliction? God knows with what willingness I would undertake anything which might afford you the melancholy consolation of knowing how much your old and early friend interests himself in the sad event which has so deeply wounded your peace of mind. The verses, therefore, which conclude this letter, must not be weighed according to their intrinsic value, for the more inadequate they are to express the feelings they would fain convey, the more they show the author's anxious wish to do what may be grateful to you.

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[1] The Countess Purgstall, as Miss Cranstoun, was an early friend of Sir Walter Scott, and the confidante of his first unfortunate love. On her marriage she accompanied her

In truth, I have long given up poetry. I have had my day with the public; and being no great believer in poetical immortality, I was very well pleased to rise a winner without continuing the game, till I was beggared of any credit I had acquired. Besides, I felt the prudence of giving way before the more forcible and powerful genius of Byron. If I were either greedy, or jealous of poetical fame—and both are strangers to my nature—I might comfort myself with the thought that I would hesitate to strip myself to the contest so completely as Byron does; or to command the wonder

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husband to his estates in Styria, where he died in 1811, leaving an only son, of remarkable abilities for his years, who followed his father to the grave when he was but nineteen. 'The desolate countess', writes Lockhart, 'was urged by her family in Scotland to return, after this bereavement, to her native country; but she had vowed to her son on his deathbed, that one day her dust should be mingled with his; and no argument could induce her to depart from the resolution of remaining in solitary Styria'. Scott's letter was written in acknowledgement of the receipt of a copy of the memoir of *The Two Last Counts of Purgstall*, by Joseph Von Hammer, but the letter never reached its destination, nor have the consolatory verses ever been found.

and terror of the public, by exhibiting, in my own person, the sublime attitude of the dying gladiator. But with the old frankness of twenty years since, I will fairly own, that this same delicacy of mine may arise more from conscious want of vigour and inferiority, than from a delicate dislike to the nature of the conflict. At any rate, there is a time for everything, and without swearing oaths to it, I think my time for poetry has gone by.

My health suffered horribly last year, I think from over labour and excitation; and though it is now apparently restored to its usual tone, yet during the long and painful disorder (spasms in the stomach) and the frightful process of cure, by a prolonged use of calomel, I learned that my frame was made of flesh, and not of iron—a conviction which I will long keep in remembrance, and avoid any occupation so laborious and agitating as poetry must be, to be worth anything.

In this humour, I often think of passing a few weeks on the Continent—a summer vacation if I can—and of course my attraction to Gratz would be very strong. I fear this is the only chance of our meeting in this world, we, who once saw each other daily; for I understand from George and Henry, that there is little chance of your coming here. And when I look around me, and consider how many changes you will see in feature, form, and fashion, amongst all you knew and loved; and how much, no sudden squall or violent tempest, but the slow and gradual progress of life's long voyage, has severed all the gallant fellowships whom you left spreading their sails to the morning breeze, I really am not sure that you would have much pleasure. The gay and wild romance of life is over with all of us. The real, dull, and stern history of humanity has made a far greater progress over our heads; and age, dark and unlovely, has laid his crutch over the stoutest fellows' shoulders. One thing your old society may boast, that they have all run their course with honour, and almost all with distinction; and the brother-suppers of Frederick Street have certainly made a very considerable figure in the world, as was to be expected from her talents, under whose auspices they were assembled.

One of the most pleasing sights which you would see in Scotland, as it now stands, would be your brother George in possession of the most beautiful and romantic place in Clydesdale—Corehouse. I have promised often to go out with him, and assist him with my deep experience as a planter and landscape gardener. I promise you my oaks will outlast my laurels; and I pique myself more upon my compositions for manure, than on any other compositions whatever to which I was ever accessory. But so much does business of one sort or other engage us both, that we have never been able to fix a time which suited us both: and with the utmost wish to make out the party, perhaps we never may.

This is a melancholy letter, but it is chiefly so from the sad tone of yours, who have had such real disasters to lament, while mine is only the humorous sadness, which a retrospect on human life is sure to produce on the most prosperous. For my own course of life, I have only to be ashamed of its prosperity, and afraid of its termination; for I have little reason, arguing on the doctrine of chances, to hope that the same good fortune will attend me for ever. I have had an affectionate and promising family, many friends, few unfriends, and, I think, no enemies—and more of fame and fortune than mere literature ever procured for a man before. I dwell among my own people, and have many whose happiness is dependent upon me, and which I study to the best of my power. I trust my temper, which you know is by nature good and easy, has not been spoiled by flattery or prosperity; and therefore I have escaped entirely that irritability of disposition which I think is planted, like the slave in the poet's chariot, to prevent his enjoying his triumph. Should things, therefore, change with me—and in these times, or indeed in any times, such change is to be apprehended—I trust I shall be able to surrender these adventitious advantages, as I would my upper dress, as something extremely comfortable, but which I can make shift to do without.

### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO JOANNA BAILLIE

[*Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen and Joanna Baillie's 'Miscellany'*]

*February* 10, 1882.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

No one has so good a title as you to command me in all my strength and in all my weakness. I do not believe I have a single scrap of unpublished poetry, for I was never a willing composer of occasional pieces, and when I have been guilty of such effusions, it was to answer the purpose of some publisher of songs, or the like immediate demand. The consequence is that all these trifles have been long before the public, and whatever I add to your collection must have the grace of novelty, in case it should have no other. I do not know what should make it rather a melancholy task for me nowadays to sit down to versify: I did not use to think it so, but I have ceased, I know not why, to find pleasure in it, and yet I do not think I have lost any of the faculties I ever possessed for the task; but I was never fond of my own poetry, and am now much out of conceit with it. All this another person less candid in construction than yourself would interpret into a hint to send a good dose of praise; but you know we have agreed long ago to be above ordinances, like Cromwell's saints. When I go to the country upon March 12, I will try what the water-side can do for me, for there is no inspiration in causeways and kennels, or even the Court of Session. You have the victory over me now, for I remember laughing at you for saying you could only write your beautiful lyrics upon a fine warm day. But what is this something to be? I wish you would give me a subject, for that would cut off half my difficulties.

I am delighted with the prospect of seeing Miss Edgeworth, and making her personal acquaintance. I expect her to be just what you describe: a being totally void of affectation, and who, like one other lady of my acquaintance, carries her literary reputation as freely and easily as the milkmaid in my country does the *leglen*, which she carries on her head, and walks as gracefully with it as a duchess. Some of the fair sex, and some of the foul sex too, carry their renown in London fashion—on a yoke and a pair of pitchers. The consequence is, that besides poking frightfully, they are hitting every one on the shins with their buckets. Now, this is all nonsense, too fantastic to be written to anybody but a person of good sense. By the way, did you know Miss Austen, authoress of some novels which have a great deal of nature in them?—nature in ordinary and middle life, to be sure, but valuable from its strong resemblance and correct drawing. I wonder which way she carried her pail?

I did indeed rejoice at Erskine's promotion. There is a degree of melancholy attending the later stage of a barrister's profession, which, though no one cares for sentimentalities attendant on a man of fifty or thereabout, in a rusty black bombazine gown, are not the less cruelly felt; their business sooner or later fails, for younger men will work cheaper, and longer, and harder—besides that the cases are few, comparatively, in which senior counsel are engaged, and it is not etiquette to ask any one in that advanced age to take the whole burden of a cause. Insensibly, without decay of talent, and without losing the public esteem, there is a gradual decay of employment, which almost no man ever practised thirty years without experiencing; and thus the honours and dignities of the Bench, so hardly earned, and themselves leading but to toils of another kind, are peculiarly desirable. Erskine would have sat there ten years ago but for wretched intrigues. He has a very poetical and elegant mind, but I do not know of any poetry of his writing, except some additional stanzas to Collins' Ode on Scottish Superstitions, long since published in the *Border Minstrelsy*. I doubt it would not be consistent with his high office to write poetry now, but you may add his name with Mrs. Scott's (Heaven forgive me! I should have said Lady Scott's) and mine to the subscription list. I will not promise to get you more, for people always look as if you were asking the guinea for yourself—there John Bull has the better of Sawney; to be sure he has more guineas to bestow, but we retain our reluctance to part with hard cash, though profuse enough in our hospitality. I have seen a laird, after giving us more champagne and claret than we cared to drink, look pale at the idea of paying a crown in charity.

I am seriously tempted, though it would be sending coals to Newcastle with a vengeance, not to mention salt to Dysart, and all other superfluous importations—I am, I say, strangely tempted to write for your *protégés* a dramatic scene on an incident which happened at the battle of Halidon Hill (I think). It was to me a nursery tale, often told by Mrs. Margaret Swinton, sister of my maternal grandmother, a fine old lady of high blood, and of as high a mind, who was lineally descended from one of the actors. The anecdote was briefly thus: The family of Swinton is very ancient, and was once very powerful, and at the period of this battle the Knight of Swinton was gigantic in stature, unequalled in strength, and a sage and experienced leader to boot. In one of those quarrels which divided the kingdom of Scotland in every corner, he had slain his neighbour, the head of the Gordon family, and an inveterate feud had ensued ; for it seems that, powerful as the Gordons always were, the Swintons could then bide a bang with them. Well, the battle of Halidon began, and the Scottish army, unskilfully disposed on the side of a hill where no arrow fell in vain, was dreadfully galled by the archery of the English, as usual, upon which Swinton approached the Scottish general, requesting command of a body of cavalry, and pledging his honour that he would, if so supported, charge and disperse the English archers—one of the manœuvres by which Bruce gained the battle of Bannockburn. This was refused, out of stupidity or sullenness, by the general, on which Swinton expressed his determination to charge at the head of his own followers, though totally inadequate for the purpose. The young Gordon heard the proposal, son of him whom Swinton had slain, and with one of those irregular bursts of generosity and feeling which redeem the dark ages from the character of utter barbarism, he threw himself from his horse, and kneeled down before Swinton. 'I have not yet been knighted', he said, 'and never can I take the honour from the hand of a truer, more loyal, more valiant leader than he who slew my father ; grant me', he said, 'the boon I ask, and I unite my forces to yours, that we may live and die together'. His feudal enemy became instantly his godfather in chivalry and his ally in battle. Swinton knighted the young Gordon, and they rushed down at the head of their united retainers, dispersed the archery, and would have turned the battle had they been supported. At length they both fell, and all who followed them were cut off ; and it was remarked that while the fight lasted the old giant guarded the young man's life more than his own, and the same was indicated by the manner in which his body lay stretched over that of Gordon. Now, do not laugh at my Berwickshire *burr*, which I assure you is literally and lineally handed down to me by my grandmother from this fine old Goliath. Tell me, if I can clamper up the story into a sort of single scene, will it answer your purpose ? I would rather try my hand in blank verse than rhyme.

The story, with many others of the same kind, is consecrated to me by the remembrance of the narrator, with her brown silk gown and triple ruffles, and her benevolent face, which was always beside our beds when there were childish complaints among us. Poor Aunt Margaret had a most shocking fate, being murdered by a favourite maid-servant in a fit of insanity, when I was about ten years old; the catastrophe was much owing to the scrupulous delicacy and high courage of my poor relation, who would not have the assistance of men called in for exposing the unhappy wretch her servant. I think you will not ask for a letter from me in a hurry again, but, as I have no chance of seeing you for a long time, I must be contented with writing. My kindest respects attend Mrs. Agnes, your kind brother and family, and the Richardsons, little and big, short and tall; and believe me most truly yours,

W. SCOTT.

PS.—Sophia[1] is come up to her Sunday dinner, and begs to send a thousand remembrances, with the important intelligence that her baby actually says ma-ma, and bow-wow when he sees the dog. Moreover, he is christened John Hugh; and I intend to plant two little knolls at their cottage, to be called Mount Saint John and Hougomont. The papa also sends his respects.

## SIR WALTER SCOTT TO MARIA EDGEWORTH

[*The Loneliness of Age; and the Sudden Death of Boswell's Sons*]

Abbotsford, *April* 24, 1822.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,—

I am extremely sorry indeed that you cannot fulfil your kind intentions to be at Abbotsford this year. It is a great disappointment, and I am grieved to think it should have arisen from the loss of a valued relation. That is the worst part of life when its earlier path is trod. If my limbs get stiff, my walks are made shorter, and my rides slower; if my eyes fail me, I can use glasses and a large print; if I get a little deaf, I comfort myself that, except in a few instances, I shall be no great loser by missing one full half of what is spoken; but I feel the loneliness of age when my companions and friends are taken from me. The sudden death of both the Boswells, and the bloody end of the last, have given me great pain.[1] You have never got half the praise Vivian ought to have procured you. The reason is, that the class from which the excellent portrait was drawn feel the resemblance too painfully to thank the author for it; and I do not believe the common readers understand it in the least. I, who, thank God, am neither great man nor politician, have lived enough among them to recognize the truth and nature of the painting, and am no way implicated in the satire. I begin to think that of the three kingdoms the English alone are qualified to mix in politics safely and without fatal results; the fierce and hasty resentments of the Irish, and the sullen, long-enduring, revengeful temper of my countrymen, make such agitations have a much wider and more dreadful effect amongst them. Well, we will forget what we cannot help, and pray that we may lose no more friends till we find, as I hope and am sure we shall do, friends in each other. I had arranged to stay at least a month after May 12, in hopes of detaining you at Abbotsford, and I will not let you off under a month or two the next year. I shall have my house completed, my library replaced, my armoury new furbished, my piper new clothed, and the time shall be July. I trust I may have the same family about me, and perhaps my two sons. Walter is at Berlin studying the great art of war—and entertaining a most military conviction that all the disturbances of Ireland are exclusively owing to his last regiment, the 18th Hussars, having been imprudently reduced. Little Charles is striving to become a good scholar and fit for Oxford. Both have a chance of being at home in autumn, 1823. I know nothing I should wish you to see which has any particular chance of becoming invisible in the course of fourteen months, excepting my old bloodhound, poor fellow, on whom age now sits so heavily that he cannot follow me far from the house. I wished you to see him very much—he is of that noble breed which Ireland, as well as Scotland, once possessed, and which is now almost extinct in both countries. I have sometimes thought of the final cause of dogs having such short lives, and I am quite satisfied it is in compassion to the human race ; for if we suffer so much in losing a dog after an acquaintance of ten or twelve years, what would it be if they were to live double that time ?

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[1] Scott's daughter, who married John Gibson Lockhart, his biographer, in 1820.

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[1] James Boswell, editor of the third *Variorum Shakespeare*, and the second son of Bozzy', died suddenly, in the prime of life, about a fortnight before his brother Sir Alexander, who died from the effects of a duel with James Stuart, of Dunearn. 'Scott was warmly attached to them both', writes Lockhart, 'and the fall of the baronet might well give him a severe shock, for he had dined in Castle Street only two or three days before it occurred, and the merriest tones of his voice were still ringing in his friend's ears when he received the fatal intelligence. That evening was, I think, the gayest I ever spent in Castle Street; and though Charles Matthews was present, and in his best force, poor Boswell's songs, jokes, and anecdotes had exhibited no symptom of eclipse. It turned out that he had joined the party whom he thus delighted immediately after completing the last arrangements for his duel. It may be worth while to add, that several circumstances of his death are *exactly* reproduced in the duel scene of *St. Ronan's Well*'.

I don't propose being in London this year ; I do not like it—there is such a riding and driving—so much to see—so much to say—not to mention plovers' eggs and champagne—that I always feel too much excited in London, though it is good to rub off the rust too, sometimes, and brings you up abreast with the world as it goes. But I must break off, being summoned to a conclave to examine how the progress of decay, which at present threatens to destroy the ruins of Melrose, can yet be arrested. The Duke of Buccleuch, though but a boy, is very desirous to have something done, and his guardians have acquiesced in a wish so reasonable and creditable to the little chief. I only hope they will be liberal, for a trifle will do no good, or rather, I think, any partial tampering is likely to do harm. But the duke has an immense estate, and I hope they will remember that though a moderate sum may keep up this national monument, yet his whole income could not replace it should it fall.

Yours, dear Miss Edgeworth, with true respect and regard,
WALTER SCOTT.

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### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO THE REV. T. FROGNALL DIBDIN [1]

[*An Honour for 'the Unknown Author of "Waverley"'*]

Edinburgh, *February* 25, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I was duly favoured with your letter, which proves one point against the unknown author of *Waverley*, namely, that he is certainly a Scotsman, since no other nation pretends to the advantage of the Second Sight. Be he who or where he may, he must certainly feel the very high honour which has selected him (*nominis umbra*) to a situation so worthy of envy.

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[1] Vice-President of the Roxburghe Club, who had written to Scott to announce the election of the author of *Waverley* to the seat vacated by the death of Sir M. M. Sykes.

As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, one may presume he may be desirous of offering some test of his gratitude in the shape of a reprint, or such like kickshaw ; and for that purpose you had better send him the statutes of your learned body which I will engage shall reach him in safety. It will follow as a characteristic circumstance, that the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair like that of Banquo's at Macbeth's banquet. But if this author who 'hath fern-seed and walketh invisible', should not appear to claim it before I come to London (should I ever be there again), with permission of the Club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although 'a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek. dubb'd with unhack'd rapier and on carpet consideration' would, rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion.

It will be not uninteresting to you to know that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club, but having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view. It is to be called the *Bannatyne Club*, from the celebrated antiquary George Bannatyne, who compiled by far the greatest manuscript record of old Scottish poetry. Their first meeting is to be held on Thursday, when the health of the Roxburghe Club will not fail to be drunk.

I am, dear Sir, etc.,
WALTER SCOTT.

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### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO THE REV. T. FROGNALL DIBDIN

[*Accepted as Locum Tenens for the Anonymous Author*]

Edinburgh, *May* 1, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I am duly honoured with your very interesting and flattering communication. Our Highlanders have a proverbial saying, founded on the traditional renown of Fingal's dog, 'If it is not Bran', they say, 'it is Bran's brother'. Now this is always taken as a compliment of the first class, whether applied to an actual cur or parabolically to a biped, and upon the same principle it is with no small pride and gratification that the Roxburghe Club have been so very flatteringly disposed to accept me as a *locum tenens* for the unknown author whom they have made the child of their adoption. As sponsor I will play my part as well as I can ; and should the real Simon Pure make his appearance, to push me from my stool, why I shall have at least the satisfaction of having enjoyed it.

> They cannot say but what I had the crown.

Besides, I hope the Devil does not owe me such a shame.

Mad Tom tells us that the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman, and this mysterious personage will I hope partake as much of his honourable feelings as of his invisbility, and resuming his incognito permit me to enjoy in his stead an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels.

I regret deeply I cannot soon avail myself of my new privileges, but Courts which I am under the necessity of attending officially set down in a few days, and, *hei mihi* ! do not arise for Vacation until July. But I hope to be in Town next spring, and certainly I have one strong additional reason for a London Journey furnished by the pleasure of meeting the Roxburghe Club. Make my most respectful compliments to the members at their next merry meeting, and express in the warmest manner my sense of obligation.

I am always, my dear Sir,
Very much your most obedient servant,
WALTER SCOTT.

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### SIR WALTER SCOTT TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[*Renews their Correspondence*]

Address Abbotsford, *July* 8, 1824.

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—

Do you remember Richardson's metaphor of two bashful lovers opposite to each other in parallel lines, without the least chance of union, until some good-natured body gives a shove to the one, and a shove to the other, and so leads them to form a junction? Two lazy correspondents may, I think, form an equally apt subject for the simile, for here have you and I been silent for I know not how many years, for no other reason than the uncertainty which wrote last, or which was in duty bound to write first. And here comes my clever, active, bustling friend Mrs. Hughes, and tells me that you regret a silence which I have not the least power of accounting for, except upon the general belief that I wrote you a long epistle after your kind present of the Lay of the Laureate, and that I have once every week proposed to write you a still longer, till shame of my indolence confirmed me in my evil habits of procrastination—when here comes good Mrs. Hughes, gives me a shake by the collar, and assures me that you are in pretty nearly the same case with myself—and, as a very slight external impulse will sometimes drive us into action when a long succession of internal resolutions have been made and broke, I take my pen to assure my dear Southey that I love him as well as if our correspondence had been weekly or daily.

The years which have gone by have found me dallying with the time, and you improving it as usual—I tossing my ball and driving my hoop a grey-headed schoolboy—and you plying your task unremittingly for the instruction of your own and future ages. Yet I have not been wholly idle or useless—witness five hundred acres of moor and moss, now converted into hopeful woodland of various sizes, to the great refreshment, even already, of the eyes of the pilgrims who still journey to Melrose. I wish you could take a step over the Border this season with Mrs. Southey, and let us have the pleasure of showing you what I have been doing. I twice intended an invasion of this sort upon your solitude at Keswick—one in spring, 1821, and then again in the summer of the same year when the coronation took place. But the convenience of going to London by the steam-packet, which carries you on whether you wake or sleep, is so much preferable to a long land journey, that I took it on both occasions. The extreme rapidity of communication, which places an inhabitant of Edinburgh in the metropolis sooner than a letter can reach it by the post, is like to be attended with a mass of most important consequences—some, or rather most of them, good, but some also which are not to be viewed without apprehension. It must make the public feeling and sentiment of London, whatever that may chance to be, much more readily and emphatically influential upon the rest of the kingdom, and I am by no means sure that it will be on the whole desirable that the whole country should be as subject to be removed by its example as the inhabitants of its suburbs. Admitting the metropolis to be the heart of the system, it is no sign of health when the blood flows too rapidly through the system at every pulsation. Formerly in Edinburgh and other towns, the impulse received from any strong popular feeling in London was comparatively slow and gradual, and had to contend with opposite feelings and prejudices of a national or provincial character : the matter underwent a reconsideration,—and the cry which was raised in the great mart of halloo and humbug was not instantly echoed back, as it may be in the present day and present circumstances, when our opinion, like a small drop of water brought into immediate contiguity with a bigger, is most likely to be absorbed in and united with that of the larger mass. However, you and I have outlived so many real perils, that it is not perhaps wise to dread those that are only contingent, especially where the cause out of which they arise brings with it so much absolute and indisputable advantage.

What is Wordsworth doing ? I was unlucky in being absent when he crossed the Border. I heartily wish I could induce him to make a foray this season, and that you and Mrs. Southey, and Miss Wordsworth, my very good and well-remembered friend, could be of the party. Pray think of this, for the distance is nothing to well-resolved minds, and you in particular owe me a visit. I have never quite forgotten your tour in Scotland without looking in upon my poor premises. Well, as I have reappeared like your floating island, which I see the newspapers aver hath again, after seven years' soaking, become visible to mortal ken, it would not be fair in me to make my visit too long a one—so with kindest respects to Mrs. Southey, in which my wife sincerely joins, I am always most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

You may have heard that about four years since I was brought to death's door by a violent, and at the same time most obstinate complaint—a sort of spasms in the stomach or diaphragm, which for a long time defied medicine. It gave way at length to a terrific course of calomel, such as made the cure almost as bad as the disease. Since that time, I have recovered even a better portion of health than I generally had before, and that was excellent. I do not indeed possess the activity of former days, either on foot or horseback ; but while I can ride a pony, and walk five or six miles with pleasure, I have no reason to complain. The rogue Radicals [1] had nearly set me on horseback again, but I would have had a good *following* to help out my own deficiencies, as all my poor neighbours were willing to fight for Kirk and King.

### Sir Walter Scott to J. G. Lockhart

[*How he Faced the Crisis*]

Edinburgh, *January* 20, 1826.

My dear Lockhart,—

I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio fori*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements (the better thing almost of the two) ; to make good all claims upon Ballantyne & Co. ; and even supposing that neither Hurst & Co. nor Constable & Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute—even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me ; but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favourably. It is needless to add that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more—or £2,000—or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and now must pay my own. If our friend C. had set out a fortnight earlier, nothing of all this would have happened ; but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow ; it is an infirmity of nature.

I have made my matters public, and have had splendid offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

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[1] Sir Walter was a stout Tory all his life, but he never allowed political differences to affect his private feelings towards his friends and companions.

It is easy, no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connexion with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better, excluded from the Bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and—it was a price that made men's hair stand on end—£1,000 for *Marmion*. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much to Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst & Co. and Constable may be able to pay me; if 15*s*. in the pound, I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment. They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

I have had visits from all the monied people, offering their purses—and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measures I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake and for my own; for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *conn*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose. A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,000,[1] which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I would have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'éclat*; but that having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results.

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[1] Sir Walter never knew the name of this munificent friend.

I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as you ever saw me, and working at *Woodstock* like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best, it will be well.

Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the song [1] and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all; and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embittered parting, and made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship.

Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately,
WALTER SCOTT.

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## SIR WALTER SCOTT TO ROBERT CADELL [2]

### [*The Last of the Novels*]

Abbotsford, *December* 12, 1830.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I am much obliged for your kind letter, and have taken a more full review of the whole affair than I was able to do at first. There are many circumstances in the matter which you and J. B.[3] could not be aware of, and which, if you were aware of, might have influenced your judgment, which had, and yet have, a most powerful effect upon mine. The deaths of both my father and mother have been preceded by a paralytic shock. My father survived it for nearly two years —a melancholy respite, and not to be desired. I was alarmed with Miss Young's morning visit, when, as you know, I lost my speech. The medical people said it was from my stomach, which might be : but while there is a doubt on a point so alarming, you will not wonder that the subject, or, to use Hare's *lingo*, the *shot*, should be a little anxious. I restricted all my creature comforts, which were never excessive, within a single cigar and a small wine-glass of spirits per day. But one night last month, when I had a friend with me, I had a slight vertigo when going to bed, and fell down in my dressing-room, though but for one instant. Upon this I wrote to Dr. Abercrombie, and in consequence of his advice, I have restricted myself yet further, and have cut off the cigar, and almost half of the mountain-dew. Now, in the midst of all this, I began my work with as much attention as I could ; and having taken pains with my story, I find it is not relished, nor indeed tolerated, by those who have no interest in condemning it, but a strong interest in putting even a face upon their consciences.[1] Was not this, in the circumstances, a damper to an invalid, already afraid that the sharp edge might be taken off his intellect, though he was not himself sensible of that ? and did it not seem, of course, that nature was rather calling for repose than for further efforts in a very exciting and feverish style of composition ? It would have been the height of injustice and cruelty to impute want of friendship or sympathy to J. B.'s discharge of a doubtful and, I am sensible, a perilous task. True—

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[1] *Up with the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee.*

[2] Robert Cadell dissolved partnership with Constable in 1826, and became Scott's publisher, and his partner in the re-purchase of the *Waverley* copyright in the following year.

[3] James Ballantyne, the printer of Scott's works, who had been ruined by the bankruptcy of Constable & Co. in 1826. Thenceforth Ballantyne was engaged in the literary management of the printing-house for the creditors' trustees.

> The first bringer of unwelcome news
> Hath but a losing office—

and it is a failing in the temper of the most equal-minded men, that we find them liable to be less pleased with the tidings that they have fallen short of their aim, than if they had been told they had hit the mark ; but I never had the least doubt of blaming him, and indeed my confidence in his judgment is the most forcible part of the whole affair. It is the consciousness of his sincerity which makes me doubt whether I can proceed with the County Paris.[2] I am most anxious to do justice to all concerned, and yet, for the soul of me, I cannot see what is likely to turn out for the best.

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[1] James Ballantyne had—to quote the words of Lockhart—'obeyed his natural sense of duty, by informing Sir Walter, in plain terms, that he considered *Count Robert* as decidedly inferior to anything that had ever before come from that pen '.

[2] *Count Robert of Paris.*

I might attempt the Perilous Castle of Douglas,[1] but I fear the subject is too much used, and that again might fail in it. Then being idle will never do, for a thousand reasons: all this I am thinking off till I am half sick. I wish James, who gives such stout advice when he thinks we are wrong, would tell us how to put things right. One is tempted to cry, 'Wo worth thee! is there no help in thee?' Perhaps it may be better to take no resolution till we all meet again.

I certainly am quite decided to fulfil all my engagements, and, so far as I can, discharge the part of an honest man; and if anything can be done meantime for the *Magnum*[2] I shall be glad to do it.

I trust James and you will get afloat next Saturday. You will think me like Murray in the farce—'I eat well, drink well, and sleep well, but that's all, Tom, that's all'.[3] We will wear the thing through one way or other if we were once afloat: but you see all this is a scrape.

Yours truly,
WALTER SCOTT.

## JANE AUSTEN

### 1775–1817

CRABBE and Scott were both favourite authors of Jane Austen—Crabbe especially. She used to say that if she ever married at all she could fancy being Mrs. Crabbe; and it is easy to imagine how the gentle, kindly nature of the East Anglian poet would appeal to Jane Austen, whose disposition was as sweet and lovable as his own. Her correspondence, printed in the Memoir by her nephew, J. E. Austen Leigh (to whose book, by the courtesy of Messrs. Macmillan, we are indebted for the letters now reprinted), is for the most part of slight biographical interest, consisting of family letters, pure and simple. 'They may be said to resemble the nest which some little bird builds of the materials nearest at hand, of the twigs and mosses supplied by the tree in which it is placed; curiously constructed out of the simplest matters'. The two letters now selected bring Jane Austen out of this family retreat, and relate to the only mark of official distinction ever bestowed upon her—the patronage of the Prince Regent, who was a great admirer of her books. This did not happen until towards the close of her career, when the last of her works to be published during her lifetime—all of which she had issued anonymously—was in the press. The Prince, having been informed by Mr. Clarke, his librarian, as to the authorship of the novels, sent her an invitation to look over Carlton House, and incidentally hinted that he would be happy to accept the dedication of her next book. Mr. Clarke was himself an enthusiastic admirer of Jane Austen's work, and, as the following letters show, sent her suggestions for extending her literary scope. Fortunately Jane Austen had sufficient sense to keep to her own exquisite style.

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[1] *Castle Dangerous* and *Count Robert of Paris* were published in November, 1831. It is the fourth series of *Tales of my Landlord.*

[2] The *Magnum* was the collected edition of the Waverley novels—the *magnum opus.*

[3] Sir Mark Chace, in the farce *A Rowland for an Oliver.*

### JANE AUSTEN TO J. S. CLARKE

[*Her Works and her Modesty*]

*December* 11, 1815.

DEAR SIR,—

My *Emma* is now so near publication that I feel it right to assure you of my not having forgotten your kind recommendation of an early copy for Carlton House, and that I have Mr. Murray's promise of its being sent to His Royal Highness, under cover to you, three days previous to the work being really out. I must make use of this opportunity to thank you, dear Sir, for the very high praise you bestow on my other novels. I am too vain to wish to convince you that you have praised them beyond their merits. My greatest anxiety at present is that this fourth work should not disgrace what was good in the others. But on this point I will do myself the justice to declare that, whatever may be my wishes for its success, I am strongly haunted with the idea that to those readers who have preferred *Pride and Prejudice* it will appear inferior in wit, and to those who have preferred *Mansfield Park* inferior in good sense. Such as it is, however, I hope you will do me the favour of accepting a copy. Mr. Murray will have directions for sending one. I am quite honoured by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of in your note of November 16. But I assure you I am *not*. The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must at times be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or at least be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman, who, like me, knows only her mother tongue,[1] and has read little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress.

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[1] Jane Austen, says her nephew and biographer, here boasts of greater ignorance than she had any just claim to, for she knew a great deal of French and a little of Italian.

Believe me, dear Sir,
Your obliged and faithful humble servant,
JANE AUSTEN.

### JANE AUSTEN TO J. S. CLARKE

[*Declines to Depart from her Natural Style*]

*April* 1, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I am honoured by the Prince's thanks and very much obliged to yourself for the kind manner in which you mention the work. I have also to acknowledge a former letter forwarded to me from Hans Place. I assure you I feel very grateful for the friendly tenor of it, and hope my silence will have been considered, as it was truly meant, to proceed only from an unwillingness to tax your time with idle thanks. Under every interesting circumstance which your own talents and literary labours have placed you in, by the favour of the Regent bestowed, you have my best wishes. Your recent appointments I hope are a step to something still better. In my opinion, the service of a court can hardly be too well paid, for immense must be the sacrifice of time and feeling required by it.

You are very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Saxe Cobourg, might be much more to the purpose of profit and popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motives than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up, and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style, and go on in my own way, and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.

I remain, my dear Sir,
Your very obliged and sincere friend,
J. Austen.

## JAMES HOGG, THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD

### 1770–1835

James Hogg had found his way into print before he made the acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott,—or Mr. Scott, Sheriff of Selkirkshire, as he then was,—but it was Scott who put him on the road to fame, printing several of his ballads in the *Border Minstrelsy*, and inducing Constable to publish Hogg's *Mountain Bard*, and the solid treatise entitled *Hogg on Sheep*, which together brought him £300. Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott*, gives a delightful sketch of the Shepherd as he appeared in those days. Scott had invited him to dinner, together with William Laidlaw and some other admirers of the rustic genius. When Hogg entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Scott, being at the time in a delicate state of health, was reclining on a sofa. The Shepherd, after being presented and making his best bow, forthwith took possession of another sofa, placed opposite to hers, and stretched himself thereupon at all his length; for, as he said afterwards, 'I thought I could never do wrong to copy the lady of the house'. As his dress at this period was precisely that in which any ordinary herdsman attends cattle to the market, and as his hands, moreover, bore most legible marks of a recent sheep-smearing, the lady of the house did not observe with perfect equanimity the novel usage to which her chintz was exposed. The Shepherd, however, remarked nothing of all this—dined heartily and drank freely, and, by jest, anecdote, and song, afforded plentiful merriment to the more civilized part of the company. As the liquor operated, his familiarity increased and strengthened; from 'Mr. Scott', he advanced to 'Sheera', and thence to 'Scott', 'Walter', and 'Wattie'—until at supper he fairly convulsed the whole party by addressing Mrs. Scott as 'Charlotte'. It was shortly after this affair that Hogg wrote the first of the following letters to Scott. The Shepherd's later friends included Wordsworth, Southey, Professor John Wilson, and Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch. He was entertained publicly in London when he paid his visit, in 1831, to arrange for a complete edition of his works. *The Queen's Wake*, the work upon which his poetical reputation chiefly rests, appeared in 1813, when it was welcomed by the critics with a chorus of praise. 'No doubt can be entertained', declared Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*, 'that he is a poet in the highest acceptation of the term'.

### JAMES HOGG TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

[*An Apology and a Cool Request*]

Ettrick House, *December* 24, 1803.

DEAR MR. SCOTT,—

I have been very impatient to hear from you. There is a certain affair of which you and I talked a little in private, and which must now be concluded, that naturally increaseth this.

I am afraid that I was at least half-seas over the night I was with you, for I cannot, for my life, recollect what passed when it was late ; and, there being certainly a small vacuum in my brain, which, when empty, is quite empty, but is sometimes supplied with a small distillation of intellectual matter —this must have been empty that night, or it never could have been taken possession of by the fumes of the liquor so easily. If I was in the state in which I suspect that I was, I must have spoke a very great deal of nonsense, for which I beg ten thousand pardons. I have the consolation, however, of remembering that Mrs. Scott kept in company all or most of the time, which she certainly could not have done had I been very rude. I remember, too, of the filial injunction you gave at parting, cautioning me against being ensnared by the loose women in town. I am sure I had not reason enough left at that time to express either the half of my gratitude for the kind hint, or the utter abhorrence I inherit at those seminaries of lewdness.

You once promised me your best advice in the first lawsuit in which I had the particular happiness of being engaged. I am now going to ask it seriously in an affair, in which, I am sure, we will both take as much pleasure. It is this : I have as many songs besides me, which are certainly the worst of my productions, as will make about one hundred pages close printed, and about two hundred printed as the *Minstrelsy* is. Now, although I will not proceed without your consent and advice, yet I would have you to understand that I expect it, and have the scheme much at heart at present. The first thing that suggested it was their extraordinary repute in Ettrick and its neighbourhood, and being everlastingly plagued with writing copies, and promising scores which I never meant to perform. As my last pamphlet was never known, save to a few friends, I wish your advice what pieces of it are worth preserving. The *Pastoral* I am resolved to insert, as I am *Sandy Tod.* As to my manuscripts, they are endless ; and as I doubt you will disapprove of publishing them wholesale and letting the good help off the bad, I think you must trust to my discretion in the selection of a few. I wish likewise to know if you think a graven image on the first leaf is any recommendation ; and if we might front the songs with a letter to you, giving, an impartial account of my manner of life and education, and, which if you pleased to transcribe, putting He for I.[1] Again there is no publishing a book without a patron, and I have one or two in my eye, and of which I will, with my wonted assurance to you, give you the most free choice. The first is Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff-depute of Ettrick Forest, which, if permitted, I will address you in a dedication singular enough. The next is Lady Dalkeith, which, if you approved of, you must become the editor yourself ; and I shall give you my word for it, that neither word nor sentiment in it shall offend the most delicate ear. You will not be in the least jealous, if, alongst with my services to you, I present my kind compliments to the sweet little lady whom you call Charlotte. As for Camp and Walter (I beg pardon for this pre-eminence), they will not mind them if I should exhaust my eloquence in compliments.

Believe me, dear Walter, your most devoted servant,

JAMES HOGG.

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## JAMES HOGG TO HIS BROTHER

[*His 'Queen's Wake' and his Brother's Grammar*]

Edinburgh *November* 28, 1813.

DEAR BROTHER,—

I have been very much to blame in not answering your letter, but the truth is that I never write any letters.

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[1] The notion that Scott should transcribe the Shepherd's narrative, and merely putting 'He' for 'I', adopt it as his own composition, is, as Lockhart says in his *Life of Scott*, particularly amusing. 'James, however, would have had no hesitation about offering a similar composition either to Scott, or Wordsworth, or Byron, at any period of their renown. To say nothing about modesty, his notions of literary honesty were always exceedingly loose ; but at the same time we must take into account his peculiar notions, or rather no notions, as to the proper limits of a joke'.

The one of yours which I received in Athol I cannot lay my hands upon, but I know I objected particularly to the terms *perfect breed* and *perfection of a breed.* I received all my things in the box safe, and I find them of excellent quality. I am sorry I have not got a copy of the *Wake* to you, though I sent for one. I send you the *Review* and *Mag.* You shall have a copy of the poem soon. I will see my nephew Robert to-day, as I am bound to the south. Mr. Gray has a good letter from you, which I understand he has been reading in all the literary circles of Edinburgh, to show them, as he says, that the genius of the family is not all concentred in one head. For God's sake, take some thought of your *wases* and *weres*, *has* and *have*, *is* and *are*, etc. Excuse me, my dear William, for, believe me, the writing of a letter is now the greatest penance I suffer.

I am your affectionate brother,

JAMES HOGG.

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## JAMES HOGG TO THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH

[*A Characteristic Appeal*]

Ettrickbank, *March* 17, 1814.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,—

I have often grieved you by my applications for this and that. I am sensible of this, for I have had many instances of your wishes to be of service to me, could you have known what to do for that purpose. But there are some eccentric characters in the world, of whom no person can judge or know what will prove beneficial, or what may prove their bane. I have again and again received of your Grace's private bounty, and though it made me love and respect you the more, I was nevertheless grieved at it. It was never your Grace's money that I wanted, but the honour of your countenance; indeed my heart could never yield to the hope of being patronized by any house save that of Buccleuch, whom I deemed bound to cherish every plant that indicated anything out of the common way on the braes of Ettrick and Yarrow.

I know you will be thinking that this long prelude is to end with a request. No, madam, I have taken the resolution of never making another request. I will, however, tell you a story, which is, I believe, founded on a fact.

There is a small farm at the head of a water called—— possessed by a mean fellow named —— A third of it has been taken off and laid into another farm—the remainder is as yet unappropriated. Now, there is a certain poor bard, who has two old parents, each of them upwards of eighty-four years of age; and that bard has no house nor home to shelter those poor parents in, or cheer the evening of their lives. A single line from a certain and very great and very beautiful lady, to a certain Mr. Riddle, would ensure that small pendicle to the bard at once. But she will grant no such thing. I appeal to your Grace if she is not a very bad lady that?

I am your Grace's ever obliged and grateful
JAMES HOGG,
The Ettrick Shepherd.[1]

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## JAMES HOGG TO PROFESSOR JOHN WILSON

[*The Sportsman's Instinct*]

Mount Benger, *August*, 1829.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED JOHN,—

I never thought you had been so unconscionable as to desire a sportsman on the 11th or even the 13th of August to leave Ettrick Forest for the bare scraggy hills of Westmoreland!—Ettrick Forest, where the black cocks and white cocks, brown cocks and grey cocks, ducks, plovers and peaseweeps and whilly-whaups are as thick as the flocks that cover her mountains, and come to the hills of Westmoreland that can nourish nothing better than a castril or stonechat! To leave the great yellow-fin of Yarrow, or the still larger grey-locher for the degenerate fry of Troutbeck, Esthwaite, or even Wastwater! No, no, the request will not do; it is an unreasonable one, and therefore not unlike yourself, for besides, what would become of Old North and Blackwood, and all our friends for game, were I to come to Elleray just now ? I know of no home of man where I could be so happy within doors with so many lovely and joyous faces around me ; but this is not the season for indoor enjoyments ; they must be reaped on the wastes among the blooming heath, by the silver spring, or swathed in the delicious breeze of the wilderness. Elleray, with all its sweets, could never have been my choice for a habitation, and perhaps you are the only Scottish gentleman who ever made such a choice, and still persists in maintaining it, in spite of every disadvantage. Happy days to you and a safe return !

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[1] 'Though the Duke of Buccleuch', writes Lockhart in printing this characteristic letter, which was received by the duchess only a few months before her death, 'would not dismiss a poor tenant merely because Hogg called him "a mean fellow", he had told Scott that if he could find an unappropriated "pendicle", such as this letter referred to, he would most willingly bestow it on the Shepherd. It so happened, that when Scott paid his first visit to Bowhill after the death of the Duchess, the Ettrick Shepherd was mentioned:—"My friend", said the Duke, "I must now consider this poor man's case as *her* legacy", and to this favour Hogg owed, very soon afterwards, his establishment at Altrive, on his favourite braes of Yarrow'.

Yours most respectfully,
JAMES HOGG.

## THOMAS CAMPBELL

### 1777–1844

THOMAS CAMPBELL was living in Edinburgh as a law clerk and tutor when he wrote the following letters to his old college friend Thomson, in 1798. *The Pleasures of Hope*, which appeared in the following year, ran through four editions in a twelvemonth, and the author was able to leave his legal studies and start on his Continental tour, visiting the battlefield of Hohenlinden, and sailing past the batteries of Copenhagen shortly before the destruction of the Danish fleet by the British in 1801—experiences which resulted in some of the finest lyrics in the language. A few years afterwards Campbell, now married, settled in London as a man of letters, and in 1806 received a pension of £200 from the Government. His *Gertrude of Wyoming* appeared in 1809, and ten years later he became editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, to which he contributed *The Last Man*; and several other poems; but his later work added comparatively little to his permanent literary reputation. 'I wonder often', wrote Scott in his diary in 1826, 'how Tom Campbell, with so much real genius, has not maintained a greater figure in the public eye than he has done of late. The magazine seems to have paralysed him. The author, not only of the *Pleasures of Hope*, but of *Hohenlinden*, *Lochiel*, etc., should have been at the very top of the tree. Somehow he wants audacity, fears the public, and, what is worse, fears the shadow of his own reputation. He is a great corrector too, which succeeds as ill in composition as in education. Many a clever boy is flogged into a dunce, and many an original composition corrected into mediocrity. Tom ought to have done a great deal more ; his youthful promise was so great '.

## THOMAS CAMPBELL TO JAMES THOMSON

['*A Gloomy Welcome to Scotland*']

*January*, 1798.

MY DEAR THOMSON,—

Your intelligence—can you think it possible?—I wish I had not received. I would give the world you had not informed me you are coming to Scotland: for long ere that time I fear your friend will be on the other side of the globe. This is all of a piece with my other fortunes. I have found few *friends*—few that care whether I exist or not. Yet of these congenial minds, there is not one whose society I have been able to enjoy for any length of time. I have either left them, or they have left *me*. This, my dear Thomson, you will say is a gloomy welcome to Scotland. But I wish you may enjoy all the happiness and restoration of health which the tour can confer—I do, sincerely. But the idea that our mutual expectation of happiness in meeting, after such a long absence, must be disappointed, obliges me to think on your jaunt with little pleasure. In all probability, at that very time when—were I permited to stay here—we might be seated at this humble but hospitable fireside, I shall be crossing the Ecliptic, or mooring in the mouth of the Ohio. I have engaged to go to America; and, in all human probability, must sail in six weeks.[1] A ray breaks on my mind—is it a false hope I entertain?—that before that time you may have at least spent one day here. I fear—I see it is impossible. The weather is too severe, even at that time, for a valetudinarian to travel. There is no chance of farewell. I will think of you as often in America as here. I will write to you by every chance, and console myself with the hopes of hearing from you in return. I have only one request to make; send me a lock of your hair, and I will have it set in the most precious stones—at least that I can afford. I will immediately transcribe all the Pieces in my possession, and leave you them—a sad remembrance of your friend! I cannot help recurring to my theme. I would have accompanied you to Loch Lomond and the Western Isles, had fate permitted—but my doom was settled before the receipt of your letter. You will certainly be much pleased with the romantic scenes you have to visit. I advise you, in particular, to see the islands of Staffa and Iona; they are enough to inspire a man of taste with enthusiasm. Oh, how happy an excursion had it been, to have shared with my friend the sublime pleasure of contemplating the works of nature!

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[1] Campbell's American scheme (he was to have joined his brothers in Virginia) fell through.

I am, as ever,
T. C.

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### THOMAS CAMPBELL TO JAMES THOMSON

[*A Happier Outlook; and his 'Pleasures of Hope'*]

Edinburgh, *November 7*, 1798.

I SHOULD stand inexcusable, my dear forgiving friend, if the time that has elapsed since I wrote you had not been the most troublesome I have experienced during my life. I thought, before this gloomy month, to have had every article of my private affairs snugly settled for the winter, and to have begun my studies with a vacant and satisfied mind. I have been disappointed by ——[1]. It is needless to say any more to you, my friend. Let the page of our sacred correspondence be unstained by relating the mean subterfuges of ——, not Mr. Mundell; I have had profitable transactions with him, and never was treated ungenteelly. But although in part disappointed in my views, I have the pleasure to inform you, in return for your kind, and, I know heart-felt inquiries, that the black side of my fortune has been compensated by pleasant—unexpectedly pleasant events; I have the prospect of spending a happy winter. I have enlarged and liberal views of rising in life; and I feel that one great cause of tumultuous, foolish, contemptible infelicity has subsided in my mind.[2] My silence may have given the appearance of indifference to my feelings; but *you* know, Thomson, I never had a heart of a phlegmatic description. The subject of your visit to Scotland has been the predominant thought in my mind ever since I heard of your intention. The slightest association calls it up; and it is so pleasant as to be a match for the *most* pleasant that can start up. It throws itself into the balance of happiness, when I speculate upon the long-disputed point in philosophy, whether pain or pleasure predominates in this wicked world, and forms the decision—certainly the truest and the best. I feel a strange and delightful curiosity to know what change the time that has elapsed since we last shook hands has produced upon my friend. I anticipate the start we shall mutually give on meeting. I shall want words to accost you. You remember I was a laughing little boy—and you were but a boy yourself—when we lounged about Alma Mater. My friends all tell me I have now got a Parnassian thoughtfulness in my physiognomy, which must be very different from my former aspect! But we are *old men*, compared with the tyros of those days, and time produces wonderful changes at our period of life.

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[1] Some one who had failed him in certain literary affairs, by which Campbell would have benefited pecuniarily.

[2] The termination of an early and unsuccessful love affair.

I think, by a person returned from London, there will be few prodigies to be seen at Edinburgh. But if you will admire men of genius devoutly, I will introduce you to two young men, whom I expect to see *ornaments of their country*. I speak without exaggeration. One of them is Henry Brougham,[1] of English extraction—a man of twenty—who has written some papers for the Royal Society, on a mathematical subject—*Porism*—which Newton left unfinished, and which has never been hitherto pursued by any other. I am an indifferent mathematician myself, and cannot pretend to appreciate their merits; but the best judges here regard them with astonishment. The other is a lad of the same age; he is author of a publication entitled *Observations on Darwin's Zoonomia*. Of these I can better judge; and have read with delight and wonder the works of a young, daring, but yet modest philosopher, who seems, in the generality of instances, to have confuted this eccentric writer upon his own principles. With the latter genius I have particularly cultivated acquaintance; he is as amiable in temper as remarkable in literature. At the same time our minds do not come into the closest contact; there is no coldness in his disposition, but a timid gentleness, and a politeness which, to me, seems rather distant. There is, in short, a something which make me rather proud to hold him as an acquaintance than to be upon the most familiar footing with him. You may, however, suspend your judgment till you see him. There are a few more to whom I could wish you known.—I know not from what motive I desire that our acquaintance with them should be common ; perhaps it is from wishing us to think upon the same topics at the same time. I sometimes regret that minds so much in unison as ours should be employed so far away from each other, in thinking of subjects equally distant.

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[1] Afterwards Baron Brougham, Lord Chancellor.

Before May shall unclose her blue voluptuous eye, and wave her shadowy locks of gold, I shall have the pleasure of presenting you with a Poem,[1] in two books, to be published as soon as the plates for it are finished ! I hope the sentiments it develops will be as congenial to yours as our sentiments hitherto have been.

Before concluding, I must inform you that your time is now fixed, and *fixed* it must remain ! In Scotland you must be, yes—in Edinburgh—at the fireside of your sincerely happy friend,

T. C.

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### THOMAS CAMPBELL TO LORD MINTO

[*Turns Historian*]

Alison Square, Edinburgh, *December 27*, 1802.

MY LORD,—

My booksellers have engaged me at the present in an historical work, intended as a continuation of Smollett's down to the present time.[2] The compensation which I am to receive for it is not sufficient to tempt me to put my name to it. It is not to be written for reputation, but for employment ; and as a trial of my hand at a new species of literary labour. Still, however, although I do not come like a trembling culprit before the public, I feel interested, even to enthusiasm, in my new undertaking ; and shall, perhaps, write with more spirit than if I set to it with the embarrassing impression of the public looking over my shoulder. Public events for fifty years past have followed in pretty interesting succession; and I should think the man's heart very listless indeed who could sit down to relate and review them without strong animation. Whatever my history may turn out—and possibly it may prove both dull and dry—I shall begin it, at least, with the favourable omens of zeal and interest, anonymous although I mean it to be. The outlines of the materials I have collared already. I have sketched indeed a rough draft of the picture.

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[1] *The Pleasures of Hope.*
[2] Campbell's *Annals of Great Britain from George II to the Peace of Amiens.*

You may easily suppose, my lord, that to obtain original information upon that part of the internal history of the country which relates to Sir E. Impey's impeachment,[1] would be a very great favour. With regard to quotations from your lordship's speeches, either printed or MS.—without decided permission, or making any improper use of either, if trusted to my hands—I can only say that sooner than give your lordship a moment's uneasiness from fear of such accidents, I should give up all the advantage to be derived from seeing them.

I think myself warranted, however, by the confidence I feel in your regard, to let you know this state of my literary circumstances; and—if there be any information on the subject of Sir E. I.'s trial, to the sources of which your lordship's intimate knowledge of the whole event can direct me—to request that you would have the kindness, at a leisure moment, to supply me with a hint.

One suspicion I might perhaps incur from one less generous in ascribing motives of conduct than I know your lordship to be—viz. that my object is to improve the pecuniary value of my history, by original materials, obtained in this gratuitous manner.—My arrangements are all made with my employers. It is no wish of theirs that I should make this work anything more than passable; but although it is to be anonymous, I should feel myself degraded in my own esteem by making it slovenly. One would wish even his bastard son to be a gentleman.—If I were writing or speaking in a desert island, I should still wish to write and speak with spirit. Besides, I am not so little of a Scotchman, or so lukewarm a patriot, as to be able to pass over the appearance of one of my countrymen—solitary I may almost say in arraigning corruption—without giving a little more to the public than has hitherto been said. Your lordship's name and Mr. Burke's can never be injured by the protecting patronage which Indian influence has given to the acquitted culprits. But still, as a point of history, it is apt to suffer by misrepresentation. Indeed, circumstances of the whole trial are wrapt up in a foggy sort of mystery, which the East Indians, I dare say, would not wish to see dispelled. The journals of the 'House of Commons', it is true, are testimony against them—but it is not proof so recondite as that which dispels all doubt; and while any doubt remains, the abettors of Sir Elijah have an advantage which they do not deserve. The conclusion from this is indeed different from the idea I at first started, viz. of putting authentic facts into the body of English history relative to the impeachment of Sir E. It ought to be done, my lord, by your own hand. A work, such as you propose, would not be too voluminous—large as you intend it—for public and even very general perusal; and it would at all times serve as a rallying point for those who, in writing the history of the times, might have occasion to quote more condensed and explicit evidence than is to be found at present in any separate publication on the subject.

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[1] Sir Elijah Impey's impeachment in 1783 for his conduct as Chief Justice of Bengal during the governor-generalship of Warren Hastings. He was honourably acquitted.

I ought to have begun my letter by acknowledging your lordship's of the 23rd, and likewise some additional sheets from Tulloch, which, I suppose, came franked by your lordship's interference.

With many thanks to your lordship for so much kindness, I am your lordship's most sincerely obliged, humble servant,

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

### THOMAS CAMPBELL TO GEORGE CRABBE, JUN.

[*Reminiscences of Crabbe, the Poet*]

1834.

THE first time I met Crabbe was at Holland House, when he and Tom Moore and myself lounged the better part of a morning about the park and library; and I can answer you one of the party at least being very much pleased with it. Our conversation, I remember, was about novelists. Your father was a strong Fieldingite, and I as sturdy a Smollettite. His mildness in literary argument struck me with surprise in so stern a poet of nature, and I could not but contrast the unassumingness of his manners with the originality of his powers. In what may be called the ready-money small talk of conversation, his facility might not perhaps seem equal to the known calibre of his talents, but in the progress of conversation I recollect remarking that there was a vigilant shrewdness that almost eluded you by keeping its watch so quietly. Though an oldish man when I saw him, he was not a *laudator temporis acti*, but a decided lover of later times.

The part of the morning which I spent at Holland House with him and Tom Moore was one, to me at least, of memorable agreeableness. He was very frank, and even confidential in speaking of his own feelings. Though in a serene tone of spirits, he confessed to me that since the death of his wife he had scarcely known positive happiness. I told him that in that respect, viz. the calculation of our own happiness, we are apt to deceive ourselves. The man whose manners are mild and tranquil, and whose conversation is amusing, cannot be positively unhappy.

When Moore left us we were joined by Foscolo[1]; and I remember as distinctly as if it had been yesterday, the contrasted light in which Crabbe and Foscolo struck me. It is not an invidious contrast—at least my feelings towards Ugo's memory intend it not to be so—yet it was to me morally instructive, and, I need hardly say, greatly in favour of your father. They were both men of genius, and both simple. But, what a different sort of simplicity! I felt myself between them as if I had been standing between a roaring cataract and a placid stream. Ugo raged and foamed in argument, to my amusement, but not at all to your father's liking. He could not abide him. What we talked about I do not recollect, but only that Ugo's impetuosity was a foil to the amenity of the elder bard.

One day—and how can it fail to be memorable to me when Moore has commemorated it?—your father and Rogers and Moore came down to Sydenham pretty early in the forenoon, and stopped to dine with me. We talked of founding a Poets' Club, and even set about electing the members, not by ballot, but *vivâ voce*. The scheme failed, I scarcely know how ; but this I know, that, a week or so afterwards, I met with Perry, of the *Morning Chronicle*, who asked me how our Poets' Club was going on. I said, 'I don't know—we have some difficulty in giving it a name—we thought of calling ourselves *the Bees*'. 'Ah', said Perry, 'that's a little different from the common report, for they say you are to be called *the Wasps*'. I was so stung with this waspish report, that I thought no more of the Poets' Club.

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[1] Ugo Foscolo, Italian author and patriot, who settled in England in 1806, and died near London eleven years later.

The last time I saw Crabbe was when I dined with him at Mr. Hoare's at Hampstead. He very kindly came with me to the coach to see me off, and I never pass that spot on the top of Hampstead Heath without thinking of him. As to the force and faith of genius, it would be superfluous in me to offer my opinion. Pray pardon me for speaking of his memory in this very imperfect manner, and believe me dear sir, yours very truly,

T. CAMPBELL.

## SYDNEY SMITH

### 1771–1845

Little need be added to the tabloid life of himself which Sydney Smith, in his own humorous way, has given in the letter to M. Robin, here printed out of its chronological order on account of its biographical interest. The rough outline may be added to by Smith's well-known story of the beginning of his long connexion with the *Edinburgh Review*. 'When first I went into the Church', he writes, 'I had a curacy in the middle of Salisbury Plain. The squire of the parish took a fancy to me, and requested me to go with his son to reside at the University of Weimar ; before we could get there Germany became the seat of war, and in stress of politics we put into Edinburgh, where I remained five years. The principles of the French Revolution were then fully afloat, and it is impossible to conceive a more violent and agitated state of society. Among the five persons with whom I became acquainted were Lord Jeffrey, Lord Murray (late Lord Advocate for Scotland) and Lord Brougham ; all of them maintaining opinions upon political subjects a little too liberal for the dynasty of Dundas, then exercising supreme power over the northern division of the island. One day we happened to meet in the eighth or ninth story or flat in Buccleugh Place, the elevated residence of the then Mr. Jeffrey. I proposed that we should set up a Review ; this was acceded to with acclamation. I was appointed editor, and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number of the *Edinburgh Review*. The motto I proposed for the Review was : *Tenui Musam meditámur avena*. "We cultivate literature upon a little oatmeal ". But this was too near the truth to be admitted'. In the following year Sydney Smith removed to London, where he became preacher at the chapel of the Foundling Hospital, and lectured on literature at the Royal Institution. He published his ironical *Letters on the Subject of the Catholics to my Brother Abraham, who lives in the Country, by Peter Plymley,* in 1806, while Rector of Foston, in Yorkshire. Macaulay, who describes him as 'the greatest master of ridicule since Swift', and visited him at Foston when he was a young man, gives a characteristic sketch in one of his letters of Sydney Smith as a country rector.

### SYDNEY SMITH TO M. EUGÈNE ROBIN[1]

[*Autobiography in Brief*]

Paris, *June* 29, 1844.

SIR,—

Your application to me does me honour, and requires, on your part, no sort of apology. It is scarcely possible to speak of self, and I have little or nothing to tell which has not been told before in my preface.

I am seventy-four years of age, and being Canon of St. Paul's in London, and a rector of a parish in the country, my mind is divided equally between town and country. I am living amongst the best society in the metropolis, and at ease in my circumstances; in tolerable health, a mild Whig, a tolerating Churchman, and much given to talking, laughing and noise. I dine with the rich in London and physic the poor in the country: passing from the sauces of Dives to the sores of Lazarus. I am, upon the whole, a happy man; have found the world an entertaining world, and am thankful to Providence for the part allotted to me in it. If you wish to become more informed respecting the actor himself, I must refer you to my friend Van de Weyer, who knows me well, and is able (if he will condescend to do so) to point out the good and the evil within me. If you come to London, I hope you will call on me, and enable me to make your acquaintance; and in the meantime I beg you to accept every assurance of my consideration and respect.

SYDNEY SMITH.

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[1] M. Robin had applied for some particulars of his life for a paper which he was writing for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

### SYDNEY SMITH TO FRANCIS JEFFREY

[*An Edinburgh Reviewer*]

Burnt Island, *June*, 1802.

MY DEAR JEFFREY,—

With the inculpative part of *your* criticisms on *mine* I very much agree; and, in particular, am so well aware of that excessive levity into which I am apt to run, that I think I shall correct it.

Upon the point of severity, I beg you to recollect the facts. That —— is a very stupid and a very contemptible fellow no one pretends to deny. He has been hangman for these ten years to all the poor authors in England, is generally considered to be hired by Government, and has talked about Social Order till he has talked himself into £600 or £700 per annum. That there can be a fairer object for critical severity I cannot conceive; and though he be not notorious in Edinburgh, he is certainly so in London. If you think that the violence of the attack may induce the generality of readers to sympathize with the sufferer rather than with the executioner, in spite of the recollection that the artificer of death is perishing by his own art, then your objections to my criticism are good, for the very opposite reason to that you have alleged; not because they are too severe, but because, by diminishing the malice of the reader, they do not attain the maximum of severity.

You say the readers will think my review long. Probably. If it is amusing, they will not; if it is dull, I am sorry for it—— but I can write no better. I am so desirous of attacking this time-serving—— that I cannot consent to omit this article, unless my associates consider their moral and religious characters committed by it; at the same time, I will, with great pleasure, attempt to modify it.

I am very much obliged to you for your animadversions on my inaccuracies, and should be obliged to you also to correct them. One of the instances you mention is rather awkward than incorrect, but had better be amended. I wrote my views exactly as you see them; though I certainly made these blunders, not in consequence of neglect, but in spite of attention.

I will come over soon if I can, not to detect Scotticisms, but to enjoy the company of Scotchmen. Just now I am expecting Dugald Stewart and his spouse.

I have been so very bitter lately against authors, and find so much of the *infusum amarum* still remaining in my style, that I am afraid that you will not think my answer to your expostulation a very gracious one. If you do think so, pray think otherwise; you cannot be too candid with me. You will very often find me too vain for correction, but never so blind to the value of a frank and manly character as not to feel real gratitude, when it consults my good, by pointing out my errors.

SYDNEY SMITH.

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### SYDNEY SMITH TO FRANCIS JEFFREY

[*Preaching and Lecturing in London*]

*February*, 1805.

MY DEAR JEFFREY,—

I thought you had entirely forgotten me, and was pleasing myself with the notion that you were rising in the world, that your income was tripling and quadrupling in value, and that you were going through the customary and concomitant process of shedding your old friends and the companions of your obscurity—when, behold, your letter arrived, diminished your income, blunted your fame, and restored your character.

As for me, I am plagued to death with lectures, sermons, etc.; and am afraid I have rather overloaded myself. I have got through my first course I think creditably; whether any better than creditably others know better than myself. I have still ten to read, have written two upon wit and humour, and am proceeding to write three upon taste. What the subjects of the others will be I know not. I wish I had your sanity and fertility at my elbow, to resort to in cases of dulness and difficulty.

I am extremely glad, however, upon the whole, that I have engaged in the thing, and think that it will do me good, and *hereafter* amuse me, when I have more leisure.

I have not seen much of your friend Bell,[1] but mean to see more of him. He is modest, amiable, and full of zeal and enterprise in his profession. I could not have conceived that anything could be so perfect and beautiful as his wax models. I saw one to-day, which was quite the Apollo Belvedere of morbid anatomy.

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[1] Sir Charles Bell, discoverer of distinct functions of the nerves.

Horner [1] is a very happy man; his worth and talents are acknowledged by the world at a more early period than those of any independent and upright man I ever remember. He verifies an observation I have often made, that the world does not dislike originality, liberality and independence so much as the *insulting arrogance* with which they are almost always accompanied. Now, Horner pleases the best judges, and does not offend the worst.

God bless you, my dear Jeffrey!—is the prayer of your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

## SYDNEY SMITH TO LADY HOLLAND

### [*A Friend in Need*]

(*No date.*)

MY DEAR LADY HOLLAND,—

I told the little poet,[2] after the proper softenings of wine, dinner, flattery, repeating his verses, etc. etc., that a friend of mine wished to lend him some money, and I begged him to take it. The poet said that he had a very sacred and serious notion of the duties of independence, that he thought he had no right to be burdensome to others from the mere apprehensions of evil, and that he was in no immediate want. If it was necessary, he would ask me hereafter for the money without scruple; and that the knowing he had such resources in reserve, was a great comfort to him; nor had he the slightest feeling of affront on the subject, but, on the contrary, of great gratitude to his benefactor, whose name I did not mention, as the money was not received; I therefore cancel your draft, and will call upon you, if he calls upon me. This, I presume, meets your approbation. I had a great deal of conversation with him, and he is a much more sensible man than I had any idea of. I have received this morning a very kind letter from Sir Francis Baring, almost amounting to a promise that I am to be a professor in his new Institution.

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[1] Francis Horner (1778–1817), politician; contributed to the first number of the *Edinburgh Review*.

[2] Thomas Campbell.

I cannot conclude my letter without telling you that you are a very good lady for what you have done ; and that, for it, I give you my hearty benediction.

Respectfully and sincerely yours,
SYDNEY SMITH.

## SYDNEY SMITH TO LADY HOLLAND

[*The Blessings of a Contented Heart*]

Heslington, *September* 9, 1809.

MY DEAR LADY HOLLAND,—

I heard you laugh at me for being happy in the country, and upon this I have a few words to say. In the first place, whether one lives or dies, I hold, and have always held, to be of infinitely less moment than is generally supposed ; but if life is to be, then it is common sense to amuse yourself with the best you can find where you happen to be placed. I am not leading precisely the life I should choose, but that which (all things considered, as well as I could consider them) appears to me to be the most eligible. I am resolved, therefore, to like it, and to reconcile myself to it ; which is more manly than to feign myself above it, and to send up complaints by the post of being thrown away, and being desolate, and such like trash. I am prepared, therefore, either way. If the chances of life ever enable me to emerge, I will show you that I have not been wholly occupied by small and sordid pursuits. If (as the great probability is) I am come to the end of my career, I give myself up quietly to horticulture, etc. In short, if it be my lot to crawl, I will crawl contentedly ; if to fly, I will fly with alacrity ; but as long as I can possibly avoid it, I will never be unhappy. If, with a pleasant wife, three children, a good house and farm, many books, and many friends, who wish me well, I cannot be happy, I am a very silly, foolish fellow, and what becomes of me is of very little consequence. I have at least this chance of doing well in Yorkshire, that I am heartily tired of London. I beg your pardon for saying so much of myself, but I say it upon this subject once for all. . . .

I am about to open the subject of classical learning in the *Review*, from which, by some accident or other, it has hitherto abstained. It will give great offence, and therefore be more fit for this journal, the genius of which seems to consist in stroking the animal the contrary way to that which the hair lies.

I dare say it cost you much to part with Charles ; but in the present state of the world, it is better to bring up our young ones to war than to peace. I burn gunpowder every day under the nostrils of my little boy, and talk to him often of fighting, to put him out of conceit with civil sciences, and prepare him for the evil times which are coming !

Ever, respectfully and affectionately, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

### SYDNEY SMITH TO MRS. HOLLAND[1]

[*Travelling Adventures of a Canon*]

*December* 11, 1835.

MY DEAREST CHILD,—

Few are the adventures of a Canon travelling gently over good roads to his benefice. In my way to Reading I had, for my companion, the Mayor of Bristol, when I preached that sermon in favour of the Catholics. He recognized me, and we did very well together. I was terribly afraid that he would stop at the same inn, but he (thank God) stopped at the *Crown*, as a loyal man, and I, as a rude one, went on to the *Bear*. Civil waiters, wax candles, and off again the next morning, with my friend and Sir W. W——, a very shrewd, clever, coarse, entertaining man, with whom I skirmished *à l'amiable* all the way to Bath. At Bath, candles still waxen, and waiters still more profound. Being, since my travels, very much gallicized in my character, I ordered a pint of claret ; I found it incomparably the best wine I ever tasted ; it disappeared with a rapidity which surprises me even at this distance of time. The next morning, in the coach by eight, with a handsome, valetudinarian lady, upon which the coach produced the same effect as a steam-packet would do. I proposed weak, warm brandy and water ; she thought at first, it would produce inflammation of the stomach, but presently requested to have it warm and *not* weak, and she took it to the last drop, as I did the claret. All well here. God bless you, dearest child. Love to Holland.

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[1] Sydney Smith's eldest daughter, Saba; married in 1834 to Dr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Holland.

SYDNEY SMITH.

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### SYDNEY SMITH TO SIR GEORGE PHILLIPS

[*His need of Society*]

*February* 28, 1836.

MY DEAR PHILLIPS,—

You say I have many comic ideas rising in my mind; this may be true; but the champagne bottle is no better for holding the champagne. Don't you remember the old story of Carlin, the French harlequin? It settles these questions. I don't mean to say I am prone to melancholy; but I acknowledge my weakness enough to confess that I want the aid of society, and dislike a solitary life.

Thomas Brown [1] was an intimate friend of mine, and used to dine with me regularly every Sunday in Edinburgh. He was a Lake poet, a profound metaphysician, and one of the most virtuous men that ever lived. As a metaphysician, Dugald Stewart was a humbug to him. Brown had real talents for the thing. You must recognize, in reading Brown, many of those arguments with which I have so often reduced you to silence in metaphysical discussions. Your discovery of Brown is amusing. Go on! You will detect Dryden if you persevere; bring to light John Milton, and drag William Shakespeare from his ill-deserved obscurity.

SYDNEY SMITH.

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### SYDNEY SMITH TO CHARLES DICKENS

[*An Invitation from the Miss Berrys*]

Charles Street, Berkeley Square,

*June* 11, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Nobody more, and more justly, talked of than yourself.

The Miss Berrys,[2] now at Richmond, live only to become acquainted with you, and have commissioned me to request you to dine with them on Friday, the 29th, or Monday, July 1st, to meet a Canon of St. Paul's, the Rector of Combe Florey and the Vicar of Halberton [1]—all equally well known to you, to say nothing of other and better people. The Miss Berrys and Lady Charlotte Lindsay have not the smallest objection to be put into a number, but, on the contrary, would be proud of the distinction ; and Lady Charlotte, in particular, you may marry to Newman Noggs. Pray come ; it is as much as my place is worth to send them a refusal.

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[1] 'The last of the Scottish School of Metaphysicians'; also known as a poet and essayist. Died 1820.

[2] Horace Walpole's Miss Berrys (see p. 258 in companion volume— 'Sir Thomas More to Robert Burns.')

SYDNEY SMITH.

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### SYDNEY SMITH TO LORD MURRAY

[*Jeffrey and his Essays : Amusing Calculation about Eating and Drinking*]

Combe Florey, *September* 29, 1843.

MY DEAR MURRAY,—

Jeffrey has written to me to say he means to dedicate his Essays to me. This I think a very great honour, and it pleases me very much. I am sure he ought to resign. He has very feeble health ; a mild climate would suit the state of his throat. Mrs. Jeffrey thinks he could not employ himself. Wives know a great deal about husbands ; but, if she is right, I should be surprised. I have thought he had a canine appetite for books, though this sometimes declines in the decline of life. I am beautifying my house in Green street ; a comfortable house is a great source of happiness. It ranks immediately after health and a good conscience.

You are, I hear, attending more to diet than heretofore. If you wish for anything like happiness in the fifth act of life, eat and drink about one half what you could eat and drink. Did I ever tell you my calculation about eating and drinking ? Having ascertained the weight of what I could live upon, so as to preserve health and strength, and what I did live upon, I found that, between ten and seventy years of age, I had eaten and drunk forty-four horse wagon loads of meat and drink more than would have preserved me in life and health! The value of this mass of nourishment I considered to be worth seven thousand pounds sterling. It occurred to me that I must, by my voracity, have starved to death fully a hundred persons. This is a frightful calculation, but irresistibly true; and I think, dear Murray, your wagons require an additional horse each!

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[1] By which, of course, he means himself. Halberton, then attached to a stall at Bristol, was ' the living which I never see '.

Lord and Lady Lansdowne, who are rambling about this fine country, are to spend a day here next week. You must really come to see the West of England. From Combe Florey we will go together to Linton and Lynmouth, than which there is nothing finer in this island. Two of our acquaintance dead this week—Stewart Mackenzie and Bell! We must close our ranks. God bless you, my dear Murray!

SYDNEY SMITH.

### SYDNEY SMITH TO DR. HOLLAND

[*A cheerful invalid*]

Combe Florey, 1844.

*Scale of Dining*

Gruel.
Broth.
Pudding.
Panada.
Mutton-chop.
Roast and Boiled.

DEAR HOLLAND,—

I am only at broth at present, but Lyddon thinks I shall get to pudding to-morrow, and mutton-chops the next day. I long for promotion.

Yours affectionately,
SYDNEY SMITH.

## FRANCIS JEFFREY, LORD JEFFREY

1773–1850

FRANCIS JEFFREY's letter to his brother supplements Sydney Smith's account of the starting of the *Edinburgh Review*, quoted in our introductory note to the correspondence of Sydney Smith, who is not to be taken too seriously on one or two points in this connexion. The 'eighth or ninth' story of Jeffrey's house, as Mr. Stuart Reid points out in his

*Life and Times of Sydney Smith*, existed only in the writer's lively imagination, for Jeffrey's rooms at No. 18, Buccleugh Place were on the third floor; and the expression, 'I was appointed editor', is also misleading. 'Both Jeffreys and Brougham', writes Mr. Reid, 'have expressly stated that at the outset there was no recognized editor; the whole thing was only an experiment, and no such appointment was made until public approval had stamped the enterprise with success. When the proposal, however, first took shape, Sydney Smith, as the originator of the scheme, was naturally appealed to by his colleagues to read over the articles submitted, and to see the introductory numbers through the press. He accordingly revised in an informal way the first articles, and then, on his removal to London, Jeffrey was duly appointed, though not without strong misgiving on his part, to the post of editor'.

Jeffrey edited the journal at £50 a number until 1809, when his remuneration was raised to £200 a number. He remained in charge twenty years longer, meantime gaining a great reputation at the Bar, as well as in letters. Jeffrey also played a part in politics, and ended his career as a Lord of the Court of Session; but it is as a literary critic that he will always be best remembered.

## FRANCIS JEFFREY TO HIS BROTHER JOHN JEFFREY

[*The First Numbers of the 'Edinburgh Review'*]

Edinburgh, *July* 2, 1803.

MY DEAR JOHN,—

It will be a sad thing if your reformation be the cause of my falling off; yet it is certain that since you have begun to write oftener, my letters have begun to be more irregular.

I am glad you have got our *Review*, and that you like it. Your partiality to my articles is a singular proof of your judgment. In No. 3, I do Gentz, Hayley's Cowper, Sir J. Sinclair, and Thelwall. In No. 4, which is now printing, I have Miss Baillie's Plays, Comparative View of Geology, Lady Mary Wortley, and some little ones. I do not think you know any of my associates. There is the sage Horner, however, whom you have seen, and who has gone to the English bar with the resolution of being Lord Chancellor; Brougham, a great mathematician, who has just published a book upon *Colonial Policy of Europe*, which all you Americans should read: Rev. Sydney Smith, and P. Elmsley, two learned Oxonian priests, full of jokes and erudition: my excellent little Sanscrit Hamilton, who is also in the hands of Bonaparte at Fontainebleau; Thomas Thomson and John Murray, two ingenious advocates: and some dozen of occasional contributors, among whom the most illustrious, I think, are young Watt of Birmingham, and Davy of the Royal Institution. We sell 2,500 copies already, and hope to do double that in six months, if we are puffed enough. I wish you could try if you can *repandre* us upon your continent, and use what interest you can with the literati, or rather with the booksellers of New York and Philadelphia. I believe I have not told you that the concern has now become to be of some emolument. After the fourth number the publishers are to pay the writers no less than ten guineas a sheet, which is three times what was ever paid before for such work, and to allow £50 a number to an editor. I shall have the offer of that first, I believe, and I think I shall take it, with the full power of laying it down whenever I think proper. The publication is in the highest degree respectable as yet, as there are none but gentlemen connected with it. If it ever sink into the state of an ordinary bookseller's journal I have done with it.

We are all in great horror about the war here, though not half so much afraid as we ought to be. For my part I am often in absolute despair, and wish I were fairly piked, and done with it. It is most clearly and unequivocally a war of our own seeking, and an offensive war upon our part, though we have no means of offending. The consular proceedings are certainly very outrageous and provoking, and, if we had power to humble him I rather think we have had provocation enough to do it. But with our means, and in the present state and temper of Europe, I own it appears to me like insanity. There is but one ground upon which our conduct can be justified. If we are perfectly certain that France is to go to war with us, and will infallibly take some opportunity to do it with greater advantage in a year or two, there may be some prudence in being beforehand with her, and open the unequal contest in our own way. While men are mortal, and the fortunes of nations variable, however, it seems ridiculous to talk of absolute certainty for the future; and we ensure a present evil, with the magnitude of which we are only beginning to be acquainted. In the meantime we must all turn out, I fancy, and do our best. There is a corps of riflemen raising, in which I shall probably have a company. I hate the business of war, and despise the parade of it; but we must submit to both for a while. I am happy to observe that there is little of that boyish prating about uniforms, and strutting in helmets, that distinguished our former arming. We look sulky now, and manful, I think. Always, dear John, very affectionately yours.

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### FRANCIS JEFFREY TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

*[Proof of his Impartiality as a Critic]*

Queen Street, *Tuesday* (*April*, 1808).

DEAR SCOTT,—

If I did not give you credit for more magnanimity than other of your irritable tribe, I should scarcely venture to put this into your hands. As it is, I do it with no little solicitude, and earnestly hope that it will make no difference in the friendship which has hitherto subsisted between us. I have spoken of your poem exactly as I think, and though I cannot reasonably suppose that you will be pleased with everything I have said, it would mortify me very severely to believe I had given you pain. If you have any amity left for me, you will not delay very long to tell me so.[1] In the meantime, I am very sincerely yours,

F. JEFFREY.

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### FRANCIS JEFFREY TO THOMAS CAMPBELL

*[The Beauties and Blemishes of 'Gertrude of Wyoming']*

Edinburgh, *March* 1, 1809.

I have seen your *Gertrude*. The sheets were sent to Alison, and he allowed me, though very hastily, to peruse them. There is great beauty, and great tenderness, and fancy in the work—and I am sure it will be very popular. The latter part is exquisitely pathetic, and the whole touched with those soft and skyish tints of purity and truth, which fall like enchant-ments on all minds that can make anything of such matters. Many of your descriptions come nearer the tone of *The Castle of Indolence* than any succeeding poetry, and the pathos is much more graceful and delicate. . . . But there are faults too—for which you must be scolded. In the first place, it is too short—not merely for the delight of the reader—but, in some degree, for the development of the story, and for giving full effect to the fine scenes that are delineated. It looks almost as if you had cut out large portions of it, and filled up the gaps very imperfectly. There is little or nothing said, I think, of the early love, and of the childish plays of your pair, and nothing certainly of their parting, and the effects of separation on each—though you had a fine subject in his European tour, seeing everything with the eyes of a lover—a free man, and a man of the woods. It ends rather abruptly—not but that there is great spirit in the description—but a spirit not quite suitable to the soft and soothing tenor of the poem. The most dangerous faults, however, are your faults of diction. There is still a good deal of obscurity in many passages, and in others a strained and unnatural expression—an appearance of labour and hardness ; you have hammered the metal in some places till it has lost all its ductility. These are not great faults, but they are blemishes, and as dunces will find them out, noodles will see them when they are pointed to. I wish you had had courage to correct, or rather to avoid them, for with you they are faults of overfinishing and not of negligence. I have another fault to charge you with in private, for which I am more angry with you than for all the rest. Your timidity, or fastidiousness, or some other knavish quality, will not let you give your conceptions glowing, and bold, and powerful, as they present themselves ; but you must chasten, and refine, and soften them, forsooth, till half their nature and grandeur is chiselled away from them. Believe me, my dear C., the world will never know how truly you are a great and original poet, till you venture to cast before it some of the rough pearls of your fancy. Write one or two things without thinking of publication, or of what will be thought of them—and let me see them, at least, if you will not venture them any further. I am more mistaken in my prognostics than I ever was in my life, if they are not twice as tall as any of your full-dressed children. I write all this to you in a terrible hurry—but tell me instantly when your volume is to be out.

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[1] When we consider Scott's personal intimacy with Jeffrey, and the aid which he had but lately been affording to the *Edinburgh Review* itself, it must be allowed, as Lockhart remarks, that Jeffrey acquitted himself on this occasion in a manner highly creditable to his courageous sense of duty. Scott, in his reply, 'assured Jeffrey that the article had not disturbed his digestion, though he hoped neither his booksellers nor the public would agree with the opinions it expressed; and begged he would come to dinner at the hour previously appointed. Mr. Jeffrey appeared accordingly, and was received by his host with the frankest cordiality'; but Scott's letter to his brother, written seven months later—and now reprinted with the other letters of Scott—proves that he felt the harshness of Jeffrey's criticism more than he cared at the time to show.

F. JEFFREY.

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### FRANCIS JEFFREY TO LEIGH HUNT

[*Praises his 'Imagination and Fancy'*]

Edinburgh, *December*, 1844.

MY DEAR HUNT,—

I feel that I have been, not only impolite, but truly and substantially unkind and ungrateful, in not thanking you before for a little volume [1] which has given me (as you wisely anticipated) very great pleasure, and a letter, for which my heart thanked you still more than for the book ; but I have been both busy and unwell of late, and I am always lazy, and, moreover, reckon on being forgiven for all my sins of omission, at least, by all those people whose absolution is worth having.

Your book is really very charming. The citations alone, indeed, would bewitch any one who deserves to read them. But your prose is very exquisite also. There are some trivial passages, perhaps, and some that are too careless and colloquial in expression. But your idioms in general are most grateful and elegant, as well as soft and natural ; and the loving and reverent spirit which breathes from the whole work will dispose all those who agree in the fundamentals of your faith to adopt all your articles, and conform to your liturgy, without much examination.

Your Spenser Gallery is gorgeous and graceful, though I am not sure that I would always assign the subjects to the same painters with you ; for instance, I would have given Charissa to Rubens, rather than Raphael, and perhaps the Thames and the Medway also—and I would have added more subjects, both for Rembrandt and Michael Angelo.

And now I have only to hope that this little venture *succeeds* as well as it deserves ; and that we may hope, therefore, for a succession of such jewel cases. I hope this for the sake of the reading public, as much as for yours—being persuaded that the best way of breaking in careless readers to a true taste in poetry is by thus parsing and expounding as it were, to them a few exquisite passages, and so enabling them, by their light, and the master's magnifying commentary, to distinguish the elements in which all the poetical beauty consists.

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[1] Hunt's *Imagination and Fancy*, published 1844.

As for what you say of me, and my poor unpoetic name, I have only to answer that I give you full leave to print what you please of me, and would rather that you should do it, without any previous reference to me, as I should not like to sanction either *praise* or blame. I am not sure that I should be so heroically indifferent and incurious, if I did not rely a little on your indulgence, or indeed, your partiality to me; but at all events, I will even take my chance—and engage beforehand not to quarrel with your judgment.

I hope you are well and prosperous. Ever your obliged and faithful,

F. JEFFREY.

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## FRANCIS JEFFREY TO CHARLES DICKENS

[*The Christmas Carol*]

Edinburgh, *December* 26, 1843.

Blessings on your kind heart, my dear Dickens! and may it always be as light and full as it is kind, and a fountain of kindness to all within reach of its beatings! We are all charmed with your Carol, chiefly, I think, for the genuine goodness which breathes all through it, and in the true inspiring angel by which its genius has been awakened. The whole scene of the Cratchetts is like the dream of a beneficent angel in spite of its broad reality, and little tiny Tim, in life and death almost as sweet and as touching as Nelly. And then the school-day scene, with that large-hearted delicate sister, and her true inheritor, with his gall-lacking liver, and milk of human kindness for blood, and yet all so natural, and so humbly and serenely happy! Well, you should be happy yourself, for you may be sure you have done more good, and not only fastened more kindly feelings, but prompted more positive acts of beneficence, by this little publication, than can be traced to all the pulpits and confessionals in Christendom since Christmas, 1842.

And is not this better than caricaturing American knaveries, or lavishing your great gifts of fancy and observation on Pecksniffs, Dodgers, Bailleys, and Moulds. Nor is this a mere crotchet of mine, for nine-tenths of your readers, I am convinced, are of the same opinion ; and accordingly, I prophesy that you will sell three times as many of this moral and pathetic Carol as of your grotesque and fantastical Chuzzlewits.

I hope you have not fancied that I think less frequently of you, or love you less, because I have not lately written to you. Indeed it is not so ; but I have been poorly in health for the last five months, and advancing age makes me lazy and perhaps forgetful. But I do not forget my benefactors, and I owe too much to you not to have you constantly in my thoughts. I scarcely know a single individual to whom I am indebted for so much pleasure, and the means at least of being made better. I wish you had not made such an onslaught on the Americans. Even if it were all merited, it does mischief, and no good. Besides, you know that there are many exceptions ; and if ten righteous might have saved a city once, there are surely innocent and amiable men and women, and besides, boys and girls enough, in that vast region, to arrest the proscription of a nation. I cannot but hope, therefore, that you will relent before you have done with them, and contrast your deep shadings with some redeeming touches. God bless you. I must not say more to-day. With most kind love to Mrs. Dickens, always very affectionately, etc.

Since writing this in the morning, and just as I was going to seal it, in comes another copy of the Carol, with a flattering autograph on the blank page, and an address in your own "fine Roman hand." I thank you with all my heart, for this proof of your remembrance, and am pleased to think, that while I was so occupied about you, you had not been forgetful of me. Heaven bless you, and all that are dear to you. Ever yours, etc.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770–1850

The first of our Wordsworth letters shows, as Bishop Wordsworth remarks in printing it in his Life of his uncle, 'how great an effort it was to the poet to *write*, and how fortunate, therefore, he was in having at hand, through life, pens ever ready to commit his thoughts to paper. If Providence had not blessed him with a wife, a sister, a wife's sister, and a daughter, whose lives were bound up in his life, as his was in theirs, and who felt—what the world was slow in admitting—that his poems were destined for immortality, it is probable that many of his verses, muttered by him on the roads, or on the hills, or on the terrace walks of his own garden, would have been scattered to the winds'. The letters to Sir George Beaumont also indicate how fortunate Wordsworth was in his friends. The 'young man' referred to as having left him £900 was Raisley Calvert (son of the steward to the Duke of Norfolk), who, though no poet himself, was one of the first men to discover Wordsworth's genius.

> Calvert ! it must not be unheard by them
> Who may respect my name, that I to thee
> Owe many years of early liberty.
> This care was thine, when wasting sickness did condemn
> Thy youth to hopeless wasting root and stem,
> That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
> Where'er I liked, and finally array
> My temples with the Muses' diadem.

This legacy of £900 saved Wordsworth from the danger of depending upon journalism for his livelihood, and enabled him, in the autumn of 1795, to settle down with his devoted sister at Racedown Lodge, near Crewkerne, where, in the summer of 1797, Coleridge came to see him. References to this memorable visit, and to the speedy removal of Wordsworth to Alfoxden in order to live near his brother poet, will be found in Coleridge's letters. The *Lyrical Ballads*, which have for ever linked together the names of Wordsworth and Coleridge, proved a heavy loss to the enterprising Cottle, when he published the book in Bristol in the autumn of 1798. 'The sale was so slow', he writes, 'and the severity of the reviews so great, that its progress to oblivion seemed to be certain', and he was forced to part with the bulk of the first edition of 500 copies as 'remainders'. His business was transferred to Longmans shortly afterwards, when the copyright of the *Lyrical Ballads* was valued at *nil*, whereupon, at Cottle's request, it was returned to him, and he presented it to the authors. Wordsworth's fame was long deferred, but his faith in himself, and in the judgment of posterity, is strikingly shown in the letter to Lady Beaumont, written on May 21, 1807. His connexion with Sir George Beaumont—art patron and landscape painter, and a descendant of Francis Beaumont the dramatist—was one of the friendships which Wordsworth reckoned 'among the blessings of his life'. Beaumont, like Calvert, discovered the genius of Wordsworth long before the world would acknowledge it. In 1803 he presented him with an estate near Keswick, in order that he might again be near Coleridge, who had settled there in 1800, after his return from Germany. The plan fell through, for Coleridge, now a slave to opium, went to Malta in the following year to recruit his health—leaving Mrs. Coleridge and his children to be cared for by the Southeys at Greta Hall, though not, be it remembered, without making over to his wife the annuity which he was receiving from the Wedgwoods. The expenses of his voyage were covered by Wordsworth and Sir George Beaumont, and when he returned in the summer of 1806, little better for his travels, the Wordsworths sheltered him for a time at Coleorton. Here they spent the winter in Sir George Beaumont's farmhouse before removing to Allen Bank, Grasmere. Sir George remained a firm friend up to the day of his death in 1827, when he left Wordsworth an annuity of £100 to defray the expenses of a yearly tour. By this time Wordsworth had lost the old friendship with Coleridge, who had removed to London. Wordsworth himself had been living at Rydal Mount, Grasmere, for fourteen years, and Rydal Mount remained his home until his death in 1850—seven years after he had succeeded Southey as poet laureate.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

[*The Applethwaite Estate and his Distaste for Writing*]

Grasmere, *October* 14, 1803.

DEAR SIR GEORGE,—

If any person were to be informed of the particulars of your kindness to me—if it were described to him in all its delicacy and nobleness—and he should afterwards be told that I suffered eight weeks to elapse without writing to you one word of thanks or acknowledgments, he would deem it a thing absolutely impossible. It is nevertheless true. This is, in fact, the first time that I have taken up a pen, not for writing letters, but on any account whatsoever, except once, since Mr. Coleridge showed me the writings of the Applethwaite estate, and told me the little history of what you have done for me, the motives, etc. I need not say that it gave me the most heartfelt pleasure, not for my own sake chiefly, though in that point of view it might be most highly interesting to me, but as an act which, considered in all its relations as to matter and manner, it would not be too much to say, did honour to human nature; at least, I felt it as much, and it overpowered me.

Owing to a set of painful and uneasy sensations which I have, more or less, at all times about my chest, I deferred writing to you, being at first made still more uncomfortable by travelling, and loathing to do violence to myself, in what ought to be an act of pure pleasure and enjoyment, viz., the expression of my deep sense of your goodness. This feeling was, indeed, so strong in me, as to make me look upon the act of writing to you, not as the work of a moment, but as a thing not to be done but in my best, my purest, and my happiest moments. Many of these I had, but then I had not my pen, ink, and paper before me, my conveniences, 'my appliances and means to boot'; all which, the moment that I thought of them, seemed to disturb and impair the sanctity of my pleasure. I contented myself with thinking over my complacent feelings, and breathing forth solitary gratulations and thanksgivings, which I did in many a sweet and many a wild place, during my late tour. In this shape, procrastination became irresistible to me; at last I said, I will write at home from my own fireside, when I shall be at ease and in comfort. I have now been more than a fortnight at home, but the uneasiness I have mentioned has made me beat off the time when the pen was to be taken up. I do not know from what cause it is, but during the last three years I have never had a pen in my hand for five minutes before my whole frame becomes one bundle of uneasiness; a perspiration starts out all over me, and my chest is oppressed in a manner which I cannot describe. This is a sad weakness; for I am sure, though it is chiefly owing to the state of my body, that by exertion of mind I might in part control it. So, however, it is; and I mention it, because I am sure when you are made acquainted with the circumstances, though the extent to which it exists nobody can well conceive, you will look leniently upon my silence, and rather pity than blame me; though I must still continue to reproach myself, as I have done bitterly every day for these last eight weeks. . . .

It is now high time to speak of the estate, and what is to be done with it. It is a most delightful situation, and few things would give me greater pleasure than to realize the plan which you had in view for me, of building a house there. But I am afraid, I am sorry to say, that the chances are very much against this, partly on account of the state of my own affairs, and still more from the improbability of Mr. Coleridge's continuing in the country. The writings are at present in my possession, and what I should wish is, that I might be considered at present as steward of the land, with liberty to lay out the rent in planting, or any other improvement which might be thought advisable, with a view to building upon it. And if it should be out of my power to pitch my own tent there, I would then request that you give me leave to restore the property to your own hands, in order that you might have the opportunity of again presenting it to some worthy person who might be so fortunate as to be able to make that pleasant use of it which it was your wish that I should have done. . . .

They are sadly remiss at Keswick in putting themselves to trouble in defence of the country ; they came forward very cheerfully some time ago, but were so thwarted by the orders and counter-orders of the ministry and their servants, that they have thrown up the whole in disgust. At Grasmere, we have turned out almost to a man. [1] We are to go to Ambleside on Sunday to be mustered, and put on, for the first time, our military apparel. I remain, dear Sir George, with the most affectionate and respectful regard for you and Lady Beaumont,

Yours sincerely,
W. WORDSWORTH.

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### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

[*A Chapter of His Life*]

Grasmere, *February* 20, 1805.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

My father, who was an attorney of considerable eminence, died intestate when we were children ; and the chief of his personal property after his decease was expended in an unsuccessful attempt to compel the late Lord Lonsdale to pay a debt of about £5,000 to my father's estate. Enough, however, was scraped together to educate us all in different ways. I, the second son, was sent to college with a view to the profession of the church or law ; into one of which I should have been forced by necessity, had not a friend left me £900. The bequest was from a young man with whom, though I call him friend, I had had but little connexion ; and the act was done entirely from a confidence on his part that I had powers and attainments which might be of use to mankind. This I have mentioned, because it was his due, and I thought the fact would give you pleasure. Upon the interest of the £900, £400 being laid out in annuity, with £200 deducted from the principal, and £100 a legacy to my sister, and £100 more which the *Lyrical Ballads* have brought me, my sister and I contrived to live seven years, nearly eight. Lord Lonsdale then died, and the present Lord Lowther paid to my father's estate £8,500. Of this sum I believe £1,800 apiece will come to my sister and myself; at least, would have come: but £3,000 was lent out to our poor brother,[1] I mean taken from the whole sum, which was about £1,200 more than his share, which £1,200 belonged to my sister and me. This £1,200 we freely lent him: whether it was insured or no, I do not know; but I dare say it will prove to be the case; we did not, however, stipulate for its being insured. But you shall faithfully know all particulars as soon as I have learned them.

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[1] This was written at the time of the threatened French invasion. 'I have raised a corps of infantry at Coleorton', writes Sir George, 'and another of pioneers at Dunmow, and have my share of another of infantry at Haverhill. . . . I am delighted with your patriotic effusions, and, as I have your permission, shall send them to the papers. I give you the highest credit for your military exertions. . . . We must all come to it at last'.

## William Wordsworth to Sir Walter Scott[2]

[*On Dryden's Poetical Qualities*]

Patterdale, *November 7*, 1805.

My dear Scott,—

I was much pleased to hear of your engagement with Dryden[3]; not that he is, as a poet, any great favourite of mine. I admire his talents and genius highly; but his is not a poetical genius. The only qualities I can find in Dryden that are *essentially* poetical, are a certain ardour and impetuosity of mind, with an excellent ear. It may seem strange that I do not add to this, great command of language: *that* he certainly has, and of such language, too, as it is most desirable that a poet should possess, or rather that he should not be without. But it is not language that is, in the highest sense of the word, poetical, being neither of the imagination nor of the passions; I mean the amiable, the ennobling, or the intense passions. I do not mean to say that there is nothing of this in Dryden, but as little, I think, as is possible, considering how much he has written. You will easily understand my meaning, when I refer to his versification of Palamon and Arcite, as contrasted with the language of Chaucer. Dryden had neither a tender heart nor a lofty sense of moral dignity. Whenever his language is poetically impassioned, it is mostly upon unpleasing subjects, such as the follies, vices, and crimes of classes of men or of individuals. That his cannot be the language of imagination, must have necessarily followed from this—that there is not a single image from nature in the whole body of his work; and in his translation from Virgil, whenever Virgil can be fairly said to have had his *eye* upon his object, Dryden always spoils the passage.

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[1] Captain John Wordsworth, who perished from shipwreck shortly before the date of this letter.

[2] Wordsworth began his cordial friendship with Scott in 1803, during his tour with his sister in Scotland. They paid several memorable visits to each other in later years both at Grasmere and Abbotsford.

[3] Scott's edition of Dryden appeared, in eighteen volumes, in 1808.

But too much of this; I am glad that you are to be his editor. His political and satirical pieces may be greatly benefited by illustration, and even absolutely require it. A correct text is the first object of an editor; then such notes as explain difficult and obscure passages; and lastly, which is much less important, notes pointing out authors to whom the poet has been indebted, and not in the fiddling way of phrase here and phrase there (which is detestable as a general practice), but where he has had essential obligations, either as to matter or manner. If I can be of any use to you, do not fail to apply to me. One thing I may take the liberty to suggest: when you come to the Fables, might it not be advisable to print the whole of the Tales of Boccace in a smaller type in the original language?[1] If this should look too much like swelling a book, I should certainly make such extracts as would show where Dryden has most strikingly improved upon or fallen below, his original. I think his translations from Boccace are the best, at least the most practical of his poems. It is many years since I read Boccace, but I remember that Sigismunda is not married by him to Guiscard (the names are different in Boccace, in both tales, I believe, certainly in Theodore, etc.). I think Dryden has much injured the story of the marriage, and degraded Sigismunda's character by it. He has, also, to the best of my remembrance, degraded her still more, by making her love absolute sensuality. Dryden had no other notion of the passion. With all these defects, and they are very gross ones, it is a noble poem. Guiscard's answer, when first reproached by Tancred, is noble in Boccace: nothing but this; *Amor può molto più, che ne voi ne io possiamo.* This Dryden has spoiled. He says first very well, 'the faults of love by love are justified'; and then come four lines [1] of miserable rant, quite *à la Maximin.*

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[1] The *Tales* were printed by Sir Walter Scott, but not in the original language.

Farewell, and believe me ever
Your affectionate friend,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

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### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

*[Coleridge's Portraits and the Conclusion of the 'Prelude']*

Grasmere, *June* 3, 1805.

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,—

I write to you from the moss-hut at the top of my orchard, the sun just sinking behind the hills in front of the entrance, and his light falling upon the green moss of the side opposite me. A linnet is singing in the tree above, and the children of some of our neighbours, who have been to-day little John's visitors, are playing below equally noisy and happy. The green fields in the level area of the vale, and part of the lake, lie before me in quietness. I have just been reading two newspapers, full of factious brawls about Lord Melville and his delinquencies, ravage of the French in the West Indies, victories of the English in the East, fleets of ours roaming the sea in search of enemies whom they cannot find, etc., etc., and I have asked myself more than once lately, if my affections can be in the right place, caring as I do so little about what the world seems to care so much for. All this seems to me, 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' It is pleasant in such a mood to turn one's thoughts to a good man and a dear friend. I have, therefore, taken up the pen to write to you. And, first, let me thank you (which I ought to have done long ago, and should have done, but that I knew I have a licence from you to procrastinate) for your most acceptable present of Coleridge's portrait, welcome in itself, and more so as coming from you. It is as good a resemblance as I expect to see of Coleridge, taking it altogether, for I consider C.'s as a face absolutely impracticable. Mrs. Wordsworth was overjoyed at the sight of the print, Dorothy and I most pleased. We think it excellent about the eyes and forehead, which are the finest parts of C.'s face, and the general contour of the face is well given ; but, to my sister and me, it seems to fail sadly about the middle of the face, particularly at the bottom of the nose. Mrs. W. feels this also, and my sister so much, that, except when she covers the whole of the middle of the face, it seems to her so entirely to alter the expression, as rather to confound than revive in her mind the remembrance of the original. We think, as far as mere likeness goes, Hazlitt's is better ; but the expression in Hazlitt's is quite dolorous and funereal ; that in this is much more pleasing though certainly falling far below what one would wish to see infused into a picture of C.

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[1] The lines alluded to are:—

With unresisted might the monarch reigns,
He levels mountains, and he raises plains;
And not regarding difference of degree,
Abased your daughter, and exalted me.

I have the pleasure to say, that I have finished my poem [1] about a fortnight ago. I had looked forward to the day as a most happy one ; and I was indeed grateful to God for giving me life to complete the work, such as it is. But it was not a happy day for me ; I was dejected on many accounts : when I looked back upon the performance, it seemed to have a dead weight about it—the reality so far short of the expectation. It was the first long labour that I had finished ; and the doubt whether I should ever live to write *The Recluse*, and the sense which I had of this poem being so far below what I seemed capable of executing depressed me much ; above all, many heavy thoughts of my poor departed brother hung upon me, the joy which I should have had in showing him the manuscript, and a thousand other vain fancies and dreams. I have spoken of this, because it was a state of feeling new to me, the occasion being new. This work may be considered as a sort of *portico* to *The Recluse*, part of the same building, which I hope to be able, ere long to begin with in earnest ; if I am permitted to bring it to a conclusion, and to write, further, a narrative poem of the epic kind, I shall consider the task of my life as over. I ought to add that I have had the satisfaction of finding the present poem not quite of so alarming a length as I apprehended.

I wish to hear from you, if you have leisure ; but as you are so indulgent to me, it would be the highest injustice were I otherwise to you.

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[1] The autobiographical *Prelude*, which remained in manuscript forty-five years, being left by Wordsworth for publication after his death.

We have read *Madoc*[1] and been highly pleased with it. It abounds in beautiful pictures and descriptions, happily introduced, and there is an animation diffused through the whole story, though it cannot, perhaps, be said that any of the characters interest you much, except, perhaps, young Llewellyn, whose situation is highly interesting, and he appears to me the best conceived and sustained character in the piece. His speech to his uncle at the meeting in the island is particularly interesting. The poem fails in the highest gifts of the poet's mind, imagination in the true sense of the word, and knowledge of human nature and the human heart. There is nothing that shows the hand of the great master ; but the beauties in description are innumerable ; for instance, that of the figure of the bard, receiving the poetic inspiration ; that of the wife of Tlalala, the savage, going out to meet her husband ; that of Madoc, and the Atzecan king with a long name preparing for battle ; everywhere, indeed, you have beautiful descriptions, and it is a work which does the author high credit, I think. I should like to know your opinion of it. Farewell. Best remembrances and love to Lady Beaumont. Believe me,

My dear Sir George,
Your most sincere friend,
W. WORDSWORTH.

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## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LADY BEAUMONT

[*His 'Invincible Confidence' in his Poems*]

Coleorton, *May* 21, 1807.

MY DEAR LADY BEAUMONT,—

Though I am to see you so soon, I cannot but write a word or two, to thank you for the interest you take in my poems,[2] as evinced by your solicitude about their immediate reception. I write partly to thank you for this, and to express the pleasure it has given me, and partly to remove any uneasiness from your mind which the disappointments you sometimes meet with, in this labour of love, may occasion. I see that you have many battles to fight for me—more than, in the ardour and confidence of your pure and elevated mind, you have ever thought of being summoned to; but be assured that this opposition is nothing more than what I distinctly foresaw that you and my other friends would have to encounter. I say this, not to give myself credit for an eye of prophecy, but to allay any vexatious thoughts on my account which this opposition may have produced in you.

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[1] Southey's *Madoc*, published in 1805, and considered by Southey himself to be 'the best English poem since *Paradise Lost*'.

[2] His *Poems in Two Volumes*, published in 1807.

It is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work upon what is called the public. I do not here take into consideration that envy and malevolence, and all the bad passions which always stand in the way of a work of any merit from a living poet; but merely think of the pure, absolute, honest ignorance, in which all worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped, with respect to the thoughts, feelings and images on which the life of my poems depend. The things which I have taken, whether from within or without, what have they to do with routs, dinners, morning calls, hurry from door to door, from street to street, on foot or in carriage; with Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, Mr. Paul or Sir Francis Burdett, the Westminster election or the borough of Honiton? In a word—for I cannot stop to make my way through the hurry of images that present themselves to me—what have they to do with the endless talking about things nobody cares anything for except as far as their own vanity is concerned?—what have they to do (to say all at once) with a life without love? In such a life there can be no thought; for we have no thought (save thoughts of pain) but as far as we have love and admiration.

It is an awful truth, that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of the twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society. This is a truth, and an awful one, because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God.

Upon this I shall insist elsewhere; at present let me confine myself to my object; which is to make you, my dear friend, as easy-hearted as myself with respect to these poems. Trouble not yourself upon their present reception; of what moment is that compared with what I trust is their destiny?—to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous; this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all that is mortal to us) are mouldered in our graves. I am well aware how far it would seem to many I overrate my own exertions, when I speak in this way, in direct connexion with the volume which I have just made public.

I am not, however, afraid of such censure, insignificant as probably the majority of those poems would appear to very respectable persons. I do not mean London wits and witlings, for these have too many foul passions about them to be respectable, even if they had more intellect than the benign laws of Providence will allow to such a heartless existence as theirs is; but grave, kindly-natured, worthy persons, who would be pleased if they could. I hope that these volumes are not without some recommendations, even for readers of this class: but their imagination has slept; and the voice which is the voice of the poetry, without imagination, cannot be heard. . . .

My letter (as this second sheet, which I am obliged to take, admonished me) is growing to an enormous length; and yet, saving that I have expressed my calm confidence that these poems will live, I have said nothing which has a particular application to the object of it, which was to remove all disquiet from your mind on account of the condemnation they may at present incur from the portion of my contemporaries who are called the public. I am sure, my dear Lady Beaumont, if you attach any importance to it, it can only be from an apprehension that it may affect me, upon which I have already set you at ease; or from a fear that this present blame is ominous of their future or final destiny. If this be the case, your tenderness for me betrays you. Be assured that the decision of these persons has nothing to do with the question; they are altogether incompetent judges. These people in the senseless hurry of their idle lives, do not *read* books, they merely snatch a glance at them that they may talk about them. And even if it were not so, never forget what, I believe, was observed to you by Coleridge, that every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished ; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen ; this, in a certain degree, even to all persons, however wise and pure may be their lives, and however unvitiated their taste. But for those who dip into books in order to give an opinion of them, or talk about them to take up an opinion—for this multitude of unhappy and misguided, and misguiding beings, an entire regeneration must be produced ; and if this be possible, it must be a work of time. To conclude, my ears are stone-dead to this idle buzz, and my flesh as insensible as iron to these petty stings ; and, after what I have said, I am sure yours will be the same. I doubt not that you will share with me an invincible confidence that my writings (and among them these little poems) will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wherever found ; and that they will in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier. Farewell. I will not apologize for this letter, though its length demands an apology. Believe me, eagerly wishing for the happy day when I shall see you and Sir George here,

Most affectionately yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

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### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ALEXANDER DYCE

[*A Pathetic Story*]

Rydal Mount, *March* 20, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR—

I have to thank you for the very valuable present of Shirley's works, [1] just received. The preface is all that I have yet had time to read. It pleased me to find that you sympathized with me in admiration of the passage from the Duchess of Newcastle's poetry ; and you will be gratified to be told that I have the opinion you have expressed of that cold and false-hearted Frenchified coxcomb, Horace Walpole.

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[1] Dyce's Edition of Shirley's works, published in 1833 in six volumes, was a completion of Gifford's edition.

Poor Shirley ! What a melancholy end was his ! And then to be so treated by Dryden ! One would almost suspect some private cause of dislike, such as is said to have influenced Swift in regard to Dryden himself. Shirley's death reminded me of a sad close of the life of a literary person, Sanderson by name, in the neighbouring county of Cumberland. He lived in a cottage by himself, though a man of some landed estate. His cottage, from want of care on his part, took fire in the night. The neighbours were alarmed ; they ran to his rescue ; he escaped, dreadfully burned, from the flames, and lay down (he was in his seventieth year), much exhausted under a tree, a few yards from the door. His friends in the meanwhile endeavoured to save what they could of his property from the flames. He inquired most anxiously after a box in which his manuscripts and published pieces had been deposited with a view to a publication of a laboriously-corrected edition ; and, upon being told that the box was consumed, he expired in a few minutes, saying or rather sighing out the words, 'Then I do not wish to live'. Poor man ! though the circulation of his works had not extended beyond a circle of fifty miles diameter, perhaps, at furthest, he was most anxious to survive in the memory of the few who were likely to hear of him.

The publishing trade, I understand, continues to be much depressed, and authors are driven to solicit or invite subscriptions, as being in many cases the only means of giving their works to the world. I am always pleased to hear from you, and believe me,

My dear Sir,
Faithfully your obliged friend,
Wm. Wordsworth.

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

### 1772–1834

The letters of Coleridge, though heavy when compared with the correspondence of his friend, Charles Lamb, are the best character studies we have of the genius who, from a psychological point of view, is, perhaps, the most interesting personality in our literary history. Coleridge was twenty-two when he wrote his letter from Jesus College in 1794 to Robert Southey, then a freethinker and hot republican. He had met Southey at Balliol College during a visit to Oxford in the summer term, and had seen him again in Bristol on returning from a Welsh tour in August. The firstfruits of the ardent friendship which sprung up between these budding geniuses was Pantisocracy—the short-lived scheme of a new Utopia, which they were to found on the banks of the Susquehanna, in America. A more serious affair to which Coleridge found himself pledged before returning to Cambridge, was his hasty engagement to Sarah Fricker, a sister of Southey's fiancée. 'Had the betrothal been merely imprudent in a worldly point of view', as Dr. Garnett writes in his little *Life of Coleridge,* 'there would have been no room for serious censure, but Coleridge committed the inexpiable fault of contracting himself without making sure of the reality of his attachment, which, in truth, had no reality. The only excuse that can be urged for him is that his heart, as so frequently the case, had been taken at the rebound; a casual encounter with Mary Evans in Wales had revived his passion for her, and convinced him of its hopelessness'. Mary Evans, who was probably the only real love of Coleridge's life, was the sweetheart of his boyhood days at Christ's Hospital with Charles Lamb.

'Her image', he wrote to Southey, after that chance meeting with Mary in July, 'is in the sanctuary of my heart, and never can it be torn away but with the strings that grapple it to life'. Sarah Fricker, as Mrs. Coleridge, was an estimable woman in most respects, but incapable, apparently, of understanding her husband, and they gradually drifted apart. The intellectual sympathy which he so sorely needed, he found a year or so later in Dorothy Wordsworth, when the poet and his devoted sister came to Alfoxden in order to be near Coleridge at Nether Stowey. This was in 1797, and meantime Coleridge had not only become a father, but had published his first volume of *Poems,* through his generous friend and publisher, Joseph Cottle, of Bristol; had started and stopped the short-lived *Watchman* newspaper: and, alas! had begun to take laudanum. How he turned from poetry to prose, and how in time, the drug enslaved him, we may leave Coleridge to tell in his own pathetic words.

### S. T. Coleridge to Robert Southey

[*Southey, Sarah Fricker and Pantisocracy*]

Jesus College, Cambridge, *September* 18, 1794.

Well, my dear Southey! I am at last arrived at Jesus. My God! how tumultuous are the movements of my heart. Since I quitted this room what and how important events have been evolved! America! Southey! Miss Fricker! . . . . Pantisocracy! Oh, I shall have such a scheme of it. My head, my heart, are all alive. I have drawn up my arguments in battle array; they shall have the *tactician* excellence of the mathematician with the enthusiasm of the poet. The head shall be the mass; the heart the fiery spirit that fills, informs, and agitates the whole.

### SHAD GOES WITH US. HE IS MY BROTHER [1]

I am longing to be with you: make Edith [2] my sister. Surely, Southey, we shall be *frendotatoi meta frendous*—most friendly where all are friends. She must, therefore, be more emphatically my sister. . . . C—— [3] the most pantisocratic of aristocrats, has been laughing at me. Up I arose, terrible in reasoning. He fled from me, because 'he could not answer for his own sanity, sitting so near a madman of genius'. He told me that the strength of my imagination had intoxicated my reason, and that the acuteness of my reason had given a directing influence to my imagination. Four months ago the remark would not have been more elegant than just. Now it is nothing.

### S. T. Coleridge to Thomas Poole [4]

[*His Marriage and Literary Prospects*]

Wednesday evening, *October* 7, 1795.

My dear Sir,—

God bless you; or rather, God be praised for that he *has* blessed you!

On Sunday morning I was *married* at St. Mary's, Redcliff, poor Chatterton's church! The thought gave a tinge of melancholy to the solemn joy which I felt, united to the woman whom I love best of all created beings. We are settled, nay, quite domesticated, at Clevedon, our comfortable cot!

*Mrs. Coleridge!* I like to write the name. Well, as I was saying, Mrs. Coleridge desires her affectionate regards to you. I talked of you on my wedding night. God bless you!

The prospect around is perhaps more *various* than any in the kingdom. Mine eye gluttonizes the sea, the distant islands, the opposite coast! I shall assuredly write rhymes, let the nine Muses prevent it if they can. Cruikshank, I find, is married to Miss Buclé. I am happy to hear it. He will surely, I hope, make a good husband to a woman, to whom he would be a villain who should make a bad one.

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[1] "Shad" is short for Shadrach Weekes, who had been boy of all work to Southey's aunt at Bristol. Southey, who was about his own age, had taken him into his confidence, and made a companion of him.

[2] Sarah Fricker's sister, afterwards Mrs. Southey.

[3] George Caldwell, a college friend of Coleridge, afterwards Fellow and Tutor of Jesus College.

[4] Coleridge's intimacy with Poole began at Nether Stowey in the summer of 1794 and continued throughout his life. Poole found him the cottage and garden at Stowey, to which Coleridge moved with his wife and child at the end of 1796, and also raised a subscription intended to have been the foundation of an annuity for the poet.

I have given up all thoughts of the magazine, for various reasons. *Imprimis*, I must be connected with R. Southey in it, which I could not be with comfort to my feelings. *Secundo*, It is a thing of monthly *anxiety* and quotidian bustle. *Tertio*, It would cost Cottle an hundred pounds in buying paper, etc. —all on an uncertainty. *Quarto*, To publish a magazine for *one* year would be nonsense, and if I pursue what I mean to pursue, my school plan, I could not publish it for more than a year. *Quinto*, Cottle has entered into an engagement to give me a guinea and a half for every hundred lines of poetry I write, which will be perfectly sufficient for my maintenance, I only amusing myself on mornings; and all my prose works he is eager to purchase. *Sexto*, In the course of half a year I mean to return to Cambridge (having previously taken my name off from the University control) and, taking lodgings there for myself and wife, finish my great work of *Imitations*, in two volumes. My former works may, I hope, prove somewhat of genius and of erudition. Cottle has spent a day with me, and takes this letter to Bristol. My next will be long, and full of *something*. This is inanity and egotism. Pray let me hear from you, directing the letter to Mr. Cottle, who will forward it. My respectful and grateful remembrance to your mother, and believe me, dear Poole, your affectionate and mindful *friend*, shall I so soon dare to say? Believe me, my heart prompts it.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

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### S. T. COLERIDGE TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[*Four Months Later*]

Redcliff Hill, *February* 22, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,—

It is my duty and business to thank God for all his dispensations, and to believe them the best possible; but, indeed, I think I should have been more thankful, if he had made me a journeyman shoemaker,[1] instead of an author by trade. I have left my friends; I have left plenty; I have left that ease which would have secured a literary immortality, and have enabled me to give the public works conceived in moments of inspiration, and polished them with leisurely solicitude; and, alas! for what have I left them? for —— who deserted me in the hour of distress, and for a scheme of virtue impracticable and romantic! So I am forced to write for bread; write the flights of poetic enthusiasm, when every minute I am hearing a groan from my wife. Groans, and complaints, and sickness! The present hour I am in a quick-set hedge of embarrassment, and whichever way I turn a thorn runs into me! The future is cloud and thick darkness! Poverty, perhaps, and the thin faces of them that want bread, looking up to me! Nor is this all. My happiest moments for composition are broken in upon by the reflection that I must make haste. I am too late! I am already months behind! I have received my pay beforehand! Oh, wayward and desultory spirit of genius! Ill canst thou brook a taskmaster! The tenderest touch from the hand of obligation wounds thee like a scourge of scorpions.

I have been composing in the fields this morning, and came home to write down the first rude sheet of my preface, when I heard that your man had brought a note from you. I have not seen it, but I guess its contents. I am writing as fast as I can. Depend on it you shall not be out of pocket for me! I feel what I owe you, and independently of this I love you as a friend; indeed, so much, that I regret, seriously regret, that you have been my copyholder.

If I have written petulantly, forgive me. God knows I am sore all over. God bless you, and believe me that, setting gratitude aside, I love and esteem you, and have your interest at heart full as much as my own.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

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[1] Coleridge, as a schoolboy, had a passing fancy for an apprenticeship to a shoemaker.

### S. T. Coleridge to Thomas Poole

[*Charles Lloyd goes to Live with him*]

*September* 24, 1796.

My dear, very dear Poole,—

The heart thoroughly penetrated with the flame of virtuous friendship is in a state of glory ; but lest it should be exalted above measure there is given it a thorn in the flesh. I mean that when the friendship of any person forms an essential part of a man's happiness, he will at times be pestered by the little jealousies and solicitudes of imbecile humanity. Since we last parted I have been gloomily dreaming that you did not leave me so affectionately as you were wont to do. Pardon this littleness of heart, and do not think the worse of me for it. Indeed, my soul seems so mantled and wrapped around by your love and esteem, that even a dream of losing but the smallest fragment of it makes me shiver, as though some tender part of my nature were left uncovered in nakedness.

Last week I received a letter from Lloyd, [1] informing me that his parents had given their joyful concurrence to his residence with me ; but that, if it were possible that I could be absent for three or four days, his father wished particularly to see me. I consulted Mrs. Coleridge, who advised me to go. . . . Accordingly on Saturday night I went by the mail to Birmingham and was introduced to the father, who is a mild man, very liberal in his ideas, and in religion *an allegorizing Quaker.* I mean that all the apparently irrational path of his sect he allegorizes into significations, which for the most part you or I might assent to. We became well acquainted, and he expressed himself ' thankful to heaven that his son was about to be with me '. He said he would write to me concerning money matters after his son had been some time under my roof.

On Tuesday morning I was surprised by a letter from Mr. Maurice, our medical attendant, informing me that Mrs. Coleridge was delivered on Monday, September 19, 1796, half past two in the morning, of a SON, and that both she and the child were uncommonly well. I was quite annihilated with the suddenness of the information, and retired to my own room to address myself to my Maker, but I could only offer up to Him the silence of stupefied feelings. I hastened home, and Charles Lloyd returned with me. When I first saw the child, I did not feel that thrill and overflowing of affection which I expected. I looked on it with a melancholy gaze; my mind was intensely contemplative and my heart only sad. But when two hours after I saw it at the bosom of its mother, on her arm, and her eye tearful and watching its little features, then I thrilled and melted, and gave it the KISS of a *father*. . . . The baby seems strong, and the old nurse has over-persuaded my wife to discover a likeness of me in its face—no great compliment to me, for, in truth, I have seen handsomer babies in my lifetime. Its name is David Hartley Coleridge.[1] I hope that ere he be a man, if God destined him for continuance in this life, his head will be convinced of, and his heart saturated with the truth so ably supported by that great master of *Christian* philosophy.

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[1] Charles Lloyd, son of the Quaker philanthropist of the same name, lived with Coleridge from the autumn of 1796 to the middle of 1797, and also cultivated the society of Lamb. His poems, along with verses by Charles Lamb, were appended to Coleridge's volume of poems in 1797. He died in a private asylum in France in 1839.

Charles Lloyd wins upon me hourly; his heart is uncommonly pure, his affection delicate, and his benevolence enlivened but not sicklied by sensibility. He is assuredly a man of great genius; but it must be in *tête-à-tête* with one whom he loves and esteems that his colloquial powers open; and this arises not from reserve or want of simplicity, but from having been placed in situations where for years together he met with no congenial minds, and where the contrariety of his thoughts and notions to the thoughts and notions of those around him induced the necessity of habitually suppressing his feelings. His joy and gratitude to Heaven for the circumstance of his domestication with me I can scarcely describe to you; and I believe that his fixed plans are of being always with me. His father told me that if he saw that his son had formed habits of severe economy he should not insist upon his adopting any profession; as then his fair share of his (the father's) wealth would be sufficient for him.

My dearest Poole, can you conveniently receive us in the course of a week? We can both sleep in one bed, which we do now. And I have much, very much to say to you and consult with you about, for my heart is heavy respecting Derby,[1] and my feelings are so dim and huddled that though I can, I am sure, communicate them to you by my looks and broken sentences, I scarce know how to convey them in a letter. And Charles Lloyd wishes much to know you personally. I shall write on the other side of the paper two of Charles Lloyd's sonnets, which he wrote in one evening at Birmingham. The latter of them alludes to the conviction of the truth of Christianity, which he had received from me, for he had been, if not a deist, yet quite a sceptic.

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[1] After David Hartley, the philosopher, who died in 1757. Hartley Coleridge promised to be almost as remarkable as his father, but after earning an Oxford fellowship was removed from the University on the ground of intemperance, and never pulled himself together. His life by his brother Derwent was prefixed to the two volumes of Hartley's poetical works, published in 1851—two years after his death.

Let me hear from you by post immediately; and give my kind love to that young man with the soul-beaming face,[2] which I recollect much better than I do his name.

God bless you, my dear friend.

Believe me, with deep affection, yours,
S. T. COLERIDGE.

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## S. T. COLERIDGE TO CHARLES LAMB[3]

### [*The Tragic Death of Lamb's Mother*]

*September* 28, 1796.

YOUR letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupefied my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter. I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit: much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy that your faith in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to 'His God and your God'; the God of mercies, and Father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror by the glories of God manifest and the hallelujahs of angels.

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[1] A suggestion had been made that Coleridge should start a day school at Derby, but it never came to anything.

[2] Thomas Ward, who became Poole's partner, and transcribed Coleridge's correspondence in 'Poole's Copying Book'.

[3] This is one of the few letters of Coleridge to Lamb which have been preserved. It was first printed by Gillman in his *Life of Coleridge* in 1838 and is Coleridge's reply to Lamb's letter describing the death of his mother at the hands of Mary Lamb (see pp. 186–8). 'Your letter', wrote Lamb, in acknowledging this reply, 'is an inestimable treasure', but a few weeks later he took exception to the sentence, 'You are a temporary sharer in human miseries that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature', as savouring too much of theological subtlety. In this connexion Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, in his two volumes of *Letters of S. T. Coleridge* remarks that his grandfather's 'religious letter' came from his heart; 'but he was a born preacher, and naturally clothes his thoughts in rhetorical language. I have seen a note written by him within a few hours of his death, when he could scarcely direct a pen. It breathes the tenderest loving-kindness, but the expressions are elaborate and formal. It was only in poetry that he attained to simplicity'.

As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man called by sorrow and anguish and a strange dissolution of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God. We cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ; and they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of His character, and, bowed down and crushed under foot, cry in fulness of faith, 'Father, Thy will be done'.

I wish above measure to have you for a little while here; no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings; you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair. You are a temporary sharer in human miseries that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

I remain your affectionate
S. T. Coleridge.

## S. T. COLERIDGE TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[*His Visit to Wordsworth at Racedown*]

*June*, 1797.

MY DEAR COTTLE,—

I am sojourning for a few days at Racedown, the mansion of our friend Wordsworth, who has received Fox's *Achmed*. He returns you his acknowledgements, and presents his kindliest respects to you. I shall be home by Friday—not to-morrow—but the next Friday. If the *Ode on the Departing Year* be not reprinted, please to *omit* the lines from 'When shall scepter'd slaughter cease', to 'For still does Madness roam on Guilt's bleak dizzy height', inclusive.[1] The first epode is to end at the words 'murderer's fate'. Wordsworth admires my tragedy, which gives me great hopes. Wordsworth has written a tragedy himself. I speak with heartfelt sincerity, and (I think) unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel myself *a little man by his side*, and yet do not think myself the less man than I formerly thought myself. His drama is absolutely wonderful. You know I do not commonly speak in such abrupt and unmingled phrases, and therefore will the more readily believe me. There are in the piece those *profound* touches of the human heart which I find three or four times in *The Robbers* of Schiller, and often in Shakespeare, but in Wordsworth there are no *inequalities*. T. Poole's opinion of Wordsworth is that he is the greatest man he ever knew; I coincide.

It is not impossible that in the course of two or three months I may see you. God bless you, and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

## S. T. COLERIDGE TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[*Wordsworth's Two Tragedies and the 'Lyrical Ballads'*]

*May*, 1798.

MY DEAR COTTLE,—

Neither Wordsworth nor myself could have been otherwise than uncomfortable, if any but yourself had received from us the first offer of our Tragedies,[1] and of the volume of Wordsworth's Poems. At the same time, we did not expect that you could with prudence and propriety advance such a sum as we should want at the time we specified. In short, we both regard the publication of our Tragedies as an evil. It is not impossible but that in happier times they may be brought on the stage: and to throw away this chance for a mere trifle, would be to make the present moment act fraudulently and usuriously towards the future time.

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[1] This was a correction for the second edition of his early poems, republished this year, but Cottle, for some reason, omitted to make the correction.

My Tragedy employed and strained all my thoughts and faculties for six or seven months; Wordsworth consumed far more time, and far more thought, and far more genius. We consider the publication of them an evil on any terms; but our thoughts were bent on a plan, for the accomplishment of which a certain sum was necessary (the whole) at that particular time, and in order to this we resolved, although reluctantly, to part with our Tragedies: that is, if we could obtain thirty guineas for each, and at less than thirty guineas Wordsworth will not part with the copyright of his volume of Poems. We shall offer the Tragedies to no one, for we have determined to procure the money some other way. If you choose the volume of poems,[2] at the price mentioned, to be paid at the time specified, i.e. thirty guineas, to be paid some time in the last fortnight of July, you may have them; but remember, my dear fellow! I write to you now merely as a bookseller, and entreat you, in your answer, to consider yourself only; as to us, although money is necessary to our plan, [that of visiting Germany,] yet the plan is not necessary to our happiness; and if it were, Wordsworth could sell his Poems for that sum to some one else or we could procure the money without selling the Poems. So I entreat you, again and again, in your answer, which must be immediate, consider yourself only.

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[1] The two poets were both at work on tragedies when Wordsworth took up his residence at Alfoxden in order to be near Coleridge at Nether Stowey. Cottle offered thirty guineas apiece for Wordsworth's *Borderers*, and Coleridge's *Osorio*, but the offer was declined in the hope 'that in happier times, they may be brought on the stage'. The *Borderers* though praised by London critics, was rejected by the Covent Garden management; *Osorio* was also, for the time being condemned, but, sixteen years later, it was acted to crowded houses as *The Remorse*.

[2] The famous *Lyrical Ballads*, containing nineteen pieces by Wordsworth and four—including the *Ancient Mariner*—by Coleridge. Cottle gave the thirty guineas for the volume, and, in the following September—the month which saw the publication of the poems—Coleridge started on the longed-for visit to Germany, with Wordsworth and his sister. This they were enabled to do by the generosity of the Wedgwoods, the two sons of the great potter, who not only made over to Coleridge at this period an annuity of £150—on condition that he gave up all idea of entering the ministry, and devoted himself to philosophy and poetry—but paid the expenses of all three travellers during their visit to the continent.

Wordsworth has been caballed against *so long and so loudly*, that he has found it impossible to prevail on the tenant of the Alfoxden estate, to let him the house, after their first agreement is expired, so he must quit it at Midsummer: whether we shall be able to procure him a house and furniture near Stowey, we know not, and yet we must: for the hills, and the woods, and the streams, and the sea, and the shores, would break forth into reproaches against us, if we did not strain every nerve to keep their poet among them. Without joking, and in serious sadness, Poole and I cannot endure to think of losing him.

At all events, come down, Cottle, as soon as you can, but before Midsummer, and we will procure a horse easy as thy own soul, and we will go on a roam to Linton and Limouth, which, if thou comest in May, will be in all their pride of woods and waterfalls, not to speak of its august cliffs, and the green ocean, and the vast valley of Stones, all which live disdainful of the seasons, or accept new honours only from the winter's snow.

At all events come down, and cease not to believe me much and affectionately your friend

S. T. COLERIDGE.

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## S. T. COLERIDGE TO JOSEPH COTTLE.

['*The very Bitterness of Shame*']

*April* 26, 1814.

YOU have poured oil in the raw and festering wound of an old friend's conscience, Cottle! but it is *oil of vitriol!* I but barely glanced at the middle of the first page of your letter, and have seen no more of it—not from resentment (God forbid!), but from the state of my bodily and mental sufferings that scarcely permitted human fortitude to let in a new visitor of affliction.

The object of my present reply is to state the case just as it is. First, that for ten years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger staring, but the consciousness of my GUILT worse, far worse than all. I have prayed, with drops of agony on my brow, trembling not only before the justice of my Maker, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. 'I gave thee so many talents, what hast thou done with them?' Secondly, overwhelmed as I am with a sense of my direful infirmity, I have never attempted to disguise or conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole case with tears and the very bitterness of shame, but in two instances I have warned young men, mere acquaintances, who had spoken of having taken laudanum, of the direful consequences, by an awful exposition of the tremendous effects on myself.

Thirdly, though before God, I cannot lift up my eyelids, and only do not despair of His mercy, because to despair would be adding crime to crime, yet to my fellow-men I may say that I was seduced into the ACCURSED habit ignorantly. I had been almost bed-ridden for many months with swellings in my knees. In a medical journal, I unhappily met with an account of a cure performed in a similar case (or what appeared to me so, by rubbing in of laudanum, at the same time taking a given dose internally). It acted like a charm, like a miracle! I recovered the use of my limbs, of my appetite, of my spirits, and this continued for near a fortnight. At length the unusual stimulus subsided, the complaint returned, the supposed remedy was recurred to—but I cannot go through the dreary history.

Suffice it to say, that effects were produced which acted on me by terror and cowardice, of pain and sudden death, not (so help me God!) by any temptation of pleasure, or expectation, or desire of exciting pleasurable sensations. On the very contrary, Mrs. Morgan and her sister will bear witness, so far as to say, that the longer I abstained the higher my spirits were, the keener my enjoyment—till the moment, the direful moment, arrived when my pulse began to fluctuate, my heart to palpitate, and such a dreadful falling abroad, as it were, of my whole frame, such intolerable restlessness, and incipient bewilderment, that in the last of my several attempts to abandon the dire poison, I exclaimed in agony, which I now repeat in seriousness and solemnity, 'I am too poor to hazard this'. Had I but a few hundred pounds, but £200—half to send to Mrs Coleridge, and half to place myself in a private madhouse, where I could procure nothing but what a physician thought proper, and where a medical attendant could be constantly with me for two or three months (in less than that time life or death would be determined), then there might be hope. Now there is none!! O God! how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox, in his establishment; for my case is a species of madness, only that it is a derangement, an utter impotence of the volition, and not of the intellectual faculties. You bid me rouse myself: go bid a man paralytic in both arms, to rub them briskly together, and that will cure him. 'Alas'! he would reply, 'that I cannot move my arms is my complaint and my misery'.

May God bless you, and your affectionate, but most afflicted,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

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## S. T. COLERIDGE TO THOMAS ALLSOP[1]

[*On the Abuse of his Critics*]

*December* 2, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I cannot express how kind I felt your letter. Would to Heaven I had had many with feelings like yours 'accustomed to express themselves warmly and (as far as the word is applicable to you), even enthusiastically.' But, alas! during the prime manhood of my intellect I had nothing but cold water thrown on my efforts. I speak not now of my systematic and most unprovoked maligners. On *them* I have retorted only by pity and by prayer. These may have, and doubtless have, joined with the frivolity of 'the reading public' in checking and almost preventing the sale of my works; and so far have done injury to my *purse*. *Me* they have not injured. But I have loved with enthusiastic self-oblivion those who have been so well pleased that I should, year after year, flow with a hundred nameless rills into *their* main stream, that they could find nothing but cold praise and effective discouragement of every attempt of mine to roll onward in a distinct current of my own; who *admitted* that the *Ancient Mariner*, the *Christabel*, the *Remorse*, and some pages of the *Friend* were not without merit, but were abundantly anxious to acquit their judgments of any blindness to the very numerous defects. Yet they *knew* that to *praise*, as mere praise, I was characteristically, almost constitutionally, indifferent. In sympathy alone I found at once nourishment and stimulus; and for sympathy *alone* did my heart crave. They knew, too, how long and faithfully I have acted on the maxim, never to admit the *faults* of a work of genius to those who denied or were incapable of feeling and understanding the *beauties*; not from wilful partiality, but as well knowing that in *saying* truth I should, to such critics, convey falsehood. If, in one instance, in my literary life, I have appeared to deviate from this rule, first, it was not till the fame of the writer (which I had been for fourteen years successfully toiling like a second Ali to build up) had been established; and, secondly and chiefly, with the purpose and, I may safely add, with the *effect* of rescuing the necessary task from Malignant Defamers, and in order to set forth the excellences and the trifling proportion which the defects bore to the excellences. But this, my dear sir, is a mistake to which affectionate natures are too liable, though I do not remember to have ever seen it noticed—the mistaking those who are desirous and well pleased to be loved *by* you, for those who love you. Add, as a more general cause, the fact that I neither am nor ever have been of any party. What wonder, then, if I am left to decide which has been my worse enemy, the broad, pre-determined abuse of the *Edinburgh Review*,[1] etc., or the cold and brief compliments, with the warm *regrets*, of the *Quarterly?* After all, however, I have now but one sorrow relative to the ill success of my literary toils (and toils they have been, *though not undelightful toils*), and this arises wholly from the almost insurmountable difficulties which the anxieties of to-day oppose to my completion of the great work, the form and materials of which it has been the employment of the best and most genial hours of the last twenty years to mature and collect .[1] If I could but have a tolerably numerous audience to my first, or first and second Lectures on the History of Philosophy, I should entertain a strong hope of success, because I know that these lectures will be found by far the most interesting and *entertaining* of any that I have yet delivered, independent of the more permanent interest of rememberable instruction. Few and important would the errors of men be, if they did but know, first, *what they themselves meant ;* and, secondly, what the *words* mean by which they attempt to convey their meaning, and I can conceive no subject so well fitted to exemplify the mode and the importance of these two points as the History of Philosophy, treated as in the scheme of these lectures. Trusting that I shall shortly have the pleasure of seeing you here,

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[1] Coleridge had at this time been living for two years at the Grove, Highgate, with the Gillmans, who sheltered him for the rest of his life. Henceforth Coleridge was able to keep the opium habit within comparatively harmless limits. 'Here', writes Dr. Garnett, 'the age of prose begins for Coleridge; his pinions were no longer capable of lofty poetical flights, but his influence as a thinker dates from his eclipse as a poet'. Thomas Allsop is the stockbroker and author who has been described as the 'favourite disciple of Coleridge'. The poet was a frequent guest at Allsop's house, and maintained an intimate friendship with him to the end. Allsop's *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, from which this and the following letters are taken, appeared in 1836. Many of the originals of the letters to Allsop were presented by the Allsop family to the late Emperor of Brazil, who was a great admirer of Coleridge.

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[1] *Christabel* published in 1816, and *Biographia Literaria*, published a year later, were both singled out for savage abuse in the *Edinburgh Review*—and in *Blackwood's* as well.

I remain, my dear Sir,
Yours most sincerely,
S. T. COLERIDGE.

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### S. T. COLERIDGE TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[*His Completed and Uncompleted Work*]

*January,* 1821.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—

The only impression left by you on my mind is an increased desire to see you again, I could not hold you dearer, or more earnestly desire to retain you the adopted of whatever within me will remain, when the dross and alloy of infirmity shall have been purged away . . . . My health, I have reason to believe, is so intimately connected with the state of my spirits, and these again so dependent on my thoughts, prospective and retrospective, that I should not doubt the being favoured with a sufficiency for my noblest undertaking, had I the ease of heart requisite for the necessary abstraction of the thoughts, and such a reprieve from the goading of the immediate exigencies as might make tranquility possible. But, alas ! I know by experience (and the knowledge is not the less because the regret is not unmixed with self-blame, and the consciousness of want of exertion and fortitude) that my health will continue to decline as long as the pain from reviewing the barrenness of the past is great in an inverse proportion to any rational anticipations of the future. As I now am, however, from five to six hours devoted to actual writing and composition in the day is the utmost that my strength, not to speak of my nervous system, will permit ; and the invasions on this portion of my time from applications, often of the most senseless kind, are such and so many as to be almost as ludicrous even to myself as they are vexatious. In less than a week I have not seldom received half-a-dozen packets or parcels, of works printed or manuscript, urgently requesting my candid *judgment*, or my correcting hand. Add to these, letters from lords and ladies, urging me to write reviews or puffs of heaven-born geniuses, whose whole merit consists in being ploughmen or shoemakers. Ditto from actors ; entreaties for money, or recommendations to publishers, from ushers out of place, etc., etc.; and to me, who have neither interest, influence or money, and, what is still more apropos, can neither bring myself to tell smooth falsehoods nor harsh truths, and, in the struggle, too often do both in the anxiety to do neither.

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[1] The ' great work ' is described in detail in the next letter.

I have already the written materials and contents, requiring only to be put together, from the loose papers and commonplace or memorandum books, and needing no other change, whether of omission, addition, or correction, than the mere act of arranging, and the opportunity of seeing the whole collectively bring with them of course.[1] I. Characteristics of Shakspeare's dramatic Works, with a critical review of each play ; together with a relative and comparative critique on the kind and degree of the merits and demerits of the dramatic works of Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger. The History of the English Drama ; the accidental advantages it afforded to Shakspeare, without in the least detracting from the perfect originality or proper creation of the Shakspearean Drama ; the contradistinction of the latter from the Greek Drama, and its still remaining *uniqueness*, with the causes of this, from the combined influences of Shakspeare himself, as man, poet, philosopher, and, finally, by conjunction of all these, dramatic poet ; and of the age, events, manners, and state of the English language. This work, with every art of compression, amounts to three volumes of about five hundred pages each. II. Philosophical Analysis of the Genius and Works of Dante, Spenser, Milton, Cervantes, and Calderon, with similar, but more compressed Criticisms on Chaucer, Ariosto, Donne, Rabelais, and others, during the predominance of the Romantic Poetry. In one large volume. These two works will, I flatter myself, form a complete code of the principles of judgment and feeling applied to Works of Taste ; and not of Poetry only, but of Poetry in all its forms, Painting, Statuary, Music, etc., etc. III. The History of Philosophy considered as a Tendency of the Human Mind to exhibit the Powers of the Human Reason, to discover by its own Strength the Origin and Laws of Man [1] and the World, from Pythagoras to Locke and Condillac. Two volumes. IV. Letters on the Old and New Testament, and on the Doctrine and Principles held in common by the Fathers and Founders of the Reformation, addressed to a candidate for Holy Orders, including advice on the Plan and Subjects of Preaching, proper to a Minister of the Established Church.[2]

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[1] The works mentioned under heads I and II formed the bulk of the series of lectures delivered by Coleridge in 1818, and were for the most part included in the *Literary Remains*, published after his death under the editorship of H. N. Coleridge, the poet's nephew and son-in-law.

To the completion of these four works, I have literally nothing more to do than to *transcribe*, but, as I before hinted, from so many scraps and *sibylline* leaves, including margins of books and blank pages, that, unfortunately, I must be my own scribe, and not done by myself, they will be all but lost ; or perhaps (as has been too often the case already) furnish feathers for the caps of others ; some for this purpose, and some to plume the arrows of detraction, to be let fly against the luckless bird from whom they had been plucked or moulted.

In addition to these—of my GREAT WORK, [3] to the preparation of which more than twenty years of my life have been devoted, and on which my hopes of extensive and permanent utility, of fame, in the noblest sense of the word, mainly rest—that, by which I might,

> As now by thee, by all the good be known,
> When this weak frame lies moulder'd in the grave,

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[1] Probably a preliminary treatise to the 'great work' referred to below.

[2] These letters—in the form of letters, at all events—have never been published.

[3] The 'great work,' as Mr. H. D. Traill says in his study of Coleridge in the English Men of Letters series, was 'apparently nothing less than an undertaking to demolish the system of Locke and his successors, and to erect German Transcendentalism on the ruins'. J. H. Green, one of the poet's ardent disciples, took down a volume of this monumental work, and after Coleridge's death spent many years in elaborating a system of Coleridgean philosophy, his *Spiritual Philosophy*, founded on the teaching of S.T. Coleridge', appearing in two volumes in 1865.

Which self-surviving I might call my own,
Which folly cannot mar, nor hate deprave—
The incense of those powers, which, risen in flame,
Might make me dear to Him from whom they came.

Of this work, to which all my other writings (unless I except my Poems, and these I can exclude in part only) are introductory and preparative ; and the result of which (if the premises be, as I, with the most tranquil assurance, am convinced they are—insubvertible, the deductions legitimate, and the conclusions commensurate, and only commensurate, with both) must finally be a revolution of all that has been called *philosophy* or metaphysics in England and France, since the era of the commencing predominance of the mechanical system at the restoration of our second Charles, and with this the present fashionable views, not only of religion, morals, and politics, but even of the modern physics and physiology. You will not blame the earnestness of my expressions, nor the high importance which I attach to this work : for how, with less noble objects, and less faith in their attainment, could I stand acquitted of folly, and abuse of time, talents, and learning in a labour of three-fourths of my intellectual life ? Of this work, something more than a volume has been dictated by me, so as to exist fit for the press, to my friend and enlightened pupil, Mr. Green ; and more than as much again would have been evolved and delivered to paper, but that, for the last six or eight months, I have been compelled to break off our weekly meeting, from the necessity of writing (alas ! alas ! of attempting to write), for purposes, and on the subjects, of the passing day. Of my poetic works I would fain finish the *Christabel !* Alas ! for the proud time when I planned, when I had present to my mind, the materials, as well as the scheme of the Hymns entitled Spirit, Sun, Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Man ; and the Epic Poem on what still appears to me the one only fit subject remaining for an epic poem—Jerusalem besieged and destroyed by Titus.

And here comes, my dear friend—here comes my sorrow and my weakness, my grievance and my confession. Anxious to perform the duties of the day arising out of the wants of the day, these wants, too, presenting themselves in the most painful of all forms—that of a debt owing to those who will not exact it, and yet need its payment ; and the delay, the long (not live-long, but *death*-long) behind-hand of my accounts to friends, whose utmost care and frugality on the one side, and industry on the other, the wife's management and the husband's assiduity, are put in requisition, to make both ends meet, I am at once forbidden to attempt, and too perplexed earnestly to pursue, the *accomplishment* of the works worthy of me—those I mean above enumerated—even if, savagely as I have been injured by one or two of the two influensive Reviews, and with more effective enmity undermined by the utter silence or occasional detractive compliments of the other, I had the probable chance of disposing of them to the booksellers, so as even to liquidate my mere boarding accounts during the time expended in the transcription, arrangement, and proof correction. And yet, on the other hand, my heart and mind are for ever recurring to them. Yes, my conscience forces me to plead guilty. I have only by fits and starts even prayed. I have not prevailed on myself to pray to God in sincerity and entireness for the fortitude that might enable me to resign myself to the abandonment of all my life's best hopes, to say boldly to myself:—1. 'Gifted with powers confessedly above mediocrity, aided by an education, of which, no less from almost unexampled hardships and sufferings than from manifold and peculiar advantages, I have never yet found a parallel, I have devoted myself to a life of unintermitted reading, thinking, meditating, and observing. I have not only sacrificed all worldly prospects of wealth and advancement, but have in my inmost soul stood aloof from temporary reputation.[1] In consequence of these toils, and this self-dedication, I possess a calm and clear consciousness, that in many and most important departments of truth and beauty, I have outstrode my contemporaries—those at least of highest name; that the number of my printed works bears witness that I have not been idle; and the seldom acknowledged, but strictly *provable*, effects of my labours appropriated to the immediate welfare of my age, in the *Morning Post*, before and during the peace of Amiens, in the *Courier* afterwards, and in the series and various subjects of my lectures at Bristol and at the Royal and Surrey Institutions, in Fetter-lane, at Willis's Rooms, and at the Crown and Anchor (add to which, the unlimited freedom of my communications in colloquial life), may surely be allowed as evidence that I have not been useless in my generation. But, from circumstances, the *main* portion of my harvest is still on the ground, ripe indeed, and only waiting, a few for the sickle, but a large part only for the *sheaving*, and carting, and housing ; but from all this I must turn away, must let them rot as they lie, and be as though they never had been, for I must go and gather blackberries and earth-nuts, or pick mushrooms and gild oak-apples for the palates and fancies of chance customers. I must abrogate the name of philosopher and poet, and scribble as fast as I can, and with as little thought as I can, for *Blackwood's Magazine* ; or, as I have been employed for the last days, in writing MS. sermons for lazy clergymen, who stipulate 'that the composition must not be more than respectable, for fear they should be desired to publish the visitation sermon !' This I have not yet had courage to do. My soul sickens, and my heart sinks ; and thus, oscillating between both, I do neither, neither as it ought to be done, or to any profitable end. If I were to detail only the various, I might say capricious, interruptions that have prevented the finishing of this very scrawl, begun on the very day I received your last kind letter, you would need no other illustrations. Now I see but one possible plan of rescuing my permanent utility. It is briefly this, and plainly. For what we struggle with inwardly, we find at least easiest to *bolt out*, namely—that of engaging from the circle of those who think respectfully and hope highly of my powers and attainments, a yearly sum, for three or four years, adequate to my actual support, with such comforts and decencies of appearance as my health and habits have made necessaries, so that my mind may be unanxious as far as the present time is concerned ; that thus I should stand both enabled and pledged to begin with some one work of these above mentioned, and for two-thirds of my whole time to devote myself to this exclusively till finished, to take the chance of its success by the best mode of publication that would involve me in no risk ; then to proceed with the next, and so on till the works above mentioned as already in full material existence, should be reduced into formal and actual being ; while in the remaining third of my time I might go on maturing and completing my great work

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[1] I expect neither profit nor fame by my writings; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own 'exceeding great reward'; it has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the Good and the Beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.—*Preface to the first Edition of his Poems.*

(for if but easy in mind, I have no doubt either of the reawakening power or of the kindling inclination) and my *Christabel*, and what else the happier hour might inspire—and without inspiration a barrel-organ may be played right deftly ; but

> All otherwise the state of poet stands ;
> For lordly want is such a tyrant fell,
> That where he rules all power he doth expel.
> The vaunted verse a vacant head demands,
> Ne wont with crabbed Care the muses dwell :
> Unwisely weaves who takes two webs in HAND.

Now, Mr. Green has offered to contribute from £30 to £40 yearly, for three or four years ; my young friend and pupil, the son of one of my dearest old friends, £50 ; and I think that from £10 to £20 I could rely upon from another. The sum required would be about £200, to be repaid, of course, as far as the disposal and sale of my writings produce the means.

I have thus placed before you at large, wanderingly, as well as diffusely, the statement which I am inclined to send in a compressed form to a few of those of whose kind dispositions towards me I have received assurances—and to their interest and influence I must leave it—anxious, however, before I do this, to learn from you your very inmost feeling and judgment as to the previous questions. Am I entitled, have I earned a *right* to do this ? Can I do it without moral degradation ? and, lastly, can it be done without loss of character in the eyes of my acquaintance, and of my friends' acquaintance, who may have been informed of the circumstances ? That, if attempted at all, it will be attempted in such a way, and that such persons only will be spoken to, as will not expose me to indelicate rebuffs, to be afterwards matters of gossip, I know those to whom I shall intrust the statement too well to be much alarmed about.

Pray, let me either see or hear from you as soon as possible ; for, indeed, and indeed, it is no inconsiderable accession to the pleasure I anticipate from disembarrassment, that *you* would have to contemplate in a more gracious form, and in a more ebullient play of the inward fountain, the mind and manners of

My dear friend,
Your obliged and very affectionate friend,
S. T. COLERIDGE.

## C. T. Coleridge to Charles Lamb

[*Tom Hood's Anonymous 'Odes and Addresses to Great Men'*]

1825.

My dear Charles,—

This afternoon, a little, thin, mean-looking sort of a foolscap sub-octavo of poems, printed on dingy outsides, lay on the table, which the cover informed me was circulating in our book-club, so very Grub-streetish in all its exteriors, internal as well as external, that I cannot explain by what accident of impulse (assuredly there was no *motive* in play) I came to look into it. Least of all the title *Odes and Addresses to Great Men*, which connected itself in my head with *Rejected Addresses* and all the Smith and Theodore Hook squad. But, my dear Charles, it was certainly written by you, or under you, or *una cum* you. I know none of your frequent visitors capacious and assimilative enough of your converse to have reproduced you so honestly, supposing you had left yourself in pledge in his lock-up house. Gillman, to whom I read the spirited parody on the introduction to Peter Bell, the *Ode to the Great Unknown*, and to Mrs. Fry—he speaks doubtfully of Reynolds and Hood. But here come Irving and Basil Montague.

Thursday night, 10 o'clock.—No! Charles, it is *you*. I have read them over again, and I understand why you have anon'd the book. The puns are nine in ten good, many excellent, the *Newgatory* transcendant! And then the *exemplum sine exemplo* of a volume of personalities, and contemporaneities, without a single line that could inflict the infinitesimal of an unpleasance on any man in his senses—saving and except perhaps in the envy-addled brain of the despiser of your *lays*. If not a triumph over him, it is at least an ovation. Then moreover and besides, to speak with becoming modesty, excepting my own self, who is there but you who could write the musical lines and stanzas that are intermixed?

Here's Gillman come up to my garret, and driven back by the guardian spirits of four huge flower-holders of omnigenous roses and honeysuckles (Lord have mercy on his hysterical olfactories! What will he do in Paradise? I must have a pair or two of nostril plugs or nose goggles laid in his coffin) stands at the door, reading that to McAdam, and the washerwoman's letter, and he admits *the facts*. You are found *in the* *manner*, as the lawyers say ; so, Mr. Charles, hang yourself up, and send me a line by way of token and acknowledgement. My dear love to Mary. God bless you and your

Umshamabramizer,
S. T. COLERIDGE.

## S. T. COLERIDGE TO ADAM STEINMETZ KENNARD.[1]

['*On the Brink of the Grave*'].

Grove, Highgate, *July* 13, 1834.

MY DEAR GODCHILD,—

I offer up the same fervent prayer for you now as I did kneeling before the altar when you were baptized into Christ, and solemnly received as a living member of His spiritual body, the church. Years must pass before you will be able to read with an understanding heart what I now write. But I trust that the all-gracious God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, who by His only-begotten Son (all mercies in one sovereign mercy !) has redeemed you from evil ground, and willed you to be born out of darkness, but into light ; out of death, but into life ; out of sin, but into righteousness ; even into 'the Lord our righteousness '—I trust that He will graciously hear the prayers of your dear parents, and be with you as the spirit of health and growth, in body and in mind. My dear godchild, you received from Christ's minister at the baptismal font, as your Christian name, the name of a most dear friend of your father's, and who was to me even as a son—the late Adam Steinmetz, whose fervent aspirations and paramount aim, even from early youth, was to be a Christian in thought, word, and deed ; in will, mind, and affections. I, too, your godfather, have known what the enjoyment and advantages of this life are, and what the more refined pleasures which learning and intellectual power can give ; I now, on the eve of my departure, declare to you, and earnestly pray that you may hereafter live and act on the conviction, that health is a great blessing ; competence, obtained by honourable industry, a great blessing ; and a great blessing it is, to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives ; but that the greatest of all blessings, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian. But I have been likewise, through a large portion of my later life, a sufferer, sorely affected with bodily pains, languor, and manifold infirmities ; and for the last three or four years have, with few and brief intervals, been confined to a sick-room, and at this moment, in great weakness and heaviness, write from a sick-bed, hopeless of recovery, yet without prospect of a speedy removal. And I thus, on the brink of the grave, solemnly bear witness to you, that the Almighty Redeemer, most gracious in His promises to them that truly seek Him, is faithful to perform what He has promised ; and has reserved, under all pains and infirmities, the peace that passeth all understanding, with the supporting assurance of a reconciled God, who will not withdraw His spirit from me in the conflict, and in His own time will deliver me from the evil one. Oh, my dear godchild ! eminently blessed are they who begin *early* to seek, fear, and love their God, trusting wholly in the righteousness and mediation of their Lord, Redeemer, Saviour, and everlasting High Priest, Jesus Christ. Oh, preserve this as a legacy and bequest from your unseen godfather and friend.

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[1] Written twelve days before Coleridge's death.

S. T. Coleridge.

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

### 1774–1843

Southey had all but abandoned Pantisocracy—much to Coleridge's disgust —when he started on his tour through Spain and Portugal, whence the first of the following letters was written. He had also been secretly married to Edith Fricker, parting from her at the church door. The second letter brings him to 1804, when, as he points out, it was almost ten years since Coleridge had visited him in his rooms at Oxford, with those momentous results which are dealt with sufficiently in the Coleridge correspondence. Southey had little idea when he played his part in bringing about the match between Coleridge and Sarah Fricker—his future sister-in-law—that he would be called upon to shelter the wife and family of his brother poet for so many years. Well might he exclaim, as he reflected on this, and on the needs of his own growing family, 'To think how many mouths I must feed out of one inkstand ! ' but, to his honour be it remembered, he never flinched from his responsibilities, even if he did, occasionally, give Coleridge a piece of his mind on the subject. Southey's home life was in striking contrast to that of Coleridge and other great contemporaries in letters. 'In all his domestic relations', says Rogers, 'Southey was the most amiable of men ; but he had no general philanthropy ; he was what you call a *cold man*. He was never happy except when reading a book or making one. Coleridge once said to me, "I can't think of Southey without seeing him either using or mending a pen" '. It was at Keswick, which remained Southey's home for the rest of his life, that Shelley made his acquaintance, and Jefferson Hogg, Shelley's friend and biographer, gives several anecdotes concerning their relationship. 'In associating with Southey', he writes, 'not only was it necessary to salvation to refrain from touching his books, but various rites, ceremonies, and usages must be rigidly observed. At certain appointed hours only was he open to conversation; at the seasons which had been predestined from all eternity for holding intercourse with his friends. Every hour of the day had its commission—every half-hour was assigned to its own peculiar, undeviating function. The indefatigable student gave a detailed account of his most painstaking life, every moment of which was fully employed and strictly pre-arranged, to a certain literary Quaker lady. "I rise at five throughout the year; from six till eight I read Spanish; then French, for one hour; Portuguese, next, for half an hour—my watch lying on the table; I give two hours to poetry; I write prose for two hours; I translate so long; I make extracts so long"; and so of the rest, until the poor fellow had fairly fagged himself into his bed again. "And pray, when dost thou think, friend"? she asked, drily, to the great discomfiture of the future Laureate.'

## ROBERT SOUTHEY TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[*A letter from Lisbon*]

*February* 1, 1796.

'Certainly I shall hear from Mr. Cottle by the first Packet,' said I. Now I say 'probably I may hear by the next'; so does experience abate the sanguine expectations of man. What, could you not write one letter? and here am I writing not only to all my friends in Bristol, but to all in England. Indeed I should have been vexed, but that the packet brought a letter from Edith, and the pleasure that gave me allowed no feeling of vexation. What of *Joan*? Mr. Coates tells me it gains upon the public, but authors seldom hear the plain truth. I am anxious that it should reach a second edition, that I may write a new preface, and enlarge the last book. I shall omit all in the second book which Coleridge wrote.

Bristol deserves panegyric instead of satire. I know of no mercantile place so literary. Here I am among the Philistines, spending my mornings so pleasantly as books, only books, can make them, and sitting at evening the silent spectator of card playing and dancing. The English unite the spirit of commerce with the frivolous amusements of high life. One of them who plays every night (Sundays are not excepted here), will tell you how closely he attends to profit. I never pay a porter for bringing a burden till the next day (says he), for while the fellow feels his back ache with the weight, he charges high ; but when he comes the next day the feeling is gone, and he asks only half the money. And the author of this philosophical scheme is worth 200,000 pounds !

The city is a curious place ; a straggling plan ; built on the most uneven ground, with heaps of ruins in the middle and large open places. The streets filthy beyond all English ideas of filth, for they throw everything into the streets, and nothing is removed. Dead animals annoy you at every corner ; and such is the indolence and nastiness of the Portuguese, that I verily believe they would let each other rot, in the same manner, if the priests did not get something by burying them. Some of the friars are avowed to wear their clothes without changing for a year ; and this is a comfort to them : you will not wonder, therefore, that I always keep to the windward of these reverend perfumers.

The streets are very agreeable in wet weather. If you walk under the houses, you are drenched by the waterspouts. If you attempt the middle, there is a river. If you would go between both, there is the dunghill. The rains here are very violent, and the streams in the streets, on a declivity, so rapid as to throw down men ; and sometimes to overset carriages. A woman was drowned some years ago in one of the most frequented streets of Lisbon.

To-night I shall see the procession of ‘ Our Lord of the Passion ’. This image is a very celebrated one, and with great reason, for one night he knocked at the door of St. Roque's church, and there they would not admit him. After this he walked to the other end of the town, to the church of St. Grace, and there they took him in ; but a dispute now arose between the two churches, to which the image belonged ; whether to the church which he first chose, or the church that first chose him. The matter was compromised. One church has him, and the other fetches him for their processions, and he sleeps with the latter the night preceding. The better mode for deciding it had been to take the gentleman between both, and let him walk to which he liked best. What think you of this story being believed in 1796 ! ! !

The power of the Inquisition still exists, though they never exercise it, and thus the Jews save their bacon. Fifty years ago it was the greatest delight of the Portuguese to see a Jew burnt. Geddes, the then chaplain, was present at one of these detestable Autos da Fé. He says, 'The transports expressed by all ages, and all sexes, whilst the miserable sufferers were shrieking and begging mercy for God's sake, formed a scene more horrible than any out of hell'! He adds, that 'this barbarity is not their national character, for no people sympathize so much at the execution of a criminal; but it is the damnable nature of their religion, and the most diabolical spirit of their priests; their celibacy deprives them of the affections of men, and their creed gives them the ferocity of devils'. Geddes saw one man gagged, because immediately he came out of the Inquisition gates, he looked up at the sun, whose light for many years had never visited him, and exclaimed, 'How is it possible for men who behold that glorious orb, to worship any being but him who created it'! My blood runs cold when I pass that accursed building; and though they do not exercise their power, it is a reproach to human nature that the building should exist.

It is as warm here as in May with you; of course we broil in that month at Lisbon; but I shall escape the hot weather here, as I did the cold weather of England, and quit this place the latter end of April. You will, of course, see me the third day after my landing at Falmouth, or, if I can get companions in a post-chaise, sooner. This my resolution is like the law of the Medes and Persians, that altereth not. Be so good as to procure for me a set of Coleridge's *Watchman*, with his Lectures and Poems. I want to write a Tragedy here, but can find no leisure to begin with.

Portugal is much plagued with robbers, and they generally strip a man, and leave him to walk home in his birthday suit. An Englishman was served thus at Almeyda, and the Lisbon magistrates, on his complaint, took up the whole village, and imprisoned them all. Contemplate this people in what light you will, you can never see them in a good one. They suffered their best epic Poet to perish for want; and they burned to death their best dramatic writer, because he was a Jew.

Yours,
ROBERT SOUTHEY.

### ROBERT SOUTHEY TO MISS BARKER

[*His Anxiety concerning Coleridge*]

Keswick, *April* 3, 1804.

SENORA,—

Perhaps you may be anxious to hear of our goings on, and therefore, having nothing to say, I take up a very short and ugly pen to tell you so. In a fortnight's time, by God's good will, I may have better occasion to write. . . .

Coleridge is gone to Malta, and his departure affects me more than I let be seen. Let what will trouble me, I bear a calm face; and if the Boiling Well could be drawn (which, however it heaves and is agitated below, presents a smooth, undisturbed surface), that should be my emblem. It is now almost ten years since he and I first met, in my rooms at Oxford, which meeting decided the destiny of both; and now, when, after so many ups and downs, I am, for a time, settled under his roof, he is driven abroad in search of health. Ill he is, certainly and sorely ill; yet I believe if his mind was as well regulated as mine, the body would be quite as manageable. I am perpetually pained and mortified by thinking what he ought to be, for mine is an eye of miscroscopic discernment to the faults of my friends; but the tidings of his death would come upon me more like a stroke of lightning than any evil I have ever yet endured; almost it would make me superstitious, for we were two ships that left port in company. He has been sitting to Northcote for Sir George Beaumont. There is a finely painted but dismal picture of him here, with a companion of Wordsworth. I enjoy the thought of your emotion when you will see that portrait of Wordsworth. It looks as if he had been a month in the condemned hole, dieted upon bread and water, and debarred the use of soap, water, razor, and combs: then taken out of prison, placed in a cart, carried to the usual place of execution, and had just suffered Jack Ketch to take off his cravat. The best of this good joke is, that the Wordsworths are proud of the picture, and that his face is the painter's ideal of excellence; and how the devil the painter has contrived to make a likeness of so well-looking a man so ridiculously ugly *poozles* everybody.

I am expecting with pleasurable anticipation the beaver's back. Farewell.

Yours,

R. SOUTHEY.

### ROBERT SOUTHEY TO JOSEPH COTTLE[1]

[*His Gratitude to his Bristol Friend and Publisher*]

Greta Hall, *April* 28, 1808.

MY DEAR COTTLE,—

What you say of my copyrights affects me very much. Dear Cottle, set your heart at rest on that subject. It ought to be at rest. They were yours; fairly bought, and fairly sold. You bought them on the chance of their success, what no London bookseller would have done; and had they not been bought, they could not have been published at all. Nay, if you had not published *Joan of Arc*, the poem never would have existed, nor should I, in all probability, ever have obtained that reputation which is the capital on which I subsist, nor that power which enables me to support it.

But this is not all. Do you suppose, Cottle, that I have forgotten those true and most essential acts of friendship which you showed me when I stood most in need of them? Your house was my house when I had no other. The very money with which I bought my wedding ring, and paid my marriage fees, was supplied by you. It was with your sisters that I left my Edith, during my six months' absence; and for the six months after my return it was from you that I received, week by week, the little on which we lived, till I was enabled to live by other means. It is not the settling of our cash account that can cancel obligations like these. You are in the habit of preserving your letters, and if you were not, *I would entreat you to preserve this, that it might be seen hereafter.* Sure I am, that there never was a more generous, nor a kinder heart than yours, and you will believe me when I add, that there does not live that man upon earth, whom I remember with more gratitude and more affection. My heart throbs, and my eyes burn with these recollections. Good-night, my dear old friend and benefactor.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

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### SOUTHEY TO SIR SAMUEL EGERTON BRYDGES[2]

[*Affecting History of the Poet Bampfylde*][3]

SIR,— Keswick, *May* 10, 1809.

I hold myself greatly indebted to you not only for the list of authors, but for the very gratifying manner in which you have introduced my name in the *Censura Literaria*. That list, with another of equal length, for which the selections were prepared for the press, but omitted during the course of publication by the friend who undertook to superintend it, will enable me, in an additional volume, to supply the bibliographical defects of the work. It gives me great pleasure to hear that Bampfylde's remains are to be edited. The circumstances which I did not mention concerning him are these. They were related to me by Jackson, of Exeter, and minuted down immediately afterwards, when the impression which they made upon me was warm.

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[1] Cottle, having sold his business, had written to Southey regretting that he had not been able to return the copyrights of his early poems.

[2] Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges (1762–1837), bibliographer and genealogist.

[3] John Codington Bampfylde (1754–1796). His sonnets appeared in 1778.

He was the brother of Sir Charles, as you say. At the time when Jackson became intimate with him he was just in his prime, and had no other wish than to live in solitude, and amuse himself with poetry and music. He lodged in a farm-house near Chudleigh, and would oftentimes come to Exeter in a winter morning, ungloved and open-breasted, before Jackson was up (though he was an early riser), with a pocket full of music or poems, to know how he liked them. His relations thought this was a sad life for a man of family, and forced him to London. The tears ran down Jackson's cheeks when he told me the story. ‘ Poor fellow ’, said he, ‘ there did not live a purer creature, and, if they would have let him alone, he might have been alive now ’.

When he was in London, his feelings, having been forced out of their proper channel, took a wrong direction, and he soon began to suffer the punishment of debauchery. The Miss Palmer, to whom he dedicated his Sonnets (afterwards and perhaps still, Lady Inchiquin), was niece to Sir Joshua Reynolds. Whether Sir Joshua objected to his addresses on account of his irregularities in London, or on other grounds, I know not ; but this was the commencement of his madness. He was refused admittance into the house ; upon this, in a fit of half anger and half derangement, he broke the windows, and was (little to Sir Joshua's honour) sent to Newgate. Some weeks after this happened, Jackson went to London, and one of his first inquiries was for Bampfylde. Lady Bampfylde, his mother, said she knew little or nothing about him ; that she had got him out of Newgate, and he was now in some beggarly place. ‘ Where ? ’ ‘ In King Street, Holborn, she believed, but she did not know the number of the house'. Away went Jackson, and knocked at every door till he found the right. It was a truly miserable place: the woman of the house was one of the worst class of women in London. She knew that Bampfylde had no money, and that at that time he had been three days without food. When Jackson saw him, there was all the levity of madness in his manners; his shirt was ragged, and black as a coal-heaver's, and his beard of a two months' growth. Jackson sent out for food, and said he was come to breakfast with him; and he turned aside to a harpsichord in the room, literally, he said, to let him gorge himself without being noticed. He removed him from hence, and, after giving his mother a severe lecture, obtained for him a decent allowance, and left him, when he himself quitted town, in decent lodgings, earnestly begging him to write.

But he never wrote: the next news was, that he was in a private madhouse, and Jackson never saw him more. Almost the last time they met, he showed him several poems, among others, a ballad on the murder of David Rizzio; such a ballad! said he. He came that day to dine with Jackson, and was asked for copies. 'I burned them', was the reply, 'I wrote them to please you; you did not seem to like them, so I threw them into the fire'. After twenty years' confinement he recovered his senses, but not till he was dying of consumption. The apothecary urged him to leave Sloane Street (where he had always been as kindly treated as he could be) and go into his own country, saying that his friends in Devonshire would be very glad to see him. But he hid his face and answered, 'No, sir; they who knew me what I was, shall never see me what I am'. Some of these facts I should have inserted in the specimens, had not Coleridge mislaid the letter in which I had written them down, and it was not found till too late. . . .

He read the preface to me. I remember that it dwelt much upon his miraculous genius for music, and even made it intelligible to me, who am no musician. He knew nothing of the science, but would sit down to the harpsichord and produce combinations so wild, that no composer would have ventured to think of, and yet so beautiful in their effect, that Jackson (an enthusiast concerning music) spoke of them after the lapse of twenty years with astonishment and tears.

You have noticed the death of Henry Kirke White, of Nottingham, whose *Remains* I have prepared for the press. Should the enclosed specimens of his poetry please you, as I think they cannot fail to do, you will perhaps give them a place in the *Censura*. They have never been printed. Had he lived, I am persuaded that he would have placed himself in the first rank of English poets.

There is a class of books of which as yet you have taken no notice—the prose romances. They have had a greater effect upon our literature than has been supposed. On reading *Amadis of Greece*, I have found Spenser's *Mask of Cupid*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Zelmane*, and Shakspeare's *Florizel*. The latter, by name, going to court a shepherdess, who proves, of course, a princess at last. Was ever any single work honoured with such imitators! The French romances which followed (those of Calprenade, the Scudery's, etc.) were the great store-houses from whence Lee, and the dramatists of that age, drew their plots.

These considerations may induce you to give some attention to them in your very useful work.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

### ROBERT SOUTHEY TO JOHN RICKMAN[1]

[*His Faith in a Future Life*]

Keswick, *August* 17–20, 1809.

MY DEAR RICKMAN,—

I can wish you nothing better than that your life may be as long, your age as hale, and your death as easy as your father's. The death of a parent is a more awful sorrow than that of a child, but a less painful one: it is in the inevitable order and right course of nature that ripe fruit should fall: it seems like one of its mishaps when the green bud is cut off. In the outward and visible system of things, nothing is wasted: it would therefore be belying the whole system to believe that intellect and love—which are of all things the best—could perish. I have a strong and lively faith in a state of continued consciousness from this stage of existence, and that we shall recover the consciousness of some lower stages through which we may previously have past, seems to me not improbable. The supposition serves for dreams and system—the belief is a possession more precious than any other. I love life, and can thoroughly enjoy it ; but if to exist were but a life-hold property, I am doubtful whether I should think the lease worth holding. It would be better never to have been than ever to cease to be.

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[1] John Rickman, statistician and friend of Southey and Lamb. He prepared the first Census Act, 1860.

Still I shall hope for your coming. You would at any rate have been inconveniently late for the Highlands, for which as near Midsummer as possible is the best season. September is the best for this country.

### ROBERT SOUTHEY TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

[*The 'Imaginary Conversations'*;[1] *Catholic Emancipation; and the History of the American War*]

*April* 14, 1829.

THE bookseller sent me the first volume of your unpublished series. Some things in it I wished away ; with very many more you know how truly I must be delighted. Lucullus and Cæsar especially pleased me, as one of the most delightful of these conversations throughout.

You will not suppose that I am one of the sudden converts to the Catholic Emancipation. Those conversions have the ill effect of shaking all confidence in public men, and making more converts to parliamentary reform than ever could have been made by other means. For myself, I look on almost as quietly at those things from Keswick as you do from Florence, having done my duty in opposing what I believe to be a most dangerous measure, and comforting myself with the belief that things will end better than if it had been in my power to have directed their course. I suppose the next movement of the Irish Catholics, when the next movement of the drama begins, will be put down by the Duke of Wellington with a high hand ; but the ghost of the Catholic Question will be far more difficult to lay than the

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[1] Landor's greatest work, *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen*, appeared at intervals from 1824 to 1829.

Question itself would have been; there will be a great emigration of Protestants from Ireland; the struggle will be for the Catholic domination there, and we shall have the war upon a religious ground, not upon a civil pretext.

We are likely to have historians of the American War on both sides of the water. Jared Sparks, who is to publish Washington's correspondence, came over to examine our state papers. In his search, and in that which took place in consequence of it, so much matter has been ferreted out that the Government wishes to tell its own story, and my pulse was felt; but I declined, upon the grounds that others could perform the task as well, and that I have other objects which it was not likely that any other person would take up with the same good-will, and equal stock in hand to begin with.

My health, thank God, is good, and the operation I underwent last June has restored me to the free use of my strength in walking, a matter of no trifling importance for one who was born to go a-foot all the days of his life. I can now once more climb the mountains, and have a pleasant companion in my little boy, now in his eleventh year. Whatever may be his after fortunes, he will have had a happy childhood and, thus far, a happy boyhood. The change which my death would make in his happiness, and in that of others, is the only thing which casts a cloud over my prospects towards eternity. I wish I could see you and your children; and I have a hope that this may yet be, though I know not when.

God bless you.

R. S.

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### Robert Southey to Henry Taylor[1]

[*His History of the Peninsular War*]

*June* 20, 1829.

My dear H. T.,—

Here is a tit-bit of information to you respecting publishers and public taste. One of ——'s best novelists writes to me thus: 'You are not aware, perhaps, that my publisher employs supervisors, who strike out anything like dissertation, crying out ever for bustle and incident, the more thickly clustered the better. Novel readers, say these gentry, are impatient of anything else ; and they who have created this depraved appetite must continue to minister to it'.

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[1] Afterwards Sir Henry Taylor, author of *Philip Van Artevelde* and other plays in the Elizabethan manner. Died, 1886.

I have been amused by reading in the *Atlas* that I resemble Leigh Hunt very much both in my handwriting and character, both being 'elegant *pragmatics*'. A most queer fish, whose book and epistle will make you laugh when you come here next, calls me, in verse, 'a man of Helicon'. 'Elegant Pragmatic', I think, pleases better.

I am now working at the Peninsular War. Canga Arguelles has published a volume of remarks upon the English histories of that war ; it is in the main a jealous but just vindication of his countrymen against Napier. In my case he has denied one or two unimportant statements, for which my authorities are as good as his ; and pointed out scarcely any mistakes except that of paper money, for stamps, in a case where the people burnt those of the intrusive government. I am not a little pleased to see that he has not discovered a single error of the slightest importance ; but I am justly displeased that professedly writing to vindicate his countrymen against the injurious and calumniating representation of the English writers he has not specially excepted me from such an imputation, as he ought in honesty to have done.

I am also in the last part of a queer poem for Alan Cunningham. The hay asthma keeps off and on with me, sometimes better, sometimes worse, sometimes wholly suspended, and never much-to-be-complained of. As soon as my despatches are made up I shall set off with it, in the intention of bathing in the Greta, unless a shower should prevent me.

God bless you.

R. S.

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### Robert Southey to the Lord Chancellor Brougham and Vaux

[*A Scheme for a Government Academy of Letters*]

Keswick, *February* 1, 1831.

My Lord,—

The letter which your lordship did me the honour of addressing to me at this place, found me at Crediton, in the middle of last month, on a circuitous course homeward. It was not likely that deliberation would lead me to alter the notions which I have long entertained upon the subject that has, in this most unexpected manner, been brought before me ; but I should have deemed it disrespectful to have answered such a communication without allowing some days to intervene. The distance between Devonshire and Cumberland, a visit upon the way to my native city, which I had not seen for twenty years, and the engagements arising upon my return home after an absence of unusual length, will explain, and I trust excuse, the subsequent delay.

Your first question is, whether Letters would gain by the more avowed and active encouragement of the Government ?

There are literary works of national importance which can only be performed by co-operative labour, and will never be undertaken by that spirit of trade which at present preponderates in literature. The formation of an English Etymological Dictionary is one of those works ; others might be mentioned ; and in this way literature might gain much by receiving national encouragement ; but Government would gain a great deal more by bestowing it. Revolutionary governments understand this ; I should be glad if I could believe that our legitimate one would learn it before it is too late. I am addressing one who is a statesman as well as a man of letters, and who is well aware that the time is come in which governments can no more stand without pens to support them than without bayonets. They must soon know, if they do not already know it, that the volunteers as well as the mercenaries of both professions, who are not already enlisted in this service, will enlist themselves against it ; and I am afraid they have a better hold upon the soldier than upon the penman ; because the former has, in the spirit of his profession and in the sense of military honour, something which not unfrequently supplies the want of any higher principle ; and I know not that any substitute is to be found among the gentlemen of the press.

But neediness, my Lord, makes men dangerous members of society, quite as often as affluence makes them worthless ones. I am of opinion that many persons who become bad subjects because they are necessitous, because 'the world is not their friend, nor the world's law', might be kept virtuous (or, at least, withheld from mischief) by being made happy, by early encouragement, by holding out to them a reasonable hope of obtaining, in good time, an honourable station and a competent income, as the reward of literary pursuits, when followed with ability and diligence, and recommended by good conduct.

My Lord, you are now on the Conservative side. Minor differences of opinion are infinitely insignificant at this time, when in truth there are but two parties in this kingdom—the Revolutionists and the Loyalists ; those who would destroy the constitution and those who would defend it. I can have no predilections for the present administration ; they have raised the devil, who is now raging through the land ; but, in their present position, it is their business to lay him if they can ; and so far as their measures may be directed to that end I heartily say, God speed them. If schemes like yours, for the encouragement of letters, have never entered into their wishes, there can be no place for them at present in their intentions. Government can have no leisure now for attending to anything but its own and our preservation ; and the time seems not far distant when the cares of war and expenditure will come upon it once more with their all-engrossing importance. But when better times shall arrive (whosoever may live to see them) it will be worthy the consideration of any government whether the institution of an Academy, with salaries for its members (in the nature of literary or lay benefices), might not be the means of retaining in its interests, as connected with their own, a certain number of influential men of letters, who should hold those benefices, and a much greater number of aspirants who would look to them in their turn. A yearly grant of £10,000 would endow ten such appointments of £500 each for the elder class, and twenty-five of £200 each for younger men ; these latter eligible of course, and preferably, but not necessarily, to be elected to the higher benefices, as those fell vacant, and as they should have approved themselves.

The good proposed by this, as a political measure, is not that of retaining such persons to act as pamphleteers and journalists, but that of preventing them from becoming such, in hostility to the established order of things; and of giving men of letters, as a class, something to look for beyond the precarious gains of literature; thereby inducing in them a desire to support the existing institutions of their country, on the stability of which their own welfare would depend.

Your Lordship's second question,—in what way the encouragement of Government could most safely and beneficially be given—is, in the main, answered by what has been said upon the first. I do not enter into any details of the proposed institution, for that would be to think of fitting up a castle in the air. Nor is it worth while to examine how far such an institution might be perverted. Abuses there would be, as in the disposal of all preferments, civil, military or ecclesiastical; but there would be a more obvious check upon them; and where they occurred they would be less injurious in their consequences than they are in the state, the army, the navy, or the church.

With regard to prizes, methinks they are better left to schools and colleges. Honours are worth something to scientific men, because they are conferred upon such men in other countries; at home there are precedents for them in Newton and Davy, and the physicians and surgeons have them. In my judgment, men of letters are better without them, unless they are rich enough to bequeath to their family a good estate with the bloody hand, and sufficiently men of the world to think such distinctions appropriate. For myself, if we had a Guelphic order, I should choose to remain a Ghibelline.

I have written thus fully and frankly, not dreaming that your proposal is likely to be matured and carried into effect, but in the spirit of good will, and as addressing one by whom there is no danger that I can be misunderstood. One thing alone I ask from the legislature, and in the name of justice, that the injurious law of copyright should be repealed, and that the family of an author should not be deprived of their just and natural rights in his works when his permanent reputation is established. This I ask with the earnestness of a man who is conscious that he has laboured for posterity.

I remain, My Lord,
Yours with due respect,
ROBERT SOUTHEY,

## ROBERT SOUTHEY TO HENRY TAYLOR

[*Scott, Wordsworth, and a Vision of Heaven*]

Keswick *July* 15, 1813.

MY DEAR H. T.,—

This day being Friday, when no letters go for London, I intended to have sent you a note of introduction to Sir Walter ; but this day's newspaper brings account that he has had another attack, and is in extreme danger.[1] I fear this is true, because I wrote to him last week, and should most likely have heard from him in reply if he had been well. His *make* is apoplectic and I dare say he has overworked himself, with much wear and tear of anxiety to boot, which is even more injurious. Latterly his spirits have failed him, a good deal owing to the prospect of public affairs : that indeed can exhilarate such persons only as ——, and those who hope to fish in troubled waters. . . .

Wordsworth in all likelihood will be at home at the time you wish. I saw him last week ; he is more desponding than I am, and I perhaps despond less than I should do if I saw more clearly before me. After seeing the reign (I cannot call it the government) of Louis Philippe's last twelve months, Poland resisting Russia, and Italy not resisting Austria, William IV dissolving Parliament in order to effect Parliamentary reform, and Prince Leopold willing to become king of the Belgians—who can tell what to expect, or who would be surprised at anything that was most unexpected, most insane, or most absurd. Certainly what seems least to be expected is that we should escape a revolution, and yet I go to sleep at night as if there were no danger of one . . . .

Have you seen the strange book which Anastasius Hope left for publication, and which his representatives, in spite of all dissuasion, have published ? His notion of immortality and heaven is, that at the consummation of all things he, and you, and I, and John Murray, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Lambert the fat man, and the Hottentot Venus, and Thurtell, and Probert, and the twelve Apostles, and the noble martyrs, and Genghis Khan, and all his armies, and Noah with all his ancestors and all his posterity—yea, all men and all women, and all children that have ever been or ever shall be, saints and sinners alike—are all to be put together, and made into one great celestial eternal human being. He does not seem to have known how nearly this approaches Swedenborg's fancy. I do not like the scheme. I don't like the notion of being mixed up with Hume, and Hunt, and Whittle Harvey, and Philpotts, and Lord Althorpe, and the Huns, and the Hottentots, and the Jews, and the Philistines, and the Scotch, and the Irish. God forbid! I hope to be I myself; I, in an English heaven, with you yourself—you, and some others, without whom heaven would be no heaven to me. God bless you!

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[1] Sir Walter Scott died in September of the following year.

R. S.

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### ROBERT SOUTHEY TO SIR ROBERT PEEL

[*Declining the Offer of a Baronetcy, with the Addition of £300 a Year to his Income*]

Keswick, *February* 3, 1835.

DEAR SIR,—

No communication has ever surprised me so much as those which I have this day had the honour of receiving from you. I may truly say, also, that none has ever gratified me more, though they make me feel how difficult it is to serve any one who is out of the way of fortune. An unreserved statement of my condition will be the fittest and most respectful reply.

I have a pension of £200 conferred upon me through the good offices of my old friend and benefactor, Charles W. Wynn, when Lord Grenville went out of office; and I have the Laureateship. The salary of the latter was immediately appropriated, as far as it went, to a life insurance of £3,000. This, with an earlier insurance for £1,000, is the whole provision I have made for my family; and what remains of the pension after the annual payments are made, is the whole of my certain income. All beyond must be derived from my own industry. Writing for a livelihood, a livelihood is all that I have gained; for having also something better in view, and therefore never having courted popularity, nor written for the mere sake of gain, it has not been possible for me to lay by anything. Last year, for the first time in my life, I was provided with a year's expenditure beforehand. The exposition might suffice to show how utterly unbecoming and unwise it would be to accept the rank, which, so greatly to my honour, you have solicited for me, and which his Majesty would so graciously have conferred. But the tone of your letter encourages me to say more.

My life insurances have increased in value. With these, the produce of my library, my papers, and a posthumous edition of my works, there will probably be £12,000 for my family at my decease. Good fortune, with great exertions on the part of my surviving friends, might possibly extend this to £15,000, beyond which I do not dream of any possibility. I had bequeathed the whole to my wife, to be divided ultimately between our four children; and having thus provided for them, no man could have been more contented with his lot, nor more thankful to that Providence on whose especial blessing he knew that he was constantly, and as it were immediately, dependent for his daily bread.

But the confidence which I used to feel in myself is now failing. I was young, in health and heart, on my last birthday, when I completed my sixtieth year. Since then I have been shaken at the root. It has pleased God to visit me with the severest of all domestic afflictions, those alone excepted into which guilt enters. My wife, a true helpmate as ever man was blessed with, lost her senses a few months ago. She is now in a lunatic asylum; and broken sleep, and anxious thoughts, from which there is no escape in the night season, have made me feel how more than possible it is that a sudden stroke may deprive me of those faculties, by the exercise of which this poor family has hitherto been supported. Even in the event of my death, their condition would, by our recent calamity, be materially altered, for the worse; but if I were rendered helpless, all our available means would procure only a respite from actual distress.

Under these circumstances, your letter, Sir, would in other times have encouraged me to ask for such an increase of pension as might relieve me from anxiety on this score. Now that lay sinecures are in fact abolished, there is no other way by which a man can be served, who has no profession wherein to be promoted, and whom any official situation would take from the only employment for which the studies and the habits of forty years have qualified him. This way, I am aware, is not now to be thought of, unless it were practicable as part of a plan for the encouragement of literature; but to such a plan perhaps these times might not be unfavourable.

The length of this communication would require an apology, if its substance could have been compressed: but on such an occasion it seemed a duty to say what I have said: nor, indeed, should I deserve the kindness which you have expressed, if I did not explicitly declare how thankful I should be to profit by it.

I have the honour to remain,

With the sincerest respect,

Your most faithful and obliged servant,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

## ROBERT SOUTHEY TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

['*Busy with the Admirals and Cowper*']

Keswick, *May* 9, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Thank you for your new volume,[1] which it is needless for me to praise. It will do good now and hereafter; more and more as it shall be more and more widely read: and there is no danger of it ever being laid on the shelf. I am glad to see that you have touched upon our white slavery, and glad that you have annexed such a postscript.

My good daughters, who, among their other virtues, have that of being good correspondents, send full account to Rydal of our proceedings. We shall lose hope so gradually, that if we lose it, we shall hardly be sensible when it is lost. There is, however, so great an improvement in their mother's state from what it was at any time during her abode in the Retreat, that we seem to have fair grounds of hope at present. It is quite certain that in bringing her home I have done what was best for her and for ourselves.

I wish the late Administration had continued long enough in power to have provided as well for William [2] as it has done for me. It has placed me, as far as relates to the means of subsistence, at ease for the remainder of my days. Nor ought any man who devotes himself to literature consider himself ill recompensed with such an income as I shall henceforward receive from the Treasury. My new pension is directed to be paid without deductions.

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[1] *Yarrow Re-visited, and other Poems.*

[2] Wordsworth's younger son.

Bating what I suppose to be rheumatism in my right arm and an ugly rash, I am in good health, and my spirits are equal to the demands upon them. To be relieved from suspense is the greatest of all reliefs.

I am busy upon the Admirals and Cowper. After supper I compare his letters to Mr. Unwin, which are all in my hands, with the printed books, and see what has been omitted, and correct the blunders that have crept into the text. This will be a long operation. Besides this, I have heaps of his letters to Lady Hesketh, and sundry others. One very interesting one shows the state of his mind as to his worldly prospects about a year before his malady broke out. Another says, that at the Temple he carefully went through Homer with one of his friends, and compared the original with Pope throughout, execrating the translation as he went on. I shall collect a great deal from these materials, as well as add much to his printed letters.

God bless you !

R. S.

## ROBERT SOUTHEY TO ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

[*The Literary Symptoms of the Times*]

Keswick. *June* 3, 1833.

MY DEAR ALLAN,—

Thank you in my own name, and in my daughter Bertha's, for the completing volumes of your *Painters*.[1] The work is very far the best that has been written for the Family Library, and will continue to be reprinted long after all the others with which it is now associated. I do not exclude the *Life of Nelson*[2] from this : the world cares more about artists than admirals, after the lapse of centuries ; and as long as the works of those artists endure, or as long as their conceptions are perpetuated by engravings, so long will a lively interest be excited by their lives, when written as you have written them.

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[1] Cunningham's *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 1829–1833.

[2] Southey's *Life of Nelson*, however, still enjoys a wide popularity.

Give your history of the rustic poetry of Scotland the form of biography, and no bookseller will shake his head at it, unless he is a booby. People who care nothing about such a history would yet be willing to read the lives of such poets, and you may very well introduce all that you wish to bring forward under cover of the more attractive title. The biography of men who deserve to be remembered always retains its interest. . . .

Thank you for your good word in the *Athenæum*. I had not heard of it before ; little of the good or evil which is said of me reaches this place ; and as I believe the balance is generally largely on the wrong side (enmity being always more on the alert than friendship), my state is the more gracious. The new edition of Byron's work is, I think, one of the very worst symptoms of those bad times.

God bless you, my dear Allan. My daughter joins in kind remembrances to Mrs. Cunningham. Believe me always,

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

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## ROBERT SOUTHEY TO EDWARD MOXON [1]

[*Recollections of Lamb and Lloyd*]

Keswick, *February* 2, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I have been too closely engaged in clearing off the second volume of *Cowper* to reply to your inquiries concerning poor Lamb sooner. His acquaintance with Coleridge began at Christ's Hospital : Lamb was some two years, I think, his junior. Whether he was ever one of the Grecians there, might be ascertained, I suppose, by inquiring. My own impression is, that he was not. Coleridge introduced me to him in the winter of 1794–5, and to George Dyer also, from whom, if his memory has not failed, you might possibly learn more of

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[1] Publisher and versifier. Married Lamb's adopted daughter, Emma Isola, in 1833.

Lamb's early history than from any other person. Lloyd, Wordsworth, and Hazlitt became known to him through their connexion with Coleridge.

When I saw the family (one evening only, and at that time) they were lodging somewhere near *Lincoln's Inn*, on the western side (I forget the street), and were evidently in uncomfortable circumstances. The father and mother were both living; and I have some dim recollection of the latter's invalid appearance. The father's senses had failed him before that time. He published some poems in quarto. Lamb showed me once an imperfect copy: the *Sparrow's Wedding* was the title of the longest piece, and this was the author's favourite; he liked, in his dotage, to hear Charles read it.

His most familar friend, when I first saw him, was White,[1] who held some office in Christ's Hospital, and continued intimate with him as long as he lived. You know what Elia says of him. Lamb, I believe, first appeared as an author in the second edition of Coleridge's 'Poems' (Bristol 1797), and, secondly, in the little volume of blank verse with Lloyd (1798). Lamb, Lloyd, and White were inseparable in 1798; the two latter at one time lodged together, though no two men could be imagined more unlike each other. Lloyd had no drollery in his nature; White seemed to have nothing else. You will easily understand how Lamb could sympathize with both.

Lloyd, who used to form sudden friendships, was all but a stranger to me, when unexpectedly he brought Lamb down to visit me at a little village (Burton) near Christchurch, in Hampshire, where I was lodging in a very humble cottage. This was in the summer of 1797, and then, or in the following year, my correspondence with Lamb began. I saw more of him in 1802 than at any other time, for I was then six months resident in London. His visit to this country was before I came to it; it was to Lloyd and to Coleridge.

I had forgotten one of his schoolfellows, who is still living—C. V. Le Grice, a clergymen at or near Penzance. From him you might learn something of his boyhood.

Cottle had a good likeness of Lamb, in chalk, taken by an artist named Robert Hancock, about the year 1798. It looked older than Lamb was at that time; but he was old-looking.

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[1] James White, whose *Original Letters of John Falstaff and his Friends* appeared in 1796.

Coleridge introduced him to Godwin, shortly after the first number of the *Anti-Jacobin Magazine and Review* was published, with a caricature of Gillray's, in which Coleridge and I were introduced with asses' heads, and Lloyd and Lamb as toad and frog. Lamb got warmed with whatever was on the table, became disputatious, and said things to Godwin which made him quietly say: 'Pray, Mr. Lamb, are you toad or frog'? Mrs. Coleridge will remember the scene, which was to her sufficiently uncomfortable. But the next morning S. T. C. called on Lamb, and found Godwin breakfasting with him, from which time their intimacy began.

His angry letter to me in the Magazine arose out of a notion that an expression of mine in the *Quarterly Review* would hurt the sale of Elia; some one, no doubt, had said that it would. I meant to serve the book, and very well remember how the offence happened. I had written that it wanted nothing to render it altogether delightful but a saner religious feeling. This would have been the proper word if any other person had written the book. Feeling its extreme unfitness as soon as it was written, I altered it immediately for the first word which came into my head, intending to re-model the sentence when it should come to me in the proof; and that proof never came. There can be no objection to your printing all that passed upon the occasion, beginning with the passage in the *Quarterly Review*, and giving his letter.

I have heard Coleridge say that, in a fit of derangement, Lamb fancied himself to be young Norval. He told me this in relation to one of his poems.

If you will print my lines to him in Album Verses, I will send you a corrected copy. You received his letters, I trust, which Cuthbert took with him to town in October. I wish they had been more, and wish, also, that I had more to tell you concerning him, and what I have told were of more value. But it is from such fragments of recollection, and such imperfect notices, that the materials for biography must, for the most part, be collected.

Yours very truly,
ROBERT SOUTHEY.

### ROBERT SOUTHEY TO CHARLOTTE BRONTË

[‘*Literature cannot be the Business of a Woman's Life*[1]]

*March*, 1837.

WHAT you are I can only infer from your letter, which appears to be written in sincerity, though I may suspect that you have used a fictitious signature. Be that as it may, the letter and the verses bear the same stamp, and I can well understand the state of mind they indicate. . . . It is not my advice that you have asked as to the direction of your talents, but my opinion of them, and yet the opinion may be worth little, and the advice much. You evidently possess, and in no inconsiderable degree, what Wordsworth calls the ‘ faculty of verse ’. I am not depreciating it when I say that in these times it is not rare. Many volumes of poems are now published every year without attracting public attention, any one of which, if it had appeared half a century ago, would have obtained a high reputation for its author. Whoever, therefore, is ambitious of distinction in this way ought to be prepared for disappointment.

But it is not with a view to distinction that you should cultivate this talent, if you consult your own happiness. I, who have made literature my profession, and devoted my life to it, and have never for a moment repented of the deliberate choice, think myself, nevertheless, bound in duty to caution every young man who applies as an aspirant to me for encouragement and advice, against taking so perilous a course. You will say that a woman has no need of such a caution ; there can be no peril in it for her. In a certain sense this is true ; but there is a danger of which I would, with all kindness and all earnestness, warn you. The day dreams in which you habitually indulge are likely to induce a distempered state of mind ; and in proportion as all the ordinary uses of the world seem to you flat and unprofitable, you will be unfitted for them without becoming fitted for anything else. Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation. To those duties you have not yet been called, and when you are you will be less eager for celebrity. You will not seek in imagination for excitement, of which the vicissitudes of this life, and the anxieties from which you must not hope to be exempted, be your state what it may, will bring with them but too much.

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[1] Charlotte Brontë, before her first book was published, enclosed some of her poetry to Southey, and asked his opinion of it. ‘ From an excitement not unnatural in a girl who has worked herself up to the pitch of writing to a Poet Laureate and asking his opinion of her poems ’, writes Mrs Gaskell, ‘ she used some high-flown expressions, which probably, gave him the idea that she was a romantic young lady, unacquainted with the realities of life ’. Charlotte's reply will be found among her letters now reprinted.

But do not suppose that I disparage the gift which you possess ; nor that I would discourage you from exercising it : I only exhort you so to think of it, and so to use it, as to render it conducive to your own permanent good. Write poetry for its own sake ; not in a spirit of emulation, and not with a view to celebrity ; the less you aim at that the more likely you will be to deserve and finally to obtain it. So written, it is wholesome both for the heart and soul ; it may be made the surest means, next to religion, of soothing the mind and elevating it. You may embody in it your best thoughts and your wisest feelings, and in so doing discipline and strengthen them.

Farewell, Madam. It is not because I have forgotten that I was once young myself, that I write to you in this strain ; but because I remember it. You will neither doubt my sincerity nor my good-will, and however ill what has here been said may accord with your present views and temper, the longer you live the more reasonable it will appear to you. Though I may be but an ungracious admirer, you will allow me, therefore, to subscribe myself, with the best wishes for your happiness here and hereafter, your true friend,

Robert Southey.

## CHARLES LAMB

### 1775–1834

Charles Lamb is at his best as a letter-writer, though to the general reader he is probably little known even to-day outside the essays which made the name of 'Elia' famous. There is such an alluring pile of Lamb's correspondence to choose from, that it is specially hard in his case to find our space so limited. Our selection begins with the heart-breaking letter to Coleridge, describing the drama of a day which changed the whole course of his subsequent life. The tragedy was not the first sign of the hereditary taint which was the curse of the Lamb family, for 'Elia' himself had spent some time in an asylum during the previous winter. 'The six weeks that finished last year and began this', he writes, in one of his early letters, also to Coleridge, 'your humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one'. Lamb was only twenty-two at the time, and it was remarkable that the shock of the tragedy which wrecked his home a few months later did not send him back to the asylum; but it seems to have had the opposite effect, steadying his mind in a most providential manner. The aunt who is mentioned in the second of the letters to Coleridge now printed, died in the following year, and the father—a mentally feeble old man—lingered until the spring of 1799, when Mary returned to her brother, to be cherished and sustained by him with a devotion which meant the renouncement, on his side, of all hope of marriage, and only ended with his life thirty-five years later. Lamb's friendship for Coleridge—begun in the Bluecoat School days—was almost his sole comfort in the early days of his grief. 'You are the only correspondent, and, I might add, the only friend I have in the world', he writes to him in one of his letters during this period. Lamb was then a clerk in the India Office; Coleridge was at Bristol, newly and unluckily married, and had just published his first volume of poems, which included four sonnets by Lamb. It was Coleridge who—as Lamb wrote in dedicating to him the first collected edition of his works in 1818—'first kindled in me, if not the power, yet the love of poetry, and beauty, and kindliness'; and it was through Coleridge that he became rich in the friends who first helped to bring the sunshine back into his life—Southey, Wordsworth, Thomas Manning—afterwards famous as the first Englishman to enter Lhasa—and Charles Lloyd, who shared with Lamb and Coleridge the volume of poems published by Cottle at Bristol in 1797. There are letters to several of these and other friends in the following series—all selected to show the gentle Elia at different periods of his life, and in various moods, from the date of the tragedy of 1796 to within a few years of his death.

## CHARLES LAMB TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

### [*The Tragedy*]

*September*, 1796.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—

White, or some of my friends, or the public papers, by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines; my poor dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I hear she must be moved to a hospital. God has preserved to me my senses; I eat, and drink, and sleep, and have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris of the Blue-Coat School has been very kind to us, and we have no other friends; but, thank God, I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me 'the former things are passed away', and I have something more to do than to feel.

God Almighty have us all in His keeping.

C. LAMB.

Mention nothing of poetry, I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

Your own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife. You look after your family; I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God Almighty love you and all of us.

C. LAMB.

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### CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[*How he faced the Situation*]

MY DEAREST FRIEND, *October* 3, 1796.

Your letter[1] was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear, dearest, sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments on our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind and impressive (as it must be to the end of life), but tempered with religious resignation and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which, in this early stage, knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her, this morning, calm and serene; far, very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed, from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind, and religious principle, to look forward to a time when even she might recover tranquility. God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected and calm ; even on the dreadful day, and in the midst of the terrible scene, I preserved a tranquility which bystanders may have construed into indifference—a tranquility not of despair. Is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that most supported me ? I allow much to other favourable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret. On the first evening, my aunt was lying insensible, to all appearance like one dying—my father, with his poor forehead plastered over, from a wound he had received from a daughter loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly—my mother a dead and murdered corpse in the next room—yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terror and despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest in things of sense—had endeavoured after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the ignorant present time, and *this* kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me ; for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or two after the fatal one, we dressed for dinner a tongue which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down, a feeling like remorse struck me ; this tongue poor Mary got for me, and I can partake of it now, when she is far away ! A thought occurred and relieved me—if I give into this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs ; I must rise above such weaknesses. I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, though, too far. On the second day (I date from the day of horrors), as is usual in such cases, there were a matter of twenty people, I do think, supping in our room ; they prevailed with me to eat with them (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry in the room. Some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from interest; I was going to partake with them; when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room—the very next room—a mother who, through life, wished nothing but her children's welfare. Indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind. In an agony of emotion I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquility returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me, and I think it did me good.

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[1] Coleridge's letter will be found on pp. 145–6.

I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice[1] who was then in town, was with me the three or four first days, and was a brother to me, gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humouring my poor father; talked with him, read to him, played at cribbage with him (for so short is the old man's recollection that he was playing at cards, as though nothing had happened, while the coroner's inquest was sitting over the way). Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. A gentleman, brother to my godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds; and to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old lady, a cousin of my father and aunt's, a gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days. My aunt is recovered, and as well as ever, and highly pleased at thoughts of going—and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my father for her board) wholely and solely to my sister's use. Reckoning this, we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid-servant to look after him when I am out, which will be necessary, £170 or £180 rather a-year, out of which we can spare £50 or £60 at least for Mary while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life, for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into a hospital. The good lady of the madhouse, and her daughter, an elegant, sweet-behaved, young lady, love her, and are taken with her amazingly ; and I knew from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as much. Poor thing, they say she was but the other morning saying, she knew she must go to Bethlem for life ; that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream ; that she had often as she passed Bethlem thought it likely, ‘ here it may be my fate to end my days ’, conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head oftentimes and mindful of more than one severe illness of that nature before. A legacy of £100, which my father will have at Christmas, and this £20 I mentioned before, with what is in the house, will much more than set us clear. If my father, an old servant-maid, and I, can't live, and live comfortably on £130 or £120 a-year, we ought to burn by slow fires ; and I almost would that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave an unfavourable impression on your mind respecting my brother. Since this has happened, he has been very kind and brotherly ; but I fear for his mind—he has taken his ease in the world and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way ; and I know his language already, ‘ Charles, you must take care of yourself, you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to,’ etc., etc., in that style of talking. But you, a necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what is *amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good—but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father's monies in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The lady at the madhouse assures me that I may dismiss immediately both doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally a composing draught or so for a while ; and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to herself ; for £50 or guineas a-year—the outside would be £60—you know, by economy, how much more even I shall be able to spare for her comforts. She will, I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients, and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves dearly ; and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world, my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the last tincture of selfishness. I will enlarge upon her qualities poor dear, dearest soul, in a future letter, for my own comfort, for I understand her thoroughly ; and, if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found (I speak with not sufficient humility, I fear, but humanly and foolishly speaking), she will be found, I trust, uniformly great and amiable. God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind !

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[1] One of the Le Grices from Cornwall, who had been among his Blue Coat School associates.

C. Lamb.

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## Charles Lamb to S. T. Coleridge

[*A Memorable Holiday at Stowey*]

1800.

I am scarcely yet so reconciled to the loss of you, or so subsided into my wonted uniformity of feeling as to sit calmly down to think of you and write to you. But I reason myself into the belief that those few and pleasant holydays shall not have been spent in vain. I feel improvement in the recollection of many a casual conversation. The names of Tom Poole,[1] of Wordsworth and his good sister, with thine and Sarah's, are become 'familiar in my mouth as household words.' You would make me very happy, if you think W. has no objection by transcribing for me that inscription of his. I have some scattered sentences ever floating on my memory, teasing me that I cannot remember more of it. You may believe I will make no improper use of it. Believe me I can think now of many subjects on which I had planned gaining information from you ; but I forgot my 'treasure's worth while I possessed it.' Your leg has now become to me a matter of much more importance—and many a little thing, which when I was present with you seemed scarce to *indent* my notice, now presses painfully on my remembrance. . . . You will oblige me too by sending me my great coat, which I left behind in the oblivious state the mind is thrown into at parting. Is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great coat lingering so cunningly behind! At present I have none—so send it me by a Stowey wagon, if there be such a thing, directing for C. L. No. 45, Chapel Street, Pentonville, near London. But above all *that Inscription*—it will recall to me the tones of all your voices—and with them many a remembered kindness to one who could and can repay you all only by the silence of a grateful heart. I could not talk much, while I was with you, but my silence was not sullenness, nor I hope from any bad motive; but, in truth disuse has made me awkward at it. I know I behaved myself, particularly at Tom Poole's, and at Cruikshank's, most like a sulky child; but company and converse are strange to me. It was kind in you all to endure me as you did.

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[1] Coleridge's lifelong friend (see p. 145).

Are you and your dear Sarah—to me also very dear, because very kind—agreed yet about the management of little Hartley,[1] and how go on the little rogue's teeth? I will see White to-morrow, and he shall send you information on that matter; but as perhaps I can do it as well after talking with him, I will keep this letter open.

My love and thanks to you and all of you.

C.

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### CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[*With Coleridge in the Lake District*]

*September* 24, 1802.

MY DEAR MANNING,—

Since the date of my last letter, I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intended some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly intend never to learn the language; therefore there could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year, prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed peak in Derbyshire, where the devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was, a tour to the lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for, my time being precious, did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, etc., etc. We thought we had got into fairy land. But that went off (and it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose that I can ever again.[1] Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, etc. I shall never forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study, which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old fashioned organ, never play'd upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, etc. And all looking out upon the faded view of Skiddaw, and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and past much time with us; he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater; I forget the name;[1] to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up to the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call romantic, which I very much suspected before; they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water, she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad. It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers, without being controll'd by any one, to come home, and work. I felt very little. I had been dreaming I was a great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think, *i.e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or no, remains to be proved. I shall certainly be happier in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.* the night, glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant? O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spiritous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shame-worthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard, but it is just now nearest my heart.[1] Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I have been with you, benighted, etc. I feel my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

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[1] Coleridge's son Hartley was born on September 19. 1796.

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[1] This is one of the rare occasions on which Lamb has a good word to say for the country. To his mind there was nothing in all nature to compare with the crowded streets of London. (See his letter to Wordsworth a few pages on.) 'In his later years,' says Talfourd, 'I have heard him, when longing after London among the pleasant fields of Enfield, declare that his love of natural scenery would be abundantly satisfied by the patches of long waving grass, and the stunted trees, that blacken in the old churchyard nooks which you may yet find bordering on Thames Street'.

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[1] Patterdale.

C. LAMB.

### CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[*A Brother's Love*]

*June* 14, 1805.

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,—

I try to think Mary is recovering; but I cannot always feel it; and meanwhile she is lost to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a fool, bereft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I should think wrong, so used am I to look up to her in the least and the biggest perplexity. To say *all that I find her*, would be more than I think any body could possibly understand; and when I hope to have her well again so soon, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her. She is older and wiser and better than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death with me. She lives but for me. And I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade. I am stupid, and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid.

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[1] The social gatherings at the Lambs' brought poor Charles temptations which he ound hard to resist. Even a moderate indulgence in wine or spirits appears to have proved too much for him; but his one failing need not be enlarged upon. Much may be forgiven a man of so many lovable qualities.

* * * * *

I cannot resist transcribing three or four lines which poor Mary made upon a picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an auction only one week before she was taken ill. They are sweet lines and upon a sweet picture. But I send them only as the latest memorial of her.

*Virgin and Child, L. Da Vinci.*
Maternal Lady with thy virgin-grace,
Heaven-born, thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face
Men look upon, they wish to be,
A Catholic, Madonna fair, to worship thee.

You had her lines about the 'Lady Blanch.' You have not had some which she wrote upon a copy of a girl from Titian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung in our room. 'Tis light and pretty.

Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place
Of Blanch, the lady of the matchless grace?
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me,
Who in thy lifetime thou might'st be?
Thou pretty art, and fair,
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare.
No need for Blanch her history to tell,
Who ever saw her face, they there did read it well.
But when I look on thee, I only know,
There liv'd a pretty maid some hundred years ago.

This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance. That you may go on gathering strength and peace is the next wish to Mary's recovery.[1]

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[1] This was one of the periodical attacks of insanity to which Mary was subject for the remainder of her life. Generally there were preliminary warnings, and some of the most pathetic passages in Lamb's letters relate to the partings of Charles and his sister on these occasions. Some time after her recovery from the present attack she collaborated with her brother in *Tales from Shakespeare*—herself dealing with the Comedies—published in 1807.

I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait. It is not a balance of this way of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand.

CHARLES LAMB.

### CHARLES LAMB TO BERNARD BARTON [1]

['*The Miseries of Subsisting by Authorship*']

*January* 9, 1823.

THROW yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you!

Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you have but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors want for bread, some repining, others enjoying the blessed security of a spunging-house, all agreeing they had rather have been tailors, weavers-what not? rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book drudgery, what he has found them. O you know not, may you never know, the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine; but a slavery, worse than all slavery, to be a bookseller's dependant, to drudge your brains for pots of ale, and breasts of mutton, to change your FREE THOUGHTS and VOLUNTARY NUMBERS for ungracious TASK-WORK. The booksellers hate us. The reason I take to be, that contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit (a jeweller or silversmith for instance), and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the back-ground ; in our work the world gives all the credit to us, whom they consider as their journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches.

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[1] Bernard Barton (1784–1849), the Quaker poet of Woodbridge, where he remained a banking clerk till within two days of his death. Edward Fitzgerald afterwards wrote the memoir to his collected *Poems and Letters*, and also married his daughter.

* * * * *

Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public ; you may hang, starve, drown yourself for anything that worthy personage cares. I bless every star, that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle upon me the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B.B., in the banking-office ; what ! is there not from six to eleven, P.M. six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday ? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time, if you could think so ! Enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. Oh, the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts that disturb the brain of the unlucky wight, who must draw upon it for daily sustenance ! Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantle employment ; look upon them as lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome dead timber of the desk, that gives me life. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen, but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close, but unharassing way of life.[1] I am quite serious. If you can send me *Fox*, I will not keep it six weeks, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's-ear.

Yours truly
C. LAMB.

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[1] Lamb felt his East-India bondage acutely, but, as Talfourd says, 'there never was wanting a secret consciousness of the benefits which it ensured for him, the precious independence which he won by his hours of toil, and the freedom of his mind, to work only "at his own sweet will", which his confinement to the desk obtained '. It was later in this year that the immortal *Essays of Elia*, appeared in volume form—reprinted from the *London Magazine*.

### CHARLES LAMB TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[*His thorough Aversion to Byron's Character*]

London, India House, *May* 26, 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I am ashamed of not having acknowledged your kind present[1] earlier, but that unknown something, which was never yet discovered, though so often speculated upon, which stands in the way of lazy folks' answering letters, has presented its usual obstacle. It is not forgetfulness, nor disrespect, nor incivility, but terribly like all these bad things.

I have been in my time a great Epistolary scribbler, but the passion, and with it the facility, at length wears out, and it must be pumped up again by the heavy machinery of duty or gratitude, when it should run free.

I have read your *Fall of Cambria* with as much pleasure as I did your *Messiah*. Your Cambrian Poem I shall be tempted to repeat oftenest, as Human poems take me in a mood more frequently congenial than Divine. The character of Llewellyn pleases me more than any thing else perhaps, and then, some of the Lyrical Pieces are fine varieties.

It was quite a mistake that I could dislike any thing you should write about Lord Byron, for I have a thorough aversion to his character, and a very moderate admiration of his genius ; he is great in so little a way. To be a poet is to be the Man ; not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up into a permanent form of humanity. Shakspeare has thrust such rubbishly feelings into a corner—the dark dusky heart of Don John, in the *Much Ado about Nothing*. The fact is I have not yet seen your *Expostulatory Epistle* to him. I was not aware, till your question, that it was out. I shall inquire and get it forthwith.

Southey is in town, whom I have seen slightly. Wordsworth expected, whom I hope to see much of. I write with accelerated motion, for I have two or three bothering clerks and brokers about me, who always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely, but I think you do not like swearing.

I conclude, begging you to consider that I feel myself much obliged by your kindness, and shall be most happy at any and all times to hear from you.

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[1] A copy of Cottle's poem, the *Fall of Cambria*.

Dear Sir,
Yours truly,
Charles Lamb.

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### Charles Lamb to William Wordsworth

### [*His Beloved London*]

1830.

And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans*. The seasons pass with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom; autumn hath foregone its moralities—they are 'hey-pass re-pass,' as in a show-box, Yet, as far as last year recurs—for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it, that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins; have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle, called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them; with the garden but to see it grow; with the tax-gatherer but to hear him knock; with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us, save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how; quietists—confiding ravens. We have the *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite killed, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health? Intolerable dullness. What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. O! never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I would gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snoring of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teasing image of a town about one; country folks that do not look like country folks; shops two yards square, half a dozen apples and two penn'orth of overlooked ginger-bread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street; and for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels have not yet travelled (marry, they just begin to be conscious of *Red-gauntlet*),[1] to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate; the topping gentry stock-brokers; the passengers too many to insure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping, too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet Street. Confining, room-keeping, thickest winter, is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. Oh! let no native Londoner imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet, and recreative study, can make the country any thing better than altogether odious and detestable. A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for any thing there is to see in the country; but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to; any thing high may, nay must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here; it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it, read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse I gather. The last long time I heard from, you, you had knocked your head against something. Do not do so; for your head (I do not flatter) is not a nob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a nine-pin—unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a *Recluse* out of it; then would I bid the smirch'd god knock and I knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. Mary must squeeze out a line *propriâ manu*, but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear, that though I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past; she is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

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[1] Sir Walter Scott's *Red-gauntlet* was published in 1824.

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## CHARLES LAMB TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

[*The Germ of the 'Dissertation on Roast Pig'*]

DEAR C.,—

It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well—they are interesting creatures at a certain age—what a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling—and brain sauce—did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly, with no Œdipean avulsion? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no cursed compliment of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that I sent the pig, nor can form the remotest guess what part O—— could play in the business. I never knew him give anything away in his life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but at the unluckly juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, widgeons, snipes, barn-door-fowl, ducks, geese—your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as myself. They are but self extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere—where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity, there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay I should think it an affront, and undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs I ever felt of remorse was when a child—my kind old aunt had strained her pocket strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough, I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant—but thereabouts: a look-beggar, not a verbal petitionist; and in the coxcombry of taught-charity, I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me; the sum it was to her; the pleasure she had a right to expect that I—not the old impostor—should take in eating her cake; the cursed ingratitude by which under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like—and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

Yours (short of pig) to command in everything,

C. L.

## THOMAS DE QUINCEY

### 1785–1859

There is a strange parallel between the careers of De Quincey and Coleridge, who met each other for the first time in the summer following Coleridge's return from the Continent in 1806. Coleridge had then been for years a slave to his opium habit, and the youthful De Quincey was so affected by the spectacle of 'majestic power, already besieged by decay', that he sent him anonymously 'an unconditional loan' of £300. 'A noble action' remarks Dr. Garnett, 'if De Quincey had not afterwards marred it by charges of plagiarism, which hurt Coleridge less than himself'. It was about the time of his introduction to Coleridge that he began his long association with Grasmere and the Lake poets, by making a pilgrimage to Wordsworth. Two years later, when the Wordsworths moved to another house, De Quincey succeeded them in Dove Cottage, and he continued the tenancy until his removal with his family to Edinburgh in 1828. 'Cottage immortal in my remembrance'! he exclaims; 'as well it might be, for this cottage I retained through just seven-and-twenty years; this was the scene of struggles the most tempestuous and bitter within my own mind: this the scene of my despondency and unhappiness—this the scene of my happiness—a happiness which justified the faith of man's *earthly* lot as upon the whole a dowry from heaven'! It was after his marriage with Margaret Simpson, the lovely daughter of a neighbouring dalesman—who proved a most devoted wife—that De Quincey turned to journalism to support the needs of his growing family and the increasing demands of the opium habit. For a short time he edited the *Westmoreland Gazette*, and thence in 1821 proceeded to London, there to make his name at once with *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. De Quincey first 'tampered with opium' to relieve neuralgic pains during his Oxford days—before his introduction to Coleridge and Wordsworth. He increased the dose, partly as a mental stimulant, partly because it afforded him relief from the painful irritation in the stomach which had resulted from his months of starvation in London years before—after running away from school to become 'a hopeless vagrant upon the earth'. How completely the drug overmastered him, he has himself told in his *Confessions*, published in 1821; and in the letter of 1844, now reprinted, he tells how he succeeded at last in regaining the mastery—and keeping it, though he never entirely escaped from the habit. 'His jottings and memoranda during this period', writes Dr. Japp in his *Life of De Quincey*—originally published by Mr. John Hogg, by whose permission the following letters from that work are now reprinted—'show that he possessed more strength of will and self-control than he is usually credited with, else assuredly he must now have succumbed. Having convinced himself of the curse that excessive opium indulgence had been to him, he once more set himself resolutely to subdue it. His constant, careful jottings of graduated reductions day by day—his patient records of the effect of ordinary articles of diet, coffee, cocoa, etc.—his measured round of exercise, amounting to fifteen or twenty miles per day, often taken in the little treadmill walk of the garden attached to the Lasswade Cottage (his home near Edinburgh), forty rounds counting for a mile—all are touching in the agony that may be read between the lines.'

1853.

### THOMAS DE QUINCEY TO MISS MITFORD[1]

[*Pathetic Picture of his Nervous Sufferings*]

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—

I am stung with compunction—exaggeration there is *not* in that word—when I figure to myself the sort of picture, which any outside observer would just now frame of our several shares in the sort of intercourse going on between us. Your condescension on the one side in continuing to answer my daughter's letters, and on the other side of my own lordly arrogance (as it certainly would appear to a stranger) in sitting at ease and addressing you (if I can be said to do so at all) by proxy. One fact which my daughter (I believe) had communicated to you, serves to mitigate the atrocity of this picture—viz, that I *did* address to you, and all but finished, a pretty long letter. Perhaps she has not told you that since that I have written two others, in all three. Where are they ? you ask. Hereafter I will explain that, and you will then understand that I not only know where they are, but that they are recoverable. Why they disappeared for a time, and how they came to do so, is a point which my daughter could not explain, seeing that she is not at all aware of it. No purpose could be answered by my vainly endeavouring to make intelligible for my daughters what I cannot make intelligible for myself—the undecipherable horror that night and day broods over my nervous system. One effect of this is to cause, at uncertain intervals, such whirlwinds of impatience as precipitate me violently, whether I will or not, into acts that would seem insanities, but are not such in fact, as my understanding is never under any delusion. Whatever I may be writing becomes suddenly over-spread with a dark frenzy of horror. I am using words, perhaps, that are tautologic ; but it is because no language can give expression to the sudden storm of frightful revelations opening upon me from an eternity not coming, but past and irrevocable. Whatever I may have been writing is suddenly wrapt, as it were, in one sheet of consuming fire—the very paper is poisoned to my eyes. I cannot endure to look at it, and I sweep it away into vast piles of unfinished letters, or inchoate essays begun and interrupted under circumstances the same in kind, though differing unaccountably in degree. I live quite alone in my study, so nobody witnesses these paroxysms. Nor, if they did, would my outward appearance testify to the dreadful transports within. They interpret the case so far as it is made known to them by many practical results of my delay or my neglect, not indolence or caprice. As to the worst they put it down amongst my foibles, for which I am sure they find filial excuses. Why should I interrupt their gaiety, which all day long sounds often so beautifully in my ears—a gaiety which at times is so pathetic to me as the natural result of their youth and their innocence—by any attempts to explain the inexplicable ? Them it would sadden, and me it could in no way benefit.

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[1] Mary Russell Mitford (1789-1855), author of *Our Village*. Miss Mitford thought De Quincey's prose 'the finest of any living writer'.

Meantime, I forsee that your benignity, and the regard with which you honour me, will prompt, as your first question, What have I done, or am doing, towards the alleviation of the dreadful curse ? Is there any key, you will say, to its original cause ? Sincerely I do not believe there is. One inevitable suggestion at first arose to everybody consulted—viz., that it might be some horrible recoil from the long habit of using opium to excess. But this seems improbable for more reasons than one. Ist. Because previously to any considerable abuse of opium—viz., in the year 1812,—I suffered an unaccountable attack of nervous horror which lasted for five months, and went off in one night as unaccountably as it had first come on in one second of time. I was at the time perfectly well, was at my cottage in Grasmere, and had just accompanied an old friend of Southey's (Mr. Grosvenor Bedford) round the Lake district. . . .

### THOMAS DE QUINCEY TO A FRIEND

[*His Final Struggle with the Opium Habit*]

1844.

WITH respect to my book (*The Logic of Political Economy*), which perhaps by this time you and Professor Nichol will have received through the publishers, I have a word to say. Upon some of the distinctions there contended for it would be false humility if I should doubt they are sound. The substance, I am too well assured, is liable to no dispute. But as to the method of presenting the distinctions, as to the composition of the book, and the whole evolution of a course of thinking, there it is that I too deeply recognize the mind, affected by my morbid condition. Through that ruin, and by help of that ruin, I look into and read the latter states of Coleridge. His chaos I comprehended by the darkness of my own, and both were the work of laudanum. It is as if ivory carvings and elaborate fretwork and fair enamelling should be found with worms and ashes amongst coffins and the wrecks of some forgotten life or some abolished nature. In parts and fractions eternal creations are carried on, but the nexus is wanting, and life and the central principle which should bind together all the parts at the centre, with all its radiations to the circumference, are wanting. Infinite incoherence, ropes of sands, gloomy incapacity of vital pervasion by some one plastic principle, that is the hideous incubus upon my mind already. For there is no disorganized wreck so absolute, so perfect, as that which is wrought by misery.

Misery is a strong word; and I would not have molested your happiness by any such gloomy reference, were it not that I did really, and in solemn earnest, regard my condition in that same hopeless light as I did until lately. I had one sole glimmer of hope, and it was this—that laudanum might be the secret key to all this wretchedness, not utterable to any human ear, which for ever I endured. Upon this subject the following is my brief record. On leaving Glasgow in the first week of June 1843, I was as for two years you had known me. Why I know not, but for some cause during the summer months the weight of insufferable misery and mere abhorrence of life increased; but also it fluctuated. A conviction fell upon me that immense exercise might restore me. But you will imagine my horror when, with that conviction, I found, precisely in my earliest efforts, my feet gave way, and the misery in all its strength came back. Every prospect I had of being laid up as a cripple for life. Much and deeply I pondered on this, and I gathered myself up as if for a final effort. For if that fate were established, farewell I felt for me to all hope of restoration. Eternally the words sounded in my ears: 'Suffered and was buried'. Unless that one effort which I planned and determined, as often you see a prostrate horse 'biding his time' and reserving his strength for one mighty struggle, too surely I believed that for me no ray of light would ever shine again. The danger was, that at first going off on exercise the inflammation should come on; that, if then I persisted, the inflammation would settle into the bones, and the case become desperate. It matters not to trouble you with the details—the result was this:—I took every precaution known to the surgical skill of the neighbourhood. Within a measured space of forty-four yards in circuit, so that forty rounds were exactly required for one mile, I had within ninety days walked a thousand miles. And so far I triumphed. But because still I was irregular as to laudanum, this also I reformed. For six months no results ; one dreary uniformity of report—absolute desolation ; misery so perfect that too surely I preceived, and no longer disguised from myself the impossibility of continuing to live under so profound a blight. I now kept my journal as one who in a desert island is come to his last day's provisions. On Friday, February, 23, I might say for the first time, in scriptural words 'And the man was sitting clothed and in his right mind.' That is not too strong an expression. I had known all along, and too ominously interpreted the experience from the fact, that I was not in my perfect mind. Lunacy causes misery ; the border is sometimes crossed, and too often that is the order of succession. But also misery, and above all physical misery, working by means of intellectual remembrances and persecution of thoughts, no doubt sometimes inversely causes lunacy. To that issue I felt that all things tended. You may guess, therefore, the awe that fell upon me, when, not by random accident, capable of no theory on review, but in consequence of one firm system pursued through eight months as to one element, and nearly three as to another, I recovered in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, such a rectification of the compass as I had not known for years. It is true that this frame departed from me within forty-eighty hours ; but that no way alarmed me—I drew hope from the omen. It is as if a man had been in a whirlpool, carried violently by a headlong current, and before he could speak or think, he was riding as if at anchor, once more dull and untroubled, as in days of infancy. The current caught me again ; and the old sufferings in degree came back, as I have said. There is something shocking and generally childish, by too obvious associations, in any suggestion of suicide ; but too certainly I felt that to this my condition tended ; for again enormous irritability was rapidly travelling over the disk of my life, and this and the consciousness of increasing weakness, added to my desolation of heart. I felt that no man could continue to struggle. Coleridge had often spoken to me of the dying away from him of all hope, not meaning, as I rightly understood him, the hope that forms itself as a distant look out into the future, but of the gladsome vital feelings that are born of the blood, and make the goings-on of life pleasureable.

Then I partly understood him, now perfectly; and laying all things together, I returned obstinately to the belief that laudanum was at the root of all this unimaginable hell. Why then not, if only by way of experiment, leave it off? Alas! that had become impossible. Then I descended to a hundred drops. Effects so dreadful and utterly unconjectured by medical men succeeded that I was glad to get back under shelter. Not the less I persisted; silently, surely, descended the ladder, and as I have said, suddenly found my mind as if whirled round on its true centre. A line of Wordsworth's about Germany I remembered:—

> All power was given her in the dreadful trance.

Such was my sense; illimitable seemed the powers restored to me; and now, having tried the key, and found it the true key, even though a blast of wind has blown the door to again, no jot of spirits was gone away from me; I shall arise as one risen from the dead.

This long story I have told you, because nothing short of this could explain my conduct, past, present, and future. And thus far there is an interest for all the world—that I am certain of this, viz., that misery is the talisman by which man communicates with the world outside of our fleshly world.

### Thomas De Quincey to his Daughter, Margaret Craig

### [*His Incapacity for Food*]

Thursday, *June* 10, 1847.

My dear M.,—

I am rather disturbed that neither M. nor F. nor E. has found a moment for writing to me. Yet perhaps it was not easy. For I know very seriously, and have often remarked, how difficult it is to find a spare moment for some things in the very longest day, which lasts you know twenty-four hours; though, by the way, it strikes one as odd that the shortest lasts quite as many. I have been suffering greatly myself for ten days, the cause being, in part, some outrageous heat that the fussy atmosphere put itself into about the beginning of this month—but what *for*, nobody can understand. Heat always untunes the harp of my nervous system; and, oh heavens! how electric it is! But, after all, what makes me so susceptible of such undulations in this capricious air, and compels me to sympathize with all the uproars and *miffs*, towering passions or gloomy sulks, of the atmosphere, is the old eternal ground, viz. that I am famished. Oh, what ages it is since I dined![1] On what great day of jubilee is it that Fate hides, under the thickest of table-cloths, a dinner for *me*? Yet it is a certain, undeniable truth, which this personal famine has revealed to me that most people on this terraqueous globe eat too much. Which it is, and nothing else, that makes them stupid, as also unphilosophic. To be a great philosopher, it is absolutely necessary to be famished. My intellect is far too electric in its speed, and its growth of flying armies of thoughts eternally new. I could spare enough to fit out a nation. This secret lies—not, observe, in my hair; cutting off *that* does no harm: it lies in my want of dinner, as also of breakfast and supper. Being famished, I shall show this world of ours in the next five years something that it never saw before. But if I had a regular dinner, I should sink into the general stupidity of my beloved human brethren.

By the way, speaking of gluttony as a foible of our interesting human race, I am reminded of another little foible, which they have rather distressingly, viz. a fancy for being horribly dirty. If I had happened to forget this fact, it would lately have been recalled to my remembrance by Mrs. Butler, formerly Fanny Kemble (but I dare say you know her in neither form—neither as chrysalis nor butterfly). She, in her book on Italy, etc. (not too good, I fear), makes this '*observe*' in which I heartily agree—namely, that this sublunary world has the misfortune to be very dirty, with the exception of some people in England, but with no exception at all for any other island or continent. Allowing for the 'some' in England, all the rest of the clean people, you perceive clearly, must be out at sea. For myself, I did not need Mrs. Butler's authority on this matter. One fact of my daily experience renews it most impertinently, and will not suffer me to forget it. As the slave said every morning to Philip of Macedon, '*Philip, begging your honour's pardon, you are mortal,*' so does this infamous fact say to me truly as dawn revolves, '*Tom, take it as you like, your race is dirty.*' The fact I speak of is this—that I cannot accomplish my diurnal ablutions in fewer minutes than sixty, at the least, seventy-five at the most. Now, having an accurate measure of human patience, as that quality exists in most people, well I know that it would never stand this. I allow that, if people are not plagued with washing their hair, or not at the same time, much less time may suffice, yet hardly less than thirty minutes I think.

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[1] De Quincey's incapacity for food was due to the old nervous irritation of his stomach—gastrodynia. He probably never knew what it was to eat a good dinner after his early privations in London.

Professor Wilson tells on this subject a story of a Frenchman which pleases me by its *näiveté*—that is, you know, by its *unconscious* ingenuousness. He was illustrating the inconsistencies of man, and he went on thus—'Our faces, for instance, our hands—why, bless me ! we wash them every day : our feet, on the other hand—*never* ! " And echo answered —'*never.*'

## *PART II*

# The Age of Byron

LORD BYRON—THOMAS MOORE—SAMUEL ROGERS—WILLIAM GODWIN—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY—LEIGH HUNT—JOHN KEATS—WILLIAM HAZLITT—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR—THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES.

# LORD BYRON

## 1788–1824

Byron follows Scott in letters as naturally as he succeeded him in popularity as a poet. Scott was ready—perhaps too ready—to acknowledge that the younger man had supplanted him when his *Lord of the Isles* failed, in 1815, to repeat the full triumph of his earlier poems, while Byron's works were increasing in circulation every month. 'Well, well, James, so be it', said Scott, with cheery resignation, when his printer told him how matters stood with the *Lord of the Isles*, 'but you know, we must not droop, for we can't afford to give out. Since one line has failed, we must stick to something else', and with that he went on with the wonderful series of prose romances which he had begun a year previously with *Waverley*. Sir Walter's courtesy to the new favourite was only equalled by the genuine respect and admiration which Lord Byron felt for one whom he addressed in sending him a copy of his *Giaour* in 1814, as the 'Monarch of Parnassus'. The friendship of Scott was one of the things which Byron treasured through life. 'It would not be in the power indeed, of the most poetical friend to allege anything more convincingly favourable of his character', writes Moore, who dedicated his famous biography of Byron to Sir Walter Scott, 'than is contained in the few simple facts that, through life, with all his faults, he never lost a friend; that those about him in his youth, whether as companions, teachers, or servants, remained attached to him to the last, that the woman to whom he gave the love of his maturer years idolizes his name; and that, with a single unhappy exception, scarce an instance is to be found of any one once brought, however briefly, into relation of amity with him, that did not feel towards him a kind of regard in life, and retain a fondness for his memory'. Byron's letters, though they lack the sincerity, and exquisite finish, of Shelley's correspondence, are thoroughly characteristic of the man—impetuous, a little theatrical, and quite regardless of the conventionalities of the respectable world, but full of human and romantic interest. In the accompanying selection we can follow the poet through most of his erratic career, from his last year at Cambridge, where his life, to quote his own boastful words to his friend, Miss Pigot, was 'one long routine of dissipation', to his not inglorious death for the Greeks at Missolonghi.

### Lord Byron to Miss Pigot [1]

['*One continued routine of Dissipation*']

Trin. Coll. Camb., *July* 5, 1807.

Since my last letter I have determined tor eside *another year* at Granta, as my rooms, etc., etc., are finished in great style, several old friends come up again, and many new acquaintances made; consequently my inclination leads me forward, and I shall return to college in October if still *alive.* My life here has been one continued routine of dissipation—out at different places every day, engaged to more dinners, etc., etc., than my *stay* would permit me to fulfil. At this moment I write with a bottle of claret in my *head* and *tears* in my *eyes*; for I have just parted with my '*Cornelian*', who spent the evening with me. As it was our last interview, I postponed my engagement to devote the hours of the *Sabbath* to friendship:—Edleston and I have separated for the present, and my mind is a chaos of hope and sorrow. To-morrow I set out for London: you will address your answer to 'Gordon's Hotel, Albemarle Street', where I *sojourn* during my visit to the metropolis.

I rejoice to hear you are interested in my protégé; [2] he has been my *almost constant* associate since October, 1805, when I entered Trinity College. His *voice* first attracted my attention, his *countenance* fixed it, and his *manners* attached me to him for ever. He departs for a *mercantile house* in *town* in October, and we shall probably not meet till the expiration of my minority, when I shall leave to his decision either entering as a *partner* through my interest, or residing with me altogether. Of course he would in his present frame of mind prefer the *latter*, but he may alter his opinion previous to that period;—however, he shall have his choice. I certainly love him more than any human being, and neither time nor distance have had the least effect on my (in general) changeable disposition. In short, we shall put *Lady E. Butler* and *Miss Ponsonby* to the blush, *Pylades* and *Orestes* out of countenance, and want nothing but a catastrophe like

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[1] A member of the Pigot family, who were neighbours and close friends of the Byrons at Southwell, where Byron's mother had taken a house.

[2] Edleston, the chorister, whom Byron took under his protection at Cambridge. There are references to this ardent friendship in the *Hours of Idleness*. Edleston died of consumption in 1811.

*Nisus* and *Euryalus*, to give *Jonathan* and *David* the 'go by'. He certainly is perhaps more attached to *me* than even I am in return. During the whole of my residence at Cambridge we met every day, summer and winter, without passing *one* tiresome moment, and separated each time with increasing reluctance. I hope you will one day see us together. He is the only being I esteem, though I *like* many.

The Marquis of Tavistock was down the other day; I supped with him at his tutor's—entirely a Whig party. The opposition muster strong here now, and Lord Hartington, the Duke of Leinster, etc., etc., are to join us in October, so everything will be *splendid*. The *music* is all over at present. Met with another '*accidency*'—upset a butter-boat in the lap of a lady—look'd very *blue—spectators* grinned —'curse 'em'! Apropos, sorry to say, been *drunk* every day, and not quite *sober* yet—however, touch no meat, nothing but fish, soup, and vegetables, consequently it does me no harm—sad dogs all the *Cantabs*. Mem.—*we mean* to reform next January.

Saw a girl at St. Mary's the image of Anne ——, thought it was her—all in the wrong—the lady stared, so did I—I *blushed*, so did *not* the lady,—sad thing—wish women had *more modesty*. Talking of women, puts me in mind of my terrier Fanny—how is she? Got a headache, must go to bed, up early in the morning to travel. My protégé breakfasts with me; parting spoils my appetite—excepting from Southwell. Mem.—*I hate Southwell*. Yours, etc.

### LORD BYRON TO JOHN MURRAY

### ['*The Abbot*' *and his Friends*]

Ravenna, *9bre* 19, 1820.[1]

WHAT you said of the late Charles Skinner Matthews has set me to my recollections; but I have not been able to turn up anything which would do for the proposed Memoir of his brother—even if he had previously done enough during his life to sanction the production of anecdotes so merely personal. He was, however, a very extraordinary man, and would have been a great one.[1] No one ever succeeded in a more surpassing degree than he did as far as he went. He was indolent, too; but whenever he stripped, he overthrew all antagonists. His conquests will be found registered at Cambridge, particularly his *Downing* one, which was hotly and highly contested, and yet easily *won*. Hobhouse was his most intimate friend, and can tell you more of him than any man. William Bankes also a great deal. I myself recollect more of his oddities than of his academical qualities, for we lived most together at a very idle period of *my* life. When I went up to Trinity, in 1805, at the age of seventeen and a-half, I was miserable and untoward to a degree. I was wretched at leaving Harrow, to which I had become attached during the two last years of my stay there; wretched at going to Cambridge instead of Oxford (there were no rooms vacant at Christ-church); wretched from some private domestic circumstances of different kinds, and consequently about as unsocial as a wolf taken from the troop. So that, although I knew Matthews, and met him often *then* at Bankes's (who was my collegiate pastor, and master, and patron), and at Rhodes's, Milnes's, Price's, Dick's, Macnamara's, Farrell's, Galley Knight's, and others of that *set* of contemporaries, yet I was neither intimate with him nor with any one else, except my old school-fellow, Edward Long (with whom I used to pass the day in riding and swimming), and William Bankes, who was good-naturedly tolerant of my ferocities.

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[1] Printed out of chronological order, because it takes up the story from Byron's Cambridge days.

It was not till 1807, after I had been upwards of a year away from Cambridge, to which I had returned again to *reside* for my degree, that I became one of Matthews's familiars, by means of Hobhouse,[2] who, after hating me for two years, because I wore a *white hat* and a *grey* coat, and rode a *grey* horse (as he says himself), took me into his good graces because I had written some poetry. I had always lived a good deal, and got drunk occasionally, in their company—but now we became really friends in a morning. Matthews, however, was not at this period resident in College. I met *him* chiefly in London, and at uncertain periods at Cambridge. Hobhouse, in the meantime, did great things: he founded the Cambridge 'Whig Club' (which he seems to have forgotten), and the 'Amicable Society', which was dissolved in consequence of the members constantly quarrelling, and made himself very popular with 'us youth', and no less formidable to all tutors, professors, and heads of Colleges.

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[1] Matthews had a brilliant career at Cambridge and became a Fellow of Downing in 1808. He was drowned in the Cam in 1811.

[2] John Cam Hobhouse (afterwards Baron Broughton) became Byron's 'best man,' and subsequently, as his executor, advised the destruction of the famous *Memoirs*.

Matthews and I, meeting in London, and elsewhere, became great cronies. He was not good-tempered—nor am I—but with a little tact his temper was manageable, and I thought him so superior a man, that I was willing to sacrifice something to his humours, which were often, at the same time, amusing and provoking. What became of his *papers* (and he certainly had many), at the time of his death, was never known. I mention this by the way, fearing to skip it over, and *as* he *wrote* remarkably well, both in Latin and English. We went down to Newstead together, where I had got a famous cellar, and *Monks'* dresses from a masquerade warehouse. We were a company of some seven or eight, with an occasional neighbour or so for visitors, and used to sit up late in our friars' dresses, drinking burgundy, claret, champagne, and what not, out of the *skull-cup*, and all sorts of glasses, and buffooning all round the house, in our conventual garments. Matthews always denominated me 'the Abbot', and never called me by any other name in his good humours, to the day of his death. The harmony of these our symposia was somewhat interrupted, a few days after our assembling, by Matthews's threatening to throw Hobhouse out of a *window*, in consequence of I know not what commerce of jokes ending in this epigram. Hobhouse came to me and said, that 'his respect and regard for me as host would not permit him to call out any of my guests, and that he should go to town next morning'. He did. It was in vain that I represented to him that the window was not high, and that the turf under it was particularly soft. Away he went.

Matthews and myself had travelled down from London together, talking all the way incessantly upon one single topic. When we got to Loughborough, I know not what chasm had made us diverge for a moment to some other subject, at which he was indignant. 'Come', said he 'don't let us break through—let us go on as we began, to our journey's end'; and so he continued, and was as entertaining as ever to the very end. He had previously occupied, during my year's absence from Cambridge, my rooms in Trinity, with the furniture; and Jones, the tutor, in his odd way, had said, on putting him in, 'Mr. Matthews, I recommend to your attention not to damage any of the movables, for Lord Byron, sir, is a young man of *tumultuous passions*'. Matthews was delighted with this; and whenever anybody came to visit him, begged them to handle the very door with caution; and used to repeat Jones's admonition in his tone and manner. There was a large mirror in the room, on which he remarked, 'that he thought his friends were grown uncommonly assiduous in coming to *see him*, but he soon discovered that they only came to *see themselves*'. Jones's phrase of '*tumultuous passions*', and the whole scene, had put him into such good humour, that I verily believe that I owed to it a portion of his good graces.

When at Newstead, somebody by accident rubbed against one of his white silk stockings, one day before dinner; of course the gentleman apologised. 'Sir', answered Matthews, 'it may be all very well for you, who have a great many silk stockings, to dirty other people's; but to me, who have only this *one pair*, which I have put on in honour of the Abbot here, no apology can compensate for such carelessness; besides, the expense of washing'. He had the same sort of droll sardonic way about everything. A wild Irishman, named Farrell, one evening beginning to say something at a large supper at Cambridge, Matthews roared out 'Silence'! and then, pointing to Farrell, cried out, in the words of the oracle, '*Orson is endowed with reason*'. You may easily suppose that Orson lost what reason he had acquired, on hearing this compliment. When Hobhouse published his volume of poems, the *Miscellany* (which Matthews *would* call the '*Miss-sell-any*'), all that could be drawn from him was that the preface was 'extremely like *Walsh*'. Hobhouse thought this at first a compliment; but we never could make out what it was, for all we know of *Walsh* is his Ode to King William, and Pope's epithet of '*knowing Walsh*'. When the Newstead party broke up for London, Hobhouse and Matthews, who were the greatest friends possible, agreed, for a whim, to *walk together* to town. They quarrelled by the way, and actually walked the latter half of their journey, occasionally passing and repassing, without speaking. When Matthews had got to Highgate, he had spent all his money but threepence halfpenny, and determined to spend that also in a pint of beer, which I believe he was drinking before a public house, as Hobhouse passed him (still without speaking) for the last time on their route. They were reconciled in London again.

One of Matthews's passions was 'the Fancy'; and he sparred uncommonly well. But he always got beaten in rows, or combats with the bare fist. In swimming, too, he swam well: but with *effort* and *labour*, and *too high* out of the water; so that Scrope Davies and myself, of whom he was therein somewhat emulous, always told him that he would be drowned if ever he came to a difficult pass in the water. He was so; but surely Scrope and myself would have been most heartily glad that

> 'the Dean had lived,
> And our prediction proved a lie.'

His head was uncommonly handsome, very like what *Pope's* was in his youth.

His voice, and laugh, and features are strongly resembled by his brother Henry's, if Henry be *he* of *King's College.* His passion for boxing was so great, that he actually wanted me to match him with Dogherty (whom I had backed and made the match for against Tom Belcher), and I saw them spar together at my own lodgings with the gloves on. As he was bent upon it, I would have backed Dogherty to please him, but the match went off. It was of course to have been a private fight, in a private room.

On one occasion, being too late to go home and dress, he was equipped by a friend (Mr. Baillie, I believe), in a magnificently fashionable and somewhat exaggerated shirt and neckcloth. He proceeded to the Opera, and took his station in Fops' Alley. During the interval between the opera and the ballet, an acquaintance took his station by him and saluted him: 'Come round', said Matthews, 'come round'. —Why should I come round'? said the other; 'you have only to turn your head—I am close to you'.—'That is exactly what I cannot do', said Matthews; 'don't you see the state I am in'? pointing to his buckram shirt collar and inflexible cravat,—and there he stood with his head always in the same perpendicular position during the whole spectacle.

One evening, after dining together, as we were going to the Opera, I happened to have a spare Opera ticket (as subscriber to a box), and presented it to Matthews, 'Now, sir', said he to Hobhouse afterwards, 'this I call *courteous* in the Abbot—another man would never have thought that I might do better with half a guinea than throw it to a door-keeper;—but here is a man not only asks me to dinner, but gives me a ticket for the theatre'. These were only his oddities, for no man was more liberal, or more honourable in all his doings and dealings, than Matthews. He gave Hobhouse and me, before we set out for Constantinople, a most splendid entertainment, to which we did ample justice. One of his fancies was dining at all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Somebody popped upon him in I know not what coffee-house in the Strand—and what do you think was the attraction? Why, that he paid a shilling (I think) to *dine with his hat on*. This he called his '*hat* house' and used to boast of the comfort of being covered at meal-times.

When Sir Henry Smith was expelled from Cambridge for a row with a tradesman named 'Hiron', Matthews solaced himself with shouting under Hiron's windows every evening,

Ah me! what perils do environ
The man who meddles with *hot Hiron*.

He was also of that band of profane scoffers who under the auspices of ——, used to rouse Lort Mansel (late Bishop of Bristol) from his slumbers in the lodge of Trinity: and when he appeared at the window foaming with wrath, and crying out, 'I know you, gentlemen, I know you!' were wont to reply, 'We beseech thee to hear us, good *Lort*'—'Good *Lort* deliver us!' (Lort was his Christian name). As he was very free in his speculations upon all kinds of subjects, although by no means either dissolute or intemperate in his conduct, and as I was no less independent, our conversation and correspondence used to alarm our friend Hobhouse to a considerable degree.

You must be almost tired of my packets, which will have cost a mint of postage.

Salute Gifford and all my friends,

Yours, etc.

### Lord Byron to Henry Drury

[*His early Travels ; how he swam the Hellespont*]

*Salsette* frigate, *May* 3, 1810.

My dear Drury,—

When I left England, nearly a year ago, you requested me to write to you—I will do so. I have crossed Portugal, traversed the south of Spain, visited Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, and thence passed into Turkey, where I am still wandering. I first landed in Albania, the ancient Epirus, where we penetrated as far as Mount Tomarit—excellently treated by the chief, Ali Pacha,—and, after journeying through Illyria, Chaonia, etc., crossed the Gulf of Actium, with a guard of fifty Albanians, and passed the Achelous in our route through Acarnania and Ætolia. We stopped a short time in the Morea, crossed the Gulf of Lepanto, and landed at the foot of Parnassus ;—saw all that Delphi retains, and so on to Thebes and Athens, at which last we remained ten weeks.

His Majesty's ship, Pylades, brought us to Smyrna ; but not before we had topographised Allica, including, of course, Marathon and the Sunian promontory. From Smyrna to the Troad (which we visited when at anchor, for a fortnight, off the tomb of Antilochus) was our next stage ; and now we are in the Dardanelles, waiting for a wind to proceed to Constantinople.

This morning I *swam* from *Sestos* to *Abydos*. The immediate distance is not above a mile, but the current renders it hazardous ;—so much so that I doubt whether Leander's conjugal affection must not have been a little chilled in his passage to Paradise. I attempted it a week ago, and failed,—owing to the north wind, and the wonderful rapidity of the tide,—though I have been from my childhood a strong swimmer. But, this morning being calmer, I succeeded, and crossed the 'broad Hellespont' in an hour and ten minutes.

Well, my dear sir, I have left my home, and seen part of Africa and Asia, and a tolerable portion of Europe. I have been with generals and admirals, princes and pashas, governors and ungovernables,—but I have not time or paper to expatiate. I wish to let you know that I live with a friendly remembrance of you, and a hope to meet you again ; and if

I do not this as shortly as possible, attribute it to any thing but forgetfulness.

Greece, ancient and modern, you know too well to require description. Albania, indeed, I have seen more of than any Englishman (except a Mr. Leake), for it is a country rarely visited, from the savage character of the natives, though abounding in more natural beauties than the classical regions of Greece,—which, however, are still eminently beautiful, particularly Delphi and Cape Colonna in Attica. Yet these are nothing to parts of Illyria and Epirus, where places without a name, and rivers not laid down in maps, may, one day, when more known, be justly esteemed superior subjects, for the pencil and the pen, to the dry ditch of the Ilissus and the bogs of Bœotia.

The Troad is a fine field for conjecture and snipe-shooting, and a good sportsman and an ingenious scholar may exercise their feet and faculties to great advantage upon the spot;—or, if they prefer riding, lose their way (as I did) in a cursed quagmire of the Scamander, who wriggle about as if the Dardan virgins still offered their wonted tribute. The only vestige of Troy, or her destroyers, are the barrows supposed to contain the carcases of Achilles, Antilochus, Ajax, etc.;—but Mount Ida is still in high feather, though the shepherds are now-a-days not much like Ganymede. But why should I say more of these things? are they not written in the *Boke of Gell*[1] and has not Hobhouse got a journal?[2] I keep none, as I have renounced scribbling.

I see not much difference between ourselves and the Turks, save that we have . . . and they have none—that they have long dresses, and we short, and that we talk much, and they little. They are sensible people. Ali Pacha told me he was sure I was a man of rank, because I had *small ears* and *hands*, and *curling hair*. By-the-bye, I speak the Romanaic, or modern Greek, tolerably. It does not differ from the ancient dialects so much as you would conceive; but the pronunciation is diametrically opposite. Of verse, except in rhyme they have no idea.

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[1] Sir William Gell's *Topography of Troy and its Vicinity*, published in 1804.

[2] Hobhouse published his *Journey through Albania with Lord Byron* in 1813.

I like the Greeks, who are plausible rascals,—with all the Turkish vices, without their courage. However, some are brave, and all are beautiful, very much resembling the busts of Alcibiades;—the women not quite so handsome. I can swear in Turkish; but, except one horrible oath, and 'pump', and 'bread', and 'water', I have got no great vocabulary in that language. They are extremely polite to strangers of any rank, properly protected; and as I have two servants and two soldiers, we get on with great *éclat*. We have been occasionally in danger of thieves, and once of shipwreck,—but always escaped.

Of Spain I sent some account to our Hodgson, but have subsequently written to no one, save notes to relations and lawyers, to keep them out of my premises. I mean to give up all connexion, on my return, with many of my best friends—as I supposed them—and to snarl all my life. But I hope to have one good-humoured laugh with you, and to embrace Dwyer, and pledge Hodgson, before I commence cynicism.

Tell Dr. Butler I am now writing with the gold pen he gave me before I left England, which is the reason my scrawl is more unintelligible than usual. I have been at Athens, and seen plenty of these reeds for scribbling, some of which he refused to bestow upon me, because topographic Gell had brought them from Attica. But I will not describe,—no—you must be satisfied with simple detail till my return, and then we will unfold the flood-gates of colloquy.

And so Hobhouse's *boke* is out,[1] with some sentimental sing-song of my own to fill up,—and how does it take, eh? and where the devil is the second edition of my Satire, with additions? and my name on the title-page? and more lines tagged to the end, with a new exordium and what not, hot from my anvil before I cleared the Channel? The Mediterranean and the Atlantic roll between me and criticism; and the thunders of the Hyperborean Review are deafened by the roar of the Hellespont.

Remember me to Claridge, if not translated to college, and present to Hodgson assurances of my high consideration. Now, you will ask, what shall I do next? and I answer, I do not know. I may return in a few months, but I have intents and projects after visiting Constantinople.—Hobhouse, however, will probably be back in September.

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[1] The *Miscellany*, referred to on p. 200.

On the 2nd of July we have left Albion one year—*oblitus meorum obliviscendus et illis.* I was sick of my own country, and not much prepossessed in favour of any other; but I 'drag on my chain' without 'lengthening it at each remove'. I am like the Jolly Miller, caring for nobody, and not cared for. All countries are much the same in my eyes. I smoke, and stare at mountains, and twirl my mustachios very independently. I miss no comforts, and the mosquitoes that rack the morbid frame of H. have, luckily for me, little effect on mine, because I live more temperately.

I omitted Ephesus in my catalogue, which I visited during my sojourn at Smyrna; but the Temple has almost perished, and St. Paul need not trouble himself to epistolize the present brood of Ephesians, who have converted a large church built entirely of marble into a mosque, and I don't know that the edifice looks the worse for it.

My paper is full, and my ink ebbing—good afternoon! If you address to me at Malta, the letter will be forwarded wherever I may be. H. greets you; he pines for his poetry,—at least, some tidings of it. I almost forgot to tell you that I am dying for love of three Greek girls at Athens, sisters. I lived in the same house. Teresa, Mariana, and Katinka, are the names of these divinities,—all of them under fifteen.

Your ταπεινοτατος δουλος,

BYRON.

### LORD BYRON TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

[*His Apology for 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'*] [1]

St. James's Street, *July* 6, 1812.

SIR,—

I have just been honoured with your letter.—I feel sorry that you should have thought it worth while to notice the 'evil works of my nonage', as the thing is suppressed *voluntarily*, and your explanation is too kind not to give me pain.

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[1] In reply to Scott's letter (see pp. 61–3).

The Satire was written when I was very young and very angry, and fully bent on displaying my wrath and my wit, and now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale assertions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise ; and now, waving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball ; and after some sayings, peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you and your immortalities : he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered, I thought the *Lay*. He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of *Princes*, as *they* never appeared more fascinating than in *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake.* He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell on the description of your Jameses as no less loyal than poetical. He spoke alternately of Homer and yourself, and seemed well acquainted with both ; so that (with the exception of the Turks and your humble servant) you were in very good company. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his Royal Highness's opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject ; but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it, and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living *gentleman*.

This interview was accidental. I never went to the levee ; for having seen the courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns, my curiosity was sufficiently allayed ; and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had, in fact, ' no business there '. To be thus praised by your Sovereign must be gratifying to you ; and if that gratification is not alloyed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately and sincerely,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

BYRON.

### LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

[*Moore's 'Lalla Rookh' and Byron's 'Giaour'*]

*August—September*, I mean—1, 1813.

I SEND you, begging your acceptance, Castellan, and three vols. on Turkish literature, not yet looked into. The *last* I will thank you to read, extract what you want, and return in a week, as they are lent to me by that brightest of Northern constellations, Mackintosh,—amongst many other kind things into which India has warmed him; for I am sure your *home* Scotsman is of a less genial description.

Your Peri, my dear M., is sacred and inviolable; I have no idea of touching the hem of her petticoat. Your affectation of a dislike to encounter me is so flattering, that I begin to think myself a very fine fellow. But you are laughing at me—'Stap my vitals, Tam! thou art a very impudent person'; and, if you are not laughing at me, you deserve to be laughed at. Seriously, what on earth can you, or have you, to dread from any poetical flesh breathing? It really puts me out of humour to hear you talk thus.

*The Giaour* I have added to a good deal; but still in foolish fragments. It contains about 1,200 lines, or rather more—now printing. You will allow me to send you a copy. You delight me much by telling me that I am in your good graces, and more particularly as to temper; for, unluckily, I have the reputation of a very bad one. But they say the devil is amusing when pleased, and I must have been more venomous than the old serpent, to have hissed or stung in your company. It may be, and would appear to a third person, an incredible thing, but I know *you* will believe me when I say, that I am as anxious for your success as one human being can be for another's,—as much as if I had never scribbled a line. Surely the field of fame is wide enough for all; and if it were not, I would not willingly rob my neighbour of a rood of it. Now you have a pretty property of some thousand acres there, and when you have passed your present Inclosure Bill your income will be doubled (there's a metaphor, worthy of a Templar, namely, pert and low), while my wild common is too remote to incommode you, and quite incapable of such fertility. I send you (which return per post, as the printer would say) a curious letter from a friend of mine, which will let you into the origin of *The Giaour*. Write soon.

Ever, dear Moore, yours most entirely, etc.

PS.—This letter was written to me on account of a *different story* circulated by some gentlewomen of our acquaintance, a little too close to the text. The part erased contained merely some Turkish names, and circumstantial evidence of the girl's detection, not very important or decorous.

### LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

[*Engaged to be Married*]

Newstead Abbey, *September* 20, 1814.

Here's to her who long
  Hath waked the poet's sigh!
The girl who gave to song
  What gold could never buy.

MY DEAR MOORE,—

I am going to be married—that is, I am accepted, and one usually hopes the rest will follow. My mother of the Gracchi (that *are* to be) *you* think too strait-laced for me, although the paragon of only children, and invested with 'golden opinions of all sorts of men', and full of 'most blest conditions' as Desdemona herself. Miss Milbanke is the lady, and I have her father's invitation to proceed there in my elect capacity,—which, however, I cannot do till I have settled some business in London, and got a blue coat.

She is said to be an heiress, but of that I really know nothing certainly, and shall not inquire. But I do know that she has talents and excellent qualities; and you will not deny her judgment, after having refused six suitors and taken me.

Now, if you have anything to say against this, pray do; my mind's made up, positively fixed, determined, and therefore I will listen to reason, because now it can do no harm. Things may occur to break it off, but I will hope not. In the meantime, I tell you (a *secret*, by the bye,—at least, till I know she wishes it to be public) that I have proposed and am accepted. You need not be in a hurry to wish me joy, for one mayn't be married for months. I am going to town to-morrow; but expect to be here, on my way there, within a fortnight.

If this had not happened, I should have gone to Italy. In my way down, perhaps, you will meet me at Nottingham, and come over with me here. I need not say that nothing will give me greater pleasure. I must, of course, reform thoroughly; and, seriously, if I can contribute to her happiness, I shall secure my own. She is so good a person, that—that—in short, I wish I was a better.

Ever, etc.

### LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

[*At War with his Wife*]

*February* 29, 1816.

I HAVE not answered your letter for a time; and, at present, the reply to part of it might extend to such a length, that I shall delay it till it can be made in person, and then I will shorten it as much as I can.

In the meantime, I am at war 'with all the world and his wife'; or rather, 'all the world and *my* wife' are at war with me, and have not yet crushed me,—whatever they *may* do. I don't know that in the course of a hair-breadth existence I was ever, at home or abroad, in a situation so completely uprooting of present pleasure, or rational hope for the future, as this same. I say this, because I think so, and feel it. But I shall not sink under it the more for that mode of considering the question—I have made up my mind.

By the way, however, you must not believe all you hear on the subject; and don't attempt to defend me. If you succeeded in that, it would be a mortal, or an immortal, offence—who can bear refutation? I have but a very short answer for those whom it concerns; and all the activity of myself and some vigorous friends have not yet fixed on any tangible ground or personage on which or with whom I can discuss matters, in a summary way, with a fair pretext;—though I nearly had *nailed one* yesterday, but he evaded by —what was judged by others—a satisfactory explanation. I speak of *circulators*—against whom I have no enmity, though I must act according to the common code of usage when I hit upon those of the serious order.

Now for other matters—poesy, for instance. Leigh Hunt's poem is a devilish good one—quaint, here and there, but with the substratum of originality, and with poetry about it that will stand the test. I do not say this because he has inscribed it to me, which I am sorry for, as I should otherwise have begged you to review it in the *Edinburgh*. It is really deserving of much praise, and a favourable critique in the *E. R.* would but do it justice, and set it up before the public eye, where it ought to be.[1]

How are you ? and where ? I have not the most distant idea what I am going to do myself—or with myself—or where—or what. I had, a few weeks ago, some things to say that would have made you laugh ; but they tell me now that I must not laugh, and so I have been very serious—and am.

I must go and dress to dine. My little girl is in the country, and, they tell me, is a very fine child, and now nearly three months old. Lady Noel (my mother-in-law, or, rather, *at* law) is at present overlooking it. Her daughter (Miss Milbanke that was) is, I believe, in London with her father. A Mrs C. (now a kind of housekeeper and spy of Lady N.'s), who, in her better days, was a washerwoman, is supposed to be—by the learned, very much the occult cause of our late domestic discrepancies.

In all this business I am the sorriest for Sir Ralph. He and I are equally punished, though *magis pares quam similes* in our affliction. Yet it is hard for both to suffer for the fault of one, and so it is—I shall be separated from my wife ; he will retain his.

Ever, etc.

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## LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

### [*His Italian Liaison*]

Venice, *November* 17, 1816.

I WROTE to you from Verona the other day in my progress hither, which letter I hope you will receive. Some three years ago, or it may be more, I recollect your telling me that you had received a letter from our friend Sam, dated 'On board his gondola'. *My* gondola is, at this present, waiting for me on thecanal; but I prefer writing to you in the house, it being autumn—and rather an English autumn than otherwise. It is my intention to remain at Venice during the winter, probably, as it has always been (next to the East) the greenest island of my imagination. It has not disappointed me; though its evident decay would, perhaps, have that effect upon others. But I have been familiar with ruins too long to dislike desolation. Besides, I have fallen in love, which, next to falling into the canal (which would be of no use, as I can swim), is the best or the worst thing I could do. I have got some extremely good apartments in the house of a 'Merchant of Venice', who is a good deal occupied with business, and has a wife in her twenty-second year. Marianna (that is her name) is in her appearance altogether like an antelope. She has the large, black, oriental eyes, with that peculiar expression in them which is seen rarely among *Europeans*—even the Italians—and which many of the Turkish women give themselves by tinging the eyelid,—an art not known out of that country, I believe. This expression she has *naturally*,—and something more than this. In short, I cannot describe the effect of this kind of eye,—at least upon me. Her features are regular, and rather aquiline—mouth small—skin clear and soft, with a kind of hectic colour—forehead remarkably good: her hair is of the dark gloss, curl, and colour of Lady J——'s: her figure is light and pretty, and she is a famous songstress—scientifically so; her natural voice (in conversation, I mean) is very sweet; and the naïveté of the Venetian dialect is always pleasing in the mouth of a woman.

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[1] Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini* (1816), the greater part of which was written during his imprisonment.

## LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

### [*His 'Way of Life' in Venice*]

Venice, *December* 24, 1816.

I HAVE taken a fit of writing to you, which portends postage—once from Verona—once from Venice, and again from Venice—*thrice* that is. For this you may thank yourself; for I heard that you complained of my silence—so, here goes for garrulity.

I trust that you received my other twain of letters. My 'way of life' (or 'May of life', which is it, according to the commentators?)—my 'way of life' is fallen into great regularity. In the mornings I go over in my gondola to babble Armenian with the friars of the convent of St. Lazarus, and to help one of them in correcting the English of an English and Armenian grammar which he is publishing. In the evenings I do one of many nothings—either at the theatres, or some of the conversaziones, which are like our routs, or rather worse, for the women sit in a semicircle by the lady of the mansion, and the men stand about the room. To be sure, there is one improvement upon ours—instead of lemonade with their ices, they hand about stiff *rum-punch—punch*, by my palate; and this they think *English*. I would not disabuse them of so agreeable an error,—'not for Venice'.

My flame (my 'Donna', whom I spoke of in my former epistle, my Marianna) is still my Marianna, and I her—what she pleases. She is by far the prettiest woman I have seen here, and the most lovable I have met with anywhere—as well as one of the most singular. I believe I told you the rise and progress of our *liaison* in my former letter. Lest that should not have reached you, I will merely repeat, that she is a Venetian, two-and-twenty years old, married to a merchant well-to-do in the world, and that she has great black oriental eyes, and all the qualities which her eyes promise. Whether being in love with her has steeled me or not, I do not know; but I have not seen many other women who seem pretty. The nobility, in particular, are a sad-looking race—the gentry rather better. And now, what art *thou* doing?

What are you doing now,
  Oh Thomas Moore?
What are you doing now,
  Oh Thomas Moore?
Sighing or suing now,
Rhyming or wooing now,
Billing or cooing now,
  Which, Thomas Moore?

Are you not near the Luddites? By the Lord! if there's a row, but I'll be among ye! How go on the weavers—the breakers of frames—the Lutherans of politics—the reformers?

As the Liberty lads o'er the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
So we, boys, we
Will *die* fighting, or *live* free,
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

When the web that we weave is complete,
And the shuttle exchanged for the sword,
We will fling the winding-sheet
O'er the despot at our feet,
And dye it deep in the gore he has pour'd.

Though black as his heart its hue,
Since his veins are corrupted to mud,
Yet this is the dew
Which the tree shall renew
Of Liberty, planted by Ludd![1]

There's an amiable *chanson* for you—all impromptu. I have written it principally to shock your neighbour——, who is all clergy and loyalty—mirth and innocence—milk and water.

But the Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore,
The Carnival's coming
Oh Thomas Moore;
Masking and humming,
Fifing and drumming,
Guitarring and strumming,
Oh Thomas Moore.

The other night I saw a new play,—and the author. The subject was the sacrifice of Isaac. The play succeeded, and they called for the author—according to continental custom—and he presented himself, a noble Venetian, Mali, or Malapiero, by name. Mala was his name, and *pessima* his production,—at least, I thought so: and I ought to know, having read more or less of five hundred Drury Lane offerings, during my coadjutorship with the sub- and super-Committee.

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[1] The Luddites, the organized band of workmen in the Midlands, who went about destroying machinery between 1812 and 1818—the lack of employment then prevailing being attributed by them to the new inventions—took their name from Ned Ludd, a Leicestershire workman, who had destroyed some stocking frames thirty years previously.

When does your poem of poems come out ? I hear that the *Edinburgh Review* has cut up Coleridge's 'Christabel', and declared against me for praising it. I praised it, firstly, because I thought well of it ; secondly, because Coleridge was in great distress ; and after doing what little I could for him in essentials, I thought that the public avowal of my good opinion might help him further, at least with the booksellers. I am very sorry that Jeffrey has attacked him, because, poor fellow, it will hurt him in mind and pocket. As for me, he's welcome—I shall never think less of Jeffrey for anything he may say against me or mine in future.

I suppose Murray has sent you, or will send (for I do not know whether they are out or no) the poem, or poesies, of mine, of last summer. By the mass ! they are sublime—'Ganion Coheriza'—gainsay who dares !

Ever and ever, etc.

## LORD BYRON TO JOHN MURRAY

['*The Precise Worth of Popular Applause*']

Venice, *April* 6, 1819.

So you and Mr. Foscolo,[1] etc., want me to undertake what you call a 'great work'?—an Epic Poem, I suppose, or some such pyramid. I'll try no such thing ; I hate tasks. And then 'seven or eight years'! God send us all well this day three months, let alone years. If one's years can't be better employed than in sweating poesy, a man had better be a ditcher. And works, too !—is 'Childe Harold' nothing ? You have so many '*divine*' poems—is it nothing to have written a *human* one ? without any of your worn-out machinery. Why, man, I could have spun the thoughts of the four cantos of that poem into twenty, had I wanted to book-make, and its passion into as many modern tragedies.

And Foscolo, too ! Why does *he* not do something more than the 'Letters of Ortis', and a tragedy and pamphlets ? He has good fifteen years more at his command than I have : what has he done all that time ?—proved his genius, doubtless, but not fixed its fame, nor done his utmost.

Besides, I mean to write my best work in *Italian*, and it will take me nine years more thoroughly to master the language; and then, if my fancy exist, and I exist too, I will try what I *can* do *really*. As to the estimation of the English which you talk of, let them calculate what it is worth before they insult me with their insolent condescension.

---

[1] Ugo Foscolo (1788–1827), see p. 108.

I have not written for their pleasure. If they are pleased, it is that they choose to be so; I have never flattered their opinions, nor their pride; nor will I. Neither will I make 'Ladies' books: *al dilettar le femine e la plebe.* I have written from the fulness of my mind, from passion, from impulse, from many motives, but not for their 'sweet voices'.

I know the precise worth of popular applause, for few scribblers have had more of it; and if I chose to swerve into their paths, I could retain it, or resume it. But I neither love ye nor fear ye; and though I buy with ye, and sell with ye, and talk with ye, I will neither eat with ye, drink with ye, nor pray with ye. They made me, without my search, a species of popular idol; they, without reason or judgment, beyond the caprice of their good pleasure, threw down the image from its pedestal; it was not broken with the fall, and they would, it seems, again replace it,—but they shall not.

You ask about my health: about the beginning of the year I was in a state of great exhaustion, attended by such debility of stomach that nothing remained upon it; and I was obliged to reform my 'way of life', which was conducting me from the 'yellow leaf' to the ground, with all deliberate speed. I am better in health and morals, and very much yours, etc.

PS.—I have read Hodgson's *Friends*. He is right in defending Pope against the bastard pelicans of the poetical winter day, who add insult to their parricide by sucking the blood of the parent of English *real* poetry,—poetry without fault,—and then spurning the bosom which fed them.

## Lord Byron to John Murray

[*Musings in a Cemetery*]

Bologna, *June* 7, 1819.

I have been picture-gazing this morning at the famous Domenichino and Guido, both of which are superlative. I afterwards went to the beautiful cemetery of Bologna, beyond the walls, and found, besides the superb burial-ground, an original of a Custode, who reminded me of the grave-digger in Hamlet. He has a collection of capuchins' skulls, labelled on the forehead, and taking down one of them, said, 'This was Brother Desiderio Berro, who died at forty—one of my best friends. I begged his head of his brethren after his decease, and they gave it me. I put it in lime, and then boiled it. Here it is, teeth and all, in excellent preservation. He was the merriest, cleverest fellow I ever knew. Wherever he went, he brought joy; and whenever any one was melancholy, the sight of him was enough to make him cheerful again. He walked so actively, you might have taken him for a dancer—he joked—he laughed—oh! he was such a Frate as I never saw before, nor ever shall again.'

He told me that he had himself planted all the cypresses in the cemetery; that he had the greatest attachment to them and to his dead people; that since 1801 they had buried fifty-three thousand persons. In showing some older monuments, there was that of a Roman girl of twenty, with a bust by Bernini. She was a princess Bartorini, dead two centuries ago: he said that, on opening her grave, they had found her hair complete, and 'as yellow as gold.' Some of the epitaphs at Ferrara pleased me more than the more splendid monuments at Bologna; for instance:—

Martini Luigi
    Implora pace.
Lucrezia Picini
    Implora eterna quiete.

Can anything be more full of pathos? Those few words say all that can be said or sought: the dead had had enough of life; all they wanted was rest, and this they *implore!* There is all the helplessness, and humble hope, and deathlike prayer, that can arise from the grave—'implora pace'. I hope, whoever may survive me, and shall see me put in the foreigners' burying-ground at the Lido, within the fortress by the Adriatic, will see those two words, and no more, put over me. I trust they won't think of 'pickling, and bringing me home to Clod or Blunderbuss Hall'. I am sure my bones would not rest in an

English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. I believe the thought would drive me mad on my deathbed, could I suppose that any of my friends would be base enough to convey my carcass back to your soil. I would not even feed your worms, if I could help it [1].

So, as Shakespeare says of Mowbray, the banished Duke of Norfolk, who died at Venice (see Richard II), that he, after fighting

> Against black Pagans, Turks, and Saracens,
> And toiled with works of war, retired himself
> To Italy, and there, at *Venice*, gave
> His body to that *pleasant* country's earth,
> And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ,
> Under whose colours he had fought so long.

Before I left Venice, I had returned to you your late, and Mr. Hobhouse's sheets of Juan. Don't wait for further answers from me, but address yours to Venice, as usual. I know nothing of my own movements ; I may return there in a few days, or not for some time. All this depends on circumstances. I left Mr. Hoppner very well, as well as his son and Mrs. Hoppner. My daughter Allegra [2] was well too, and is growing pretty ; her hair is growing darker, and her eyes are blue. Her temper and her ways, Mr. Hoppner says, are like mine, as well as her features : she will make, in that case, a manageable young lady.

I have never heard anything of Ada, [3] the little Electra of my Mycenæ. But there will come a day of reckoning, even if I should not live to see it. What a long letter I have scribbled !

Yours, etc.

PS.—Here, as in Greece, they strew flowers on the tombs. I saw a quantity of rose-leaves, and entire roses, scattered over the graves at Ferrara. It has the most pleasing effect you can imagine.

---

[1] Byron was buried in England after all, his body being brought from Missolonghi after his death in 1824 and interred in the Church of Hucknall-Torkard, near Newstead.

[2] His illegitimate daughter by Claire Clairmont, daughter, by a former marriage, of William Godwin's second wife.

[3] His daughter, by Lady Byron, born in December, 1815, shortly before Lady Byron left her husband's house for ever.

### Lord Byron to John Murray

### [‘*Alone and Unhappy*’]

Bologna, *August* 24, 1819.

Keep the *anonymous*, in any case: it helps what fun there may be. But if the matter grow serious about ‘Don Juan,’ and you feel *yourself* in a scrape, or *me* either, *own that I am the author.* I will never *shrink*; and if *you* do, I can always answer you in the question of Guatimozin to his minister— each being on his own coals.

I wish that I had been in better spirits; but I am out of sorts, out of nerves, and now and then (I begin to fear) out of my senses. All this Italy has done for me, and not England: I defy all you, and your climate to boot, to make me mad. But if ever I do really become a bedlamite, and wear a strait waistcoat, let me be brought back among you: your people will then be proper company.

I assure you what I here say and feel has nothing to do with England, either in a literary or personal point of view. All my present pleasures or plagues are as Italian as the opera. And, after all, they are but trifles; for all this arises from my ‘Dama's’ being in the country for three days (at Capofiume). But as I could never live but for one human being at a time (and, I assure you, *that one* has never been *myself*, as you may know by the consequences, for the *selfish* are successful in life), I feel alone and unhappy.

I have sent for my daughter from Venice, and I ride daily, and walk in a garden, under a purple canopy of grapes, and sit by a fountain, and talk with the gardener of his tools, which seem greater than Adam's, and with his wife, and with his son's wife, who is the youngest of the party, and, I think, talks best of the three. Then I revisit the Campo Santo, and my old friend, the sexton, has two—but *one* the prettiest daughter imaginable; and I amuse myself with contrasting her beautiful and innocent face of fifteen with the skulls with which he has peopled several cells, and particularly with that of one skull, dated 1766, which was once covered (the tradition goes) by the most lovely features of Bologna—noble and rich. When I look at these, and at this girl—when I think of what *they were*, and what she must be—why, then, my dear Murray, I won't shock you by saying what I think. It is little matter what becomes of us 'bearded men,' but I don't like the notion of a beautiful woman's lasting less than a beautiful tree—than her own picture—her own shadow, which won't change so to the sun as her face to the mirror. I must leave off, for my head aches consumedly. I have never been quite well since the night of the representation of Alfieri's *Mirra* a fortnight ago.

Yours ever.

### LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

[*His MS. Memoir*; *his Wife*; *and his relations with the Guicciolis*]

*January* 2, 1820.

MY DEAR MOORE,—

To-day it is my wedding day;
And all the folks would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.

Here's a happy new year! but with reason,
I beg you'll permit me to say—
Wish me *many* returns of the *season*,
But as *few* as you please of the *day*.

My this present writing is to direct you that, *if she chooses*, she may see the *MS.* Memoir in your possession. I wish her to have fair-play, in all cases, even though it will not be published till after my decease. For this purpose, it were but just that Lady B. should know what is there said of her and hers, that she may have full power to remark on or respond to any part or parts, as may seem fitting to herself. This is fair dealing, I presume, in all events. . . [1]

For my own part, I had a sad scene since you went. Count Gu. came for his wife, and *none* of those consequences which Scott prophesied ensued. There was no damages, as in England, and so Scott lost his wager. But there was a great scene, for she would not, at first, go back with him—at least, she *did* go back with him; but he insisted, reasonably enough, that all communication should be broken off between her and me. So, finding Italy very dull, and having a fever tertian I packed up my valise, and prepared to cross the Alps; but my daughter fell ill, and detained me.

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[1] Lady Byron declined to see the *Memoirs*, and protested against such a publication

After her arrival at Ravenna, the Guiccioli fell ill again too: and at last, her father (who had, all along, opposed the *liaison* most violently till now) wrote to me to say that she was in such a state that *he* begged me to come and see her—and that her husband had acquiesced, in consequence of her relapse, and that *he* (her father) would guarantee all this, and that there would be no further scenes in consequence between them, and that I should not be compromised in any way. I set out soon after, and have been here ever since. I found her a good deal altered, but getting better:—*all* this comes of reading *Corinna*.

The Carnival is about to begin, and I saw about two or three hundred people at the Marquis Cavalli's the other evening, with as much youth, beauty, and diamonds among the women as ever averaged in the like number. My appearance in waiting on the Guiccioli was considered as a thing of course. The Marquis is her uncle, and naturally considered me as her relation.

The paper is out, and so is the letter. Pray write. Address to Venice, whence the letters will be forwarded. Yours, etc.

"B."

### LORD BYRON TO P. B. SHELLEY

[*Allegra; the Death of Keats; Admiration of Shelley's poetry*]

Ravenna, *April* 26, 1821.

THE child continues doing well, and the accounts are regular and favourable. It is gratifying to me that you and Mrs. Shelley do not disapprove of the step which I have taken, which is merely temporary.[1]

I am very sorry to hear what you say of Keats—is it *actually* true? I did not think criticism had been so killing. Though I differ from you essentially in your estimate of his performances, I so much abhor all unnecessary pain, that I would rather he had been seated on the highest peak of Parnassus than have perished in such a manner. Poor fellow! though with such inordinate self-love he would probably have not been very happy. I read the review of *Endymion* in the *Quarterly*. It was severe—but surely not so severe as many reviews in that and other journals upon others.

---

[1] Allegra, now four years old, had been placed by her father in a convent near Ravenna; 'Where she will, at least, have her learning advanced, and her morals and religion inculcated'.

I recollect the effect on me of the *Edinburgh* on my first poem; it was rage, and resistance, and redress—but not despondency nor despair. I grant that those are not amiable feelings; but, in this world of bustle and broil, and especially in the career of writing, a man should calculate upon his powers of *resistance* before he goes into the arena.

> 'Expect not life from pain nor danger free,
> Nor deem the doom of man reversed for thee.'

You know my opinion of *that second-hand* school of poetry. You also know my high opinion of your own poetry—because it is of *no* school. I read *Cenci*—but, besides that I think the *subject* essentially *un*-dramatic, I am not an admirer of our old dramatists *as models*. I deny that the English have hitherto had a drama at all. Your *Cenci*, however, was a work of power, and poetry. As to *my* drama, pray revenge yourself upon it, by being as free as I have been with yours.

I have not yet got your *Prometheus*, which I long to see. I have heard nothing of mine, and do not know that it is yet published. I have published a pamphlet on the Pope controversy, which you will not like. Had I known that Keats was dead—or that he was alive and so sensitive—I should have omitted some remarks upon his poetry, to which I was provoked by his *attack* upon *Pope*, and my disapprobation of *his* own style of writing.

You want me to undertake a great poem—I have not the inclination nor the power. As I grow older, the indifference—*not* to life, for we love it by instinct—but to the stimuli of life, increases. Besides, this late failure of the Italians has latterly disappointed me for many reasons,—some public, some personal. My respects to Mrs. S.

Yours ever.

PS.—Could not you and I contrive to meet this summer? Could not you take a run here *alone?*'

## LORD BYRON TO JOHN MURRAY

['*Don Juan*' *drawn from Real Life*]

Ravenna, *August* 23, 1821.

WITH regard to the charges about the shipwreck, I think that I told both you and Mr. Hobhouse, years ago, that there was not a *single circumstance* of it not taken from *fact* ; not, indeed, from any *single* shipwreck ; but all from actual facts of different wrecks. Almost all *Don Juan* is *real* life, either my own, or from people I knew. By the way, much of the description of the *furniture*, in Canto third, is taken from Tully's *Tripoli*[1] (pray note *this*), and the rest from my own observation. Remember, I never meant to conceal this at all, and have only not stated it, because *Don Juan* had no preface nor name to it. If you think it worth while to make this statement, do so in your own way. *I* laugh at such charges, convinced that no writer ever borrowed less, or made his materials more his own. Much is coincidence ; for instance, Lady Morgan (in a really *excellent* book, I assure you, on Italy) calls Venice an *ocean Rome* : I have the very same expression in Foscari, and yet *you* know that the play was written months ago, and sent to England ; the 'Italy' I received only on the 16th instant.

Your friend, like the public, is not aware that my dramatic simplicity is *studiously* Greek, and must continue so : *no* reform ever succeeded at first. I admire the old English dramatists ; but this is quite another field, and has nothing to do with theirs. I want to make a *regular* English drama, no matter whether for the stage or not, which is not my object—but a *mental theatre*.

Yours.

## LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

[*Madame Guiccioli divorced ; Completion of* '*Cain*']

Ravenna, *September* 19, 1821.

I AM in all the sweat, dust, and blasphemy of an universal packing of all my things, furniture, etc., for Pisa, whither I go for the winter. The cause has been the exile of all my fellow-Carbonics, and, amongst them, of the whole family of Madame G.; who, you know, was divorced from her husband last week, 'on account of P. P. clerk of this parish,' and who is obliged to join her father and relatives, now in exile there, to avoid being shut up in a monastery, because the Pope's decree of separation required her to reside in *casâ paterna*, or else, for decorum's sake, in a convent. As I could not say with Hamlet, 'Get thee to a nunnery,' I am preparing to follow them.

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[1] *A Narrative of a Ten Years' Residence at the Court of Tripoli*, by Richard Tully, who was consul at Tripoli from 1783 to 1793.

It is awful work, this love, and prevents all a man's projects of good or glory. I wanted to go to Greece lately (as everything seems up here) with her brother, who is a very fine, brave fellow (I have seen him put to the proof), and wild about liberty. But the tears of a woman who has left her husband for a man, and the weakness of one's own heart, are paramount to these projects, and I can hardly indulge them.[1]

We were divided in choice between Switzerland and Tuscany, and I gave my vote for Pisa, as nearer the Mediterranean, which I love for the sake of the shores which it washes, and for my young recollections of 1809. Switzerland is a curst, selfish, swinish country of brutes, placed in the most romantic region of the world. I never could bear the inhabitants, and still less their English visitors; for which reason, after writing for some information about houses, upon hearing that there was a colony of English all over the cantons of Geneva, etc., I at once gave up the thought, and persuaded the Gambas to do the same.

What are you doing, and where are you? in England? Nail Murray—nail him to his own counter, till he shells out the thirteens. Since I wrote, to you I have sent him another tragedy—*Cain* by name—making three in MS. now in his hands, or in the printer's. It is in the *Manfred* metaphysical style, and full of some Titanic declamation;—Lucifer being one of the dram. pers., who takes Cain a voyage among the stars, and afterwards to 'Hades,' where he shows him the phantoms of a former world, and its inhabitants. I have gone upon the notion of Cuvier, that the world has been destroyed three or four times, and was inhabited by mammoths, behemoths, and what not; but *not* by man till the Mosaic period, as, indeed, is proved by the strata of bones found;—those of all unknown animals, and known, being dug out, but none of mankind. I have, therefore, supposed Cain to be shown, in the *rational* Preadamites, beings endowed with a higher intelligence than man, but totally unlike him in form, and with much greater strength of mind and person. You may suppose the small talk which takes place between him and Lucifer upon these matters is not quite canonical.

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[1] Madame Guiccioli returned to her husband after Byron's death. Being a widow she married the Marquis de Boissy in 1851, and died at Florence in 1873.

The consequence is, that Cain comes back and kills Abel in a fit of dissatisfaction, partly with the politics of Paradise, which had driven them all out of it, and partly because (as it is written in Genesis) Abel's sacrifice was the more acceptable to the Deity.

Yours, etc.

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### LORD BYRON TO LADY BYRON

[*A Letter that was never sent*]

Pisa, *November* 17, 1821.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of 'Ada's hair', which is very soft and pretty, and nearly as dark already as mine was at twelve years old, if I may judge from what I recollect of some in Augusta's possession, taken at that age. But it don't curl,—perhaps from its being let grow.

I also thank you for the inscription of the date and name, and I will tell you why:—I believe that they are the only two or three words of your handwriting in my possession. For your letters I returned; and except the two words, or rather the one word, 'Household', written twice in an old account book, I have no other. I burnt your last note, for two reasons:—firstly, it was written in a style not very agreeable; and, secondly, I wished to take your word without documents, which are the worldly resources of suspicious people.

I suppose that this note will reach you somewhere about Ada's birthday—the 10th of December, I believe. She will then be six, so that in about twelve more I shall have some chance of meeting her;—perhaps sooner, if I am obliged to go to England by business or otherwise. Recollect, however, one thing, either in distance or nearness;—every day which keeps us asunder should, after so long a period, rather soften our mutual feelings, which must always have one rallying-point as long as our child exists, which I presume we both hope will be long after either of her parents.

The time which has elapsed since the separation has been considerably more than the whole brief period of our union, and the not much longer one of our prior acquaintance. We both made a bitter mistake ; but now it is over, and irrevocably so. For, at thirty-three on my part, and a few years less on yours, though it is no very extended period of life, still it is one when the habits and thought are generally so formed as to admit of no modification ; and as we could not agree when younger, we should with difficulty do so now.

I say all this, because I own to you, that, notwithstanding everything, I considered our re-union as not impossible for more than a year after the separation ;—but then I gave up the hope entirely and forever. But this very impossibility of re-union seems to me at least a reason why, on all the few points of discussion which can arise between us, we should preserve the courtesies of life, and as much of its kindness as people who are never to meet may preserve perhaps more easily than nearer connexions. For my own part, I am violent, but not malignant ; for only fresh provocations can awaken my resentments. To you, who are colder and more concentrated, I would just hint that you may sometimes mistake the depth of a cold anger for dignity, and a worse feeling for duty. I assure you that I bear you *now* (whatever I may have done) no resentment whatever. Remember, that *if you have injured me* in aught, this forgiveness is something ; and that, if I have *injured you*, it is something more still, if it be true, as the moralists say, that the most offending are the least forgiving.

Whether the offence has been solely on my side, or reciprocal, or on yours chiefly, I have ceased to reflect upon any but two things—viz., that you are the mother of my child, and that we shall never meet again. I think if you also consider the two corresponding points with reference to myself, it will be better for all three.

Yours ever,
NOEL BYRON.

## LORD BYRON TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

[*Gratitude for a review in the 'Quarterly'*]

MY DEAR SIR WALTER,—

I need not say how grateful I am for your letter, but I must own my ingratitude in not having written to you long ago. Since I left England (and it is not for all the usual term of transportation) I have scribbled to five hundred blockheads on business, etc., without difficulty, though with no great pleasure ; and yet, with the notion of addressing you a hundred times in my head, and always in my heart, I have not done what I ought to have done. I can only account for it on the same principle of tremulous anxiety with which one sometimes makes love to a beautiful woman of our own degree, with whom one is enamoured in good earnest ; whereas, we attack a fresh-coloured housemaid without (I speak, of course, of earlier times) any sentimental remorse or mitigation of our virtuous purpose.

I owe to you far more than the usual obligation for the courtesies of literature and common friendship ; for you went out of your way in 1817 to do me a service when it required not merely kindness, but courage to do so : to have been recorded by you in such a manner, would have been a proud memorial at any time, but at such a time, when 'all the world and his wife', as the proverb goes, were trying to trample upon me, was something still higher to my self-esteem,—I allude to the *Quarterly Review* of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold*, which Murray told me was written by you,—and, indeed, I should have known it without his information, as there could not be *two* who *could* and *would* have done this at the time. Had it been a common criticism, however eloquent or panegyrical, I should have felt pleased, undoubtedly, and grateful, but not to the extent which the extraordinary good-heartedness of the whole proceeding must induce in any mind capable of such sensations. The very *tardiness* of this acknowledgement will, at least, show that I have not forgotten the obligation ; and I can assure you that my sense of it has been out at compound interest during the delay. I shall only add one word upon the subject, which is, that I think that you, and Jeffrey, and Leigh Hunt, were the only literary men, of numbers whom I know (and some of whom I have served), who dared venture even an anonymous word in my favour just then : and that, of those three, I had never seen *one* at all—of the second much less than I desired—and that the third was under no kind of obligation to me, whatever; while the other *two* had been actually attacked by me on a former occasion; *one*, indeed, with some provocation, but the other wantonly enough. So you see you have been heaping 'coals of fire', etc., in the true gospel manner, and I can assure you that they have burnt down to my very heart.

I am glad that you accepted the inscription. I meant to have inscribed *The Foscarini* to you instead; but first, I heard that *Cain* was thought the least bad of the two as a composition: and secondly, I have abused Southey like a pickpocket, in a note to the *Foscarini*, and I recollected that he is a friend of yours (though not of mine), and that it would not be the handsome thing to dedicate to one friend anything containing such matters about another. However, I'll work the Laureate before I have done with him, as soon as I can muster Billingsgate therefor. I like a row, and always did from a boy, in the course of which propensity, I must needs say, that I have found it the most easy of all to be gratified, personally and poetically. You disclaim 'jealousies'; but I would ask, as Boswell did of Johnson, 'of *whom could* you be *jealous?*—of none of the living certainly, and (taking all and all into consideration) of which of the dead? I don't like to bore you about the Scotch novels (as they call them, though two of them are wholly English, and the rest half so), but nothing can or could ever persuade me, since I was the first ten minutes in your company, that you are *not* the man. To me those novels have so much of 'Auld lang syne' (I was bred a canny Scot till ten years old), that I never move without them; and when I removed from Ravenna to Pisa the other day, and sent on my library before, they were the only books that I kept by me.

"*January* 27, 1822.

I delayed till now concluding, in the hope that I should have got *The Pirate,* who is under way for me, but has not yet hove in sight. I heard that your daughter is married, and I suppose by this time you are half a grandfather—a young one, by the way. I have heard great things of Mrs. Lockhart's personal and mental charms, and much good of her lord: that you may live to see as many novel Scotts as there are Scott's novels, is the very bad pun, but sincere wish of

Yours ever most affectionately, etc.

### Lord Byron to Thomas Moore

['*I am no enemy to religion*']

Pisa, *March* 4, 1822.

Since I wrote the enclosed, I have waited another post, and now have your answer acknowledging the arrival of the packet—a troublesome one, I fear, to you in more ways than one, both from weight external and internal.

The unpublished things in your hands, in Douglas K.'s, and Mr. John Murray's, are—*Heaven and Earth*, a lyrical kind of Drama upon the Deluge, etc.;—*Werner, now with you*;—a translation of the First Canto of the *Morgante Maggiore*;—*ditto* of an Episode in Dante;—some stanzas to the Po, June 1st, 1819;—*Hints from Horace*, written in 1811, but a good deal, *since*, to be omitted; several prose things, which may, perhaps, as well remain unpublished;—*The Vision, etc., of Quevedo Redivivus*, in verse.

Here you see is 'more matter for a May morning'; but how much of this can be published is for consideration. The *Quevedo* (one of my best in that line) has appalled the Row already, and must take its chance at Paris, if at all. The new Mystery is less speculative than *Cain*, and very pious; besides, it is chiefly lyrical. The *Morgante* is the *best* translation that ever was or will be made; and the rest are—whatever you please to think them.

I am sorry you think *Werner* even *approaching* to any fitness for the stage, which, with my notions upon it, is very far from my present object. With regard to the publication, I have already explained that I have no exorbitant expectations of either fame or profit in the present instances; but wish them published because they are written, which is the common feeling of all scribblers.

With respect to 'Religion,' can I never convince you that I have no such opinions as the characters in that drama, which seems to have frightened everybody? Yet *they* are nothing to the expressions in Goethe's *Faust* (which are ten times hardier), and not a whit more bold than those of Milton's Satan. My ideas of a character may run away with me: like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character while I *draw* it, but not for a moment after the pen is from off the paper.

I am no enemy to religion, but the contrary. As a proof, I am educating my natural daughter a strict Catholic in a convent of Romagna; for I think people can never have *enough* of religion, if they are to have any. I incline, myself, very much to the Catholic doctrines; but if I am to write a drama, I must make my characters speak as I conceive them likely to argue.

As to poor Shelley, who is another bugbear to you and the world, he is, to my knowledge, the *least* selfish and the mildest of men—a man who has made more sacrifices of his fortune and feelings for others than any I ever heard of. With his speculative opinions I have nothing in common, nor desire to have.

The truth is, my dear Moore, you live near the *stove* of society, where you are unavoidably influenced by its heat and its vapours. I did so once—and too much—and enough to give a colour to my whole future existence. As my success in society was *not* inconsiderable, I am surely not a prejudiced judge upon the subject, unless in its favour; but I think it, as now constituted, *fatal* to all great original undertakings of every kind I never courted it *then*, when I was young and high in blood, and one of its 'curled darlings'; and do you think I would do so *now*, when I am living in a clearer atmosphere? One thing *only* might lead me back to it, and that is, to try once more if I could do any good in *politics*; but *not* in the petty politics I see now preying upon our miserable country.

Do not let me be misunderstood, however. If you speak your *own* opinions, they ever had, and will have, the greatest weight with *me*. But if you merely *echo* the 'monde' (and it is difficult not to do so, being in its favour and its ferment), I can only regret that you should ever repeat anything to which I cannot pay attention.

But I am prosing. The gods go with you, and as much immortality of all kinds as may suit your present and all other existence.

Yours, etc.

### LORD BYRON TO P. B. SHELLEY

[*The Death of Allegra*]

*April* 23, 1822.

THE blow was stunning and unexpected; for I thought the danger over, by the long interval between her stated amelioration and the arrival of the express. But I have borne up against it as I best can, and so far successfully, that I can go about the usual business of life with the same appearance of composure, and even greater. There is nothing to prevent your coming to-morrow: but, perhaps, to-day, and yester-evening, it was better not to have met. I do not know that I have anything to reproach in my conduct, and certainly nothing in my feelings and intentions towards the dead. But it is a moment when we are apt to think that, if this or that had been done, such event might have been prevented—though every day and hour shows us that they are the most natural and inevitable. I suppose that Time will do his usual work—Death has done his.

Yours, ever,
N. B.

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### LORD BYRON TO JOHN MURRAY

[*Allegra to be buried at Harrow*]

Montenero' near Leghorn, *May* 26, 1822.

THE body is embarked, in what ship I know not, neither could I enter into the details; but the Countess G. G. has had the goodness to give the necessary orders to Mr. Dunn, who superintends the embarkation, and will write to you. I wish it to be buried in Harrow Church.

There is a spot in the church*yard*, near the footpath, on the brow of the hill looking towards Windsor, and a tomb under a large tree (bearing the name of Peachie, or Peachey), where I used to sit for hours and hours when a boy. This was my favourite spot; but, as I wish to erect a tablet to her memory, the body had better be deposited in the church. Near the door, on the left hand as you enter, there is a monument with a tablet containing these words:—

When Sorrow weeps o'er Virtue's sacred dust,
Our tears become us, and our grief is just:
Such were the tears she shed, who grateful pays
This last sad tribute of her love and praise.

I recollect them (after seventeen years), not from anything remarkable in them, but because from my seat in the gallery I had generally my eyes turned towards that monument. As near it as convenient I could wish Allegra to be buried, and on the wall a marble tablet placed, with these words:—

In Memory of
Allegra,
Daughter of G. G. Lord Byron,
who died at Bagna Cavallo,
in Italy, April 20th, 1822,
aged five years and three months.
'I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me'.
2d Samuel, xii. 23.

The funeral I wish to be as private as is consistent with decency; and I could hope that Henry Drury[1] will, perhaps, read the service over her. If he should decline it, it can be done by the usual minister for the time being. I do not know that I need add more just now.

### LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

[*The Death of Shelley*]

Pisa, *August* 8, 1822.

YOU will have heard by this time that Shelley and another gentleman (Captain Williams) were drowned about a month ago (a *month* yesterday), in a squall off the Gulf of Spezia. There is thus another man gone about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will, perhaps, do him justice *now*, when he can be no better for it.

I have not seen the thing you mention,[2] and only heard of it casually, nor have I any desire. The price is, as I saw in some advertisements, fourteen shillings, which is too much to pay for a libel on oneself. Some one said in a letter, that it was a Dr. Watkins, who deals in the life and libel line. It must have diminished your natural pleasure, as a friend (*vide* Rochefoucauld), to see yourself in it.

With regard to the Blackwood fellows, I never published anything against them; nor, indeed, have seen their magazine (except in Galignani's extracts) for these three years past. I once wrote, a good while ago, some remarks on their review of *Don Juan*, but saying very little about themselves, and these were *not* published. If you think that I ought to follow your example (and I like to be in your company when I can) in contradicting their impudence, you may shape this declaration of mine into a similar paragraph for me. It is possible that you may have seen the little I *did* write (and never published) at Murray's :—it contained much more about Southey than about the Blacks.

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[1] Henry Joseph Drury was an old friend of Byron, and a son of the poet's head-master at Harrow. Byron's wishes with regard to this tablet could not be carried out, owing, chiefly, to objections raised by a number of influential laymen of the parish. 'Allegra' was buried at the entrance to the church, but no memorial was erected.

[2] *Memoirs of the Right Hon. Lord Byron.*

If you think that I ought to do anything about Watkins's book, I should not care much about publishing *my Memoir now*, should it be necessary to counteract the fellow. But, in *that* case, I should like to look over the *press* myself.

### LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE

[*Shelley's Funeral Pile ; the new Journal ; and other Schemes*]

Pisa, *August* 27, 1822.

It is boring to trouble you with 'such small gear' ; but it must be owned that I should be glad if you would inquire whether my Irish subscription ever reached the committee in Paris from Leghorn. My reasons like Vellum's 'are three-fold': First, I doubt the accuracy of all almoners, or remitters of benevolent cash ; second, I do suspect that the said Committee, having in part served its time to time-serving, may have kept back the acknowledgement of an obnoxious politician's name in their lists ; and third, I feel pretty sure that I shall one day be twitted by the government scribes for having been a professor of love for Ireland and not coming forward with the others in her distress.

It is not as you may opine that I am amibitious of having my name in the papers, as I can have that any day in the week gratis. All I want is to know if the Reverend Thomas Hall did or did not remit my subscription (200 scudi of Tuscany, or about a thousand francs, more or less) to the Committee at Paris.

The other day at Viareggio I thought proper to swim off to my schooner (the *Bolivar*) in the offing and thence to shore again—about three miles, or better, in all. As it was at midday, under a broiling sun, the consequence has been a feverish attack, and my whole skin's coming off, after going through the process of one large continuous blister, raised by the sun and sea together. I have suffered much pain; not being able to lie on my back, or even side; for my shoulders and arms were equally St. Bartholomewed. But it is over—and I have got a new skin, and am as glossy as a snake in its new suit.

We have been burning the bodies of Shelley and Williams on the sea-shore, to render them fit for removal and regular interment. You can have no idea what an extraordinary effect such a funeral pile has, on a desolate shore, with mountains in the background and the sea before, and the singular appearance the salt and frankincense gave to the flame. All of Shelley was consumed, except his *heart*, which would not take the flame, and is now preserved in spirits of wine.

Your old acquaintance Londonderry has quietly died at North Cray! and the virtuous De Witt was torn in pieces by the populace! What a lucky——the Irishman has been in his life and end. In him your Irish Franklin *est mort!*

Leigh Hunt is sweating articles for his new Journal; and both he and I think it somewhat shabby in *you* not to contribute. Will you become one of the *proprietors*? 'Do, and we go snacks'. I recommend you to think twice before you respond in the negative.

I have nearly (*quite three*) four new cantos of *Don Juan* ready. I obtained permission from the female Censor Morum of *my* morals to continue it, provided it were immaculate; so I have been as decent as need be. There is a deal of war—a siege, and all that, in the style, graphical and technical, of the shipwreck in Canto Second, which 'took', as they say in the Row.

Yours, etc.

PS.—That——Galignani has about ten lies in one paragraph. It was not a Bible that was found in Shelley's pocket, but John Keats' poems. However, it would not have been strange, for he was a great admirer of Scripture as a composition. *I* did not send my bust to the Academy of New York; but I sat for my picture to young West, an American artist, at the request of some members of that Academy to *him* that he would take my portrait—for the Academy, I believe.

I had, and still have, thoughts of South America, but am fluctuating between it and Greece. I should have gone, long ago, to one of them, but for my liaison with the Countess Gi.; for love, in these days, is little compatible with glory. *She* would be delighted to go too; but I do not choose to expose her to a long voyage, and a residence in an unsettled country, where I shall probably take a part of some sort.

### Lord Byron to Mr. Murray

[*'Don Juan' intended as a Satire; Strained Relations with Leigh Hunt*]

Genoa, 10$^{bre}$ 25, 1822.

I HAD sent you back the *Quarterly*, without perusal, having resolved to read no more reviews—good, bad, or indifferent; but 'who can control his fate'? Galignani, to whom my English studies are confined, has forwarded a copy of at least one-half of it, in his indefatigable catch-penny weekly compilation; and as, 'like honour it came unlooked for', I have looked through it. I must say that, upon the *whole*, that is, the whole of the *half* which I have read (for the other half is to be the segment of Galignani's next week's circular), it is extremely handsome, and anything but unkind or unfair. As I take the good in good part, I must not, nor will not, quarrel with the bad. What the writer says of *Don Juan* is harsh, but it is inevitable. He must follow, or at least not directly oppose, the opinion of a prevailing, and yet not very firmly seated, party. A Review may and will direct and 'turn awry' the currents of opinion, but it must not directly oppose them. *Don Juan* will be known by-and-by for what it is intended—a *Satire* on *abuses* of the present states of society, and not an eulogy of vice. It may be now and then voluptuous: I can't help that. Ariosto is worse; Smollett (see Lord Strutwell in the second volume of *Roderick Random*) ten times worse; and Fielding no better. No girl will ever be seduced by reading *Don Juan*:—no, no; she will go to Little's poems and Rousseau's *romans* for that, or even to the immaculate De Staël. They will encourage her, and not the Don, who laughs at that, and—and—most other things. But never mind—*ça ira*!

Now, do you see what you and your friends do by your in-judicious rudeness ?—actually cement a sort of connexion which you strove to prevent, and which, had the Hunts *prospered*, would not in all probability have continued. As it is, I will not quit them in their adversity, though it should cost me character, fame, money, and the usual *et cetera*.

My original motives I already explained (in the letter which you thought proper to show) : they are the *true* ones, and I abide by them, as I tell you, and I told Leigh Hunt when he questioned me on the subject of that letter. He was violently hurt, and never will forgive me at bottom ; but I can't help that. I never meant to make a parade of it ; but if he chose to question me, I could only answer the plain truth : and I confess I did not see anything in the letter to hurt him, unless I said he was 'a *bore* ', which I don't remember. Had their Journal gone on well, and I could have aided to make it better for them, I should then have left them, after my safe pilotage off a lee shore, to make a prosperous voyage by themselves. As it is, I can't, and would not, if I could, leave them among the breakers.

As to any community of feeling, thought, or opinion between Leigh Hunt and me, there is little or none. We meet rarely, hardly ever ; but I think him a good-principled and able man, and must do as I would be done by. I do not know what world he has lived in, but I have lived in three or four ; but none of them like his Keats and kangaroo *terra incognita*. Alas ! poor Shelley ! how he would have laughed had he lived, and how we used to laugh now and then, at various things, which are grave in the suburbs !

You are all mistaken about Shelley. You do not know how mild, how tolerant, how good he was in society ; and as perfect a gentleman as ever crossed a drawing-room, when he liked, and where he liked.

I have some thoughts of taking a run down to Naples (*solus*, or, at most, *cum solâ*) this spring, and writing, when I have studied the country, a fifth and sixth canto of *Childe Harold ;* but this is merely an idea for the present.

Yours, etc.,

N. B.

PS.—Mrs. Shelley is residing with the Hunts at some distance from me. I see them very seldom, and generally on account of their business. Mrs. Shelley, I believe, will go to England in the spring.

Count Gamba's family, the father and son and daughter, are residing with me by Mr. Hill (the minister's) recommendation, as a safer asylum from the political persecutions than they could have in another residence.

### LORD BYRON TO GOETHE[1]

*[The Eve of his Voyage to Greece]*

Leghorn, *July* 24, 1823.

ILLUSTRIOUS SIR,—

I cannot thank you as you ought to be thanked for the lines, which my young friend, Mr. Sterling, sent me of yours ; and it would but ill become me to pretend to exchange verses with him who, for fifty years, has been the undisputed sovereign of European literature. You must therefore accept my most sincere acknowledgements in prose—and in hasty prose too; for I am at present on my voyage to Greece once more, and surrounded by hurry and bustle, which hardly allow a moment even to gratitude and admiration to express themselves.

I sailed from Genoa some days ago, was driven back by a gale of wind, and have since sailed and arrived here, 'Leghorn', this morning, to receive on board some Greek passengers for their struggling country.

Here also I found your lines and Mr. Sterling's letter ; and I could not have had a more favourable omen, a more agreeable surprise, than a word of Goethe, written by his own hand.

I am returning to Greece, to see if I can be of any little use there : if ever I come back, I will pay a visit to Weimar, to offer the sincere homage of one of the many millions of your admirers. I have the honour to be, ever and most,

Your obliged,

NOEL BYRON.

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[1] Goethe took a deep interest both in Byron's life and his writings, and in 1820 wrote an enthusiastic review of *Manfred* in *Kunst und Alterthum.* Byron on his side showed his appreciation of Goethe by dedicating *Werner* to him. Goethe, in return, on hearing that his brother poet was about to give his services to Greece, sent him the verses referred to in Byron's letter. The Mr. Sterling, by whom the letter was sent, happened to be returning from the poet's house at Weimar to Genoa, whence Byron sailed on July 16.

## LORD BYRON TO HIS HALF-SISTER, MRS. LEIGH[1]

[*From the scene of his Death*]

Missolonghi, *February* 23, 1824.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—

I received a few days ago your and Lady B.'s report of Ada's health, with other letters from England; for which I ought to be, and am (I hope) sufficiently thankful, as they are of great comfort, and I wanted some, having been recently unwell—but am now much better, so that you must not be alarmed. You will have heard of our journeys and escapes, and so forth, perhaps with some exaggeration; but it is all very well now, and I have been some time in Greece, which is in as good a state as could be expected, considering circumstances. But I will not plague you with politics, wars, or earthquakes, though we have had a rather smart one three nights ago, which produced a scene ridiculous enough, as no damage was done except to those who stuck fast in the scuffle to get first out of the doors or windows, amongst whom some recent importations from England, who had been used to quieter elements, were rather squeezed in the press for precedence.

I have been obtaining the release of about nine-and-twenty Turkish prisoners—men, women, and children—and have sent them, at my own expense, home to their friends; but one pretty little girl of nine years of age, named Hato or Hatagée,[2] has expressed a strong wish to remain with me or under my care; and I have nearly determined to adopt her, if I thought Lady B. would let her come to England as a companion to Ada (they are about the same age), and we could easily provide for her—if not, I can send her to Italy for education. She is very lively and quick, and with great black, Oriental eyes and Asiatic features. All her brothers were killed in the revolution. Her mother wishes to return to her husband, who is at Prevesa; but says that she would rather entrust the child to me in the present state of the country. Her extreme youth and sex have hitherto saved her life, but there is no saying what might happen in the course of the war (and of such a war). I shall probably commit her to the care of some English lady in the Islands for the present. The child herself has the same wish, and seems to have a decided character for her age. You can mention this matter, if you think it worth while. I merely wish her to be respectably educated and treated ; and if my years and all things be considered, I presume it would be difficult to conceive me to have any other views.

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[1] This letter was found on Byron's writing-table after his death. Mrs. Leigh endorsed it with the words, 'His last letter'.

[2] Hato and her mother were returned to their home after Byron's death. 'I thought you slaves', exclaimed the father on embracing them, 'and you return to me decked like brides'.

With regard to Ada's health, I am glad to hear that she is so much better ; but I think it right that Lady B. should be informed (and guard against it accordingly) that her description of much of her disposition and tendencies very nearly resemble that of my own at a similar age,—except that I was much more impetuous. Her preference of *prose* (strange as it may now seem) *was*, and indeed still *is* mine (for I hate reading verse—and always did) ; and I never invented anything but 'boats and ships', and generally something relative to the ocean. I showed the report to Colonel Stanhope, who was struck with the resemblance of parts of it to the paternal line, even now. . . . But it is also fit, though unpleasant, that I should mention that my recent attack, and a very severe one, had a strong appearance of epilepsy ; why, I know not—for it is late in life, its first appearance at thirty-six, and, so far as I know, it is not hereditary ; and it is that it may not *become* so that you should tell Lady B. to take some precautions in the case of Ada. My attack has not returned, and I am fighting it off with abstinence and exercise, and thus far with success ; if merely casual, it is all very well.

## THOMAS MOORE

### 1779–1852

Thomas Moore was on his way back from Bermuda when he sent home his graphic account of the 'awful sublimities' of Niagara. The letter is worth preserving if only for the picture which it gives of the famous Falls as they existed in their prime—unspoiled by the hand of the electrical engineer. Thomas Moore had been to Bermuda in connexion with his appointment as Admiralty registrar there, and, finding the office to be a sinecure, had left a deputy in charge. Some years later his deputy embezzled £600 and involved the poet in a lawsuit, which would have led to his arrest for the debt had he not taken refuge on the Continent for three years. Moore's reputation as a poet was established long before he sought safety abroad. His Irish Melodies, for each of which he received a hundred guineas, (he received £12,810 for them altogether), had made him the national 'Bard of Erin' his *Twopenny Post Bag*, containing the lampoons in verse in which he punished the Regent and his favourites for their failure to support Catholic emancipation—as well as for disappointing his personal hopes of provision from the public revenue—had proved a big success; and *Lalla Rookh* had earned for him a European reputation. It is to *Lalla Rookh* that he refers in his letter to Miss Godfrey—written in May, 1813, before he had made his handsome bargain with Longmans—as well as in the succeeding letter to Samuel Rogers. The poem itself was not published until 1817, and its romantic little history is well known—how Longmans, without seeing a line of the work, agreed to pay for it 'not less than the highest sum ever given for a poem', which they said was £3,000; how they declined Moore's offer to let them see as much as he had completed by 1815, declaring that they had too great a confidence in him to feel any anxiety on that score; and how it was at last completed in the year of financial disaster—1816—when Moore, not to be beaten in magnanimity, volunteered to release the publishers from their agreement if they felt such a course to be at all advisable. Longmans held on, and were well rewarded by the success of the book. During the three years of his forced residence on the Continent, Moore received the 'precious gift' from his friend Byron at Venice—the famous Memoirs—as described in the second letter to Samuel Rogers. Moore was not able to return to England until 1822, by which time the Bermuda claim was satisfied by Lord Lansdowne with a cheque for £740, which Moore refunded out of the profits of his later efforts, *The Loves of the Angels*, and his *Fables of the Holy Alliance*, published under the pseudonym of Thomas Brown the younger.

## THOMAS MOORE TO HIS MOTHER

[*The 'Awful Sublimities' of Niagara Falls*]

Niagara, *July* 24, 1804.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—

I have seen the Falls, and am all rapture and amazement. I cannot give you a better idea of what I felt than by transcribing what I wrote off hastily in my journal on returning. 'Arrived at Chippewa, within three miles of the Falls, on Saturday, July 21, to dinner. That evening walked towards the Falls, but got no farther than the rapids, which gave us a prelibation of the grandeur we had to expect. Next day, Sunday, July 22, went to visit the Falls. Never shall I forget the impression I felt at the first glimpse of them which we got as the carriage passed over the hill that overlooks them. We were not near enough to be agitated by the terrific effects of the scene; but saw through the trees this mighty flow of waters descending with calm magnificence, and received enough of its grandeur to set imagination on the wing; imagination which, even at Niagara, can outrun reality. I felt as if approaching the very residence of the Deity; the tears started into my eyes; and I remained, for moments after we had lost sight of the scene, in that delicious absorption which pious enthusiasm alone can produce. We arrived at the New Ladder and descended to the bottom. Here all its awful sublimities rushed full upon me. But the former exquisite sensation was gone. I now saw all. The string that had been touched by the first impulse, and which *fancy* would have kept for ever in vibration, now rested at *reality*. Yet, though there was no more to imagine, there was much to feel. My whole heart and soul ascended towards the Divinity in a swell of devout admiration, which I never before experienced. Oh! bring the atheist here, and he cannot return an atheist! I pity the man who can coldly sit down to write a description of these ineffable wonders; much more do I pity him who can submit them to the admeasurement of gallons and yards. It is impossible by pen or pencil to convey even a faint idea of their magnificence. Painting is lifeless, and the most burning words of poetry have all been lavished upon inferior and ordinary subjects. We must have new combinations of language to describe the Fall of Niagara.

### THOMAS MOORE TO MR. POWER [1]

[*The 'Twopenny Post Bag'*]

*Friday*,. . . 1813.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I dare say you will be surprised at not hearing from me so long, but the truth is I have been stealing a week or ten days from you to do a little job, which I think will get me out of Carpenter's debt, and, if I can make a good bargain with him, put money in my pocket. I have collected all the little squibs in the political way which I have written for two or three years past, and am adding a few *new ones* to them for publication. I publish them, of course, anonymously, and you must keep my secret. Carpenter being the Prince's bookseller, is afraid to publish them himself, but gets some one else. I am much mistaken if they do not make a little noise. What a pity it is that such things do not come from *our bookshop* in the *Strand*, but *these* would not *keep*, and there is no fear but I shall find *more* against that is opened. I consider very little reputation I can make, my dear sir, as going towards the fund I am to throw into our establishment, and though I shall, of course, *deny* the trifles I am now doing, yet, if they are liked, I shall be sure to get the credit for them.

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[1] The publisher of Moore's music.

In the meantime I have not been idle in the musical way, but have an original song nearly ready for you, and after I have despatched my politics, you shall see what a fertile month I shall make February. I would not have turned aside for my present job, only that I found I had a little time over, and that, indeed, (as I have already said), everything that I can get fame by tells towards our future prospects ; it is like establishing a credit.

What I inclose for Carpenter is the beginning of my squibs. It is to be called *Intercepted Letters, or the Twopenny Post Bag.*

Will you find out for me how many ponies Lady B. Ashley gave the Princess Charlotte ; or, at least, how many the latter drives ?

Ever yours.
THOMAS MOORE.

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### THOMAS MOORE TO MISS GODFREY[1]

[' *Lalla Rookh* '—*before the bargain with Longmans*]

Mayfield, Ashbourne, *May*, 1813.

So you insist upon my taking my poem to Town with me ? I will, if I can, you may be sure ; but I confess I feel rather downhearted about it. Never was anything more unlucky for me than Byron's invasion of this region, which, when I entered it, was as yet untrodden, and whose charm consisted in the gloss and novelty of its features ; but it will now be overrun with clumsy adventurers, and, when I make my appearance, instead of being a leader as I looked to be, I must dwindle into a humble follower—a Byronian. This is disheartening, and I sometimes doubt whether I shall publish it at all; though at the same time, if I may trust my own judgment, I think I never wrote so well before. But (as King Arthur, in *Tom Thumb*, says) 'Time will tell', and in the meantime, I am leading a life which but for these anxieties of fame, and a few ghosts of debt that sometimes haunt me, is as rationally happy as any man can ask for. You want to know something of our little girls. Barbara is stout and healthy, not at all pretty, but very sensible-looking, and is, of course, to be everything that's clever. The other little thing was very ill-treated by the nurse we left her with in that abominable Cheshire, but she is getting much better, and promises to be the prettier of the two. Bessy's[1] heart is wrapped up in them, and the only pain they ever give me is the thought of the precariousness of such treasures, and the way I see that *her* life depends upon *theirs*. She is the same affectionate, sensible, and unaffected creature as a mother that she is as a wife, and devotes every thought and moment to them and me. I pass the day in my study or in the fields; after dinner I read to Bessy for a couple of hours, and we are in this way, at present, going through Miss Edgeworth's works, and then after tea I go to my study again. We are not without the distractions of society, for this is a very gay place, and *some* of the distractions I could dispense with; but being far out of the regular road, I am as little interrupted as I could possibly expect in so very thick a neighbourhood.

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[1] Sister of Lady Donegal, who was also among Moore's early friends.

Good-bye. Ever yours,
T. MOORE.

### THOMAS MOORE TO SAMUEL ROGERS

[*Progress of 'Lalla Rookh'*]

Mayfield, *December* 26, 1815.

MY DEAR ROGERS,—

As this is about the time you said you should be on your return to London, from your bright course through that noble zodiac you've been moving in, I hasten to welcome you thither, not alas ! with my hand, as I could wish,—*that* joy must not be for a few months longer,—but with my warmest congratulations on your safe and sound return from the Continent, and hearty thanks for your kind recollections of me—recollections, which I never want the outward and visible sign of letter-writing to assure me of, however delightful and welcome it may be, in addition to *knowing* that there's sweet music in the instrument, to *hear* a little of its melody now and then. This image will not stand your criticism, but you know its *meaning*, and that's enough—much more indeed than we Irish image-makers can in general achieve. . . . With respect to my Peris, thus stands the case, and remember that they are still to remain (where Peris best like to be) *under the rose.* I have nearly finished three tales, making, in all, about three thousand five hundred lines, but my plan is to have *five tales*, the stories of all which are arranged, and which I am *determined* to finish before I publish—no urgings nor wonderings nor tauntings shall induce me to lift the curtain till I have grouped these five subjects in the way I think best for variety and effect. I have already suffered enough by premature publication. I have formidable favourites to contend with, and must try to make up my deficiencies in *dash* and vigour by a greater degree, if possible, of versatility and polish. Now it will take, at the least, six thousand lines to complete this plan, i.e. between two and three thousand more than I have yet done. By May next I expect to have five thousand finished. This is the number for which the Longmans stipulated, and accordingly in May I mean to appear in London, and *nominally* deliver the work into their hands. It would be then too late (even if all were finished) to think of going to press ; so that I shall thus enjoy the credit with the Literary Quidnuncs of having completed my task together with the advantage of the whole summer before me to extend it to the length I purpose. Such is the statement of my thousands, &c., which I am afraid you will find as puzzling as a speech of Mr. Vansittart's ; but it is now near twelve o'clock at night, which being an hour later than our cottage rules allow, I feel it impossible to be luminous any longer—in which tendency to eclipse, my candle sympathizes most gloomily.

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[1] The poet's wife, *née* Bessie Dyke, whose devotion to him was rewarded—in the words of Lord John Russell—with the 'homage of a lover from the hour of their nuptials to that of his dissolution'.

### THOMAS MOORE TO SAMUEL ROGERS

### [*Abroad for Safety* ; *the Byron Memoirs*]

Paris, *December* 23, 1819.

MY DEAR ROGERS,—

There is but little use now in mentioning (though it is very true) that I began a letter to you from Rome ; the first fragment of which is now before my eyes, and is as follows, ' One line from Rome is worth at least two of even yours from Venice ; and it is lucky it should be so, as I have not at this moment time for much more '. There I stopped ; and if you had ever travelled on the wing as I have done, flying about from morning till night, and from sight to sight, you would know how hard it is to find time to write, and you would forgive me. Taking for granted that you *do* forgive me, I hasten to write you some very valueless lines indeed, as they must be chiefly about myself. I found a letter here on my arrival, from the Longmans, telling me that I must not venture to cross the water (as was my intention for the purpose of reaching Holyrood House) till they had consulted you and some other of my friends with respect to the expediency of such a step. I have heard nothing more from them on the subject, and therefore I suppose I must make up my mind to having Mrs. Moore and the little ones over, and remaining here. This is disappointing to me in many respects, and in few more than its depriving me of all chance of seeing *you*, my dear Rogers, and of comparing notes with you on the subject of the many wonders I have witnessed since we parted. Lord John has, I suppose, told you of the precious gift Lord Byron made me at Venice—his own memoirs, written up to the time of his arrival in Italy.[1] I have many things to tell you about him, which at this moment neither time nor inclination will let me tell ; when I say ' inclination ', I mean that spirits are not equal to the effort. I have indeed seldom felt much more low and comfortless than since I arrived in Paris ; and though if I had you at this moment *a quattr' occhi*, I know I should find wherewith to talk whole hours; it is with difficulty I have brought myself to write even these few lines. Would I *were* with you! I have no one here that I care one pin for, and begin to feel, for the first time, like a banished man. Therefore, pray write to me, and tell me that you forgive my laziness, and that you think I *may* look to our meeting before very long. If it were possible to get to Holyrood House, I should infinitely prefer it.

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[1] Byron afterwards expressed some doubt as to the advisability of publishing these memoirs, and on his death, in deference to the wishes of Lord Broughton and others Moore destroyed the manuscript, writing instead the well-known *Life*, which appeared in 1830.

Lord John, in a letter I have just received from him, says you have not been well; but I trust, my dear Rogers, you are by this time quite yourself again.

Ever yours most truly,
THOMAS MOORE.

## THOMAS MOORE TO JOHN MURRAY

[*A Chapter in the Life of George Crabbe*]

Sloperton Cottage, *January* 1, 1834.

MY DEAR MR. MURRAY,—

Had I been aware that your time of publication was so near, the few scattered notices and recollections of Mr. Crabbe, which it is in my power to furnish for his son's memoir, should have been presented in a somewhat less crude and careless shape than, in this hasty reply to your letter, I shall be able to give them.

It was in the year 1817, if I recollect right, that, during a visit of a few weeks to London, I first became acquainted with Mr. Crabbe; and my opportunities of seeing him during that period, at Mr. Rogers's and Holland House, were frequent. The circumstance connected with him at that time, which most dwelt upon my memory, was one in which you yourself were concerned, as it occurred in the course of the negotiation which led to your purchase of the copyright of his poems.[1] Though to Crabbe himself, who had up to this period received but little for his writings, the liberal sum which you offered, namely £3000, appeared a mine of wealth, the two friends whom he had employed to negotiate for him, and who, both exquisite judges of literary merit, measured the marketable value of his works by their own admiration of them, thought that a bargain more advantageous might be made, and (as you, probably, now for the first time learn) applied to another eminent house on the subject. Taking but too just a measure of the state of public taste at that moment, the respectable publishers to whom I allude named, as the utmost which they could afford to give, but a third of the sum which you had the day before offered. In this predicament, the situation of poor Crabbe was most critical. He had seen within his reach a prize far beyond his most sanguine hopes, and was now, by the over-sanguineness of friends, put in danger of losing it. Change of mind, or a feeling of umbrage at this reference to other publishers, might, not unnaturally, it was feared, induce you to decline all further negotiation ; and that such was likely to be the result there appeared every reason to apprehend, as a letter which Crabbe had addressed to you, saying that he had made up his mind to accept your offer, had not yet received any answer.

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[1] *Tales of the Hall*, published by Murray in 1819.

In this crisis it was that Mr. Rogers and myself, anxious to relieve our poor friend from his suspense, called upon you, as you must well remember, in Albemarle Street ; and seldom have I watched a countenance with more solicitude, or heard words that gave me much more pleasure, than when, on the subject being mentioned, you said, 'Oh yes, I have heard from Mr. Crabbe, and look upon the matter as all settled '. I was rather pressed, I recollect, for time that morning, having an appointment on some business of my own ; but Mr. Rogers insisted that I should accompany him to Crabbe's lodgings, and enjoy the pleasure of seeing him relieved from his suspense. We found him sitting in his room, alone, and expecting the worst ; but soon dissipated all his fears by the agreeable intelligence which we brought.

When he received the bills for £3000, we earnestly advised that he should, without delay, deposit them in some safe hands ; but no—he must take them with him to Trowbridge, and show them to his son John. They would hardly believe in his good luck, at home, if they did not see the bills. On his way down to Trowbridge, a friend at Salisbury, at whose house he rested (Mr. Everett, the banker), seeing that he carried these bills loosely in his waistcoat pocket, requested to be allowed to take charge of them for him ; but with equal ill-success. There was no fear, he said, of his losing them, and he must show them to his son John.

It was during the same visit of Mr. Crabbe to London, that we enjoyed a very agreeable day together, at Mr. Horace Twiss's,—a day remarkable, not only for the presence of this great poet, but for the amusing assemblage of other remarkable characters who were there collected ; the dinner guests being, besides the Dowager Countess of Cork, and the present Lord and Lady Clarendon, Mr. William Spencer, Kean the actor, Colonel Berkeley, and Lord Petersham. Between these two last-mentioned gentlemen Mr. Crabbe got seated at dinner ; and though I was not near enough to hear distinctly their conversation, I could see that he was alternately edified and surprised by the information they were giving him.

In that same year, I had the good luck to be present with him at a dinner in celebration of the memory of Burns, where he was one of a large party (yourself among the number) whom I was the means of collecting for the occasion ; and who, by the way, subscribed liberally towards a monument to the Scottish bard, of which we have heard nothing ever since. Another public festival to which I accompanied him was the anniversary of the Wiltshire Society : where, on his health being proposed from the chair by Lord Lansdowne, he returned thanks in a short speech, simply, but collectedly, and with the manner of a man not deficient in the nerve necessary for such displays. In looking over an old newspaper report of that dinner, I find, in a speech of one of the guests, the following passage, which, more for its truth than its eloquence, I here venture to cite :—' Of Mr. Crabbe, the speaker would say, that the *Musa severior* which he worships has had no influence whatever on the kindly dispositions of his heart : but that, while, with the eye of a sage and a poet, he looks penetratingly into the darker region of human nature, he stands surrounded by its most genial light himself '.

In the summer of the year 1824, I passed a few days in his company at Longleat, the noble seat of the Marquis of Bath ; and it was there, as we walked about those delicious gardens, that he, for the first time, told me of an unpublished poem which he had by him, entitled, as I think he then said, *The Departure and the Return*, and the same, doubtless, which you are now about to give to the world. Among the visitors at Longleat, at that time, was the beautiful Madame ——, a Genoese lady, whose knowledge and love of English literature rendered her admiration of Crabbe's genius doubly flattering. Nor was either the beauty or the praises of the fair Italian thrown away upon the venerable poet, among whose many amiable attributes a due appreciation of the charms of female society was not the least conspicuous. There was, indeed, in his manner to women a sweetness bordering rather too much upon what the French call *doucereux*, and I remember hearing Miss——, a lady known as the writer of some of the happiest *jeux d'esprit* of our day, say once of him, in allusion to this excessive courtesy, 'The cake is no doubt very good, but there is too much sugar to cut through in getting at it'.

In reference to his early intercourse with Mr. Burke, Sir James Mackintosh had, more than once, said to me, 'It is incumbent on you, Moore, who are Crabbe's neighbour, not to allow him to leave this world without putting on record, in some shape or other, all that he remembers of Burke'. On mentioning this to Mr. Rogers, when he came down to Bowood, one summer, to meet Mr. Crabbe, it was agreed between us that we should use our united efforts to sift him upon this subject, and endeavour to collect whatever traces of Beaconsfield might still have remained in his memory. But beyond a few vague generalities, we could extract nothing from him whatever, and it was plain that, in his memory at least, the conversational powers of the great orator had left but little vestige. The range of subjects, indeed, in which Mr. Crabbe took any interest was, at all times of his life, very limited; and, at the early period when he became acquainted with Mr. Burke, when the power of poetry was but newly awakening within him, it may easily be conceived that whatever was unconnected with his own absorbing art, or even with his own peculiar province of that art, would leave but a feeble and transient impression upon his mind.

This indifference to most of the general topics, whether of learning or politics, which diversify the conversation of men of the world, Mr. Crabbe retained through life; and in this peculiarity, I think, lay one of the causes of his comparative inefficiency as a member of society,—of that impression, so disproportionate to the real powers of his mind, which he produced in ordinary life. Another cause, no doubt, of the inferiority of his conversation to his writings is to be found in that fate which threw him, early in life, into a state of dependent intercourse with persons far superior to him in rank, but immeasurably beneath him in intellect. The courteous policy which would then lead him to keep his conversation down to the level of those he lived with, afterwards grew into a habit which, in the commerce of the world, did injustice to his great powers.

You have here all that, at this moment, occurs to me, in the way either of recollection or remark, on the subject of our able and venerated friend. The delightful day which Mr. Rogers and myself passed with him at Sydenham, you have already, I believe, an account of from my friend, Mr. Campbell, who was our host on the occasion. Mr. Lockhart has, I take for granted, communicated to you the amuing anecdote of Crabbe's interview with the two Scottish lairds—an anecdote which I cherish the more freshly and fondly in my memory, from its having been told me, with his own peculiar humour, by Sir Walter Scott, at Abbotsford.

THOMAS MOORE.

## SAMUEL ROGERS

### 1763–1855

THE pre-Byronic poetry of Samuel Rogers—the 'melodious' Rogers whom Bryon himself ranked above Wordsworth and Coleridge—is little more than a tradition to the present generation. Rogers is remembered to-day mainly for his riches, for his generosity to many a less fortunate brother-poet, and for a few epigrams, such as—

> Ward has no heart, they say, but I deny it ;
> He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it.

'I have a very weak voice', he once explained, 'and if I did not say ill-natured things no one would hear me'. Rogers's best-known work, *The Pleasures of Memory*, appeared in 1792 and was repeatedly reprinted in his own day. The first part of his 'inimitable' *Italy*, his last work, appeared eight years after the date of the following letter to Moore, and the complete edition cost its author £10,000. It is not surprising that it proved a financial failure, but Rogers recouped himself by the sumptuous edition of his works which he subsequently produced in two volumes, at a cost of £15,000, with illustrations by Turner and Stothard.

## SAMUEL ROGERS TO THOMAS MOORE

[*His Travels in Switzerland and Italy*]

Venice, *October* 17, 1814.

MY DEAR MOORE,—

Last night in my gondola I made a vow I would write you a letter if it was only to beg you would write to me at Rome. Like the great Marco Polo, however, whose tomb I saw to-day, I have a secret wish to astonish you with my travels, and would take you with me, as you would not go willingly, from London to Paris, and from Paris to the Lake of Geneva, and so on to this city of romantic adventure, the place from which he started. I set out in August last, with my sister and Mackintosh. He parted with us in Switzerland, since which time we have travelled on together, and happy should we have been could you and Psyche have made a quartett of it. I hope all her predictions have long ago been fulfilled to your mind, and that she, and you, and the bambini are all as snug and as happy as you can wish to be. By the way, I forgot one of your family, who, I hope, is still under your roof. I mean one of nine sisters—the one I have more than once made love to. With another of them, too, all the world knows your *good fortune*. À propos of love, and such things, is Lord Byron to be married to Miss Milbanke, at last ? I have heard it. But to proceed to business ; Chamouny, and the Mer de Glace, Voltaire's chamber at Ferney, Gibbon's terrace at Lausanne, Rousseau's Isle of St. Pierre, the Lake of Lucerne, and the little Cantons, the passage over the Alps, the Lago Maggiore, Milan, Verona, Padua, Venice—what shall I begin with ? but I believe I must refer you to my three Quartos on the subject, whenever they choose to appear. The most wonderful thing we have seen is Bonaparte's road over the Alps—as smooth as that in Hyde Park, and not steeper than St. James's Street. We left Savoy at seven in the morning, and slept at Domo d'Ossola in Italy that night. For twenty miles we descended through a mountain-pass, as rocky, and often narrower, than the *narrowest* part of Dovedale ; the road being sometimes cut out of the mountain, and three times carried through it, leaving the torrent (and such a torrent !) to work its way by itself. The passages or galleries, as I believe the French engineers call them, were so long as to require large openings here and there for light, and the roof was hung with icicles, which the carriage shattered as it passed along, and which fell to the ground with a shrill sound. We were eight hours in climbing to the top and only three in descending. Our wheel was never locked, and our horses were almost always in a gallop. But I must talk to you a little about Venice. I cannot tell you what I felt, when the postillion turned gaily round, and, pointing with his whip, cried out, 'Venezia !' For there it was, sure enough, with its long line of domes and turrets glittering in the sun. I walk about here all day long in a dream. Is that the Rialto, I say to myself ? Is this St. Mark's Place ? Do I see the Adriatic ? I think if you and I were together here, my dear Moore, we might manufacture something from the ponte dei sospiri, the scala dei giganti, the piombi, the pozzi, and the thousand ingredients of mystery and terror that are here at every turn. Nothing can be more luxurious than a gondola and its little black cabin, in which you can fly about unseen, the gondoliers so silent, all the while. They dip their oars as if they were afraid of disturbing you ; yet you fly. As you are rowed through one of the narrow streets, often do you catch the notes of a guitar, accompanied by a female voice, through some open window ; and at night, on the Grand Canal, how amusing is it to observe the moving lights (every gondola has its light), one now and then shooting across at a little distance, and vanishing into a smaller canal. Oh, if you had any pursuit of love or pleasure, how nervous would they make you, not knowing their contents or their destination ! and how infinitely more interesting, as more mysterious, their silence, than the noise of carriage wheels ! Before the steps of the Opera-house, they are drawn up in array with their shining prows of white metal, waiting for the company. One man remains in your boat, while the other stands at the door of your *loge*. When you come out, he attends you down, and, calling 'Pietro', or 'Giacomo', is answered from the water and away you go. The gliding motion is delightful, and would calm you after any scene in a casino. The gondolas of the Foreign Ministers carry the national flag. I think you would be pleased with an Italian theatre. It is lighted only from the stage, and the soft shadows that are thrown over it produce a very visionary effect. Here and there the figures in a box are illuminated from within, and glimmering and partial lights are almost magical. Sometimes the curtains are drawn, and you may conceive what you please. This is indeed a fairy land, and Venice particularly so. If at Naples you see most with the eye, and at Rome with the memory, surely at Venice you see most with the imagination. But enough of Venice. To-morrow we bid adieu to it,—most probably I shall never see it again. We shall pass through Ferrara to Bologna, then cross the Apennines to Florence, and so on to Rome, where I shall look for a line from you. Pray, have you sermonized the discordant brothers ? I hope you have, and not forgotten yourself on the occasion. When you write to Tunbridge, pray remember me. Tell Lady D. I passed the little Lake of Lowertz, and saw the melancholy effects of the downfall. It is now a scene of desolation, and the little town of Goldau is buried many fathoms deep.

It is a sad story, and you shall have it when we meet. I received a very kind leter from her at Tunbridge, and mean to answer it. I hope to meet you in London-town, when you visit it next ; at least I shall endeavour to do so. My sister unites with me in kindest remembrance to Mrs. Moore ; and pray, pray believe me to be.

Yours ever,
S. R.

At Verona we were shown Juliet's tomb in a Convent garden ! In the evening we went to the play, but saw neither Mercutio nor ' the two Gentlemen ' there.

## WILLIAM GODWIN

### 1756–1836

WILLIAM GODWIN was a dissenting minister before he adopted revolutionary ideas. He made his name with *Political Justice* in 1793, when his future son-in-law, Shelley, was only a year old. His novel, *Caleb Williams* appeared in the following year, and in March, 1797, he married Mary Wollstonecraft, who died in the following September, ten days after giving birth to Shelley's future wife. The story of how the relationship of the Shelleys and the Godwins was formed, is told in Thomas Jefferson

Hogg's *Life of Shelley* (reprinted in the series to which the present work belongs), and references to their later connexion will be found both in the following letters of Godwin, and in Shelley's correspondence. Godwin, in spite of his professed principles, was greatly annoyed when Shelley eloped with his daughter in 1814, though his annoyance did not prevent him from accepting considerable pecuniary assistance from the poet. He was fully reconciled two years later when Shelley was able to make Mary his legal wife. Godwin's pecuniary embarrassments were relieved in later life by his acceptance from Earl Grey of the sinecure office of Yeoman Usher of the Exchequer.

### WILLIAM GODWIN TO P. B. SHELLEY

[*Wholesome Advice during the Poet's Mission in Ireland*]

*March* 4, 1812.

MY GOOD FRIEND,—

I have read all your letters (the first perhaps excepted) with peculiar interest, and I wish it to be understood by you, unequivocally, that as far as I can yet penetrate into your character, I conceive it to exhibit an extraordinary assemblage of lovely qualities, not without considerable defects. The defects do and always have arisen chiefly from this source—that you are still very young, and that, in certain essential respects, you do not sufficiently perceive that you are so.

In your last letter you say, 'I publish, because I will publish nothing that shall not conduce to virtue; and therefore my publications, so far as they do influence, shall influence to good'.

Oh! my friend, how short-sighted are the views which dictated this sentence! Every man, in every deliberate action of his life, imagines he sees a preponderance of good likely to result. This is the law of our nature, from which none of us can escape. You do not on this point generically differ from the human beings about you. Mr. Burke and Tom Paine, when they wrote on the French Revolution, perhaps equally believed that the sentiments they supported were essentially conducive to the welfare of man.

When Mr. Walsh resolved to purloin to his own use a few thousand pounds, with which to settle himself and his family and children in America, he tells us that he was for some time anxious that the effects of his fraud should fall upon Mr. Oldham, rather than upon Sir Thomas Plumer, because, in his opinion, Sir Thomas was the better man; and I have no doubt that he was fully persuaded that a greater sum of happiness would result from these thousand pounds being employed in settling his innocent and lovely family in America, than in securing to his employer the possession of a large landed estate.

It is this feature of human nature that is the great basis of the duty of inquiry and disquisition. If every man, the ignorant, the half-enlightened, and the most patient and persisting philosopher, was always in the right, when he thought himself in the right, inquiry then, instead of holding a place in the first rank of human duties, would immediately subside into an innocent and elegant amusement for our hours of leisure. To you, who have been acquainted with me principally through my writings, I may perhaps be allowed to quote a passage of my own:

'To ascertain the tendency of any work is a point of great difficulty. It is by no means impossible, that the books most pernicious in their effects that ever were produced, were written with intentions uncommonly elevated and pure'.[1]

In the pamphlet you have just sent me, your views and mine as to the improvement of mankind are decisively at issue. You profess the immediate object of your efforts to be 'the organization of a society, whose institution shall serve as a bond to its members'. If I may be allowed to understand my book on *Political Justice*, its pervading principle is, that association is a most ill-chosen and ill-qualified mode of endeavouring to promote the political happiness of mankind. And I think of your pamphlet, however commendable and lovely are many of the sentiments it contains, that it will either be ineffective to its immediate object, or that it has no very remote tendency to light again the flames of rebellion and war. It is painful to me to differ so much from your views on the subject, but it is my duty to tell you that such is the case. . . .

One principle, that I believe is wanting in you, and all our too fervent and impetuous reformers, is the thought that almost every institution or form of society is good in its place, and in the period of time to which it belongs. How many beautiful and admirable effects grew out of Popery and the monastic institutions, in the period when they were in their genuine health and vigour! To them we owe almost all our logic and our literature. What excellent effects do we reap, even at this day, from the feudal system and from chivalry! In this point of view, nothing can, perhaps, be more worthy of our applause than the English constitution. Excellent to this purpose are the words of Daniel in his Apology for Rhyme: 'Nor can it touch but of arrogant ignorance to hold this or that nation barbarous, these or those times gross, considering how this manifold creature, man, wheresoever he stand in the world, hath always some disposition of worth, entertains and affects that order of society which is best for his use, and is eminent for some one thing, or other, that fits his humours and the times'. This is the truest and most sublime toleration! There is a period, indeed, when each institution is obsolete, and should be laid aside; but it is of much importance, that we should not proceed too rapidly in this, or introduce any change before its due and proper season.

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[1] *Enquirer*, Essay xx. p. 138.

I perfectly agree with you when you say that it is highly improving for a man, who is ever to write for the public, that he should write much while he is young. It improves him equally in the art of thinking and of expressing his thoughts. Till we come to try to put our thoughts upon paper, we can have no notion how broken and imperfect they are, or find where the imperfection lies. Language is a scheme of machinery of so subtle a kind, that it is only by long habit that we can learn to conduct it in a masterly manner, or to the best purposes. Swift, an eminent master of language, says in a letter written, I think, when he was about eighteen—'Within these last few weeks I have written and blotted more quires of paper, and upon almost all sorts of subjects, than perhaps any other man you have known in a twelvemonth'.

But I see no necessary connexion between writing and publishing; and, least of all, with one's name. The life of a thinking man, who does this, will be made up of a series of retractations. It is beautiful to correct our errors, to make each day a comment on the last, and to grow perpetually wiser; but all this need not be done before the public. It is commendable to wash one's face, but I will not wash mine in the saloon of the opera-house. A man may resolve, as you say, to present to the moralist and metaphysician a picture of all the successive turns and revolutions of his mind, and it is fit there should be some men that should do this. But such a man must be contented to sacrifice general usefulness, and confine himself to this. Such a man was Rousseau ; but not such a man was Bacon, or Milton.

Mankind will ascribe little weight and authority to a versatile character, that makes a show of all his imperfections. How shall I rely upon a man, they cry, who is not himself in his public character at all times the same. I have myself, with all my caution, felt some of the effects of this. You have already begun your retractation. You confess that your thesis on Atheism was not well judged or wise, though you still seek to shelter yourself under the allegation that it was harmless. I think the second chapter of your Retractations is not far distant.

You say that you count but on a short life. In that, too, you are erroneous. I shall not live to see you fourscore, but it is not impossible that my son will. I was myself, in early, life, of a remarkably puny constitution. Pope, who was at all times kept alive only by means of art, reached his fifty-seventh year. The constitution of man is a theatre of change, and I think it not improbable, that at thirty, or forty, you will be a robust man.

How did you manage with Curran ?[1] I hope you have seen him. I should not wonder, however, if your pamphlet has frightened him. You should have left my letter, with your card the first time you called, and then it was his business to have sought you.

I have not received your little romances. If they have a publisher in London, and you had given me his name, I could then have sent for them, and enforced your order for their delivery. But in your handwriting I cannot even read their names.

One strange expression of your pamphlet give me leave to notice. You say to the people of Ireland : ‘ I have come to this country to spare no pains, where expenditure may purchase your real benefit ’. Does this mean money ? Do you mean to contract debts, and lay out your thousands in establishing the association you so warmly recommend ?

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[1] John P. Curran, the great Irish barrister and patriot, was a friend of William Godwin, who visited him in Ireland, shortly after editing the posthumous works of his wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, in 1798.

To descend from great things to small, I can perceive that you are already infected with the air of that country. Your letter with its inclosures cost me by post, £1 1*s.* 8*d.* ; and you say in it, that, ‘ you send it in this way to save expense ’. The post always charges parcels that exceed a sheet or two, by weight, and they should, therefore, always be forwarded by some other conveyance.

Perhaps in this letter I have assumed too much of the instructor, and expressed myself with a bluntness and freedom that will shock you. The length of my letter ought to convince you of the warmth of my feelings, and my earnest desire to serve you.

### WILLIAM GODWIN TO P. B. SHELLEY

[*The Philosopher Expostulates*]

*July*, 1812.

MY DEAR SHELLEY,—

Our acquaintance is a whimsical, and, to a certain degree, anomalous one. I have never seen your face.

> Your face, my Thane, is as a book, where men
> May read strange matters—

and till I have seen a man's face, I may say, in good sooth, I do not know him. Would that this whimsical and anomalous state of our acquaintance were brought to a conclusion !

Deprived, therefore, as I have hitherto been, of the legitimate way of reading your character, and diving into your heart, I am reduced to collect traits of your character, one by one, as I can, as they offer themselves in your correspondence. I am half afraid I have got a glimpse of a new one—that, perhaps, I may not altogether approve—this day :[1]

The postman this morning brought a letter, directed to

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[1] ‘ It had apparently been settled in London ’, writes Shelley's friend Hogg, ‘ that they were to take the cottage of a certain Mr. Eton, a friend of Mrs. Godwin, at Lynmouth. With this arrangement they did not comply, and their wilful neglect seems to have given offence to the authorities in Skinner Street, for the “ venerated friend ” was more angry than one would expect so great a philosopher could be about so small a matter ’

Mr. Eton, at Mrs. Godwin's. The circumstance was an awkward one. Our family have been taught by yourself and Mrs. Shelley to be anxious about the place where you shall fix your abode. The moment what I may now call the well-known hand was seen, all the females were on the tiptoe to know.

Well ! Do they take this nice cottage, near Tintern Abbey and Piercefield ? It seemed idle, too, that we should be kept in ignorance of your determination. There could, I thought, be no secrets between you and Mr. Eton. I therefore ventured to open the letter. Mrs. Godwin will write a line to Mr. Eton in the course of the day, telling him that you decline his house ; I am a little astonished, however, with the expression in your letter, that ' the insufficiency of house-room is a vital objection '. This would sound well to Mr. Eton from the eldest son of a gentleman of Sussex, with an ample fortune. But to me, I own, it a little alarms me. Observe however, that I know nothing of Mr. Eton's house. It may be of the dimension of a pig-sty : nor is it my habit to reason directly to a particular case : the bent of my mind's eye is always to a general principle.

One thing more, by way of preliminary. You love *frankness*, and you honour *me* ; but when this frankness proceeds to unreserve and unceremoniousness in my person, will you bear that ?

Your family consists of yourself, a very young wife, and a sister. Yourself, as I conceived, a plain philosophical republican, loving your species very much, and caring very little for the accumulation of personal indulgences—Tell me, how much of truth there is in this picture ?

The *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* may, unknown to me, be a mass of false principles and erroneous conclusions ; to me it appears otherwise : there is one principle that lies at the basis of that book : ' I am bound to employ my talents, my understanding, my strength, and my time, for the production of the greatest quantity of general good. I have no right to dispose of a shilling of my property at the suggestion of my caprice '. There is no principle, as it appears to me more fundamental to a just morality than this last. Not only property and money are most essential for promoting the good of others ; but he that misuses these undermines all the good qualities he might otherwise have. He may say, indeed, he will employ his faculties and efforts for the general good, but if in the meantime he lives, like a farmer-general, he is a wofully deficient character. The very act of having no conscience in the expenditure of his money, and pampering all his whims, will corrupt his understanding and taint his benevolence.

But you, my dear Shelley, have special motives for wariness in this matter. You are at variance with your father, and I think you say in one of your letters, that he allows you only £200 a year. If by unnecessary and unconscientious expense you heap up embarrassments at present, how much do you think that will embitter your days and shackle your powers hereafter ? I wish to see you a free man, when you shall come of age, and when at whatever time that may arrive, you shall be, the minister, in the name and on the behalf of your species, of a considerable property. Prudence, too, a just and virtuous prudence, in this most essential point, the dispensation of property, will do much to make you and your father friends ; and why should you not be friends ?

Forgive the freedom of this expostulation : you must see, that I am not playing the part of a peevish and presumptuous censor, but endeavouring to revive in you, if they need to be revived, great principles, without which a man can never be a worthy member of the great commonwealth of mankind.

Believe me, my dear Shelley, with the warmest wishes for your prosperity and happiness, your sincere friend,

W. GODWIN.

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### WILLIAM GODWIN TO MARY SHELLEY

[*Her Father's letter on hearing of Shelley's death*]

*August* 9, 1822.

MY poor girl ! What do you mean to do with yourself ? You surely do not mean to stay in Italy ? How glad I should be to be near you, and to endeavour by new expedients each day to make up for your loss ! But you are the best judge. If Italy is a country to which in these few years you are naturalized, and if England is become dull and odious to you, then stay.

I should think, however, that now you have lost your closest friend, your mind would naturally turn homewards, and [to] your earliest friend. Is it not so? Surely we might be a great support to each other, under the trials to which we are reserved. What signify a few outward adversities, if we find a friend at home?

Above all, let me entreat you to keep up your courage. You have many duties to perform; you must now be the father as well as the mother; and I trust you have energy of character enough to enable you to perform your duties honourably and well.

Ever and ever most affectionately yours,

W. GODWIN.

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### WILLIAM GODWIN TO MARY SHELLEY

[*The Home Coming of his Daughter*]

No. 195, Strand, *May* 6, 1823.

IT certainly is, my dear Mary, with great pleasure that I anticipate that we shall once again meet. It is a long, long time now since you have spent one night under my roof. You are a grown woman, have been a wife, a mother, a widow. You have realized talents which I but faintly and doubtfully anticipated. I am grown an old man, and want a child of my own to smile on and console me.

When you first set your foot in London, of course I expect that it will be in this house; but the house is smaller, one floor less, than the house in Skinner Street: it will do well enough for you to make shift with for a few days; but it would not do for a permanent residence. But I hope we shall at least have you near us—within a call—how different from your being on the shores of the Mediterranean! [1]

Your novel has sold five hundred copies—half the impression. I ought to have written to you sooner. Your letter reached me on the 18th ult., but I have been unusually surrounded with perplexities.

Your affectionate father,

WM. GODWIN.

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[1] For some time after her return to England Mrs. Shelley lived in the Strand with her father, but she subsequently removed to Kentish Town, and then to Harrow, in order to be near her son—the future Sir Percy Bysshe Shelley—who was being educated at the school there.

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792—1822

No higher praise can be said of Shelley's letters than that they glow as his poems glow, bearing the impress of his genius on every page, and forming the best commentary imaginable upon his life both as a man and a poet. In their own way, Shelley's letters—more especially the letters from abroad—have never been excelled; certainly not in the nineteenth century, when letter-writing as an art gradually fell into disuse. Matthew Arnold, indeed, 'doubts whether Shelley's delightful Essays and Letters which deserve to be far more read than they are now, will not resist the wear and tear of time better, and finally come to stand higher than his poetry'. However that may be, Shelley's genius as a letter-writer entitles him to a leading place in a work of this description, and we leave our readers to decide whether or not we are justified in giving up to him a larger amount of space than is accorded to any other writer of the nineteenth century.

### PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY TO T. J. HOGG

(*Love and Theology*]

Field Place, *January* 3, 1811.[1]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Before we deny or believe the existence of anything, it is necessary that we should have a tolerably clear idea of what it is. The word 'God,' a vague word, has been, and will continue to be, the source of numberless errors, until it is erased from the nomenclature of philosophy. Does it not imply 'the soul of the universe, the intelligent and *necessarily* beneficent, actuating principle'? This it is impossible not to believe in. I may not be able to adduce proofs; but I think that the leaf of a tree, the meanest insect on which we trample, are, in themselves, arguments more conclusive than any which can be advanced, that some vast intellect animates infinity. If we disbelieve *this*, the strongest argument in support of the existence of a future state instantly becomes annihilated. I confess that I think Pope's—

> All are but parts of one stupendous whole,

something more than poetry. It has ever been my favourite theory, for the immortal soul, 'never to be able to die, never to escape from some shrine as chilling as the clay-formed dungeon which now it inhabits'; it is the future punishment which I can most easily believe in.

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[1] Written shortly before his last term at Oxford, whence both Shelley and Jefferson Hogg were banished in the following March through the publication of the poet's treatise on the *Necessity of Atheism*.

Love, love *infinite in extent,* eternal in duration, yet (allowing your theory in that point), perfectible, should be the reward; but can we suppose that this reward will arise, spontaneously, as a necessary appendage to our nature, or that our nature itself could be without cause—a first cause—a God? When do we see effects arise without causes? What causes are there without correspondent effects? Yet here, I swear—and as I break my oaths, may Infinity, Eternity blast me—here I swear that never will I forgive intolerance! It is the only point on which I allow myself to encourage revenge; every moment shall be devoted to my object, which I can spare; and let me hope that it will not be a blow which spends itself, and leaves the wretch at rest,—but lasting, long revenge! I am convinced too, that it is of great disservice to society—that it encourages prejudices, which strike at the root of the dearest, the tenderest of its ties. Oh! how I wish I were the avenger!—that it were mine to crush the demon; to hurl him to his native hell, never to rise again, and thus to establish for ever perfect and universal toleration. I expect to gratify some of this insatiable feeling in poetry. You shall see—you shall hear—how it has injured me. She is no longer[1] mine! she abhors me as a sceptic, as what *she* was before! Oh, bigotry! When I pardon this last, this severest of thy persecutions, may Heaven (if there be wrath in Heaven) blast me! Has vengeance, in its armoury of wrath, a punishment more dreadful? Yet forgive me, I have done; and were it not for your great desire to know *why* I consider myself as the victim of severer anguish, I could not have entered into this brief recital.

I am afraid there is selfishness in the passion of love, for I cannot avoid feeling every instant as if my soul was bursting; but I *will* feel no more! It is selfish. I would feel for others, but for myself—oh! how much rather would I expire in the struggle! Yes, that were a relief! Is suicide wrong? I slept with a loaded pistol and some poison, last night, but did not die. I could not come on Monday, my sister would not part with me; but I must—I will see you soon. My sister is now comparatively happy; she has felt deeply for me. Had it not been for her—had it not been for a sense of what I owed to her, to *you*, I should have bidden you a final farewell some time ago. But can the dead feel; dawns any day-beam on the night of dissolution?

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[1] A reference to his earliest love affair—with his cousin Harriet Grove.

Adieu, my dear friend. Your sincere,

P. B. S.

### P. B. Shelley to T. J. Hogg

[*Why he married Harriet Westbrook*]

(*No date. Postmark,* Rhayader)[1]

My dear Friend,—

You will perhaps see me before you can answer this; perhaps not; Heavens knows! I shall certainly come to York, but *Harriet Westbrook* will decide whether now or in three weeks. Her father has persecuted her in a most horrible way, by endeavouring to compel her to go to school. She asked my advice: resistance was the answer, at the same time that I essayed to mollify Mr. W. in vain! And in consequence of my advice *she* has thrown herself upon *my* protection. I set off for London on Monday. How flattering a distinction!—I am thinking of ten million things at once.

What have I said? I declare, quite *ludicrous*. I advised her to resist. She wrote to say that resistance was useless, but that she would fly with me, and threw herself upon my protection. We shall have £200 a year: when we find it run short, we must live, I suppose, upon love! Gratitude and admiration, all demand that I should love her *for ever*. We shall see you at York. I will hear your arguments for matrimonialism, by which I am now almost convinced. I can get lodgings at York, I suppose. Direct to me at Graham's, 18, Sackville Street, Piccadilly.

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[1] This must have been written during the summer following Shelley's expulsion from Oxford. His run-away marriage with Harriet Westbrook, who was a school-friend of his sister, took place in Edinburgh on August 28, 1811. 'Harriet Westbrook', writes Hogg, 'appears to have been dissatisfied with her school, but without any adequate cause, for she was kindly treated and well educated there. It is not impossible that this discontent was prompted and suggested to her, and that she was put up to it, and to much besides, by somebody who conducted the whole affair—who had assumed and steadily persisted in keeping the complete direction of her. When a young man finds a young woman discontented with her school, or convent, and with her own family and friends, without much reason, a pretty face and soft manners too often make him forget that she is very probably a girl of a discontented disposition, and is likely to be dissatisfied wherever she may afterwards be placed'.

Your inclosure of £10 has arrived; I am now indebted to you £30. In spite of philosophy, I am rather ashamed of this unceremonious exsiccation of your fiancial river. But indeed, my dear friend the gratitude which I owe you for your society and attachment ought so far to over-balance this consideration as to leave me nothing but that. I must, however, pay you when I can. I suspect that the *strain* is gone for ever. This letter will convince you that I am not under the influence of a *strain*. I am thinking at once of ten million things. I shall come to live near you, as Mr. Peyton.

Ever your most faithful friend,
P. B. S.

I shall be at 18, Sackville Street; at least direct there. Do not send more cash; I shall raise supplies in London.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[*A Momentous Introduction*]

Keswick, *January* 3, 1812.[1]

YOU will be surprised at hearing from a stranger. No introduction has, nor in all probability ever will authorize that which common thinkers would call a liberty; it is, however, a liberty which, although not sanctioned by custom is so far from being reprobated by reason, that the dearest interests of mankind imperiously demand that a certain etiquette of fashion should no longer keep 'man at a distance from man', or impose its flimsy fancies between the free communication of intellect.

The name of Godwin has been used to excite in me feelings of reverence and admiration. I have been accustomed to consider him a luminary too dazzling for the darkness which surrounds him. From the earliest period of my knowledge of his principles, I have ardently desired to share, on the footing of intimacy, that intellect which I have delighted to contemplate in its emanations.

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[1] Shelley and his wife lived at Keswick for several months, and came to know the Southeys there.

Considering, then, these feelings, you will not be surprised at the inconceivable emotions with which I learned your existence and your dwelling. I had enrolled your name in the list of the honourable dead. I had felt regret that the glory of your being had passed from this earth of ours. It is not so; you still live, and, I firmly believe, are still planning the welfare of human kind.

I have but just entered on the scene of human operations; yet my feelings and my reasonings correspond with what yours were. My course has been short, but eventful. I have seen much of human prejudice, suffered much from human persecution, yet I see no reason hence inferrible which should alter my wishes for their renovation. The ill-treatment I have met with has more than ever impressed the truth of my principles on my judgment. I am young, I am ardent in the cause of philanthropy and truth; do not suppose that this is vanity; I am not conscious that it influences this portraiture. I imagine myself dispassionately describing the state of my mind. I am young: you have gone before me —I doubt not, are a veteran to me in the years of persecution. Is it strange that, defying prejudice as I have done, I should outstep the limits of custom's prescription, and endeavour to make my desire useful by a friendship with William Godwin?

I pray you to answer this letter. Imperfect as may be my capacity, my desire is ardent and unintermitted. Half an hour would be at least humanely employed in the experiment. I may mistake your residence; certain feelings, of which I may be an inadequate arbiter, may induce you to desire concealment; I may not, in fine, have an answer to this letter. If I do not, when I come to London, I shall seek for you. I am convinced I could represent myself to you in such terms as not to be thought wholly unworthy of your friendship; at least, if desire for universal happiness has any claim upon your preference, that desire I can exhibit. Adieu! I shall earnestly await your answer.

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[*Autobiography and Romance*]

Keswick, *January* 10, 1812.

SIR,—

It is not otherwise to be supposed than that I should appreciate your avocations far beyond the pleasure or benefit which can accrue to me from their sacrifice. The time, however, will be small which may be mis-spent in reading this letter; and much individual pleasure as an answer might give me, I have not the vanity to imagine that it will be greater than the happiness elsewhere diffused during the time which its creation will occupy.

You complain that the generalizing character of my letter renders it deficient in interest; that I am not an individual to you. Yet, intimate as I am with your character and your writings, intimacy with *yourself* must in some degree precede this exposure of my peculiarities. It is scarcely possible, however pure be the morality which he has endeavoured to diffuse, but that generalization must characterize the uninvited address of a stranger to a stranger.

I proceed to remedy the fault. I am the son of a man of fortune in Sussex. The habits of thinking of my father and myself never coincided. Passive obedience was inculcated and enforced in my childhood. I was required to love, because it was *my duty* to love: it is scarcely necessary to remark, that coercion obviated its own intention. I was haunted with a passion for the wildest and most extravagant romances. Ancient books of Chemistry and Magic were perused with an enthusiasm of wonder, almost amounting to belief. My sentiments were unrestrained by anything within me; external impediments were numerous and strongly applied; their effect was merely temporary.

From a reader, I became a writer of romances; before the age of seventeen I had published two, *St. Irvyn* and *Zastrozzi*, each of which, though quite uncharacteristic of me as now I am, yet serves to mark the state of my mind at the period of their composition. I shall desire them to be sent to you: do not, however, consider this as any obligation to yourself to misapply your valuable time.

It is now a period of more than two years since first I saw your inestimable book of *Political Justice* ; it opened to my mind fresh and more extensive views ; it materially influenced my character, and I rose from its perusal a wiser and a better man. I was no longer the votary of romance ; till then I had existed in an ideal world—now I found that in this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussions of reason ; I beheld, in short, that I had duties to perform. Conceive the effect which the *Political Justice* would have upon a mind before jealous of its independence, participating somewhat singularly in a peculiar susceptibility.

My age is now *nineteen* ; at the period to which I allude I was at Eton. No sooner had I formed the principles which I now profess, than I was anxious to disseminate their benefits. This was done without the slightest caution. I was twice expelled, but recalled by the interference of my father. I went to Oxford. Oxonian society was insipid to me, uncongenial with my habits of thinking. I could not descend to common life : the sublime interest of poetry, lofty and exalted achievements, the proselytism of the world, the equalization of its inhabitants, were to me the soul of my soul. You can probably form some idea of the contrast exhibited to my character by those with whom I was surrounded. Classical reading and poetical writing employed me during my residence at Oxford.

In the meantime I became, in the popular sense of the word, a sceptic. I printed a pamphlet, avowing my opinion, and its occasion. I distributed this anonymously to men of thought and learning, wishing that Reason should decide on the case at issue : it was never my intention to deny it. Mr.——, at Oxford, among others, had the pamphet ; he showed it to the Master and the Fellows of University College, and *I* was sent for. I was informed, that in case I denied the publication, no more would be said. I refused, and was expelled.[1]

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[1] 'Shelley's letters to William Godwin', writes his friend Jefferson Hogg, 'must be received with caution. He was altogether incapable of rendering an account of any transaction whatsoever according to the strict and precise truth, and the bare, naked realities of actual life ; not through an addiction to falsehood, which he cordially detested, but because he was the creature, the unsuspecting and unresisting victim, of his irresistible imagination. Take some examples. He writes :

'" I was informed at Oxford, that in case I denied the publication, no more would be said. I refused, and was expelled ".

'This is incorrect ; no such offer was made, no such information was given ; but

It will be necessary, in order to elucidate this part of my history to inform you, that I am heir by entail to an estate of £6,000 per annum. My principles have induced me to regard the law of primogeniture as an evil of primary magnitude. My father's notions of family honour are incoincident with my knowledge of public good. I will never sacrifice the latter to any consideration. My father has ever regarded me as a blot, a defilement of his honour. He wished to induce me by poverty to accept of some commission in a distant regiment, and in the interim of my absence to prosecute the pamphlet, that a process of outlawry might make the estate, on his death, devolve to my younger brother. These are the leading points of the history of the man before you. Others exist, but I have thought proper to make some selection, not that it is my design to conceal or extenuate any part, but that I should by their enumeration quite outstep the bounds of modesty. Now, it is for you to judge whether, by permitting me to cultivate your friendship, you are exhibiting yourself more really useful than by the pursuance of those avocations, of which the time spent in allowing this cultivation would deprive you. I am now earnestly pursuing studious habits. I am writing 'An inquiry into the causes of the failure of the French Revolution to benefit mankind'. My plan is that of resolving to lose no opportunity to disseminate truth and happiness.

I am married to a woman whose views are similar to my own. To you, as the regulator and former of my mind, I must ever look with real respect and veneration.

Yours sincerely,
P. B. Shelley.

musing on the affair, as he was wont, he dreamed that the proposal had been declined by him, and thus he had the gratification of believing that he was more of a martyr than he really was. Again he writes thus: "At the period to which I allude, I was at Eton. No sooner had I formed the principles, which I now profess, than I was anxious to disseminate their benefits. This was done without the slightest caution. I was twice expelled, but recalled by the interference of my father". All this is purely imaginary: he never published anything controversial at Eton; he was never expelled; not twice, not once. One more instance, and that is still more extraordinary; he says: 'My father wished to induce me, by poverty, to accept of some commission in a distant regiment, and in the interim of my absence to prosecute the pamphlet, that a process of outlawry might make the estate on his death devolve to my younger brother".

'No offer of a commission in the army was ever made to Bysshe; it is only in a dream that the prosecution, outlawry, and devolution of the estate could find a place'.

## P. B. SHELLEY TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[*The end of his Irish Mission*][1]

17, Grafton Street, Dublin *March* 18, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I have said that I acquiesce in your decision, nor has my conduct militated with the assertion. I have withdrawn from circulation the publications wherein I erred, and am preparing to quit Dublin. It is not because I think that *such* associations as I conceived, would be deleterious, that I have withdrawn them. It is possible to festinate, or retard, the progress of human perfectibility ; such associations as I would have recommended would be calculated to produce the former effect ; the refinement of secessions would prevent a fictitious unanimity, as their publicity would render ineffectual any schemes of violent innovation. I am not one of those whom pride will restrain from admitting my own short-sightedness, or confessing a conviction which wars with those previously avowed. My schemes of organizing the ignorant I confess to be ill-timed. I cannot conceive that they were dangerous, as unqualified publicity was likewise enforced : moreover, I do not see that a peasant would attentively read my address, and, arising from the perusal, become imbued in sentiments of violence and bloodshed.

It is indescribably painful to contemplate beings capable of soaring to the heights of science, with Newton and Locke, without attempting to awaken them from a state of lethargy so opposite. The part of this city called the Liberty, exhibits a spectacle of squalidness and misery such as might reasonably excite impatience in a cooler temperament than mine.

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[1] 'Having resided for three months very unpleasantly at Keswick ',writes Jefferson Hogg, 'with every element of discomfort around him, and without the consolation of congenial society, for which the correspondence lately entered into with William Godwin proved an insufficient substitute, Bysshe was strongly impelled to change his abode, and to try to ameliorate his condition. The change which he proposed to himself was an extraordinary one ; it was a mission to Ireland, in order at once thereby to carry into effect Catholic Emancipation, and to procure a repeal of the Union Act by means of an Association of philanthropists, and also to accomplish a complete regeneration of that country. I had never heard him mention Catholic Emancipation, or Catholic Disabilities ; and I do not believe that he ever had any definite notion of the meaning of these party phrases. As to the Union Act, I am very sure that he was always entirely ignorant of that statute, of its enactments and provisions, having certainly never read a single clause, or line, of the Act, which he suddenly took upon himself to abrogate '. His letter to Godwin shows the end of this, the most quixotic of Shelley's undertakings,

But I submit; I shall address myself no more to the illiterate. I will look to events in which it will be impossible that I can share and make myself the cause of an effect which will take place ages after I have mouldered in the dust; I need not observe that this resolve requires stoicism. To return to the heartless bustle of ordinary life, to take interest in its uninteresting details; I cannot. Wholly to abstract our views from self, undoubtedly requires unparalleled disinterestedness. There is not a completer abstraction than labouring for distant ages.

My association scheme undoubtedly grew out of my notions of political justice, first generated by your book on that subject. I had not, however, read in vain of confidential discussions, and a recommendation for their general adoption: not in vain had I been warned against a fictitious unanimity. I have had the opportunity of witnessing the latter at public dinners. The peculiarity of my association would have consisted in combining the adoption of the former with the rejection of the latter. Moreover, I desired to sink the question of immediate grievance in the more general and remote consideration of a highly perfectible state of society. I desired to embrace the present opportunity for attempting to forward the accomplishment of that event, and my ultimate views looked to an establishment of those familiar parties for discussion which have not yet become general.

It appears to me that on the publication of *Political Justice* you looked to a more rapid improvement than has taken place. It is my opinion, that if your book had been as general as the Bible, human affairs would now have exhibited a very different aspect.

I have read your letters—read them with the attention and reverence they deserve. Had *I*, like you, been witness to the French Revolution, it is probable that my caution would have been greater. I have seen and heard enough to make me doubt the omnipotence of truth in a society so constituted as that wherein we live. I shall make you acquainted with all my proceedings; if I err, probe me severely.

If I was alone, and had made no engagements, I would immediately come to London: as it is, I defer it for a time. We leave Dublin in three weeks.

A woman of extraordinary talents, whom I am so happy as to enroll in the list of those who esteem me, has engaged to visit me in Wales. Mrs. Shelley earnestly desires me to make one last attempt to induce you to visit Wales. If *you* absolutely cannot, may not your amiable family, with whom we all long to become acquainted, breath with us the pure air of the mountains? Lest there be any informality in the petition, Mrs. Shelley desires her regards to Mrs. Godwin and family, urging the above. Miss Westbrook, my sister-in-law, resides with us; and, in one thing at least, none of us are deficient, viz., zeal and sincerity.

Fear no more for any violence, or hurtful measures, in which I may be instrumental in Dublin. My mind is now by no means settled on the subject of associations: they appear to me in one point of view useful, in another deleterious. I acquiesce in your decisions. I am neither haughty, reserved, nor unpersuadable. I hope that time will show your pupil to be more worthy of your regard than you have hitherto found him; at all events, that he will never be otherwise than sincere and true to you.

P. B. SHELLEY.

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### P. B. SHELLEY TO THOMAS HOOKHAM[1]

[*Leigh Hunt's Imprisonment*]

*February*, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I am boiling with indignation at the horrible injustice and tyranny of the sentence pronounced on Hunt and his brother; and it is on this subject that I write to you. Surely the seal of abjectness and slavery is indelibly stamped upon the character of England.

Although I do not retract in the slightest degree my wish for a subscription for the widows and children of those poor men hung at York, yet this £1,000 which the Hunts are sentenced to pay is an affair of more consequence[1] Hunt is a brave, a good, and an enlightened man. Surely the public, for whom Hunt has done so much will repay in part the great debt of obligation which they owe the champion of their liberties and virtues ; or are they dead, cold, stone-hearted, and insensible—brutalized by centuries of unremitting bondage ? However that may be, they surely may be excited into some slight acknowledgment of his merits. Whilst hundreds of thousands are sent to the tyrants of Russia, he pines in a dungeon, far from all that can make life desired.

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[1] Shelley's friend, the publisher of Old Bond Street.

Well I am rather poor at present ; but I have £20 which is not immediately wanted. Pray, begin a subscription for the Hunts ; put down my name for that sum, and, when I hear that you have complied with my request, I will send it you. Now, if there are any difficulties in the way of this scheme of ours, for the love of liberty and virtue, overcome them. Oh ! that I might wallow for one night in the Bank of England !

*Queen Mab* is finished and transcribed. I am now preparing the notes, which shall be long and philosophical. You will receive it with the other poems. I think that the whole should form one volume ; but of that we can speak hereafter.

As to the French *Encyclopédie*, it is a book which I am desirous—very desirous—of possessing ; and, if you could get me a few months' credit (being at present rather low in cash), I should very much desire to have it.

My dear sir, excuse the earnestness of the first part of my letter. I feel warmly on this subject, and I flatter myself that so long as your own independence and liberty remain uncompromised, you are inclined to second my desires.

Your very sincere friend,
P. B. SHELLEY.

PS.—If no other way can be devised for this subscription, will you take the trouble on yourself of writing an appropriate advertisement for the papers, inserting, by way of stimulant my subscription ?

On second thoughts, I enclose the £20.

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[1] Leigh Hunt and his brother were each sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £500. They declined to accept any subscription, paying the fine entirely out of their own pockets.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO T. J. HOGG

[*'Queen Mab' and his Cottage in Wales*]

Tanyrallt, *February* 7, 1813.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—

I have been teased to death for the last fortnight. Had you known the variety of the discomfitures I have undergone, you would attribute my silence to anything but unkindness or neglect. I allude to the embankment affairs [1], in which I thoughtlessly engaged; for when I come home to Harriet, I am the happiest of the happy. I forget whether I have expressed to you the pleasure which you know I must feel at your visit in March. I hope it will be early in the month, and that you will arrange matters so in London, that it may be protracted to the utmost possible length.

We simple people live here in a cottage extensive and tasty enough for the villa of an Italian Prince. The rent, as you may conceive, is large, but it is an object with us that they allow it to remain unpaid till I am of age.

You must take your place in the mail as far as Capel Cerrig, and inform me of the time you mean to be there, and I will meet you. I do not think that you have ever visited this part of North Wales. The scenery is more strikingly grand in the way from Capel Cerrig to our house than ever I beheld. The road passes at the foot of Snowdon; all around you see lofty mountain peaks, lifting their summits far above the clouds, wildly wooded valleys below, and dark tarns reflecting every tint and shape of the scenery above them. The roads are tremendously rough; I shall bring a horse for you, as you will then be better able to see the country than when jumbled in a chaise.

*Mab* has gone on but slowly, although she is nearly finished. They have teased me out of all poetry. With some restrictions, I have taken your advice, though I have not been able to bring myself to rhyme. The didactic is in blank heroic verse, and the descriptive in blank lyrical measure. If an authority is of any weight in support of this singularity, Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, the Greek Choruses, and (you will laugh) Southey's *Thalaba* may be adduced. I have seen your last letter to Harriet. She will answer it by next post. I need not say that your letters delight me, but all your principles do not. The species of pride which you love to encourage appears to me incapable of bearing the test of reason. Now, do not tell me that Reason is a cold and insensible arbiter. Reason is only an assemblage of our better feelings—passion considered under a peculiar mode of its operation. This chivalric pride, although of excellent use in an age of Vandalism and brutality, is unworthy of the nineteenth century. A more elevated spirit has begun to diffuse itself, which, without deducting from the warmth of love, or the constancy of friendship, reconciles all private feelings to public utility, and scarce suffers true Passion and true Reason to continue at war. Pride mistakes a desire of being esteemed for that of being really estimable. I scarce think that the mock humility of ecclesiastical hypocrisy is more degrading and blind. I remember when over our Oxford fire we used to discuss various subjects; fancy me present with you in spirit, and own 'how vain is human pride!' Perhaps you will say that my Republicanism is proud; it certainly is far removed from pot-house democracy, and knows with what smile to hear the servile applauses of an inconsitsent mob. But though its cheeks could feel without a blush the hand of insult strike, its soul would shrink neither from the scaffold nor the stake, nor from those deeds and habits which are obnoxious to slaves in power. My Republicanism, it is true, would bear with an aristocracy of chivalry and refinement before an aristocracy of commerce and vulgarity; not, however, from pride, but because the one I consider as approaching most nearly to what man ought to be. So much for Pride!

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[1] A big engineering scheme, which had been temporarily absorbing the poet's enthusiasm.

Since I wrote the above, I have finished the rough sketch of my poem. As I have not abated an iota of the infidelity or cosmopolicy of it, sufficient will remain, exclusively of innumerable faults, invisible to partial eyes, to make it very unpopular. Like all egotists, I shall console myself with what I may call, if I please, the suffrages of the chosen few, who can think and feel, or of those friends whose personal partialities may blind them to all defects. I mean to subjoin copious philosophical notes.

Harriet has a bold scheme of writing you a Latin letter. If you have an Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, she will thank you to bring it. I do not teach her grammatically, but by the less laborious methods of teaching her the English of Latin words, intending afterwards to give her a general idea of grammar She unites with me in all kindest wishes.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK [1]

[*The land of Rousseau's 'Julie'*]

Montalegre near Coligni, Geneva, July 12 (1816).[2]

IT is nearly a fortnight since I have returned from Vevai. This journey has been on every account delightful, but most especially, because then I first knew the divine beauty of Rousseau's imagination, as it exhibits itself in *Julie*. It is inconceivable what an enchantment the scene itself lends to those delineations, from which its own most touching charm arises. But I will give you an abstract of our voyage, which lasted eight days, and if you have a map of Switzerland, you can follow me.

We left Montalegre at half-past two on the 23rd of June. The lake was calm, and after three hours of rowing we arrived at Hermance, a beautiful little village, containing a ruined tower, built, the villagers say, by Julius Cæsar. There were three other towers similar to it, which the Genevese destroyed for their own fortifications in 1560. We got into the tower by a kind of window. The walls are immensely solid, and the stone of which it is built so hard, that it yet retained the mark of chisels. The boatman said, that this tower was once three times higher than it is now. There are two staircases in the thickness of the walls, one of which is entirely demolished, and the other half ruined, and only accessible by a ladder.

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[1] Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866), novelist, poet, and official of the East India Company, was one of Shelley's most intimate friends. His best known works are his novels, *Headlong Hall*, *Melincourt*, and *Nightmare Abbey*.

[2] Much had happened between the writing of this and the previous letter. In the summer of 1814 Shelley separated from his wife and daughter, who was born shortly after their return from Ireland. Cooling affections on both sides had led to a gradual estrangement between husband and wife, and the growth of the poet's intimacy with Mary Godwin brought the crisis to a head. Shelley left England with Mary Godwin a few weeks after separating from his wife, but lack of funds soon forced them to return. In 1815, however, Shelley's grandfather died, and his income was increased to £1,000—£200 of which he settled on Mrs. Shelley, who meantime had given birth to his son, Charles Bysshe. In May, 1816, he again fled to the Continent through the importunities of William Godwin, whose financial difficulties were a continual source of annoyance to the poet.

Leaving Hermance, we arrived at sunset at the village of Herni. After looking at our lodgings, which were gloomy and dirty, we walked out by the side of the lake. It was beautiful to see the vast expanse of these purple and misty waters broken by the craggy islets near to its slant and 'beached margin.' There were many fish sporting in the lake, and multitudes were collected close to the rocks to catch the flies which inhabited them.

On returning to the village, we sat on a wall beside the lake, looking at some children who were playing at a game like ninepins. The children here appeared in an extraordinary way deformed and diseased. Most of them were crooked, and with enlarged throats; but one little boy had such exquisite grace in his mien and motions, as I never before saw equalled in a child. His countenance was beautiful for the expression with which it overflowed. There was a mixture of pride and gentleness in his eyes and lips, the indications of sensibility, which his education will probably pervert to misery or seduce to crime; but there was more of gentleness than of pride, and it seemed that the pride was tamed from its original wildness by the habitual exercise of milder feelings. My companion[1] gave him a piece of money, which he took without speaking, with a sweet smile of easy thankfulness, and then with an embarrassed air turned to his play. All this might scarcely be; but the imagination surely could not forbear to breathe into the most inanimate forms, some likeness of its own visions, on such a serene and glowing evening, in this remote and romantic village, beside the calm lake that bore us hither.

On returning to our inn, we found that the servant had arranged our rooms, and deprived them of the greater portion of their former disconsolate appearance. They reminded my companion of Greece; it was five years, he said, since he had slept in such beds. The influence of the recollections excited by this circumstance on our conversation gradually faded, and I retired to rest with no unpleasant sensations.

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[1] Shelley's companion on this occasion was Lord Byron.

The next morning we passed Yvoire, a scattered village with an ancient castle, whose houses are interspersed with trees, and which stands at a little distance from Nerni, on the promontory which bounds a deep bay, some miles in extent. So soon as we arrived at this promontory, the lake began to assume an aspect of wilder magnificence. The mountains of Savoy, whose summits were bright with snow, descended in broken slopes to the lake ; on high, the rocks were dark with pine forests, which become deeper and more immense, until the ice and snow mingle with the points of naked rock that pierce the blue air ; but below, groves of walnut, chestnut, and oak, with openings of lawny fields, attested the milder climate.

As soon as we had passed the opposite promontory, we saw the river Drance, which descends from between a chasm in the mountains, and makes a plain near the lake, intersected by its divided streams. Thousands of *besolets*, beautiful water-birds, like sea-gulls, but smaller, with purple on their backs, take their station on the shallows where its waters mingled with the lake. As we approached Evian, the mountains descended more precipitously to the lake, and masses of intermingled wood and rock overhung its shining spire.

We arrived at this town about seven o'clock, after a day which involved more rapid changes of atmosphere than I ever recollect to have observed before. The morning was cold and wet ; then an easterly wind, and the clouds hard and high ; then thunder showers, and wind shifting to every quarter ; then a warm blast from the south, and summer clouds hanging over the peaks, with bright blue sky between. About half an hour after we had arrived at Evian, a few flashes of lightning came from a dark cloud, directly overhead, and continued after the cloud had dispersed. *Diespiter per pura tonantes egit equos* ; a phenomenon which certainly had no influence on me, corresponding with that which it produced on Horace.

The appearance of the inhabitants of Evian is more wretched, diseased, and poor, than I ever recollect to have seen. The contrast indeed between the subjects of the King of Sardinia and the citizens of the independent republics of Switzerland, affords a powerful illustration of the blighting mischiefs of despotism, within the space of a few miles. They have mineral waters here, *eaux savonneuses*, they call them. In the evening we had some difficulty about our passports, but so soon as the syndic heard my companion's rank and name, he apologized for the circumstance. The inn was good. During our voyage, on the distant height of a hill, covered with pine-forests, we saw a ruined castle, which reminded me of those on the Rhine.

We left Evian on the following morning, with a wind of such violence as to permit but one sail to be carried. The waves also were exceedingly high, and our boat so heavily laden, that there appeared to be some danger. We arrived, however, safe at Meillerie, after passing with great speed mighty forests which overhung the lake, and lawns of exquisite verdure, and mountains with bare and icy points, which rose immediately from the summit of the rocks, whose bases were echoing to the waves.

We here heard that the Empress Maria Louise had slept at Meillerie—before the present inn was built, and when the accommodations were those of the most wretched village—in remembrance of St. Preux. How beautiful it is to find that the common sentiments of human nature can attach themselves to those who are the most removed from its duties and its enjoyments, when Genius pleads for their admissions at the gate of Power. To own them was becoming in the Empress, and confirms the affectionate praise contained in the regret of a great and enlightened nation. A Bourbon dared not even to have remembered Rousseau. She owed this power to that democracy which her husband's dynasty outraged, and of which it was, however, in some sort, the representative among the nations of the earth. This little incident shows at once how unfit and how impossible it is for the ancient system of opinions, or for any power built upon a conspiracy to revive them, permanently to subsist among mankind. We dined there and had some honey, the best I have ever tasted, the very essence of the mountain flowers, and as fragrant. Probably the village derives its name from this production. Meillerie is the wellknown scene of St. Preux's visionary exile ;

but Meillerie is indeed enchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician. Groves of pine, chestnut, and walnut overshadow it; magnificent and unbounded forests to which England affords no parallel. In the midst of these woods are dells of lawny expanse, inconceivably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers, and odorous with thyme.

The lake appeared somewhat calmer as we left Meillerie, sailing close to the banks, whose magnificence augmented with the turn of every promontory. But we congratulated ourselves too soon: the wind gradually increased in violence, until it blew tremendously; and as it came from the remotest extremity of the lake, produced waves of a frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. One of our boatmen, who was a dreadfully stupid fellow, persisted in holding the sail at a time when the boat was on the point of being driven under water by the hurricane. On discovering his error, he let it entirely go, and the boat for a moment refused to obey the helm; in addition, the rudder was so broken as to render the management of it very difficult; one wave fell in, and then another. My companion, an excellent swimmer, took off his coat, I did the same, and we sat with our arms crossed every instant expecting to be swamped. The sail was, however, again held, the boat obeyed the helm, and still in imminent peril from the immensity of the waves, we arrived in a few minutes at a sheltered port in the village of St. Gingoux.

I felt in this near prospect of death a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, though but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone: but I knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have been risked to preserve mine. When we arrived at St. Gingoux, the inhabitants, who stood on the shore, unaccustomed to see a vessel as frail as ours, and fearing to venture at all on such a sea, exchanged looks of wonder and congratulation with our boatmen, who, as well as ourselves, were well pleased to set foot on shore.

As my companion rises late I had time before breakfast, on the ensuing morning, to hunt the waterfalls of the river that fall into the lake of St. Gingoux. The stream is, indeed, from the declivity over which it falls, only a succession of waterfalls, which roar over the rocks with a perpetual sound, and suspend their unceasing spray on the leaves and flowers that overhang and adorn its savage banks. The path that conducted along this river sometimes avoided the precipices of its shores, by leading through meadows; sometimes threaded the base of the perpendicular and caverned rocks. I gathered in these meadows a nosegay of such flowers as I never saw in England, and which I thought more beautiful for that rarity.

On my return, after breakfast, we sailed for Clarens, determining first to see the three mouths of the Rhone, and then the Castle of Chillon; the day was fine, and the water calm. We passed from the blue waters of the lake over the stream of the Rhone, which is rapid even at a great distance from its confluence with the lake; the turbid waters mixed with those of the lake, but mixed with them unwillingly. (*See Nouvelle Hèloïse, Lettre* 17, *Part.* 4). I read *Julie* all day; an overflowing, as it now seems, surrounded by the scenes which it has so wonderfully peopled, of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility. Meillerie, the castle of Chillon, Clarens, the mountains of La Valais and Savoy, present themselves to the imagination as monuments of things that were once familiar, and of beings that were once dear to it. They were created indeed by one mind, but a mind so powerfully bright as to cast a shade of falsehood on the records that are called reality.

We passed on to the castle of Chillon, and visited its dungeons and towers. These prisons are excavated below the lake; the principal dungeon is supported by seven columns, whose branching capitals support the roof. Close to the very walls the lake is eight hundred feet deep; iron rings are fastened to these columns, and on them were engraven a multitude of names, partly those of visitors, and partly doubtless of the prisoners, of whom now no memory remains, and who thus beguiled a solitude which they have long ceased to feel. One date was as ancient as 1670. At the commencement of the Reformation, and indeed long after that period, this dungeon was the receptacle of those who shook, or who denied the system of idolatry, from the effects of which mankind is even now slowly emerging.

Close to this long and lofty dungeon was a narrow cell, and beyond it one larger and far more loftly and dark, supported upon two unornamented arches. Across one of these arches was a beam, now black and rotten, on which prisoners were hung in secret. I never saw a monument more terrible of that cold and inhuman tyranny, which it had been the delight of man to exercise over man. It was indeed one of those many tremendous fulfilments which render the *pernicies humani generis* of the great Tacitus so solemn and irrefragable a prophecy. The gendarme, who conducted us over this castle, told us that there was an opening to the lake, by means of a secret spring, connected with which the whole dungeon might be filled with water before the prisoners could possibly escape!

We proceeded with a contrary wind to Clarens against a heavy swell. I never felt more strongly than on landing at Clarens, that the spirit of old times had deserted its once cherished habitation. A thousand times, thought I, have Julia and St. Preux walked on this terraced road, looking towards these mountains which I now behold; nay, treading on the ground where I now tread. From the window of our lodging our landlady pointed out 'le bosquet de Julie.' At least the inhabitants of this village are impressed with an idea, that the persons of that romance had actual existence. In the evening we walked thither. It is, indeed Julia's wood. The hay was making under the trees; the trees themselves were aged, but vigorous, and interpersed with younger ones, which are destined to be their successors, and in future years, when we are dead, to afford a shade to future worshippers of nature, who love the memory of that tenderness and peace of which this was the imaginary abode. We walked forward among the vineyards, whose narrow terraces overlook this affecting scene. Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me at this moment to repress the tears of melancholy transport which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, even until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects which excited them.

I forgot to remark, what indeed my companion remarked to me, that our danger from the storm took place precisely in the spot where Julie and her lover were nearly overset, and where St. Preux was tempted to plunge with her into the lake.

On the following day we went to see the castle of Clarens, a square strong house, with very few windows, surrounded by a double terrace that overlooks the valley, or rather the plain of Clarens. The road which conducted to it wound up the steep ascent through woods of walnut and chestnut. We gathered roses on the terrace, in the feeling that they might be the posterity of some planted by Julie's hand. We sent their dead and withered leaves to the absent.

We went again to 'le bosquet de Julie,' and found that the precise spot was now utterly obliterated, and a heap of stones marked the place where the little chapel had once stood. Whilst we were execrating the author of this brutal folly, our guide informed us that the land belonged to the convent of St. Bernard, and that this outrage had been committed by their orders. I knew before that if avarice could harden the hearts of men, a system of prescriptive religion has an influence far more inimical to natural sensibility. I know that an isolated man is sometimes restrained by shame from outraging the venerable feelings arising out of the memory of genius, which once made nature even lovelier than itself; but associated man holds it as the very sacrament of his union to forswear all delicacy, all benevolence, all remorse; all that is true, or tender, or sublime.

We sailed from Clarens to Vevai. Vevai is a town more beautiful in its simplicity than any I have ever seen. Its market-place, a spacious square interspersed with trees, looks directly upon the mountains of Savoy and La Valai, the lake, and the valley of the Rhone. It was at Vevai that Rousseau conceived the design of *Julie*.

From Vevai we came to Ouchy, a village near Lausanne. The coasts of the Pays de Vaud, though full of villages and vineyards, present an aspect of tranquillity and peculiar beauty which well compensates for the solitude which I am accustomed to admire. The hills are very high and rocky, crowned and interspersed with woods. Waterfalls echo from the cliffs, and shine afar. In one place we saw the traces of two rocks of immense size, which had fallen from the mountain behind. One of these lodged in a room where a young woman was sleeping, without injuring her. The vineyards were utterly destroyed in its path, and the earth torn up.[1]

The rain detained us two days at Ouchy. We, however, visited Lausanne, and saw Gibbon's house. We were shown the decayed summer-house where he finished his History, and the old acacias on the terrace, from which he saw Mont Blanc, after having written the last sentence. There is something grand and even touching in the regret which he expresses at the completion of his task. It was conceived amid the ruins of the Capitol. The sudden departure of his cherished and accustomed toil must have left him, like the death of a dear friend, sad and solitary.

My companion gathered some acacia leaves to preserve in remembrance of him. I refrained from doing so, fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau; the contemplation of whose imperishable creations had left no vacancy in my heart for mortal things. Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now that *Julie* and Clarens, Lausanne and the *Roman Empire*, compelled me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[*Threatened with Consumption*]

Marlow, *December* 7, 1817.[2]

MY DEAR GODWIN;—

My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to a state of such unnatural and keen excitement, that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopical distinctness. Towards evening, I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa, between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack; and, although at present it has passed away without any very considerable vestige of its existence, yet this sympton sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumption. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, it would be my *duty* to go to Italy without delay: and it is only when that measure becomes an indispensable duty that, contrary to both Mary's feelings and to mine, as they regard you, I shall go to Italy. I need not remind you (besides the mere pain endured by the survivors) of the train of evil consequences which my death would cause to ensue. I am thus circumstantial and explicit, because you seem to have misunderstood me. It is not health, but life, that I should seek in Italy: and that, not for my own sake—I feel that I am capable of trampling on all such weakness—but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.

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[1] It was during these two wet days that Byron, who, as already stated, was Shelley's companion, wrote the *Prisoner of Chillon*.

[2] Returning from Switzerland in the autumn of 1816, Shelley settled at Great Marlow, and he was living here when Mrs. Shelley's body was found in the Serpentine in the following December. The circumstances of the tragedy, and of the shame which was, apparently, the immediate cause of it, are too obscure to be dealt with here. The news profoundly affected the poet, but it also enabled him to make Mary Godwin his legal wife. The symptoms of consumption to which he refers in this letter passed away after a time.

I ought to say I cannot persevere in the meat diet. What you say of Malthus fills me, as far as my intellect is concerned, with life and strength. I believe that I have a most anxious desire that the time should quickly come that, even so far as you are personally concerned, you should be tranquil and independent. But when I consider the intellectual lustre with which you clothe this world, and how much the last generation of mankind may be benefited by that light flowing forth without the intervention of one shadow, I am elevated above all thoughts which tend to you or myself as an individual, and become, by sympathy, part of those distant and innumerable minds to whom your writings must be present.

I meant to have written to you about *Mandeville*[1] solely; but I was so irritable and weak that I could not write, although I thought I had much to say. I have read *Mandeville*, but I must read it again soon, for the interest is of that irresistible and overwhelming kind, that the mind in its influence is like a cloud borne on by an impetuous wind—like one breathlessly carried forward, who has no time to pause or observe the causes of his career. I think the power of *Mandeville* is inferior to nothing you have done; and were it not for the character of Falkland,[2] no instance in which you have exerted that power of *creation* which you possess beyond all contemporary writers, might compare with it. Falkland is still alone; power is, in Falkland, not, as in *Mandeville*, tumult hurried onward by the tempest, but tranquillity standing unshaken amid its fiercest rage. But *Caleb Williams* never shakes the deepest soul like *Mandeville*. It must be said of the latter, you rule with a rod of iron. The picture is never bright; and we wonder whence you drew the darkness with which its shades are deepened, until the epithet of tenfold might almost cease to be a metaphor. The *noun smorfia* touches some cord within us with such a cold and jarring power, that I started, and for some time could scarce believe but that I was Mandeville, and that this hideous grin was stamped upon my own face. In style and strength of expression, *Mandeville* is wonderfully great, and the energy and the sweetness of the sentiments scarcely to be equalled. Clifford's character, as mere beauty, is a divine and soothing contrast; and I do not think—if, perhaps, I except (and I know not if I ought to do so) the speech of Agathon in the *Symposium* of Plato—that there ever was produced a moral discourse more characteristic of all that is admirable and lovely in human nature—more lovely and admirable in itself—than that of Henrietta to Mandeville, as he is recovering from madness. Shall I say that, when I discovered that she was pleading all this time sweetly for her lover, and when at last she weakly abandoned poor Mandeville, I felt an involuntary and, perhaps, an unreasonable pang? Adieu!

Always most affectionately yours,

P. S.

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[1] Godwin's romance of the seventeenth century, published in 1817.
[2] In Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794).

### P. B. Shelley to Mrs. Shelley

### [*Impressions of Florence*]

Florence, *August* 20, 1818.[1]

Dearest Mary,—

We have been delayed in this city four hours, for the Austrian minister's passport, but are now on the point of setting out with a vetturino, who engages to take us on the third day to Padua; that is, we shall only sleep three nights on the road. Yesterday's journey, performed in a one-horse cabriolet, almost without springs, over a rough road, was excessively fatiguing. ——suffered most from it; for, as to myself, there are occasions in which fatigue seems a useful medicine, as I have felt no pain in my side—a most delightful respite—since I left you. The country was various and exceedingly beautiful. Sometimes there were those low cultivated lands, with their vine festoons, and large bunches of grapes just becoming purple—at others we passed between high mountains, crowned with some of the most majestic Gothic ruins I ever saw, which frowned from the bare precipices, or were half seen among the olive-copses. As we approached Florence, the country became cultivated to a very high degree, the plain was filled with the most beautiful villas, and, as far as the eye could reach, the mountains were covered with them; for the plains are bounded on all sides by blue and misty mountains. The vines are here trailed on low trellisses of reeds interwoven into crosses to support them, and the grapes, now almost ripe, are exceedingly abundant. You everywhere meet those teams of beautiful white oxen, which are now labouring the little vine-divided fields with their Virgilian ploughs and carts. Florence itself, that is the Lung' Arno (for I have seen no more), I think is the most beautiful city I have yet seen. It is surrounded with cultivated hills, and from the bridge which crosses the broad channel of the Arno, the view is the most animated and elegant I ever saw. You see three or four bridges, one apparently supported by Corinthian pillars, and the white sails of the boats, relieved by the deep green of the forest, which comes to the water's edge, and the sloping hills covered with bright villas on every side. Domes and steeples rise on all sides, and the cleanliness is remarkably great. On the other side there are the foldings of the Vale of Arno above; first the hills of olive and vine, then the chestnut woods, and then the blue and misty pine forests, which invest the aerial Apennines, that fade in the distance. I have seldom seen a city so lovely at first sight as Florence.

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[1] Five months after Shelley, with his family, had left England for Italy, never to return.

We shall travel hence within a few hours, with the speed of the post, since the distance is 190 miles, and we are to do it in three days, besides the half day, which is somewhat more than sixty miles a-day. We have now got a comfortable carriage and two mules, and, thanks to Paolo, have made a very decent bargain, comprising everything, to Padua. I should say we had delightful fruit for breakfast—figs, very fine,—and peaches, unfortunately gathered before they were ripe, whose smell was like what one fancies of the wakening of Paradise flowers.

Well, my dearest Mary, are you very lonely? Tell me truth, my sweetest, do you ever cry? I shall hear from you once at Venice, and once on my return here. If you love me you will keep up your spirits—and, at all events, tell me truth about it; for, I assure you, I am not of a disposition to be flattered by your sorrow, though I should be by your cheerfulness; and, above all, by seeing such fruits of my absence as were produced when we were at Geneva. What acquaintances have you made? I might have travelled to Padua with a German, who had just come from Rome, and had scarce recovered from a malaria fever, caught in the Pontine Marshes, a week or two since; and I conceded to——'s entreaties—and to *your* absent suggestions, and omitted the opportunity, although I have no great faith in such species of contagion. It is not very hot—not at all too much so for my sensations; and the only thing that incommodes me are the gnats at night, who roar like so many humming-tops in one's ear—and I do not always find zanzariere. How is Willmouse and little Clara? They must be kissed for me—and you must particularly remember to speak my name to William, and see that he does not quite forget me before I return. Adieu—my dearest girl, I think that we shall soon meet. I shall write again from Venice. Adieu, dear Mary!

I have been reading the *Noble Kinsmen*, in which, with the exception of that lovely scene, to which you added so much grace in reading to me, I have been disappointed. The Jailer's

Daughter is a poor imitation, and deformed. The whole story wants moral discrimination and modesty. I do not believe that Shakspeare wrote a word of it.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO T. L. PEACOCK

[*Death of his daughter*; *Byron*; '*Prometheus Unbound*']

Este, *October* 8, 1818.

MY DEAR P.—

I have not written to you, I think, for six weeks. But I have been on the point of writing many times, and have often felt that I had many things to say. But I have not been without events to disturb and distract me, amongst which is the death of my little girl.[1] She died of a disorder peculiar to the climate. We have all had bad spirits enough, and I, in addition, bad health. I *intend* to be better soon: there is no malady, bodily or mental, which does not either kill or is killed.

We left the Baths of Lucca, I think, for the day after I wrote to you—on a visit to Venice [2] partly for the sake of seeing the city. We made a very delightful acquaintance there with a Mr. and Mrs. Hoppner, the gentleman an Englishman, and the lady a Swissesse, mild and beautiful, and unprejudiced, in the best sense of the word. The kind attentions of these people made our short stay at Venice very pleasant. I saw Lord Byron, and really hardly knew him again; he is changed into the liveliest and happiest-looking man I ever met. He read me the first canto of his *Don Juan*—a thing in the style of Beppo, but infinitely better, and dedicated to Southey, in ten or a dozen stanzas, more like a mixture of wormwood and verdigrease than satire. Venice is a wonderfully fine city. The approach to it over the laguna, with its domes and turrets glittering in a long line over the blue waves, is one of the finest architectural delusions in the world. It seems to have—and literally it has—its foundations in the sea. The silent streets are paved with water, and you hear nothing but the dashing of the oars, and the occasional cries of the gondolieri. I heard nothing of Tasso. The gondolas themselves are things of a most romantic and picturesque appearance ; I can only compare them to moths of which a coffin might have been the chrysalis. They are hung with black, and painted black, and carpeted with grey ; they curl at the prow and stern, and at the former there is a nondescript beak of shining steel, which glitters at the end of its long black mass.

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[1] His daughter Clara, born September, 1817.

[2] Mainly to deliver the child Allegra to her father, Lord Byron—the fruit of his amour with Claire Clairemont (see pp. 238 and 250–252).

The Doge's palace, with its library, is a fine monument of aristocratic power. I saw the dungeons, where these scoundrels used to torment their victims. They are of three kinds—one adjoining the place of trial, where the prisoners destined to immediate execution were kept. I could not descend into them because the day on which I visited it was festa. Another under the leads of the palace, where the sufferers were roasted to death or madness by the ardours of an Italian sun : and others called the Pozzi—or wells, deep underneath, and communicating with those on the roof by secret passages—where the prisoners were confined sometimes half up to their middles in stinking water. When the French came here, they found only one old man in the dungeons, and he could not speak. But Venice, which was once a tyrant, is now the next worst thing, a slave ; for in fact it ceased to be free or worth our regret as a nation, from the moment that the oligarchy usurped the rights of the people. Yet, I do not imagine that it was ever so degraded as it has been since the French, and especially the Austrian yoke. The Austrians take sixty per cent. in taxes, and impose free quarters on the inhabitants. A horde of German soldiers, as vicious and more disgusting than the Venetians themselves, insult these miserable people. I had no conception of the excess to which avarice, cowardice, superstition, ignorance, passionless lust, and all the inexpressible brutalities which degrade human nature, could be carried, until I had passed a few days at Venice.

We have been living this last month near the little town from which I date this letter, in a very pleasant villa which has been lent to us, and we are now on the point of proceeding to Florence, Rome, and Naples at which last city we shall spend the winter, and return northwards in the spring. Behind us here are the Euganean hills, not so beautiful as those of the Bagni di Lucca, with Arqua, where Petrarch's house and tomb are religiously preserved and visited. At the end of our garden is an extensive Gothic castle, now the habitation of owls and bats, where the Medici family resided before they came to Florence. We see before us the wide flat plains of Lombardy, in which we see the sun and moon rise and set, and the evening star, and all the golden magnificence of autumnal clouds. But I reserve wonder for Naples.

I have been writing—and indeed have just finished the first act of a lyric and classical drama, to be called *Prometheus Unbound.* Will you tell me what there is in Cicero about a drama supposed to have been written by Æschylus under this title.

I ought to say that I have just read Malthus in a French translation. Malthus is a very clever man, and the world would be a great gainer if it would seriously take his lessons into consideration, if it were capable of attending seriously to anything but mischief—but what on earth does he mean by some of his inferences ?

Yours ever faithfully,
P. B. S.

I will write again from Rome and Florence—in better spirits, and to more agreeable purpose, I hope. You saw those beautiful stanzas in the fourth canto about the Nymph Egeria. Well, I did not whisper a word about nympholepsy : I hope you acquit me—and I hope you will not carry delicacy so far as to let this suppress anything nympholeptic.

### P. B. Shelley to T. L. Peacock

[*From Bologna to 'the Capital of the vanished World'*]

Rome, *November* 20, 1818.

My Dear P.—

Behold me in the capital of the vanished world ! But I have seen nothing except St. Peter's and the Vatican, overlooking the city in the mist of distance, and the Dogana, where they took us to have our luggage examined, which is built between the ruins of a temple to Antoninus Pius. The Corinthian columns rise over the dwindled palaces of the modern town, and the wrought cornice is changed on one side, as it were, to masses of wave-worn precipices, which overhang you, far, far on high.

I take advantage of this rainy evening, and before Rome has effaced all other recollections, to endeavour to recall the vanished scenes through which we have passed. We left Bologna, I forget on what day, and passing by Rimini, Fano, and Foligno, along the Via Flaminia and Terni, have arrived at Rome after ten days' somewhat tedious, but most interesting journey. The most remarkable things we saw were the Roman excavations in the rock, and the great waterfall of Terni. Of course you have heard that there are a Roman bridge and a triumphal arch at Rimini, and in what excellent taste they are built. The bridge is not unlike the Strand bridge, but more bold in proportion, and of course infinitely smaller. From Fano we left the coast of the Adriatic, and entered the Apennines, following the course of the Metaurus, the banks of which were the scene of the defeat of Asdrubal: and it is said (you can refer to the book) that Livy has given a very exact and animated description of it. I forget all about it, but shall look as soon as our boxes are opened. Following the river, the vale contracts, the banks of the river become steep and rocky, the forests of oak and ilex which overhang its emerald-coloured stream, cling to their abrupt precipices. About four miles from Fossombrone, the river forces for itself a passage between the wall and toppling precipices of the loftiest Apennines, which are here rifted to their base, and undermined by the narrow and tumultuous torrent. It was a cloudy morning, and we had no conception of the scene that awaited us. Suddenly the low clouds were struck by the clear north wind, and like curtains of the finest gauze, removed one by one, were drawn from before the mountain, whose heaven-cleaving pinnacles and black crags overhanging one another, stood at length defined in the light of day. The road runs parallel to the river, at a considerable height, and is carried through the mountain by a vaulted cavern. The marks of the chisel of the legionaries of the Roman Consul are yet evident.

We passed on day after day, until we came to Spoleto, I think the most romantic city I ever saw. There is here an aqueduct of astonishing elevation, which unites two rocky mountains—there is the path of a torrent below, whitening the green dell with its broad and barren track of stones, and above there is a castle, apparently of great strength and of tremendous magnitude, which overhangs the city, and whose marble bastions are perpendicular with the precipice. I never saw a more impressive picture; in which the shapes of nature are of the grandest order, but over which the creations of man, sublime from their antiquity and greatness, seem to predominate. The castle was built by Belisarius or Narses, I forget which, but was of that epoch.

From Spoleto we went to Terni, and saw the cataract of the Velino. The glaciers of Montanvert and the source of the Arveiron is the grandest spectacle I ever saw. This is the second. Imagine a river sixty feet in breadth, with a vast volume of waters, the outlet of a great lake among the higher mountains, falling 300 feet into a sightless gulf of snow-white vapour, which bursts up for ever and for ever, from a circle of black crags, and thence leaping downwards, made five or six other cataracts, each fifty or a hundred feet high, which exhibit, on a smaller scale, and with beautiful and sublime variety, the same appearances. But words (and far less could painting) will not express it. Stand upon the brink of the platform of cliff, which is directly opposite. You see the ever-moving water stream down. It comes in thick and tawny folds, flaking off like solid snow gliding down a mountain. It does not seem hollow within, but without it is unequal, like the folding of linen thrown carelessly down; your eye follows it, and it is lost below; not in the black rocks which gird it around, but in its own foam and spray, in the cloud-like vapours boiling up from below, which is not like rain, nor mist, nor spray, nor foam, but water, in a shape wholly unlike anything I ever saw before. Is is as white as snow, but thick and impenetrable to the eye. The very imagination is bewildered in it. A thunder comes up from the abyss wonderful to hear; for, though it ever sounds, it is never the same, but, modulated by the changing motion, rises and falls intermittingly; we passed half an hour in one spot looking at it, and thought but a few minutes had gone by. The surrounding scenery is, in its kind, the loveliest and most sublime that can be conceived. In our first walk we passed through some olive groves, of large and ancient trees, whose hoary and twisted trunks leaned in all directions. We then crossed a path of orange trees by the river side, laden with their golden fruit, and came to a forest of ilex of a large size, whose evergreen and acorn-bearing boughs were intertwined over our winding path. Around, hemming in the narrow vale, were pinnacles of lofty mountains of pyramidical rock clothed with all evergreen plants and trees ; the vast pine, whose feathery foliage trembled in the blue air, the ilex, that ancestral inhabitant of these mountains, the arbutus with its crimson-coloured fruit and glittering leaves. After an hour's walk, we came beneath the cataract of Terni, within the distance of half a mile ; nearer you cannot approach, for the Nar, which has here its confluence with the Velino, bars the passage. We then crossed the river formed by this confluence, over a narrow natural bridge of rock, and saw the cataract from the platform I first mentioned. We think of spending some time next year near this waterfall. The inn is very bad, or we should have stayed there longer.

We came from Terni last night to a place called Nepi, and to-day arrived at Rome across the much-belied Campagna di Roma, a place I confess infinitely to my taste. It is a flattering picture of Bagshot Heath. But then there are the Apennines on one side, and Rome and St. Peter's on the other, and it is intersected by perpetual dells clothed with arbutus and ilex.

Adieu—very faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

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### P. B. SHELLEY TO T. L. PEACOCK

(*Byron's Associates* ; *the ruins of Rome ; and a visit to Vesuvius*]

Naples, *December* 22, 1818.

MY DEAR P.—

I have received a letter from you here, dated November 1st ; you see the reciprocation of letters from the term of our travels is more slow. I entirely agree with what you say about *Childe Harold.* The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one. Nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt and desperation. The fact is, that first, the Italian women with whom he associates, are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon—the most ignorant, the most disgusting, . . . an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, L. B. is familiar with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondoleri pick up in the streets. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man, and who do not scruple to avow practices which are not only not named, but I believe seldom even conceived in England. He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself; and contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts the nature and the destiny of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair? But that he is a great poet, I think the address to Ocean proves. And he has a certain degree of candour while you talk to him, but unfortunately it does not outlast your departure. No, I do not doubt, and, for his sake, I ought to hope, that his present career must end soon in some violent circumstance.

Since I last wrote to you, I have seen the ruins of Rome, the Vatican, St. Peter's, and all the miracles of ancient and modern art contained in that majestic city. The impression of it exceeds anything I have ever experienced in my travels. We stayed there only a week, intending to return at the end of February, and devote two or three months to its mines of inexhaustible contemplation, to which period I refer you for a minute account of it. We visited the Forum and the ruins of the Coliseum every day. The Coliseum is unlike any work of human hands I ever saw before. It is of enormous height and circuit, and the arches built of massy stones are piled on one another, and jut into the blue air, shattered into the forms of overhanging rocks. It has been changed by time into the image of an ampitheatre of rocky hills overgrown by the wild olive, the myrtle, and the fig-tree, and threaded by little paths, which wind among its ruined stairs and immeasurable galleries: the copsewood overshadows you as you wander through its labyrinths, and the wild weeds of this climate of flowers bloom under your feet. The arena is covered with grass, and pierces, like the skirts of a natural plain, the chasms of the broken arches around. But a small part of the exterior circumference remains—it is exquisitely light and beautiful; and the effect of the perfection of its architecture, adorned with ranges of Corinthian pilasters, supporting a bold cornice, is such as to diminish the effect of its greatness. The interior is all ruin. I can scarcely believe that even when encrusted with Dorian marble and ornamented by columns of Egyptian granite, its effect could have been so sublime and so impressive as in its present state. It is open to the sky, and it was the clear and sunny weather of the end of November in this climate when we visited it, day after day.

Near it is the arch of Constantine, or rather the arch of Trajan; for the servile and avaricious senate of degraded Rome ordered that the monument of his predecessor should be demolished in order to dedicate one to the Christian reptile, who had crept among the blood of his murdered family to the supreme power. It is exquisitely beautiful and perfect. The Forum is a plain in the midst of Rome, a kind of desert full of heaps of stones and pits; and though so near the habitations of men, is the most desolate place you can conceive. The ruins of temples stand in and around it, shattered columns and ranges of others complete, supporting cornices of exquisite workmanship, and vast vaults of shattered domes distinct with regular compartments, once filled with sculptures of ivory or brass. The temples of Jupiter, and Concord, and Peace, and the Sun, and the Moon, and Vesta, are all within a short distance of this spot. Behold the wrecks of what a great nation once dedicated to the abstractions of the mind! Rome is a city, as it were, of the dead, or rather of those who cannot die, and who survive the puny generations which inhabit and pass over the spot which they have made sacred to eternity. In Rome, at least in the first enthusiasm of your recognition of ancient time, you see nothing of the Italians. The nature of the city assists the delusion, for its vast and antique walls describe a circumference of sixteen miles, and thus the population is thinly scattered over this space, nearly as great as London. Wide wild fields are enclosed within it, and there are grassy lanes and copses winding among the ruins, and a great green hill, lonely and bare, which overhangs the Tiber. The gardens of the modern palaces are like wild woods of cedar, and cypress, and pine, and the neglected walks are overgrown with weeds. The English burying-place is a green slope near the walls, under the pyramidal tomb of Cestius, and is, I think, the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld. To see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh, when we first visited it, with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep. Such is the human mind, and so it peoples with its wishes vacancy and oblivion.

I have told you little about Rome; but I reserve the Pantheon, and St. Peter's, and the Vatican, and Raffael, for my return. About a fortnight ago I left Rome, and Mary and C—— followed in three days, for it was necessary to procure lodgings here without alighting at an inn. From my peculiar mode of travelling I saw little of the country, but could just observe that the wild beauty of the scenery and the barbarous ferocity of the inhabitants progressively increased. On entering Naples, the first circumstance that engaged my attention was an assassination. A youth ran out of a shop, pursued by a woman with a bludgeon, and a man armed with a knife. The man overtook him, and with one blow in the neck laid him dead in the road. On my expressing the emotions of horror and indignation which I felt, a Calabrian priest, who travelled with me, laughed heartily, and attempted to quiz me, as what the English call a flat. I never felt such an inclination to beat any one. Heaven knows I have little power, but he saw that I looked extremely displeased, and was silent. This same man, a fellow of gigantic strength and stature, had expressed the most frantic terror of robbers on the road; he cried at the sight of my pistol, and it had been with great difficulty that the joint exertions of myself and the vetturino had quieted his hysterics.

But external nature in these delightful regions contrasts with and compensates for the deformity and degradation of humanity. We have a lodging divided from the sea by the royal gardens, and from our windows we see perpetually the blue waters of the bay, forever changing, yet forever the same, and encompassed by the mountainous island of Capreæ, the lofty peaks which overhang Salerno, and the woody hill of Posilipo, whose promontories hide from us Misenum and the lofty isle Inarime,[1] which, with its divided summit, forms the opposite horn of the bay. From the pleasant walks of the garden we see Vesuvius ; a smoke by day and a fire by night is seen upon its summit, and the glassy sea often reflects its light or shadow. The climate is delicious. We sit without a fire, with the windows open, and have almost all the productions of an English summer. The weather is usually like what Wordsworth calls ‘ the first fine day of March ’ ; sometimes very much warmer, though perhaps it wants that ‘ each minute sweeter than before ’, which gives an intoxicating sweetness to the awakening of the earth from its winter's sleep in England. We have made two excursions, one to Baiæ and one to Vesuvius, and we propose to visit, successively, the islands, Pæstum, Pompeii, and Beneventum.

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[1] The ancient name of Ischia.

We set off an hour after sunrise one radiant morning in a little boat ; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a wave upon the sea, which was so translucent that you could see the hollow caverns clothed with the glaucous sea-moss, and the leaves and branches of those delicate weeds that pave the unequal bottom of the water. As noon approached, the heat, and especially the light, became intense. We passed Posilipo, and came first to the eastern point of the bay of Puzzoli, which is within the great bay of Naples, and which again incloses that of Baiæ. Here are lofty rocks and craggy islets, with arches and portals of precipice standing in the sea, and enormous caverns, which echoed faintly with the murmur of the languid tide. This is called La Scuola di Virgilio. We then went directly across to the promontory of Misenum, leaving the precipitous island of Nesida on the right. Here we were conducted to see the Mare Morto, and the Elysian fields ; the spot on which Virgil places the scenery of the Sixth *Æneid*. Though extremely beautiful, as a lake, and woody hills, and this divine sky must make it, I confess my disappointment. The guide showed us an antique cemetry, where the niches used for placing the cinerary urns of the dead yet remain. We then coasted the bay of Baiæ to the left, in which we saw many picturesque and interesting ruins ; but I have to remark that we never disembarked but we were disappointed—while from the boat the effect of the scenery was inexpressibly delightful. The colours of the water and the air breathe over all things here the radiance of their own beauty. After passing the bay of Baiæ, and observing the ruins of its antique grandeur standing like rocks in the transparent sea under our boat, we landed to visit lake Avernus. We passed through the cavern of the Sibyl (not Virgil's Sybil) which pierces one of the hills which circumscribe the lake, and came to a calm and lovely basin of water, surrounded by dark woody hills, and profoundly solitary. Some vast ruins of the temple of Pluto stand on a lawny hill on one side of it, and are reflected in its windless mirror. It is far more beautiful than the Elysian fields—but there are all the materials for beauty in the latter, and the Avernus was once a chasm of deadly and pestilential vapours. About half a mile from Avernus, a high hill, called Monte Novo, was thrown up by volcanic fire.

Passing onward we came to Pozzoli, the ancient Dicæarchea, where there are the columns remaining of a temple to Serapis, and the wreck of an enormous amphitheatre, changed, like the Coliseum, into a natural hill of the overteeming vegetation. Here also is the Solfatara, of which there is a poetical description in the *Civil War* of Petronius, beginning—*Est locus*, and in which the verses of the poet are infinitely finer than what he describes, for it is not a very curious place. After seeing these things we returned by moonlight to Naples in our boat. What colours there were in the sky, what radiance in the evening star, and how the moon was encompassed by a light unknown to our regions!

Our next excursion was to Vesuvius. We went to Resina in a carriage, where Mary and I mounted mules, and C——was carried in a chair on the shoulders of our men, much like a member of parliament after he has gained his election, and looking, with less reason, quite as frightened. So we arrived at the hermitage of San Salvador, where an old hermit, belted with rope, set forth the plates for our refreshment.

Vesuvius is, after the Glaciers, the most impressive exhibition of the energies of nature I ever saw. It has not the immeasurable greatness, the overpowering magnificence, nor, above all, the radiant beauty of the glaciers; but it has all their character of tremendous and irresistible strength. From Resina to the hermitage you wind up the mountain, and cross a vast stream of hardened lava, which is an actual image of the waves of the sea, changed into hard black stone by enchantment. The lines of the boiling flood seem to hang in the air, and it is difficult to believe that the billows which seem hurrying down upon you are not actually in motion. This plain was once a sea of liquid fire. From the hermitage we crossed another vast stream of lava, and then went on foot up the cone—this is the only part of the ascent in which there is any difficulty, and that difficulty has been much exaggerated. It is composed of rocks of lava, and declivities of ashes ; by ascending the former and descending the latter, there is very little fatigue. On the summit is a kind of irregular plain, the most horrible chaos that can be imagined ; riven into ghastly chasms, and heaped up with tumuli of great stones and cinders, and enormous rocks blackened and calcined, which had been thrown from the volcano upon one another in terrible confusion. In the midst stands the conical hill from which volumes of smoke, and the fountains of liquid fire, are rolled forth forever. The mountain is at present in a slight state of eruption ; and a thick heavy white smoke is perpetually rolled out, interrupted by enormous columns of an impenetrable black bituminous vapour, which is hurled up, fold after fold, into the sky with a deep hollow sound, and fiery stones are rained down from its darkness, and a black shower of ashes fell even where we sat. The lava, like the glacier, creeps on perpetually, with a crackling sound as of suppressed fire There are several springs of lava ; and in one place it rushes precipitously over a high crag, rolling down the half-molten rocks and its own overhanging waves ; a cataract of quivering fire. We approached the extremity of one of the rivers of lava ; it is about twenty feet in breadth and ten in height ; and as the inclined plane was not rapid, its motion was very slow. We saw the masses of its dark exterior surface detach themselves as it moved, and betray the depth of the liquid flame. In the day the fire is but slightly seen ; you only observe a tremulous motion in the air, and streams and fountains of white sulphurous smoke.

At length we saw the sun sink, between Capreæ and Inarime, and, as the darkness increased, the effect of the fire became more beautiful. We were, as it were, surrounded by streams and cataracts of the red and radiant fire ; and in the midst, from the column of bituminous smoke shot up into the air, fell the vast masses of rock, white with the light of their intense heat, leaving behind them through the dark vapour trains of splendour. We descended by torch-light, and I should have enjoyed the scenery on my return, but they conducted me, I know not how, to the hermitage in a state of intense bodily suffering, the worst effect of which was spoiling the pleasure of Mary and C——. Our guides on the occasion were complete savages. You have no idea of the horrible cries which they suddenly utter, no one knows why ; the clamour, the vociferation, the tumult. C—— in her palanquin suffered most from it ; and when I had gone on before, they threatened to leave her in the middle of the road, which they would have done had not my Italian servant promised them a beating, after which they became quiet. Nothing, however, can be more picturesque than the gestures and the physiognomies of these savage people. And when, in the darkness of night, they unexpectedly begin to sing in chorus some fragments of their wild but sweet national music, the effect is exceedingly fine.

Since I wrote this, I have seen the museum of this city. Such statues ! There is a Venus ; an ideal shape of the most winning loveliness. A Bacchus, more sublime than any living being. A Satyr, making love to a youth : in which the expressed life of the sculpture, and the inconceivable beauty of the form of the youth, overcome one's repugnance to the subject. There are multitudes of wonderfully fine statues found in Herculaneum and Pompeii. We are going to see Pompeii the first day that the sea is waveless. Herculaneum is almost filled up ; no more excavations are made ; the king bought the ground and built a palace upon it.

You don't see much of Hunt. I wish you could contrive to see him when you go to town, and ask him what he means to answer to Lord Byron's invitation. He has now an opportunity, if he likes, of seeing Italy. What do you think of joining his party, and paying us a visit next year ; I mean as soon as the reign of winter is dissolved ? Write to me your thoughts upon this. I cannot express to you the pleasure it would give me to welcome such a party.

I have depression enough of spirits and not good health, though I believe the warm air of Naples does me good. We see absolutely no one here.

Adieu, my dear P——.

Affectionately your friend, P. B. S.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO T. L. PEACOCK

### [*Pen Pictures from Rome*]

Rome, *March* 23, 1819.

MY DEAR P.—

I wrote to you the day before our departure from Naples. We came by slow journeys, with our own horses, to Rome, resting one day at Mola di Gaeta, at the inn called Villa di Cicerone, from being built on the ruins of his Villa, whose immense substructions overhang the sea, and are scattered among the orange-groves. Nothing can be lovelier than the scene from the terraces of the inn. On one side precipitous mountains, whose bases slope into an inclined plane of olive and orange copses—the latter forming, as it were, an emerald sky of leaves, starred with innumerable globes of their ripening fruit, whose rich splendour contrasted with the deep green foliage; on the other the sea—bounded on one side by the antique town of Gaeta, and the other by what appears to be an island, the promontory of Circe. From Gaeta to Terracina the whole scenery is of the most sublime character. At Terracina, precipitous conical crags of immense height shoot into the sky and overhang the sea. At Albano, we arrived again in sight of Rome. Arches after arches in unending lines stretching across the uninhabited wilderness, the blue defined line of the mountains seen between them; masses of nameless ruin standing like rocks out of the plain; and the plain itself, with its billowy and unequal surface announced the neighbourhood of Rome. And what shall I say to you of Rome? If I speak of the inanimate ruins, the rude stones piled upon stones, which are the sepulchres of the fame of those who once arrayed them with the beauty which has faded, will you believe me insensible to the vital, the almost breathing creations of genius yet subsisting in their perfection? What has become, you will ask, of the Apollo, the Gladiator, the Venus of the Capitol? What of the Apollo di Belvedere, the Laocoön? What of Raffael and Guido? These things are best spoken of when the mind has drunk in the spirit of their forms; and little indeed can I, who must devote no more than a few months to the contemplation of them, hope to know or feel of their profound beauty.

I think I told you of the Coliseum, and its impressions on me on my first visit to this city. The next most considerable relic of antiquity, considered as a ruin, is the Thermæ of Caracalla. These consist of six enormous chambers, above 200 feet in height, and each enclosing a vast space like that of a field. There are, in addition, a number of towers and labyrinthine recesses, hidden and woven over by the wild growth of weeds and ivy. Never was any desolation more sublime and lovely. The perpendicular wall of ruin is cloven into steep ravines filled up with flowering shrubs, whose thick twisted roots are knotted in the rifts of the stones. At every step the aerial pinnacles of shattered stone group into new combinations of effect, and tower above the lofty yet level walls, as the distant mountains change their aspect to one travelling rapidly along the plain. The perpendicular walls resemble nothing more than that cliff of Bisham wood, that is overgown with wood, and yet is stony and precipitous—you know the one I mean : not the chalk-pit, but the spot that has the pretty copse of fir trees and privet-bushes at its base, and where H—— and I scrambled up, and you, to my infinite discontent, would go home. These walls surround green and level spaces of lawn, on which some elms have grown, and which are interspersed towards their skirts by masses of the fallen ruin, overtwined with the broad leaves of the creeping weeds. The blue sky canopies it, and is as the everlasting roof of these enormous halls.

But the most interesting effect remains. In one of the buttresses, that supports an immense and lofty arch, 'which bridges the very winds of heaven', are the crumbling remains of an antique winding staircase, whose sides are open in many places to the precipice. This you ascend, and arrive on the summit of these piles. There grow on every side thick entangled wildernesses of myrtle, and the myrletus, and bay, and the flowering laurestinus, whose white blossoms are just developed, the white fig, and a thousand nameless plants sown by the wandering winds. These woods are intersected on every side by paths, like sheep-tracks through the copse-wood of steep mountains, which wind to every part of the immense labyrinth. From the midst rise those pinnacles and masses, themselves like mountains, which have been seen from below. In one place you wind along a narrow strip of weed-grown ruin : on one side is the immensity of earth and sky, on the other a narrow chasm, which is bounded by an arch of enormous size, fringed by the many-coloured foliage and blossoms, and supporting a lofty and irregular pyramid, overgrown like itself with the all-prevailing vegetation. Around rise other crags and other peaks, all arrayed, and the deformity of their vast desolation softened down, by the undecaying investiture of nature. Come to Rome. It is a scene by which expression is overpowered; which words cannot convey. Still further, winding up one half of the shattered pyramids, by the path through the blooming copsewood, you come to a little mossy lawn, surrounded by the wild shrubs; it is overgrown with anemones, wall-flowers, and violets, whose stalks pierce the starry moss, and with radiant blue flowers, whose names I know not, and which scatter through the air the divinest odour, which, as you recline under the shade of the ruin, produces sensations of voluptuous faintness, like the combinations of sweet music. The paths still wind on, threading the perplexed windings, other labyrinths, other lawns, and deep dells of wood, and lofty rocks, and terrific chasms. When I tell you that these ruins cover several acres, and that the paths above penetrate at least half their extent, your imagination will fill up all that I am unable to express of this astonishing scene.

I speak of these things not in the order in which I visited them, but in that of the impression which they made on me, or perhaps chance directs. The ruins of the ancient Forum are so far fortunate that they have not been walled up in the modern city. They stand in an open, lonesome place, bounded on one side by the modern city, and the other by the Palatine Mount, covered with shapeless masses of ruin. The tourists tell you all about these things, and I am afraid of stumbling on their language when I enumerate what is so well known. There remain eight granite columns of the Ionic order, with their entablature, of the temple of Concord, founded by Camillus. I fear that the immense expanse demanded by these columns forbids us to hope that they are the remains of any edifice dedicated by that most perfect and virtuous of men. It is supposed to have been repaired under the Eastern Emperors; alas, what a contrast of recollections! Near them stand those Corinthian fluted columns, which supported the angle of a temple; the architrave and entablature are worked with delicate sculpture. Beyond, to the south, is another solitary column; and still more distant, three more, supporting the wreck of an entablature. Descending from the Capitol to the Forum, is the triumphal arch of Septimius Severus, less perfect than that of Constantine, though from its proportions and magnitude a most impressive monument. That of Constantine, or rather of Titus (for the relief and sculpture, and even the colossal images of Dacian captives, were torn by a decree of the senate from an arch dedicated to the latter, to adorn that of this stupid and wicked monster, Constantine, one of whose chief merits consists in establishing a religion, the destroyer of those arts which would have rendered so base a spoliation unnecessary), is the most perfect. It is an admirable work of art. It is built of the finest marble, and the outline of the reliefs is in many parts as perfect as if just finished. Four Corinthian fluted columns support, on each side, a bold entablature, whose bases are loaded with reliefs of captives in every attitude of humiliation and slavery. The compartments above express, in bolder relief, the enjoyment of success; the conqueror on his throne, or in his chariot, or nodding over the crushed multitudes, who writhe under his horses' hoofs, as those below express the torture and abjectness of defeat. There are three arches, whose roofs are panelled with fretwork, and their sides adorned with similar reliefs. The keystone of these arches is supported each by two winged figures of Victory, whose hair floats on the wind of their own speed, and whose arms are outstretched, bearing trophies, as if impatient to meet. They look, as it were, borne from the subject extremities of the earth, on the breath which is the exhalation of that battle and desolation, which it is their mission to commemorate. Never were monuments so completely fitted to the purpose for which they were designed, of expressing that mixture of energy and error which is called a triumph.

I walk forth in the purple and golden light of an Italian evening, and return by star or moonlight, through this scene. The elms are just budding, and the warm spring winds bring unknown odours, all sweet from the country. I see the radiant Orion through the mighty columns of the temple of Concord, and the mellow fading light softens down the modern buildings of the capitol, the only ones that interfere with the sublime desolation of the scene. On the steps of the Capitol itself, stand two colossal statues of Castor and Pollux, each with his horse, finely executed, though far inferior to those of Monte Cavallo the cast of one of which you know we saw together in London. This walk is close to our lodging, and this is my evening walk.

What shall I say of the modern city ? Rome is yet the capital of the world. It is a city of palaces and temples, more glorious than those which any other city contains, and of ruins more glorious than they. Seen from any of the eminences that surround it, it exhibits domes beyond domes, and palaces, and colonades interminably, even to the horizon ; interspersed with patches of desert, and mighty ruins which stand girt by their own desolation, in the midst of the fanes of living religions and the habitations of living men, in sublime loneliness. St. Peter's is, as you have heard, the loftiest building in Europe. Externally it is inferior in architectural beauty to St. Paul's, though not wholly devoid of it ; internally it exhibits littleness on a large scale, and is in every respect opposed to antique taste. You know my propensity to admire ; and I tried to persuade myself out of this opinion—in vain ; the more I see of the interior of St. Peter's, the less impression as a whole does it produce on me. I cannot even think it lofty, though its dome is considerably higher than any hill within fifty miles of London ; and when one reflects, it is an astonishing monument of the daring energy of man. Its colonnade is wonderfully fine, and there are two fountains, which rise in spire-like columns of water to an immense height in the sky, and falling on the porphyry vases from which they spring, fill the whole air with a radiant mist, which at noon is thronged with innumerable rainbows. In the midst stands an obelisk. In front is the palace-like façade of St. Peter's, certainly magnificent ; and there is produced, on the whole, an architectural combination unequalled in the world. But the dome of the temple is concealed, except at a very great distance, by the façade and the inferior part of the building, and that diabolical contrivance they call an attic.

The effect of the Pantheon is totally the reverse of that of St. Peter's. Though not a fourth part of the size, it is, as it were, the visible image of the universe ; in the perfection of its proportions, as when you regard the unmeasured dome of heaven, the idea of magnitude, is swallowed up and lost. It is open to the sky, and its wide dome is lighted by the ever-changing illumination of the air. The clouds of noon fly over it and at night the keen stars are seen through the azure darkness, hanging immoveably, or driving after the driving moon among the clouds. We visited it by moonlight ; it is supported by sixteen columns, fluted and Corinthian, of a certain rare and beautiful yellow marble, exquisitely polished, called here *giallo antico.* Above these are the niches for the statues of the twelve gods. This is the only defect of this sublime temple ; there ought to have been no interval between the commencement of the dome and the cornice, supported by the columns. Thus there would have been no diversion from the magnficent simplicity of its form. This improvement is alone wanting to have completed the unity of the idea.

The fountains of Rome are, in themselves, magnificent combinations of art, such as alone it were worth coming to see. That in the Piazza Navona, a large square, is composed of enormous fragments of rock, piled on each other, and penetrated as by caverns. This mass supports an Egyptian obelisk of immense height. On the four corners of the rock recline, in different attitudes, colossal figures representing the four divisions of the globe. The water bursts from the crevices beneath them. They are sculptured with great spirit ; one impatiently tearing a veil from his eyes ; another with his hands stretched upwards. The Fontana di Trevi is the most celebrated, and is rather a waterfall than a fountain ; gushing out from masses of rock, with a gigantic figure of Neptune ; and below are two river gods, checking two winged horses, struggling up from among the rocks and waters. The whole is not ill conceived nor executed ; but you know not how delicate the imagination becomes by dieting with antiquity day after day ! The only things that sustain the comparison are Raffael, Guido, and Salvator Rosa.

The fountain on the Quirinal, or rather the group formed by the statues, obelisk, and the fountain is, however, the most admirable of all. From the Piazza Quirinale, or rather Monte Cavallo, you see the boundless ocean of domes, spires, and columns, which is the city, Rome. On a pedestal of white marble rises an obelisk of red granite, piercing the blue sky. Before it is a vast basin of porphyry, in the midst of which rises a column of the purest water, which collects into itself all the overhanging colours of the sky, and breaks them into a thousand prismatic hues and graduated shadows—they fall together with its dashing water-drops into the outer basin. The elevated situation of this fountain produces, I imagine, this effect of colour. On each side, on an elevated pedestal, stand the statues of Castor and Pollux, each in the act of taming his horse; which are said, but I believe wholly without authority, to be the work of Phidias and Praxiteles. These figures combine the irresistible energy with the sublime and perfect loveliness supposed to have belonged to their divine nature. The reins no longer exist, but the position of their hands and the sustained and calm command of their regard, seem to require no mechanical aid to enforce obedience. The countenances at so great a height, are scarcely visible, and I have a better idea of that of which we saw a cast together in London, than of the other. But the sublime and living majesty of their limbs and mien, the nervous and fiery animation of the horses they restrain, seen in the blue sky of Italy, and overlooking the city of Rome, surrounded by the light and the music of that crystalline fountain, no cast can communicate.

These figures were found at the Baths of Constantine; but, of course, are of remote antiquity. I do not acquiesce however in the practice of attributing to Phidias, or Praxiteles, or Scopas, or some great master, any admirable work that may be found. We find little of what remained, and perhaps the works of these were such as greatly surpassed all that we conceive of most perfect and admirable in what little has escaped the *deluge*. If I am too jealous of the honour of the Greeks, our masters and creators, the gods whom we should worship— pardon me.

I have said what I feel without entering into any critical discussions of the *ruins* of Rome, and the mere outside of this inexhaustible mine of thought and feeling. Hobhouse, Eustace, and Forsyth, will tell all the show-knowledge about it—' the common stuff of the earth '. By-the-bye, Forsyth is worth reading, as I judge from a chapter or two I have seen. I cannot get the book here.

I ought to have observed that the central arch of the triumphal Arch of Titus yet subsists, more perfect in its proportions, they say, than any of a later date. This I did not remark. The figures of Victory, with unfolded wings, and each spurning back a globe with outstretched feet, are, perhaps, more beautiful than those on either of the others. Their lips are parted: a delicate mode of indicating the fervour of their desire to arrive at the destined resting-place, and to express the eager respiration of their speed. Indeed, so essential to beauty were the forms expressive of the exercise of the imagination and the affections considered by *Greek* artists, that no ideal figure of antiquity, not destined to some representation directly exclusive of such a character, is to be found with closed lips. Within this arch are two panelled alto relievos, one representing a train of people bearing in procession the instruments of Jewish worship, among which is the holy candlestick with seven branches; on the other, Titus standing on a quadriga, with a winged Victory. The grouping of the horses, and the beauty, correctness, and energy of their delineation, is remarkable, though they are much destroyed.

## P. B. SHELLEY TO THOMAS MEDWIN AT MILAN (RE-ADDRESSED TO GENEVA)[1]

[‘*The Cenci*’; ‘*Prometheus Unbound*’; *and* ‘*Charles the First*’]

Pisa, *July* 20, 1820.

MY DEAR MEDWIN,—

I wrote to you a day or two ago at Geneva. I have received your letter from the mountains. How much I envy you, or rather how much I sympathize in the delights of your wandering. I have a passion for such expeditions, although partly the capriciousness of my health, and partly the want of the incitement of a companion, keep me at home. I see the mountains, the sky, and the trees from my windows, and recollect, as an old man does the mistress of his youth, the raptures of a more familiar intercourse, but without his regrets, for their forms are yet living in my mind. I hope you will not pass Tuscany, leaving your promised visit unpaid. I leave it to you, to make the project of taking up your abode with such an animal of the other world as I am, agreeable to your friend.

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[1] Thomas Medwin, cousin and biographer of Shelley, (died 1869).

I am delighted with your approbation of my *Cenci*, and am encouraged to wish to present you with *Prometheus Unbound*, a drama also, but a composition of a totally different character. I do not know if it be wise to affect variety in compositions, or whether the attempt to excel in many ways does not debar from excellence in one particular kind. *Prometheus Unbound* is in the nearest spirit of ideal poetry, and not, as the name would indicate, a mere imitation of the Greek drama; or, indeed, if I have been successful, is it an imitation of anything. But you will judge. I hear it is just printed, and I probably shall receive copies from England before I see you. Your objection to *The Cenci*—as to the introduction of the name of God—is good, inasmuch as the play is addressed to a Protestant people; but *we* Catholics speak eternally and familiarly of the First Person of the Trinity, and, amongst *us*, religion is more interwoven with, and is less extraneous to, the system of ordinary life. As to Cenci's curse, I know not whether I can defend it or no. I wish I may be able; and, as it often happens respecting the worst part of an author's work, it is a particular favourite with me. I prided myself—as since your approbation I hope that I had just cause to do—upon the two concluding lines of the play. I confess I cannot approve of the squeamishness which excludes the exhibition of such *subjects* from the scene—a squeamishness the produce, as I firmly believe, of a lower tone of the public mind, and foreign to the majestic and confident wisdom of the golden age of our country. What think you of my boldness? I mean to write a play, in the spirit of human nature, without prejudice or passion, entitled *Charles the First*. So vanity intoxicates people; but let those few who praise my verses, and in whose approbation I take so much delight, answer for the sin.

I wonder what in the world the Queen has done.[1] I should not wonder, after the whispers I have heard, to find that the green bag contained evidence that she had imitated Pasiphae, and that the Committee should recommend to Parliament a

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[1] The "Uncrowned Queen" of George IV, against whom he had just forced his ministers to bring in a divorce bill. The bill was abandoned four months later from fear of a revolution, but Queen Caroline died in London in the following year, broken-hearted.

Bill to exclude all Minotaurs from the succession. What silly stuff is this to employ a great nation about. I wish the King and the Queen, like Punch and his wife, would fight out their disputes in person.

Your affectionate friend,
P. B. S.

## P. B. SHELLEY TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Quarterly Review*

[*An Unfinished Letter in Defence of Keats*] [1]

1820

SIR,—

Should you cast your eye on the signature of this letter before you read the contents, you might imagine that they related to a slanderous paper which appeared in your *Review* some time since. I never notice anonymous attacks. The wretch who wrote it has doubtless the additional reward of a consciousness of his motives, besides the thirty guineas a sheet, or whatever it is that you pay him. Of course you cannot be answerable for all the writings which you edit, and I certainly bear you no ill-will for having edited the abuse to which I allude—indeed, I was too much amused by being compared to Pharaoh, not readily to forgive editor, printer, publisher, stitcher, or any one, except the despicable writer, connected with something too exquisitely entertaining. Seriously speaking, I am not in the habit of permitting myself to be disturbed by what is said or written of me, though, I dare say, I may be condemned sometimes justly enough. But I feel, in respect to the writer in question, that 'I am there sitting, where he durst not soar.'

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[1] 'This letter', writes Lord Houghton in his *Life and Letters of Keats*, 'was never sent, but, in its place, when Keats was dead, Shelley used a very different tone, and hurled his contemptuous defiance at the anonymous slanderer, in these memorable lines':—

> Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh !
> What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
> Life's early cup with such a draught of woe ?
> The nameless worm would now itself disown ;
> It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
> Whose prelude held all envy, hate and wrong
> But what was howling in one breast alone,
> Silent with expectation of the song,
> Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.
> Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame !
> Live ! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
> Thou noteless blot on a remembered name !
> But be thyself, and know thyself to be !
> And ever in thy season be thou free
> To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow :
> Remorse and self-contempt shall cling to thee ;
> Hot shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
> And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.
>
> *Adonais-Stanzas*, 36, 37

The case is different with the unfortunate subject of this letter, the author of *Endymion*, to whose feelings and situations I entreat you to allow me to call your attention. I write considerably in the dark; but if it is Mr. Gifford that I am addressing, I am persuaded that, in an appeal to his humanity and justice, he will acknowledge the *fas ab hoste doceri*. I am aware that the first duty of a reviewer is towards the public, and I am willing to confess that the *Endymion* is a poem considerably defective, and that, perhaps, it deserved as much censure as the pages of your *Review* record against it; but, not to mention that there is a certain contemptuousness of phraseology from which it is difficult for a critic to abstain, in the review of *Endymion*, I do not think that the writer has given in its due praise. Surely the poem, with all its faults, is a very remarkable production for a man of Keat's age, and the promise of ultimate excellence is such as has rarely been afforded even by such as have afterwards attained high literary eminence. Look at Book II. line 833, etc., and Book III., line 113 to 120; read down that page, and then again from line 195. I could cite many other passages, to convince you that it deserved milder usage. Why it should have been reviewed at all, excepting for the purpose of bringing its excellences into notice, I cannot conceive, for it was very little read, and there was no danger that it should become a model to the age of that false taste with which I confess that it is replenished.

Poor Keats was thrown into a dreadful state of mind by this review, which, I am persuaded, was not written with any intention of producing the effect, to which it has, at least, greatly contributed, of embittering his existence, and inducing a disease, from which there are now but faint hopes of his recovery. The first effects are described to me to have resembled insanity, and it was by assiduous watching that he was restrained from effecting purposes of suicide.[1] The agony of his sufferings at length produced the rupture of a blood vessel in the lungs, and the usual process of consumption appears to have begun. He is coming to pay me a visit in Italy ;[1] but I fear that, unless his mind can be kept tranquil, little is to be hoped from the mere influence of climate.

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[1] Shelley, in the enthusiasm of his friendship, greatly exaggerated the effect which

But let me not extort anything from your pity. I have just seen a second volume,[2] published by him evidently in careless despair. I have desired my bookseller to send you a copy, and allow me to solicit your especial attention to the fragment of a poem entitled *Hyperion*, the composition of which was checked by the Review in question. The great proportion of this piece is surely in the very highest style of poetry. I speak impartially, for the canons of taste to which Keats has conformed in his other compositions are the very reverse of my own. I leave you to judge for yourself ; it would be an insult to you to suppose that, from motives however honourable, you would lend yourself to a deception of the public.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO C. OLLIER

[*His ' Epipsychidion '*]

Pisa, *February* 16, 1821.

DEAR SIR,—

I send you three poems—*Ode to Naples*, a sonnet, and a longer piece, entitled *Epipsychidion*. The two former are my own ; and you will be so obliging as to take the first opportunity of publishing according to your own discretion.

The longer poem, I desire, should not be considered as my own ; indeed, in a certain sense, it is a production of a portion of me already dead ; and in this sense the advertisement is no fiction.[3] It is to be published simply for the esoteric few ;

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the cruel criticism of some of the reviews had on the health and spirits of Keats, who shows in his own correspondence that he attached comparatively little importance to such opinions. Shelley's letter, however, is valuable, as Lord Houghton remarks, in proving how he ' could unbend for others the pride which ever remained erect for himself '.

[1] Keats declined Shelley's invitation to Pisa, on his way to Rome, where his death took place in the following February.

[2] *Lamia and Other Poems*, published July, 1820.

[3] In his preface he speaks of the poem as having been written by a person who ' died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where it was his hope to have realized a scheme of life suited, perhaps, to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this '. The preface is signed ' S '. Lady Shelley, in the *Memoirs of Shelley*, which she edited in 1859.

and I make its author a secret, to avoid the malignity of those who turn sweet food into poison: transforming all they touch into the corruption of their own natures. My wish with respect to it is, that it should be printed immediately in the simplest form, and merely one hundred copies: those who are capable of judging and feeling rightly with respect to a composition of so abstruse a nature, certainly do not arrive at that number—among those, at least, who would ever be excited to read an obscure and anonymous production; and it would give me no pleasure that the vulgar should read it. If you have any bookselling reason against publishing so small a number as a hundred, merely, distribute copies among those to whom you think the poetry would afford any pleasure, and send me, as soon as you can, a copy by the post. I have written it so as to give very little trouble, I hope, to the printer, or to the person who revises. I would be much obliged to you if you would take this office on yourself.[1]

Is there any expectation of a second edition of the *Revolt of Islam*? I have many corrections to make in it, and one part will be wholly remodelled. I am employed in high and new designs in verse; but they are the labours of years, perhaps.

Pray send me news of my intellectual children. For *Prometheus*, I expect and desire no great sale. The *Cenci* ought to have been popular.

I remain, dear Sir,
Your very obedient servant,
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

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### P. B. SHELLEY TO MRS. SHELLEY

[*Byron and his Liaison with Countess Guiccioli*]

Ravenna, *August* 7, 1821

MY DEAREST MARY,—

I arrived last night at ten o'clock, and sate up talking with

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[1] Charles Ollier (1788–1859) was the publisher of Shelley's works, and of the first poems of Keats. He also issued a number of Leigh Hunt's books, and a collected edition of Lamb's works, as well as some romances by himself.

Lord Byron until five this morning. I then went to sleep, and now awake at eleven, and having despatched my breakfast as quick as possible, mean to devote the interval until twelve, when the post departs, to you.

Lord Byron is very well, and was delighted to see me. He has in fact completely recovered his health, and lives a life totally the reverse of that which he led at Venice. He has a permanent sort of liaison with Countess Guiccioli, who is now at Florence, and seems from her letters to be a very amiable woman. She is waiting there until something shall be decided as to their emigration to Switzerland or stay in Italy; which is yet undetermined on either side. She was compelled to escape from the Papal territory in great haste, as measures had already been taken to place her in a convent, where she would have been unrelentingly confined for life. The oppression of the marriage contract, as existing in the laws and opinions of Italy, though less frequently exercised, is far severer than that of England. I tremble to think of what poor Emilia is destined to.

Lord Byron had almost destroyed himself in Venice: his state of debility was such that he was unable to digest any food, he was consumed by hectic fever, and would speedily have perished, but for this attachment, which has reclaimed him from the excesses into which he threw himself from carelessness and pride, rather than taste. Poor fellow! he is now quite well, and immersed in politics and literature. He has given me a number of the most interesting details on the former subject, but we will not speak of them in a letter. Fletcher is here, and as if like a shadow he waxed and waned with the substance of his master: Fletcher also has recovered his good looks, and from amidst the unseasonable grey hairs, a fresh harvest of flaxen locks put forth.

We talked a great deal of poetry, and such matters last night; and as usual differed, and I think more than ever. He affects to patronize a system of criticism fit for the production of mediocrity, and although all his fine poems and passages have been produced in defiance of this system, yet I recognize the pernicious effects of it in the Doge of Venice; and it will cramp and limit his future efforts however great they may be, unless he gets rid of it. I have read only parts of it, or rather he himself read them to me, and gave me the plan of the whole.

Lord Byron has also told me of a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly; because it exhibits a degree of desperate and wicked malice for which I am at a loss to account.[1] When I hear such things my patience and my philosophy are put to a severe proof, whilst I refrain from seeking out some obscure hiding-place, where the countenance of man may never meet me more. . . .

. . . Imagine my despair of good, imagine how it is possible that one of so weak and sensitive a nature as mine can run further the gauntlet through this hellish society of men. *You* should write to the Hoppners a letter refuting the charge, in case you believe, and know and can prove that it is false; stating the grounds and proofs of your belief. I need not dictate what you should say; nor, I hope, inspire you with warmth to rebut a charge, which you only can effectually rebut. If you will send the letter to me here, I will forward it to the Hoppners. Lord Byron is not up, I do not know the Hoppners' address, and I am anxious not to lose a post.

*Friday.*

We ride out in the evening, through the pine forests which divide this city from the sea. Our way of life is this, and I have accommodated myself to it without much difficulty:—L. B. gets up at two, breakfasts; we talk, read, etc., until six; then we ride, and dine at eight; and after dinner sit talking till four or five in the morning.

L. B. is greatly improved in every respect. In genius, in temper, in moral views, in health, in happiness. The connexion with la Guiccioli has been an inestimable benefit to him. He lives in considerable splendour, but within his income, which is now about £4,000 a-year; £100 of which he devotes to purposes of charity. He has had mischievous passions, but these he seems to have subdued, and he is becoming what he should be, a virtuous man. The interest which he took in the politics of Italy, and the actions he performed in consequence of it, are subjects not fit to be *written*, but are such as will delight and surprise you. He is not yet decided to go to Switzerland—a place, indeed, little fitted for him: the gossip and the cabals of those anglicized coteries would torment him, as they did before, and might exasperate him into a relapse of libertinism, which he says he plunged into not from taste, but despair. La Guiccioli and her brother (who is L. B's. friend and confidant, and acquiesces perfectly in her connexion with him), wish to go to Switzerland ; as L. B. says, merely from the novelty of the pleasure of travelling. L. B. prefers Tuscany or Lucca, and is trying to persuade them to adopt his views. He has made *me* write a long letter to her to engage her to remain—an odd thing enough for an utter stranger to write on subjects of the utmost delicacy to his friend's mistress. But it seems destined that I am always to have some active part in every body's affairs whom I approach. I have set down, in lame Italian, the strongest reasons I can think of against the Swiss emigration—to tell you truth, I should be very glad to accept, as my fee, his establishment in Tuscany. Ravenna is a miserable place ; the people are barbarous and wild, and their language the most infernal patois that you can imagine. He would be, in every respect, better among the Tuscans. I am afraid he would not like Florence, on account of the English there. There is Lucca, Florence, Pisa, Siena, and I think nothing more. What think you of Prato, or Pistoia, for him ?—no Englishman approaches those towns ; but I am afraid no house could be found good enough for him in that region.

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[1] A reference to the foul slanders which charged Shelley with being the father of Claire Clairemont's "Allegra" (Lord Byron's child), and with shamefully ill-treating Mary herself.

He has read to me one of the unpublished cantos of *Don Juan*, which is astonishingly fine. It sets him not only above, but far above, all the poets of the day—every word is stamped with immortality. I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, as well I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending. This canto is in the style, but totally, and sustained, with incredible ease and power, like the end of the second canto. There is not a word which the most rigid asserter of the dignity of human nature would desire to be cancelled. It fulfils, in a certain degree, what I have long preached of producing—something wholly new and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful. It may be vanity, but I think I see the trace of my earnest exhortations to him to create something wholly new. He has finished his *life* up to the present time, and given it to Moore, with liberty for Moore to sell it for the best price he can get, with condition that the bookseller should publish it after his death. Moore has sold it to Murray for *two thousand* *pounds.*[1] I have spoken to him of Hunt, but not with a direct view of demanding a contribution ; and, though I am sure that if asked it would not be refused—yet there is something in me that makes it impossible. Lord Byron and I are excellent friends, and were I reduced to poverty, or were I a writer who had no claims to a higher station than I possess—or did I possess a higher than I deserve, we should appear in all things as such, and I would freely ask him many favour. Such is not the case. The demon of mistrust and pride lurks between two persons in our situation, poisoning the freedom of our intercourse. This is a tax, and a heavy one, which we must pay for being human. I think the fault is not on my side, nor is it likely, I being the weaker.

Write to me at Florence, where I shall remain a day at least, and send me letters, or news of letters. How is my little darling ? And how are you, and how do you get on with your book ? Be severe in your corrections, and expect severity from me, your sincere admirer. I flatter myself you have composed something unequalled in its kind, and that, not content with the honours of your birth and your hereditary aristocracy, you will add still higher renown to your name. . . . .

Adieu, dear Mary,
Yours affectionately,
S.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO LEIGH HUNT

[*The Invitation to Italy*]

Pisa, *August* 26, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—

Since I last wrote to you, I have been on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. The result of this visit was a determination, on his part, to come and live at Pisa ; and I have taken the finest palace on the Lung' Arno for him. But the material part of my visit consists in a message which he desires me to give you, and which, I think, ought to add to your determination—for such a one I hope you have formed, of restoring your shattered health and spirits by a migration to these 'regions mild of calm and serene air'. He proposes that you should come and go shares with him and me, in a periodical work, to be conducted here; in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions, and share the profits[1]. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason it was never brought to bear. There can be no doubt that the *profits* of any scheme in which you and Lord Byron engage, must, from various, yet co-operating reasons, be very great. As for myself, I am, for the present, only a sort of link between you and him, until you can know each other, and effectuate the arrangement; since (to entrust you with a secret which, for your sake, I withhold from Lord Byron) nothing would induce me to share in the profits, and still less, in the borrowed splendour of such a partnership.

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[1] Moore subsequently bought the manuscript back, and, as mentioned in his own etters, destroyed it. He received a still larger sum, however, for the life which he undertook for Murray on Byron's death.

You and he, in different manners, would be equal, and would bring, in a different manner, but in the same proportion, equal stocks of reputation and success. Do not let my frankness with you, nor my belief that you deserve it more than Lord Byron, have the effect of deterring you from assuming a station in modern literature, which the universal voice of my contemporaries forbids me either to stoop or to aspire to. I am, and I desire to be, nothing. I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey; because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation, in the worldly sense of the word; and I am as jealous for my friend as for myself; but I suppose that I shall at last make up an impudent face, and ask Horace Smith[2] to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me. I know I need only ask. I think I have never told you how very much I like your *Amyntas*; it almost reconciles me to translations. In another sense I still demur. You might have written another such poem as the *Nymphs,* with no great access of efforts. I am full of thoughts and plans, and should do something, if the feeble and irritable frame which incloses it was willing to obey the spirit. I fancy that then

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[1] This was to be the new journal, the *Liberal.* Leigh Hunt, after many delays, arrived with his family at Leghorn about the middle of June in the following year, and it was on his return from welcoming his friend that Shelley was drowned.

[2] Horace (Horatio) Smith (1779–1849), poet and joint-author with his brother of *Rejected Addresses*, was an intimate and generous friend of both Shelley and Leigh Hunt.

I should do great things. Before this you will have seen *Adonais*. Lord Byron, I suppose from modesty, on account of his being mentioned in it, did not say a word of *Adonais*, though he was loud in his praise of *Prometheus*, and, what you will not agree with him in, censure of the *Cenci*. Certainly, if *Marino Faliero* is a drama, the *Cenci* is not—but that between ourselves. Lord Byron is reformed, as far as gallantry goes, and lives with a beautiful and sentimental Italian Lady, who is as much attached to him as may be I trust greatly to his intercourse with you, for his creed to become as pure as he thinks his conduct is. He has many generous and exalted qualities, but the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out.

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### P. B. SHELLEY TO C. OLLIER

[*Mrs. Shelley's Romance, 'Valperga'*]

Pisa, *September* 25, 1821.

DEAR SIR,—

It will give me great pleasure if I can arrange the affair of Mrs. Shelley's novel with you to her and your satisfaction. She has a specific purpose in the sum which she instructed me to require: and although this purpose could not be answered without ready money, yet I should find means to answer her wishes in that point, if you could make it convenient to pay one-third at Christmas, and give bills for the other two-thirds at twelve and eighteen months. It would give me peculiar satisfaction that you, rather than any other person, should be the publisher of this work; it is the product of no slight labour, and, I flatter myself, of no common talent. I doubt it will give no less credit than it will receive from your names. I trust you know me too well to believe that my judgment deliberately given in testimony of the value of any production is influenced by motives of interest or partiality.

The romance is called *Castruccio, Prince of Lucca*, and is founded (not upon the novel of Macchiavelli under that name, which substitutes a childish fiction for the far more romantic truth of history, but) upon the actual story of his life. He was a person who, from an exile and an adventurer, after having served in the wars of England and Flanders in the reign of our Edward the Second, returned to his native city, and, liberating it from its tyrants, became himself its tyrant, and died in the full splendour of his dominion, which he had extended over the half of Tuscany. He was a little Napoleon, and, with a dukedom instead of an empire for his theatre, brought upon the same all the passion and the errors of his antitype. The chief interest of this romance rests upon Euthanasia, his betrothed bride, whose love for him is only equalled by her enthusiasm for the liberty of the republic of Florence, which is in some sort her country, and for that of Italy, to which Castruccio is a devoted enemy, being an ally of the party of the Emperor. This character is a masterpiece; and the keystone of the drama, which is built up with admirable art, is the conflict between these passions and these principles. Euthanasia, the last survivor of a noble house, is a feudal countess, and her castle is the scene of the exhibition of the knightly manners of the time. The character of Beatrice, the prophetess, can only be done justice to in the very language of the author. I know nothing in Walter Scott's novels which at all approaches to the beauty and sublimity of this—creation, I may almost say, for it is perfectly original; and, although founded upon the ideas and manners of the age which is represented, is wholly without a similitude in any fiction I ever read. Beatrice is in love with Castruccio, and dies; for the romance, although interspersed with much lighter matter, is deeply tragic, and the shades darken and gather as the catastrophe approaches. All the manners, customs, opinions, of the age are introduced; the superstitions, the heresies, and the religious persecutions are displayed; the minutest circumstance of Italian manners in that age is not omitted; and the whole seems to me to constitute a living and moving picture of an age almost forgotten. The author visited the scenery which she describes in person; and one or two of the inferior characters are drawn from her own observation of the Italians, for the national character shows itself still in certain instances under the same forms as it wore in the time of Dante [1]. The novel consists, as I told you before, of three volumes, each at least equal to one of the *Tales of my Landlord*, and they will be very soon ready to be sent. In case you should accept the present offer, I will make one observation which I consider of essential importance. It ought to be printed in half volumes at a time, and sent to the author for her last corrections by the post. It may be printed on thin paper like that of this letter, and the expense shall fall upon me. Lord Byron has his works sent in this manner; and no person, who has either fame to lose or money to win, ought to publish in any other manner.

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[1] The book was published in 1823 under the title of *Valperga*. Mrs. Shelley received £400 for the copyright, and this sum was devoted to the relief of Godwin's pecuniary distress.

By-the-bye, how do I stand with regard to these two great objects of human pursuit? I *once* sought something nobler and better than either; but I might as well have reached at the moon, and now, finding that I have grasped the air, I should not be sorry to know what substantial sum, especially of the former, is in your hands on my account. The gods have made the reviewers the almoners of this worldly dross, and I think I must write an ode to flatter them to give me some; if I would not that they put me off with a bill on posterity, which, when my ghost shall present, the answer will be—'no effects.'

*Charles the First* is conceived, but not born. Unless I am sure of making something good, the play will not be written. Pride, that ruined Satan, will kill *Charles the First*, for his midwife would be only *less than him whom thunder has made greater*. I am full of great plans; and, if I should tell you them, I should add to the list of these riddles.

I have not seen Mr. Procter's *Mirandola*. Send it me in the box, and pray send me the box immediately. It is of the utmost consequence; and, as you are so obliging as to say you will not neglect my commissions, pray send this without delay. I hope it *is* sent, indeed, and that you have recollected to send me several copies of *Prometheus*, the *Revolt of Islam*, and the *Cenci*, etc., as I requested you. Is there any chance of a second edition of the *Revolt of Islam?* I could materially improve that poem on revision. The *Adonais*, in spite of its mysticism, is the least imperfect of my compositions, and, as the image of my regret and honour for poor Keats, I wish it to be so. I shall write to you, probably, by next post on the subject of that poem, and should have sent the promised criticism for the second edition, had I not mislaid, and in vain sought for, the volume that contains *Hyperion*. Pray give me notice against what time you want the second part of my *Defence of Poetry*. I give you this *Defence*, and you may do what you will with it. Pray give me an immediate answer about the novel.

I am, my dear Sir,
Your very obliged servant,
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

I ought to tell you that the novel has not the smallest tincture of any peculiar theories in politics or religion.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO T. L. PEACOCK

[*Life and Literary Work at Pisa*]

Pisa, *January* (probably 11), 1822.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,—

I am still at Pisa, where I have at length fitted up some rooms at the top of a lofty palace that overlooks the city and the surrounding region, and have collected books and plants about me, and established myself for some indefinite time, which, if I read the future, will not be short. I wish you to send my books by the very first opportunity, and I expect in them a great augmentation of comfort. Lord Byron is established here, and we are constant companions. No small relief this, after the dreary solitude of the understanding and the imagination in which we passed the first years of our expatriation, yoked to all sorts of miseries and discomforts. Of course you have seen his last volume, and if you before thought him a great poet, what is your opinion now that you have read *Cain?* The *Foscari* and *Sardanapalus* I have not seen; but as they are in the style of his later writings, I doubt not they are very fine. We expect Hunt here every day, and remain in great anxety on account of the heavy gales which he must have encountered at Christmas. Lord Byron has fitted up the lower apartments of his palace for him, and Hunt will be agreeably surprised to find a commodious lodging prepared for him after the fatigues and dangers of his passage. I have been long idle, and, as far as writing goes, despondent; but I am now engaged on *Charles I*, and a devil of a nut it is to crack.

M. and C., who is not with us just at present, are well, and so is our little boy,[1] the image of poor William.[2] We live, as usual, tranquilly. I get up, or at least wake, early; read and write till two; dine; go to Lord B.'s, and ride, or play at billiards, as the weather permits; and sacrifice the evening either to light books or whoever happens to drop in. Our furniture, which is very neat, cost fewer shillings than that at Marlow did pounds sterling; and our windows are full of plants which turn the sunny winter into spring. My health is better—my cares are lighter; and although nothing will cure the consumption of my purse, yet it drags on a sort of life in death, very like its master, and seems, like Fortunatus's, always empty yet never quite exhausted. You will have seen my *Adonais*, and perhaps my *Hellas*, and I think, whatever you may think of the subject, the composition of the first poem will not wholly displease you. I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called verse, but I have not; and since you give me no encouragement about India,[3] I cannot hope to have.

How is your little star, and the heaven which contains the milky way in which it glimmers?

Adieu—Yours ever, most truly, S.

### P. B. Shelley to Joseph Severn

[*In Sending the First Copy of the 'Adonais'*]

Pisa, *November* 29, 1821.

Dear Sir,—

I send you the elegy of poor Keats—and I wish it were better worth your acceptance. You will see, by the preface, that it was written before I could obtain any particular account of his last moments; all that I still know was communicated to me by a friend who had derived his information from Colonel Finch; I have ventured to express, as I felt, the respect and admiration which *your* conduct towards him demands.

In spite of his transcendent genius, Keats never was, nor ever will be, a popular poet; and the total neglect and obscurity in which the astonishing remnants of his mind still lie, was hardly to be dissipated by a writer, who, however he may differ from Keats in more important qualities, at least resembles him in that accidental one, a want of popularity.

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[1] Afterwards Sir Percy Florence Shelley.

[2] His first child by Mary Godwin, born January, 1816, died June, 1819.

[3] 'He had expressed a desire', writes Peacock, 'to be employed politically at the court of a native prince, and I had told him that such employment was restricted to the regular service of the East India Company.'

I have little hope, therefore, that the poem I send you will excite any attention, nor do I feel assured that a critical notice of his writings would find a single reader. But for these considerations, it had been my intention to have collected the remnants of his compositions, and to have published them with a Life and Criticism. Has he left any poems or writings of whatsoever kind, and in whose possession are they? Perhaps you would oblige me by information on this point.

Many thanks for the picture you promised me: I shall consider it among the most sacred relics of the past. For my part, I little expected, when I last saw Keats at my friend Leigh Hunt's, that I should survive him.

Should you ever pass through Pisa, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you, and of cultivating an acquaintance into something pleasant, begun under such melancholy auspices.

Accept, my dear sir, the assurance of my highest esteem, and believe me,

Your most sincere and faithful servant,
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

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### P. B. SHELLEY TO HORATIO SMITH

['*Hellas*', *Byron's* '*Cain*', *and Christianity*]

Pisa, *April* 11, 1822.

MY DEAR SMITH,—

I have, as yet, received neither the . . . nor his metaphysical companions—*Time, my Lord, has a wallet on his back*, and I suppose he has bagged them by the way. As he has had a good deal of *alms* for oblivion out of me, I think he might as well have favoured me this once; I have, indeed, just dropped another mite into his treasury, called *Hellas*, which I know not how to send to you, but I dare say some fury of the Hades of authors will bring one to Paris. It is a poem written on the Greek cause last summer—a sort of lyrical, dramatic, nondescript piece of business. You will have heard of a *row* we have had here, which, I dare say, will grow to a serious size before it arrives at Paris. It was, in fact, a trifling piece of business enough, arising from an insult of a drunken dragoon, offered to one of our party, and only serious, because one of Lord B.'s servants wounded the fellow dangerously with a pitchfork. He is now, however, recovering, and the echo of the affair will be heard long after the original report has ceased.

Lord Byron has read me one or two letters of Moore to him, in which Moore speaks with great kindness of me ; and of course I cannot but feel flattered by the approbation of a man, my inferiority to whom I am proud to acknowledge. Amongst other things, however, Moore, after giving Lord B. much good advice about public opinion, &c., seems to deprecate my influence on his mind, on the subject of religion, and to attribute the tone assumed in *Cain* to my suggestions. Moore cautions him against my influence on this particular, with the most friendly zeal ; and it is plain that his motive springs from a desire of benefiting Lord B., without degrading me. I think you know Moore. Pray assure him that I have not the smallest influence over Lord Byron, in this particular, and if I had, I certainly should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush for the hours of sickness and distress. *Cain* was *conceived* many years ago, and begun before I saw him last year at Ravenna. How happy should I not be to attribute to myself, however indirectly, any participation in that immortal work ! I differ with Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world ; no man of sense can think it true ; and the alliance of the monstrous superstitions of the popular worship with the pure doctrines of the Theism of such a man as Moore, turns to the profit of the former, and makes the latter the fountain of its own pollution. I agree with him that the doctrines of the French, and Material Philosophy, are as false as they are pernicious ; but still they are better than Christianity, inasmuch as anarchy is better than despotism ; for this reason, that the former is for a season, and that the latter is eternal. My admiration of the character, no less than of the genius of Moore, makes me rather wish that he should not have an ill opinion of me.

Where are you? We settle this summer near Spezzia; Lord Byron at Leghorn. May not I hope to see you, even for a trip in Italy? I hope your wife and little ones are well. Mine grows a fine boy, and is quite well. I have contrived to get my musical coals at Newcastle itself. My dear Smith, believe me,

Faithfully yours.
P. B. S.

### P. B. SHELLEY TO HORATIO SMITH [1]

[*Begs a Loan for Godwin*]

Lerici, *May*, 1822.

MY DEAR SMITH,—

It is some time since I have heard from you; are you still at Versailles? Do you still cling to France, and prefer the arts and conveniences of that over-civilized country to the beautiful nature and mighty remains of Italy? As to me, like Anacreon's swallow, I have left my Nile, and have taken up my summer quarters here, in a lonely house, close by the sea-side, surrounded by the soft and sublime scenery of the gulf of Spezzia. I do not write; I have lived too long near Lord Byron, and the sun has extinguished the glow-worm; for I cannot hope, with St. John, that '*the light came into the world, and the world knew it not*'.

The object of my present letter is, however, a request, and as it concerns that most odious of all subjects, money, I will put it in the shortest shape—Godwin's law-suit, he tells us, is decided against him; and he is adjudged to pay £400. He writes, of course, to his daughter in the greatest distress: but we have no money except our income, nor any means of procuring it. My wife has sent him her novel, which is now finished, the copyright of which will probably bring him £300 or £400—as Ollier offered the former sum for it, but as he required a considerable delay for the payment, she rejected his offer. Now, what I wish to know is, whether you could with convenience lend me the £400 which you once dedicated to this service, and allow Godwin to have it, under the precautions and stipulations which I formerly annexed to its employment. You could not obviously allow this money to lie idle waiting for this event, without interest. I forgot this part of the business till this instant ' and now I reflect that I ought to have assured you of the regular payment of interest, which I omitted to mention, considering it a matter of course.

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[1] Horace Smith (see note, p. 339) was unable to advance the sum applied for. Godwin, indeed, appears already to have tried the same quarter in vain, for, other reasons apart, Smith did not see why Godwin's friends should be called upon to pay his legal expenses.

I can easily imagine that circumstances may have arisen to make this loan inconvenient or impossible.—In any case, believe me,

My dear Smith,
Yours very gratefully and faithfully,
P. B. Shelley.

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### P. B. Shelley to Mrs. Shelley

[*The Last Letter She received from Him* [1]]

Pisa, *July* 4, 1822.

My dearest Mary,—

I have received both your letters, and shall attend to the instructions they convey. I did not think of buying the *Bolivar* ; Lord B. wishes to sell her, but I imagine would prefer ready money. I have as yet made no inquiries about houses near Pugnano—I have no moment of time to spare from Hunt's affairs ; I am detained unwillingly here, and you will probably see Williams in the boat before me,—but that will be decided to-morrow.

Things are in the worst possible situation with respect to poor Hunt. I find Marianne in a desperate state of health, and on our arrival at Pisa sent for Vaccà. He decides that her case is hopeless, and that although it will be lingering, must inevitably end fatally. This decision he thought proper to communicate to Hunt ; indicating at the same time, with great judgment and precision, the treatment necessary to be observed for availing himself of the chance of his being deceived. This intelligence has extinguished the last spark of poor Hunt's spirits, low enough before.

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[1] Four days later Shelley, having settled Leigh Hunt's affairs for him, as far as was possible in the time, was drowned on his way back to his wife. (See the letters of both Byron and Leigh Hunt).

Lord Byron is at this moment on the point of leaving Tuscany. The Gambas have been exiled, and he declares his intention of following their fortunes. His first idea was to sail to America, which was changed to Switzerland then to Genoa, and last to Lucca. Everybody is in despair and everything in confusion. Trelawny[1] was on the point of sailing to Genoa for the purpose of transporting the *Bolivar* overland to the lake of Geneva, and had already whispered in my ear his desire that I should not influence Lord Byron against this terrestrial navigation. He next received *orders* to weigh anchor and set sail for Lerici. He is now without instructions, moody and disappointed. But it is the worst for poor Hunt, unless the present storm should blow over. He places his whole dependence upon the scheme of a journal, for which every arrangement has been made. Lord Byron must of course furnish the requisite funds at present, as I cannot ; but he seems inclined to depart without the necessary explanations and arrangements due to such a situation as Hunt's. These, in spite of delicacy, I must cure ; he offers him the copyright of the *Vision of Judgment* for the first number. This offer, if sincere, is *more* than enough to set up the journal, and, if sincere, will set everything right.

How are you, my best Mary ? Write especially how is your health and how your spirits are, and whether you are not more reconciled to staying at Lerici, at least during the summer.

You have no idea how I am hurried and occupied ; I have not a moment's leisure, but will write by next post. Ever, dearest Mary,

Yours affectionately,
S.

## LEIGH HUNT

1784–1859

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT, who entered Christ's Hospital just after Lamb and Coleridge had left it, was already known for his poetical originality and his political persecutions when he first came to make their acquaintance. Leigh Hunt, writes Lord Houghton, was then 'regarded by some with admiration, by others with ridicule, as the master of a school of poets,'—the 'Cockney School' as the critics called it—'though in truth he was only their encourager, sympathizer, and friend ; while the unpopularity of his liberal and cosmopolite politics was visited with indiscriminating injustice on all who had the happiness of his friendship or even the gratification of his society. In those days of hard opinion, which we of a freer and worthier time look upon with indignation and surprise, Mr. Hunt had been imprisioned for the publication of phrases which, at the most, were indecorous expressions of public feeling, and became a traitor or a martyr according to the temper of the spectator. The heart of Keats leaped towards him in human and poetic brotherhood, and the earnest sonnet on the day he left his prison riveted the connexion. They read and walked together, and wrote verses in competition on a given subject. "No imaginative pleasure", characteristically observes Mr. Hunt, "was left unnoticed by us or unenjoyed, from the recollection of the bards and patriots of old, to the luxury of a summer rain at our windows, or the clicking of coal in winter time".' The particular phrase which sent Leigh Hunt and his brother to prison in 1813 was the description of the Prince Regent as a 'corpulent Adonis of fifty', which he printed in his Radical *Examiner*. For this the brothers were each sentenced to a fine of £500, and imprisoned for two years in separate jails, during which time Leigh Hunt continued to edit the *Examiner*, received hosts of friends, including Coleridge, Lord Byron, Moore and Bentham, and turned his cell into a 'bower of roses'. One of Keats' last visits before leaving England to die in Italy, was to Leigh Hunt, who wrote his affecting letter—now reprinted—of March 8, 1821, without knowing that Keats was already in his grave. A few months later Leigh Hunt himself sailed for Italy with his wife and seven children, accepting the generously-worded invitation, included among the Shelley letters, to help Byron and Shelley to found the new quarterly entitled *The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South.* It was an ill-starred scheme, for Shelley was drowned immediately after Leigh Hunt's arrival, and Byron could not, or would not, hit it off well with the Hunts. 'Our tastes are so opposite', he wrote, 'that we are totally unsuited to each other.'

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[1] Edward John Trelawny (1792–1881), author and adventurer. His *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author* appeared in 1858.

The *Liberal* only lived through four numbers. Leigh Hunt returned to England in 1825, to continue a life of ceaseless activity, (Alexander Ireland's bibliography credits him with no fewer than seventy-nine works) and impecuniosity—relieved in 1844 by an annuity of £120 from Sir Percy Shelley, and three years later by a pension of £200 from the Government.

### LEIGH HUNT TO MR. IVES [1]

### [*A Political Prisoner*]

Surrey Jail, *February* 5, 1813.

Mr. Leigh Hunt presents his compliments to Mr. Ives, and puts down his wishes upon paper as requested.

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[1] The Governor of the prison.

His first and greatest wish, then, is to be allowed to have his wife and children living with him in the prison. It is to be observed, that his is a new case within these walls; and not only so, but that his habits have always been of the most domestic kind, that he has not been accustomed to be from home a day long, and that he is subject, particularly at night-time, to violent attacks of illness, accompanied by palpitations of the heart and other nervous affections, which render a companion not only much wanted, but sometimes hardly to be dispensed with. His state of health is bad at the present moment, as anybody may see; not so bad indeed as it has been, and he wishes to make no parade of it; but quite bad enough to make him feel tenfold all the wants of his situation, and to render it absolutely necessary that his greatest comforts should not all be taken away. If it would take time, however, to consider this request, his next wish is that his wife and children be allowed to be with him in the day-time. His happiness is wound up in them, and he shall say no more on this subject except that a total separation in respect to abode would be almost as bad to him as tearing his body asunder.

His third and last request is, that his friends be allowed to come up to his room during the daytime; and if this permission be given, he will give his word that it shall not be abused. His physician has often declared that society is necessary to his health; but though he has been used to every comfort that domestic and social happiness can bestow, he is content with as little as possible, and provided his just wish be granted, could make almost any sacrifice.

This is all he has to say on the subject, and all with which he should ever trouble anybody. The hope of living in Mr. Ives's house he has given up; many privations, of course, he is prepared to endure; with the other regulations of the prison he has no wish to interfere; and from what little has already been seen of him in this place he believes that every credit will be given him for conducting himself in a reasonable and gentlemanly manner; for as he is a stubborn enemy of what is wrong, so is he one of the quietest and most considerate friends of what is right. He has many private friends who would do their utmost for him; and his character, he believes, has procured him some public ones of the highest description, who would leave no means untaken for bettering his condition, but he would willingly leave his comforts to those about him. To conclude, he is prepared to suffer all extremities rather than do himself dishonour ; but it is no dishonour to have the feelings of a husband and a father : and till he is dead to them and to everything else, he shall not cease exerting himself in their behalf.

### LEIGH HUNT TO HIS WIFE

[*Byron visits Him in Prison*]

Surrey Gaol, *May* 25, 1813.

I have had Lord B. (Byron) here again. He came on Sunday, by himself, in a very frank, unceremonious manner, and knowing what I wanted for my poem, brought me the last new *Travels in Italy*, in two quarto volumes, of which he requests my acceptance, with the air of one who did not seem to think himself conferring the least obligation. This will please you. It strikes me that he and I shall become friends, literally and cordially speaking : there is something in the texture of his mind and feelings that seems to resemble mine to a thread ; I think we are cut out of the same piece, only a different wear may have altered our respective naps a little. Thomas Moore and he dine with me again in a few days ; and if you do not see the former when you return, perhaps you may his lordship, who will be pleased, I am sure, to know you and become acquainted :—a good domestic female capable of loving one person sincerely and making sacrifices for him, is, I guess, not one of his everyday acquaintances.

### LEIGH HUNT TO PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

[*Condoles with Him on the Death of His Son*]

York Buildings, *July*, 1819.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—

My letter would have come off to you before I received yours, had I not been laid prostrate by a bilious fever, from which I am now recovering, and which, I think, has left me in a condition to get better than I was before, if I take care and take exercise, which with me are nearly the same thing. I had received the news of your misfortune, and thought of all which you and Mary must suffer.[1] Marianne, I assure you, wept hearty tears of sympathy. He was a fine little fellow was William ; and for my part I cannot conceive that the young intellectual spirit which sat thinking out of his eye, and seemed to comprehend so much in his smile, can perish like the house it inhabited. I do not know that a soul is born with us ; but we seem, to me, to *attain* to a soul, some later, some earlier ; and when we have got that, there is a look in our eye, a sympathy in our cheerfulness, and a yearning and grave beauty in our thoughtfulness that seems to say, ' Our mortal dress may fall off when it will ; our trunk and our leaves may go ; we have shot up our blossom into an immortal air '. This is poetry, you will say, not argument : but then there comes upon me another fancy, which would fain persuade me that poetry is the argument of a higher sphere. Do you smile at me ? Do you, too, Marina, smile at me ? Well, then, I have done something at any rate. My dear friends, I affront your understandings and feelings with none of the ordinary topics of consolation. We must all weep on these occasions, and it is better for the kindly fountains within us that we should. May you weep quietly, but not long ; and may the calmest and most affectionate spirit that comes out of the contemplation of great things and the Love of all, lay His most blessed hand upon you. I fear this looks a little like declamation ; and yet I know that he would be a very mistaken critic who should tell me that it was so.

I can do nothing with my tragedy, at least, not at present : I may do something when the new management at Drury Lane is settled, provided Kean likes it on perusal. He has rejected it, in a manner, at present, without perusing ; for in my letter to him I unfortunately said that there were *two* characters in it, either of which, it was thought, would suit him ; and it turned out just afterwards that he had a mortal antipathy to having any second Richard in the field. He returned me a very polite answer, in which he said that his hands were full. I then sent to Covent Garden, and here, it seems, the manager lives in the house of a bad dramatist, to whom he is under obligations, and who settles the destiny of all new comers. I had the honour to be rejected. You cannot suppose, of course, that I think my tragedy worse than those which are received. I know it to be a great deal better: but between ourselves, I think I have hurt it for publication, by keeping in mind its destination for the stage. At all events, I shall keep it myself, in hopes of future performance. What I most regret is the waste of time, which I might have turned to more lucrative account: but I did my best, and most industrious. The two little poems (*Hero and Leander*, and *Bacchus and Ariadne*) are out; and if Ollier does not bestir himself, I will make up a little packet next week, with these and one or two other things in it. Perhaps I had better do so at once, if Peacock does not send. Is it possible that you have never received even Ollier's first packet yet, with the portrait in it, which I thought, in my egotism, was to gratify you so? I guess as much, by your silence about it. You will see in the *Examiner* what I have said about your lovely poem of *Rosalind and Helen*, which is a great favourite of mine. I was rejoiced to find also that Charles Lamb was full of it. Your reputation is certainly rising greatly in your native country, in spite of its honest Promethean chains; and I have no doubt it will be universally recognized on its proper eminence. I long, by the bye, to see Prometheus himself. I have no doubt you have handled his 'wearied virtue' nobly. It is curious, but I had thought a little while ago of writing a poem myself, entitled *Prometheus Throned;* in which I intended to have described him as having lately taken possession of Jupiter's seat. But the subject, on every account, is in better hands. I am rather the son of one of Atlas's daughters, than of Atlas himself. I am glad you like the specimen of the *Pocket-Book*. As my old chat refreshes you, I think myself bound to write just often:—I shall despatch another letter next week addressed to Mary, which I hope will induce her to oblige me with one of her gigantic paragraphs which she entitles a letter. Won't you write to me frequently, too, if I write frequently? God bless you, my dear,

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[1] The death of Shelley's son William.

dear friends, and take care of your health and spirits, if it be only for the sake of your affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

### LEIGH HUNT TO JOSEPH SEVERN

[*A Letter that arrived too Late* [1]]

Vale of Health, Hampstead, *March* 8, 1821.

DEAR SEVERN,—

You have concluded, of course, that I have sent no letters to Rome, because I was aware of the effect they would have on Keats's mind ; and this is the principal cause,—for besides what I have been told of his emotions about letters in Italy, I remember his telling me on one occasion that, in his sick moments, he never wished to receive another letter, or even to see another face however friendly. But I still should have written to you had I not been almost at death's door myself. You will imagine how ill I have been when you hear that I have just begun writing for the *Examiner* and *Indicator*, after an interval of several months, during which my flesh wasted from me in sickness and melancholy. Judge how often I thought of Keats, and with what feelings. Mr. Brown tells me he is comparatively calm now, or rather quite so. If he can bear to hear of us, pray tell him—but he knows it all already, and can put it in better language than any man. I hear he does not like to be told that he may get better ; nor is it to be wondered at, considering his firm persuasion that he shall not recover. He can only regard it as a puerile thing, and an insinuation that he cannot bear to think he shall die. But if this persuasion should happen no longer to be so strong upon him, or if he can now put up with such attempts to console him, remind him of what I have said a thousand times, and that I still (upon my honour, Severn) think always that I have seen too many instances of recovery from apparently desperate cases of consumption, not to indulge in hope to the very last. If he cannot bear this, tell him—tell that great poet and noble-hearted man—that we shall all bear his memory in the most precious part of our hearts, and that the world shall bow their heads to it, as our loves do. Or if this again will trouble his spirit, tell him we shall never cease to remember and love him, and that the most sceptical of us hath faith enough in the high things that nature put into our heads to think that all who are of one accord in mind and heart are journeying to one and the same place, and shall unite somehow or other again, face to face, mutually conscious, mutually delighted. Tell him he is only before us on the road, as he was in everything else ; or, whether you tell him the latter or no, tell him the former, and add that we shall never forget he was so, and that we are coming after him. The tears are again in my eyes, and I must not afford to shed them. The next letter I write shall be more to yourself, and a little more refreshing to your spirits, which we are very sensible must have been greatly taxed. But whether our friend dies or not, it will not be among the least lofty of our recollections by-and-by, that you helped to smooth the sick-bed of so fine a being.

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[1] Keats was already in his grave when this affecting letter reached Rome from his old home at Hampstead. He had died on February 23, 1821.

God bless you, dear Severn,
Your sincere friend,
LEIGH HUNT.

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### LEIGH HUNT TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[*A Quarrel in defence of Shelley*]

Hampstead, *April* 20, (1821).

I THINK, Mr. Hazlitt, you might have found a better time, and place too, for assaulting me and my friends in this bitter manner. A criticism on *Table Talk* was to appear in next Sunday's *Examiner*, but I have thought it best, upon the whole, not to let it appear, for I must have added a quarrelsome note to it ; and the sight of acquaintances and brother-reformers cutting and carbonadoing one another in public is, I conceive, no advancement to the cause of liberal opinion, however you may think they injure it in other respects. In God's name, why could you not tell Mr. Shelley in a pleasant manner of what you dislike in him ? If it is not mere spleen, you make a gross mistake in thinking that he is not open to advice, or so wilfully in love with himself and his opinions. His spirit is worthy of his great talents. Besides, do you think that nobody has thought or suffered, or come to conclusions through thought or suffering, but yourself? You are fond of talking against vanity: but do you think that people will see no vanity in that very fondness—in your being so intolerant with everybody's ideas of improvement but your own, and in resenting so fiercely the possession of a trifling quality or so which you do not happen to number among your own? I have been flattered by your praises: I have been (I do not care what you make of the acknowledgement) instructed, and I thought bettered, by your objections; but it is one thing to be dealt candidly with or rallied, and another to have the whole alleged nature of one's self and a dear friend torn out and thrown in one's face, as if we had not a common humanity with yourself. Is it possible that a misconception of anything private can transport you into these—what shall I call them?—extravagances of stomach? or that a few paltry fellows in Murray's or Blackwood's interest can worry you into such outrageous efforts to prove you have no vanities in common with those whom you are acquainted with? At all events, I am sure that this sulky, dog-in-the-manger philosophy, which will have neither one thing nor t'other, neither alteration nor want of it, marriage or no marriage, egotism nor no egotism, hope nor despair, can do no sort of good to anybody. But I have faith enough in your disinterestedness and suffering to tell you so privately instead of publicly; and you might have paid as decent a compliment to a man half killed with his thoughts for others if you had done as much for me, instead of making my faults stand for my whole character, and inventing those idle things about '. . . . .' and hints to emperors. If you wished to quarrel with me you should have done so at once, instead of inviting me to your house, coming to mine, and in the meanwhile getting ready the proof-sheets of such a book as this,—preparing and receiving specimens of the dagger which was to strike at a sick head and heart, and others whom it loved. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of even in your philosophy; and if you had a little more imagination, the very 'cruelty' of your stomach would carry you beyond itself and inform you so. If you did not wish to quarrel with or to cut me, how do you think that friends can eternally live upon their good behaviour in this way, and be cordial and comfortable, or whatever else you *choose* they should be—for it is difficult to find out—on pain of being drawn and quartered in your paragraphs? I wish you well.

LEIGH HUNT.

PS.—Since writing this letter, which I brought to town with me to send you, I have heard that you have expressed regret at the attack upon myself. If so, I can only say that I am additionally sorry at being obliged to send it; but I should have written to you, had you attacked my friends only in that manner. I am told also, that you are angry with me for not always being punctual with you in engagements of visiting. I think I have always apologized and explained when I have not been so; but if not, surely a trifle of this kind, arising out of anything but a sense of my being necessary to others, ought not to make you tear one to pieces in this way for the sport of our mutual enemies; and I must say, that since I got any notion of your being annoyed by such things, I have come to see you sometimes when I have been ready to drop in the streets with illness and anguish.

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## LEIGH HUNT TO PERCY BYSSHE AND MARY SHELLEY

[*Preparing to join them in Italy*]

Hampstead, *September* 21, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIENDS,—

We are coming; I feel the autumn so differently from the summer, and the accounts of the cheapness of living and education at Pisa are so inviting, that what with your kind persuasions, the proposal of Lord Byron, and last, be sure not least, the hope of seeing you again and trying to get my health back in your society, my brother as well as myself think I had better go. We hope to set off in a month from the date of this letter, not liking to delay our preparations till we hear from you again, on account of the approach of winter; so about October 21 we shall all set off, myself, Marianne, and the six children. With regard to the proposed publication of Lord B., about which you talk so modestly, he has it in his power, I believe, to set up not only myself and family in our finances again, but one of the best-hearted men in the world, my brother and his. I allude, of course, to the work in which he proposes me to join him. I feel with you, quite, on the other point, as I always have. I agree to his proposal with the less scruple, because I have had a good deal of experience in periodical writing, and know what the getting up of the *machine* requires, as well as the soul of it. You see I am not so modest as you are by a great deal, and do not mean to let you be so either. What ? Are there not three of us ? And ought we not to have as much strength and variety as possible ? We will divide the world between us, like the Triumvirate, and you shall be the sleeping partner, if you will ; only it shall be with a Cleopatra, and your dreams shall be worth the giving of Kingdoms. The Gisbornes tell me of a fine new novel of Marina's,[1] which I long to see. There is something extremely interesting in having a lady's novel in sheets, and not the less so, because there is masculine work as well as feminine ; for a novel of hers will have plenty of both, I know. You may imagine how we talked with the Gisbornes, of Italy. It was nothing but a catechism about beef, salad, oil, and education, all day long. But the money, Shelley ? You tell me you have secured it, and I need not say (sorry as I am for the 'need not,' knowing your necessities to be only less than mine), that I cannot do without your kindness in this respect. I fear, however, by what you say of Horace S. that your security is stronger in love and faith than matter of fact ; but I must not wait to hear from you again, if I can help it. I shall do my best, with my brother's help, to raise the money, and have an impudent certainty that you will help me out with the return of it. God bless you. I could write sheets, in spite of a head burning already with writing, but I must not do it, especially as I mean to get up a good deal of matter during the month to furnish articles for the paper during the journey. The journey too ! What is that to be, by land or water ? We have not settled yet, but we are making all sorts of inquiries, and talking of nothing else but Italy, Italy, Italy : where we soon hope to grasp the hands of the best friends in the world.

Your affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

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[1] Mr. Shelley's *Valperga*.

### LEIGH HUNT TO ELIZABETH KENT (HIS SISTER-IN-LAW)

[*The Death of Shelley*]

Pisa, *July* 20, 1822.

DEAREST BESSY,—

Your sister is as well as she can be expected to be: so am I, and the children; all which I tell you at once, at the head of my letter, lest the frightful note I am compelled to strike up, should affect you still more than it must. Good God, how shall I say it? My beloved friend Shelley,—my dear, my divine friend, the best of friends and men, he is no more. I know not how to proceed for anguish; but you need not be under any alarm for me. Thank Heaven! the sorrows I have gone through enable me to bear this; and we all endeavour to bear it as well as possible for each other's sakes, which is what he, the noble-minded being, would have wished. Would to God I could see him—his spirit—sitting this moment by the table. I think it would no more frighten me than the sight of my baby,—whom I kiss and wonder why he has not gone with him.

He was returning to Lerici by sea with his friend Captain Williams, who is said also to have been a most amiable man, and appeared so. It was on the 8th. A storm arose; and it is supposed the boat must have foundered not far from home. The bodies were thrown up some days after. Dear S. had retained a book in his pocket, which he told me he would not part with till he saw me again,—Keats's last publication. He borrowed it to read as he went. It will be buried with him: that is to say, it is so already, on the sea shore; but if he is taken up to be buried elsewhere, it shall go with him. Mr. Williams, too, left a wife, who was passionately fond of him. Conceive the terrible state in which the women are;—but none of us, I trust, have known Shelley for nothing: the Williamses doted on him; and—I know not what to say; but rely upon me, I fear nothing. I am cooler in general than while writing this, and besides the patience to which I have been accustomed, I must work hard for our new publication, which will still go on. Lord B. is very kind.

Pray, show or send Hogg this letter for him to see; and tell him I would have written him a separate one, but at present I am sure he will spare it me. I had already begun to enliven

Shelley's hours with accounts for his pleasant sayings, and hoped to—but, good God, how are one's most confident expectations cut short! I embrace him, as my friend, and Shelley's.

Adieu, dearest Bessy, you will not wonder that I do not make this letter an answer to your last, which I was delighted to receive. It showed me you were well, and Henry out of danger.

Pray send the following to my brother for the *Examiner*.

Your ever most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

## LEIGH HUNT TO MARY SHELLEY

### [*Some Words of Comfort*]

Pisa, *July* 20, 1822.

DEAREST MARY,—

I trust you will have set out on your return from that dismal place, before you receive this. You will also have seen Trelawny. God bless you, and enable us all to be a support for one another. Let us do our best, if it is only for that purpose. It is easier for me to say that I will do it, than for you; but whatever happens, this I can safely say, that I belong to those whom Shelley loved, and that all which it is possible for me to do for them, now and ever, is theirs. I will grieve with them, endure with them, and, if it be necessary, work for them while I have life.—Your most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Marianne sends you a thousand loves, and longs, with myself, to try whether we can say or do one thing that can enable you and Mrs. Williams to bear up a little better. But we rely on your great strength of mind.

## LEIGH HUNT TO——

### [*His Claims to a Pension*] [1]

Wimbledon, *August* 11 and 12, 1846.

I FEEL I made a great confusion of my *portion* of the legal expenses incurred by the *Examiner*, with the *whole* of them.

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[1] He was awarded a pension of £200 in the following year.

That portion only amounted to £750, the whole being £1,500. Of this £750 out of my pocket (which was quite enough), £250 went to pay for expenses (counsel, etc.) attendant on the failure of two Government prosecutions,—one for saying (*totidem verbis*) that 'of all monarchs since the Revolution, the successor of George the Third would have the finest opportunity of becoming nobly popular; (think, nowadays, of being prosecuted for *that!*) and the other for copying from the *Stamford News* the paragraph against military flogging, alluded to the other day in the *Daily News*. (Think, now, this moment, of being prosecuted for *that!*) The £500 fine and two years' imprisonment was for ludicrously contrasting the *Morning Post's* picture of the Regent as an 'Adonis,' etc., with the old and real fat state of the case, and for adding that His Royal Highness had lived for 'upwards of half a century without doing anything to deserve the admiration of his contemporaries or the gratitude of posterity'. Words to that effect and I believe better,—but I do not quite remember them. They might be easily ascertained by reference to Peel's Coffee-house, and the words of the *Post*, too.

Besides the fine, my imprisonment cost me several hundred pounds (I can't exactly say how many) in monstrous *douceurs* to the gaoler for *liberty to walk in his garden*, for help towards getting me permission to fit up rooms in the sick hospital, and for fitting up said rooms, or rather converting them from sorts of washhouses, hitherto uninhabited and unfloored, into comfortable apartments,—which I did too expensively,—at least, as far as papering the sitting-room with a trellis of roses went, and having my ceiling painted to imitate an out-of-door sky. No notice, however, could be taken, I suppose, of any of this portion of the expenses, governments having nothing to do with the secret corruptions of gaolers or the pastorals of incarcerated poets: otherwise the prosecutions cost me altogether a good bit beyond a thousand pounds.

But perhaps it might be mentioned that I went to prison from all but a sick bed, having been just ordered by the physician to *go to the seaside*, and *ride* for the benefit of my health (pleasing dramatic contrast to the verdict!). I also declined, as I told you, to try avoiding the imprisonment by the help of Perry's offer of the famous secret 'Book'; and I further declined (as I think I also told you) to avail myself of an offer on the part of a royal agent (made, of course, in the guarded, though obvious manner in which such offers are conveyed) to drop the prosecution, provided we would agree to drop all future hostile mention of the Regent. But of this, too, governments could not be expected to take notice—perhaps would regard it as an addition to the offence. This, however, I must add, that the whole attack on the Regent was owing, not merely to the nonsense of the *Post*, but to his violation of those promises of conceding the Catholic claims, to which his princely word stood pledged. The subject of the article was 'Dinner on St. Patrick's day'. All the Whig world was indignant at that violation; so were the Irish, of course, *vehemently*; and it was on the spur of this publicly indignant movement that I wrote what I did,—as angrily and as much in earnest in the serious part of what I said as I was derisive in the rest. I did not care for my factious object, nor was I what is called anti-monarchical. I didn't know Cobbett, or Henry Hunt, or any demagogue, *even by sight*, except Sir Francis Burdett, and him by sight alone. Nor did I ever see, or speak a word with them, afterwards. I knew nothing, in fact, of politics themselves, except in some of those large, and, as it appeared to me, obvious phases, which, at all events, *have since become obvious to most people*, and in fighting for which (if a man can be said to fight for a 'phase'!) I suffered all that Tories could inflict upon me,—by expenses in law and calumnies in literature;—reform, Catholic claims, free trade, abolition of flogging, right of free speech, as opposed by attorneys-general. I was, in fact, all the while nothing but a poetic student, appearing in politics once a week, but given up entirely to letters almost all the rest of it, and loving nothing so much as a book and a walk in the fields. I was precisely the sort of person, in these respects, which I am at this moment. As to George the Fourth, I aided, years afterwards, in publicly wishing him well—'Years having brought the philsosphic mind'. I believe I even expressed regret at not giving him the excuse due to all human beings (the passage, I take it, is in the book which Colburn called *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*); *and when I consider that Moore had been pensioned, not only in spite of all his libels on him, but perhaps by very reason of their Whig partizanship, I should* *think it hard to be refused a pension purely because I openly suffered for what I had earnestly said.* I knew George the Fourth's physician, Sir William Knighton, who had been mine before I was imprisoned (it was not he who was the loyal agent alluded to); and, if my memory does not deceive me, Sir William told me that George had been gratified by the book above mentioned. Perhaps he had found out, by Sir William's help, that I was not an ill-natured man, or one who could not outlive what was mistaken in himself or resentful in others. As to my opinions about Governments, the bad conduct of the Allies, and of Napoleon, and the old Bourbons, certainly made them waver as to which might be ultimately best, monarchy or republican; but they ended in favour of their predilections; and no man, for a long while, has been less a republican than myself, monarchies and courts appearing to me salutary for the good and graces of mankind, and Americanisms anything but either. But, nobody, I conceive, that knew my writings, or heard of me truly from others, ever took me for a republican. William the Fourth saw or heard nothing of me to hinder his letting Lord Melbourne give me £200 out of the Royal Fund. Queen Victoria gave me another, through the same kind friend. She also went twice to see my play; and everybody knows how I praise and love her. *I do not think, therefore, in reference to the pension, that the public would care twopence about George the Fourth one way or the other; or that if any remembered that case at all, they would connect the pension in the least with anything about him, but attribute it solely to the Queen's and Minister's goodness, and the wants of a sincere and not undeserving man of letters, distinguished for his loyal attachment.* I certainly think the £500 fine ought not to have been taken out of my pocket, or the other two £250 either; and I think also, that a liberal Whig minister might reasonably and *privately* think some compensation on those accounts due to me. *I have been fighting his own fight from first to last, and helping to prepare matters for his triumph.* But still the above, in my opinion, is what the public would think of the matter, *and my friends of the press could lay it entirely to the literary account.*

With regard to those wants, and to my annuity of £120, from Sir Percy Shelley, the case is this: I have never been able to get in advance of them, partly from constant fluctuations of health, more from irregularities of employment. You know how I lost my proprietorship of the *Examiner*, in consequence of its decay during Tory ascendancy, and the results of the bankruptcy of my brother's son. We all lost it. The booksellers bowed me out of their shops in those days, as much as they are now willing to bow me in. I was too sincere in my writings, took too much pains with them, and (let me add) was a little too refined and *few-addressing* in my taste, to get much way with editors of magazines. My health was so bad for years, that I could not write more than half an hour or so at a time, in consequence of what is called a tendency of blood to the head. It is far better (in this respect) now, but still it is more subject to fluctuation than my animal spirits would lead people to imagine ; and at sixty-two years of age it is not likely to get very strong. I never make the worst of it, or of any other suffering, as I am sure you must have perceived ; but this will do me no harm with generous men. My pecuniary difficulties, acquainted with them as you are, are often worse than you have any conception of, small as are my responsibilities in amount ; and circumstances, just now, have aggravated them. I came, you know, to this place on account of a cough of some years' growth, which, the doctor said, 'if I did not conquer it, would conquer me'. Inability to pay up the expenses which the place has caused me (in combination with a house on hand) has forced me to stay ever since, to the advantage of my health, no doubt, but so much to the disadvantage of my purse, that I have been just now forced to apply to my friend, Sir Percy, for leave to draw a year's advance on the annuity, and am waiting his answer. (I wrote yesterday, compelled by my alarms.) I dare say he will oblige me, but you may imagine how anxious I shall be respecting the months to come. That annuity is given to myself, and to Mrs. Hunt after me ! but it is not in any way secured or guaranteed. I receive it from quarter to quarter, by drawing for the quarter each time on the banker, in a form which places it to Sir Percy's account.

Pray do not think ill of the hasty slovenliness of this writing, nor measure it by one bit of the sense I entertain of your deliberate zeal, my dear F., and great kindness. But I know you will not. You would hasten to reassure me in your heartiest and most deprecating manner, were I speaking *vivâ voce*. I have been occupied with other writings before I began; and when my head begins to feel what I am about, my handwriting becomes small and rascally. I am busy with *Wit and Humour* proofs; and Mrs. Hunt has written 140 pages of the new selection I spoke of, which I long to talk to you more about; because the selection, modestly speaking, is an admirable selection, and a special private delight of mine, and I hope it will be to all gentle people. Ever, my dear friend, most affectionately yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

## JOHN KEATS

### 1795–1821

IN the correspondence of Keats with his intimate friends, with Fanny Brawne, with his brothers, and sister, and sister-in-law, are to be found the best character portraits that we have of the poet—letters, which like those of Shelley, often rival his verse in beauty of thought, and depth of feeling. His first volume of *Poems* had been published—with Shelley's help—about six months before he wrote the first of the accompanying series, but it had proved a financial failure. 'Beyond the circle of ardent friends and admirers, which comprised most of the most remarkable minds of the period', writes Lord Houghton, 'it had hardly a purchaser; and the contrast between the admiration he had, perhaps in excess, enjoyed among his immediate acquaintance, and the entire apathy of mankind without, must have been a hard lesson to his sensitive spirit.' Keats was then twenty-two, and had just abandoned surgery, to which he had been apprenticed by his guardian, for the more congenial paths of literature. 'I cannot exist without Poetry—without eternal Poetry', he writes to his friend John Hamilton Reynolds shortly after the publication of his first volume, and on the eve of beginning *Endymion*, during his visit to the Isle of Wight. His correspondence shows how anxious he was that his originality should not be influenced by the assistance or counsel of any of the literary friends with whom he was surrounded. 'I refused', he writes to Bailey, 'to visit Shelley that I might have my own unfettered scope'. Shelley had invited him to Great Marlowe, but though he declined this invitation, he had spent September and the beginning of October with Bailey at Oxford, continuing *Endymion* upon the Isis. Bailey, who was then an undergraduate of Magdalen Hall, became Archdeacon of Colombo. 'Your sincere friend and brother', Keats signs himself in a letter to him. 'Brothers they were in affection and thought', adds Lord Houghton—'brothers also in destiny. Mr. Bailey died soon after Keats'. *Endymion* was finished at Burford Bridge in November, and appeared in the following May, the poet meantime going to look after his invalid brother

Tom, at Teignmouth, whence the next two eloquent letters were written. The fourth letter, sent to Bailey during Keats's walking tour with Armitage Brown, in the English lakes and Scotland, is a valuable addition, as Lord Houghton remarks, 'to our knowledge of the most wonderful of the works of Nature—a poet's heart. For the time was at hand, when one intense affection was about to absorb his entire being, and to hasten, by its very violence, the calamitous extinction against which it struggled in vain'. Keats had to hurry home from the walking tour to nurse his beloved brother Tom, now dying of consumption. The end, which came three months later, was a grievous blow to the poet, for he was a devoted brother. Henceforth, though he still had *Hyperion* to write, as well as the other treasures of the 1820 volume,—*Lamia and other Poems*—the shadows grew deeper and deeper. The consuming passion for Fanny Brawne was more than his frail body and sorely charged heart could bear; the cruel attacks of the critics hurt him seriously for the first time; poverty and the disease which had carried off his brother Tom were fast laying hold of him. In the month after *Lamia and other Poems* appeared he sailed for Italy—'as a soldier marches against a battery'—in the forlorn hope of saving his life there. He was accompanied by his faithful friend, Joseph Severn, who had won the gold medal of the Royal Academy, and was about to start for Rome. Here in the following February, 'with his hand clasped on a white cornelian, one of the tokens Fanny Brawne had given him at starting', he died, in Severn's arms, with a 'Thank God it has come' on his lips.

## John Keats to Benjamin Bailey

### [*His Hopes of 'Endymion'*]

*October* 8, 1817.

My dear Bailey,—

I refused to visit Shelley, that I might have my own unfettered scope. . . . As to what you say about my being a Poet, I can return no answer but by saying that the high idea I have of poetical fame makes me think I see it towering too high above me. At any rate I have no right to talk until *Endymion* is finished. It will be a test, a trial of my powers of imagination, and chiefly of my invention,—which is a rare thing indeed—by which I must make 4,000 lines of one bare circumstance and fill them with poetry. And when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the Temple of Fame,—it makes me say—'God forbid that I should be without such a task!' I have heard Hunt say, and I may be asked, '*Why endeavour after a long poem?*' To which I should answer, 'Do not the lovers of poetry like to have a little region to wander in, where they may pick and choose, and in which the images are so numerous that many are forgotten and found new in a second reading,—which may be food for a week's stroll in the summer ?' not that they like this better than what they can read through before Mrs. Williams comes downstairs—a morning's work at most.

Besides, a long poem is a test of invention, which I take to be the polar star of poetry, as Fancy is the sails, and Imagination the rudder. Did our great poets ever write short pieces ? I mean, in the shape of Tales. This same invention seems indeed of late years to have been forgotten in a partial excellence. But enough of this—I put on no laurels till I have finished *Endymion*, and I hope Apollo is not enraged at my having made mockery of him at Hunt's. . . . The little mercury I have taken has corrected the poison and improved my health—though I feel from my employment that I shall never again be secure in robustness. Would that you were as well as

Your sincere Friend and Brother,
JOHN KEATS.

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## JOHN KEATS TO J. H. REYNOLDS

['*I hate a Mawkish Popularity*']

Teignmouth, *April* 9, 1818.

MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—

Since you all agree that the thing is bad, it must be so—though I am not aware that there is anything like Hunt in it (and if there is, it is my natural way, and I have something in common with Hunt). Look over it again, and examine into the motives, the seeds, from which every one sentence sprang.

I have not the slightest feeling of humility towards the public, or to anything in existence but the Eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of great Men. When I am writing for myself, for the mere sake of the moment's enjoyment, perhaps nature has its course with me ; but a Preface is written to the public—a thing I cannot help looking upon as an enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of hostility. If I write a Preface in a supple or subdued style, it will not be in character with me as a public speaker.

I would be subdued before my friends, and thank them for subduing me ; but among multitudes of men I have no feel of stooping ; I hate the idea of humility to them.

I never wrote one single line of poetry with the least shadow of public thought.

Forgive me for vexing you, and making a Trojan horse of such a trifle, both with respect to the matter in question, and myself ; but it eases me to tell you : I could not live without the love of my friends ; I would jump down Ætna for any great public good, but I hate a mawkish popularity. I cannot be subdued before them. My glory would be to daunt and dazzle the thousand jabberers about pictures and books. I see swarms of porcupines with their quills erect 'like lime-twigs set to catch my winged book', and I would fright them away with a touch. You will say my Preface is not much of a touch. It would have been too insulting 'to begin from Jove', and I could not (set) a golden head upon a thing of clay. If there is any fault in the Preface, it is not affection, but an undersong of disrespect to the public. If I write another Preface, it must be done without a thought of those people. I will think about it. If it should not reach you in four or five days, tell Taylor to publish it without a Preface, and let the Dedication simply stand—'Inscribed to the Memory of Thomas Chatterton'.

I had resolved last night to write to you this morning—I wish it had been about something else—something to greet you towards the close of your long illness. I have had one or two intimations of your going to Hampstead for a space ; and I regret to see your confounded rheumatism keeps you in Little Britain, where I am sure the air is too confined.

Devonshire continues rainy. As the drops beat against my window, they give me the same sensation as a quart of cold water offered to revive a half-drowned devil—no feel of the clouds dropping fatness ; but as if the roots of the earth were rotten, cold, and drenched. I have not been able to go to Kent's (cave ?) at Babbicomb ; however, on one very beautiful day I had a fine clamber over the rocks all along as far as that place.

I shall be in town in about ten days. We go by way of Bath on purpose to call on Bailey. I hope soon to be writing to you about the things of the North, purposing to wayfare all over those parts. I have settled my accoutrements in my own mind, and will go to gorge wonders. However, we'll have some days together before I set out.

I have many reasons for going wonder-ways; to make my winter chair free from spleen; to enlarge my vision; to escape disquisitions on poetry, and Kingston—criticism; to promote digestion and economize shoe-leather. I'll have leather buttons and belt; and, if Brown holds his mind, 'over the hills we go'. If my books will help me to it, then will I take all Europe in turn, and see the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them. Tom is getting better; he hopes you may not meet him at the top of the hill. My love to your nurse.

I am ever
Your affectionate Friend,
JOHN KEATS.

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## JOHN KEATS TO J. H. REYNOLDS [1]

[*Human Life 'a large Mansion of many Apartments'*]

Teignmouth, *May* 3, 1818.

MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—

What I complain of is, that I have been in so uneasy a state of mind as not to be fit to write to an invalid. I cannot write to any length under a disguised feeling. I should have loaded you with an addition of gloom, which I am sure you do not want. I am now, thank God, in a humour to give you a good groat's worth; for Tom, after a night without a wink of sleep, and over-burdened with fever, has got up, after a refreshing day-sleep, and is better than he has been for a long time. And you, I trust, have been again round the Common without any effect but refreshment. As to the matter, I hope I can say, with Sir Andrew, 'I have matter enough in my head,' in your favour. And now, in the second place, for I reckon that I have finished my Imprimis, I am glad you blow up the weather. All through your letter there is a leaning towards a climate-curse; and you know what a delicate satisfaction there is in having a vexation anathematized.

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[1] John Hamilton Reynolds, one of the friends he first met at Leigh Hunt's house in Hampstead. Reynolds published several volumes of verse, and is best remembered for his *Romance of Youth*, and some sonnets.

One would think that there has been growing up, for these last four thousand years, a grandchild scion of the old forbidden tree, and that some modern Eve had just violated it; and that there was come, with double charge 'Notus and Afer (Auster ?) black with thunderous clouds from Serraliona'. Tom wants to be in town: we will have some such day upon the heath like that of last summer—and why not with the same book? or what do you say to a black-letter Chaucer, printed in 1596? Aye, I have got one, huzza! I shall have it bound in Gothique—a nice sombre binding; it will go a little way to unmodernize. And, also, I see no reason, because I have been away this last month, why I should not have a peep at your Spenserian—notwithstanding you speak of your office, in my thought, a little too early; for I do not see why a mind like yours is not capable of harbouring and digesting the whole mystery of Law[1] as easily as Parson Hugh does pippins, which did not hinder him from his poetic canary. Were I to study Physic, or rather Medicine again, I feel it would not make the least difference in my poetry; when the mind is in its infancy a bias is in reality a bias, but when we have acquired more strength, a bias becomes no bias. Every department of knowledge we see excellent and calculated towards a great whole. I am so convinced of this that I am glad at not having given away my medical books, which I shall again look over, to keep alive the little I know thitherwards; and moreover intend, through you and Rice,[2] to become a sort of pip-civilian. An extensive knowledge is needful to thinking poeple; it takes away the heat and fever, and helps, by widening speculation, to ease the burden of the Mystery, a thing which I begin to understand a little, and which weighed upon you in the most gloomy and true sentence in your letters. The difference of high sensations, with and without knowledge, appears to me this: in the latter case we are continually falling ten thousand fathoms deep, and being blown up again, without wings, and with all (the) horror of a bare-shouldered creature; in the former case, our shoulders are fledged, and we go through the same air and space without fear. This is running one's rigs on the score of abstracted benefit; when we come to human life and the affections, it is impossble to know how a parallel of breast and head can be drawn (you will forgive me for thus privately treading out (of) my depth, and take it for treading as schoolboys tread the water); it is impossible to know how far knowledge will console us for the death of a friend, and the 'ills that flesh is heir to'. With respect to the affections and poetry, you must know by sympathy my thoughts that way, and I dare say these few lines will be but a ratification. I wrote them on May-day, and intend to finish the ode all in good time.

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[1] Reynolds entered a solicitor's office this year.

[2] James Rice, another young solicitor and a bosom friend of Reynolds.

Mother of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!
    May I sing to thee
As thou hast hymned on the shores of Baiæ ?
    Or may I woo thee
In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
By bard who died content on pleasant sward,
Leaving great verse unto a little clan?
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span
    Of heaven and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song should die away
    Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day.

You may perhaps be anxious to know for fact to what sentence in your letter I allude. You say, 'I fear there is little chance of anything else in this life'. You seem by that to have been going through, with a more painful and acute zest, the same labyrinth that I have—I have come to the same conclusion thus far. My branchings out therefrom have been numerous: one of them is the consideration of Wordsworth's genius, and as a help, in the manner of gold being meridian line of worldly wealth, how he differs from Milton. And here I have nothing but surmises, from an uncertainty whether Milton's apparently less anxiety for humanity proceeds from his seeing farther or not than Wordsworth, and whether Wordsworth has, in truth, epic passion, and martyrs himself to the human heart, the main region of his song. In regard to his genius alone, we find what he says true, as far as we have experienced, and we can judge no further but by larger experience; for axioms in philosophy are not axioms till they have been proved upon our pulses. We read fine things, but never feel them to the full until we have gone (over) the same steps as the author. I know this is not plain ; you will know exactly my meaning when I say that now I shall relish *Hamlet* more than I ever have done or better. You are sensible no man can set down venery as a bestial or joyless thing until he is sick of it, and therefore all philosophizing on it would be mere wording. Until we are sick, we understand not ; in fine, as Byron says, ' knowledge is sorrow ' ; and I go on to say that ' Sorrow is wisdom ' ; and further, for aught we can know for certainty, ' Wisdom is folly '. So you see how I have run away from Wordsworth and Milton, and shall still run away from what was in my head to observe, that some kind of letters are good squares, others handsome ovals, others orbicular, others spheroid—and why should there not be another species with two rough edges, like a rat trap ? I hope you will find all my long letters of that species, and all will be well ; for by merely touching the spring delicately and ethereally, the rough-edged will fly immediately into a proper compactness ; and thus you may make a good wholesome loaf, with your own leaven in it, of my fragments. If you cannot find this sad rat-trap sufficiently tractable, alas ! for me, it being an impossibility in grain for my ink to stain otherwise. If I scribble long letters, I must play my vagaries. I must be too heavy, or too light, for whole pages. I must be quaint, and free of tropes and figures ; I must play my draughts as I please, and for my advantage and your erudition, crown a white with a black, or a black with a white, and move into black or white, far and near as I please ; I must go from Hazlitt to Patmore, and make Wordsworth and Coleman play at leap-frog, or keep one of them down a whole half-holiday at fly-the-garter ; ' from Gray to Gay, from Little to Shakespeare '. I shall resume after dinner.

* * * * *

This crossing a letter is not without its associations—for chequer work leads us naturally to a milkmaid, a milkmaid to Hogarth, Hogarth to Shakespeare ; Shakespeare to Hazlitt, Hazlitt back to Shakespeare ; and thus by merely pulling an apron-string we set a pretty peal of chimes at work. Let them chime on, while, with your patience, I will return to Wordsworth, whether or no he has an extended vision or a circumscribed grandeur — whether he is an eagle in his nest or on the wing; and, to be more explicit, and to show you how tall I stand by the giant, I will put down a simile of human life as far as I now perceive it; that is, to the point to which I say we both have arrived at. Well, I compare human life to a large mansion of many apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first we step into we call the Infant, or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think. We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it, but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awaking of the thinking principle within us. We no sooner get into the second chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere.

We see nothing but pleasant wonders and think of delaying there for ever in delight. However, among the effects this breathing is father of, is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of man, of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of misery and heart-break, pain, sickness, and oppression; whereby this Chamber of Maiden-thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil; we are in a mist; we are in that state, we feel the 'Burden of the Mystery'. To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive, when he wrote *Tintern Abbey*, and it seems to me that his genius is explorative of those dark passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them. He is a genius and superior (to) us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries and shed a light in them. Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton, though I think it has depended more upon the general and gregarious advance of intellect than individual greatness of mind. From the *Paradise Lost*, and the other works of Milton, I hope it is not too presuming, even between ourselves, to say that his philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years. In his time, Englishmen were just emancipated from a great superstition, and men had got hold of certain points and resting-places in reasoning which were too nearly born to be doubted, and too much opposed by the rest of Europe, not to be thought ethereal and authentically divine. Who could gainsay his ideas on virtue, vice, and chastity, in *Comus*, just at the time of the dismissal of a hundred social disgraces ? Who would not rest satisfied with his hintings at good and evil in the *Paradise Lost*, when just free from the Inquisition and burning in Smithfield ? The Reformation produced such immediate and great benefits, that Protestantism was considered under the immediate eye of Heaven, and its own remaining dogmas and superstitions then, as it were, regenerated, constituted those resting-places and seeming sure points of reasoning. From that I have mentioned, Milton, whatever he may have thought in the sequel, appears to have been content with these by his writings. He did not think with the human heart as Wordsworth has done ; yet Milton, as a philosopher, had surely as great powers as Wordsworth. What is then to be inferred ? O ! many things : it proves there is really a grand march of intellect ; it proves that a mighty Providence subdues the mightiest minds to the service of the thing being, whether it be in human knowledge or religion.

I have often pitied a tutor who has to hear 'Nom. Musa' so often dinn'd into his ears : I hope you may not have the same pain in this scribbling — I may have read these things before, but I never had even a thus dim perception of them ; and, moreover, I like to say my lesson to one who will endure my tediousness, for my own sake.

After all there is something real in the world. Moore's present to Hazlitt is real. I like that Moore, and am glad I saw him at the Theatre just before I left town. Tom has spit a little blood this afternoon, and that is rather a damper—but I know—the truth is, there is something real in the world. Your third Chamber of Life shall be a lucky and a gentle one, stored with the wine of Love and the bread of Friendship.

When you see George,[1] if he should not have received a letter from me, tell him he will find one at home most likely. Tell Bailey I hope soon to see him. Remember me to all.

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[1] The poet's younger brother. George had been looking after the youngest brother Tom at Teignmouth before John went to relieve him, and in the following June, having meantime married, sailed with his bride for America. The poet returned with Tom to Well Walk, Hampstead, and five weeks later, when George left for America, started with Armitage Brown for their tour in the English lake district and Scotland.

The leaves have been out here for many a day. I have written to George for the first stanzas of my *Isabel.* I shall have them soon, and will copy the whole out for you.

Your affectionate friend,
JOHN KEATS.

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### JOHN KEATS TO J. H. REYNOLDS

[*A Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Burns*]

Maybole, *July* 11, 1818.

MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—

I'll not run over the ground we have passed; that would be nearly as bad as telling a dream—unless, perhaps, I do it in the manner of the Laputan printing press; that is, I put down mountains, rivers, lakes, dells, glens, rocks, with beautiful, enchanting, gothic, picturesque, fine; delightful, enchanting, grand, sublime—a few blisters, etc.—and now you have our journey thus far; where I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns' cottage very fast. We have made continual inquiries from the time we left his tomb at Dumfries. His name, of course, is known all about; his great reputation among the plodding people is, 'that he wrote a good many sensible things'. One of the pleasantest ways of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns: we need not think of his misery—that is all gone, bad luck to it! I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure, as I do on my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey. I shall fill this sheet for you in the Bardie's country, going no farther than this, till I get to the town of Ayr, which will be a nine miles' walk to tea.

We were talking on different and indifferent things, when, on a sudden, we turned a corner upon the immediate country of Ayr. The sight was as rich as possible. I had no conception that the native place of Burns was so beautiful; the idea I had was more desolate: his *Rigs of Barley* seemed always to me but a few strips of green on a cold hill—Oh, prejudice!—It was as rich as Devon. I endeavoured to drink in the prospect, that I might spin it out to you, as the silk-worms make silk from mulberry leaves. I cannot recollect it. Besides all the beauty, there were the mountains of Annan Isle, black and huge over the sea. We came down upon everything suddenly ; there were in our way the 'bonny Doon', with the brig that Tam o' Shanter crossed, Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage, and then the Brigs of Ayr. First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon, surrounded by every phantasy of green in tree, meadow, and hill ; the stream of the Doon, as a farmer told us, is covered with trees 'from head to foot'. You know those beautiful heaths, so fresh against the weather of a summer's evening ; there was one stretching along behind the trees.

I wish I knew always the humour my friends would be in at opening a letter of mine, to suit it to them as nearly as possible. I could always find an egg-shell for melancholy, and, as for merriment, a witty humour will turn anything to account. My head is sometimes in such a whirl in considering the million likings and antipathies of our moments, that I can get into no settled strain in my letters. My wig ! Burns and sentimentality coming across you and Frank Floodgate in the office. Oh, Scenery, that thou shouldst be crushed between two puns ! As for them, I venture the rascalliest in the Scotch region. I hope Brown does not put them in his journal ; if he does, I must sit on the cutty-stool all next winter. We went to Kirk Alloway. 'A prophet is no prophet in his own country'. We went to the Cottage and took some whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the roof ; they are so bad I cannot transcribe them. The man at the cottage was a great bore with his anecdotes. I hate the rascal. His life consists in fuzy, fuzzy, fuzziest. He drinks glasses five for the quarter, and twelve for the hour ; he is a mahogany-faced old jackass who knew Burns : he ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself 'a curious old bitch', but he is a flat old dog. I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him. Oh, the flummery of a birth-place ! Cant ! Cant ! Cant ! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache ! Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest—this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity : the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet. My dear Reynolds, I cannot write about scenery and visitings. Fancy is indeed less than present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance. You would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos. You would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself. One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for a whole year in his native country. His misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one's quill; I tried to forget it—to drink toddy without any care—to write a merry sonnet—it won't do—he talked, he drank with blackguards; he was miserable. We can see horribly clear, in the works of such a man, his whole life, as if we were God's spies. What were his addresses to Jean in the after part of his life? I should not speak so to you.—Yet, why not? You are not in the same case—you are in the right path—and you shall not be deceived. I have spoken to you against marriage, but it was general. The prospect in those matters has been to me so blank, that I have not been unwilling to die. I would not now, for I have inducements to life—I must see my little nephews in America, and I must see you marry your lovely wife. My sensations are sometimes deadened for weeks together—but, believe me, I have more than once yearned for the time of your happiness to come, as much as I could for myself after the lips of Juliet. From the tenor of my occasional rhodomontade in chit-chat, you might have been deceived concerning me in these points. Upon my soul, I have been getting more and more close to you every day, ever since I knew you, and now one of the first pleasures I look to is your happy marriage—the more, since I have felt the pleasure of loving a sister-in-law. I did not think it possible to become so much attached in so short a time. Things like these, and they are real, have made me resolved to have a care of my health—you must be as careful. . . .

Tell my friends I do all I can for them, that is, drink their health in Toddy. Perhaps I may have some lines, by-and-by, to send you fresh, on your own letter.

Your affectionate friend,
JOHN KEATS.

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### JOHN KEATS TO BENJAMIN BAILEY

[*The Poet and the Fair Sex*]

Inverary, *July* 18, 1818.

MY DEAR BAILEY,—

The only day I have had the chance of seeing you when you were last in London I took every advantage of—but some devil led you out of the way. Now I have written to Reynolds to tell me where you will be in Cumberland—so that I cannot miss you. And here, Bailey, I will say a few words, written in a sane and sober mind (a very scarce thing with me) for they may, hereafter, save you a great deal of trouble about me, which you do not deserve, and for which I ought to be bastinadoed. I carry all matters to an extreme ; so that when I have any little vexation, it grows, in five minutes, into a theme for Sophocles. Then, and in that temper, if I write to any friend, I have so little self-possession, that I give him matter for grieving, at the very time, perhaps when I am laughing at a pun. Your last letter made me blush for the pain I had given you. I know my own disposition so well that I am certain of writing many times hereafter in the same strain to you ; now, you know how far to believe in them. You must allow for Imagination. I know I shall not be able to help it.

I am sorry you are grieved at my not continuing my visits to Little Britain. Yet I think I have, as far as a man can do who has books to read and subjects to think upon. For that reason I have been nowhere else except to Wentworth Place, so nigh at hand. Moreover, I have been too often in a state of health that made it prudent not to hazard the night air. Yet, further, I will confess to you that I cannot enjoy society small or numerous. I am certain that our Fair are glad I should come for the mere sake of my coming ; but I am certain I bring with me a vexation they are better without. If I can possibly, at any time, feel my temper coming upon me, I refrain even from a promised visit. I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women—at this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot. Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish imagination ? When I was a schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure goddess : my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not. I have no right to expect more than their reality. I thought them ethereal, above men. I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small. Insult may be inflicted in more ways than by word or action. One who is tender of being insulted does not like to think an insult against another. I do not like to think insults in a lady's company. I commit a crime with her which absence would not have known. Is it not extraordinary ?—when among men, I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen ; I feel free to speak or to be silent ; I can listen, and from every one I can learn ; my hands are in my pockets, I am free from all suspicion, and comfortable. When I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen ; I cannot speak, or be silent ; I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing ; I am in a hurry to be gone. You must be charitable, and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since my boyhood. Yet with such feelings I am happier alone, among crowds of men, by myself, or with a friend or two. With all this, trust me, I have not the least idea that men of different feelings and inclinations are more short-sighted than myself. I never rejoiced more than at my brother's marriage, and shall do so at that of any of my friends. I must absolutely get over this—but how ? the only way is to find the root of the evil, and so cure it, 'with backward mutters of dissevering power'. This is a difficult thing ; for an obstinate prejudice can seldom be produced but from a gordian complication of feelings, which must take time to unravel, and care to keep unravelled. I could say a good deal about this, but I will leave it, in the hopes of better and more worthy dispositions—and, also, content that I am wronging no one, for, after all, I do think better of womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats, five feet high, likes them or not. You appeared to wish to know my moods on this subject ; don't think it a bore, my dear fellow—it shall be my Amen.

I should not have consented to myself, these four months, tramping in the Highlands, but that I thought it would give me more experience, rub off more prejudice, use (me) to more hardship, identify finer scenes, load me with grander mountains, and strengthen more my reach in poetry, than would stopping at home among books, even though I should reach Homer. By this time I am comparatively a mountaineer ; I have been among wilds and mountains too much to break out much about their grandeur. I have not fed upon oat-cake long enough to be very much attached to it. The first mountains I saw, though not so large as some I have seen, weighed very solemnly upon me. The effect is wearing away, yet I like them mainly. We have come this evening with a guide—for without was impossible—into the middle of the Isle of Mull, pursuing our cheap journey to Iona, and perhaps Staffa. We would not follow the common and fashionable mode, for the great imposition of expense. . . .

You say I must study Dante: well, the only books I have with me are those three little volumes. I read that fine passage you mention a few days ago. Your letter followed me from Hampstead to Port Patrick, and thence to Glasgow. You must think me, by this time, a very pretty fellow. . . . Brown keeps on writing volumes of adventures to Dilke. When we get in of an evening, and I have perhaps taken my rest on a couple of chairs, he affronts my indolence and luxury, by pulling out of his knapsack, first, his paper; secondly, his pens; and lastly, his ink. Now I would not care if he would change a little. I say now, why not, Bailey, take out his pens first sometimes. But I might as well tell a hen to hold up her head before she drinks, instead of afterwards.

Your affectionate friend,
JOHN KEATS.

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## JOHN KEATS TO J. H. REYNOLDS

### [*'The Top Thing in the World'*]

Winchester, *August* 25, 1819.

MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—

By this post I write to Rice, who will tell you why we have left Shanklin, and how we like the place. I have indeed scarcely anything else to say, leading so monotonous a life, unless 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, 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 this 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.

### JOHN KEATS TO ARMITAGE BROWN

['*I cannot bear to leave her*']

Naples, *November* 1, 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. 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. Oh, 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 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.

## JOHN KEATS TO ARMITAGE BROWN

[*A Last Letter from Rome* [1]]

Rome, *November* 30, 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 con-ing 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 worse, even in quarantine, summoned up more puns, in a sort of desperation, in one week than in any year of my life. There is one thought enough to kill me; I have been well, healthy, alert, etc., 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,[2] 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. I can scarcely bid you good-bye, even in a letter. I always made an awkward bow.

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[1] This is believed to be the last letter that he wrote.

[2] George Keats lived until 1842, meantime making and losing a couple of fortunes. His sister, Frances Mary, or Fanny, became Mrs. Llanos and lived to be eighty-six, dying in 1889.

God bless you!
JOHN KEATS.

## WILLIAM HAZLITT

### 1778–1830

'HE is your only good damner', said Keats of Hazlitt, one of his oldest friends, 'and if ever I am damned, I should like him to damn me'. Hazlitt was certainly a good hater, but that did not prevent him from being —perhaps it helped him to be—a prince of critics; and he could be both loyal and generous in his friendships. His life was a series of disappointments, some of which may be traced in his letter to his son. His matrimonial experiences were disastrous, his first marriage ending in divorce and his second in his wife's desertion. Between these two experiences, which were only separated by a couple of years, came his *Liber Amoris*, the literary fruit of his Quixotic amour with Sarah Walker, the demure but commonplace daughter of his lodging-house keeper. The consuming frenzy of this infatuation is indicated in the letter from Berwickshire in 1822, written about the time of his unemotional divorce negotiations with his first wife, who was quite agreeable that they should go their separate ways. Hazlitt gave up more than one profession before he took to literature. He failed—as he tells his son—to shine as an artist, but, according to Northcote, he would have become a great painter if only he had continued his studies. Previously to this, he had abandoned the ministry—like Coleridge, whose last sermon he had heard as a youth in the Unitarian Church at Shrewsbury. The literary life brought to Hazlitt its inevitable disappointments, and repeated attacks in the *Edinburgh* roused him to send his celebrated letter to William Gifford, which has been described as an unsurpassed example of eloquent vituperation. Hazlitt disliked letter writing as much as anything, but he did not end his letter to Gifford until he had written enough to fill eighty-seven printed pages. We have not attempted to condense it in the space at our disposal.

### William Hazlitt to the Editor of the *Monthly Repository*

### [*A Story of Sterne*]

Wem, Shropshire, *July*, 1808.

Sir,—

I am not so much surprised as probably some of your readers at the mortifying account which has been published in your work (p. 9) of the brutality of Sterne to his mother. For, above forty years ago, as I was travelling in a coach from Bath to London, my companion, a Dr. Marriot, who was his near neighbour, gave me such a character of the man as filled me with unfavourable impressions of him ever since. Being then a young man, and, like most other young men, being too forward to show my opinion of men and books, I began to express my high admiration of the writings of Sterne, and to pass unqualified eulogiums upon him, as a man possessed of the finest feelings and philanthropy.

As soon as I had ended my frothy declaration, the Doctor very placidly told me that I did not know the man as well as he did; that he was his very near neighbour; and that of all the men he ever knew he was the most devoid of the feelings of humanity, or of everything that we call sympathy.

As one proof of this, the Doctor told me that his daughter had some acquaintance with Miss Sterne, and therefore that she frequently passed an afternoon at his house; that Miss Sterne was subject to violent epileptic fits, that she had been lately seized with one of these, which was accompanied with such alarming symptoms, as made him and his daughter apprehend that she was dying; that they therefore sent to Mr. Sterne to apprize him of the circumstance, and to come to them immediately.

After waiting for some time in anxious expectation, the gentleman made his appearance, and seeing his daughter agonized upon the floor, and seemingly ready to expire, he coolly observed that she would be well again presently and that he could not stop a moment, being engaged to play the first fiddle at York that night. Thus he took his leave, and hastily hurried out of the house.

We cannot therefore conclude with any certainty what a man feels from the pathos of his writings, unless we have an intimate acquaintance with the man himself; unless we can prove from his actions that his high wrought descriptions are the index of his mind. It is even possible, as the philosopher Moies asserted, that a man of no feeling may succeed best in giving us a finished picture of distress. How is this to be accounted for, unless it be, that because they have no interest in what they deliver, they are not hurried on by any real passion—they take time to dress it to the popular taste, by ornamenting it with all the nick-nackery which it will bear?

I intended to have attempted an explanation of this, but rather wish to have this done by some of your ingenious correspondents. I shall only observe, that notwithstanding all the admiration which Sterne's 'Maria' has produced, he could not, to save his life, have written anything equal to David's lamentation over Absalom. He would, like Dr. Swift, if in his situation, have been proud and witty, even when deploring the death of his lovely Stella.

W. Hazlitt.

## William Hazlitt to his son,—then a Boy of ten

[*On Women, and Art*]

1822.

If ever you marry. I would wish you to marry the woman you like. Do not be guided by the recommendation of friends. Nothing will atone for, or overcome an original distaste. It will only increase from intimacy; and if you are to live separate, it is better not to come together. There is no use in dragging a chain through life, unless it binds one to the object we love. Choose a mistress from among your equals. You will be able to understand her character better, and she will be more likely to understand yours. Those in an inferior station to yourself will doubt your good intentions, and misapprehend your plainest expressions. All that you swear is to them a riddle or downright nonsense. You can not by possibility translate your thoughts into their dialect.

They will be ignorant of the meaning of half you say, and laugh at the rest. As mistresses, they will have no sympathy with you, and as wives, you can have none with them.

Women care nothing about poets, or philosophers, or politicians. They go by a man's looks and manner. Richardson calls them 'an eye-judging sex'; and I am sure he knew more about them than I can pretend to do. If you run away with a pedantic notion that they care a pin's point about your head or your heart, you will repent it too late. . . .

If I were to name one pursuit rather than another, I should wish you to be a good painter, if such a thing could be hoped. I have failed in this myself and should wish you to be able to do what I have not—to paint like Claude, or Rembrandt, or Guido, or Vandyke, if it were possible. Artists, I think, who have succeeded in their chief object, live to be old, and are agreeable old men. Their minds keep alive to the last. Cosway's spirits never flagged till after ninety; and Nollekens, though nearly blind, passed all his mornings in giving directions about some group or bust in his workshop. You have seen Mr. Northcote, that delightful specimen of the last age. With what avidity he takes up his pencil, or lays it down again to talk of numberless things! His eye has not lost its lustre, nor 'paled its ineffectual fire'. His body is a shadow: he himself is a pure spirit. There is a kind of immortality about this sort of ideal and visionary existence that dallies with Fate and baffles the grim monster, Death. If I thought you could make as clever an artist, and arrive at such an agreeable old age as Mr. Northcote, I should declare at once for your devoting yourself to this enchanting profession; and in that reliance, should feel less regret at some of my own disappointments, and little anxiety on your account.

### WILLIAM HAZLITT TO PETER G. PATMORE [1]

[*A Lover's Despair*]

Renton Inn, Berwickshire, *June* 9, 1822.

MY DEAR PATMORE,—

Your letter raised me for a moment from the depths of despair, but not hearing from you yesterday or to-day, as I hoped, I am gone back again. . . . I grant all you say about my self-tormenting madness, but has it been without cause ? When I think of this, and I think of it for ever (except when I read your letters), the air I breathe stifles me. . . . I can do nothing. What is the use of all I have done ? Is it not this thinking beyond my strength, my feeling more than I ought about so many things, that has withered me up, and made me a thing for love to shrink from, and wonder at ? . . . . My state is that I feel I shall never lie down again at night nor rise up of a morning in peace, nor ever behold my little boy's face with pleasure, while I live, unless I am restored to her favour. . . . I wander, or rather crawl, by the sea-side and the eternal ocean, and lasting despair, and her face are before me. . . . Do let me know if anything has passed ; suspense is my greatest torment. Jeffrey (to whom I did a little unfold) came down with £100, to give me time to recover, and I am going to Renton Inn to see if I can work a little in the three weeks before it will be over, if all goes well. Tell Colburn to send the 'Table Talk' to him, 92, George Street, Edinburgh, unless he is mad, and wants to ruin me. . . . Write on the receipt of this, and believe me yours unspeakably obliged,

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[1] Peter George Patmore (1786–1855), father of Coventry Patmore, the poet. P. G. Patmore edited the *New Monthly Magazine* (1841–53), and as a writer is best known by his *Imitations of Celebrated Authors*, and *My Friends and Acquaintances*.

W. H.

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

1775—1864

To sum up the outward career of Walter Savage Landor is to deal only with the stormy side of the 'unsubduable old Roman', as Carlyle calls him. Landor, sent to Rugby, was expelled for insubordination ; he went to Oxford and was rusticated on similar grounds ; returned home to quarrel with his father, and, in consequence, to retire to South Wales on an allowance of £150 a year ; bought Llanthony Abbey, and was soon at loggerheads with the authorities and all his neighbours ; married Julia Thuillier after a chance meeting at a ball in 1811, and left her three years later to live on the Continent ; rejoined by his wife and settled at Como, only to insult the authorities there in a Latin poem and be ordered to quit ; again quarrelled with his wife in 1835, and left Italy for England ; driven back again by an unhappy scandal, when his mind was evidently weakened, and attempted to live with his family at Florence ; failed in this, and taking rooms by himself in that city, died there six years later. Landor's letters, however, show that his heart had its tender side, and his friends have testified to his generosity and real nobility of sentiment. In 1808 he saw some fighting in Spain, and took with him a band of volunteers which he had raised at his own expense, to help the Spaniards in their efforts to throw off the yoke of Napolean. He had published several volumes of poems by that time, including his *Gebir*, which led to his life-long friendship with Southey. His *Tragedy of Count Julian* appeared in 1811—the year of his marriage—and the first two volumes of his *Imaginary Conversations*—the work by which he is best known to the present generation—in 1824.

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

### [*An Eloquent Appeal to his Friendship*]

1817.

I HAVE written many letters to you since I received one from you. Can anything occur that ought to interrupt our friendship ? Believe me, Southey—and of all men living I will be the very last to deceive or to flatter you—I have never one moment ceased to love and revere you as the most amiable and best of mortals, and your fame has always been as precious to me as it could ever be to yourself. If you believe me capable, as you must, of doing anything to displease you, tell it me frankly and fully. Should my reply be unsatisfactory, it will not be too late nor too soon to shake me off from all pretensions to your friendship. Tell it me rather while your resentment is warm than afterwards ; for in the midst of resentment the heart is open to generous and tender sentiments ; it closes afterwards. I heard with inexpressible grief of your most severe and irreparable loss, long indeed ago ; but even if I had been with you at the time, I should have been silent. If your feelings are like mine, of all cruelties those are the most intolerable that come under the name of condolence and consolation. Surely to be told that we ought not to grieve is among the worst bitternesses of grief. The best of fathers and of husbands is not always to derive perfect happiness from being so ; and genius and wisdom, instead of exempting a man from all human sufferings, leave him exposed to all of them, and add many of their own. Whatever creature told me that his reason

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[1] The loss of his eldest son in 1816 was a crushing blow to Southey, and this, together with the surreptitious publication in the following year of his revolutionary drama, *Wat Tyler*—written twenty three years before—reduced him to a state of depression which put a stop for a time to his correspondence with his friend.

had feelings, to him I should only reply that mine had subdued my regard for him. But occupations and duties fill up the tempestuous vacancy of the soul; affliction is converted to sorrow, and sorrow to tenderness: at last the revolution is completed, and love returns in its pristine but incorruptible form. More blessings are still remaining to you than to any man living. In that which is the most delightful of all literary occupations, at how immense a distance are you from every rival or competitor! In history, what information are you capable of giving to those even who are esteemed the most learned! And those who consult your criticisms do not consult them to find, as in others, with what feathers the most barbarous ignorance tricks out its nakedness, or with what gipsy shuffling and arrant slang detected impostures are defended. On this sad occasion I have no reluctance to remind you of your eminent gifts. In return I ask from you a more perfect knowledge of myself than I yet possess. Conscious that I have done nothing very wrong, I almost hope that I have done something not quite right, that I may never think you have been unjust towards me.

W. L.

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### Walter Savage Landor to Dr Samuel Parr

[*Public Criticism and Private grief*]

Bath (*about* 1806).

Dear Sir,—

Some people are going from Bath who will carry a few letters to my family, none of whom have more claims on my remembrance than you have. The printers at Oxford have published a poem of mine, and I desired they would send you a copy; but I find that none have been transmitted to my brother Henry, who would receive them first, and who would enclose two or three lines which I wrote on the occasion. The *Anti-Jacobin* has assailed me with much virulence—I am a coward, and a profligate; of the latter expression, as I know not the meaning of it, I shall be silent. The former is a plain intelligible word, and, if I discover the person who has made this application of it, I will give him some documents which shall enlighten his judgment at the expense of his skin. Could you imagine it? You also are mentioned with a proportionate share of insolence: let them pass. Who would stop a cloud that overshadows his garden? The cloud is transitory,—the garden blooms. Thank God! I have a mind more alive to kindness than to contumely. The statue of Memnon is insensible to the sands that blow against it, but answers in a tender tone to the first touches of the sun. Come, come, let me descend from these clouds, and this romance, at which you will laugh most heartily, and quote in my favour the example of Mr. Lemuel Gulliver, who, when the Lilliputians climbed and crept over him, forebore that contention which a more equal or a more formidable enemy would have aroused.

Thoughts, alas! how much more serious, how much more painful and more lasting, have been excited by a late event! Poor Lambe! poor Lambe![1] poor little Elizabeth, and her divine mother. Yes, death has proved the fact, and not the contrary. For what is death? a change of situation, an enlargement of liberty, a privilege, a blessing, an apotheosis. What hours have I passed with this virtuous couple, never, never to return, or to produce their likeness in this world! In vain have I tried every species of amusement. Routs, plays, concerts, and balls. Her image rises up everywhere before me. I sicken at the sight of beauty. Did not she treat me as a brother? Did she not call me by more than one name? The sound of Walter was the sweetest of sounds. Pardon me, I will acknowledge it, she made me think myself a virtuous or a great man. Certainly, I never left her company but I was more happy, and more deserving of happiness. How perfect an example for every wife and mother! What purity—what affection! Is it profane, or is it too much to call such a woman an *angel*? The difference is that *she* resided with us (shall I write it?) *long*, that she was constantly and universally seen, marked, admired; the *other* is sent down to very few, 'at intervals and long between'. Farewell.

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[1] Dr. Lambe, 'my early guide, my guardian friend'—as Landor wrote of him. This letter was written on hearing of the death of the doctor's young wife—the 'angel' of Landor's earlier letters.

### WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO DR. SAMUEL PARR

[*Tender gratitude*]

Florence, *February* 5, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,—

It has appeared, and might well do so, an extraordinary thing, that I should have omitted your name in my *Conversations*.[1] You will perceive at the close of this paper, that, if I did not venture to deliver your opinions, at least I had not forgotten the man by whom mine could have been best corrected.

Had I completed my undertaking, I should have prefixed to the last volume a dedication to my venerable friend, Dr. Samuel Parr, and it would have been with more propriety inscribed to him than any of the former, as containing less of levity and of passion, and greatly more, if I had done justice to the interlocutors of argument and of eloquence. My first exercises in these were under his eye and guidance, corrected by his admonition, and animated by his applause. His house, his library, his heart, were always open to me; and among my few friendships, of which indeed, partly by fortune, partly by choice, I have certainly had fewer than any man, I shall remember his to the last hour of my existence with tender gratitude.

My admiration of some others I have expressed in the few words preceding each volume; my esteem and love of him I have expressed in still fewer; but with such feelings as that man's are who has shaken hands with the friends that followed him to the shore, and who sees from the vessel one separate from the rest, one whom he can never meet again. May you enjoy, my dear Sir, all that can be enjoyed of life! I am heartily sated of it, and have abandoned all thoughts of completing my design. The third volume will, however, come out in the beginning of March, and I hope there are some things in it which will not displease you.

I request you to present my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Parr, and to believe me, dear Sir, yours ever most faithfully,

W. S. LANDOR.

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[1] Dr. Parr had a great reputation as a conversationalist, in this respect being said to be second only to Dr. Johnson. Dr. Parr only lived a few weeks after the date of this latter. He was in his seventy-ninth year.

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

### [*The Landorian Temper*]

Florence, *April* 11, 1825.

HIS [1] first villainy in making me disappoint the person with whom I had agreed for the pictures, instigated me to throw my fourth volume, in its imperfect state, into the fire, and has cost me nine-tenths of my fame as a writer. His next villainy will entail perhaps a chancery-suit on my children,—for at its commencement I blow my brains out. . . . Mr. Hazlitt, Mr. Leigh Hunt, Lord Dillon, Mr. Brown, and some other authors of various kinds, have been made acquainted, one from another, with this whole affair; and they speak of it as a thing unprecedented. This cures me for ever, if I live, of writing what could be published; and I will take good care that my son shall not suffer in the same way. Not a line of any kind will I leave behind me. My children shall be carefully warned against literature. To fence, to swim, to speak French, are the most they shall learn.

W. S. L.

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO LADY BLESSINGTON

### [*Some Appreciation, and how he takes it*]

Florence, *October* 14, 1834.

BEFORE I express to you any of my fears and other fancies, let me thank you for your letter,—and now for the fears; the first is, that you have really taken the trouble to overlook the sheets of my *Examination* [2]; the next that the conference of Spenser and Essex are not added to it. For this I have written an Introduction which quite satisfied me ; which hardly any thing does upon the whole, though everything in part.

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[1] John Taylor, the proprietor of the *London Magazine*, who published the first two volumes of the *Imaginary Conversations* in the beginning of 1824, had omitted certain passages at the time, and Landor naturally was very angry about it. The present explosion was over a comparatively trifling matter.

[2] Landor's *Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare . . . touching Deer-Stealing*, published 1834.

Pray relieve me from this teazing anxiety, for the *Examination* and the conferences, if disjoined, would break my heart. Never were two things so totally different in style . . . I did not believe such things would be said of me for at least a century to come. Perhaps before we meet every fashionable person will pronounce my name without an apology, and I may be patted on the head by dandies, with all the gloss upon their coats, and with unfrayed straps to their trousers. Who knows but I may be encouraged at last to write as they instruct me, and may attract all the gay people of the Parks and Parliament by my puff-paste and powder sugar surface ?

But then, how will my older and rather more dignified patricians look upon me ? My Cæsar and Lucullus—my pleasant Peterborough—above all, my dear Epicurus ? No, not above all—for if my little Ternissa should frisk away from me, I am utterly undone. Lady Jane Grey, too, who saw so many of my tears fall before her, foreknowing, as I did, what must happen,—all these in their various miens and voices would upbraid me.

It occurs to me that authors are beginning to think it an honest thing to pay their debts ; and that they are debtors (as surely they are) to all, by whose labour and charges the fields of literature have been cleared and sown. It must be confessed, we have been a rascally gang hitherto, for the most part, particularly we moralists. Few writers have said all the good they thought of others, and fewer have concealed the ill. They praise their friends, because their friends, it may be hoped, will praise them—or get them praised. As these propensities seem inseparable from the literary character, I have always kept aloof from authors where I could. Southey stands erect, and stands alone. I love him no less for his integrity than for his genius. No man, in our days, has done a twentieth part for the glory of our literature.

W. S. L.

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*Byron, Coleridge and Lamb*]

Firenze, *March* 16, 1835.

AFTER a year or more, I received your reminiscences of Byron.[1] Never, for the love of God, send anything again by a Welshman ; I mean anything literary. Lord D.'s brother, like Lord D. himself, is a very good man, and if you had sent me a cheese, would have delivered it safely in due season. But a book is a thing that does not spoil so soon. Alas ! how few are there who know the aches of expectancy, when we have long been looking up high for some suspended gift of bright imagination.

Thanks upon thanks for making me think Byron a better and a wiser man than I had thought him. Since this precious volume, I have been reading the English Opium-Eater's Recollections of Coleridge, a genius of the highest order, even in Poetry.

I was amused—when I was a youth, I should have been shocked and disgusted—at his solution of Pythagoras's enigma on bears. When I was at Oxford, I wrote my opinion on the origin of the religion of the Druids. It appears to me that Pythagoras, who settled in Italy, and who had many followers in the Greek colony of the Phœnicians at Marseilles, had engrafted on a barbarous and bloodthirsty religion the humane doctrine of the Metempsychosis.

It would have been very vain to say, do not murder ; no people ever minded this doctrine ; but he frightened the savages by saying, if you are cruel even to beasts and insects, the cruelty will fall upon yourself, you shall be the same. In this disquisition I gave exactly the same solution as (it appears) Coleridge gave. Our friend, Parr, was delighted with it, and beyond a doubt, it remains among my letters, etc., sent to him. I did not allow any of these to be published by Doctor John Johnston, his biographer, who asked my permission.

Infinite are the pains I take in composing and correcting my *Imaginary Conversations* (having no right to make other people speak and think worse than they did) ; I may indulge all my natural idleness in regard to myself.

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[1] Lady Blessington's *Conversations with Lord Byron*, published 1832.

Mr. Robinson, the soundest man who ever stepped through the trammels of law, gave me, a few days ago, the sorrowful information, that another of our great writers had joined Coleridge. Poor Charles Lamb, what a tender, good, joyous heart he had! What playfulness, what purity of style and thought! His sister is yet living, much older than himself. One of her tales is, with the sole exception of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, the most beautiful tale in prose composition in any language ancient or modern. A young girl has lost her mother, the father marries again, and marries a friend of his former wife. The child is ill reconciled to it, but being dressed in new clothes for the marriage she runs up to her mother's chamber, filled with the idea how happy that dead mother would be at seeing her in all her glory—not reflecting, poor soul, that it was only by her mother's death that she appeared in it. How natural, how novel is all this! Did you ever imagine that a fresh source of the pathetic would burst forth before us in this trodden and hardened world? I never did, and when I found myself upon it, I pressed my temples with both hands and tears ran to my elbows.

The Opium-eater calls Coleridge 'the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and most comprehensive that has yet existed among men'. Impiety to Shakespeare! treason to Milton! I give up the rest, even Bacon. Certainly since that day, we have seen nothing at all comparable to him. Byron and Scott were but gun-flints to a granite mountain; Wordsworth has one angle of resemblance; Southey has written more, and all well, much admirably. Forster has said grand things about me; but I sit upon the earth with my heels under me, looking up devoutly to the last glorious ascension. Never ask me about the rest. If you do, I shall only answer, in the cries that you are very likely to hear at this moment from your widow. 'Ground Ivy! ground ivy! ground ivy!'—

Cannot you teach those about you to write somewhat more purely? I am very fastidious. Three days ago I was obliged to correct a friend of mine, a man of fashion, who so far forgot the graces, to say to a lady, 'I have not often been in her *company*.' Say *presence*; we are in the company of men; in the presence of angels and of women.

Let me add a few lines as usual:

Pleasures—away, they please no more:
Friends, are they what they were before?
Loves—they are very idle things,
The best about them are their wings.
The dance—'tis what the bear can do;
Music—I hate your music too.
Whene'er these witnesses that time
Hath snatch'd the chaplet from our prime
Are called by nature (as we go
With eyes more wary, step more slow),
And will be heard and noted down,
However we may fret or frown;
Shall we desire to leave the scene
Where all our former joys have been?
No! 'twere ungrateful and unwise:
But when die down our charities
For human weal and human woes,
'Tis then the hour our days should close.

W. S. L.

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## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*His Opinion of Wordsworth*]

Clifton, 1836.

I WISH our friend Robinson would show you my defence, for I never make any note of what I write, be the subject what it may.

Wordsworth, no doubt, has a thousand good reasons why there is not a poet upon earth; but as there are many who have given me pleasure, I love them for it; some of them, perhaps, a little more than they deserve. All men are liable to error. I particularly, who believe that there may be criticism without sarcasm, and Christianity without deans and chapters.

The surface of Wordsworth's mind, the poetry, has a good deal of staple about it, and will bear handling; but the inner, and conversational and private, has many coarse intractable dangling threads, fit only for the flock bed equipage of grooms. I praised him before I knew more of him; else I never should; and I might have been unjust to the better part had I remarked the worse sooner. This is a great fault, to which we are all liable, from an erroneous idea of consistency.

Besides, there is a little malice, I fear, at the bottom of our hearts (men's, I mean, of course).

What a fool I must be to have written as I have just been writing, if my own could rise up against me on this occasion! Alas! it has done on too many.

Do not be angry with me for my sincerity in regard to Byron. He deserves it. Of this I find evident proofs in abundance, although I never read his dramas, nor anything besides *Don Juan*, and some short pieces. One is admirable, I mean——

> 'A change came o'er the spirit of my dream'.

This is not the beginning, as you will recollect. The bosom of Byron never could hold the urn in which the muse of tragedy embalms the dead. There have been four magic poets in the world. We await the fifth monarchy, and, like the Jews with the Messiah, we shall not be aware of it when it comes.

Poets are called improvident in all affairs outlying from poetry; but it appears to me, that in their poetry they are the most so—forgetful as they are while they are writing, that they must transcribe it afterwards. Then comes the hoe-husbandry, the weeding, etc., enough to break the back. Infinite pains it has always cost me, not to bring together the materials, not to weave the tissue, but to make the folds of my drapery hang becomingly. When I think of writing on any subject, I abstain a long while from every kind of reading, lest the theme should haunt me, and some of the ideas take the liberty of playing with mine. I do not wish the children of my brain to imitate with gait or learn any tricks of others.

By living at Clifton, I am grown as rich as Rothschild; and if Count d'Orsay could see me in my new coat, he would not write me so pressingly to come up to London. It would breed ill-blood between us — half plague, half cholera. He would say—'I wish that fellow had his red forehead again, the deuce might powder it for me'. However, as I go out very little, I shall not divide the world with him. How glad I am that you are become acquainted with Forster![1]

W. S. L.

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[1] John Forster, the friend and biographer of Dickens and Landor.

### Walter Savage Landor to Leigh Hunt

[*Wordsworth v. Southey*]

Bath, *February* 6, 1838.

My dear Sir,—

Whatever I send you, in supplement or continuation of *High and Low Life*,[1] is quite as much at your discretion as what I first presented to you. The *attempts at simplicity* were introduced for the correction of the vice now prevalent in English poetry. Wordsworth is certainly the man whose authority has produced and fostered it. Now Southey was the first man of letters who openly and boldly placed him near the eminence he at present occupies. We differed in this; Southey preferred him, thirty years ago, to Walter Scott; while my opinion was, that he had written nothing so good as *Marmion.* Again, I showed my sense of the injustice he had received in the first publication of my *Imaginary Conversations.* No person who can pretend to the name of critic had publicly avowed so favourable an opinion of him. It was only when I heard from Kenyon and Robinson of his base ingratitude to Southey, of his practice, (for I heard it again from a gentleman and lady named Godwin, residing in his neighbourhood), of saying that he would not give five shillings for all the poetry Southey had ever written, it was only then that I resolved to show more accurately what were his own claims in comparison with Southey's.

There is little moral courage in our literary world. Few will speak what they think; and they gather what they think from conduits and common sewers rather than from springs and fountains. They do not guide the mass, but are moved along and soon confounded with it. In all other countries the literary part of the community is the best; in England, I am sorry to say, it is guided by spleen, fashion, and interest. You have suffered so much by pursuing another line of conduct

*Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre errare*—

that I may speak frankly and fearlessly to you on the subject.

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[1] *High and Low Life in Italy*, contributed by Landor to Leigh Hunt's *Monthly Repository* for December, 1837, and succeeding numbers.

I doubt whether the leaves I send you have not somewhat too much of the south wind among them—if so, lay them aside. Perhaps, if ever a volume should be formed of these papers, there are fewer which you would be inclined to exclude. Let Mrs. —— see them as soon as you can. She has expressed the wish.

Believe me ever, my dear sir, yours sincerely,

W. S. Landor.

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### Walter Savage Landor to the Editor of the *Examiner*

### [*Merciless Denunciation of Lord Brougham*] [1]

*August* 17, 1843

Sir,—

The prosecution with which you are threatened by Lord Brougham might well be expected from every facette of his polygonal character. He began his literary and political life with a scanty store of many small commodities. Long after he set out, the witty and wise Lord Stowell said of him, that he wanted only a little law to fill up the vacancy. His shoulders were not overburdened by the well-padded pack he bore on them; and he found a ready sale, where such articles find the readiest, in the town of Edinburgh. Here he entered into a confederacy (the word *conspiracy* may be libellous) to defend the worst atrocities of the French, and to cry down every author to whom England was dear and venerable. A better spirit now prevails in the *Edinburgh Review*, from the generosity and genius of Macaulay. But in the days when Brougham and his confederates were writers in it, more falsehood and more malignity marked its pages than any other Journal in the language. And here is the man who cries out he is wounded! the recreant who, screaming for help, aims a poisoned dagger at the vigorous breast that crushes him to the ground.

Had he no respect for the tenets by which he made his fortune? Has he none for a superiority of intellectual power which leaves to him superiority of station? This eminently bad writer and reasoner brings an action for slander on many counts, at the summit of which is 'because it is *despicable*. Now did ever man or cat fly at the eyes for a thing *beneath his notice*: and such is the meaning of *despicable* among us who have learnt Latin and who write English. What other man within the walls of Parliament, however hasty, rude, and petulant, hath exhibited such manifold instances of bad manners, bad feelings, bad reasonings, bad language, and bad law? They who cannot be what they want to be, resolve on notoriety in any shape whatever. Each House exhibits a specimen of this genus, pinned to the last pages of its Journals. Such notoriety can in no manner be more readily attained than by suddenly turning round on one leg, showing how agile is old age in this step, and then appealing to you whether the Terpsichorist has ever changed countenance or colour, from youth upwards. Meanwhile the toothless jaws are dropping, on both sides, the slaver of wrath and dotage.

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[1] Lord Brougham brought an action for libel against the *Examiner* for accusing him of having insinuated that Cobden had advised private assassination. Jeffrey, who had previously attacked Brougham in the *Examiner* on various other accounts, seemed only too pleased to join in the fight.

How many things are published with impunity which are more injurious to a man's character, more detrimental to his fortune and interest, than a great proportion of those which the law calls libellous! Suppose an author, who has devoted his whole life to some particular study, writes a book upon it; suppose it is in any manner displeasing to Lord Brougham, whether on its own account or the author's; would he hesitate, has he ever hesitated, to inflict an irremediable wound? Dexterity in mischief is applauded; the sufferer is derided. Easily may a weaker, who watches the opportunity, trip up a stronger. Similar feats are the peculiar gratification of coarse and vulgar minds. Has no virtuous man of genius bled to death under the scourge of such a critic as Brougham? Years of application, if years were yet allowed him, would be insufficient to place him in the festive seat, which a crueller hand than a murder's made vacant. On the contrary, the accusations brought against Lord Brougham, by the *Examiner* could be shown by his Lordship to be true or false within a single hour, and the fact be rendered apparent to the whole nation before nightfall. But here no vindictive spirit can exert its agency: no lightning of phosphorus runs along the benches of the Lords; no thunder as awful shakes the woolsack.

Wavering as he is by habit, malicious as he is by nature, it is evident that Lord Brougham says and does the greater part of his sayings and doings for no other purpose than to display his ability in defending them. He dazzles us by no lights of eloquence, he attracts us by not even a fictitious flue-warmth; but he perplexes and makes us stare and stumble by his angular intricacies and sudden glares. Not a sentence of his speeches or writings will be deposited in the memory as rich or rare; and even what is strange will be cast out of it for what is stranger, until this goes too. Is there a housewife who keeps a cupboardful of cups without handle or bottom; a selection of brokages and flaws?

I am, Sir, etc.,
W. S. LANDOR.

## THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES

1803–1849

MR. SWINBURNE has remarked that Beddoes's 'noble instinct for poetry is even better shown in his letters than in his verses.' His 'brilliant correspondence on poetical questions', adds Mr. Swinburne, 'gives to me a higher view of his fine and vigorous intelligence than any other section of his literary remains'. Beddoes was one of the first to discover the genius of Browning—as well as that of Shelley—and to Browning was left the Beddoes MSS., when Kelsall, the friend and literary executor, of Beddoes, died in 1872. The legacy seems to have somewhat distressed Browning. 'I am sure we shall come upon some dreadful secret. I cannot bear to lift the lid', he said to Mr. Edmund Gosse, to whom he first gave permission to examine the box. The papers which they took out showed that Beddoes had committed suicide—a fact which hitherto had been carefully concealed. At Mr. Browning's request the letters were edited by Mr. Gosse in the little volume which appeared in 1894. We are able to reprint two of the letters by the courtesy of the publisher, Mr. John Lane.

### THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES TO THOMAS FORBES KELSALL

[*Student Life, and his 'Death's Jest-Book'*]

Göttingen, *December* 4, 1825.

MY DEAR KELSALL,—

A few words in answer to your last letter. I will frankly confess to you that I have lost much, if not all of my ambition to become poetically distinguished: and I do not think, with Wordsworth, that a man may dedicate himself entirely, or even in great part, to the cultivation of that part of literature, unless he possess far greater powers of imagination, etc., than even W. himself, and (I need not add) ergo, than I do; or bodily ill-health or mental weakness, prevents him from pursuing to any good purpose, studies in useful sciences.

At the same time, I think you will not fear that I shall become at any time a bare and barren man of science, such as are so abundant and so appallingly ignorant on this side of Chemistry or Anatomy. Again, even as a dramatist, I cannot help thinking that the study of anatomy, physiology, psychology, and anthropology applied to and illustrated by history, biography, and works of imagination is that which is most likely to assist one in producing correct and masterly delineations of the passions; great light would be thrown on Shakespeare by the commentaries of a person so educated. The studies then of the dramatist and physician are closely, almost inseparably, allied; but is it impossible for the same man to combine these two professions in some degree, at least?

The science of psychology and mental varieties has long been used by physicians in conjunction with the corresponding corporeal knowledge, for the investigation and removal of immaterial causes of disease; it still remains for some one to exhibit the sum of his experience in mental pathology and therapeutics, not in a cold technical dead description, but a living semiotical display, a series of anthropological experiments developed for the purpose of ascertaining some important psychical principle—i.e., a tragedy.

Thus far to show you that my studies, pursued as I pledge myself to pursue them, are not hostile, but rather favourable to the development of a germ which I would fain believe within me. You will say, 'this may be theoretically true, but no such physician has ever yet appeared'. I shall have great satisfaction in contradicting you, as Dr. Johnson did the man who denied motion. You talk about too much practice and so forth. I believe that is what is least to be feared; I am very nearly unconnected, am not quite apt at flattery or the social humiliations to which the fashionable physician is bound: am perhaps somewhat independent, and have a competence adequate to my philosophical desires. There are reasons why I should reject too much practice, if it did intrude ; really I am much more likely to remain a patientless physician.

And now I will end this unnecessary subject, by telling you that *Death's Jest Book*[1] goes on like the tortoise, slow and sure ; I think it will be entertaining, very unamiable, and utterly unpopular. Very likely it may be finished in the spring or summer ; I shall not, if I can help it, return to England, but shall send it to you or Procter to see what can be done about printing it with the Pygmalion and the other thing whose name I forget, as it will have a certain connexion in a leading feature with them, of which I believe the former is much the best.

As yet I have hardly any German acquaintance here, as I cannot speak the language very tolerably ; from one or two specimens with which I am more intimate, and a general external knowledge of the body of students, I can decidedly say of those here, at least, that they have been causelessly and disgracefully ridiculed in our ignorant and flippant travels and periodicals. There is an appetite for learning, a spirit of diligence and withal a good-natured fellow-feeling wholly unparalleled in our old apoplectic and paralytic Almæ Matres ; nine students out of ten at this time of the year rise at five or six, study the whole day and night, and Saturday night and Sunday morning are set aside for social communication. I never was better employed, never so happy, never so well self-satisfied. I hope to remain here three years at least. I shall then probably visit Berlin, Leipzig, Vienna, some of the Italian curiosities, and finally Paris, for I intend to devote eight or ten years to these studies, combined with the languages necessary, and a slender thread of practical literature. You see, I will not fail of being something by not exercising what talent I have. I feel myself in a measure alone in the world and likely to remain so, for from the experiments I have made I fear I am a non-conductor of friendship, a not very likeable person, so that I must make sure of my own respect and occupy that part of the brain which should be employed in imaginative attachments in the pursuit of immaterial and unchanging good.

I am ashamed of having scribbled a letter so full of myself ;

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[1] His *Death's Jest Book*, begun in 1825, was not published until 1850—the year after his death.

but I send it because it may entertain you, and I think you require some explanation of my way of studying medicine. Shame on you for having anticipated a regular M.D. to arise out of my ashes after reduction in the crucible of German philosophy. Apollo has been barbarously separated by the moderns; I would endeavour to unite him. Of German literature, professors here, anecdotes and news in our next, which will not appear before the receipt of your next.

Yours truly,
T. L. BEDDOES.

### THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES TO BRYAN WALLER PROCTER [1]

[*Shakespeare's Golden Intellect*]

Bristol, *March* 3, 1824

DEAR PROCTER,—

I have just been reading your epistle to our Ajax Flagellifer, the bloody John Lacy [2]: on one point, where he is most vulnerable, you have omitted to place your sting—I mean his palpable ignorance of the Elizabethans, and many other dramatic writers of this and preceding times, with whom he ought to have formed at least a nodding acquaintance, before he offered himself as physician to Melpomene.

About Shakespeare you don't say enough. He was an incarnation of nature, and you might just as well attempt to remodel the seasons, and the laws of life and death, as to alter 'one jot or tittle' of his eternal thoughts. 'A star' you call him: if he was a star, all the other stage-scribblers can hardly be considered a constellation of brass buttons. I say he was an universe; and all material existence, with its excellences and defects, was reflected in shadowy thought upon the crystal waters of his imagination, ever-glorified as they were by the sleepless sun of his golden intellect. And this imaginary universe had its seasons and changes, its harmonies and its discords, as well as the dirty reality; on the snow-maned necks of its winter hurricanes rode madness, despair, and 'empty death, with the winds whistling through the white grating of his sides'; its summer of poetry, glistening through the drops of pity; and its solemn and melancholy autumn, breathing deep melody among the 'sere and yellow leaves' of thunder-stricken life, etc., etc. (See Charles Phillips' speeches and X. Y. Z. for the completing furbelow of this paragraph). By the 3rd scene of the 4th Act of *Macbeth*, I conclude that you mean the dialogue between Malcolm and Macduff, which is only part of the scene; for the latter part, from the entrance of Rosse, is of course necessary to create an interest in the destined avenger of Duncan, as well as to set the last edge to our hatred of the usurper. The Doctor's speech is merely a compliment to the 'right divine' of people in turreted nightcaps to cure sores a little more expeditiously than Dr. Solomon; and is, too, a little bit of smooth chat, to show, by Macduff's manner, that he has not yet heard of his wife's murder.

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[1] Bryan Waller Procter (1787–1874), poet and friend of Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb, and Dickens. Produced his successful tragedy, *Mirandola*, at Govent Garden, under his pseudonym of 'Barry Cornwall', in 1821.

[2] 'John Lacy' was the pseudonym of George Darley (1795–1846), dramatic critic of the *London Magazine*. Darley was the author of *Sylvia, the May Queen*, and other dramatic poems.

I hope Guzman has grown since I saw him, and has improved in vice.

I shall be in London in about a week, and hope to find you in your Franciscan eyrie—singing among the red brick boughs, and laying tragedy-eggs for Covent Garden market. So you 'think this last author will do something extraordinary':—so do I too; I should not at all wonder, if he was to be plucked for his degree,—which would be quite delightful and new.

This March wind has blown all my sense away, and so farewell.

Ever yours,
T. L. BEDDOES.

# *PART III*

# The Early Victorian Age

LORD MACAULAY—WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY—CHARLOTTE BRONTË—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING AND ROBERT BROWNING—CHARLES DICKENS—THOMAS HOOD—LORD LYTTON—CHARLES LEVER—CAPTAIN MARRYAT — GEORGE BORROW — EDWARD FITZGERALD — THOMAS CARLYLE.

# LORD MACAULAY

## 1800–1859

MACAULAY's two letters to his father on his early acquaintance with Sydney Smith were written in the year following the publication of his first article (on Milton) in the *Edinburgh*—the review which Sydney Smith had himself projected, and helped to start, two years after Macaulay's birth. Jeffrey was the editor when Macaulay wrote the Milton article, and he was delighted with it. 'The more I think', he said, 'the less I can conceive where you picked up that style'; and it was not long before Macaulay became the mainstay of the review. Sydney Smith, as the following correspondence shows, praised the new contributor's articles, and he had a genuine appreciation of his remarkable gifts, but, in some of his own letters, the allusions to Macaulay, whom he describes as that 'book in breeches' are not always complimentary. 'He is certainly more agreeable since his return from India', he writes, in his later correspondence. 'His enemies might, perhaps, have said before (though I never did so) that he talked rather too much; but now he has occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation perfectly delightful. Oh, yes! We *both* talk a good deal, but I don't believe Macaulay ever did hear my voice! Sometimes, when I have told a good story, I have thought to myself, Poor Macaulay! he will be very sorry some day to have missed that'. Macaulay, it is true, was a much better talker than a listener; but it is amusing to hear such a hardened sinner as Sydney Smith complaining about it. It was in 1838 that Macaulay returned from Calcutta, after sitting for some years on the Supreme Council of India, and in the following year he not only began his *History of England*, but became Secretary of War. His letter to Leigh Hunt on Hunt's claim to a pension, was written while filling this office. Leigh Hunt's financial embarrassments were then about at their worst, and Macaulay helped him in another direction by obtaining some reviewing for him to do in the *Edinburgh*. Macvey Napier, who succeeded Jeffrey as editor of that review in 1829, appears, however, to have hurt Hunt's feelings by a slight, which was quite unintentional. As a result of Macaulay's mediation, however, he sent Hunt a generously-worded letter, which put matters right at once. Macaulay's correspondence with Leigh Hunt is taken from the two volumes of *Correspondence*, edited by Hunt's eldest son; the remaining letters are from the well-known life of Macaulay, by his nephew Sir George Trevelyan—reprinted by the kind permission of the author and of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

### THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO HIS FATHER

[*A Call from Sydney Smith*]

York, *July* 21, 1826.

MY DEAR FATHER,—

The other day as I was changing my neckcloth which my wig had disfigured, my good landlady knocked at the door of my bedroom, and told me that Mr. Smith wished to see me and was in my room below. Of all names by which men are called there is none which conveys a less determinate idea to the mind than that of Smith. Was he on the circuit? For I do not know half the names of my companions. Was he a special messenger from London? Was he a York attorney coming to be preyed upon, or a beggar coming to prey upon me, a barber to solicit the dressing of my wig, or a collector for the Jews' Society?

Down I went, and to my utter amazement beheld the Smith of Smiths, Sydney Smith, alias Peter Plymley. I had forgotten his very existence till I discerned the queer contrast between his black coat and his snow-white head, and the equally curious contrast between the clerical amplitude of his person and the most unclerical wit, whim and petulance of his eye.

I shook hands with him very heartily; and on the Catholic question we immediately fell, regretted Evans, triumphed over Lord George Beresford, and abused the Bishops.[1] He then very kindly urged me to spend the time between the close of the Assizes and the commencement of the Sessions at his house; and was so hospitably pressing that I at last agreed to go thither on Saturday afternoon. He is to drive me over again into York on Monday morning. I am very well pleased at having this opportunity of becoming better acquainted with a man who, in spite of innumerable affectations and oddities, is certainly one of the wittiest and most original writers of our time.

Ever yours affectionately,
T. B. M.

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[1] Refers to a General Election which had recently taken place.

## THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO HIS FATHER

[*Sydney Smith at Home*]

Bradford, *July* 26, 1826.

MY DEAR FATHER,—

On Saturday I went to Sydney Smith's. His parish lies three or four miles out of any frequented road. He is, however, most pleasantly situated. 'Fifteen years ago,' said he to me as I alighted at the gate of his shrubbery, 'I was taken up in Piccadilly and set down here. There was no house and no garden; nothing but a bare field'.

One service this eccentric divine has certainly rendered to the Church. He has built the very neatest, most commodious, and most appropriate rectory that I ever saw.[1] All its decorations are in a peculiarly clerical style, grave, simple, and gothic. The bed-chambers are excellent, and excellently fitted up; the sitting-rooms handsome; and the grounds sufficiently pretty. Tindal and Parke (not the judge of course), two of the best lawyers, best scholars, and best men in England, were there. We passed an extremely pleasant evening, and had a very good dinner, and many amusing anecdotes. After breakfast the next morning I walked to church with Sydney Smith. The edifice is not at all in keeping with the rectory. It is a miserable little hovel with a wooden belfry. It was, however, well filled, and with decent people, who seemed to take very much to their pastor. I understand that he is a very respectable apothecary; and most liberal of his skill, his medicine, his soup and his wine, among the sick. He preached a very queer sermon—the former half too familiar and the latter half too florid, but not without some ingenuity of thought and expression.

Sydney Smith brought me to York on Monday morning in time for the stage-coach which runs to Skipton. We parted with many assurances of good will. I have really taken a great liking to him. He is full of wit, humour, and shrewdness. He is not one of those show talkers who reserve all their good things for special occasions. It seems to be his greatest luxury to keep his wife and daughter laughing two or three hours every day. His notions of law, government, and trade are surprisingly clear and just. His misfortune is to have chosen a profession at once above him and below him. Zeal would have made him a prodigy; formality and bigotry would have made him a bishop; but he could neither rise to the duties of his order, nor stoop to its degradations.

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[1] Sydney Smith built his own parsonage when he settled at Foston in 1809. Here he continued for twenty years as 'village parson, village doctor, village comforter, village magistrate, and *Edinburgh* Reviewer'.

He praised my articles in the *Edinburgh Review* with a warmth which I am willing to believe sincere, because he qualified his compliments with several very sensible cautions. My great danger, he said, was that of taking a tone of too much asperity and contempt in controversy. I believe that he is right, and I shall try to mend.

Ever affectionately yours,
T. B. M.

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### THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO LEIGH HUNT

[*Hunt's claims to a Pension*]

War Office, *March* 6, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—

Your letter of February 16 has this moment been put into my hands. It finds me surrounded with estimates and pay lists—things much less agreeable than the comedies of Congreve or than your criticisms on them. I am afraid that my answer must be short. I will only say that the goodwill which I expressed towards you was perfectly sincere, and that if I used any expression which could either give you pain, or affect your interests unfavourably, I am exceedingly sorry for it. If I should be able to find a few hours in the midst of official and parliamentary business, for Vanbrugh and Farquhar, assure yourself that I will bear your wishes in mind.

I am quite sensible of your claims on the party to which I belong; and I will say, without any circumlocution, that I have a real desire to serve you. At the same time, my power is very small. My patronage is confined to clerkships, which would suit only boys; and district paymasterships, which can be held only by military men. The demands of a hundred and forty thousand constituents also press heavily upon me. The power of granting pensions resides with Lord Melbourne, who is not so much of a Mæcenas as might be expected from his fine understanding, his numerous accomplishments, and his kind nature. To get anything from him for a man of letters is almost as difficult as to get a dukedom. But if a favourable opportunity should offer, I will see whether anything can be done.

In the meantime I should be really glad if you could point out any mode in which any interest which I may possess might be of use to you.

Believe me, my dear sir,
Your faithful servant,
T. B. MACAULAY.

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### THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO LEIGH HUNT

[*Suggests Leigh Hunt for the Laureateship*]

War Office, *March* 27, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I have just had a long conversation with Lord Melbourne, on whom I have pressed your claims with as much urgency as I thought myself justified in using. I have not had time to give you particulars, some of which would be curious and amusing. At last he told me that he feared a pension was out of the question, but that he would try to do something for you. This is less than I wished, but more, I own, than I expected.

I assure you that your letter has affected me much. I am sorry and ashamed for my country, that a man of so much merit should have endured so much distress. I heard the other day, from one of poor Southey's nephews, that he cannot live many weeks [1]; I really do not see why you might not succeed him. The title of Poet Laureate is indeed ridiculous. But the salary ought to be left for the benefit of some man of letters. Should the present government be in office when a vacancy takes place, I really think that the matter might be managed.

Believe me, my dear sir,
Yours very faithfully,
T. B. MACAULAY.

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[1] Southey died in 1843, and was succeeded by Wordsworth.

### THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO LEIGH HUNT

[*Soothing ruffled feelings*]

Albany, *October* 29, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I do not wonder that you are hurt by Napier's letter, but I think that you a little misunderstand him. I am confident that he has not taken any part of your conduct ill, and equally confident by the expression *gentleman-like*, which certainly he might have spared, he meant not the smallest reflection either on your character or manners. I am certain that he means merely a literary criticism. His taste in composition is what would commonly be called classical, not so catholic as mine, nor so tolerant of those mannerisms which are produced by the various tempers and trainings of men, and which, within certain limits, are, in my judgment, agreeable. Napier would thoroughly appreciate the merits of a writer like Bolingbroke or Robertson ; but would, I think, be unpleasantly affected by the peculiarities of such a writer as Burton, Sterne, or Charles Lamb. He thinks your style too colloquial ; and, no doubt, it has a very colloquial character. I wish it to retain that character, which to me is exceedingly pleasant. But I think that the danger against which you have to guard is excess in that direction. Napier is the very man to be startled by the smallest excess in that direction. Therefore I am not surprised that, when you proposed to send him a *chatty* article, he took fright, and recommended dignity and severity of style ; and care to avoid what he calls vulgar expressions, such as *bit*. The question is purely one of taste. It has nothing to do with the morals or the honour.

As to the tone of Napier's criticism, you must remember that his position with regard to the *Review*, and the habits of his life, are such that he cannot be expected to pick his words very nicely. He has superintended more than one great literary undertaking, The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, for example. He has had to collect contributions from hundreds of men of letters, and has been answerable to the publishers and to the public for the whole. Of course he has been under the necessity of very frequently correcting, disapproving, and positively rejecting articles ; and is now as little disturbed about such things as Sir Benjamin Brodie about performing a surgical operation. To my own personal knowledge, he has positively refused to accept papers even from so great a man as Lord Brougham. He only a few months ago received an article on foreign politics from an eminent diplomatist. The style was not to his taste ; and he altered it to an extent which greatly irritated the author. Mr. Carlyle formerly wrote for the *Review*, a man of talents, though, in my opinion, absurdly overpraised by some of his admirers. I believe, though I do not know, that he ceased to write because the oddities of his diction and his new words compounded *à la Teutonique* drew such strong remonstrances from Napier. I could mention other instances, but these are sufficient to show you what I mean. He is really a good, friendly, and honourable man. He wishes for your assistance, but he thinks your style too colloquial. He conceives that, as the editor of the *Review*, he ought to tell you what he thinks. And, having during many years been in the habit of speaking his whole mind on such matters almost weekly to all sorts of people, he expresses himself with more plainness than delicacy. I shall probably have occasion to write to him in a day or two. I will tell him that one or two of his phrases have hurt your feelings, and that, I think, he would have avoided them if he had taken time to consider.

If you ask my advice, it is this. Tell him that some of his expressions have given you pain ; but that you feel that you have no right to resent a mere difference of literary taste ; that to attempt to unlearn a style already formed and to acquire one completely different would, as he must feel, be absurd, and that the result would be something intolerably stiff and unnatural ; but that, as he thinks that a tone rather less colloquial would suit better with the general character of the *Review*, you will, without quitting the easy and familiar manner which is natural to you, avoid whatever even an unreasonably fastidious taste could regard as vulgarity. This is my honest advice. You may easily imagine how disagreeable it is to say anything about a difference between two persons for both of whom I entertain a sincere regard.

Believe me, dear sir,
Yours very truly,
T. B. MACAULAY.

### Thomas Babington Macaulay to Macvey Napier

[*His Plea for Leigh Hunt*]

Albany, London, *October* 30, 1841.

Dear Napier,—

I have received your letter and am truly glad you are satisfied with the effect of my article. As to the preliminary part of the matter, I am satisfied, and more than satisfied. Indeed, as you well know, money has never been my chief object in writing. It was not so even when I was poor; and at present I consider myself as one of the richest men of my acquaintance; for I can well afford to spend a thousand a year, and I can enjoy every comfort on eight hundred. I own, however, that your supply comes agreeably enough to assist me in furnishing my rooms, which I have made, unless I am mistaken, into a very pleasant student's cell. And now a few words about Leigh Hunt. He wrote to me yesterday in great distress, and enclosed a letter which he had received from you and which had much agitated him. In truth, he misunderstood you; and you had used an expression which was open to some misconstruction.

You told him that you should be glad to have a 'gentlemanlike' article from him, and Hunt took this for a reflection on his birth. He implored me to tell him candidly whether he had given you any offence, and to advise him as to his course. I replied that he had utterly misunderstood you; that I was sure you meant merely a literary criticism; that your taste in composition was more severe than his, more indeed than mine; that you were less tolerant than myself of little mannerisms springing from peculiarities of temper and training; that his style seemed to you too colloquial; that I myself thought he was in danger of excess in that direction; and that, when you received a letter from him promising a very 'chatty' article, I was not surprised that you should caution him against his besetting sin. I said that I was sure that you wished him well, and would be glad of his assistance; but that he could not expect a person in your situation to pick his words very nicely; that you had during many years superintended great literary undertakings; that you had been under the necessity of collecting contributions from great numbers of writers, and that you were responsible to the public for the whole. Your credit was so deeply concerned that you must be allowed to speak plainly. I knew that you had spoken to men of the first consideration quite as plainly as to him. I knew that you had refused to insert passages written by so great a man as Lord Brougham. I knew that you had not scrupled to hack and hew articles on foreign politics which had been concocted in the Hotels of Ambassadors, and had received the *imprimatur* of Secretaries of State. I said that, therefore, he must, as a man of sense, suffer you to tell him what you might think, whether rightly or wrongly, to be the faults of his style. As to the sense which he had put on one or two of your expressions, I took it on myself, as your friend, to affirm that he had mistaken their meaning, and that you would never have used those words if you had foreseen that they would have been so understood. Between ourselves, the word 'gentlemanlike' was used in rather a harsh way. Now I have told you what has passed between him and me; and I leave you to act as you think fit. I am sure that you will act properly and humanely. But I must add that I think you are too hard on his article. As to the *Vicar of Wakefield*,[1] the correction must be deferred, I think, till the appearance of the next number. I am utterly unable to conceive how I can have committed such a blunder, and failed to notice it in the proofs.

Ever yours,
T. B. MACAULAY.

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### THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO MACVEY NAPIER

[*Questions of Style*]

Albany, London, *April* 18, 1842.

DEAR NAPIER,—

I am much obliged to you for your criticisms on my article on Frederic. My copy of the *Review* I have lent, and cannot therefore refer to it. I have, however, thought over what you say, and should be disposed to admit part of it to be just. But I have several distinctions and limitations to suggest.

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[1] Referring to a curious slip in one of his articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, in which he had substituted the *Vicar of Wakefield* for the *History of Greece*, thus condemning the *Vicar of Wakefield* as a bad work.

The charge to which I am most sensible is that of interlarding my sentences with French terms. I will not positively affirm that no such expression may have dropped from my pen in writing hurriedly on a subject so very French. It is, however, a practice to which I am extremely averse, and into which I could fall only by inadvertence. I do not really know to what you allude; for as to the words 'Abbé' and 'Parc-aux-Cerfs', which I recollect, those surely are not open to objection. I remember that I carried my love of English in one or two places almost to the length of affectation. For example, I called the 'Place des Victoires', the 'Place of Victories;' and the 'Fermier général' D'Étioles a publican. I will look over the article again, and try to discover to what you allude. The other charge, I confess, does not appear to me to be equally serious. I certainly should not, in regular history, use some of the phrases which you censure. But I do not consider a review of this sort as regular history, and I really think that from the highest and most unquestionable authority, I could vindicate my practice.

Take Addison, the model of pure and graceful writing. In his *Spectators* I find 'wench', 'baggage', 'queer old put', 'prig', 'fearing that they should smoke the knight'. All these expressions I met this morning, in turning over two or three of his papers at breakfast. I would no more use the word 'bore' or 'awkward squad' in a composition meant to be uniformly serious and earnest, than Addison would in a State Paper have called Louis an 'old put', or have described Shrewsbury and Argyle as 'smoking the design to bring in the Pretender'.

But I did not mean my article to be uniformly serious and earnest. If you judge of it as you would judge a regular history, your censure ought to go very much deeper than it does, and to be directed against the substance as well as against the diction. The tone of many passages, nay of whole pages, would justly be called flippant in a regular history. But I conceive that this sort of composition has its own character, and its own laws. I do not claim the honour of having invented it; that praise belongs to Southey; but I must say that in some points I have improved upon his design. The manner of these little historical essays bears, I think, the same analogy to the manner of Tacitus or Gibbon which the manner of Ariosto bears to the manner of Tasso, or the manner of Shakespeare's historical plays to the manner of Sophocles.

Ariosto, when he is grave and pathetic, is as grave and pathetic as Tasso; but he often takes a light fleeting tone which suits him admirably, but which in Tasso would be quite out of place. The despair of Constance in Shakespeare, is as lofty as that of Œdipus in Sophocles; but the levities of the bastard Faulconbridge would be utterly out of place in Sophocles. Yet we feel that they are not out of place in Shakespeare. So with these historical articles. Where the subject requires it, they may rise, if the author can manage it, to the highest altitudes of Thucydides. Then, again, they may without impropriety, sink to the levity and colloquial ease of Horace Walpole's Letters. This is my theory. Whether I have succeeded in the execution is quite another question. You will, however, perceive that I am in no danger of taking similar liberties in my history.

I do, indeed, greatly disapprove of those notions which some writers have of the dignity of History. For fear of alluding to the vulgar concerns of private life, they take no notice of the circumstances which deeply affect the happiness of nations. But I never thought of denying that the language of history ought to preserve a certain dignity. I would, however, no more attempt to preserve that dignity in a paper like this on Frederic than I would exclude from such a poem as *Don Juan* slang terms, because such terms would be out of place in *Paradise Lost*, or Hudibrastic rhymes, because such rhymes would be shocking in Pope's *Iliad.*

As to the particular criticisms which you have made, I willingly submit my judgment to yours, though I think I could say something on the other side. The first rule of all writing—that rule to which every other is subordinate—is that the words used by the writer shall be such as most fully and precisely convey his meaning to the great body of his readers. All considerations about the dignity and purity of style ought to bend to this consideration. To write what is not understood in its whole force for fear of using some word which was unknown to Swift or Dryden, would be, I think, say as absurd as to build an Observatory like that at Oxford, from which it is impossible to observe, only for the purpose of exactly preserving the proportions of the Temple of the Winds at Athens. That a word which is appropriate to a particular idea, which everybody high and low uses to express that idea, and which expresses that idea with a completeness which is not equalled by any other single word, and scarcely by any circumlocution, should be banished from writing, seems to be a mere throwing away of power. Such a word as 'talented' it is proper to avoid; first, because it is not wanted; secondly, because you never have it from those who speak very good English. But the word 'shirk' as applied to military duty is a word which everybody uses; which is the word, and the only word for the thing; which in every regiment, and in every ship, belonging to our country is employed ten times a day; which the Duke of Wellington, or Admiral Stopford, would use in reprimanding an officer. To interdict it, therefore, in what is meant to be familiar, and almost jocose, narrative seems to me rather rigid. But I will not go on. I will only repeat that I am truly grateful for your advice, and that if you will, on future occasions, mark with an asterisk any words in my proof sheets which you think open to objection, I will try to meet your wishes, though it may sometimes be at the expense of my own.

Ever yours most truly,
T. B. MACAULAY.

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## THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO LEIGH HUNT

### [*On Judgment in Art*]

Albany, *November* 19, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Thanks for your note and for your very pleasing and interesting little volume.

I do not know that we differ in judgment about Spenser. But there is a liking which does not depend on the judgment. I see Rousseau's genius as clearly as any of his admirers. But he does not attract me. I read *Gil Blas* once a year; and I do not care if I never see Rousseau's novel again. It is the same with painting. I know that the *Raising of Lazarus*, in the National Gallery, is a great work: and I partly feel its merits. But I look at it with little or no pleasure, and should be very little concerned if I heard that it was burned. On the other hand, there are pictures of much less fame and power which, if I could afford it, I would hang over my fireplace, and look at half-an-hour every day. So with female beauty. If a man were to say that Mrs. Siddons was not a fine woman, we should think that he must have no eyes. But a man might well say that, though a fine woman, she did not attract him, that she did not hit his taste, and that he liked Miss Foote's or Miss O'Neil's looks better. Just so I say about Spenser. To deny him the rank of a great poet would be to show utter ignorance of all that belongs to the art. But his excellence is not the sort of excellence in which I take especial delight.

I shall be most happy to see you when you are passing by. I had heard of your windfall,[1] and heartily rejoiced at the news.

Yours very truly,
T. B. MACAULAY.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

### 1811–1863

BOTH Thackeray and Mathew Arnold expressed the wish that no memoirs of them should be published after their death, and—so far at least, as their families are concerned—the wish has been respected. Mrs. Richmond Ritchie's biographical edition of her father's works, in nineteen volumes, is the nearest approach that we have to an authorized life of Thackeray, but the essence of the man is given in Mrs. Brookfield's collection of his letters, 1847–55, from which the following fragments are reprinted, by permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. Buoyant, unaffected, and tender, they show the real Thackeray in all his lovable aspects. His happy married life had been broken up some years before these letters were begun, Mrs. Thackeray's mind never having recovered from the breakdown which followed the birth of her youngest daughter in 1840. Most of the letters in question were written to Mrs. Brookfield and her husband, the Rev. W. H. Brookfield, whose friendship with Thackeray began when the novelist was living alone in London—before *Vanity Fair* was written—and continued during many years. Thackeray's two remaining little girls were living with his mother in Paris, in the early days of this friendship, but it was not long before his work on *Punch*, and in the magazines, enabled him to bring his family over from France, and start a new home in Kensington. It was some years later, however, before he made a name with any of his books. 'I can suit the magazines', he wrote on one occasion, 'but I can't hit the public, be hanged to them.' Even *Vanity Fair*, which began in monthly numbers early in 1847, hung fire for a time, and it was not until the end of the year that its success was assured. That, of course, was the turning point of Thackeray's career.

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[1] Leigh Hunt's financial embarrassment's were relieved in 1844 by an annuity of £120 from Sir Percy Shelley.

## W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Brookfield

### ['*Those Inimitable Dickens Touches*']

1849.

What have I been doing since these many days? I hardly know. I have written such a stupid number of 'Pendennis' in consequence of not seeing you, that I shall be ruined if you are to stay away much longer. . . . Has William written to you about our trip to Hampstead on Sunday? It was very pleasant. We went first to St. Mark's Church, where I always thought you went, but where the pew opener had never heard of such a person as Mrs. J. O. B.; and having heard a jolly and perfectly stupid sermon, walked over Primrose Hill to the Crowe's, where His Reverence gave Mrs. Crowe half an hour's private talk, whilst I was talking under the blossoming apple tree about newspapers to Monsieur Crowe. Well, Mrs. Crowe was delighted with William and his manner of *discoorsing* her; and indeed though I say it that shouldn't, from what he said afterwards, and from what we have often talked over pipes in private, that is a pious and kind soul. I mean his, and calculated to soothe and comfort and appreciate and elevate, so to speak out of despair, many a soul that your more tremendous, rigorous divines would leave on the wayside, where sin, that robber, had left them half killed. I will have a Samaritan parson when I fall among thieves. You, dear Lady, may send for an ascetic if you like; what is he to find wrong in you?

I have talked to my mother about her going to Paris with the children; she is very much pleased at the notion, and it won't be very lonely to me. I shall be alone for some months at any rate, and vow and swear I'll save money. . . . Have you read Dickens? Oh! it is charming! brave Dickens! It has some of his very prettiest touches—those inimitable Dickens touches which make such a great man of him; and the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. In the first place it pleases the other author to see that Dickens, who has long left off alluding to the A's works, has been copying the O.A., and greatly simplifying his style, and overcoming the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer and *David Copperfield* will be improved by taking a lesson from *Vanity Fair*. Secondly it has put me upon my metal; for ah! Madame, all the metal was out of me, and I have been dreadfully and curiously cast down this month past. I say, secondly, it has put me upon my metal and made me feel I must do something; that I have fame and name and family to support. . . .

I have just come away from a dismal sight; Gore House [1] full of snobs looking at the furniture. Foul Jews; odious bombazine women, who drove up in mysterious flys which they had hired, the wretches, to be fine, so as to come in state to a fashionable lounge; brutes keeping their hats on in the kind old drawing room—I longed to knock some of them off, and say, 'Sir, be civil in a lady's room'. . . .

There was one of the servants there, not a powdered one, but a butler, a *whatdoyoucallit*. My heart melted towards him and I gave him a pound. Ah! it was a strange, sad picture of Vanity Fair. My mind is all boiling up with it; indeed, it is in a queer state. . . .

### W. M. THACKERAY TO MRS. BROOKFIELD

### [*Henry Hallam's Buried Hopes*]

White Lion, Bristol, *Monday*, 1850.

MY DEAR LADY,—

With the gold pen there's no knowing how and what I write; the handwriting is quite different and it seems as if one was speaking with a different voice. Fancy a man stepping up to speak to you on stilts and trying to make a bow, or paying you compliments through a Punch's whistle—not that I ever do pay you a compliment you know, but I can't or

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[1] Where the 'Gorgeous Lady Blessington' had held her court at Kensington, attended by Thackeray, Dickens, Landor, the Bulwers, Moore, Landseer, Reynolds, and a host of other celebrities of their day. In April, 1849, Lady Blessington and Count d'Orsay had to flee from their creditors to Paris. Thackeray seems to have been one of the very few friends who were really affected by the Countess's downfall. He was moved to tears at the historic sale.

I shan't be able for a line or two to approach you naturally, and must skate along over this shiny paper.

I went to Clevedon and saw the last rites performed for poor dear Harry.[1]

I went from here, and waited at Candy's till the time of the funeral, in such cold weather! Candy's shop was full of ceaseless customers all the time—there was a little boy buying candles and an old woman with the toothache—and at last the moment drew nigh and Tinling in a scarf and hatband driving himself down from the Court, passed the shop, and I went down to the church. It looked very tranquil and well ordained, and I had half an hour there before the procession came in view. Those ceremonies over a corpse—the immortal soul of a man being in the keeping of God, and beyond the reach of all undertakers—always appear to me shocking rather than solemn—and the horses and plumes give me pain. —The awful moment was when the dear old father—the coffin being lowered into the vault where so much of his affection and tenderest love lies buried, went down into the cave and gave the coffin a last kiss;—there was no standing that last most affecting touch of Nature. . . . Mr. Hallam who had been upstairs came down after an hour or two; and I was so sorry that I had decided on coming back to Bristol, when he asked me whether I wasn't going to stay? Why didn't I? I had written and proposed myself to Dean Elliot in the morning personally, and I find he is out of town on returning here in the coldest night to the most discomfortable inn, writing paper, gold pen. . . . Duty, Duty is the word, and I hope and pray you will do it *cheerfully*.

Now it is to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and so may your comforter and helper raise you up when you fall. I wonder whether what I said to you yesterday was true? I know what I think about the famous chapter of St. Paul that we heard to-day—one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and one flesh of birds and one of fish and so forth—premature definitions—yearnings and strivings of a great heart after the truth. Ah me—when shall we reach the truth?

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[1] Henry Fitzmaurice Hallam, younger son of Henry Hallam, the historian, died suddenly at Rome on October 2, 1850. His brother, Arthur Henry Hallam—immortalized in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*—died suddenly at Vienna seventeen years before, and was also buried at Clevedon.

How can we with imperfect organs ? But we can get nearer and nearer, or at least eliminate falsehood.

Tomorrow then for Sir John Cam Hobhouse. Write to me there dear sister, and tell me that you are cheerful and that your baby is well, and that you love your affectionate old brother. When will you see the children ? tomorrow I hope. And now I will go to bed and pray as best as I can for you and yours and your niece and your faithful old Makepeace.

### W. M. THACKERAY TO MRS. BROOKFIELD

### [‘*Let us turn God's Day to its Best Uses*’]

. . . And is W. Bullar going to work upon you with his ‘simple mysticism’ ? I don't know about the Unseen World ; the use of the seen World is the right thing I'm sure !—it is just as much God's world and Creation as the Kingdom of Heaven with all the angels. How will you make yourself most happy in it ? how secure at least the greatest amount of happiness compatible with your condition ? by despising to-day and looking up cloudward ? Pish ! Let us turn God's today to its best use, as well as any other part of the time He gives us. When I am on a cloud a-singing, or a pot a-boiling—I will do my best, and if you are ill, you can have consolations ; if you have disappointments, you can invent fresh sources of hope and pleasure. I'm glad you saw the Crowes, and that they gave you pleasure—and that noble poetry of Alfred's gives you pleasure (I'm happy to say m'am I've said the very same thing in prose that you like—the very same words almost). The bounties of the Father I believe to be countless and inexhaustible for most of us here in life ; Love the greatest. Art (which is an exquiste and admiring sense of nature) the next.—By Jove ! I'll admire, if I can, the wing of a Cocksparrow as much as the pinion of an Archangel ; and adore God the Father of the earth, first ; waiting for the completion of my senses, and the fulfilment of his intentions towards me afterwards, when this scene closes over us. So when Bullar turns up his eye to the ceiling, I'll look straight at your dear kind face and thank God for knowing that, my dear ; and though my nose is a broken pitcher, yet, Lo and behold there's a Well gushing over with kindness in my heart where my dear Lady may come and drink. God bless you—and William and little Magdalene.

## CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

### 1816-1855.

Charlotte Brontë had only to publish *Jane Eyre*—after sharing with her sisters the volume of poems 'by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell'—to find herself thrust to the front in the mid-Victorian school of fiction, while Thackeray, as we have seen, had to feel his way with a number of books before *Vanity Fair* completely established his reputation, in the very year that witnessed the triumph of *Jane Eyre*. The sombre story of the life that led up to this triumph, and of the black 'milestones' that afterwards marked the lonely road to her own sad death—just as the sunshine was beginning to break through the clouds—may be read in the letters which follow. They are all woven into Mrs. Gaskell's well-known biography, and show, as Mrs. Gaskell says, 'what a noble, true and tender woman Charlotte Brontë really was'.

### Charlotte Brontë to Robert Southey

[*How the Laureate for a time suppressed her Ambition*][1]

*March* 16, 1837.

Sir,—

I cannot rest till I have answered your letter, even though by addressing you a second time I should appear a little intrusive; but I must thank you for the kind and wise advice you have condescended to give me. I had not ventured to hope for such a reply; so considerate in its tone, so noble in its spirit. I must suppress what I feel, or you will think me foolishly enthusiastic.

At the first perusal of your letter, I felt only shame and regret that I had ever ventured to trouble you with my crude rhapsody; I felt a painful heat rise to my face when I thought of the quires of paper I had covered with what once gave me so much delight, but which now was only a source of confusion; but after I had thought a little and read it again and again, the prospect seemed to clear. You do not forbid me to write; you do not say that what I write is utterly destitute of merit. You only warn me against the folly of neglecting real duties for the sake of imaginative pleasures; of writing for the love of fame; for the selfish excitement of emulation. You kindly allow me to write poetry for its own sake, provided

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[1] See Southey's letter and note, p. 185.

I leave undone nothing which I ought to do, in order to pursue that single, absorbing, exquisite gratification. I am afraid, Sir, you think me very foolish. I know the first letter I wrote to you was all senseless trash from beginning to end; but I am not altogether the idle dreaming being it would seem to denote. My father is a clergyman of limited, though competent income, and I am the eldest of his children. He expended quite as much in my education as he could afford in justice to the rest. I thought it therefore my duty, when I left school, to become a governess. In that capacity I find enough to occupy my thoughts all day long, and my head and hands too, without having a moment's time for one dream of the imagination. In the evenings, I confess, I do think, but I never trouble any one else with my thoughts. I carefully avoid any appearance of pre-occupation and eccentricity, which might lead those I live amongst to suspect the nature of my pursuits. Following my father's advice—who from my childhood has counselled me, just in the wise and friendly tone of your letter—I have endeavoured not only attentively to observe all the duties a woman ought to fulfil, but to feel deeply interested in them. I don't always succeed, for sometimes when I'm teaching or sewing, I would rather be reading or writing; but I try to deny myself; and my father's approbation amply rewarded me for the privation. Once more allow me to thank you with sincere gratitude. I trust I shall never more feel ambitious to see my name in print; if the wish should rise, I'll look at Southey's letter, and suppress it. It is honour enough for me that I have written to him, and received an answer. That letter is consecrated; no one shall ever see it, but papa and my brother and sisters. Again I thank you. This incident, I suppose, will be renewed no more; if I live to be an old woman, I shall remember it thirty years hence as a bright dream. The signature which you suspected of being fictitious is my real name. Again, therefore, I must sign myself.

C. Brontë.

P. S. Pray, sir, excuse me for writing to you a second time; I could not help writing, partly to tell you how thankful I am for your kindness, and partly to let you know that your advice shall not be wasted; however sorrowfully and reluctantly it may be at first followed. C. B.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

[*Bitter Experiences as a Governess*]

*July*, 1839.

I CANNOT procure ink[1], without going into the drawing-room, where I do not wish to go. . . . I should have written to you long since, and told you every detail of the utterly new scene into which I have lately been cast, had I not been daily expecting a letter from yourself, and wondering and lamenting that you did not write; for you will remember it was your turn. I must not bother you too much with my sorrows, of which, I fear, you have heard an exaggerated account. If you were near me, perhaps I might be tempted to tell you all, to grow egotistical, and pour out the long history of a private governess's trials and crosses in her first situation. As it is, I will only ask you to imagine the miseries of a reserved wretch like me, thrown at once into the midst of a large family, at a time when they were particularly gay—when the house was filled with company—all strangers—people whose faces I had never seen before. In this state I had charge given me of a set of pampered, spoilt, turbulent children, whom I was expected constantly to amuse, as well as to instruct. I soon found that the constant demand on my stock of animal spirits reduced them to the lowest state of exhaustion; at times I felt—and, I suppose, seemed—depressed. To my astonishment, I was taken to task on the subject by Mrs.—— with a sternness of manner and harshness of language scarcely credible; like a fool, I cried most bitterly. I could not help it; my spirits quite failed me at first. I thought I had done my best—strained every nerve to please her; and to be treated in that way, merely because I was shy and sometimes melancholy, was too bad. At first I was for giving all up and going home. But, after a little reflection, I determined to summon what energy I had, and to weather the storm. I said to myself, 'I have never yet quitted a place without gaining a friend; adversity is a good school; the poor are born to labour, and the dependent to endure'. I resolved to be patient, to command my feelings, and to take what came; the ordeal, I reflected, would not last many weeks, and I trusted it would do me good. I recollected the fable of the willow and the oak ; I bent quietly, and now, I trust the storm is blowing over me. Mrs.—— is generally considered an agreeable woman ; so she is, I doubt not, in general society. She behaves somewhat more civilly to me now than she did at first, and the children are a little more manageable ; but she does not know my character, and she does not wish to know it. I have never had five minutes' conversation with her since I came, except while she was scolding me. I have no wish to be pitied, except by yourself ; if I were talking to you I could tell you much more.

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[1] The letter is written in pencil.

### Charlotte Brontë to a Friend

[*The Irish Curate*]

Haworth, *August* 4, 1839.

I have an odd circumstance to relate to you : prepare for a hearty laugh ! The other day, Mr. ——, a vicar, came to spend the day with us, bringing with him his own curate. The latter gentleman, by name Mr. B., is a young Irish clergyman, fresh from Dublin University. It was the first time we had any of us seen him, but, however, after the manner of his countrymen, he soon made himself at home. His character quickly appeared in his conversation ; witty, lively, ardent, clever too ; but deficient in the dignity and discretion of an Englishman. At home, you know, I talk with ease, and am never shy—never weighed down and oppressed by that miserable *mauvaise honte* which torments and constrains me elsewhere. So I conversed with this Irishman, and laughed at his jests ; and, though I saw faults in his character, excused them because of the amusement his originality afforded. I cooled a little, indeed, and drew in towards the latter part of the evening, because he began to season his conversation with something of Hibernian flattery, which I did not quite relish. However, they went away, and no more was thought about them. A few days after, I got a letter, the direction of which puzzled me, it being in a hand I was not accustomed to see. Evidently, it was neither from you nor Mary, my only correspondents. Having opened and read it, it proved to be a declaration of attachment and proposal of matrimony, expressed in the ardent language of the sapient young Irishman! I hope you are laughing heartily. This is not like one of my adventures, is it? It more nearly resembles Martha's. I am certainly doomed to be an old maid. Never mind. I made up my mind to that fate ever since I was twelve years old.

Well! thought I, I have heard of love at first sight, but this beats all! I leave you to guess what my answer would be, convinced that you will not do me the injustice of guessing wrong.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[*About her First Story*][1]

1840.

AUTHORS are generally very tenacious of their productions but I am not so much attached to this but that I can give it up without much distress. No doubt, if I had gone on, I should have made quite a Richardsonian concern of it. . . . I had materials in my head for half-a-dozen volumes. . . . Of course, it is with considerable regret I relinquish any scheme so charming as the one I have sketched. It is very edifying and profitable to create a world out of your own brains, and people it with inhabiants, who are so many Melchizedeks, and have no father nor mother but your own imagination. . . . I am sorry I did not exist fifty or sixty years ago, when *The Ladies' Magazine* was flourishing like a green bay-tree. In that case, I make no doubt, my aspirations after literary fame would have met with due encouragement, and I should have had the pleasure of introducing Messrs Percy and West into the very best society, and recording all their sayings and doings in double-columned close-printed pages. . . . I recollect, when I was a child, getting hold of some antiquated volumes, and reading them by stealth with the most exquisite pleasure. You give a correct description of the patient Grisels of those days. My aunt was one of them; and to this day she thinks the tales of *The Ladies' Magazine* infinitely superior to any trash of modern literature. So do I; for I read them in childhood, and childhood has a very strong faculty of admiration, but a very weak one of criticism . . . I am pleased that you cannot quite decide whether I am an attorney's clerk or a novel-reading dressmaker. I will not help you at all in the discovery ; and as to my handwriting, or the lady-like touches in my style and imagery, you must not draw any conclusions from that—I may employ an amanuensis. Seriously, sir, I am very much obliged to you for your kind and candid letter. I almost wonder you took the trouble to read and notice the novelette of an anonymous scribe, who had not even the manners to tell you whether he was a man or a woman, or whether his ' C. T '. meant Charles Timms or Charlotte Tomkins.

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[1] Apparently written in reply to a letter from Wordsworth, to whom she had sent the commencement of *The Professor*, which did not appear until after her death.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

[*The Brussels Scheme*]

*November* 2, 1841.

Now let us begin to quarrel. In the first place, I must consider whether I will commence operations on the defensive or the offensive. The defensive, I think. You say, and I see plainly, that your feelings have been hurt by an apparent want of confidence on my part. You heard from others of Miss W——'s overtures before I communicated them to you myself. This is true. I was deliberating on plans important to my future prospects. I never exchanged a letter with you on the subject. True again. This appears strange conduct to a friend, near and dear, long-known, and never found wanting. Most true. I cannot give you my *excuses* for this behaviour ; this word *excuse* implies confession of a fault, and I do not feel that I have been in fault. The plain fact is, I *was* not, I am not now, certain of my destiny. On the contrary, I have been most uncertain, perplexed with contradictory schemes and proposals. My time, as I have often told you, is fully occupied ; yet I had many letters to write, which it was absolutely necessary should be written. I knew it would avail nothing to write to you then to say I was in doubt and uncertainty—hoping this, fearing that, anxious, eagerly desirous to do what seemed impossible to be done. When I thought of you in that busy interval, it was to resolve, that you should know all when my way was clear, and my grand end attained. If I could, I would always work in silence and obscurity, and let my efforts be known by their results. Miss W—— did most kindly propose that I should come to Dewsbury Moor, and attempt to revive the school her sister had relinquished. She offered me the use of her furniture. At first, I received the proposal cordially, and prepared to do my utmost to bring about success; but a fire was kindled in my very heart, which I could not quench. I so longed to increase my attainments—to become something better than I am; a glimpse of what I felt, I showed to you in one of my former letters—only a glimpse; Mary cast oil upon the flames—encouraged me, and in her own strong, energetic language, heartened me on. I longed to go to Brussels; but how could I get there? I wished for one, at least, of my sisters to share the advantage with me. I fixed on Emily. She deserved the reward, I knew. How could the point be managed? In extreme excitement, I wrote a letter home, which carried the day. I made an appeal to aunt for assistance, which was answered by consent. Things are not settled; yet it is sufficient to say we have a *chance* of going for half a year. Dewsbury Moor is relinquished. Perhaps, fortunately so. In my secret soul, I believe there is no cause to regret it. My plans for the future are bounded to this intention: if I once get to Brussels, and if my health is spared, I will do my best to make the utmost of every advantage that shall come within my reach. When the half-year is expired, I will do what I can. . . .

Believe me, though I was born in April, the month of cloud and sunshine, I am not changeful. My spirits are unequal, and sometimes I speak vehemently, and sometimes I say nothing at all; but I have a steady regard for you, and if you will let the cloud and shower pass by, be sure the sun is always behind, obscured, but still existing.

### Charlotte Brontë to ——

[*Prolonging the Stay at Brussels*]

Brussels, 1842.

I consider it doubtful whether I shall come home in September or not. Madame Héger has made a proposal for both me and Emily to stay another half-year, offering to dismiss her English master, and take me as English teacher; also to employ Emily some part of each day in teaching music to a certain number of the pupils. For these services we are to be allowed to continue our studies in French and German, and to have board, etc., without paying for it; no salaries, however, are offered. The proposal is kind, and in a great selfish city like Brussels, and a great selfish school containing nearly ninety pupils (boarders and day pupils included), implies a degree of interest which demands gratitude in return. I am inclined to accept it. What think you? I don't deny I sometimes wish to be in England, or that I have brief attacks of home sickness; but, on the whole, I have borne a very valiant heart so far; and I have been happy in Brussels, because I have always been fully occupied wth the employments that I like. Emily is making rapid progress in French, German, music, and drawing. Monsieur and Madame Héger begin to recognize the valuable parts of her character, under her singularities.

If the national character of the Belgians is to be measured by the character of most of the girls in this school, it is a character singularly cold, selfish, animal, and inferior. They are very mutinous and difficult for the teachers to manage; and their principles are rotten to the core. We avoid them, which is not difficult to do, as we have the brand of Protestantism and Anglicism upon us. People talk of the danger which Protestants expose themselves to in going to reside in Catholic countries, and thereby running the chance of changing their faith. My advice to all Protestants who are tempted to do anything so besotted as turn Catholics, is, to walk over the sea on to the Continent; to attend mass sedulously for a time; to note well the mummeries thereof; also the idiotic, mercenary aspect of all the priests; and *then*, if they are still disposed to consider Papistry in any other light than a most feeble, childish piece of humbug, let them turn Papists at once—that's all. I consider Methodism, Quakerism, and the extremes of High and Low Churchism foolish, but Roman Catholicism beats them all. At the same time, allow me to tell you, that there are some Catholics who are as good as any Christians can be to whom the Bible is a sealed book, and much better than many Protestants.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

[*Home Again*]

*January* 23, 1844.

EVERY one asks me what I am going to do, now that I am returned home; and every one seems to expect that I should immediately commence a school. In truth, it is what I should wish to do. I desire it above all things. I have sufficient money for the undertaking, and I hope now sufficient qualifications to give me a fair chance of success; yet I cannot yet permit myself to enter upon life—to touch the object which seems now within my reach, and which I have been so long straining to attain. You will ask me why? It is on papa's account; he is now, as you know, getting old, and it grieves me to tell you that he is losing his sight. I have felt for some months that I ought not to be away from him; and I feel now that it would be too selfish to leave him (at least, as long as Branwell and Anne are absent), in order to pursue selfish interests of my own. With the help of God, I will try to deny myself in this matter, and to wait.

I suffered much before I left Brussels. I think, however long I live, I shall not forget what the parting with M. Héger cost me. It grieved me so much to grieve him who has been so true, kind, and disinterested a friend. At parting he gave me a kind of diploma certifying my abilities as a teacher, sealed with the seal of the Athénée Royal, of which he is professor. I was surprised also at the degree of regret expressed by my Belgian pupils, when they knew I was going to leave. I did not think it had been in their phlegmatic nature. . . . I do not know whether you feel as I do, but there are times now when it appears to me as if all my ideas and feelings, except a few friendships and affections, are changed from what they used to be; something in me, which used to be enthusasm, is tamed down and broken. I have fewer illusions; what I wish for now is active exertion—a stake in life. Haworth seems such a lonely, quiet spot, buried away from the world. I no longer regard myself as young—indeed, I shall soon be twenty-eight; and it seems as if I ought to be working and braving the rough realities of the world, as other people do. It is, however, my duty to restrain this feeling at present, and I will endeavour to do so.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO MESSRS. AYLOTT AND JONES

[*The 'Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell'*]

GENTLEMEN,—

Since you agree to undertake the publication of the work respecting which I applied to you, I should wish now to know, as soon as possible, the cost of paper and printing. I will then send the necessary remittance, together with the manuscript. I should like it to be printed in one octavo volume, of the same quality of paper and size of type as Moxon's last edition of *Wordsworth*. The poems will occupy, I should think, from 200 to 250 pages. They are not the production of a clergyman, nor are they exclusively of a religious character; but I presume these circumstances will be immaterial.

It will, perhaps, be necessary that you should see the manuscript, in order to calculate accurately the expense of publication; in that case I will send it immediately. I should like, however, previously, to have some idea of the probable cost; and if, from what I have said, you can make a rough calculation on the subject, I should be greatly obliged to you.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO MESSRS. SMITH AND ELDER

['*Jane Eyre' Submitted to its Future Publishers*] [1]

*August* 24, 1847.

I NOW send you per rail a MS. entitled *Jane Eyre*, a novel in three volumes, by Currer Bell. I find I cannot prepay the carriage of the parcel, as money for that purpose is not received at the small station-house where it is left. If, when you acknowldege the receipt of the MS., you would have the goodness to mention the amount charged on delivery, I will immediately transmit it in postage stamps. It is better in future to address Mr. Currer Bell, under cover to Miss Brontë, Haworth, Bradford, Yorkshire, as there is a risk of letters otherwise directed not reaching me at present. To save trouble, I enclose an envelope.

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[1] Messrs. Smith and Elder had declined her first story, *The Professor*, written in one volume, but this refusal, as she afterwards said, was 'so delicate, reasonable and courteous, as to be more cheering than some acceptances'. They had added that a work in three volumes would meet with careful attention, and a few weeks later *Jane Eyre* was on its way to Cornhill: and the story of its reception there, of the enthusiasm of the reader, Mr. W. S. Williams, and the absorption of Mr. George Smith, is very well known. *Jane Eyre* was accepted, and published by October 16.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO GEORGE H. LEWES

[*A Reply to Criticism*]

*November* 6, 1847.

DEAR SIR,—

Your letter reached me yesterday; I beg to assure you that I appreciate fully the intention with which it was written, and I thank you sincerely both for its cheering commendation and valuable advice.

You warn me to beware of melodrama, and you exhort me to adhere to the real. When I first began to write, so impressed was I with the truth of the principles you advocate, that I determined to take Nature and Truth as my sole guides, and to follow in their very footprints; I restrained imagination, eschewed romance, repressed excitement; over-bright colouring, too, I avoided, and sought to produce something which should be soft, grave, and true.

My work (a tale in one volume) being completed, I offered it to a publisher. He said it was original, faithful to nature, but he did not feel warranted in accepting it: such a work would not sell. I tried six publishers in succession; they all told me it was deficient in 'startling incident' and 'thrilling excitement', that it would never suit the circulating libraries, and as it was on those libraries the success of works of fiction mainly depended, they could not undertake to publish what would be overlooked there.

*Jane Eyre* was rather objected to at first, on the same grounds, but finally found acceptance.

I mention this to you, not with a view of pleading exemption from censure, but in order to direct your attention to the root of certain literary evils. If, in your forthcoming article in *Fraser*, you would bestow a few words of enlightenment on the public who support the circulating libraries, you might, with your powers, do some good.

You advise me, too, not to stray far from the ground of experience, as I become weak when I enter the region of fiction; and you say, 'real experience is perennially interesting, and to all men.'

I feel that this also is true; but, dear sir, is not the real experience of each individual very limited? And, if a writer dwells upon that solely or principally, is he not in danger of repeating himself, and also of becoming an egotist? Then, too, imagination is a strong, restless faculty, which claims to be heard and exercised: are we to be quite deaf to her cry, and insensate to her struggles? When she shows us bright pictures, are we never to look at them, and try to reproduce them? And when she is eloquent, and speaks rapidly and urgently in our ear, are we not to write to her dictation?

I shall anxiously search the next number of *Fraser* for your opinions on these points. Believe me, dear sir, yours gratefully,

C. BELL.

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## CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO W. S. WILLIAMS

### [*The Identity of the Brothers Bell*]

*November* 10, 1847.

DEAR SIR,—

I have received the *Britannia* and the *Sun*, but not the *Spectator*, which I rather regret, as censure, though not pleasant, is often wholesome.

Thank you for your information regarding Mr. Lewes. I am glad to hear that he is a clever and sincere man: such being the case, I can await his critical sentence with fortitude: even if it goes against me, I shall not murmur; ability and honesty have a right to condemn, where they think condemnation is deserved. From what you say, however, I trust rather to obtain at least a modified approval.

Your account of the various surmises respecting the identity of the Brothers Bell, amused me much: were the enigma solved, it would probably be found not worth the trouble of solution; but I will let it alone: it suits ourselves to remain quiet, and certainly injures no one else.

The reviewer who noticed the little book of poems, in the *Dublin Magazine*, conjectured that the *soi-disant* three personages were in reality but one, who, endowed with an unduly prominent organ of self-esteem, and consequently impressed with a somewhat weighty notion of his own merits, thought them too vast to be concentrated in a single individual, and accordingly divided hmself into three, out of consideration, I suppose, for the nerves of the much-to-be-astounded public!

This was an ingenious thought in the reviewer—very original and striking, but not accurate. We are three.

A prose work, by Ellis and Acton, will soon appear: it should have been out, indeed, long since; for the first proof-sheets were already in the press at the commencement of last August, before Currer Bell had placed the MS. of *Jane Eyre* in your hands. Mr ——, however, does not do business like Messrs. Smith and Elder; a different spirit seems to preside at —— Street, to that which guides the helm at 65, Cornhill. . . . My relations have suffered from exhausting delay and procrastination, while I have to acknowledge the benefits of a management at once business-like and gentleman-like, energetic and considerate.

I should like to know if Mr.—— often acts as he has done to my relations, or whether this is an exceptional instance of his method. Do you know, and can you tell me anything about him? You must excuse me for going to the point at once, when I want to learn anything: if my questions are impertinent, you are, of course, at liberty to decline answering them.—I am yours respectfully,

C. Bell.

### Charlotte Brontë to a Friend

[*The 'Skeleton behind the Curtain'*]

*January* 11, 1848.

We have not been very comfortable at home here lately. Branwell has, by some means, contrived to get more money from the old quarter, and has led us a sad life. . . . Papa is harassed day and night; we have little peace; he is always sick; has two or three times fallen down in fits; what will be the ultimate end, God knows. But who is without their drawback, their scourge, their skeleton behind the curtain? It remains only to do one's best, and endure with patience what God sends.

### Charlotte Brontë to a Friend

[*Repudiation of Authorship*]

*April* 28, 1848.

Write another letter, and explain that last note of yours distinctly. If your allusions are to myself, which I suppose they are, understand this—I have given no one a right to gossip about me, and am not to be judged by frivolous conjectures, emanating from any quarter whatever. Let me know what you heard, and from whom you heard it.

[*The same subject*]

*May* 3, 1848.

ALL I can say to you about a certain matter is this: the report—if report there be—and if the lady, who seems to have been rather mystified, had not dreamt what she fancied had been told to her—must have had its origin in some absurd misunderstanding. I have given *no one* a right either to affirm or to hint, in the most distant manner, that I was 'publishing'—(humbug!). Whoever has said it—if any one has, which I doubt—is no friend of mine. Though twenty books were ascribed to me, I should own none. I scout the idea utterly. Whoever, after I have distinctly rejected the charge, urges it upon me, will do an unkind and ill-bred thing. The most profound obscurity is infinitely preferable to vulgar notoriety; and that notoriety I neither seek nor will have. If then, any B—an, or G—an, should presume to bore you on the subject—to ask you what 'novel' Miss Brontë has been 'publishing', you can just say, with the distinct firmness of which you are perfect mistress, when you choose, that you are authorized by Miss Brontë to say, that she repels and disowns every accusation of the kind. You may add, if you please, that if any one has her confidence, you believe you have, and she has made no drivelling confessions to you on the subject. I am at a loss to conjecture from what source this rumour has come; and, I fear, it has far from a friendly origin. I am not certain, however, and I should be very glad if I could gain certainty. Should you hear anything more, please let me know. Your offer of *Simeon's Life* is a very kind one, and I thank you for it. I dare say Papa would like to see the work very much, as he knew Mr. Simeon. Laugh or scold A—— out of the publishing notion; and believe me, through all chances and changes, whether calumniated or let alone,—Yours faithfully,

C. BRONTË.

## CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

[*Death of Branwell Brontë*]

*October* 9, 1848

THE past three weeks have been a dark interval in our humble home. Branwell's constitution had been failing fast all the summer; but still neither the doctors nor himself thought him so near his end as he was. He was entirely confined to his bed but for one single day, and was in the village two days before his death. He died, after twenty minutes struggle, on Sunday morning, September 24th. He was perfectly conscious till the last agony came on. His mind had undergone the peculiar change which frequently precedes death two days previously; the calm of better feelings filled it; a return of natural affection marked his last moments. He is in God's hands now; and the All-Powerful is likewise the All-Merciful. A deep conviction that he rests at last—rests well after his brief, erring, suffering, feverish life—fills and quiets my mind now. The final separation, the spectacle of his pale corpse, gave me more acute, bitter pain than I could have imagined. Till the last hour comes, we never know how much we can forgive, pity, regret a near relative. All his vices were and are nothing now.[1] We only remember his woes. Papa was acutely distressed at first, but, on the whole, has borne the event well. Emily and Anne are pretty well, though Anne is always delicate, and Emily has a cold and cough at present. It was my fate to sink at the crisis, when I should have collected my strength. Headache and sickness came on first on the Sunday ; I could not regain my appetite. Then internal pain attacked me. I became at once much reduced. It was impossible to touch a morsel. At last, bilious fever declared itself. I was confined to bed a week—a dreary week. But, thank God ! health seems now returning. I can sit up all day, and take moderate nourishment. The doctor said at first, I should be very slow in recovering, but I seemed to get on faster than he anticipated. I am truly *much better.*

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[1] 'For the last three years of Branwell's life, he took opium habitually, by way of stunning conscience; he drank, moreover, whenever he could get the opportunity. The reader may say that I have mentioned his tendency to intemperance long before. It is true; but it did not become habitual, as far as I can learn, until after he was dismissed from his tutorship. He took opium, because it made him forget for a time more effectually than drink; and, besides, it was more portable. In procuring it he showed all the cunning of the opium-eater. He would steal out while the family were at church—to which he had professed himself too ill to go—and manage to cajole the village druggist out of a lump; or, it might be, the carrier had unsuspiciously brought him some in a packet from a distance. For some time before his death he had attacks of delirium tremens of the most frightful character; he slept in his father's room, and he would sometimes declare that either he or his father should be dead before the morning. The trembling sisters, sick with fright, would implore their father not to expose himself to this danger; but Mr. Brontë was no timid man, and perhaps he felt that he could possibly influence his son to some self-restraint, more by showing trust in him than by showing fear. The sisters often listened for the report of a pistol in the dead of the night, till watchful eye and hearkening ear grew heavy and dull with the perpetual strain upon their nerves. In the mornings young Brontë would saunter out, saying, with a drunkard's incontinence of speech, 'the poor old man and I have had a terrible night of it; he does his best—the poor old man! but it's all over with me.' —*Mrs. Gaskell.*

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

### [*Death of Emily Brontë*]

*December* 21, 1848.

EMILY suffers no more from pain or weakness now. She never will suffer more in this world. She is gone, after a hard, short conflict. She died on *Tuesday*, the very day I wrote to you. I thought it very possible she might be with us still for weeks ; and a few hours afterwards, she was in eternity. Yes ; there is no Emily in time or on earth now. Yesterday we put her poor, wasted, mortal frame quietly under the church pavement. We are very calm at present. Why should we be otherwise ? The anguish of seeing her suffer is over ; the spectacle of the pains of death is gone by ; the funeral day is past. We feel she is at peace. No need now to tremble for the hard frost and the keen wind. Emily does not feel them She died in a time of promise. We saw her taken from life in its prime. But it is God's will, and the place where she is gone is better than that she has left.

God has sustained me, in a way that I marvel at, through such agony as I had not conceived. I now look at Anne, and wish she were well and strong ; but she is neither ; nor is Papa. Could you now come to us for a few days ? I would not ask you to stay long. Write and tell me if you could come next week, and by what train. I would try to send a gig for you to Keighley. You will, I trust, find us tranquil. Try to come. I never so much needed the consolation of a friend's presence. Pleasure, of course, there would be none for you in the visit, except what your kind heart would teach you to find in doing good to others.

### Charlotte Brontë to ——

[*The 'Black Milestones'*]

*April* 12, 1849.

I read Anne's letter to you; it was touching enough, as you say. If there were no hope beyond this world—no eternity—no life to come—Emily's fate, and that which threatens Anne, would be heart-breaking.[1] I cannot forget Emily's death-day; it becomes a more fixed, a darker, a more frequently recurring idea in my mind than ever. It was very terrible. She was torn, conscious, panting, reluctant, though resolute, out of a happy life. But it *will not do* to dwell on these things.

I am glad your friends object to your going with Anne: it would never do. To speak truth, even if your mother and sisters had consented, I never could. It is not that there is any laborious attention to pay her: she requires, and will accept, but little nursing; but there would be hazard, and anxiety of mind, beyond what you ought to be subject to. If, a month or six weeks hence, she continues to wish for a change as much as she does now, I shall (D.V.) go with her myself. It will certainly be my paramount duty; other cares must be made subservient to that. I have consulted Mr. T——: he does not object, and recommends Scarborough, which was Anne's own choice. I trust affairs may be so ordered that you may be able to be with us at least part of the time. . . Whether in lodgings or not I should wish to be boarded. Providing oneself is, I think, an insupportable nuisance. I don't like keeping provisions in a cupboard, locking up, being pillaged, and all that. It is a petty, wearing annoyance.

### Charlotte Brontë to a Friend

[*Fighting the Battle of life alone*]

*July* 14, 1849.

I do not much like giving an account of myself. I like better to go out of myself, and talk of something more cheerful. My cold, wherever I got it, whether at Easton or elsewhere, is not vanished yet. It began in my head, then I had a sore throat, and then a sore chest, with a cough, but only a trifling cough, which I still have at times. The pain between my shoulders likewise amazed me much. Say nothing about it, for I confess I am too much disposed to be nervous. This nervousness is a horrid phantom. I dare communicate no ailment to Papa; his anxiety harasses me inexpressibly.

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[1] Anne died towards the end of the following month.

My life is what I expected it to be. Sometimes when I wake in the morning, and know that Solitude, Remembrance, and Longing are to be almost my sole companions all day through—that at night I shall go to bed with them, that they will long keep me sleepless—that next morning I shall wake to them again—sometimes, Nell, I have a heavy heart of it. But crushed I am not, yet; nor robbed of elasticity, nor of hope, nor quite of endeavour. I have some strength to fight the battle of life. I am aware, and can acknowledge, I have many comforts, many mercies. Still I can *get on*. But I do hope and pray, that never may you, or any one I love, be placed as I am. To sit in a lonely room—the clock ticking loud through a still house—and have open before the mind's eye the record of the last year, with its shocks, sufferings, losses—is a trial.

I write to you freely, because I believe you will hear me with moderation—that you will not take alarm or think me in any way worse off than I am.

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### Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams

['*I shall bend as my Powers tend*']

*September* 21, 1849.

My dear Sir,—

I am obliged to you for preserving my secret, being at least as anxious as ever (*more* anxious I cannot well be) to keep quiet. You asked me in one of your letters lately, whether I thought I should escape identification in Yorkshire. I am so little known, that I think I shall. Besides, the book is far less founded on the Real, than perhaps appears. It would be difficult to explain to you how little actual experience I have had of life, how few persons I have known, and how very few have known me.

As an instance how the characters have been managed, take that of Mr. Helstone. If this character had an original, it was in the person of a clergyman who died some years since at the advanced age of eighty. I never saw him except once—at the consecration of a church—when I was a child of ten years old. I was then struck with his appearance, and stern, martial air. At a subsequent period, I heard him talked about in the neighbourhood where he had resided : some mentioned him with enthusiasm—others with detestation. I listened to various anecdotes, balanced evidence against evidence, and drew an inference. The original of Mr. Hall I have seen ; he knows me slightly ; but he would as soon think I had closely observed him or taken him for a character—he would as soon, indeed, suspect me of writing a book a novel—as he would his dog, Prince. Margaret Hall called *Jane Eyre* a 'wicked book', on the authority of the *Quarterley* ; an expression which, coming from her, I will here confess, struck somewhat deep. It opened my eyes to the harm the *Quarterly* had done. Margaret would not have called it 'wicked', if she had not been told so.

No matter—whether known or unknown—misjudged, or the contrary—I am resolved not to write otherwise. I shall bend as my powers tend. The two human beings who understood me, and whom I understood, are gone : I have some that love me yet, and whom I love, without expecting, or having a right to expect, that they shall perfectly understand me. I am satisfied ; but I must have my own way in the matter of writing. The loss of what we possess nearest and dearest to us in this world, produces an effect upon the character : we search out what we have yet left that can support, and, when found, we cling to it with a hold of new-strung tenacity. The faculty of imagination lifted me when I was sinking, three months ago ; its active exercise has kept my head above water since ; its results cheer me now, for I feel they have enabled me to give pleasure to others. I am thankful to God, who gave me the faculty ; and it is for me a part of my religion to defend this gift, and to profit by its possession. Yours sincerely, CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO GEORGE H. LEWES

['*I wish you did not think me a Woman*']

*November* 1, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,—

It is about a year and a half since you wrote to me ; but it seems a longer period, because since then it has been my lot to pass some black milestones in the journey of life. Since then there have been intervals when I have ceased to care about literature and critics and fame; when I have lost sight of whatever was prominent in my thoughts at the first publication of *Jane Eyre*; but now I want these things to come back vividly, if possible: consequently, it was a pleasure to receive your note. I wish you did not think me a woman. I wish all reviewers believed 'Currer Bell' to be a man; they would be more just to him. You will, I know, keep measuring me by some standard of what you deem becoming to my sex; where I am not what you consider graceful, you will condemn me. All mouths will be open against that first chapter; and that first chapter is as true as the Bible, nor is it exceptionable. Come what will, I cannot, when I write, think always of myself and of what is elegant and charming in femininity; it is not on those terms, or with such ideas, I ever took pen in hand: and if it is only on such terms my writing will be tolerated, I shall pass away from the public and trouble it no more. Out of obscurity I came, to obscurity I can easily return. Standing afar off, I now watch to see what will become of *Shirley*. My expectations are very low, and my anticipations somewhat sad and bitter; still, I earnestly conjure you to say honestly what you think; flattery would be worse than vain; there is no consolation in flattery. As for condemnation I cannot, on reflection, see why I should much fear it; there is no one but myself to suffer therefrom, and both happiness and suffering in this life soon pass away. Wishing you all success in your Scottish expedition, I am, dear sir, yours sincerely,

C. BELL.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

[*The Reviews of 'Shirley'*]

*November*, 1849.

*Shirley* makes her way. The reviews shower in fast. . . . The best critique which has yet appeared is in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a sort of European Cosmopolitan periodical, whose head-quarters are at Paris. Comparatively few reviewers, even in their praise, evince a just comprehension of the author's meaning. Eugène Forçade, the reviewer in question, follows Currer Bell through every winding, discerns every point, discriminates every shade, proves himself master of the subject, and lord of the aim. With that man I would shake hands, if I saw him. I would say, 'You know me, Monsieur; I shall deem it an honour to know you'. I could not say so much of the mass of the London critics. Perhaps I could not say so much to five hundred men and women in all the millions of Great Britain. That matters little. My own conscience I satisfy first; and having done that, if I further content and delight a Forçade, a Fonblanque, and a Thackeray, my ambition has had its ration; it is fed; it lies down for the present satisfied; my faculties have wrought a day's task, and earned a day's wages. I am no teacher; to look on me in that light is to mistake me. To teach is not my vocation. What I *am*, it is useless to say. Those whom it concerns feel and find it out. To all others I wish only to be an obscure, steady-going, private character. To you, dear E——, I wish to be a sincere friend. Give me your faithful regard; I willingly dispense with admiration.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

[*After a Memorable Visit to London*]

*December* 17, 1849

Here I am at Haworth once more. I feel as if I had come out of an exciting whirl. Not that the hurry and stimulus would have seemed much to one accustomed to society and change, but to me they were very marked. My strength and spirits too often proved quite insufficient to the demand on their exertions. I used to bear up as long as I possibly could, for, when I flagged, I could see Mr. Smith became disturbed; he always thought that something had been said or done to annoy me—which never once happened, for I met with perfect good breeding even from antagonists—men who had done their best or worst to write me down. I explained to him, over and over again, that my occasional silence was only failure of the power to talk, never of the will. . . .

Thackeray is a Titan of mind. His presence and powers impress one deeply in an intellectual sense ; I do not see him or know him as a man. All the others are subordinate. I have esteem for some, and, I trust, courtesy for all. I do not, of course, know what they thought of me, but I believe most of them expected me to come out in a more marked, eccentric, striking light. I believed they desired more to admire and more to blame. I felt sufficiently at my ease with all but Thackeray ; with him I was fearfully stupid.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO GEORGE H. LEWES[1]

[*Short and Sharp*]

*January*, 1850.

I CAN be on my guard against my enemies, but God deliver me from my friends !

CURRER BELL.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO GEORGE H. LEWES

[*Shakes hands again*]

*January*, 19, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I will tell you why I was so hurt of that review in the *Edinburgh* ; not because its criticism was keen or its blame sometimes severe ; not because its praise was stinted (for, indeed, I think you give me quite as much praise as I deserve), but because after I had said earnestly that I wished critics would judge me as an *author*, not as a woman, you so roughly—I even thought so cruelly—handled the question of sex. I dare say you meant no harm, and perhaps you will not now be able to understand why I was so grieved at what you will probably deem such a trifle; but grieved I was, and indignant too.

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[1] 'The January number of the *Edinburgh Review* ', writes Mrs. Gaskell, 'had contained the article on *Shirley*, of which her correspondent, Mr. Lewes, was the writer. I have said that Miss Brontë was especially anxious to be criticized as a writer, without relation to her sex as a woman. Whether right or wrong, her feeling was strong on this point. Now although this review of *Shirley* is not disrespectful towards women, yet the headings of the first two pages ran thus : "Mental Equality of the Sexes ? " "Female Literature," and through the whole article the fact of the author's sex is never forgotten.' A few days after the review appeared, Mr. Lewes received the note now reprinted, rather in the style of Anne, Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery. 'Seeing that she was unreasonable because angry ', Lewes afterwards explained, 'I wrote to remonstrate with her on quarrelling with the severity and frankness of a review, which certainly was dictated by real admiration and real friendship : even under its objections the friend's voice could be heard.' The next letter is her reply.

There was a passage or two which you did quite wrong to write.

However, I will not bear malice against you for it; I know what your nature is: it is not a bad or unkind one, though you would often jar terribly on some feelings with whose recoil and quiver you could not possibly sympathize. I imagine you are both enthusiastic and implacable, as you are at once sagacious and careless; you know much and discover much, but you are in such a hurry to tell it all you never give yourself time to think how your reckless eloquence may affect others; and, what is more, if you knew how it did affect them, you would not much care.

However, I shake hands with you: you have excellent points; you can be generous. I still feel angry, and think I do well to be angry; but it is the anger one experiences for rough play rather than for foul play.—

I am yours, with a certain respect, and more chagrin,

CURRER BELL.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO SYDNEY DOBELL

[*Her sister's Books*] [1]

Haworth, *December* 8, 1850.

I OFFER this little book to my critic in the *Palladium*, and he must believe it accompanied by a tribute of the sincerest gratitude; not so much for anything he has said of myself as for the noble justice he has rendered to one dear to me as myself—perhaps dearer; and perhaps one kind word spoken for her awakens a deeper, tenderer, sentiment of thankfulness than eulogies heaped on my own head. As you will see when you have read the biographical notice, my sister cannot thank you herself; she is gone out of your sphere and mine, and human blame and praise are nothing to her now. But to me, for her sake, they are something still; it revived me for many a day to find that, dead as she was, the work of her genius had at last met with worthy appreciation.

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[1] Written in sending a second edition of *Wuthering Heights* in response to an article in the *Palladium*, which had rendered what she considered the due meed of merit to *Wuthering Heights*, her sister Emily's tale. 'Her own works', remarks Mrs. Gaskell, 'were praised, and praised with discrimination, and she was grateful for this. But her warm heart was filled to the brim with kindly feeling towards him who had done justice to the dead.' She anxiously sought out the name of the writer; and having discovered that it was the poet and critic, Sydney Dobell (1824–1874), he immediately became one of her

Peculiar people whom Death had made dear.

*Wildfell Hall*, to which she also refers in this letter, was by her youngest sister, Anne, who wrote *Agnes Gray* as well.

Tell me, when you have read the introduction, whether any doubts still linger in your mind respecting the authorship of *Wuthering* Heights, *Wildfell Hall*, etc. Your mistrust did me some injustice; it proved a general conception of character such as I should be sorry to call mine; but these false ideas will naturally arise when we only judge an author from his works. In fairness, I must also disclaim the flattering side of the portrait. I am no 'young Penthesilea *mediis in millibus*', but a plain country parson's daughter.

Once more I thank you, and that with a full heart.

C. BRONTË.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO GEORGE SMITH

[*On Thackeray's 'Esmond'*]

*February* 14, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—

It has been a great delight to me to read Mr. Thackeray's works; and I so seldom now express my sense of kindness that, for once, you must permit me, without rebuke, to thank you for the pleasure so rare and special. Yet I am not going to praise either Mr. Thackeray or his book. I have read, enjoyed, been interested, and, after all, feel full as much ire and sorrow as gratitude and admiration. And still one can never lay down a book of his without the last two feelings having their part, be the subject or treatment what it may. In the first half of the book, what chiefly struck me was the wonderful manner in which the writer throws himself into the spirit and letters of the times whereof he treats; the allusions, the illustrations, the style, all seem to me so masterly in their exact keeping, their harmonious consistency, their nice, natural truth, their pure exemption from exaggeration. No second-rate imitator can write in that way; no coarse scene-painter can charm us with an allusion so delicate and perfect. But what bitter satire, what relentless dissection of diseased subjects! Well, and this, too, is right, or would be right, if the savage surgeon did not seem so fiercely pleased with his work. Thackeray likes to dissect an ulcer or an aneurism; he has pleasure in putting his cruel knife or probe into quivering, living flesh. Thackeray would not like all the world to be good; no great satirist would like society to be perfect.

As usual, he is unjust to women, quite unjust. There is hardly any punishment he does not deserve for making Lady Castlewood peep through a keyhole, listen at a door, and be jealous of a boy and a milkmaid. Many other things I noticed that, for my part, grieved and exasperated me as I read; but then, again, came passages so true, so deeply thought, so tenderly felt, one could not help forgiving and admiring.

* * * * *

But I wish he could be told not to care much for dwelling on the political or religious intrigues of the times. Thackeray, in his heart, does not value political or religious intrigues of any age or date. He likes to show us human nature at home as he himself daily sees it; his wonderful observant faculty likes to be in action. In him this faculty is a sort of captain and leader; and if ever any passage in his writings lacks interest, it is when this master-faculty is for a time thrust into a subordinate position. I think such is the case in the former half of the present volume. Towards the middle, he throws off restraint, becomes himself, and is strong to the close. Everything now depends on the second and third volumes. If, in pith and interest, they fall short of the first, a true success cannot ensue. If the continuation be an improvement upon the commencement, if the stream gather force as it rolls, Thackeray will triumph. Some people have been in the habit of terming him the second writer of the day; it just depends on himself whether or not these critics shall be justified in their award. He need not be the second. God made him second to no man. If I were he, I would show myself as I am, not as critics report me; at any rate, I would do my best. Mr. Thackeray is easy and indolent, and seldom cares to do his best. Thank you once more; and believe me yours sincerely,

C. Brontë.

### Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams

### [‘*Villette*’ *in the Making*]

*November* 6, 1852.

My dear Sir,—

I must not delay thanking you for your kind letter, with its candid and able commentary on *Villette*. With many of your strictures I concur. The third volume may, perhaps, do away with some of the objections ; others still remain in force. I do not think the interest culminates anywhere to the degree you would wish. What climax there is does not come on till near the conclusion ; and even then, I doubt whether the regular novel-reader will consider the ‘ agony piled sufficiently high ’ (as the Americans say), or the colours dashed on to the canvas with the proper amount of daring. Still, I fear, they must be satisfied with what is offered ; my palette affords no brighter tints ; were I to attempt to deepen the reds, or burnish the yellows, I should but botch.

Unless I am mistaken, the emotion of the book will be found to be kept throughout in tolerable subjection. As to the name of the heroine, I can hardly express what subtlety of thought made me decide upon giving her a cold name ; but, at first, I called her ‘ Lucy Snowe ’ (spelt with an ‘ e ’) ; which Snowe I afterwards changed to ‘ Frost ’. Subsequently, I rather regretted the change, and wished it ‘ Snowe ’ again. If not too late, I should like the alteration to be made now throughout the MS. A *cold* name she must have ; partly, perhaps, on the ‘ *lucus a non lucendo* ’ principle—partly on that of the ‘ fitness of things ’, for she has about her an external coldness.

You say that she may be thought morbid and weak, unless the history of her life be more fully given. I consider that she *is* both morbid and weak at times ; her character sets up no pretensions to unmixed strength, and anybody living her life would necessarily become morbid. It was no impetus of healthy feeling which urged her to the confessional, for instance ; it was the semi-delirium of solitary grief and sickness. If, however, the book does not express all this, there must be a great fault somewhere. I might explain away a few other points, but it would be too much like drawing a picture and then writing underneath the name of the object intended to be represented. We know what sort of a pencil that is which needs an ally in the pen.

Thanking you again for the clearness and fulness with which you have responded to my request for a statement of impressions, I am, my dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

C. BRONTË.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO MISS WOOLER[1]

[*Engaged to be Married*]

Haworth, *April* 12, 1854.

MY DEAR MISS WOOLER,—

The truly kind interest which you have always taken in my affairs, makes me feel that it is due to you to transmit an early communication on a subject respecting which I have already consulted you more than once. I must tell you then, that since I wrote last, Papa's mind has gradually come round to a view very different to that which he once took; and that after some correspondence, and as the result of a visit Mr. Nicholls paid here about a week ago, it was agreed that he was to resume the curacy of Haworth, as soon as Papa's present assistant is provided with a situation, and in due course of time he is to be received as an inmate into this house.

It gives me unspeakable content to see that now my father has once admitted this new view of the case, he dwells on it very complacently. In all arrangements, his convenience and seclusion will be scrupulously respected. Mr. Nicholls seems deeply to feel the wish to comfort and sustain his declining years. I think from Mr. Nicholls's character I may depend on this not being a mere transitory impulsive feeling, but rather that it will be accepted steadily as a duty, and discharged tenderly as an office of affection. The destiny which Providence in His goodness and wisdom seems to offer me will not, I am aware, be generally regarded as brilliant, but I trust I see in it some germs of real happiness. I trust the demands of both feeling and duty will be in some measure reconciled by the step in contemplation. It is Mr. Nicholls's wish that the marriage should take place this summer; he urges the month of July, but that seems very soon.

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[1] Charlotte's old schoolmistress and life-long friend.

When you write to me, tell me how you are. . . . I have now decidedly declined the visit to London, the ensuing three months will bring me abundance of occupation; I could not afford to throw away a month. . . . Papa has just got a letter from the good and dear Bishop, which has touched and pleased us much; it expresses so cordial an approbation of Mr. Nicholls's return to Haworth (respecting which he was consulted), and such kind gratification at the domestic arrangements which are to ensue. It seems his penetration discovered the state of things when he was here in June, 1853

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË TO A FRIEND

[*Her Last Letter*][1]

*February* 5, 1855.

A FEW lines of acknowledgment your letter *shall* have, whether well or ill. At present I am confined to my bed with illness, and have been so for three weeks. Up to this period, since my marriage, I have had excellent health. My husband and I live at home with my father; of course, I could not leave *him*. He is pretty well, better than last summer. No kinder, better husband than mine, it seems to me, there can be in the world. I do not want now for kind companionship in health and the tenderest nursing in sickness. Deeply I sympathize in all you tell me about Dr. W. and your excellent mother's anxiety. I trust he will not risk another operation. I cannot write more now: for I am much reduced and very weak. God bless you all. Yours affectionately,

C. B. NICHOLLS.

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[1] 'I do not think she ever wrote a line again', says Mrs. Gaskell. 'Long days and longer nights went by; still the same relentless nausea and faintness, and still borne on in patient trust. About the third week in March there was a change; a low wandering delirium came on; and in it she begged constantly for food and even for stimulants. She swallowed eagerly now; but it was too late. Wakening for an instant from this stupor of intelligence, she saw her husband's woe-worn face, and caught the sound of some murmured words of prayer that God would spare her. "Oh"! she whispered forth, "I am not going to die, am I? He will not separate us; we have been so happy"'.

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806–1861) AND ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1888)

We are, unfortunately, obliged to limit our selection of Browning's letters, though there is an abundance of tempting material to draw from. All that we can hope to do in the circumstances is to obtain a glimpse into the private lives of the two poets after the love romance, which is so tenderly told in *The Letters of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.* Even this glimpse, however, is sufficient to show how perfect their love remained until death came to separate them in 1861—fifteen years after their runaway marriage. The longest letter is taken from *Leigh Hunt's Correspondence*, published in 1862. The two remaining examples appear in Mrs. Sutherland Orr's *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, and are now reprinted by permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. The first letter needs, perhaps, a word or two of explanation. It was written from Paris in the year following the first visit of the Brownings to England after their marriage. They had often talked of that journey home, and its delay was mainly due to the painful associations connected with the death of Robert Browning's mother. In the summer of 1851 he summoned up sufficient courage for the journey; 'and then, as on each succeeding visit paid to London with his wife', writes Mrs. Sutherland Orr, 'he commemorated his marriage in a manner all his own. He went to the church in which it had been solemnized, and kissed the paving stone in front of the door. It needed all this love to comfort Mrs. Browning in the estrangement from her father, which was henceforth to be accepted as final. He had held no communication with her since her marriage, and she knew that it was not forgiven; but she had cherished a hope that he would so far relent towards her as to kiss her child, even if he would not see her. Her prayer to this effect, however, remained unanswered'. It was in the autumn following this disappointment that the Brownings went to Paris, accompanied by Carlyle, who spent some time with them in the French capital.

### Elizabeth Barrett Browning to——

### [*Her 'Prince of husbands' and George Sand*]

Paris, *April 7*, 1852.

George Sand we came to know a great deal more of. I think Robert saw her six times. Once he met her near the Tuileries, offered her his arm, and walked with her the whole length of the gardens. She was not on that occasion looking as well as usual, being a little too much *endimanchée* in terrestrial lavenders and super-celestial blues—not, in fact, dressed with the remarkable taste which he had seen in her at other times. Her usual costume is both pretty and quiet, and the fashionable waistcoat and jacket (which are aspectable in all the *Ladies' Companions* of the day) make the only approach to masculine wearings to be observed in her.

She has great nicety and refinement in her personal ways, I think—and the cigarette is really a feminine weapon if properly understood.

Ah ! but I didn't see her smoke. I was unfortunate. I could only go with Robert three times to her house, and once she was out. He was really very good and kind to let me go at all after he found the sort of society rampant around her. He didn't like it extremely, but being the prince of husbands, he was lenient to my desires, and yielded the point. She seems to live in the abomination of desolation, as far as regards society-crowds of ill-bred men who adore her, *à genoux bas*, betwixt a puff of smoke and an ejection of saliva—society of the ragged red, diluted with the low theatrical. She herself so different, so apart, so alone in her melancholy disdain. I was deeply interested in that poor woman. I felt a profound compassion for her. I did not mind much even the Greek, in Greek costume, who *tutoyéd* her, and kissed her I believe, so Robert said—or the other vulgar man of the theatre, who went down on his knees and called her '*sublime*'. *Caprice d'amitie*, she said with her quiet gentle scorn. A noble woman under the mud, be certain. I would kneel down to her, too, if she would leave it all, throw it off, and be herself as God made her. But she would not care for my kneeling—she does not care for me. Perhaps she doesn't care much for anybody by this time, who knows ? She wrote one or two or three kind notes to me, and promised to *venir m'embrasser* before she left Paris, but she did not come. We both tried hard to please her, and she told a friend of ours that she 'liked us'. Only we always felt that we couldn't penetrate—couldn't really touch her—it was all vain.

## ROBERT AND ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING TO LEIGH HUNT

['*Aurora Leigh*' *and their* '*Darling Precious Child*']

Bagni di Lucca, *October* 6, 1857.

DEAR LEIGH HUNT,—

(It is hard to write, but you bade me do so; yet I had better say 'Master Hunt', as they used to call Webster or Ford.) A nine month's silence after such a letter as yours seems too strange even to you perhaps. So understand that you gave us more delight at once than we could bear, that was the beginning of the waiting to recover spirit and try and do one's feelings a little less injustice. But soon followed unexpected sorrows to us and to you, and the expression of even gratitude grew hard again. Certainly all this while your letter has been laid before our very eyes, and we have waited for a brighter day than ever came till we left Florence two months ago and more, then we brought it to 'answer' among the chestnut trees; but immediately on our arrival a friend was attacked by fever, and we were kept in anxiety about him for six weeks. At last he recovered sufficiently to leave for Florence, and (just think) our little boy became ill, for the first time in his life, and gave us solicitude enough for a fortnight; it is nothing now that it is over; he is going about now almost as well as before, and we go away to-morrow, as I said. But I will try and get one, at least, of the joys I came to find here, and really write to you from this place, as I meant to do. 'I'——you know it is my wife that I write for, though you entangle and distract either of us by the reverberations (so to speak) of pleasures over and above the pleasure you give us. I intend to say, that you praise that poem, and mix it up with praise of her very self, and then give it to me directly, and then give it to *her* with the pride you have just given me, and then it somehow comes back to me increased so far, till the effect is just as you probably intended. I wish my wife may know you more: I wish you may see and know her more, but you cannot live by her eleven years, as I have done—or, yes, what cannot you do, being the man, the poet you are? This last word, I dare think, I have a right to say; I *have* always venerated you as a poet; other people, not unlikely may feel like me, that there has been no need of getting into feverish haste to cry out on what is; yet, you, who wrote it, can leave it and look at other poetry, and speak so of it ; how well of you !

I am still too near the production of *Aurora Leigh* to be quite able to see it all ; my wife used to write it, and lay it down to hear our child spell, or when a visitor came—it was thrust under the cushion then. At Paris, a year ago last March, she gave me the first six books to read, I having never seen a line before. She then wrote the rest, and transcribed them in London, where I read them also. I wish, in one sense, that I had written and she had read it. . . . . I shall commend myself to you by telling you this. Indeed the proper acknowledgment of your letter seems to be that one should do something, not say something. If you were here, I might quite naturally begin repeating *Giaffar* or *Solomon*, and the rest. You would see whether I was not capable of getting all the good out of your praise.

While I write, there is a strange thing that happened last night impossible to get out of my thoughts. It may give you pain to tell you of it, yet if with the pain come triumphant memories and hopes, as I expect there will, you may choose the pain with them. What decides me to tell it is that I heard you years ago allude to the destruction of a volume of *Lamia, Isabella*, etc., *to be restored to you yet*——now you remember : also, I think, of your putting my name near Shelley's in the end of your letter, where you say 'since I lost Shelley'. Is it not strange that I should have transcribed for the first time, last night, the *Indian Serenade* that, together with some verses of Metastasio, accompanied that book ? That I should have been reserved to tell the present possessor of them——to whom they were given by Captain Roberts—*what* the poem *was, and that it had been published* ! It is preserved religiously ; but the characters are all but illegible, and I needed a good magnifying-glass to be quite sure of such of them as remain. The end is that I have rescued three or four variations in the reading of that divine little poem, as one reads it, at least in the *Posthumous Poems*. It is headed the *Indian Serenade* (not *Lines to an Indian Air*.) In the first stanza the seventh line is 'Hath led me' ; in the second, the third line is 'And the champak's odours fail' ; and the eighth 'O ! Beloved as thou art' ! In the last stanza, the seventh line was, 'Oh, press it to thine own again'. Are not all these better readings? (even to the 'Hath' for 'Has'.) There I give them to you as you gave us Milton's hair. If I have mistaken in telling you, you will understand and forgive.

I think I will ask my wife to say a word or two, so I shall be sure that you forgive. Now let my wife say the remainder. All I have wished to do—know how little likely it was that I should succeed in that—was to assure you of my pride and affectionate gratitude.——God bless you ever,

R. B.

Dear friend, I will say; for I feel it must be something as good as friendship that can forgive and understand this silence, so much like the veriest human kind of ingratitude. When I look back and think—all this time after that letter, and not a sign made—I wonder. Yet, if you knew! First of all, we were silent because we waited for information which you seemed to desire. . . . Then there were sadder reasons. Poor *Aurora*, that you were so more than kind to (oh, how can I think of it?) has been steeped in tears, and some of them of a very bitter sort. Your letter was addressed to my husband, you knowing by your delicate true instinct where your praise would give most pleasure; but I believe Robert had not the heart to write when I felt that I should not have the spirit to add a word in the proper key. When we came here from Florence a few months ago to get repose and cheerfulness from the sight of the mountains, we said to ourselves that we would speak to you at ease——instead of which the word was taken from our own mouth, and we have done little but sit by sick beds and meditate on gastric fevers. So disturbed we have been—so sad! our darling precious child the last victim. To see him lying still on his golden curls, with cheeks too scarlet to suit the poor patient eyes, looking so frightfully like an angel! It was very hard. But this is over, I do thank God, and we are on the point of carrying back our treasure with us to Florence to-morrow, quite recovered, if a little thinner and weaker, and the young voice as merry as ever. You are aware that that child I am more proud of than twenty *Auroras* even after Leigh Hunt has praised them. He is eight years old, has never been '*crammed*', but reads English, Italian, French, German, and plays the piano—then, is the sweetest child! sweeter than he looks. When he was ill, he said to me, 'You pet, don't be unhappy about me. Think it's a boy in the street, and be a little sorry, but not unhappy'. You could not be unhappy, I wonder ?

I never saw your book called the *Religion of the Heart.* It's the only book of yours I never saw, and I mean to wipe out that reproach on the soonest day possible. I receive more dogmas, perhaps (my 'perhaps' being in the dark rather), than you do. I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ in the intensest sense—that he was God absolutely. But for the rest, I am very unorthodox——about the spirit, the flesh, and the devil, and if you would not let me sit by you, a great many churchmen wouldn't ; in fact, churches do all of them, as at present constituted, seem too narrow and low to hold true Christianity in its proximate developments. I, at least, cannot help believing them so.

My dear friend, can we dare, after our sins against you—can we dare wish for a letter from you sometimes ? Ask, we dare not. May God bless you. Even if you had not praised me and made me so grateful, I should be grateful to you for three things—for your poetry, (that first), then for Milton's hair, and then for the memory I have of our visit to you, when you sat in that chair and spoke so mildly and deeply at once.

Let me be ever affectionately yours,
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

## ROBERT BROWNING TO MISS HAWORTH

[*The Death of Mrs. Browning*]

Florence, *July*, 20, 1861.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I well know you feel as you say, for her once and for me now. . . . The main comfort is that she suffered very little pain, none beside that ordinarily attending the simple attacks of cold and cough she was subject to—had no presentiment of the result whatever, and was consequently spared the misery of knowing she was about to leave us ; she was smilingly assuring me she was 'better, quite comfortable—if I would but come to bed' to within a few minutes of the last. . . . I sent the servants away and her maid to bed—so little reason for disquietude did there seem. Through the night she slept heavily, and brokenly—that was the bad sign—but then she would sit up, take her medicine, say unrepeatable things to me and sleep again. At four o'clock there were symptoms that alarmed me, and I called the maid and sent for the doctor. She smiled as I proposed to bathe her feet, 'Well, you *are* determined to make an exaggerated case of it.' Then came what my heart will keep till I see her again, and longer—the most perfect expression of her love to me within my whole knowledge of her. Always smilingly, happily, and with a face like a girl's—and in a few minutes she died in my arms; her head on my cheek. These incidents so sustain me that I tell them to her beloved ones as their right: there was no lingering, nor acute pain, nor consciousness of separation, but God took her to himself as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark, uneasy bed into your arms and the light. Thank God.

## CHARLES DICKENS

### 1812–1870

'No man ever expressed himself more in his letters than Charles Dickens,' write his eldest daughter and Miss Georgina Hogarth, his sister-in-law, in the two volumes of his correspondence from which most of the following letters are taken—by permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co. In the first of our series Dickens shows how the children of his fancy were as flesh and blood to him, seizing hold of his affections like human beings. 'I am breaking my heart over this, and cannot bear to finish it', he writes in December, 1840, to Cattermole, the artist, in drawing near to the end of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop.*

'Fast shortening as the life of little Nell was now', says Forster in this connexion, 'the dying year might have seen it pass away; but I never knew him wind up any tale with such a sorrowful reluctance as this. He caught at any excuse to hold his hand from it, and stretched to the utmost limit the time left to complete it in. Christmas interposed its delays, too, so that twelfth night had come and gone when I wrote to him in the belief that it was nearly done. 'Done'! he wrote back to me on Friday, the 7th, 'done!!! Why, bless you, I shall not be done till Wednesday night. I only began yesterday, and this part of the story is not to be galloped over, I can tell you. I think it will come famously—but I am the wretchedest of the wretched. It casts the most horrible shadow upon me, and it is as much as I can do to keep moving at all. I tremble to approach the place a great deal more than Kit; a great deal more than Mr. Garland; a great deal more than the Single Gentleman. I shan't recover it for a long time. Nobody will miss her like I shall. It is such a very painful thing to me that I really cannot express my sorrow. Old wounds bleed afresh when I think of the way of doing it: what the actual doing it will be, God knows'. It was about this time that Dickens received the warm-hearted tribute from the backwoods of America, to which he replies in the letter from Devonshire Terrace on February 23, 1841. In later years Bret Harte paid a similar tribute to his memory entitled *Dickens in Camp*, relating how the miners would gather round the fire by night to listen to the reading of the book—

——— Wherein the Master
Had writ of 'Little Nell'.

'There is hardly any form of posthumous tribute', writes Forster, 'which I can imagine likely to have better satisfied his desire of fame, than one which should thus connect with the special favourite of all his heroines, the restraints and authority exerted by his genius over the rudest and least civilized of competitors in that far fierce race for wealth.' All the letters to Lady Blessington are reprinted from Madden's Life of the Gorgeous Countess. Forster testifies to the warmth of regard which Dickens, like Thackeray, had for Lady Blessington, and for all the inmates of Gore House. His associations with them were always pleasurable, and they gave him valuable help in his preparations for his travels in Italy, whence one or two of these letters were written.

## CHARLES DICKENS TO GEORGE CATTERMOLE

[*Breaking his heart over 'little Nell'*]

*December*, 22, 1840.

I

DEAR GEORGE,—

The child lying dead in the little sleep-room, which is behind the open screen. It is winter time, so there are no flowers; but upon her breast and pillow, and about her bed, there may be strips of holly and berries, and such free green things. Window overgrown with ivy. The little boy who had that talk with her about angels may be by the bedside, if you like it so; but I think it will be quieter and more peaceful if she is quite alone. I want it to express the most beautiful repose and tranquillity, and to have something of a happy look, if death can.

2

The child has been buried inside the church, and the old man, who cannot be made to understand that she is dead, repairs to the grave and sits there all day long, waiting for her arrival, to begin another journey. His staff and knapsack, her little bonnet and basket, etc., lie beside him. 'She'll come to-morrow', he says when it gets dark, and goes sorrowfully home. I think an hourglass running out would help the notion; perhaps her little things upon his knee, or in his hand. I am breaking my heart over this story, and cannot bear to finish it.

Love to Missis.

Ever and always heartily.

### Charles Dickens to John Tomlin

[*His Admirers in the Backwoods of America*]

Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park,
*February* 23, 1841.

Dear Sir,—

You are quite right in feeling assured that I should answer the letter you have addressed to me. If you had entertained a presentiment that it would afford me sincere pleasure and delight to hear from a warm-hearted and admiring reader of my books in the backwoods of America, you would not have been far wrong.

I thank you cordially and heartily both for your letter and its kind and courteous terms. To think that I have awakened a fellow-feeling and sympathy with the creatures of many thoughtful hours among the vast solitudes in which you dwell, is a source of the purest delight and pride to me; and believe me that your expressions of affectionate remembrance and approval, sounding from the green forests on the banks of the Mississippi, sink deeper into my heart and gratify it more than all the honorary distinctions that all the courts in Europe could confer.

It is such things as these that make one hope one does not live in vain, and that are the highest reward of an author's life.

To be numbered among the household gods of one's distant countrymen, and associated with their homes and quiet pleasures; to be told that in each nook and corner of the world's great mass there lives one well-wisher who holds communion with one in the spirit, is a worthy fame indeed, and one which I would not barter for a mine of wealth.

That I may be happy enough to cheer some of your leisure hours for a very long time to come, and to hold a place in your pleasant thoughts, is the earnest wish of 'Boz.' And, with all good wishes for yourself, and with a sincere reciprocation of all your kindly feeling.

I am, dear Sir,
Faithfully yours.

### CHARLES DICKENS TO DOUGLAS JERROLD

[*His 'Child's History', and his Hatred of Cant*]

Devonshire Terrace, *May* 3, 1843.

MY DEAR JERROLD,—

Let me thank you most cordially for your books, not only for their own sakes (and I have read them with perfect delight), but also for this hearty and most welcome mark of your recollection of the friendship we have established; in which light I know I may regard and prize them.

I am greatly pleased with your opening paper in the *Illuminated.* It is very wise, and capital; witty, much needed, and full of truth. I vow to God that I think the parrots of society are more intolerable and mischievous than its birds of prey. If ever I destroy myself, it will be in the bitterness of hearing those infernal and damnably good old times extolled. Once in a fit of madness, after having been to a public dinner which took place just as this Ministry came in, I wrote the parody I send you inclosed for Fonblanque. There is nothing in it but wrath; but that's wholesome, so I send it you.

I am writing a little history of England for my boy, which I will send you when it is printed for him, though your boys are too old to profit by it. It is curious that I have tried to impress upon him (writing, I dare say, at the same moment with you) the exact spirit of your papers, for I don't know what I should do if he were to get hold of any Conservative or High Church notions; and the best way of guarding against any such horrible result is, I take it, to wring the parrots' necks in his very cradle.

Oh Heaven, if you could have been with me at a hospital dinner last Monday! There were men there who made such speeches and expressed such sentiments as any moderately intelligent dustman would have blushed through his cindery bloom to have thought of. Sleek, slobbering, bow-punched, over-fed, apoplectic, snorting cattle, and the auditory leaping up in their delight! I never saw such an illustration of the power of purse, or felt so degraded and debased by its contemplation, since I have had eyes and ears. The absurdity of the thing was too horrible to laugh at. It was perfectly overwhelming. But if I could have partaken it with anybody who would have felt it as you would have done, it would have had quite another aspect; or would at least, like a 'classic mask' (oh d—— that word!) have had one funny side to relieve its dismal features.

Supposing fifty families were to emigrate into the wilds of North America—yours, mine, and forty-eight others—picked for their concurrence of opinion on all important subjects, and for their resolution to found a colony of common sense, how soon would that devil, Cant, present itself among them in one shape or other? The day they landed, do you say, or the day after?

That is a great mistake (almost the only one I know) in the *Arabian Nights*, when the princess restores people to their original beauty by sprinkling them with the golden water. It is quite clear that she must have made monsters of them by such a christening as that.

My dear Jerrold,
Faithfully your Friend.

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### CHARLES DICKENS TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*His Travels in Italy*]

Milan, *November* 20, 1844.

APPEARANCES are against me. Don't believe them. I have written you, in intention, fifty letters, and I can claim no credit for any one of them (though they were the best letters you ever read), for they all originated in my desire to live in your memory and regard.

Since I heard from Count D'Orsay, I have been beset in I don't know how many ways. First of all, I went to Marseilles, and came back to Genoa. Then I moved to the Peschiere. Then some people, who had been present at the scientific congress, here, made a sudden inroad on the establishment, and over-ran it. Then they went away, and I shut myself up for one month, close and tight, over my little Christmas book, *The Chimes*. All my affections and passions got twined and knotted up in it, and I became as haggard as a murderer, long before I wrote 'The End'. When I had done that, like '*The* man of Thessaly', who having scratched his eyes out in a quickset hedge, plunged into a bramble bush to scratch them in again, I fled to Venice, to recover the composure I had disturbed. From thence I went to Verona and to Mantua. And now I am here, just come up from underground, and earthy all over, from seeing that extraordinary tomb in which the dead saint lies in an alabaster case, with sparkling jewels all about him to mock his dusty eyes, not to mention the twenty franc pieces which devout votaries were ringing down upon a sort of sky light in the cathedral pavement above, as if it were the counter of his Heavenly shop.

You know Verona? You know everything in Italy *I* know. I am not learned in geography, and it was a great blow to me to find that Romeo was only banished five-and-twenty miles. It was a greater blow to me to see the old house of the Capulets, with some genealogical memorials, still carved in stone over the gateway of the court-yard. It is a most miserable little inn, at this time ankle deep in dirt; and noisy Vetturini and muddy market carts were disputing possession of the yard with a brood of geese, all splashed and bespattered as if they had their yesterday's white trousers on. There was nothing to connect it with the beautiful story, but a very unsentimental middle-aged lady (the Pandora, I suppose) in the doorway, who resembled old Capulet in the one particular, of being very great indeed in the family way.

The Roman amphitheatre there, delighted me beyond expression. I never saw anything so full of solemn, ancient interest. There are the four-and-forty rows of seats, as fresh and perfect as if their occupants had vacated them but yesterday, the entrances, passages, dens, rooms, corridors; the numbers over some of the arches. An equestrian troop had been there some days before, and had scooped out a little ring at one end of the arena, and had their performance in that spot. I should like to have seen it, of all things, for its very dreariness. Fancy a handful of people sprinkled over one corner of the great place ; (the whole population of Verona wouldn't fill it now) ; and a spangled cavalier bowing to the echoes and the grass-grown walls ! I climbed to the topmost seat, and looked away at the beautiful view for some minutes ; when I turned round, and looked down into the theatre again, it had exactly the appearance of an immense straw hat, to which the helmet in the castle of Otranto was a baby ; the rows of seats representing the different plaits of straw, and the arena the inside of the crown.

I had great expectations of Venice, but they fell immeasurably short of the wonderful reality. The short time I passed there, went by me in a dream. I hardly think it possible to exaggerate its beauties, its sources of interest, its uncommon novelty and freshness. A thousand and one realizations of the thousand and one nights, could scarcely captivate and enchant me more than Venice. . . .

Your old house at Albaro—Il Paradiso—is spoken of as yours to this day. What a gallant place it is ! I don't know the present inmate, but I hear that he bought and furnished it not long since with great splendour, in the French style, and that he wishes to sell it. I wish I were rich, and could buy it. There is a third-rate wine shop below Byron's house ; and the place looks dull, and miserable and ruinous enough.

Old—— is a trifle uglier than when I first arrived. He had periodical parties, at which there are a great many flower-pots and a few ices—no other refreshments. He goes about, constantly charged with extemporaneous poetry ; and is always ready, like tavern-dinners, on the shortest notice and the most reasonable terms. He keeps a gigantic harp in his bedroom, together with pen, ink, and paper, for fixing his ideas as they flow, a kind of profane King David, but truly good-natured and very harmless.

Pray say to Count D'Orsay everything that is cordial and loving from me. The travelling purse he gave me has been of immense service. It has been constantly opened. All Italy seems to yearn to put its hand in it. I think of hanging it, when I come back to England, on a nail as a trophy, and of gashing the brim like the blade of an old sword, and saying to my son and heir, as they do upon the stage, 'You see this notch, boy ? Five hundred francs were laid low on that day, for post horses. Where this gap is, a waiter charged your father treble the correct amount, and got it. This end, worn into teeth like the rasped edge of an old file, is sacred to the Custom Houses, boy, the passports, and the shabby soldiers at town-gates, who put an open hand and a dirty coat-cuff into the coach windows of all Forestieri. Take it, boy. Thy father has nothing else to give!'

My desk is cooling itself into a mail coach, somewhere down at the back of the cathedral, and the pens and ink in this house are so detestable, that I have no hope of your ever getting to this portion of my letter. But I have the less misery in this state of mind, from knowing that it has nothing in it to repay you for the trouble of perusal.

CHARLES DICKENS.

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### CHARLES DICKENS TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*Impressions of Rome and Naples*]

Genoa, *May* 9, 1845.

ONCE more in my old quarters; and with rather a tired sole to my foot, from having found such an immense number of different resting-places for it since I went away. I write you my last Italian letter for this bout, designing to leave here, please God, on the ninth of next month, and to be in London again by the end of June. I am looking forward with great delight to the pleasure of seeing you once more; and mean to come to Gore House with such a swoop as shall astonish the Poodle, if, after being accustomed to his own size and sense, he retain the power of being astonished at anything in the wide world.

You know where I have been, and every mile of ground I have travelled over, and every object I have seen. It is next to impossible surely to exaggerate the interest of Rome; though, I think, it *is* very possible to find the main source of interest in the wrong things. Naples disappointed me greatly. The weather was bad during a great part of my stay there. But if I had not had mud I should have had dust, and though I had had sun, I must still have had the Lazzaroni. And they are so ragged, so dirty, so abject, so full of degradation, so sunken and steeped in the hopelessness of better things, that they would make Heaven uncomfortable if they could ever get there. I didn't expect to see a handsome city, but I expected something better than that long dull line of squalid houses, which stretches from the Chiaja to the quarter of the Porta Capuana; and while I was quite prepared for a miserable populace, I had some dim belief that there were bright rags among them, and dancing legs, and shining sun-browned faces. Whereas the honest truth is, that connected with Naples itself, I have not one solitary recollection. The country round it charmed me, I need not say. Who can forget Herculaneum and Pompeii?

As to Vesuvius, it burns away in my thoughts, beside the roaring waters of Niagara; and not a splash of the water extinguished a spark of the fire; but there they go on, tumbling and flaming night and day; each in its fullest glory.

I have seen so many wonders, and each of them has such a voice of its own, that I sit all day long listening to the roar they make, as if it were in a sea shell; and have fallen into an idleness so complete, that I can't rouse myself sufficiently to go to Pisa on the twenty-fifth, when the triennial illumination of the Cathedral and Leaning Tower and Bridges, and what not, takes place. But I have already been there; and it cannot beat St. Peter's, I suppose. So I don't think I shall pluck myself up by the roots, and go aboard a steamer for Leghorn.

Let me thank you heartily for the *Keepsake* and the *Book of Beauty*[1]. They reached me a week or two ago. I have been very much struck with two papers in them. One, Landor's *Conversations*, among the most charming, profound, and delicate productions I have ever read. The other, four lines on Byron's room at Venice. I am as sure that you wrote them from your heart, as I am that they found their way immediately to mine.

It delights me to receive such accounts of Maclise's fresco. If he will only give his magnificent genius fair play, there is not enough cant and dulness even in the criticism of art from which Sterne prayed kind Heaven to defend him, as the worst of all the cants continually canted in this canting world, to keep the giant down an hour.

CHARLES DICKENS.

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[1] See footnote, p. 499.

### Dickens to the Hon. Mrs. Watson

[*London Out of Season*]

Boulogne, *Wednesday, September* 21, 1853.

My dear Mrs. Watson,—

The courier was unfortunately engaged. He offered to recommend another, but I had several applicants, and begged Mr. Wills to hold a grand review at the *Household Words* office, and select the man who is to bring me down as his victim. I am extremely sorry the man you recommend was not to be had, I should have been so delighted to take him.

I am finishing *The Child's History*, and clearing the way through *Household Words*, in general, before I go on my trip, I forget whether I told you that Mr. Egg the painter, and Mr. Collins are going with me.

The other day I was in town. In case you should not have heard of the condition of that deserted village, I think it worth mentioning. All the streets of any note were unpaved, mountains high, and all the omnibuses were sliding down alleys, and looking into the upper windows of small houses.

At eleven o'clock one morning I was positively alone in Bond Street, I went to one of my tailors, and he was at Brighton. A smutty-faced woman among some gorgeous regimentals, half-finished, had not the least idea when he would be back. I went to another of my tailors, and he was in an upper room, with open windows and surrounded by mignonette boxes, playing the piano in the bosom of his family. I went to my hosier's, and two of the least presentable of 'young men' of that elegant establishment were playing at draughts in the back shop (likewise I beheld a porter pot hastily concealed under a Turkish dressing-gown of a golden pattern) I then went wandering about to look for some ingenius portmanteau, and near the corner of St. James' Street saw a solitary being sitting in a trunk-shop, absorbed in a book which, on a close inspection, I found to be *Bleak House.* I thought this looked well, and went in. And he really was more interested in seeing me, when he knew who I was, than any face I had seen in any house, every house I knew being occupied by painters, including my own. I went to the Athenæum that same night, to get my dinner, and it was shut up for repairs. I went home late, and had forgotten the key and was locked out.

Preparations were made here, about six weeks ago, to receive the Emperor, who is not come yet. Meanwhile our countrymen (deluded in the first excitement) go about staring at these arrangements, with a personal injury upon them which is most ridiculous. And they *will* persist in speaking an unknown tongue to the French people, who will speak English to them.

Kate and Georgina send their kindest loves. We are all quite well. Going to drop two small boys here, at school with a former Eton tutor highly recommended to me. Charley was heard of a day or two ago. He says his professor 'is very short-sighted, always in green spectacles, always drinking weak beer, always smoking a pipe, and always at work'. The last qualification seems to appear to Charley the most astonishing one.

Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson,
Most affectionately yours.

### Charles Dickens to Lady Blessington

[*Collecting Ideas for a Book*]

Devonshire Terrace, *March* 2, 1856.

Many thanks for the letters! I will take the greatest care of them, though I blush to find how little they deserve it.

It vexes me very much that I am going out on Friday, and cannot help it. I have no strength of mind, I am afraid. I am always making engagements, in which there is no prospect of satisfaction.

Vague thoughts of a new book are rife within me just now; and I go wandering about at night into the strangest places, according to my usual propensity at such a time, seeking rest and finding none. As an addition to my composure, I ran over a little dog in Regent's Park yesterday (killing him on the spot) and gave his little mistress, a girl of thirteen or fourteen, such exquisite distress as I never saw the like of.

I must have some talk with you about those American singers. They must never go back to their own country without your having heard them sing Hood's *Bridge of Sighs*. My God, how sorrowful and pitiful it is!

Best regards to Count D'Orsay and the young ladies.

CHARLES DICKENS.

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### CHARLES DICKENS TO WILKIE COLLINS

[*Autobiography in Brief*]

Tavistock House, *June* 6, 1856.

MY DEAR COLLINS,—

I have never seen anything about myself in print which has much correctness in it—any biographical account of myself I mean. I do not supply such particulars when I am asked for them every day. If you want to prime Forgues, you may tell him without fear of anything wrong, that I was born at Portsmouth on February 7, 1812, that my father was in the Navy Pay office: that I was taken by him to Chatham when I was very young, and lived and was educated there till I was twelve or thirteen, I suppose; that I was then put to a school near London, where (as at other places) I distinguished myself like a brick; that I was put in the office of a solicitor, a friend of my father's, and didn't much like it; and after a couple of years (as well as I can remember) applied myself with a celestial or diabolical energy to the study of such things as would qualify me to be a first-rate parliamentary reporter—at that time a calling pursued by many clever men who were young at the Bar; that I made my début in the gallery (at about eighteen, I suppose) engaged on a voluminous publication no longer in existence, called the *Mirror of Parliament*; that when the *Morning Chronicle* was purchased by Sir John Easthope and acquired a large circulation, I was engaged there, and that I remained there until I had begun to publish *Pickwick*, when I found myself in a condition to relinquish that part of my labours; that I left the reputation behind me of being the best and most rapid reporter ever known, and that I could do anything in that way under any sort of circumstances, and often did. (I daresay I am at this present writing the best shorthand writer in the world.)

That I began, without any interest or introduction of any kind, to write fugitive pieces for the old *Monthly Magazine*, when I was in the gallery for the *Mirror of Parliament*; that my faculty for descriptive writing was seized upon the moment I joined *The Morning Chronicle*, and that I was liberally paid there and handsomely acknowledged, and wrote the greater part of the short descriptive 'Sketches by Boz' in that paper; that I had been a writer when I was a mere baby, and always an actor from the same age; that I married the daughter of a writer to the *Signet* in Edinburgh, who was the great friend and assistant of Scott, and who first made Lockhart known to him.

And that here I am.

Finally, if you want any dates of publication of books, tell Wills and he'll get them for you. This is the first time I ever set down even these particulars, and, glancing them over, I feel like a wild beast in a caravan describing himself in the keeper's absence.

Ever Faithfully.

PS.—I made a speech last night at the London Tavern, at the end of which all the company sat holding their napkins to their eyes with one hand, and putting the other into their pockets. A hundred people or so contributed nine hundred pounds then and there.

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### CHARLES DICKENS TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

[*For Auld Lang Syne*]

Villa Des Moulineaux, Boulogne, *Saturday Evening*,
*July* 5, 1856.

MY DEAR LANDOR,—

I write to you so often in my books, and my writing of letters is usually so confined to the numbers that I *must* write, and in which I have no kind of satisfaction, that I am afraid to think how long it is since we exchanged a direct letter. But talking to your namesake this very day at dinner, it suddenly entered my head that I would come into my room here as soon as dinner should be over, and write, 'My dear Landor, how are you?' for the pleasure of having the answer under your own hand. That you do write, and that pretty often, I know beforehand. Else why do I read the *Examiner* ?

We were in Paris from October to May (I perpetually flying between that city and London), and there we found out, by a blessed accident, that your godson was horribly deaf. I immediately consulted the principal physician of the Deaf and Dumb Institution there (one of the best aurists in Europe), and he kept the boy for three months, and took unheard of pains with him. He is now quite recovered, has done extremely well at school, has brought home a prize in triumph, and will be eligible to 'go up' for his Indian examination soon after next Easter. Having a direct appointment, he will probably be sent out soon after he has passed, and so will fall into that strange life 'up the country,' before he well knows he is alive, which indeed seems to be rather an advanced stage of knowledge.

And there in Paris, at the same time, I found Marguerite Power and Little Nelly, living with their mother and a pretty sister, in a very small, neat apartment, and working (as Marguerite told me) hard for a living. All that I saw of them filled me with respect, and revived the tenderest remembrances of Gore House. They are coming to pass two or three weeks here for a country rest, next month. We had many long talks concerning Gore House, and all its bright associations ; and I can honestly report that they hold no one in more gentle and affectionate remembrance than you. Marguerite is still handsome, though she had the smallpox two or three years ago, and bears the traces of it here and there, by daylight. Poor Little Nellie (the quicker and more observant of the two) shows some little tokens of a broken off marriage in a face too careworn for her years, but is a very winning and sensible creature.

We are expecting Mary Boyle too, shortly.

I have just been propounding to Forster if it is not a wonderful testimony to the homely force of truth, that one of the most popular books on earth has nothing in it to make any one laugh or cry ? Yet I think, with some confidence, that you never did either over any passage in *Robinson Crusoe*. In particular, I took Friday's death as one of the least tender and (in the true sense) least sentimental things ever written. It is a book I read very much, and the wonder of its prodigious effect on me and every one, and the admiration thereof, grows on me the more I observe this curious fact.

Kate and Georgina send you their kindest love, and smile approvingly on me from the next room, as I bend over my desk. My dear Landor, you see many I daresay, and hear from many I have no doubt, who love you heartily; but we silent people in the distance never forget you. Do not forget us, and let us exchange affection at least.

Ever your Admirer and Friend.

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## Charles Dickens to a Jewish Lady

[*Why he made Fagin a Jew*] [1]

*Friday, July* 10, 1863.

Dear Madam,—

I hope you will excuse this tardy reply to your letter. It often is impossible for me, by any means, to keep pace with my correspondents. I must take leave to say, that if there be any general feeling on the part of the intelligent Jewish people, that I have done them what you describe as 'a great wrong,' they are a far less sensible, a far less just, and a far less good-tempered people than I have always supposed them to be. Fagin, in *Oliver Twist*, is a Jew, because it unfortunately was true of the time to which that story refers, that that class of criminal almost invariably was a Jew. But surely no sensible man or woman of your persuasion can fail to observe —firstly, that all the rest of the wicked *dramatis personæ* are Christians, and secondly, that he is called the 'Jew,' not because of his religion, but of his race. If I were to write a story, in which I described a Frenchman or a Spaniard as 'the Roman Catholic,' I should do a very indecent and unjustifiable thing: but I make mention of Fagin as the Jew, because he is one of the Jewish people, and because it conveys that kind of idea of him which I should give my readers of a Chinaman, by calling him a Chinese.

The enclosed is quite a nominal subscription towards the good object in which you are interested; but I hope it may serve to show you that I have no feeling towards the Jewish people but a friendly one. I always speak well of them, whether in public or in private, and bear my testimony (as I ought to do) to their perfect good faith in such transactions as I have ever had with them ; and in my *Child's History of England*, I have lost no opportunity of setting forth their cruel persecution in old times.[1]

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[1] His correspondent had written to complain that his study of Fagin was an injustice to the Jews, and had asked at the same time for a contribution towards a fund for the benefit of the Jewish poor.

Dear Madam, faithfully yours.

## THOMAS HOOD

### 1799–1845

Gallant Thomas Hood ! It is difficult to read some of his letters without a lump coming into one's throat, in spite of the smile that he nearly always insists on raising, no matter how desperately he may be engaged at the time in his life-long struggle with death. Thomas Hood could send out his last Christmas Number as sparkling with fun and merriment as ever, knowing all the time, as he said himself, that he was 'so near Death's door, he could almost fancy he heard the creaking of the hinges'. The most pathetic passage in the *Memorials* by his son and daughter, is that which tells how his humorous productions were looked forward to and laughed over at every fireside but Thomas Hood's own. 'His own family never enjoyed his quaint and humorous fancies, for they were all associated with memories of illness and anxiety. Although Hood's *Comic Annual*, as he himself used to remark with pleasure, was in every house seized upon, and almost worn out by the frequent handling of little fingers, his own children did not enjoy it till the lapse of many years had mercifully softened down some of the sad recollections concerning it'. Hood, the humorist, always had a larger audience in his life time than Hood the poet—'the finest English poet between the generation of Shelley and the generation of Tennyson', in Mr. W. M. Rossetti's opinion—but much of his serious work, such as the 'Song of the Shirt', 'Eugene Aram', the 'Bridge of Sighs', the 'Ode to Melancholy', and the song beginning 'I remember, I remember, the house where I was born', will survive long after his work as the Prince of Punsters has been forgotten. A little-known letter on Hood's first volume, *Odes and Addresses to Great People*, in which he collaborated with his brother-in-law—Keats's old friend and disciple, John Hamilton Reynolds—will be found in our selection of Coleridge's correspondence. The *Odes and Addresses* appeared anonymously, and Coleridge attributed it to Lamb, whose friendship had played a large and helpful part in Hood's early career. 'To speak with becoming modesty', writes Coleridge to Lamb, of this production, 'excepting my own self, who is there but you who could write the musical lines and stanzas that are intermixed with the jokes'? Thomas Hood's chief correspondents in the letters now reprinted are his old friends Wright, Dr. Eliot, and the first Charles Wentworth Dilke, who became proprietor of the *Athenæum* in 1830, and filled its editor's chair until a year after Thomas Hood's death. Another favourite correspondent is Lieutenant de Franck, a young Englishman serving in the Prussian army, who became Hood's close companion at Coblenz, when the struggling humorist voluntarily exiled himself there in 1835, hoping, like Scott, to wipe off by redoubled vigilance and economy the heavy debts which had accumulated over his head in consequence of a publisher's failure.

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[1] The Jewish lady wrote again, thanking Dickens for his kind letter and its enclosure, but still remonstrating and pointing out that though, as he observes, 'all the other criminal characters were Christians, this wretched Fagin stands alone as the Jew'. Dickens's reply to this was the character of Riah, in *Our Mutual Friend*, and some favourable sketches of Jewish character in some contributions to *All the Year Round*.

### THOMAS HOOD TO MR. WRIGHT

[*An Amusing Letter from Ramsgate*]

RAMSGATE, May 26, Wind E.N.E., Weather moderate. Remain in the harbour, the Isis, Snow, Rose, Pink, Daisy, cutters; Boyle, steamer: John Ketch, powerful lugger.

In the Roads, the McAdam, with Purbeck stone. The Jane (Mrs. Hood) on putting out to sea, was quite upset, and obliged to discharge.

MY DEAR WRIGHT,—

It was like your lubberly taste to prefer the Epsom Salts to the Ocean Brine, but I am glad to hear you do mean after all to trust your precious body, as you have sometimes committed your voice, to the 'deep, deep sea.' Should its power overwhelm you, it will only be a new illustration of the saying that 'might overcomes (W) right.'

(Jack enters to say the wind and tide serve, so am after a sail, which I hope, with respect to myself, will prove a 'sail of effects.')

(3 P.M. Re-enter the Ann (a young lady-friend of Hood's) with T. H., his face well washed, his coat dripping, collar like two wet dog's ears, and his old hat as glossy as a new ''un.' He eats a biscuit as soft as sopped granite, a dram of whiskey, and then resumes the pen.)

I have had my sail—my first since I have been here; delightfully brisk;
What some would call awfully rough—and am come in all in a glow.
The land-gods and satyrs may be *your* thology, but Neptune and
The sea-deities are *my*-thology. Bless them and their little pickles!

Although they are prose, I defy a poet to write better descriptive lines of the sea than the four last.

The Derby seems to have been highly creditable to Glaucus and the rest of the favourites. Outsiders (and sea-siders) for ever !

There come over here boats from France laden with boxes of white things, of an oval shape, the size of eggs ; I rather think they are eggs, and I was much amused with an energetic question which one of our local marines put to one of the French ones,—' Where *do* you get all your eggs ? ' as if they had some way of making them by machinery. For certain the quantity is great, and the French hens must lay longer odds than mine.

The weather is so fine, you will be a great Pump if you do not come here sooner than you propose.

When you talk of the *middle* of the week, you may as well embrace the *waist* of the week, and come down here at once by Tuesday's Margate steamer. Every hour will do you good, so don't stick Thursday obstinately on your back, like an ass ridden by *Day*. Seriously, I shall look for you, and my doctor says all disappointments will throw me back. Mind while you are on board, have a crust and Cheshire and bottled porter for a lunch. The last is capital ! No entire can match that which hath been ripened and mellowed by voyaging. Even Ann Porter (the young lady referred to before) is improved by crossing the Channel. Don't forget the pig-tail,—that is the porter. And sit not with your back to the bulwark, on account of the *tremor* of the engine. The sound is as of a perpetual *gallopade* performed by sea-horses. Just go to the chimney and listen. There was no illness whatever when I came down,—at least human sickness. The only symptom I saw was the *heaving* of the lead.

I remain, dear Wright, yours distantly,
THOS. HOOD, R.N.

PS. Wind has veered half a point. Forgot to say we forgot my birthday on the 23rd, so are keeping it to-day *ex post facto*, but not completely as usual, for I had no artillery to discharge at one o'clock.

### THOMAS HOOD TO CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE

### [*'A Touch on the Lungs'*]

752, Alten Graben, Coblenz, *December* 26, 1836.

MY DEAR DILKE,—

I intended to write to you long ago, but, as usual, I have been laid up in ordinary, a phrase you must get some Navy Pay Officer to translate. My marching in fact ended like Le Fèvre's (it ought to be Le Fever) in a sick bed—my regiment came to a regimen![1] Oh, Dilke, what humbugs of travellers you and I be now, that we cannot compass a few hundred miles, but the leech must be called in at the end! I came home, looking ruddy as a ploughboy, and excepting some signs of my old local weakness, better apparently than since I have been here; but almost the next day after my return, I turned white, with a most unaccountable depression, which ended in a fit of spitting blood as before. Dr. S——was immediately sent for—I was bled, and there was no return.

Now I cannot believe that such a poor crow as I can have too much blood. I suspect this time it was a touch on the lungs, which were never touched before, being indeed my strongest point. I attribute it to our unlucky accident of the coach—at four o'clock of a cold, windy morning. However, I am nearly right again, but weak and low—rather: your kind letter has just arrived with its good news, quite equal to three cheers, one for Dilke, one for the 'Comic,' and one for myself. I was afraid the first would be worse for his homeward journey. I must and will think you set off too soon, and as a prophet after the fact, you had plenty of mild fine weather before you, for it only snowed here for the first time yesterday, Christmas Day! I am heartily glad to hear of so much decided improvement, but it will be a weak point always and require great care;—even at the expense of having a fell of hair like a German.

If he cannot get it *cut at home*, he deserves to have his head shaved for that last expedition. What would Dr. S—— say, only I can't tell him. I hope *you*, *Mrs.* Dilke, preached a good sermon on it, and you will do well to read him daily a morning lesson out of the Bible, showing how Samson lost all his strength by going and having his hair cut. What an epitaph must I have written, if he had died through *that* little outbreak of personal vanity :—

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[1] A march which he had undertaken with Lieutenant de Franck and his German regiment.

> Here lies Dilke, the victim to a whim,
> Who went to have his hair cut, but the air cut him.

And now, my dear D., with kind regards to Mrs. Dilke,

Believe me ever
Your faithful friend,
THOMAS HOOD.

### THOMAS HOOD TO DR. ELIOT

[*The Tragedy behind 'The Comic'*]

39, Rue Longue, Ostend, *December* 2, 1837.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—

I have several times been on the point of writing to you ; but firstly came a resolution to try first the effect of the place on me ; secondly, the Dilkes ; and, thirdly, the 'Comic.' Indeed, an unfinished letter is beside me, for (some time back) there seemed to be a change in the aspect of my case, to which I can now speak more decidedly.

I have done the 'Comic' with an ease to myself I cannot remember.

We are also very comfortable here. Fanny is quite improved in health, getting flesh and colour, and Tom is health itself. Mrs. Hood, too, fattens and looks well. I have got through more this year than since I have been abroad. I wrote three letters some months ago in the 'Athenæum' on Copyright, which made some stir, and I have written for a sporting annual of B——'s. Also in January I am going to bring out a cheap re-issue of the 'Comic' from the beginning, so that my head and hands are full. I know it is rather against my complaint, this sedentary profession ; but in winter one must stay in a good deal, and I take what relaxation I can ; and, finally, *necessitas non habet leges*. I am, notwithstanding, in good heart and spirits. But who would think of such a creaking, croaking, blood-spitting wretch being the 'Comic' ? At this moment there is an artist on the sea on his way to come and take a portrait of me for B——, which I believe is to be in the Exhibition; but he must flatter me, or they will take the whole thing for a practical joke.

I am, my dear Doctor,
Yours ever truly,
THOMAS HOOD.

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### THOMAS HOOD TO LIEUTENANT DE FRENCH

['*Full of good News and Spirits*']

Rue Longue, Ostend, *Christmas Day*, 1838.

'TIM', says he! 'hier ist ein brief mit my own hand geschrieben at last!' 'Time it was', says you,—and so think I, considering our old comradeship; but I am not going to plead guilty to wilful neglect, or malice prepense. You know how my time is divided,—first I am very ill, then very busy to make up for lost time,—and then in consequence very jaded and knocked up, which ends generally in my being very ill again. Neither of the three moods is very favourable for writing long, cheerful, friendly letters; ergo, you will conclude that I am at this present writing neither ill, busy, nor very jaded, which is precisely the case.

Your letter came while I was in bed, full of rising ambition, so I read it before I got up,—and how nicely the fellow timed it, thought I, to arrive on this very morning of all the days in the year! so I sit down to try whether I cannot hit you with mine on New Year's day. You will like to hear all about me, so I shall make myself Number One. In health I am better, and in better hope than of late, for a complete revolution has taken place in my views on the subject.

The doctor here is an experienced old English army surgeon, besides being used to London practice; and he said from the first he could find no pulmonary symptoms about me. The truth is, my constitution is rallying, as the Prussians did after Quatre Bras, and is showing fight, the sea air and diet here being in my favour. You know what the Rhineland diet is, even at the best, while here we have meat quite as good as English, good white wheaten bread, if anything better than English, and the very finest vegetables I ever saw. The consequence is I eat heartily good breakfasts, with fish, etc., and ample dinners: in fact, we have left off suppers simply from not caring about them in general. Sometimes we have a few oysters, and we eat shrimps, Tim, all the spring and summer through!

All this looks well, but by way of making surer, and for the sake of Elliot's advice, in which I have justly such confidence, I am on the point, Tim, of a visit to England, as Elliot's practice will not let him come to me. It must blow very great guns on Wednesday morning, or I leave this in the Dover mail on a flying visit to the glorious old island! It is a rough season, and Jane is a wretched sailor; and besides, cock and hen cannot both leave the nest and chicks at the same time, so I go solus. But she will go to see her mother, I expect, in the spring or the summer: for we have made up our minds to stay here another year, and perhaps two. It will be some time before I shall be strong enough to live a London life; and being rather popular in that city, I cannot keep out of society and late hours. At all events I am close at hand if wanted for a new ministry. Jane says she should not like me to be a *place*-man, for fear of red spots.

* * * * *

Since the above I have been to England. I spent there about three weeks, and am just returned, full of good news and spirits. Elliot came to me, and after a very careful examination, and sounding every inch of me by the ear, and by the stethoscope, declares my lungs perfectly sound, and the complaint is in the liver. He altogether coincides with my doctor here, both as to the case and its treatment, and my own feelings quite confirmed their view; so that at last I seem in the right road. But what long, and precious time I have lost—I only wonder I have survived it! The ignorant brutes!

Between friends and business I had a regular fag in London, for there were such arrears: for instance, among other things, all my accounts with my publishers for three years to go through. They turned out satisfactory, and besides established the fact, which is hardly conceivable by those who are experienced on the subject, that the 'Comic' keeps up a steady sale, being, if anything, better than last year. All other annuals have died or are dying. Of course this is quite a literary triumph, and moreover I had to prepare a re-issue of all the old ones, which will come out monthly in future; you shall have them when complete in the year's end. Moreover my German book is to come out in the course of the year. I send you proofs of some of the woodcuts which are finished—you will recognize some of the portraits. Then I propose to begin a Child's Library,[1] so I have cut out plenty of work.

As for the 'Comic', I did it this year with such ease, and at such a gallop, that I sent MSS. faster than they could acknowledge the receipt thereof. I never did it so easily before. The fact is, provided my health should clear up, and I get strong, I am but beginning my career. For the fun of the thing, I must tell you that there has been a short memoir of me published. You will Judge how well the author knows me when he says, 'We believe his mind is to be more serious than comic, we have never known him laugh heartily either in company or in rhyme'. But my methodist face took him in, for he says, 'the countenance of Mr. Hood is more solemn than merry'. The rest is a great deal handsomer than I deserve, and a proof how unfounded the notion is of envy and spite among literary men.

And now I think I have told you everything about myself. Jenny is as thin as she has been for a long time; my last illness frightened her; indeed we have both had a fear we kept to ourselves, but of course she will now laugh and get fat. There is a treat too in store for her, for when the weather is fine enough she is going over to see her family; three years' absence is a trial to such a heart as hers. Luckily, she has no longer the dinner anxieties, and the wish and prayer for a 'new animal' that so worried her in Coblenz! I get nothing now that I cannot eat, and as to drink, I am quite a Temperance Society, though I am now allowed a little wine. To be sure she still sticks to her old fault of going to sleep while I am dictating, till I vow to change my *woman*uensis for *amanuensis*. And moreover she took the opportunity during my absence of buying a plaice *with red spots*—could not eat it after all—Verdict, 'Sarve her right', when we can get plenty of turbot.

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[1] 'Of all the projected works, which were never to be finished, I regret this most of all. My father had a knack of inventing children's stories, and was always a great favourite with little folk. There are many—not little folk now—who remember his gentleness and kindness in amusing them. He used to tell stories, illustrating them with sketches made as he told them—of these, alas, only the illustrations remain. With myself and my sister he was very fond of playing suggested games to us, and pointed out the "properties" that would suit them. He was very fond of Dr. Elliot's children, to whom he frequently wrote, and sent paper animals, etc., cut out very cleverly. During his last illness a very beautiful miniature of four of these little favourites lay on his bed, and he used to take much pleasure in contemplating it. Some letters, in another part of this work, written to them, will prove how well he would have written such a Child's Library as he here speaks of.'—THOMAS HOOD, the younger, in the *Memorials* of his father.

Some weeks ago some fellow or other on the Tory side wrote a poem against the ministry, and forged my name to it, and I had a skirmish on the subject. The fact is there is a set, who try to write down and libel all who are not Tories, neutrals like myself included; it is too bad, but they will sink of themselves at last from sheer want of character and principle. I am not afraid of them, and do not think they will care to attack me, as I am apt to get *the laugh* on my side. I was the more annoyed at the forgery, because it was addressed to the Queen. Are we not in luck, Tim, to have such a nice young girl to be loyal to? She is very popular, and does good by frequenting the theatres, etc. Her mother is very much respected, and has done her duty both to her daughter and to the nation, in a manner that deserves a statue at the hands of the English ladies. But I must pull up or I shall have no room for the messages. Tom sends his love to 'Fank, Vilidans, Tarelvitch, and Towski'; Fanny joins in chorus; and Jane sends her kindest regards, and says she has no chance of learning French here, there is so much English. There is plenty of *Flemish* too, but I can't *learn it*; and so must tell you in the mother tongue, that I am, my dear Franck, your friend ever, and in all sincerity, to the end of the line, and without a weak length in it,

THOMAS, TIM, JOHNNY HOOD.

PS. Should you see 'Hood's Own' advertised in any of your northern papers, it is not my wife, but the re-issue of the 'Comic.'

### THOMAS HOOD TO HIS WIFE

### [*A Night of Agony*]

*Saturday, October* 21, 1839.[1]

MY OWN DEAREST AND BEST,

You will have wondered at not hearing from me, and still more as a packet went to Bradbury, all of which I have to explain.

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[1] 'About this time my mother went over to England to visit her family, after an absence

It is a mingled yarn I must spin of good and bad. I was getting on so well, that, knowing its importance at present, on many accounts, and as Mrs. D—— was writing, I would not hinder myself; for it is not always I have the power to compose, which I was enjoying. In fact, I was rejoicing in my progress; and the only reason I did not send a packet was this, that what I had written was farther on in the book, and wanted some previous matter to connect it; and as the Bradburys had a sheet to go to press with, and half a sheet besides set up, I was afraid of locking up their type. The last thing I did was the story of the man who overhears the devil repeating the fatal word. This was finished on Wednesday night, but not posted for the above reason. And so I went to bed about eleven, well pleased with my work; but no sooner in bed than I had one of my old rheumatic attacks in my foot. A sudden change to very cold weather, I think, brought it on. You know what those attacks are. Your desire that I should wish for you, and *not* wish for you, literally came true. I missed the comfort, but was hardly sorry you were not present to be distressed by sufferings you could not relieve. I groaned all the night through in agony, without intermission: and on Thursday morning, about ten, put on leeches, which relieved me a *little*. Soon after, from sheer exhaustion, I fell asleep; but almost immediately woke up again with a most violent cramp in the same leg. The only remedy is to walk about on it; but with my foot all swelled and inflamed, I could not put it to the ground, and could only wait till the cramp went away of itself. You may suppose the double anguish was intolerable—in fact, it quite convulsed me; and when the cramp was over, I had the pain all day, with only one short doze. At night, it was worse than ever, and I got no relief but by repeatedly putting it in hot water, and then only for a moment. It was so dreadful, I made Mary sleep in the children's room, for I thought I should be delirious. It abated a little in the day, but I

of four or five years. While she was away my father was taken very ill, as will be seen in the following letter which, however, is very cheerfully written for fear of alarming her. My father was now becoming aware of the fact that the Belgian climate did not suit him better than the German. Only the native air of his own England suited him. From that, his misfortune—and the faults of others, rather than his own—excluded him. In spite of this, nevertheless, he kept up a brave heart, and struggled against illnesses, which an attentive reader will see were increasing in number and characters every year.'—Thomas Hood, the younger.

was so weakened, I was less able to bear it, but got a little sleep in the evening and in the night. The pain only left me this morning, and I still cannot move my foot freely. But it is so far over and gone, though I am suffering from exhaustion. I waked several times in the night quite in a dew of perspiration. To-morrow I shall be up, I expect, in my own room. Mary nursed me very attentively, and the children were very good. Poor Tibby made herself very useful, and Tom did his best at nursing, though it consisted in cuddling up one of my hands and keeping it warm with everything he could wrap round it.

I seem doomed to have the trial once a year,—thank God, it only comes like Christmas. But I am not out of spirits, for, in other respects, I have been unusually well, and getting on. I am glad the Dilkies like the book, and have hopes of it myself; I shall make it 12*s*., and it will have nearly, if not quite, double the letterpress of the 'Whims', and as many cuts.

* * * * *

God bless you, my own; enjoy yourself as much as you can; you may be easier about me now this is over than before. It was CRUEL suffering; but I could not describe, without laughing, that cramp, for I was pirouetting about on one leg, and the other drawn up in such a twist, as only Grimaldi used to effect. Or, remembering I was only in my shirt, I must have been like Oscar Byrne in his short tunic, and making as many grimaces. Luckily I was alone, for I must have bundled out of bed, had Hannah More been present! Don't tell Mrs. Dilke, or she will never lend me a spare bed again. Mary has brought me up a two-fold supper on one plate; on one side a roasted apple, on the other some nondescript strips[1] (tripe). I ate the apple, and looked at the tripe, *Verbum sap.* She is very attentive, so bring her something. God bless you again; I am going to settle, it's half past ten.

(Bulletin.) Huzza! I can move my toes!

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[1] 'The Dutch servant's idea of the English word "tripe"'.—T. H

### THOMAS HOOD TO ONE OF HIS DOCTOR'S DAUGHTERS

[*A Charming Letter to a Child*]

17, Elm Tree Road,
St. John's Wood, *Monday, April*, 1844.

MY DEAR MAY,—

I promised you a letter, and here it is. I was sure to remember it; for you are as hard to forget, as you are soft to roll down a hill with. What fun it was! only so prickly I thought I had a porcupine in one pocket, and a hedgehog in the other. The next time, before we kiss the earth we will have its face well shaved. Did you ever go to Greenwich Fair? I should like to go there with you, for I get no rolling at St. John's Wood. Tom and Fanny only like roll and butter, and as for Mrs. Hood, she is for rolling in money.

Tell Dunnie that Tom has set his trap in the balcony and has caught a cold, and tell Jeanie that Fanny has set her foot in the garden, but it has not come up yet. Oh, how I wish it was the season when 'March winds and April showers bring forth *May* flowers!' for then of course you would give me another pretty little nosegay. Besides it is frosty and foggy weather, which I do not like. The other night, when I came from Stratford, the cold shrivelled me up so, that when I got home, I thought I was my own child!

However, I hope we shall all have a merry Christmas; I mean to come in my most ticklesome waistcoat, and to laugh till I grow fat, or at least streaky. Fanny is to be allowed a glass of wine, Tom's mouth is to have a *hole* holiday, and Mrs. Hood is to sit up to supper! There will be doings! And then such good things to eat; but, pray, pray, pray, mind they don't boil the baby by mistake for a *plump* pudding, instead of a plum one.

Give my love to everybody, from yourself down to Willy,[1] with which and a kiss, I remain, up hill and down dale,

Your affectionate lover,
THOMAS HOOD.

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[1] ' ' 'Willy ", at that writing, being very tall for his age, and May, his youngest sister, *not* very tall for her age.'—T. H.

### THOMAS HOOD TO DR. MOIR

[*One of his Farewell Letters*]

DEAR MOIR,—

God bless you and yours, and good-bye! I drop these few lines, as in a bottle from a ship water-logged, and on the brink of foundering, being in the last stage of dropsical debility; but though suffering in body, serene in mind. So without reversing my union-jack, I await my last lurch. Till which, believe me, dear Moir,

THOMAS HOOD.

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### THOMAS HOOD TO SIR ROBERT PEEL

[*His Last Letter*]

Devonshire Lodge,
New Finchley Road, 1845.

DEAR SIR,—

We are not to meet in the flesh. Given over by my physicians and by myself, I am only kept alive by frequent instalments of mulled port wine. In this extremity I feel a comfort, for which I cannot refrain from again thanking you with all the sincerity of a dying man—and, at the same time, bidding you a respectful farewell.

Thank God my mind is composed and my reason undisturbed, but my race as an author is run. My physical debility finds no tonic virtue in a steel pen, otherwise I would have written one more paper—a forewarning one—against an evil, or the danger of it, arising from a literary movement in which I have had some share, a one-sided humanity, opposite to that Catholic Shakesperian sympathy, which felt with King as well as Peasant, and duly estimated the mortal temptations of both stations. Certain classes at the poles of Society are already too far asunder; it should be the duty of our writers to draw them nearer by kindly attraction, not to aggravate the existing repulsion, and place a wider moral gulf between Rich and Poor, with Hate on the one side and Fear on the other. But I am too weak for this task, the last I had set myself; it is death that stops my pen, you see, and not the pension.[1]

God bless you, sir, and prosper all your measures for the benefit of my beloved country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most grateful and obedient Servant,
THOMAS HOOD.

## EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON

1803–1873

If Lord Lytton's marriage wrecked his home life, it was also the cause of the remarkable energy which in ten years produced *Pelham*—though he had begun this book before his marriage—*Eugene Aram, The Last Days of Pompeii, Rienzi, Godolphin*, and half a dozen other novels, in addition to *The Lady of Lyons*, which was produced at Covent Garden, three volumes of *Athens, its Rise and Fall, England and the English*, and an endless amount of miscellaneous work for all kinds of periodicals. 'Throughout a life more ravaged than that of most men by domestic griefs and violent emotions', writes the second Lord Lytton, in the incomplete life of his father, 'he retained a singular power of concentrating all his faculties on the intellectual task of the moment, whatsoever that might be; and it did not fail him at the outset. He was now to write, not for fame, or for pleasure, but for bread'. The reason, of course, was that his mother stopped his allowance of £1,000 a year, when he married against her will, and it was only by indefatigable literary labour—sheer drudgery, much of it—that he was still able to live in the style to which he had been accustomed. To his other works he added in 1831 the duties of a Member of Parliament and editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*. Lord Lytton—or Edward Lytton Bulwer, as he was at the time—was editing the *New Monthly* when he sent the following letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, the friend and biographer of Shelley, who wrote the *Shelley Papers* in this magazine as a beginning to the larger work. Mrs. Shelley herself introduced Hogg to Bulwer, 'from whom, on that occasion, and subsequently', he writes, 'I met with much politeness and real kindness. But to write articles in a magazine or a review, is to walk in leading strings; to march in rank and file under the command of subaltern officers. However, I submitted to the requirements and restraints of bibliopolar discipline, and I contributed six or seven papers; being content to speak of my young fellow-collegian, not exactly as I would, but as I might'. The remaining letters are all addressed to Lady Blessington, who numbered Lord Lytton among her warmest admirers in the days when she gathered around her all the most distinguished men of her time.

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[1] Through Sir Robert Peel the pension of £100 a year had been transferred from Hood's name to that of his wife.

### LORD LYTTON TO THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG

[*The 'Shelley Papers' and the Duties of an Editor*]

*January* 12, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I am very sorry you are displeased with the omissions in your article. Let us come to a right understanding on this head at once. It is not pleasant to me ever to alter an author's MS. for two reasons: First, because it is a trouble I could with greater profit to myself devote to my own compositions. Secondly, because it is an office that can never gratify the author. But if an editor lays before him one great—paramount—consistent object in a periodical, alteration and omission become of frequent necessity. You must remember, that a oneness of opinion in all the papers is then requisite. Now, what I omitted in your paper, and what I altered, were chiefly passages in which I could not agree with you (about Oxford, and persons in Oxford, for instance); a few verbal changes occurred also—but they were chiefly in epithets and phrases, in which I thought a little exaggeration, natural to description and to friendship, had crept in. But on these matters you must allow me to say that, if an editor be worth a straw, he must be absolute and unquestioned; and however deep the regret I should feel in losing any contribution of yours, I must do so, rather than resign a privilege that I believe to be also a duty. I dwell the more on this, because I have not yet done more than glance over a few lines in your second paper: and I there see that your natural affection for Shelley carries you a little beyond that estimate of what he has left to the world, which as yet we are authorized to express. It is probable that this strain may be continued through the whole, and therefore require modification. Let us, then, be candid with each other. I, on my part, will not alter, or rather omit, which is my chief sin, without necessity—and will you, on your part, kindly suffer me to use my own discretion, when that necessity is apparent?

Truly yours,
E. L. BULWER.

PS.—If it should seem to me, that alteration *to any extent* is necessary, I shall return you the MS. to alter yourself. All I claim is, the power of omission, or abridgment, to such extent as I judge discreet; and that of *alteration* only in slight matters; to omit, in short, as much as I like, and alter as *little* as I can. When you *republish* the articles, to which, I dare say, there will be no objection, you can *amend* them, etc. In regard to the proposed article on his Poetry, I fear that we should not agree. You evidently admire him as a Poet, far more than *I* think criticism warrants us in doing. He is great in parts; but, the *Cenci* excepted, does not, in my opinion, effect a great whole. But the additional anecdotes on his life and opinions will be, I trust and believe, acceptable.

### LORD LYTTON TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*Paris and the Memories of his Earliest Youth*]

Paris, *August* 31, 1833.

MY DEAR LADY BLESSINGTON,—

You were kind enough to wish that I would sometimes write to you, and I take an early opportunity of doing so, because I read in the papers of your loss, and I sympathize most sincerely in it.[1] I trust the robber did not take any of those beautiful little treasures which used to ornament your rooms, and for which, I know, you must have formed an absolute attachment:—an attachment which, unlike others in general, cannot be easily replaced; for somehow or other, we seem to value the relics of people at a higher rate than themselves; and one would regret more, perhaps, to lose a portrait of Madame de Sévigné, than many of her contemporaries may have felt when they lost Madame de Sévigné herself.

Paris is much better than it was last year; it is beginning to recover from its glorious revolution. It is all very fine to say liberty is useful to trade, but whenever liberty stretches herself, she always kicks poor trade out of doors. Louis Philippe amuses himself by making fine speeches, in answer to fine addresses; the people look on and laugh. For France, however it may seem to change, is never employed but in two things, either laughing or crying. As for the theatres, they are carrying indecency to the utmost. Queen Caroline and Bergami delights us at one theatre and something worse at another.

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[1] 'Robbers had entered the house in Seamore Place at night, and from Lady Blessington's drawing-room carried away trinkets, consisting of seals, snuff-boxes, smelling-bottles, etc., to the value of upwards of £1,000. Lady Blessington after received a letter from one of the thieves at the hulks, giving an account of the robbery, and stated that when the jewels were broken up and sold piecemeal, the party divided £700 among them.'—R. R. MADDEN, in his *Life of Lady Blessington*, 1855.

Do you know, I find Paris a melancholy place; if one has seen it in one's earliest youth, it reminds one of the vast interval of mind that has elapsed. Say what we will, there is nothing like youth; all we gain in our manhood is dulness itself compared to the zest of novelty, and the worst of it is, the process of acquiring wisdom is but another word for the process of growing old. Adieu, dear Lady Blessington.

Ever truly yours,
E. L. B.

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### LORD LYTTON TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*The Art of Novel-Writing*]

*January* 23, 1835.

VERILY, my dearest friend, you regale me like Prince Prettyman, in the Fairy Isle. I owe you all manner of thanks for a most delicate consideration, in the matter of twelve larks, which flew hither on the wings of friendship yesterday; and scarcely had I recovered from their apparition, when lo, the rushing pinions of a brace of woodcocks.

Sappho and other learned persons tell us that Venus drove sparrows; at present she appears to have remodelled her equipage upon a much more becoming and attractive feather. I own that I have always thought the dove himself a fool to the Woodcock, whom, for his intrinsic merits, I would willingly crown King of the tribe. As for your eagle, he is a Carlist of the old régime, a mere Bourbon, good for nothing, and pompous; but the Woodcock, *parlez moi de ça*, he has the best qualities both of head and heart; and as for beauty, what opera-dancer ever had such a leg? I have given their two majesties into Rembault's honourable charge, and hope they will be crowned to-morrow as a matter of COURSE.

Many thanks for the volume of Monsr. de B . . .—You are right. I never saw a cooler plagiarism in my life. I shall certainly retaliate upon M. de B . . . the moment I can find anything in him worth stealing! Yet the wretch has talent, and his French seems to me purer and better (but I am a very poor judge) than that of most of his contemporaries. But then he has no elevation, and therefore no true genius, and has all the corruptions of vice without her brilliancy. Good Heaven! has the mighty mischief of Voltaire transmigrated into such authorlings. *They* imitate his mockery, his satire. They had much better cobble shoes.

I don't (pardon me) believe a word you say about the *Two Friends.* If it have no passion, it may be an admirable novel nevertheless. Miss Edgeworth has no passion;—and who in her line excels her?

As to your own doubts they foretell your success. I have always found, one is never so successful as when one is least sanguine. I fell in the deepest despondency about *Pompeii* and *Eugene Aram*; and was certain, nay, most presumptuous about *Devereux*, which is the least generally popular of my writings.

Your feelings of distrust are presentiments to be read backward; they are the happiest omens, But I will tell you all about it—Brougham-like—when I have read the book. As to what I say in the preface to *Pelham*, the rules that I lay down may not suit all. But it may be worth while to scan over two or three commonplace books of general criticism, such as Blair's *Belles Lettres*, Campbell's *Rhetoric*, and Schlegel's *Essay on the Drama*, and his brother's on *Literature*.

They are, it is true, very mediocre, and say nothing of novels to signify; but they will suggest to a thoughtful mind a thousand little maxims of frequent use. Recollect all that is said of poetry and the drama may be applied to novels; but after all, I doubt not you will succeed equally without this trouble. Reflection in one's chamber, and action in the world, are the best critics. With them we can dispense with other teachers; without them all teachers are in vain. 'Fool!' (says Sidney in the Arcadia), 'Fool! look in thy heart and write!'

E. L. B.

## LORD LYTTON TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*On the Curse of Ability, and the Charm of Rome*]

*February* 12, 1846.

ACCORDING to the promise you were kind enough to invite from me, I write to you from my wandering camp, amidst the hosts who yearly invade *la belle Italie.* I performed rather a hurried journey to Genoa, and suffered more than I had anticipated from the fatigue. So there I rested and sought to recruit; the weather was cold and stormy—only at Nice had I caught a glimpse of genial sunshine. With much misgiving, I committed myself to the abhorred powers of steam at Genoa, and ultimately re-found about two-thirds of my dilapidated self at Naples. There, indeed, the air was soft, and the sky blue; and the luxurious sea slept calmly as ever round those enchanting shores, and in the arms of the wondrous bay. But the old charms of novelty are gone. The climate, though enjoyable, I found most trying, changing every two hours, and utterly unsafe for the early walks of a water-patient, or the moonlight rambles of a romantic traveller. The society ruined by the English and a bad set. The utter absence of intellectual occupation gave me the spleen, so I fled from the balls, and the treacherous smiles of the climate, and travelled by slow stages to Rome, with some longings to stay at Mola, which were counteracted by the desire to read the newspapers, and learn Peel's programme for destroying his friends the farmers. The only interesting person, by the way, I met with at Naples, was the Count of Syracuse, the King's brother; for he is born with the curse of ability (though few discover, and fewer still acknowledge it), and has been unfortunate enough to cultivate his mind, in a country and in a rank where mind has no career. Thus he is in reality afflicted with the ennui which fools never know, and clever men only dispel by active exertions. And it was melancholy to see one with the accomplishments of a scholar and the views of a statesman, fluttering away his life amongst idle pursuits and seeking to amuse himself by billiards and *lansquenet.* He has more charming manners than I ever met in a royal person, except Charles X, with a dignity that only evinces itself by sweetness. He reminded me of Schiller's Prince, in the *Ghost Seer.*

And so I am at Rome! As Naples now a second time disappointed me, so Rome (which saddened me before) revisited, grows on me daily. I only wish it were not the Carnival which does not harmonize with the true charm of the place, its atmosphere of art and repose. I pass my time quietly enough, with long walks in the morning, and the siesta in the afternoon. In the evening I smoke my cigar in the Forum, or on the *Pincian* Hill, guessing where Nero lies buried—Nero, who, in spite of his crimes (probably exaggerated), has left so gigantic a memory in Rome, a memory that meets you everywhere, almost the only Emperor the people recall. He must have had force and genius as well as brilliancy and magnificence, for the survival. And he died so young.

E. B. L.

### Lord Lytton to Lady Blessington

[*The Future of Sardinia ; Disraeli and the Repeal of the Corn Laws*]

Lyons, *April* 10, 1846.

I expect to arrive in England the last week in April. I am much struck with Lyons: there are few cities in Italy to compare with it, in effect of size, opulence, and progress.

But Italy has improved since I was there last. Life is more active in the streets, civilization re-flowing to its old channels. Of all Italy, however, the improvement is most visible in Sardinia. There the foundations of a great State are being surely but firmly laid. The King, himself, approaches to a great man, and though priest-ridden, is certainly an admirable Governor and Monarch.[1] I venture to predict that Sardinia will become the leading nation of Italy, and eventually rise to a first-rate power in Europe. It is the only State in Italy with new blood in its veins. It has youth, not old age, attempting to struggle back into vigour in Medea's caldron.

I have been indolently employing myself, partly on a version of a Greek play, partly on a novel, anxious to keep my mind distracted from the political field, which is closed to me. For, without violent opinions on the subject, I have great misgivings as to the effects of Peel's measures on the real happiness and safety of England, and regard the question as one in which political economy—mere mercantile loss and gain, has least to do. High social considerations are bound up in it; no one yet has said what I have said on the matter. Nevertheless, I was much delighted with Disraeli's very able, and remarkable, speech. I am so pleased to see his progress in the House, *which I alone predicted the night of his first failure.* I suppose Lord George Bentinck is leading the agriculturists; I cannot well judge from Galignani with what success.

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[1] Charles Albert, who declared war against the Austrians in 1848, and on his defeat had to resign the Crown in favour of his son Victor Emmanuel, in order to save his kingdom. He died, 'broken-hearted and misunderstood,' in July, 1849.

This letter has remained unfinished until to-day the 13th, when I concluded it at Joigny. More and more struck with the improvement of France, as I pass through the country slowly. It is a great nation indeed, and to my mind, the most disagreeable part of the population, and the part least improved, is at Paris.

E. B. L.

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### Lord Lytton to Lady Blessington

[*Landor and other Friends at Naples*]

Hotel Victoria, Naples, *November* 26.

Behold me then at Naples, beautiful, enchanting, delicious Naples, the only city in all Italy, (except old Verona, whose gable-ends and motley architecture, and hanging balconies, still speak of Shakespeare and of Romeo) which is quite to my heart. I freeze in the desolate dulness of Rome, with its prosing antiquaries and insolent slaves. In Venice I fancy myself on board a ship, viz., 'in a prison, with the chance of being drowned'. In Florence I recognize a bad Cheltenham. In Naples, I for the first time find my dreams of Italy. Your magic extends even here, and the place to which you have given me letters of introduction seems to catch a charm from your beauty, and an endearment from your kindness. What a climate, and what a sea! the humour and gaiety of the people delight me. I should be in paradise if it were not for the mosquitoes. But these, in truth, are horrible tormentors; they even seem to accustom themselves to me, and behave with the polite indifference of satiety; they devour me piecemeal; they are worse than a bad conscience, and never let me sleep at nights. I am told, for my comfort, that when the cold weather comes they will vanish, and leave me alternating between the desire to enjoy the day, and the hope to rest at night.

I presented your letter to Sir William Gell, who kindly asked me to breakfast, where I found him surrounded with his dogs, amidst which he wheels himself about (for he is entirely unable to stand) in his large chair, and seems to enjoy life, enough to make a man in the possession of the use of his limbs hang himself with envy. I never knew so popular or so petted a man as Sir William Gell; every one seems to love him—yet there is something artificial and cold about him *au fond*, pardon me for saying so.

Old Matthias is here, employing his eighty-first year in putting T——'s poems into Italian verse. These old men have time to amuse themselves, we young ones are so busy that we seem as if we had not a moment to live.

While I thank you for your introduction to Sir William Gell, I ought not to forget that to Landor, who was particularly kind to me, and whom I liked exceedingly. One is at home instantly with men of real genius; their oddities, their humours, don't put one out half so much as the formal regularity of your half-clever prigs. But Landor, thanks to your introduction, had no humours, no oddities for me. He invited me to his villa, which is charmingly situated, and smoothed himself down so much, that I thought him one of the best bred men I ever met, as well as one of the most really able (pity, nevertheless, as far as his talent is concerned, that he pets paradoxes so much: he keeps them as other people keep dogs, coaxes them, plays with them, and now and then sets them to bite a disagreeable intruder).

He gave me two letters, to his friend T—— M——, and to a Miss M——, and I confess I felt a melancholy in leaving him. How much he might do! What a true, bold, honest genius he has! It makes me sad to see men like him indolent and happy. I fancy their career is blighted, yet it is perhaps just the reverse. We, the noisy, the active, the ambitious, it is we who fulfil not our end,

> and wear
> Our strength away in wrestling with the air.

Mr. Craven, too, has been kind. How well he plays! I was not aware that he was an author, by the bye, till I saw his book bound in calf's skin. It seemed, on looking into it, pleasant and well written.

Pray tell me how your Annual succeeds. I hear no news, I read no papers. Dumb to me the new oracles of my old Magazine. Politics reach me not. I miss the roar of London. I feel how much, while I have joked at the English, I love England. What a country! what force! what energy! what civilization! How it shames the talkative slaves here! But it is time to end.

E. L. B.

### LORD LYTTON TO LADY BLESSINGTON

(*Promises to write for her 'Book of Beauty'*)

(*No date.*)

I CANNOT disguise from you that I have strong objections in writing for an annual, of which a principal is, that in writing for one, I am immediately entangled by others, who, less kind than you, conceive a refusal unto them, when not given at all, as a special and deadly offence.

Another objection is, that unless you edit a work of that nature, you have all sorts of grievous remonstrances from your publishers, or friends, assuring you that you cheapen your name, and Lord knows what. And, therefore, knowing that you greatly exaggerate the value of my assistance, I could have wished to be a reader of your *Book of Beauty*,[1] rather than a contributor. But the moment you seriously asked me to aid you, and gravely convince yourself that I can be of service, all objection vanishes. I owe to you a constant, a generous, a forbearing kindness, which nothing can repay; but which it delights me to prove that I can at least remember. And very consequently you will enrol me at once amongst your ministering genii of the lamp.

You gave me my choice of verse or prose—I should prefer the first; but consider well whether it would be of equal service to you. That is my sole object, and whichever the most conduces to it, will be to me the most agreeable means. You can therefore consider and let me know, and, lastly, pray give me all the time you can spare.

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[1] The Countess of Blessington edited the *Book of Beauty* for 1834, and the *Keepsake* from 1841 to 1849.

To prove to you that I am a mercenary ally, let me name my reward. Will you give me one of the engravings of yourself in the *Book of Beauty*. It does not do you justice, it is true, but I should like to number it among those mementoes which we keep by us as symbols at once of reality and the idea. Alas! all inspiration dies except that of beauty.

E. L. B.

## CHARLES LEVER

1806–1872

Charles Lever was not far wrong when he wrote the opening sentence of the first of the letters here reprinted. He discloses a condition of perpetual impecuniosity in the two volumes of lively correspondence in which Mr. Edmund Downey has made him tell his own life story—*Charles Lever: His Life in his Letters*, published by Messrs. W. Blackwood and Sons, to whom, and to Mr. Downey himself, we are indebted for permission to reprint the following selection. It was Lever's own fault, to a great extent, that he was always hard up. His unflagging animal spirits and brilliant conversational abilities made him a general favourite in the English colony in Brussels—where he was practising as a physician—and led him into expensive habits. His fondness for cards, and the *dindes aux truffes* and iced champagne referred to in the first letter, indicate the kind of life which suited his taste, even if it did not agree with his liver. For the best part of his career Lever lived up to £1,500 or £2,000 a year, and, as he had to earn about two-thirds of this by his pen, it is not surprising that he was often at his wits' end to make both ends meet. It says much for his industry that his affairs were in perfect order when he died, and his children not unprovided for. Abandoning the medical profession, after *Charles O'Malley* had repeated the success of *Harry Lorrequer*, Lever left Brussels in 1842, and, accepting the editorship of the *Dublin University Magazine*, settled down in Ireland, hoping, as he says in his letter of November 14, 1841, to 'grub on for a few hundred per annum, and lay by a little'. In Dublin he published *Jack Hinton*, and wrote, among other works, *Tom Burke of Ours*, *Arthur O'Leary*, and *The O'Donoghue*. Financial embarrassments continued to dog his footsteps, and they followed him when he retired once more to the continent. The last of our letters come from Trieste, to the British Consulship of which he was promoted in 1867, after serving as Vice-Consul at Spezzia since 1857. 'Here is six hundred a year for doing nothing', said Lord Derby, in giving him the Consulship, 'and you are just the man to do it'. It was a bad move, however, for Lever. Neither the climate nor the society of Trieste suited him, and, as a climax to his troubles, he lost his devoted wife there. Lever's married life had been a happy contrast to that of many of his literary contemporaries, and the death of his wife left him desolate. His own 'old hulk', as he called it, broke up fast, and he followed her to the grave in the summer of 1872.

### Charles Lever to Alexander Spencer [1]

[*The perpetual plea of Poverty*]

Boulevard de L'Observation, Brussels, *April*, 1839.

I fear if my letters to you were to rise up in evidence against me, that my cry, like that of the horse-leech, would be found to be one 'Give! give'!

But true it most certainly is my poverty, not my will, consents. The war, the weather, and the taste for Italy (confound these classical publications) have all conspired to take our English population (away from) here latterly, and I find myself, like the Bank de Belgique, *presque en état de faillite.* Therefore send me the £26 you have; and if Butt has anything due——which I believe and hope he has,——send that also. I shall try if some of the London Magazines will not accept contributions from me,——as my *Lorrequer* repute is a little in my favour, now is the time; but for some days past I have been poorly—my ancient enemy, the liver——who has certain vulgar antipathies to *dindes aux truffes* and iced champagne——has again been threatening me, and I am obliged to do very little.

The letter you enclosed me from——was so singular, I am sorry you did not read it. It appears that about four years ago some person gave Mr. S. the words and music of *The Pope* as his own, which has since gone through several editions and turned out a safe speculation. Mr. S. at length learns that I am the real Simon Pure, and with no less courtesy writes me a very handsome——indeed I should not be astray if I said gentlemanlike——letter apologizing for his usurpation of my property, and requesting of me to point out any charity to which I would desire a donation to be sent, and that he will do it at once. Kate has just seen a paragraph in the *Mail* which you sent, that offers a good occasion for doing a service, and I think I may as well not let slip the opportunity. With this intent I have written a letter to Mr. S. which I leave open for you to read, and if you approve, forward it to him, pointing out the destination, and leaving the sum of his contribution to himself. If you could conveniently see Mr. S., it will be gratifying to me to know how he behaves, for I confess the affair has interested me a good deal; and finally, if the contribution be sent, I should like it to go to—— of Sandford Chapel. I have begun a new series in the Mag.,[1] and have a more lengthy and weightier speculation on the stocks.[2]

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[1] Alexander Spencer was Lever's life-long friend. To him the novelist inscribed the first edition of *The Knight of Gwynne*, styling him 'the oldest friend he had in the world.'

I believe M'Glashan will write soon, but in any case let me hear by the 26th (pay-day for my rent). Of course you don't think of paying for *Lorrequer*, and pray row Curry if your copy is not always an early one. Tell me what you think of the illustrations. I am much pleased with them.

### CHARLES LEVER TO ALEXANDER SPENCER

[*A real Charles O'Malley*]

Brussels, *January* 17, 1840.

A MOST absurd blunder has induced a certain Charles O'Malley, Esq., barrister-at-law, and leader of the Western Circuit, to suppose that my new book under that name is meant to be his Life, etc. And the consequence is that a meeting of the bar has taken place at Litton's and resolutions entered to compel a change of title.

Now as I never heard of this gentleman, nor with a very widespread acquaintance do I know of one single Mr. O'Malley, I have refused point-blank. My book is already advertised in all the London papers, and if I changed the name for another, any individual bearing the newly-adapted one would have——what Mr. O'Malley has not——just and sufficient ground of quarrel with me.

All my friends here——military, diplomatic, and literary——agree in this view, Lord Lennox, Ranelagh, Suffield, etc., saying that it would be a very weak thing indeed to yield, and one which would undoubtedly reflect both upon my courage and judgment.

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[1] *Continental Gossipings.*

[2] *Charles O' Malley.*

I write these few hurried lines to put you *en courant* to what is going on.

For God's sake send me some gilt. I am terribly hard up just now.

### CHARLES LEVER TO ALEXANDER SPENCER

[*'O'Malley' and a Royal Admirer.*]

Quartier Leopold, Brussels, *December* 28, 1840.

I WAS just puzzling my brains with the knotty problem how to pay two hundred with one, when the solution of the difficulty came from another quarter——a most civil letter from the Currys, inclosing me £100 *en cadeau de saison*, expressing themselves sorry that their finances limited the present, and in fact doing the thing handsomely. The letter contained a pressing proposition to continue *O'Malley* to 20 Nos.——a project my pocket, but not my brains, concurs in. I fear much that the public may grow very weary of the mere narrative details of battle and bloodshed which must necessarily make up the staple of the additional Nos., but they reply that the Peninsular part is likely to be popular, and in fact press me to give what in a chance conversation I hinted,——a prolongation down to Waterloo, to conclude with the battle, which (task) as regards locality, etc., I have many opportunities for making a strong thing.

I should like to have your opinion on this. The plan is to publish the present ten numbers at once complete in one vol., and then proceed seriatim with others. In a trade point of view a good idea; but the fear is, shall I not mar all by spinning out ?——for so much has my head been running on other matters that I have latterly sat down to write without a particle of material in my mind, and merely ran on mechanically stringing sentences, something so far away from the whole thing that but for my wife I had given wrong names to the characters and (made) a dozen similar blunders.

I am about to have a special audience of the king on Friday. My grandeur costs me nearly £50 for a uniform. Do you know, 'I'm Captain in the Derry Militia' and aide-de-camp to somebody ! His Majesty has been graciously pleased to move his royal jaws in laughter at something in *O'Malley*, and I am to wait upon him while he expounds that same to me in French,——a great bore on any accounts, but an unavoidable one, such requests being very imperative. I am told I shall be asked to dinner, but this I don't calculate on. . . .

The war rumour is over for the present, but both parties have shown their teeth, and the thing will come to blows sooner or later. One must live abroad to comprehend the rooted feeling of dislike the Continent entertain towards England. Waterloo is as great a grudge to the Prussians and Austrians as to the beaten French themselves,——and all the nations hate us.

### CHARLES LEVER TO ALEXANDER SPENCER

[*Proposes to abandon Medicine and retire to Ireland*]

Quartier Leopold, Brussels, *November* 14, 1841.

DUBLIN, if I am to trust the papers, is a changed city, and indeed I am disposed to believe them, and to have a great hope that a moderate Government with Tory leanings would be the fairest chance for peace in so disturbed a country.

I have been scribbling about Lord Eliot in the last Mag.[1]

I am working——what for me is very hard indeed,—writing five or six hours daily; not going into society, dining early, and taking a half bottle of hock at my dinner. With all my early hours and abstinence my feet are swelled up, and I can scarcely walk when I get up in the morning.

I have written to M'Glashan to give you a proof of *Jack Hinton*——No. 1——which I wish you'd read over, and then send on to John. I'd like to have your opinion (both of you) about it: don't forget this.

I have also hinted to John a scheme of which I have been thinking for some time——which is to retire from my profession ere it retires from me,——in plain words, to seek some cheap (and perhaps nasty) place where I could grub on for a few hundred per annum and lay by a little. Here I am pulling the devil by the tail the whole year through, and only get sore fingers for my pains: and as my contract with

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[1] 'Ireland and her Rulers.' *Dublin University Magazine*, 1841.

Curry secures me £1,200 per annum for three years at least, perhaps I ought not to hesitate about adopting some means of letting a little of it, at least, escape the wreck. Give this your consideration, and say also if you know of a nice cottage in Wicklow, about twenty-five to thirty miles from town, where I could transfer myself bag and baggage——furniture and all——at a moment's warning. My only chance of economy is to be where money cannot be spent, and if I lived for £700 per annum (a liberal allowance too) in Ireland, the remaining five would be well worth laying by.

I could have the editorship of *Bentley's Miscellany* at a salary of £800 per annum, but this would involve living in London. I could bring over a governess for my brats from this, and without much trouble import as many of my here habits as I care for.

## CHARLES LEVER TO JOHN BLACKWOOD

[*His own Epitaph and the death of Thackeray*]

Casa Capponi, Florence, *January* 2, 1863 [? 1864].

I AM not sure——so much has your criticism on *Tony* [1] weighed with me, and so far have I welded his fortunes by his counsel——that you'll not have to own it one of these days as your own, and write 'T. B. by J. B.' in the title. In sober English, I am greatly obliged for all the interest you take in the story——an interest which I insist on believing includes me fully as much as the Magazine. For this reason it is that I now send you another instalment, so that if change or suppression be needed, there will be ample time for either.

Whenever Lytton says anything of the story let me have it. Though his counsels are often above me, they are always valuable. You will have received *O'D.*[2] before this, and if you like it, I suppose the proof will be on the way to me. As to the present envoy of *Tony* if you think an additional chapter would be of advantage to the part for March, take chapter XXV, and XXVI. too if you wish it, for I now feel getting up to my work again, though the ague still keeps its hold on me and makes my alternate days very shaky ones.

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[1] *Tony Butler*, then appearing in the *Dublin University Magazine*.

[2] *The O' Donoghue*.

I am sorry to say that, grim as I look in marble, I am more stern and more worn in the flesh. I thought a few days ago that it was nearly up, and I wrote my epitaph——

For fifty odd years I lived in the thick of it,
And now I lie here heartily sick of it.

Poor Thackeray! I cannot say how I was shocked at his death. He wrote his *Irish Sketch-book*, which he dedicated to me, in my old house at Templeogue, and it is with a very heavy heart I think of all our long evenings together,——mingling our plans for the future with many a jest and many a story.

He was fortunate, however, to go down in the full blaze of his genius——as so few do. The fate of most is to go on pouring water on the lees, that people at last come to suspect they never got honest liquor from the tap at all.

I got a strange proposal t'other day from America, from the New York Institute, to go out and give lectures or readings there. As regards money it was flattering enough, but putting aside all questions as to my ability to do what I have never tried, there is in America an Irish element that would certainly assail me, and so I said 'No'. The *possibility* of doing the thing somewhere has now occurred to me. Would they listen to me in Edinburgh, think you? I own to you frankly I don't like the thought,——it is not in any way congenial to me. *Ma che volete*? I'd do it, as I wear a shabby coat and drink a small claret, though I'd like broadcloth and Bordeaux as well as my neighbours. Give me your opinion on this. I have not spoken of it to any other.

My very best wishes for you and all yours in the year to come.

### Charles Lever to John Blackwood

[*Homely life at Trieste; his opinions on Trollope and Kinglake*]

Trieste, *September* 3, 1868.

I THANK you heartily for your kind words about my wife. Thank God, she is progressing daily, and my anxiety has at last got some peace.

I was greatly pressed to join Lord Clarence Paget down amongst the islands of Dalmatia, and nothing but my anxiety for my wife prevented me. It would have been a rare opportunity to pick up much odd material, and a pleasant ramble besides. Sir H. Holland has spent a few days with me, and wished me much to join his tour,——and *his* companionship would have been delightful,——but I was obliged to refuse. It is weeks since I wrote anything but a few passing lines, and I have not yet come round to the pleasant feeling that in settling down to my work I have got back a little world where no cares can come in save necessary to my hero and heroine. But I hope this will come yet.

I'd have waited to send you another *O'D* or two, but I wanted to thank you for your hearty note, and acknowledge its enclosure. Just as a little money goes far with a poor man, a few words of sympathy are marvellous sweetness in the cup of a lonely hermit like myself, for you have no idea of the dreary desolation of this place as regards one who does not sweat guineas nor has any to sweat. The Party, I fear, will go out before I can, and for all I see I shall die here; and certainly if they're not pleasanter company after death than before it, the cemetery will be poor fun with Triestono.

I don't thing Trollope *pleasant*, though he has a certain hard common-sense about him and coarse shrewdness that prevents him from being dull or tiresome. His books are not of a high order, but still I am always surprised that he could write them. He is a good fellow I believe, *au fond*, and has few jealousies and no rancours; and for a writer, is not that saying much?

What I feel about Kinglake's book is this. The great problem to be solved is, first, Was Sebastopol assailable by the north side? Second, Were the French really desirous of a short war? I suspect K. knows far more than, with all his courage, he could say on the score of our Allies' loyalty; and any one who has not access to particular sources of knowledge would be totally unable to be his reviewer, for in reality the critic ought, though not able to write the books he reviews, to be in possession of such acquaintance with the subject as to be in a position to say what other versions the facts recorded would bear, and to weigh the evidence for and against the author's. Another difficulty remains; what a bathos would it be——the original matter of almost any writer——

among or after the extracted bits of the book itself. Kinglake's style is, with all its glitter, so intensely powerful, and his descriptive parts so perfectly picture-like, that the reviewer must needs take the humble part of the guide and limit himself to directing attention to the beauties in view, and make himself as little seen or felt as need be. Not that this would deter me, for I like the man much, and think great things of his book; but I feel I am not in a position to do him the justice his grand book deserves. If I were a week with you in Scotland, and sufficiently able to withdraw from the pleasures of your house, I believe I could do the review; but you see my bonds, and know how I am tied.

You will see by the divided sheet of this note that I started with the good intention of brevity; but this habit of writing by the sheet, I suppose, has corrupted me, and perhaps I'll not be able now to make my will without 'padding'.

I have the Bishop of Gibralter on a visit with me; about the most brilliant talker I ever met.

### CHARLES LEVER TO JOHN BLACKWOOD

[*The grand heroic spirit' of Scott*]

Trieste, *August* 17, 1871.

ABOUT half an hour after your pleasant letter and its handsome enclosure reached me, Langford came in. He was on his way to Venice, but, like a good fellow, stopped to dine with myself and daughter.

We are delighted with him——not only with his talk about books and writers, Garrick men and reviewers, but with his fine fresh-hearted appreciation of all he sees in his tour. He likes everything, and travels really to enjoy it.

I wish I knew how to detain him here a little longer; though, Gods knows, no place nor no man has fewer pretensions to lay an embargo on any one.

I took him out to see Miramar last evening, and we both wished greatly you had been with us. It was a cool drive of some miles along the Adriatic, with the Dalmatian mountains in front, and to the westward the whole Julian Alps snow-topped and edged. I know you would have enjoyed it.

I am so glad you like the *O'Ds*. As I grow older I become more and more distrustful of all I do; in fact, I feel like the man who does not know when he draws on his banker that he may not have overdrawn his account and have his cheque returned. This is very like intellectual bankruptcy, or the dread of it, which is much the same.

The fine part of Scott's nature to my thinking was the grand heroic spirit——that trumpet-stop on his organ——which elevated our commonplace people and stirred the heart of all that was high-spirited and generous amongst us. It was the anti-climax to our realism and sensationalism——detective Police Literature or Watch-house Romance.

This was the tone I wanted to see praised and recommended, and I was sorry to see how little it was touched on. The very influence that a gentleman exerts in society on a knot of inferiors was the sort of influence Scott brought to bear upon the whole nation. All felt that there was at least one there before whom nothing mean or low or shabby should be exhibited.

## FREDERICK MARRYAT

### 1792–1848

Captain Marryat, as Mr. Edmund Gosse says in his *Modern English Literature*, 'wrote of sailors as Lever did of dragoons, but with a salt-breeziness that has kept *Peter Simple* and *Mr. Midshipman Easy* fresh for sixty years'. Marryat wrote, too, from personal experience, for his adventures provided him with abundant materials for the best of his books. *Frank Mildmay* is avowedly autobiographical. Marryat was a middy on the *Impérieuse* during her exciting cruises under Lord Cochrane, and before retiring from the Service in 1830, he had won the C.B. for able and gallant conduct in the first Burmese war, the gold medal and several certificates of the Royal Humane Society for exceptional bravery on various occasions in saving upwards of a dozen lives at sea, and a Fellowship of the Royal Society for his adaptation of Popham's system of signalling to the mercantile marine. This code, as he says in one of the following letters, led to an enormous saving of life, and earned for Marryat the Gold Cross of the Legion of Honour from 'a nation for whom the signals were not written, and from my own Government . . . nothing—I beg pardon', he adds, 'I did receive something; a letter from Lord Palmerston *forbidding* me to wear the decoration granted to me by the King of the French'. In addition to novel writing, after leaving the Navy, Captain Marryat edited the *Metropolitan Magazine* for some years and published many of his best tales in it, including *Midshipman Easy*, *Peter Simple*, *Jacob Faithful* and *Japhet*. With Lady Blessington, to whom he addressed the letters now reprinted, he was a special favourite. 'In politics', writes Madden in the sketch of Marryat which he includes in his *Life of Lady Blessington*, 'he was strongly Conservative; but however strongly he wrote against Whigs and Whiggery, in his friendship he knew no difference between Whigs and Tories, no more than he did of distinction in his dealings with men of different religions. It was not in his nature to be deliberately otherwise than just and generous towards all men with whom he came in contact, whom he believed to be honest. But when he had to do with political opponents on paper, whom he did not know personally, and allowed himself to be persuaded by others of his party, who were not sincere and upright, he opened on them all his guns, and raked the enemy fore and aft, very desperately exasperated during the engagement, and often surprised, when it was over, at the extraordinary vehemence of his anger'.

### CAPTAIN MARRYAT TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*His Magazine work and disgust at Democracy*]

Spa, *June* 17, 1836.

MY DEAR LADY BLESSINGTON,—

I have received all your packets of letters, and am very much obliged to you, not only for the letters, but also for thinking about me when I am so far out of the way, which you know is not very usual in this world, and therefore particularly flattering to me. As you will perceive, I am now at Spa, after a month's sojourn at Brussels. Spa is a very beautiful and a very cheap place, but it is deserted, and it is said that there will be no season this year. There are only two or three English families here, and they are all *cocktails*, as sporting men would say.

We are, therefore, quite alone, which pleases me. I was tired of bustle and noise, and excitement, and there is room for meditation, and e'en to madness, as Calista says, although I do not intend to carry my thoughts quite so far. I write very little; just enough to amuse me, and make memorandums and think. In the morning I learn German, which I have resolved to conquer, although at forty one's memory is not quite so amenable as it ought to be. At all events, I have no master, so if the time is thrown away, the money will be saved.

I believe you sometimes look at the *Metropolitan*; if so, you will observe that I have commenced my *Diary of a Blasé*, in the last month; they say at home, that it is very good light Magazine stuff, and is liked. I mean, however, that it shall not all be quite nonsense. I hope the *Book of Beauty* [1] goes on well. I know that you, and Mrs. Norton, and I, are the three looked up to, to provide for the public taste.

Stanfield, I understand, is getting on very well indeed with the drawings for my history. I think, with respect to yours, I would next year make some alteration. Instead of having the letter-press in detached pieces, I would weave them together, much in the same way as the *Tales of Boccacio* ; some very slight link would do, and it should be conversational. It is astonishing how much a little connexion of that kind gives an interest and a reality to a work. In the *Tales of the Pasha*, a great part of the interest is in the conversation between the Pasha and those about him, and the stories become by it framed like pictures. In any work whatever, there should never be a full stop. It appears to me there will be a new era in Annuals, and that, in future, they will become more library works, and not so ephemeral as their present titles indicate ; but it will first be necessary that the publisher of them discover their own interest to be in the making them what they ought to be, and going to the necessary expense.

Of course I do see the English papers, and I am very much disgusted. Nothing but duels and blackguardism. Surely we are extremely altered by this reform. Our House of Lords was the beau ideal of all that was aristocratical and elegant. Now we have language that would disgrace the hustings. In the House of Commons it is the same, or even worse. The gentlemen's repartee, the quiet sarcasm, the playful hit, where are they ? all gone : and, in exchange for them, we have *you* lie, and *you lie.* This is very bad, and, it appears to me, strongly smacking of revolution ; for if the language of the lower classes is to take the precedence, will not they also soon do the same ? I am becoming more Conservative every day ; I cannot help it : I feel it a duty as a lover of my country. I only hope that others feel the same, and that Peel will soon be again where he ought to be. I don't know what your politics are, but all women are Tories in their hearts, or perhaps Conservatives is a better word, as it expresses not only their opinion but their feelings.

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[1] See p. 499.

I never thought that I should feel a pleasure in idleness; but I do now. I had done too much, and I required repose, *or rather repose to some portions of my brain.* I am idle here to my heart's content, and each day is but the precursor of its second. I am like a horse, which has been worked too hard, turned out to grass, and I hope I shall come out again as fresh as a two-year old. I walk about and pick early flowers with the children, sit on a bench in the beautiful *allées vertes* which we have here, smoke my cigar, and meditate till long after the moon is in the zenith. Then I lie on the sofa and read French novels, or I gossip with any one I can pick up in the streets. Besides which, I wear out all my old clothes; and there is a great pleasure in having a coat on which gives you no anxiety. I expect that by October I shall be all right again.

I am afraid this will be a very uninteresting letter; but what can you expect from one who is living the life of a hermit, and who never even takes the trouble to wind up his watch; who takes no heed of time, and feels an interest in the price of strawberries and green peas, because the children are very fond of them? I believe that this is the first epoch of real quiet that I have had in my stormy life, and every day I feel more and more inclined to dream away my existence.

Farewell! my dear Lady Blessington; present my best wishes to the Count D'Orsay *beau et brave.* I have found out a fly-fisher here, and I intend to be initiated into the sublime art. There is a quiet and repose about fly-fishing that I am sure will agree with me. While your line is on the water, you may be up in the clouds, and everything goes on just as well. Once more, with many thanks, adieu.

F. MARRYAT.

### CAPTAIN MARRYAT TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*On Women and Politics; and the attacks of Petty Reviewers*]

Wimbledon, *January* 3, 1840.

MANY thanks for your kind wishes, and your invitation, which I am sorry to say that I cannot accept, being confined almost totally to my room. I regret this the more, as you are aware how very much I admire Mrs. Fairlie, and how happy I should have been to meet her and her husband, as well as Count D'Orsay and you.

And now permit me to enter into my defence with respect to the lady you refer to. I was fully aware that I laid myself open to the charge which you have brought forward, and moreover that it will be brought forward as one in which the public feelings are likely to be enlisted ; if so, my reply will be such in tenor as I now give it to you.

The lady had thought proper to vault into the arena especially allotted to the conflicts of the other sex. She has done so, avowing herself the *champion* of the worst species of democracy and of infidelity. In so doing, she has *unsexed* herself, and has no claim to sympathy on that score. I consider that a person that advocates such doctrines as she has done, at this present time, when every energy should be employed to stem the torrent which is fast bearing down this country to destruction, ought to be hooted, pelted, and pursued to death, like the rabid dog who has already communicated its fatal virus ; and allow me to put the question, whether you ever yet heard when the hue and cry was raised, and weapons for its destruction seized, that the populace were known to shew the unheard of politeness of inquiring before they commenced the pursuit, whether the animal so necessary to be sacrificed was of the masculine or feminine gender ? I wage war on the doctrine, not the enunciator, of whom I know nothing, except that the person being clever is therefore the more dangerous.

As for your observation, that the lady never wrote a line in the *Edinburgh,* I can only say, that, although it is of no moment, I did most truly and sincerely believe she did, and my authority was from her having been reported to have said to a friend, that 'she had paid me off well in the *Edinburgh*'. That she did say so I could, I think, satisfactorily prove, were not my authority (like all other mischievous ones) under the pledge of secrecy ; but the fact is, I cared very little whether she did or did not write the articles, though I confess that I fully believe that she did.

As for the attacks of petty reviewers, I care nothing for them. I take it from wherever it comes, as the sailor said when the jackass kicked him ; but I will not permit any influential work like the *Edinburgh* to ride me roughshod any more than when a boy, I would not take a blow from any man, however powerful, without returning it to the utmost of my power. But a review is a legion composed of many ; to attack a review is of little use——like a bundle of sticks strong from union, you cannot break them ; but if I can get one stick out, I can put that one across my knee, and if strong enough, succeed in smashing it ; and in so doing, I really do injure the review, as any contributor fancies that he may be the stick selected.

The only method, therefore, by which you can retaliate upon a review like the *Edinburgh* is to select one of its known contributors—and make the reply personal to him. For instance, I have advised the *Edinburgh* to put a better hand on next time. Suppose that it attacks me again, I shall assume that their best hand, Lord B——[1] is the writer of the article, and my reply will be most personal to *him* ; and you must acknowledge that I shall be able to raise a laugh, which is all I care for. You may think that this is not fair ; I reply that it is ; I cannot put my strength against a host : all I can do is to select one of the opponents in opinion and politics, and try my strength with him. This I am gratified in doing, until the parties who write a review put their names to the article : as long as they preserve the anonymous, I select what I please, and if I happen to take the wrong one, the fault is theirs and not mine. So recollect, that if I am attacked in the *Edinburgh* (should I reply to the article when I publish my *Diary of a Blasé* in June next), my reply will be to Lord B——, and will be as bitter as gall, although I have the highest respect for his lordship's talents, and have a very good feeling towards him. Many thanks for the *Governess*,[2] which I have just read. My mother finished it last night, and pronounced it excellent. I prefer giving her opinion to my own, as none will ever accuse her of flattery, although you have me. I read it with some anxiety, owing to my having intended to have made the sister of 'Poor Jack' a governess for a short time, and I was afraid that you would have forestalled me altogether. As far as the serious goes, you have so ; but you have left me a portion of the ludicrous. I think I shall pourtray a stout, well-formed girl of nineteen, kept up in the nursery by a vain mother with dolls, pinbefores, and all other

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[1] Lord Brougham.

[2] The *Governess*, one of Lady Blessington's novels.

*et ceteras*——that is, if I do not venture to come after you, which will be hardly fair to *myself*. Are you not tired of writing ? I am most completely, and could I give it up, I would to-morrow ; but as long as my poor mother lives, I must write, and therefore, although I detest it, I wish to write a long while yet.

I have just returned from Norfolk, where I was wet through every day, and to escape cold, filled myself with tobacco smoke and gin——these antagonistical properties have had the effect of deranging me all over, and I am miserably out of tune, and feel terribly ill-natured. I feel as if I could wring off the neck of a cock-robin, who is staring at my window.

This is a long letter, but it is your own fault ; you have sowed wind, and have reaped the whirlwind. If I have written myself down in your good opinion, I must at all events try to write myself up again.

F. MARRYAT.

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### CAPTAIN MARRYAT TO LADY BLESSINGTON

[*Why William IV refused him a knighthood ; two 'splendid grumbles'*]

3, Spanish Place, Manchester Square, *September* 6.

IN reply to your kind inquiries, allow me first to observe that I have two most *splendid grumbles* on my list, so splendid that I hardly know how to part with them. *Now for grumble the first.* When Sir James Graham was at the Admiralty he was pleased to consider that my professional services entitled me to some mark of His Majesty's approbation, and accordingly asked His Majesty to give me the star of the Guelph and knighthood. To this request His Majesty King William was pleased to reply, in his usual frank, off-handed way, 'Oh yes—Marryat, I know—bring him here on Thursday' (the day of application having been Monday). But, it appears that while my 'greatness was ripening,' some kind friend informed His Majesty that I had once written a pamphlet on impressment. And when Sir James saw his Majesty on the Wednesday, the King said to him—'By the bye, Marryat wrote a work on impressment I hear' (whether for or against, His Majesty did not deign to inquire). 'I won't give him anything'; adding, in his wonted free and easy style, 'I'll see him d——d first!' Now the request of a Cabinet Minister is supposed to confirm the claim, and it is not usual for the Sovereign to refuse: indeed His Majesty seemed to be aware of that, for he said 'The *Guelph* is *my own* order, and I will not give it unless I choose'. Sir James Graham of course did not press the matter after His Majesty's opinion so frankly expressed. And there the matter dropped—so that, instead of the honour intended, I had the honour of being d——d by a sovereign, and have worn my travelling name ever since. You'll allow that that is a *capital grumble*. Now for grumble *No. two*.

Twenty-six years ago, soon after the peace, I was requested by Lloyds and the ship-owners to write a code of signals for the merchant service. I did so, and in the various annual reports of these societies they have stated that the saving of lives and property by the means of these signals has been enormous. They were, at the request of Lloyds, supplied to the British men-of-war, to enable merchant vessels to communicate their wants, etc., and eventually they have been used in all the English colonies and dependencies by the government, to communicate with vessels, and along the coast. The French, perceiving their advantage, had them translated and supplied to their men-of-war and merchantmen. Now, independent of the value they may be to the country, in saving lives and property, and the claim which I have on that account, I have one also in a pecuniary way, for during the *twenty-six* years that they have been established they have also been supplied *gratis* to the British Navy——and if it is considered how many vessels we have had in commission, had this been paid for, it would have amounted to a very large sum. For this service I have never received remuneration whatever from our own government. When I was at Paris, some years ago, Admiral de Rigny, the French First Lord sent for me, and without any application on my part, informed me that, in consequence of the important advantage derived by the use of my signals, the King of the French had been pleased to give me the *Gold Cross* of the Legion of Honour, (equivalent to the C.B in England); so that I have been rewarded by a nation for whom the signals were not written, and from my own government have received nothing——I beg pardon, I did receive something; a letter from Lord Palmerston, *forbidding* me to wear the distinction granted to me by the King of the French. Now I call that also a *capital* grumble. I have asked Sir Robert Peel to give me employment, and I did so because I consider that I have done some service to the Conservative cause——at all events, I have worked hard, and suffered much in purse. The contest of the Tower Hamlets cost me between *six and seven thousand pounds*, which is a serious affair to a man with seven children, all with very large ideas, and very small fortunes; and I have felt the loss ever since. I have invariably laboured very hard in the cause, never neglecting to infuse Conservative ideas in all my writings. I have written much in the newspapers, and never yet sent any article to the *Times*, which was not immediately inserted. One Conservative paper, which was dying a natural death, the *Era*, weekly paper, I re-established, and it now circulates upwards of five thousand; I did this out of good-will to the proprietor and zeal for the cause, for I never received a sixpence for many months' labour. The *Era* is the Licensed Victuallers' paper, and I argued that wherever that paper was taken in, the *Weekly Dispatch* would not be; and that where the man who draws the beer is a Conservative, those who drink it will become the same. It is well known that it was chiefly through the exertions of the Licensed Victuallers that Captain Rous was returned for Westminister.

As to my professional services, it is to the Admiralty that I must look for remuneration, and as for my literary reputation, it is an affair between me and the public; but I think you must acknowledge that I have claims for *omission* and claims for *commission*, and when I see the Whigs giving away Baronetcies to Easthope, etc., for literary services, and Clay, my opponent at the Tower Hamlets, for contesting elections; I do feel that the party which I have supported, now that I have decided claims upon the country, should not throw me away like a sucked orange; if they do, why——virtue must be its own reward. It will be all the same a hundred years hence.

I have now let it all out, and I feel a great deal better.

F. MARRYAT.

## GEORGE BORROW

### 1803–1881

Cowper's sad remains were laid to rest at East Dereham little more than three years before the 'beautiful little town in a certain district of East Anglia' added to its literary associations by becoming the birthplace of George Borrow. 'Yes, pretty D——', he writes in his autobiographical *Lavengro*, 'I could always love thee, were it but for the sake of him who sleeps beneath the marble slab in yonder quiet chancel. It was within thee that the long-oppressed bosom heaved its last sigh, and the crushed and gentle spirit escaped from a world in which it had known little but sorrow'. They form a strange contrast—the gentle poet with his constant need of the tenderest care, and the mighty 'word-master', with his love of horseflesh, boxing, and strong ale. The letters now reprinted are taken—by Mr. Murray's kind permission—from the *Life of Borrow*, by Professor Knapp, published in two volumes in 1899. The first letter shows Borrow at one of the turning points of his career. He was then thirty years old; had already become known as the master of many languages; had given up law for literature with disheartening disillusionment; had wandered gipsy-wise through England, and travelled over half Europe; had returned to make another attempt to succeed in London, only to resume the life of a bookseller's hack; and, renouncing the struggle in 1830, had returned to Norwich, where he had served his apprenticeship in a solicitor's office. 'Here', writes Dr. Knapp, 'he tarried without remunerative employment for the next three years, occupied in translating poetry, writing political articles, and studying languages; or, as he himself expressed it at a later period, "digging holes in the sand and filling them up again." At last, crushed in spirit, and humbled in pride, he sought the British and Foreign Bible Society just when the British and Foreign Bible Society were seeking him'. The Society needed a competent man to go to St. Petersburg to superintend the printing of a translation of the New Testament into the Court language of China, and when its authorities heard of Borrow's linguistic attainments, they asked him to call on them in London. It was one of Borrow's proudest boasts that he set out on foot from Norwich on that occasion, and walked the whole distance of 112 miles to London in twenty-seven hours—at the cost of exactly fivepence halfpenny, laid out in a pint of ale, a half-pint of milk, a roll of bread, and a couple of apples. The letter from Norwich shortly after his return was written to his friend, the Rev. Francis Cunningham, of Lowestoft, who, with Joseph Gurney, the Quaker philanthropist of Norwich, had introduced him to his future employers. By the following July Borrow had proved himself competent to take up the Bible Society's work, and left for St. Petersburg, afterwards travelling, for the same society, in Portugal, Spain and Morocco, until difficulties with his sub-committee, and a business-like marriage with a well-to-do widow, induced him to settle down on her little estate on the banks of Oulton Broads, where his best-known books were written. Mrs. Borrow, who died during their subsequent residence at Brompton, is immortalized in *Wild Wales* as a 'perfect paragon of wives—can make puddings, and sweets, and treacle posset, and is the best woman of business in East

Anglia'. 'No man could endure a clever wife', Borrow declared on one occasion.

### GEORGE BORROW TO THE REV. FRANCIS CUNNINGHAM

[*His Introduction to the Bible Society*]

Norwich, *December*, 1832.

REV. SIR,—

I this day returned to Norwich, and considering it my first duty to inform you of all that passed in London between the Society and myself, I have taken up the pen, and will not offer any apology for troubling you with this letter, being well aware that it will not be uninteresting to you. I am happy to be able to say that the Committee, which met last Monday, are quite satisfied with me and my philological capabilities from the report of the Rev. Messrs. Brandram and Jowett, who had various opportunities of examining me. They have, moreover, defrayed the expenses of my journey to and from London, and also of my residence in that city, in the most handsome manner; so that I have much to be grateful for and nothing to complain of.

It having for some time been amongst the views of the Committee to publish a translation of the Scriptures in the Manchou-Tartar, which is the Court language of China—being the mother-tongue of those Seven hordes of Tartars, who, towards the conclusion of the Sixteenth Century, made a complete conquest of China, and established a Tartar dynasty on the throne—I was requested to inform the Committee, through Mr. Brandram, whether I should be willing, if the suitable means were put in my power, to make myself acquainted with this language sufficiently to edit or translate the sacred writings into it, on the promise of being employed as soon as I had accomplished such an undertaking. I unhesitatingly replied that I should have great pleasure in so doing; whereupon I was furnished with a great many Tartar books, and I am returned with a firm determination to exert all my energies to attain the desired end; and I hope, Sir, that I shall have the benefit of your prayers for my speedy success, for the language is one of those which abound with difficulties, against which human skill and labour, without the special favour of

God, are as blunt hatchets against the oak; and though I shall almost weary Him with my own prayers, I wish not to place much confidence in them, being at present very far from a state of grace and regeneration, having a hard and stony heart, replete with worldly passions, vain wishes, and all kinds of ungodliness; so that it would be no wonder if God to prayers addressed from my lips were to turn away His head in wrath, and in lieu of cleverness were to send stupidity, dimness of vision in lieu of sharp-sightedness, and in every case that which is contrary to what I pray for. Therefore, Sir, I hope you will not be offended if I recommend this point particularly to your recollection.

Some days since, in a conversation I had with Mr. Brandram, he spoke of the Gypsies and the profound darkness as to religion and morality that involved them. He likewise spoke of a Committee which had been formed for the express purpose of enlightening their minds on these important matters. It is singular enough that these unfortunate people have been objects of my particular attention; for, many years ago, hearing that they had a language which they themselves are alone acquainted with, I went amongst them, and having discovered the truth of the report, I was at some pains to learn a portion of it. On informing Mr. Brandram of this, he begged that on my return to Norfolk I would endeavour to form a kind of vocabulary of this tongue during my hours of relaxation from other studies, which I certainly intend to do. . . .—I have the honour to remain, Rev. Sir, your much obliged and obedient servant,

George Borrow.

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## Mr. and Mrs. George Borrow to John Murray[1]

[*His Books and his Critics*]

*January* 29, 1855.

Dear Mr. Murray,—

We have received your letters. In the first place I beg leave to say something on a very principal point. You talk about *conditions* of publishing. Mr. Borrow has not the slightest wish to publish the book *Romany Rye*. The MS. was left with you because you wished to see it, and when left you were particularly requested not to let it pass out of your own hands. But it seems you have shown it to various individuals whose opinions you repeat. What those opinions are worth may be gathered from the following fact.

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[1] The letter was partly written by Mrs. Borrow at her husband's dictation, partly by Borrow himself, but was signed by Mrs. Borrow. It accounts for the delay in the publication of *Romany Rye*, which did not take place until 1857, although promised since the appearance of *Lavengro* in 1851.

The book is one of the most learned works ever written; yet in the summary of the opinions which you give, not one single allusion is made to the learning which pervades the book, no more than if it contained none at all. It is treated just as if all the philological and historical facts were mere inventions, and the book a common novel. . . .

With regard to *Lavengro* it is necessary to observe that if ever a book experienced infamous and undeserved treatment it was that book. It was (assailed by every trumpery creature who hated Mr. Borrow on account of his reputation and acquirements)[1] attacked in every form that envy and malice could suggest, on account of Mr. Borrow's acquirements and the success of the *Bible in Spain*, and it was deserted by those whose duty it was, in some degree, to have protected it. No attempt was ever made to refute the vile calumny that it was a book got up against the Popish agitation of '51. It was written years previous to that period—a fact of which none is better aware than the Publisher. Is that calumny to be still permitted to go unanswered? [2] (The following in Borrow's handwriting.)

If these suggestions are attended to, well and good; if not Mr. Borrow can bide his time. He is independent of the public and of everybody. Say no more on that Russian subject. Mr. Borrow has had quite enough of the Press. If he wrote a book on Russia, it would be said to be like the *Bible in Spain*, or it would be said to be *un*like the *Bible in Spain*, and would be blamed in either case. He has written a book in connexion with England such as no other body could have written, and he now rests from his labours. He has found England an ungrateful country. It owes much to him, and he owes nothing to it. If he had been a low ignorant impostor, like a person he could name, he would have been employed and honoured.

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[1] The portion in parenthesis was erased, Mr. Borrow writing over it what follows, with his own hand.

[2] No calumny at all (writes Dr. Knapp), but a natural inference, and one which Mr. Murray and Mr. Woodfall both noted in their letters to Borrow, before the reviewers proclaimed it.

(In the handwriting of Mrs. B.)—I remain—Yours sincerely,
MARY BORROW.

## EDWARD FITZGERALD

### 1809–1883

EDWARD FITZGERALD once confessed to a 'very young lady-like partiality' for writing to his friends. Fortunately for his friends his correspondence was always worth having, for 'Old Fitz' was a born letter writer. And how rich and steadfast he was in his friendships is indicated even in the brief series of letters which follows—to Lord Tennyson, Carlyle, George Borrow and Edward Byles Cowell. A complete list of his friends would add the names of Spedding, Fanny Kemble, Charles Keene, Thackeray, Dr. Aldis Wright, Donne, George Crabbe the younger, Bernard Barton, (the marriage to whose daughter was the mistake of his life), and many other distinguished men of art and letters, to say nothing of 'Posh', his Lowestoft boat captain—'altogether the greatest man I have known'. Edward Cowell had not been in India many months when the first of the following letters was written in 1857. He had left with Fitzgerald the manuscript of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, which he had found in the Bodleian Library, and Fitzgerald, as he tells him, found that Omar breathed 'a sort of consolation to me'. He dwells regretfully on the old studies with Cowell and his young wife, which had done so much to brighten the six or seven years which preceded their departure for India. For it was due to the Cowells that Fitzgerald turned from his 'fruitless way of life' and found some work to do as a translator. Among the early results of their joint studies in Greek, Spanish, and Persian, were his *Six Dramas of Calderon*, and the translation of Jàmi's *Allegory of Sáláman and Absal*—the last with its eloquent dedicatory letter to Cowell, which shows how he missed the happiness of the years in which they had been so closely associated. 'Especially cheered on as I was by such a Huntsman as poor Dog of a Persian scholar never hunted with before; and moreover—but that was rather in the Spanish Sierras—by the Presence of a Lady in the Field, silently brightening about us like Aurora's Self, or chiming in with musical Encouragement that all we started and ran down must be Royal-game. Ah! happy Days! When shall we Three meet again—when dip in that unreturning Tide of Time and Circumstance!—In those meadows far from the world, it seemed, as Salaman's Island—before an Iron Railway broke the Heart of that Happy Valley whose Gossip was the Mill-wheel, and Visitors the Summer Airs that momentarily ruffled the sleepy streams that turned it as they chased one another, ever to lose themselves in Whispers in the Copse beyond'. His translation of Omar's *Rubaiyat* appeared anonymously three years after those happy days came to an end. In the last of the letters now reprinted, Fitzgerald himself tells the story of his version of the quatrains and of its early vicissitudes, though we miss the familiar details of how he handed over to Quaritch the remainder of the neglected brown-wrappered booklets, and how they were discovered by Rossetti and his friends among the penny 'lots' of a St. Martin's Lane bookstall. For permission to reprint the following series we are indebted to the kindness of Dr. W. Aldis Wright, the friend, biographer, and literary executor of Fitzgerald, and to the courtesy of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., who published the *Letters* and *More Letters of Edward Fitzgerald*, edited by Dr. Wright in three volumes. For the letter to Alfred, Lord Tennyson, we are also indebted to the present Lord Tennyson, who has included it in his Memoir of his father; and for the letter to George Borrow, our thanks are due to Mr. Murray, who publishes the *Life of Borrow* by Dr. Knapp, from which it is taken.

### Edward Fitzgerald to Edward Cowell

[*His Persian Studies and his Translations*]

London, *May* 7, 1857.

My dear Cowell,—

Owing partly to my own stupidity and partly to a change in the India Post days, my last two letters (to you and wife) which were quite ready by the Marseilles Post of April 25th will not get off till the Southampton Mail of this May 10. Your letter of March 21 reached me three days ago. Write only when you have Leisure and Inclination, and only as much as those two good things are good for: I will do the same. I will at once say (in reply to a kind offer you make to have Hatifi's *Haft Paikar* copied for me) that it will (be) best to wait till you have read it: you know me well enough to know whether it will hit my taste. However, if it be but a very short poem, no harm would be done by a copy; but do let me be at the Charges of such things. I will ask for Hatifi's *Laili*: but I didn't (as you know) take much to what little I saw. As to any copies Allen might have had, I believe there is no good asking for them: for, only yesterday going to put into Madden's hands Mr. Newton's MS. of the *Mantic*,[1] I saw Allen's house *kharáb*. There has been a fire there, Madden told me, which had destroyed stock, etc., but I could not make out much of the matter, Madden putting on a face of foolish mystery. You can imagine it? We talked of you, as you may imagine also; and I believe in that he is not foolish. Well, and to-day I have a note from the great De Tassy which announces, 'My dear Sir, Definitively I have written a little Paper upon Omar with some Quotations taken here and there at random, avoiding only the too badly sounding *rubayat*. I have read that paper before the Persian Ambassador and suite, at a meeting of the Oriental Society of which I am Vice-President, the Duc de Dondeauville being president. The Ambassador has been much pleased of my quotations '. So you see I have done the part of an ill Subject in helping France to ingratiate herself with Persia when England might have had the start! I suppose it probable *Ferukh Khan* himself had never read or perhaps heard of Omar. I think I told you in my last letter that I had desired De Tassy to say nothing about you in any Paper he should write; since I cannot have you answerable for any blunders I may have had in my Copy, nor may you care to be named with Omar at all. I hope the Frenchman will attend to my desire; and I dare say he will, as he will then have all credit to himself. He says he can't make out all the metre of the *rubayat* at all—never could—though. 'I am enough skilful in scanning the Persian verses as you have seen ' (Q$^{y}$ ?) 'in my Prosody of the languages of Mussulman Countries, etc '. So much for Tassy. No; but something more yet; and better, for he tells me his print of the *Mantic* is finished, in proofs ', and will be out in about a Month: and he will send me one. Now, my dear Cowell, can't I send one to you? Yes, we must manage that somehow.

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[1] In the course of his Persian studies Fitzgerald became specially interested in the poet Attar, a manuscript of whose *Mantic uttair*—or Bird Parliament—he had obtained from Mr. Napoleon Newton, of Hertford.

Well, I have not turned over Johnson's Dictionary for the last month, having got hold of Æschylus. I think I want to turn his Trilogy into what shall be readable English Verse; a thing I have always thought of, but was frightened at the Chorus. So I am now; I can't think them so fine as People talk of; they are terribly maimed; and all such Lyrics require a better poet than I am to set forth in English. But the better Poets won't do it; and I cannot find one readable translation. I shall (if I make one) make a very free one; not for Scholars, but for those who are ignorant of Greek, and who (so far as I have seen) have never been induced to learn it by any Translations yet made of these Plays. I think I shall become a bore, of the Bowring order, by all this Translation: but it amuses me without any labour, and I really think I have the faculty of making some things readable which others have hitherto left unreadable. But don't be alarmed with the anticipation of another sudden volume of Translations; for I only sketch out the matter, then put it away; and coming on it one day with fresh eyes trim it up with some natural impulse that I think gives a natural air to all. So I have put away the *Mantic.* When I die, what a farrago of such things will be found! Enough of such matter.

Friday, June 5. What an interval since the last sentence! And why? Because I have been moving about nearly ever since till yesterday, and my Letter, thus far written, was packt up in a box sent down hither, namely, Gorlestone Cliffs, Great Yarmouth. Instead of the Regent's Park, and Regent Street, here before my windows are the Vessels going in and out of the River: Sailors walking about with fur caps and their brown hands in their Breeches Pockets. Within hail almost lives George Borrow who has lately published, and given me, two new volumes of Lavengro called *Romany Rye*, with some excellent things, and some very bad (as I have made bold to write to him—how shall I face him!) You would not like the book at all, I think. But I must now tell you an odd thing, which will also be a sad thing to you. I left London last Tuesday fortnight for Bedfordshire, meaning to touch at Hertford in passing; but as usual, bungled between two railroads and got to Bedford and not to Hertford, on the Tuesday evening. To that latter place I had wanted to go as well to see it as to see N. Newton, who had made one or two bungled efforts to see me in London. So, when I got to Bedford, I wrote him a line to say how it was I had missed him. On the very Saturday immediately after, I received a Hertford paper announcing the sudden death of N. Newton on the very Tuesday on which I had set out to see him! He had been quite well till the Saturday preceding: had then caught some illness (I suppose some infectious fever) which had been visiting some in his house; died on the Tuesday, and was buried on the Thursday after. What will Austin do without him? He had written to me about your Hafiz, saying he had got several subjects for Illustration, and I meant to have had a talk with him on the matter. What should be done? I dare not undertake any great responsibility in meddling in such matters even if I were asked to do so, which is not likely to be unless on your part; for I find my taste so very different from the Public that what I think good would probably be very unprofitable.

When in Bedfordshire I put away almost all Books except Omar Khayyam, which I could not help looking over in a Paddock covered with Butter-cups and brushed by a delicious Breeze while a dainty racing Filly of W. Browne's came startling up to wonder and sniff about me.

'Tempus est quo Orientis Aurâ mundus renovatur, Quo de fonte pluviali dulcis Imber reseratur; *Musi-manus* undecumque ramos insuper splendescit; Jesu-spiritusque Salutaris terram pervagatur.' Which is to be read as Monkish Latin, like 'Dies Irae', etc., retaining the Italian value of the Vowels, not the Classical. You will think me a perfectly Aristophanic Old Man when I tell you how many of Omar I could not help running into such bad Latin. I should not confide such follies but to you, who won't think them so, and who will be pleased at least with my still harping on our old Studies. You would be sorry, too, to think that Omar breathes a sort of Consolation to me. Poor Fellow; I think of him and Oliver Basselin, and Anacreon; lighter Shadows among the Shades, perhaps over which Lucretius presides so grimly. Thursday, June 11. Your letter of April is come to hand, very welcome: and I am expecting the MS. Omar which I have written about to London. And now with respect to your proposed *Fraser* Paper on Omar. You see a few lines back I talk of some lazy Latin Versions of his Tetrastichs, giving one clumsy example. Now I shall rub up a few more of those I have sketched in the same manner, in order to see if you approve, if not of the thing done, yet of

(letter breaks off abruptly at the end of the page)

June 23. I begin another Letter because I am looking into the Omar MS. you have sent me, and shall perhaps make some notes and inquiries as I go on. I had not intended to do so till I had looked all over and tried to make out what I could of it; since it is both pleasant to oneself to find out for oneself if possible, and also saves trouble to one's friends. But yet it will keep me talking with you as I go along: and if I find I say silly things or clear up difficulties for myself before I close my letter (which has a month to be open in!) why, I can cancel or amend, so as you will see the whole Process of Blunder. I think this MS. furnished some opportunities for one's critical faculties, and so is a good exercise for them, if one wanted such. First, however, I must tell you how much ill poor Crabbe has been: a sort of Paralysis, I suppose, in two little fits, which made him think he was sure to die; but Dr. Beck at present says he may live many years with care. Of this also I shall be able to tell you more before I wind up. The brave old Fellow! he was quite content to depart, and had his daughter up to give her his Keys, and tell her where the different wines were laid. I must also tell you that Borrow is greatly delighted with your MS. of Omar, which I showed him: delighted at the terseness so unusual in Oriental Verse. But his Eyes are apt to cloud: and his wife has been obliged, he tells me, to carry off even the little Omar out of reach of them for a while.

June 27, Geldestone Hall. I brought back my two Nieces here yesterday: and to-day am sitting as of old in my accustomed Bedroom, looking out on a Landscape which your Eyes would drink. It is said there has not been such a Flush of Verdure for years: and they are making hay on the Lawn before the house, so as one wakes to the tune of the Mower's Scythe-whetting, and with the old Perfume blowing in at open windows.

July 1. June over! A thing I think of with Omar-like sorrow. And the Roses here are blowing—and going—as abundantly as even in Persia. I am still at Geldestone, and am looking at Omar by an open window which looks over a Greener Landscape than yours. To-morrow my eldest Nephew, Walter Kerrick, whom I first took to school, is to be married in the Bermudas to a young Widow. He has chosen his chosen sister Andalusia's Birthday to be married on; and so we are to keep that double Festival. . . .

### Edward Fitzgerald to Lord Tennyson

['*I never could read Browning*']

1869.

My dear Old Alfred,—

I have been thinking of you so much for the last two or three days, while the first volume of Browning's Poems has been on my table, and I have been trying in vain to read it, and yet the *Athenaeum* tells me it is wonderfully fine. And so sometimes I am drawn to write to you (with only one eye, the other scorched by reading with a paraffin lamp these several winters), and, whether you care for my letter or not you won't care to answer; and yet I want to know what you yourself think of this poem; you, who are the one man able to judge of it, and magnanimous enough to think me capable of seeing what is fine in it. I never could read Browning. If Browning only gave a few pence for the book he drew from, what will posterity give for his version of it, if posterity ever find it on a stall? If Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope and Tennyson survive, what *could* their readers make out of this Browning a hundred years hence? Anything so utterly unlike the *Ring* too which he considers he has wrought out of the old gold—this shapeless thing. 'You are unjust, Fitz,' that is what you will say or think, I fancy. I wish you would say as much; and also that you are not angry with me for the use I made of your name, which I am rather afraid of. And I don't at all wish to give you any such offence, and never thought, till too late, that you were jealous of such liberties—even in such a local trifle as I took it in. For you have no more loyal follower than

E. F. G.,
Who can hardly see.

### EDWARD FITZGERALD TO LORD TENNYSON

[*Some Praise and Criticism*]

Woodbridge, *January*, 1870.

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,—

I bought your vol. (the *Holy Grail*) at Lowestoft; and, when I returned home here for Xmas, found a copy from your new publisher. As he sent it I suppose at your orders, I write about it what I might say to you were we together over a pipe, instead of so far asunder.

The whole myth of Arthur's Round Table Dynasty in Britain presents itself before me with a sort of cloudy, Stonehenge grandeur. I am not sure if the old knights' adventures do not tell upon me better, touched in some lyrical way (like your own *Lady of Shalott*) than when elaborated into epic form. I never could care for Spenser, Tasso, or even Ariosto, whose epic had a ballad ring about it. But then I never could care much for the old prose Romances either, except *Don Quixote.* So, as this was always the case with me, I suppose my brain is wanting in this bit of its dissected map.

Anyhow, Alfred, while I feel how pure, noble, and holy, your work is, and whole phrases, lines and sentences of it will abide with me, and, I am sure with men after me, I read on till the *Lincolnshire Farmer* drew tears to my eyes. I was got back to the substantial roughspun nature I knew ; and the old brute, invested by you with the solemn humour of Humanity, like Shakespeare's *Shallow,* became a more pathetic phenomenon than the knights who revisit the world in your other verse. There ! I can't help it, and have made a clean breast ; and you need only laugh at one more of 'old Fitz's crotchets', which I daresay you anticipate. To compare X—— to my own 'paltry Poet' is, I say, to compare an old Jew's Curiosity Shop with the Phidian Marbles. They talk of 'metaphysical depth and subtlety' ; pray is there none in *The Palace of Art, The Vision of Sin,* which last touches on the limit of disgust without ever falling in), *Locksley Hall* also, with some little passion, I think ! only that all these being clear to the bottom, as well as beautiful, do not seem to cockney eyes so deep as muddy waters ; I suppose you are at Farringford with your boys for the holidays. Let me wish you all a Happy New Year, and believe me your faithful old crotchety Retainer,

E. F. G.

PS. I also think I shall one day send you my little piece of knightlihood ('*Euphranor*'), of which Cowell told me you liked parts, and from which (in consequence) I have cut out what seems to me the most disagreeable part, leaving much behind, together with what still seems to me pretty. I had not looked at it for 15 years till Cowell told me what you said ; and that made me cut out, and insert some pages.

### EDWARD FITZGERALD TO THOMAS CARLYLE

['*Past and Present*']

Market Hill, Woodbridge, *October* 23, 1870.

MY DEAR CARLYLE,—

It seems an impertinence to stir up your recollection of me once a year. Still, that may be enough for you, if not too much: and I don't like wholly to lose an intercourse that has lasted, more or less, these 18 [28] years—yes, since I was staying with Thackeray at his house in what he called *Joram* Street, and he took me to Chelsea one night, and Naseby came into question; and, for once in your lives, I had to prove you and Dr. Arnold wrong about the battlefield, my poor Father's Obelisk having pointed you all wrong from the beginning. Many pleasant evenings do I remember—cups of Tea made by her that is gone: and many a Pipe smoked with you—in your little garden, when weather was fair—and all kind and pleasant at all times.

Though I do not write—for the reason that I have nothing worth telling you—you are often in my thoughts, and often on my tongue when I happen to visit any of the new friends I now see. Then I am often recurring to your Books: it was taking up the Heroes yesterday that made me resolve on writing my yearly letter. I seemed to hear you talking to me—as when you did talk the book to me and others in that Lecture Room, in *George Street*, was it? Sterling's life talks to me also: and so does Cromwell, and the Old Monk of St. Edmunds, they all do; but these perhaps most agreeably to me.

I have nothing whatever to tell of myself, but that I have not been so well all the year, not even sea faring: I think I feel the shadow of the Great Climacteric next year coming. You have got over that Bank and Shoal of Time gallantly.

I say nothing of Public matters, and accursed Wars. And I think this is nearly all I have to say that you would care to read— and to answer briefly—as you will?

### EDWARD FITZGERALD TO GEORGE BORROW

[*His solitary habit, and his old friends*]

Little Grange, Woodbridge, *January* 10, 1875.

DEAR BORROW,—

My nephew Kerrich told me of a very kind invitation you sent to me, through him, some while ago. I think the more of it because I imagine, from what I have heard, that you have slunk away from human company as much—as I have! For the last fifteen years I have not visited any one of my very oldest friends, except the daughters of my old George Crabbe, and Donne—once only, and for half a day, just to assure myself by my own eyes how he was after the severe illness he had last year, and which he never will quite recover from, I think; though he looked and moved better than I expected.[1]

Well—to tell you all about *why* I have thus fallen from my company would be a tedious thing, and all about one's self too—whom, Montaigne says, one never talks about without detriment to the person talked about. Suffice to say, 'so it is'; and one's friends, however kind and 'loyal' (as the phrase goes), do manage to exist and enjoy themselves pretty reasonably without one.

So with me. And is it not much the same with you also? Are you not glad now to be mainly alone, and find company a heavier burden than the grasshopper. If one ever had this solitary habit, it is not likely to alter for the better as one grows older—as one grows *old.* I like to think over my old friends. There they are, lingering as ineffaceable portraits—done in the prime of life—in my memory. Perhaps we should not like one another so well after a fifteen years' separation, when all of us change and most of us for the worse. I do not say *that* would be your case; but you must, at any rate, be less inclined to disturb the settled repose into which you, I suppose, have fallen. I remember first seeing you at Oulton, some twenty-five years go; then at Donne's in London; then at my own happy home in Regent's Park; then *ditto* at Gorleston—after which, I have seen nobody, except the nephews and nieces left me by my good sister Kerrich.

So shall things rest? I could not go to you, after refusing all this while to go to older—if not better—friends, fellow-Collegians, fellow-schoolfellows; and yet will you still believe me (as I hope *they* do),

Yours and theirs sincerely,
EDWARD FITZGERALD?

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EDWARD FITZGERALD TO H. SCHUTZ WILSON

[*The Vicissitudes of his 'Omar'*]

*March* 1, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR,

I must thank you sincerely for your thoughts about Salaman, in which I recognize a good will towards the Translator, as well as liking for his work.

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[1] Wm. Bodham Donne lived until 1882. He was Librarian of the London Library from 1852 to 1857, and Examiner of Plays in the Lord Chamberlain's Office from 1857 to 1874.

Of course your praise could not but help that on; but I scarce think that it is of a kind to profit so far by any review as to make it worth the expense of Time and Talent you might bestow upon it. In Omar's case it was different; he sang, in an acceptable way it seems, of what all men feel in their hearts, but had not had exprest in verse before: Jámí tells of what everybody knows, under cover of a not very skilful Allegory. I have undoubtedly improved the whole by boiling it down to about a Quarter of its original size; and there are many pretty things in it, though the blank Verse is too Miltonic for Oriental style.

All this considered, why did I ever meddle with it? Why, it was the first Persian Poem I read, with my friend Edward Cowell, near on forty years ago; and I was so well pleased with it then (and now think it almost the best of the Persian Poems I have read or heard about), that I published my Version of it in 1856 (I think) with Parker of the Strand. When Parker disappeared, my unsold Copies, many more than of the sold, were returned to me; some of which, if not all, I gave to little Quaritch, who, I believe, trumpeted them off to some little profit: and I thought no more of them.

But some six or seven years ago that Sheikh of mine, Edward Cowell, who liked the Version better than any one else, wished it to be reprinted. So I took it in hand, boiled it down to three-fourths of what it originally was, and (as you see) clapt it on the back of Omar, where I still believe it would hang somewhat of a dead weight: but that was Quaritch's look-out, not mine. I have never heard of any notice taken of it, but just now from you: and I believe that, say what you would, people would rather have the old Sinner alone. Therefore it is that I write all this to you. I doubt that not any of your Editors would accept an article from you on the Subject: and so probably with the Public whom you write for.

Thus *liberavi animam meam* for your behoof, as I am rightly bound to do in return for your Goodwill to me.

As to the publication of my name, I believe I could well dispense with it, were it other and better than it is. But I have some unpleasant associations with it: not the least of them being that it was borne, Christian and Surname, by a man

who left College just when I went there. . . . What has become of him I know not: but he, among other causes, has made me dislike my name, and made me sign myself (half in fun, of course), to my friends, as now I do to you, sincerely yours,
(THE LAIRD OF) LITTLEGRANGE,
where I date from,

## THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881) and
## JANE WELSH CARLYLE (1801–1866)

FORTUNATELY, the controversy over the domestic relations of the Carlyles revived by the publication of the *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* in 1903, has died down again, and there is no need to discuss it afresh in a work of this description. The following letters of Thomas Carlyle and the first of the letters of Mrs. Carlyle are all reprinted—thanks to the courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.—from Froude's *History of Carlyle's Life in London.* Carlyle had been married between eight and nine years when he wrote to his brother John, telling him of the calamity which had befallen the first volume of his *French Revolution.* The manuscript of this work, it will be remembered, had been entrusted to John Stuart Mill for annotation, and had been accidentally destroyed in his house by a servant. Mill induced Carlyle to accept £100 as some compensation for the loss. The money was sorely needed, for Carlyle found it a hard struggle to maintain himself and his wife before his *French Revolution* made his name, and placed him out of poverty's reach. *Sartor Resartus*, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* before he left Scotland in the summer of 1834, to settle in the house in Cheyne Row which he occupied for the remainder of his life, had only brought him about £80 in all, and had been received with 'unqualified dissatisfaction'—according to the publishers, who declined to run the risk of bringing it out in book form. In 1835 it was 'still hanging disconsolately under bibliopolic difficulties', writes Carlyle in his Life of Sterling, whom he met for the first time in that year, 'as a mere aggregate of magazine articles', and it was not until 1838 that a proper edition in book form appeared. Carlyle had finished the whole of his *French Revolution* by 1857, and the publication of that work six months later had marked the turning point in his career. His later correspondence may be left to speak for itself, save, perhaps, for a note on the letters relating to his beloved mother's illness and death in 1853. 'A feeling peculiarly tender had united these two', writes Froude. 'She had watched over the workings of his mind with passionate solicitude: proud of his genius, and alternately alarmed for his soul. In the long evenings when they had sate together over the fire with their pipes at Mainhill, he had half-satisfied her that he and she were one in heart and essentials. His first earnings, when a school usher, were spent in contributing to her comforts. When money came from Boston for the *French Revolution*, the 'Kitlin' instantly sent 'the auld cat' an 'American mouse.' If she gloried in his fame and greatness, he gloried more in being the son of humble Margaret Carlyle—and while she lived, she, and only she, stood between him and loneliness of which he so often and so passionately complained '. The six letters of Mrs. Carlyle, which follow those of her husband, are reprinted from the *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*—by the kind permission of the editor, Mr. Alexander Carlyle, and of Mr. John Lane, who published these much-discussed volumes. Mrs. Carlyle was one of the best correspondents that the English language ever knew. ' Her letters ', to quote the words of the late Richard Holt Hutton, in referring to the earlier *Letters and Memorials*, published in 1883, ' surpass those of her husband in every quality which letters should have except vividness—in variety, naturalness, lightness of touch; in the rapid, but never abrupt change from tender to satirical, from satirical to imaginative, and from imaginative again, to the keen, shrewd, matter-of-fact of mother wit; while in a few of them there is a wild, gipsy kind of waywardness which is, of course, entirely foreign to Mr. Carlyle's sphere '.

## THOMAS CARLYLE TO HIS BROTHER, JOHN CARLYLE

[*The Disaster to his ' French Revolution '*]

Chelsea, *March* 23, 1835.

I AM busy with vol. ii., toiling away with the heart of a free Roman. Indeed, I know not how it was, I had not felt so clear and independent, sure of myself and of my task, for many long years. There never in my life had come upon me any other accident of much moment; but this I could not but feel to be a sore one. The thing was lost, and perhaps worse; for I had not only forgotten all the structure of it, but the spirit it was written in was past. Only the general impression seemed to remain, and the recollection that I was on the whole satisfied with that, and could now hardly hope to equal it. Mill, whom I had to comfort and speak peace to, remained injudiciously enough till almost midnight; and my poor dame and I had to sit talking of indifferent matters, and could not till then get our lament fairly uttered. She was very good to me, and the thing did not beat us. That night was a hard one; something from time to time tying me tight, as it were, all round the region of the heart, and strange dreams haunting me. However, I was not without good thoughts too, that came like healing life unto me; and I got it somewhat reasonably crushed down. I have got back my spirits, and hope I shall go on tolerably. I was for writing to you next day after it happened, but Jane suggested it would only grieve you till I could say it was in the way towards adjustment.

### THOMAS CARLYLE TO JOHN CARLYLE

[*Labour nigh Insufferable*]

Chelsea, *June* 15, 1835.

MY poor ill-starred *French Revolution* is lying as a mass of unformed rubbish, fairly laid by under lock and key. About a fortnight after writing to you last that was the deliberate desperate resolution I came to. My way was getting daily more intolerable, more inconsiderable, comparable, as I often say, to a man swimming *in vacuo.* There was labour nigh insufferable, but no joy, no furtherance. My poor nerves, for long months kept at a stretch, fell all to waste, distracted. I flung it off by saying, 'If I never write it, why then it will never be written. Not by ink alone shall man live or die'. This is the first time in my life I ever did such a thing; neither do I doubt much but that it was rather wise. It goes abreast with much that is coming to a crisis with me. You would feel astonished to see with what quietude I have laid down my head on its stone pillow in these circumstances, and said to Poverty, Dispiritment, Exclusion, Necessity, and the Devil, 'Go your course, friends; behold, I lie here and rest'. In fact, with all the despair that is round about me, there is not in myself, I do think, the least desperation. I feel rather as if, quite possibly, I might be about bursting the accursed enchantment that has held me, all my weary days, in *nameless* thraldom, and actually beginning to be alive. There has been much given me to suffer, to learn from, this last year. That things should come to a crisis is what I wish. Also how true it is. *Deux afflictions mises ensemble peuvent devenir une consolation.* On the whole I never regret coming to London, where, if boundless confusion, some elements of order have also met me; above all things, the real faces and lives of my fellow-mortals, stupid or wise, so unspeakably instructive to me. Fancy me for the present reading all manner of silly books, and for these late days one pregnant book, Dante's *Inferno*; running about amongst people and things, looking even of a bright sunset on Hyde Park and its glory; I sitting on the stump of an oak, it rolling and curvetting past me on the Serpentine drive, really very superb and given gratis. Unspeakable thoughts rise out of it. This, then, is the last efflorescence of the Tree of Being.

Hengist and Horsa were bearded, but ye gentlemen have got razors and breeches; and oh, my fair ones, how are ye changed since Boadicea wore her own hair unfrizzled hanging down as low as her hips! The Queen Anne hats and heads have dissolved into air, and behold you here and me, prismatic light-streaks on the bosom of the sacred night. And so it goes on.

### THOMAS CARLYLE TO JANE WELSH CARLYLE

['*Have pity upon me, O my Friends*']

Scotsbrig, *November* 2, 1835.

ALL people say, and, what is more to the purpose, I myself rather feel, that my health is greatly improved since I got hither. Alas! the state of wreckage I was in, fretted, as thou sayest, to fiddlestrings, was enormous. Even yet, after a month's idleness and much recovery I feel it all so well. Silence for a solar year; this, were it possible, would be my blessedness. All is so black, confused, about me, streaked with splendour too, as of heaven; and I the most helpless of mortals in the middle of it. I could say with Job of old, 'Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends'. And thou, my poor Goody, depending on cheerful looks of *mine* for thy cheerfulness! For God's sake do not, or do so as little as possible. How I love thee, what I think of thee, it is not probable that thou or any mortal will know. But cheerful looks, when the heart feels slowly dying in flood of confusion and obstruction, are not the things I have to give. Courage, however—courage to the last! One thing in the middle of this chaos I can more and more determine to adhere to—it is now almost my sole rule of life—to clear myself of cants and formulas as of poisonous Nessus shirts; to strip them off me, by what name soever called, and follow, were it down to Hades, what I myself know and see. Pray God only that sight be given me, freedom of eyes to see with. I fear nothing then, nay, hope infinite things. It is a great misery for a man to lie, even unconsciously, even to himself. Also I feel at this time as if I should never laugh more, or rather say never sniff and whiffe and *pretend* to laugh more. The despicable letter of a '——,' for example, seems to me quite criminally small. Life is no frivolity, or hypothetical coquetry or whiffery. It is a great 'world of truth', that we are alive, that I am alive; that I saw the 'Sweet Milk well' yesterday, flowing for the last four thousand years from its three sources on the hill side, the origin of Middlebie Burn, and noted the little dell it had hollowed out all the way, and the huts of Adam's posterity built sluttishly along its course, and a sun shining overhead ninety millions of miles off, and eternity all round, and life a vision, dream and yet fact, woven with uproar in the loom of time. Withal it should be said that my biliousness is considerable to-day: that I am not so unhappy as I talk, nay, perhaps rather happy; in one word, that my mother indulged me this morning in a cup of —— ! I am actually very considerably better than when we parted.

The sheet is all but done, and no word of thanks for your fine Italian-English letter, which I read three times actually and did not burn. It is the best news to me that you are getting better; that you feel cheerful, as your writing indicates. My poor Goody! it seems as if she could so easily be happy; and the easy means are so seldom there. Let us take it bravely, honestly. It will not break us both. What you say of the sofa is interesting, more than I like to confess. May it be good for us! I feel as if an immeasurable everlasting sofa was precisely the thing I wanted even now. Oh, dear! I wish I was there, on the simple greatness of that one, such as it is, and Goody might be as near as she liked. *Hadere nicht mit deiner Mutter, Liebste. Trage, trage; es wird bald enden.*[1]

God bless thee, my poor little darling. I think we shall be happier some time, and oh, how happy if God will!

Your ever affectionate,
T. CARLYLE.

### THOMAS AND JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO JOHN CARLYLE

[*Carlyle's Success as a Lecturer; Mrs. Carlyle and her Mother*]

Chelsea, *May* 30, 1837.

As to the lectures, the thing went off not without effect, and I have great cause to be thankful I am so handsomely quit of it. The audience, composed of mere quality and not abilities, was very humane to me. They seemed, indeed, to be not a little astonished at the wild Annandale voice which occasionally grew high and earnest. In these cases they sate as still under me as stones. I had, I think, two hundred and odd. The pecuniary net result is 135 L., the expenses being great; but the ulterior issues may be less inconsiderable. It seems possible I may get into a kind of way of lecturing, or otherwise speaking direct to my fellow-creatures, and so get delivered out of this awful quagmire of difficulties in which you have so long seen me struggle and wriggle. Heaven be thanked that it is done this time so tolerably, and we here still alive. I hardly ever in my life had such a moment as that of the commencement when you were thinking of me at Rome. My printers had only ceased the day before. I was wasted and fretted to a thread. My tongue, let me drink as I would, continued dry as charcoal. The people were there; I was obliged to tumble in and start. *Ach Gott!* But it was got through, and so here we are. Our mother was *black-baised*, though I had written to her to be only *white-baised*. But she read the notice in the *Times*, and wept, she tells me, and again read it. Jane went to the last four lectures and did not faint.

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[1] Quarrel not with your mother, dearest. Be patient; be patient. It will soon end.

And now I am delving in the garden to compose myself, and meaning to have things leisurely settled up here, and then start for Scotland. I shall much approve of your scheme of our going all in a body. Indeed, I have tried it every way, but it will not do. Quiet observation forces on me the conclusion that Jane and her mother cannot live together. Very sad and miserable, you will say. Truly, but so it is; and I am further bound to say that the chief blame does verily not lie at our side of the house. Nay, who would be in haste to lay any blame anywhere? But poor Mrs. Welsh, with literally the best intentions, is a person you cannot live with peaceably on any other terms I could ever discover than those of disregarding altogether the whims, emotions, caprices, and conclusions she takes up chameleonlike by the thousand daily. She and I do very well together on these terms: at least I do. But Jane and she *cannot* live so.[1] Mrs. Welsh seems to think of going off home in a short time. Jane prefers being left here, and thinks that she could even do better without the perpetual pouting and fretting she is tried with.

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[1] There were 'manifold little collisions' between Mrs. Carlyle and her mother. In a letter written two years later from Ayr, where the two were staying together, Mrs. Carlyle says: 'My mother continues the worst-natured of women; but I let her be doing and "keep never minding." Once a day, generally after breakfast, she tries a fall with me'.

My own health is not fundamentally hurt. Rest will cure me. I must be a toughish kind of a lath after all ; for my life here these three years has been sore and stern, almost frightful ; nothing but eternity beyond it, in which seems any peace. Perhaps better days are now beginning. God be thanked we can still do without such ; still and always if so it be . . . I grow better daily ; I delve, as you heard ; I walk much, generally alone through the lanes and parks ; I have lived much alone for a long time, refusing to go anywhere ; finding no pleasure in going anywhere or speaking with any one.

PS. (from Mrs. Carlyle).—I do not find that my husband has given you any adequate notion of the success of his lectures ; but you will make large allowance for the known modesty of the man. Nothing that he has ever tried seems to me to have carried such conviction to the public heart that he is a real man of genius, and worth being kept alive at a moderate rate. Lecturing were surely an easier profession than authorship. We shall see. My cough is quite gone, and there is no consumption about me at present. I expect to grow strong, now that he has nothing more to worry him.

### Jane Welsh Carlyle to Mrs. Welsh

[*The 'Demon-Fowls' next Door*]

5, Cheyne Walk, *February* 23, 1842.

I am continuing to mend. If I could only get a good sleep, I shall be quite recovered ; but, alas ! we are gone to the devil again in the sleeping department. That dreadful woman next door, instead of putting away the cock which we so pathetically appealed against, has produced another. The servant has ceased to take charge of them. They are stuffed with ever so many hens into a small hencoop every night, and left out of doors the night long. Of course they are not comfortable, and of course they crow and screech not only from daylight, but from midnight, and so near that it goes through one's head every time like a sword. The night before last they woke me every quarter of an hour, but I slept some in the intervals ; for they had not succeeded in rousing *him* above. But last night they had him up at three. He went to bed again, and got some sleep after, the 'horrors' not recommencing their efforts till five; but I, listening every minute for a new screech that would send him down a second time and prepare such wretchedness for the day, could sleep no more.

What is to be done, God knows! If this goes on, he will soon be in Bedlam; and I too, for anything I see to the contrary: and how to hinder it from going on? The last note we sent the cruel women would not open. I send for the maid and she will not come. I would give them guineas for quiet, but they prefer tormenting us. In the *law* there is no resource in such cases. They may keep beasts wild in their back yard if they choose to do so. Carlyle swears he will shoot them, and orders me to borrow Mazzini's gun. Shoot them with all my heart if the consequences were merely having to go to a police office and pay the damage. But the woman would only be irritated thereby in getting fifty instead of two. If there is to be any shooting, however, I will do it myself. It will sound better my shooting them on principle than his doing it in a passion.

This despicable nuisance is not at all unlikely to drive us out of the house after all, just when he had reconciled himself to stay in it. How one is vexed with little things in this life! The great evils one triumphs over bravely, but the little eat away one's heart.

## THOMAS CARLYLE TO JOHN STERLING

[*Hard Work on 'Oliver Cromwell'*]

Chelsea, *December* 4, 1843.

I AM very miserable at present; or call it heavy-laden with fruitless toil, which will have much the same meaning. My abode is, and has been, figuratively speaking, in the centre of chaos. Onwards there is no moving in any yet discovered line, and where I am is no abiding—miserable enough.

The fact is, without any figure, I am doomed to write some book about that unblessed Commonwealth, and as yet there will no book show itself possible. The whole stagnancy of the English genius two hundred years thick lies heavy on me.

Dead heroes buried under two centuries of Atheism seem to whimper pitifully, 'Deliver us! Canst thou not deliver us?' And alas! what am I, or what is my father's house? Confound it! I have lost four years of good labour in the business; and still the more I depend on it, it is like throwing good labour after bad. On the whole, you ought to pity me. Is thy servant a dead dog that these things have fallen on him? My only consolation is that I am struggling to be the most conservative man in England, or one of the most conservative. If the past times, only two centuries back, lie wholly a torpedo darkness and dulness, freezing as with Medusa glance all souls of men that look on it, where are our foundations gone? If the past time cannot become *melodious*, it must be forgotten, as good as annihilated; and we rove like aimless exiles that *have* no ancestors, whose world began only yesterday. That must be my consolation, such as it is.

I see almost nobody. I avoid sight rather, and study to consume my own smoke. I wish among your buildings[1] you would build me some small Prophet's chamber, fifteen feet square, with a separate garret and a flue for smoking, within a furlong of your big house, sacred from all noises of dogs, cocks, pianofortes, insipid men, engaging some dumb old woman to light a fire for me daily and boil some kind of kettle.

### THOMAS CARLYLE TO JANE WELSH CARLYLE

[*His Mother's Illness; 'Frederick the Great' a Dreary Task*]

Chelsea, *July* 23, 1853.

THANK you very much, my dear, for your judicious and kind attention in writing and in not writing. You may judge with what feelings I read your letter last night, and again and again read it; how anxiously I expected what you will say to-night. If I had indeed known what was going on during Monday, what would have become of me that day? I see everything by your description as if I looked at it with my own eyes. My poor, beloved, good old mother. Things crowd round me in my solitude, old reminiscences from the very beginnings of my life. It is very beautiful if it is so sad: and I have nothing to say. I, like all mortals, have to feel the inexorable that there is in life, and to say, as piously as I can, 'God will, God's Will!' Upon the whole, I am glad you went there at the time.[1] If you could only begin to sleep I should be thankful to have you there in my own absence. Write to me; do not fail to write while you continue. Was not that a beautiful old mother's message: 'None, I am afraid, that he would like to hear'?[2] *Sunt lacrymae rerum.* You need not be apprehensive of—where you are. She really likes you, and has good insight, though capable of strong prepossessions. John, even if you are in his way, which I do not think at all, has nothing to do with it. *The rest are loyal to you to the bone.* Surely, as you say, it was quite wrong to give such quantities of wine, etc., to an old weak person. I hope and trust John has entirely abandoned that system. It is purchasing of momentary relief at a price which must be ruinous.

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[1] A reference to some improvements which Sterling was making to his new house at Ventnor.

I have done my task to-day again, but I had drugs in me, and am not in a very vigorous humour. My task is a most dreary one. I am too old for blazing up round this Fritz and his affairs; and I see it will be a dreadful job to *riddle* his history into purity and consistency out of the endless rubbish of so many dullards as have treated of it. But I will try, too. I cannot yet afford to be *beaten*; and truly there is no other thing attainable to life except even my own poor scantling of work such as it may be. If I can *work* no more, what is the good of *me* further? We shall all have a right deep sleep by-and-by, my own little Jeannie. Thou wilt lie quiet beside me there in the *divine* bosom of eternity, if never in the diabolic whirl of time any more. But this is too sad a saying, though to me it is blessed and indubitable as well as sad.

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[1] 'A real calamity, sad but inevitable and long foreseen', writes Froude, 'was fast approaching. Signs began to show that his old mother at Scotsbrig was drawing near the end of her pilgrimage. She was reported to be ill, and even dangerously ill. Mrs. Carlyle hurried over from Moffat to assist in nursing her, meeting, when she arrived there, the never-forgotten but humbly offered birthday present of July 14 from her husband. Her mother-in-law, while she was there, sank into the long, death-like trance which she so vividly describes' (*Letters and Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 221). 'Contrary to all expectations, the strong resolute woman rallied from it; and Carlyle, always hopeful, persuaded himself that for the time the stroke had passed over'. At the end of the year, however, he was summoned to her death-bed; she died on Christmas Day.

[2] Mrs. Carlyle, in describing his mother's illness, had written: 'I asked her if she had any message for you, and she said, "None, I'm afraid, that he would like to hear, for he'll be sorry that I'm so frail"'.

I called on Lady A——[1]: less mocking than usual; is to have a last Addiscombe party on Saturday week, and then go for the North.

Adieu! Jeannie mine. God bless for ever my poor mother and thee!

T. C.

### THOMAS CARLYLE TO HIS MOTHER

[*His Last Letter before her Death*]

Chelsea, *December* 4, 1853.

MY DEAR, GOOD MOTHER,—

I wrote to Jean[2] the other day and have very little news to tell you; but I cannot let this day pass without sending you some word or other, were it never so insignificant. We are going into the country to-morrow, to the Grange, for two weeks or perhaps a little more, partly to let the painters get done with that weary 'room' of which you have heard so much; partly because the Ashburtons, whose house we visited lately without their own presence, would have it so, and Jane thought we were bound. She will go, therefore, and I, having once landed her there, am to have liberty to leave again when I will. Meanwhile, I have bargained to be private all day in their big house, to go on with my work as if at home, etc. We will see how it answers. I confess I get no good of any company at present; nor, except in stubbornly trying to work—alas! too often in vain—is there any sure relief to me from thoughts which are very sad. But we must not 'lose heart': lose faith—never, never! Dear old mother, weak and sick and dear to me, while I live in God's creation, what a day has this been in my solitary thought; for, except a few words to Jane, I have not spoken to any one, nor, indeed, hardly seen any one, it being dusk and dark before I went out—a dim, silent Sabbath day, the sky foggy, dark with damp, and a universal stillness the consequence, and it is this day gone fifty-eight years that I was born. And my poor mother! Well! we are all in God's hands. Surely God is good. Surely we ought to trust in Him, or what is there for the sons of men? Oh, my dear mother! Let it ever be a comfort to you, however weak you are, that you did your part honourably and well while in strength, and were a noble mother to me and to us all. I am now myself grown old, and have had various things to do and suffer for so many years; but there is nothing I ever had to be so much thankful for as for the mother I had. That is a truth which I know well, and perhaps this day again it may be some comfort to you. Yes, surely, for if there has been any good in the things I have uttered in the world's hearing, it was your voice essentially that was speaking through me; essentially what you and my brave father meant and taught me to mean, this was the purport of all I spoke and wrote. And if in the few years that may remain to me, I am to get any more written for the world, the essence of it, so far as it is worthy and good, will still be yours. May God reward you, dearest mother, for all you have done for me! I never can. Ah no! but will think of it with gratitude and pious love so long as I have the power of thinking. And I will pray God's blessing on you, now and always, and will write no more on that at present, for it is better for me to be silent.

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[1] Lady Ashburton, the cause of the much-discussed misunderstanding in 1846 between Carlyle and his wife.

[2] Carlyle's sister.

Perhaps a note from the Doctor will arrive to-morrow; I am much obliged, as he knows, for his punctuality on that subject. He knows there is none so interesting to me, or can be. Alas! I know well he writes me the best view he can take; but I see, too, how utterly frail my poor mother is, and how little he or any mortal can help. Nevertheless, it is a constant solace to me to think he is near you, and our good Jean. Certainly she does *me* a great service in assiduously watching over you; and it is a great blessing to us all that she is there to do such a duty. As to my own health, I am almost surprised to report it so good. In spite of all these tumblings and agitations I really feel almost better than I have done in late years; certainly not worse; and at this time within sight of sixty it is strange how little decay I feel; nothing but my eyesight gone a very little; and my hope, but also my fear or care at all, about this world, gone a great deal. Poor Jane is not at all strong, sleeps very ill, etc. Perhaps the fortnight of fresh air and change of scene will do her some good. But she is very tough, and a bit of good stuff too. I often wonder how she holds out, and brave so many things with so thin a skin. She is sitting here reading. She sends her affection to you and to them all. She speaks to me about you almost daily, and answers many a question and speculation ever since she was at Scotsbrig. Give my love to Jamie, to Isabella, and them all. May God's blessing be on you all!

T. CARLYLE.

### THOMAS CARLYLE TO BENJAMIN DISRAELI

[*Declines an Offer of the Grand Cross of the Bath and a Pension*]

5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, *December* 29, 1874.

SIR,—

Yesterday, to my great surprise, I had the honour to receive your letter containing a magnificent proposal for my benefit, which will be memorable to me for the rest of my life. Allow me to say that the letter, both in purport and expression, is worthy to be called magnanimous and noble, that it is without example in my own poor history; and I think it is unexampled, too, in the history of governing persons towards men of letters at the present, as at any time; and that I will carefully preserve it as one of the things precious to memory and heart. A real treasure or benefit, independent of all results from it.

This said to yourself and reposited with many feelings in my own grateful mind, I have only to add that your splendid and generous proposals for my practical behoof, must not any of them take effect; that titles of honour are, in all degrees of them, out of keeping with the tenour of my own poor existence hitherto in this epoch of the world, and would be an encumbrance, not a furtherance to me; that as to money, it has, after long years of rigorous and frugal, but also (thank God, and those who are gone before me) not degrading poverty, become in this latter time amply abundant, even superabundant; more of it, too, now a hindrance, not a help to me; so that royal or other bounty would be more than thrown away in my case; and in brief, that except the feeling of your fine and noble conduct on this occasion, which is a real and permanent possession, there cannot anything be done that would not now be a sorrow rather than a pleasure.

With thanks more than usually sincere,

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

T. CARLYLE.

JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO MRS. CARLYLE, SCOTSBRIG.

[*Four Months after Marriage*]

21, Cowley Bank, *February* 17, 1827.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

My husband is busy below stairs with his book,[1] and I, it seems, am this time to be the writer—with greater willingness than ability, indeed ; for I have been very stupid these some days with cold. But you must not be left in the idea that we are so neglectful as we have seemed : a little packet was actually written to go by the carrier on Wednesday (my modesty will not permit me to call him by his popular name) ; when the rain fell and the wind blew so that no living creature durst venture to his quarters. The doctor proceeded as early as was good for his health the following morning, in case fortune, in the shape of bad weather or whisky, had interposed delay ; by that time, however, Carrier, boxes and Bobby were all far on the road. So you see there was nothing for it but to write by post, which I lose no time in doing.

And now let me thank you for the nice eggs and butter which arrived in the best preservation—and so opportunely ! just when I was lamenting over the emptied cans, as one who had no hope. Really, it is most kind of you to be so mindful and helpful of our Town-wants, and most gratifying to us to see ourselves so cared for. . . .

The new Book is going on at a regular rate ; and I would fain persuade myself that *his* health and spirits are at the same regular rate improving : more contented he certainly is, since he applied himself to this task, for he was not born to be anything but miserable in idleness. But that he *were* indeed well, well beside *me*, and occupied as he ought ! How plain and clear would life then lie before us ! I verily believe there would not be such a happy pair of people on the face of the whole earth ! Yet we must not wish this *too* earnestly. How many precious things do we not already possess which others have not—have hardly an idea of ! Let us enjoy these then, and bless God that we are permitted to enjoy them, rather than importune His goodness with vain longings for more.

Indeed, we lead a most quiet and even happy life here :

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[1] The fragmentary novel, *Wotten Reinfred.*

within doors all is warm, is swept and garnished ; and without the country is no longer winter-like, but beginning to be gay and green. Many pleasant people come to see us ; and such of our visitors as are *not* pleasant people, have at least the good effect of enhancing to us the pleasure of being alone. *Alone* we never weary : if I have not Jean's enviable gift of *talking*, I am at least among the best listeners in the kingdom. And my husband has always something interesting and instructive to say. Then we have books to read—all sorts of them—from Scott's Bible down to nov*ells*[1] ; and I have sewing needles and purse-needles, and all conceivable implements for a lady's work. There is a piano too, for ' soothing the savage breast '. . . . So Jean is not coming to us yet. Well, I am sorry for it, but I hope the time is coming. In the meantime, she must be a good girl, and read as much as she has time for, and above all cultivate this talent of speech, for I am purposing to learn from her when she comes. It is my husband's worst fault to me that I will not, or rather *cannot* speak ; often when he has talked for an hour without answer, he will beg for some sign of life on my part, and the only sign I can give is a little kiss. Well ! that is better than nothing, don't you think ?—(*Mrs. Carlyle ends here, and Carlyle takes the pen in hand*).—' So far ', he says, ' had the good wife proceeded, when visitors arrived, and the sheet was left unfinished ', etc.

### JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO ELIZA MILES[2]

[*From Lonely Craigenputtock*]

Craigenputtock, June 16, 1832.

MY DEAR ELIZA,—

I could wager you now think the Scotch a less amiable nation than you had supposed, least of all to be commended on the score of good faith. Is it not so ? Has not my whole nation suffered in your opinion thro' my solitary fault ? In February I made a voluntary engagement to write to you, which now in June remains to be fulfilled ! Still I *am* fulfilling it, which proves it is not altogether ' out of sight, out of mind ' with me ; and could I give you an idea of the tumult I have been in, since we parted, you would find me excusable, if not blameless. I never forget my gentle Ariel in Ampton Street—it were positive sin to forget her : so helpful she was, so beautiful, so kind and good ! Besides, this is the place of all others for thinking of absent friends, where one has seldom any present to think of. It is the stillest, solitariest place that it ever entered upon your imagination to conceive, where one has the strangest shadowy existence ; nothing actual in it but the food we eat, the bed one sleeps on, and (praised be Heaven !) the fine air one breathes ; the rest is all a dream of the absent and distant, of things past and to come.

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[1] *Anglice*, Novels—ridiculously held in horror by a certain hawk-faced ' ruling elder ' I had heard discoursing once.—T. C.

[2] Daughter of the people with whom the Carlyles had lodged when lately in London.

I was fatigued enough by the journey home, still more by the *trysting* that awaited me here ; a dismantled house, no effectual servants, weak health and, worse than the seven plagues of Egypt, a necessity of painters. All these things were against me. But happily there is a continual tide in human affairs ; and if a little while ago I was near being swept away in the hubbub, so now I find myself in a dead calm. All is again in order about us, and I fold my hands and ask, ' What is to be done next ? ' ' The duty nearest hand, and the next will show itself in course '. So my Goethe teaches. No one who lays this precept to heart need ever be at a stand. Impress it on your twenty ' children ' (that, I think, was the number you had fixed upon), impress it on the whole twenty from the cradle upwards, and you will spare your sons the vexation of many a wild-goosechase, and render your daughters for ever impracticable to *ennui*. Shame that such a malady should exist in a Christian land ; should not only exist, but be almost general throughout the whole female population that is placed above the necessity of working for daily bread. If I have an antipathy for any class of people, it is for *fine ladies*. I almost match my husband's detestation of partridge-shooting *gentlemen*. Woe to the fine lady who should find herself set down at Craigenputtock for the first time in her life, left alone with her own thoughts, no ' *fancy bazaar* ' in the same kingdom with her, no place of amusement within a day's journey ; the very church, her last imaginable resource, seven miles off. I can fancy with what horror she would look on the ridge of mountains that seemed to enclose her from all earthly bliss ! with what despair in her accents she would inquire if there were not even a 'charity sale' within reach. Alas, no! no outlet whatever for 'ladies' work', not even a book for a fine ladies' understanding! It is plain she would have nothing for it but to die as speedily as possible, and to relieve the world of the expense of her maintenance. For my part I am very content. I have everything here my heart desires, that I could have anywhere else, except society, and even that deprivation is not to be considered wholly an evil: if people we like and take pleasure in do not come about us here as in London, it is thankfully to be remembered that here the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest! If the knocker makes no sound for weeks together, it is so much the better for my nerves. My husband is as good company as reasonable mortal could desire. Every fair morning we ride on horseback for an hour before breakfast. (My precious horse knew me again, and neighed loud and long when he found himself in his old place.) Then we eat such a surprising breakfast of home-baked bread, and eggs, etc., etc., as might incite any one who had breakfasted so long in London to write a pastoral. Then Carlyle takes to his writing, while I, like Eve, 'studious of household good', inspect my house, my garden, my live stock, gather flowers for my drawing-room, and lapfuls of eggs; and finally betake myself also to writing, or reading, or making or mending, or whatever work seems fittest. After dinner, and only then, I lie on the sofa, and (to my shame be it spoken) sometimes *sleep*, but oftenest dream waking. In the evening I walk on the moor (how different from Holborn and the Strand!), and read anything that does not exact much attention.

Such is my life—agreeable as yet from its novelty, if for nothing else. Now, would you not like to share it? I am sure you would be happy beside us for awhile, and healthy: for I would keep all drugs from your lips, and pour warm milk into you. Could you not find an escort and come and try? At any rate, write and tell me how you are, what doing and what intending. I shall always be interested in all that concerns you. My health is slowly mending.

Yours affectionately,

JANE CARLYLE.

### JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO THOMAS CARLYLE

[*Her Birthday Letter*]

Seaforth House, *Tuesday*, *July* 14, 1846.

OH, my dear husband, Fortune has played me such a cruel trick this day! But it is all right now; and I do not even feel any resentment against Fortune for the suffocating misery of the last two hours. I know always, even when I seem to you most exacting, that whatever happens to me is nothing like so bad as I deserve. But you shall hear all how it was.

Yesterday, in coming back from the post-office, where I had gone myself with the letter to you, my head took to aching, and ached, ached on all day in a bearable sort of fashion, till the evening, when Geraldine came over from Manchester, and the sudden bound my heart gave at the sight of her finished me off on the spot. I had to get myself put to bed, and made a bad wakeful night of it; so that this morning I was nervous, as you may figure, and despairing of all things, even of the letter from you that I expected so confidently yesterday. Encouragement came, however, from a quarter I was little dreaming of—*before* the post time, before I was dressed, in fact Heaven knows how she had managed it—there was delivered to me a packet from—Bölte, at Cambridge—a pretty little collar and cuffs of the poor thing's own work, with the kindest letter, after all my cruelty to her! Well, I thought, if *she* can be so loving and forgiving for me, I need not be tormenting myself with the fear that *he* will not write to-day either, and I put on the collar there and then, and went down to breakfast in a little better heart.

At ten, the post hour, I slipped away myself to the post office, but was *detected* by Betsy and Geraldine, who insisted on putting on their bonnets and accompanying me. I could well have dispensed with the attention; however, I trusted there would be a letter, and their presence would only hinder me reading it for a little. And *two* were handed out which I stretched out *my* hand to receive. Both for Betsy! None for *me*, the postmistress averred!

Not a line from you on my birthday—on the fifth day! I did not burst out crying—did not faint—did not *do* anything absurd, so far as I know; but I walked back again without speaking a word, and with such a tumult of wretchedness in my heart as you, who know me, can conceive. And then I shut myself in my own room to fancy everything that was most tormenting. Were you finally so out of patience with me that you had resolved to write to me no more at all ? Had you gone to Addiscombe and found no leisure there to remember my existence ? Were you taken ill, so ill that you *could* not write ? That last idea made me mad to get off to the railway and back to London. Oh, mercy ! what a two hours I had of it ! And just when I was at my wits' end, I heard Julia crying out through the house, 'Mrs. Carlyle, Mrs. Carlyle ! are you there ? Here is a letter for you !' And so there was, after all. The postmistress had overlooked it, and given it to Robert when he went afterwards, not knowing that we had been. I wonder what *love letter* was ever received with such thankfulness ! Oh, my dear, I am not fit for living in the world with this organization. I am as much broken to pieces by that little accident as if I had come through an attack of cholera or typhus fever. I cannot even steady my hand to *write* decently. But I felt an irresistible need of thanking you by return of post. Yes, I have kissed the dear little card-case. And now I will lie down a while and try to get some sleep, at least to quiet myself. I will try to believe—oh, why cannot I believe it once for all—that with all my faults and follies, I *am* 'dearer to you than any earthly creature' ! I will be better for Geraldine here : she is become very quiet and nice, and as affectionate for me as ever.

Your own
JANE CARLYLE.

### JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO JOHN CARLYLE

[*The 'Pagan Grandeur' of a Noble Dame ; Ruskin's Unhappy Marriage*]

Chelsea, *May* 9, 1854.

. . . I HAVE got the influenza again—caught cold returning from a dinner-party at Procter's on Saturday night, and am at present in the third stage of the thing—the coughing and sneezing stage.

I saw the 'Noble Lady' [1] that night, and a strange, tragic sight she was! Sitting all alone in a low-ceilinged, confined room, at the top of Procter's house; a French bed in a corner, some relics of the grand Bedford Square drawing-room (small pictures and the like) scattered about. Herself stately, artistic as ever; not a line of her figure, not a fold of her dress changed since we knew her first, twenty years ago and more! She made me sit on a low chair opposite to her (she had sent for me to come up), and began to speak of Edward Irving[1] and long ago as if it were last year—last month! There was something quite overpowering in the whole thing: the Pagan grandeur of the old woman, retired from the world, awaiting death, as erect and unyielding as ever, contrasted so strangely with the mean bedroom at the top of the house, and the uproar of company going on below. And the past which she seemed to live and move in felt to gather round me too, till I fairly laid my head on her lap and burst into tears! She stroked my hair very gently and said, 'I think, Jane, your manner never changes any more than your hair, which is still black, I see'. 'But you, too, are not changed', I said. 'You know', she said, 'when I was still a young woman, I dressed and felt like an old one, and so age has not told so much on me as on most others'. When I had stayed with her an hour or so, she insisted on my going back to the company, and embraced me as she never did before. Her embrace always used to be so freezing to my youthful enthusiasm; but this time she held me strongly to her heart, and kissed my cheeks many times heartily, like a mother. I was near going off into crying again. I felt that she was taking eternal farewell of me in her own mind. But I don't mean it to be so: I will go again to see her very soon. The great gentleness was indeed the chief change in her—not a harsh word did she say about any one; and her voice, tho' clear and strong as of old, had a human modulation in it. You may fancy the humour in which I went back to the Party, which was then at a white heat of excitement—about nothing!

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[1] The 'Noble Lady' was an old friend, Mrs. Montagu ; Mrs. Carlyle had not seen her for many years.

. . . There is a great deal of talking about the Ruskins here at present. Mrs. Ruskin has been taken to Scotland by *her* parents: and Ruskin is gone to Switzerland with *his*; and the separation is understood to be permanent. There is even a rumour that *Mrs.* Ruskin is to sue for a divorce.[1] I know nothing about it, except that I have always pitied Mrs. Ruskin, while people generally blame her—for love of dress and company and flirtation. She was too young and pretty to be so left to her own devices as she was by her husband, who seemed to wish nothing more of her but the credit of having a pretty, well-dressed wife.

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[1] The founder of the 'Catholic Apostolic Church' and the early love of Jane Welsh, in her Haddington days.

With kind regards to *your* wife,

Yours ever,
J. W. C.

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### JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO MRS. RUSSELL

[*The Emotional Miss Geraldine Jewsbury ; a Night-alarm with Carlyle*]

Chelsea, *November* 28, 1856.

MY DARLING,—

You can't think what difficulty I have had to keep Geraldine [Jewsbury] from firing off letters to you every two or three days with the most alarming accounts of bodily state ! It is her besetting weakness by nature, and her trade of novelist has aggravated it, the *desire of feeling and producing violent emotions.* When I am well I can laugh down this sort of thing in her ; but when I am ill it fatigues me dreadfully, and irritates my moral sense as well as my nerves. In illness as in Madame Genlis' *Castle of Truth*, people and things are stripped of all illusion for one, and one sees, thro' all affectation and exaggeration and *got up* feelings, the simple *fact.* It seems as if disorder in one's nervous system were *needed* to develop in the brain all the insight that lies in it inert. However, that may be, when I am very ill I can't endure to be 'made a phrase' over, and used up for purposes of emotion : and so in these weeks my hard, practical Ann, who never utters a sympathizing word, but *does* everything I need, punctually, has been a far more agreeable nurse for me than poor Geraldine, who, if I asked for a glass of water, would spill the half of it by the way, and in compensation would *drop*

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[1] Ruskin's marriage was annulled on his wife's suit, which he did not defend, in 1855. Mrs. Ruskin afterwards married John Everett Millais, and died, as also did Millais, before Ruskin.

*tears on my hand* and answer me that I was 'sure to die'! and then fall to kissing me wildly (when I was, perhaps, in an interval of retching and perfectly *hating* to be kissed!) and bursting out into passionate sobs! (which of course did not prevent her from going out into company half an hour after, and being the life of it!) These *scenes* wore me out so, that I was obliged to restrict her visits to one half-hour in the day; and then, to be doing *something*, she *would* write letters to you, to my Cousin, and any one she thought might be anxious about me. I said she might write to Maggie one day, on condition that I saw the letter before it went. My dear! they would have believed at Auchtertool I hadn't a week to live! I burnt the letter, and two other letters, and as I believed *you* really cared for me, and would be distressed at the thought of losing me, I prohibited her over and over again from writing to you at all.[1] At last I gave in to her fixed notion to write, only on the understanding that if there were any exaggeration in the letter I should have the burning of it too! I found it a nice letter and pretty near the truth.

I am much better; my cough is quite gone, and I am sleeping better; get to sleep between two and three instead of six or not at all, as was the case for a month. Great weakness is all that remains to be cured; and I *do* take the most nourishing things; and only the weather has prevented me taking a drive every day this week. I have been out once in a *Fly*, besides into the Garden to see my poor little plants, who don't know whether to live or die. The canaries are well, but in spite of their expensive mahogany bath, they are as black with the fog as the sheep in Hyde Park. The other night I was alarmed by their having a bad dream, or *one* of them, I suppose, had the bad dream, and the other was frightened by *its* fright. They dashed about and flapped against the wires of the cage like mad canaries for a quarter of an hour.

Mr. Carlyle, after having several horses on trial, *bought* a beautiful one ten days ago, and the first day he rode it he brought it home five miles with two shoes lost! Then the smith shod it with a broken nail in its hoof under the new shoe! Of course it became dead lame, and had to be sent to a veterinary surgeon, where it is, and likely to be, for some fortnight yet. 'No wonder', my Ann says; 'there is nothing so bad for festering as a rancid (rusty ?) nail'! Mr. Fairie goes and sees the horse daily, and sends bulletins of its health. Every time Mr. Fairie comes, he asks, have I heard from Mrs. Russell, and tells me how much his friends the Gladstones admire both you and your husband. I bless the chance which sent him into your drawing-room that wet day; that gives me somebody who has *seen* you, to speak of you to.

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[1] 'This is the lady', observes Mr. Alexander Carlyle in printing this in the *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 'in whose stories about Mrs. Carlyle ("Mythic Jottings" Carlyle called what of them he had seen) Mr. Froude has placed such implicit faith'.

Oh, such a fright I got last Friday morning! Thursday night was my *second* night of something like human sleep. I had fallen asleep about three, and was still sleeping, off and on, between six and seven, when I was startled wide awake by a heavy fall in the room directly over mine (Mr. C.'s bedroom). I knew in the very act of waking that it was no table or inanimate thing that made the sound, but a human body—Mr. C.'s of course—the only human body there! What *could* I think but that he had got up ill, and fallen down in a fit? I threw myself out of bed, tore open my door and began to run upstairs. But my legs got paralysed; I leant against the wall and screamed. In answer to my scream, came Mr. C.'s voice, calling out quite *jolly*, 'It's nothing, my dear! Go back to your bed; it is a mistake: I will be there presently'! Back to bed I crept; and then, if it had been in my constitution to take a fit of hysterics, I should have taken it! As it was I lay and trembled, and my teeth chattered, and when Mr. C. came and tried me with some water, I could no more swallow it than if I had taken hydrophobia. He had awoke too early, and got up to go downstairs and smoke, *his* way of invoking sleep. His room being quite dark, and thinking to put on his stockings and shoes before getting himself a light, he had gone to sit down on a chair at the bottom of his bed, where these articles are kept; but, mistaking the locality, he had sat down *on nothing at all*! and fell smack his whole length on the floor, not hurting himself in the least, for a wonder. This adventure has pretty well taken the conceit out of me on the score of courage, presence of mind, and all that! Mercy! what would have become of Dr. Russell if he had had a wife who *stood still* and *screamed*, that time when he was so dangerously ill?

Do be so good as to give Mr. Dobbie[1] an emphatic kiss for me; for if Mr. C. becomes unendurable with his eternal *Frederick*, I intend running away with Mr. Dobbie!—to the backwoods, or wherever he likes.—God bless you, my dear, kind, *true* woman. Give my love to your Husband.

Yours ever affectionately,

JANE CARLYLE.

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### JANE WELSH CARLYLE TO MRS. RUSSELL

[*Lady Ashburton's Death; Progress of 'Frederick the Great'*]

Chelsea, *May*, 1857.

DEAREST MARY,—

I have been long in answering your dear letter. If you saw Lady Ashburton's death in the newspapers you would partly guess why; that I was shocked and dispirited and feeling *silence* best. But you could not guess the *outward* disturbance consequent on this event!

The letters and calls of inquiry and condolence that have been eating up my days for the last two weeks! distressingly and irritatingly . . . at no moment since the time she was first declared in danger could her death have come with more shock. Lord Ashburton had just been here for a week, making preparations for her immediate return to England; and he represented her as 'progressing most favourably'. Sir James Clarke, who had been to Paris to see her, said the same. Lord A. was to have gone back to Paris on the Sunday, but on Saturday he got a letter from *her*, telling him to go to St. Leonards and take a house there; 'that she might be at the seaside, if she liked, during September'! He went and took the house, and so did not go to Paris till the Monday, when she had been dead two hours! I never heard of so easy a death. She was dressing about four o'clock; felt faint, and called for Dr. Rous (her private doctor); he told her in answer to her question, 'what is this?', 'you are going to faint, it is nothing; you mustn't mind these faintnesses'! He put his arm round her to support her; she clasped her hands over his other arm, leant her forehead on his shoulder, gave a sigh, and was dead! Last Tuesday Mr. C. went to the Grange to be present at her funeral. It was conducted with a kind of royal state ; and all the men, who used to compose a sort of *court* for her, were there, *in tears* ! I never heard of a gloomier funeral.

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[1] The Rev. Mr. Dobbie (Mrs. Russell's father), then in his eightieth year.

All this has kept me from getting the good I expected from the change of weather. My cough is entirely gone ; but I am weak and nervous to a degree ! And driving out through these stifling streets puts no strength into me. I long to be far away. I feel as if one long breath of pure Scotch air would cure me ! The German scheme is fallen entirely into abeyance. Mr. C. has commenced printing the first two volumes of his Book [1] ; and it will be a year he says, before they are ready. 'How was it then ', I asked last night, 'that you spoke of being done with them in two months, telling me I must make haste and get well to go to Germany ' ? 'Oh ', said he, 'one talks all sorts of things ' ! 'But ', said I, 'that was a talk that cost me three nights' sleep ' ! 'Bless me ! ' said he, quite astonished, 'I said all that chiefly by way of cheering you up ' ! Oh, men ! men ! how stupid you are in your dealings with us poor egg-shell wretches ! There is no great fear of Germany, then, for a year anyhow ! He will be too busy for going from home at all, if he can possibly stand the heat in town. So that I fancy I shall be at liberty to regulate my own goings according to my own will, which, however, is hampered enough by many considerations ; chiefly that of *his* solitude and tendency to overwork himself when left in the house alone. For his material comforts, Ann can care as well as I, now ; the only difference being in the scales of expenditure, and even that is not exorbitant. It will be no hindrance to him, however, in the long run, not to leave untried any feasible means of strengthening myself before the winter returns to take me by the lungs ; and certainly getting out of this and breathing fresh air awhile, under favourable moral circumstances, would be the most possible means of all. Nowhere could I be so well and content, I think, as with *you* ; and if I could go to you for a fortnight or so, without travelling farther and making more visits, I would say at once your kind invitation is *believed in* and accepted ! But there are so many in Scotland who have always been kind to me, and whose kindness I would not for the world seem insensible to, who would be grieved and angered if I be in Scotland without going to see them; and that sort of brashing about which I experienced last year is more than I have either strength or spirits for in my normal state.

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[1] *Frederick the Great.*

After this long illness and confinement to the spot and one circle of ideas, I shudder at the bare notion of going over the ground, both material and emotional, that I went over last year! But it is time enough to be making up one's plans.

In the meantime I am going for a week to Easthampstead Park (the Marquis of Downshire's) almost immediately. But these great grand Country Houses are not the places Nature prompts me to take my sick nerves and bad spirits to! especially when I am not going as an animated but still wholly irresponsible carpet-bag, with Mr. Carlyle's name on it, but on my own basis! . . .

I have not made a single call yet; but when I have finished this letter, I am going off in a cab to call for the old Countess of Sandwich (Lady A.'s mother). She said yesterday she would like to see me. . . . I send you some Poems, amongst which you will find *some* to like. God bless you, my darling. Kindest love to your husband. I was so very thankful to hear of your improved sleep.

Affectionately yours,
Jane W. Carlyle.

# *PART IV*

# The Age of Tennyson

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON—GEORGE ELIOT—CHARLES KINGSLEY—MATTHEW ARNOLD—DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI—JAMES THOMSON ('B.V.')—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON—JOHN RUSKIN—ROBERT BUCHANAN.

# LORD TENNYSON

## 1809-1892

We owe it to the courtesy of the present Lord Tennyson that we are permitted to reprint the following letters from his admirable Memoir of his father, published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., in 1897. The first letter, which illustrates the poet's attitude towards his critics in the early days of his career, is to Professor John Wilson, who, as 'Christopher North', was then the mainstay of *Blackwood's Magazine*. 'Christopher North' had himself picked plenty of holes in Tennyson's first volume of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*—published in 1830 by Effingham Wilson, who, five years later, issued Browning's *Paracelsus*—but his criticism, on the whole, had not been unfriendly. The *Quarterly*, on the other hand, had treated Tennyson with contempt, and it was long before its prejudice gave way even to mild applause. The second letter takes the poet to 1845, when Sir Robert Peel obtained for him the annual grant of £200 as a 'mark of Royal Favour to one who has devoted to worthy objects great intellectual powers'. Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton) was fond of describing his interview with Carlyle on the subject of this pension, and the story as told in Wemyss Reid's Life of Houghton is worth repeating :

'Richard Milnes', said Carlyle one day, withdrawing his pipe from his mouth, as they were seated together in the little house in Cheyne Row, 'when are you going to get that pension for Alfred Tennyson ?' 'My dear Carlyle', responded Milnes, 'the thing is not so easy as you seem to suppose. What will my constituents say if I do get the pension for Tennyson ? They know nothing about him or his poetry, and they will probably think he is some poor relation of my own, and that the whole affair is a job'. Solemn and emphatic was Carlyle's response. 'Richard Milnes, on the Day of Judgment, when the Lord asks you why you didn't get that pension for Alfred Tennyson, it will not do to lay the blame on your constituents ; it is *you* that will be damned'. The question arose, adds the present Lord Tennyson, 'whether Sheridan Knowles or my father should be placed on the pension list. Peel knew nothing of either of them. Houghton said that he then made Peel read *Ulysses*, 'whereupon the pension was granted to Tennyson'.

### Lord Tennyson to 'Christopher North'

### [*The Poet's Attitude towards his Critics*]

Somersby, Lincolnshire, (*About* 1832).

Tho' I *am* 'the star of little Britain', I assure you I do not rise or set there very cordially. I prefer vegetating in a very quiet garden where I neither see nor hear anything of the great world of literature—not lighting even upon *Maga* once a year. Nevertheless, in the lack of better things, a composition, mistermed a Satyre, entitled *Criticism and Taste*, and particularly remarkable for the want of either, was forwarded to me, a day or two ago, by the author—with a note; he thinks I ought to promote the circulation of his book for the good of my own, does he? so then I am to be pioneered—perhaps patronized, by Mr. John Lake. Now, sir, hew me piecemeal, cut me up any way you will, exhaust all your world of fun and fancy upon me, but do not suspect me—tho' I may have done, written, said foolish things, not excepting a silly squib to Christopher North—do not dream that I can, now or ever, own any one grain of sympathy with the ravings of this unhappy coxcomb. I would rather request you, if you do not object to meet me on such dirty ground, to shake hands over the puddle he has made.

Five months after it had been printed I saw the critique from which Mr. L. had drawn his inspiration[1] I considered it at the time as somewhat too skittish and petulant, tho' it was redeemed to me by a tone of boisterous and picturesque humour such as I love. My gall might have risen a little—that it could never have contained much bitterness the weakness of my epigram ought, I think, to prove; for I trust that you will give me credit for being able to write a better.

I could wish that some of the poems there broken on your critical wheel were deeper than ever plummet sounded. Written as they were before I attained my nineteenth year, they could not but contain as many faults as words. I never wish to see them or hear of them again—much less to find them dragged forward once more on your boards, if you should condescend to divide Mr. L, from his one idea by replying to him. Perhaps you should not use him too harshly—tho' his arrogance deserves reproof; a consideration of the real imbecility of his nature ought to blunt the weapon.

Some one (I think M. in his cups) told a friend of mine that you were the author of an article on me in the *Quarterly*. I do not believe it: for I could not recognize one spark of genius or a single touch of true humour or good feeling. Moreover, the man misprints me, which is worse than lying—but now that we have shaken hands (for I trust we have) I find that you owe me an explanation. Somewhere or other you state 'Alfred is a gentleman'—to which I answer with Conrade and Borachio, 'Yea, sir, we hope': you say afterwards, that I have forgotten what was due to myself in that character, because having previously sent you 'a copy with a grateful superscription' I have publicly disclaimed much relish for your approbation. Now upon mine honour as a gentleman, I did never send or cause to be sent, any such presentation copy, or write, indite, or cause to be written or indited any superscription, grateful or ungrateful, to any Editor of any Review or Magazine whatsoever.

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[1] The *Blackwood* article, by 'Christopher North.'

Apologising for having thus far encroached on your valuable time. . . . [1]

## LORD TENNYSON TO CANON RAWNSLEY

[*The Poet and His Pension*]

Cheltenham, 1845.

MY DEAR RAWNSLEY,—

I was delighted to see your handwriting again. I thought you had given me up as a bad job, for I remember that I once very flagitiously did not answer a very kind letter of yours long, long ago: and truly my love for my best friends must not be measured by the quantity of black and white into which I put it: for, however appearances are against me, I *have* a love for old Lincolnshire faces and things which will stick by me as long as I live. As to visiting you I wish I could, but I am engaged to Hallam, who has a country house in the neighbourhood of Bristol, and it is an engagement of some standing, and thither am I going as soon as ever I recover from the worst cold I ever caught since I was a Somersby suckling. It has kept me half-dead for a month. I got it one wet night at Chelsea, when I went to see Mr. Carlyle. The better half of the Carlyle was then in Scotland. He, by the bye, is about to publish a book which you had better get in your book club—all the letters of Oliver Cromwell that can be got at, connected with a short narration or commentary of his own. Oliver is Carlyle's God, the greatest of great men, and he intends if he can to sweep off all the royalist cobwebs that have hitherto obscured his fair fame.

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[1] This letter was found in a rag-store in Dundee in 1895. The signature is missing.

I am glad to hear of your quadrilling at Horncastle. There is something pleasant in the notion of your figuring in L'Été with all your hood fluttering about you, and I respect a man who can keep his heart green when the snows of Time begin to whiten his head: not that I mean to say your head is white, but the silver hair *may* intrude 'obiter', tho' as far as I recollect you had a very stout black crop when I saw you last. I should like to have been amongst you as in old times, but

> 'The days are awa that we hae seen',

and I begin to feel an old man myself. I have gone through a vast deal of suffering (as to many difficulties in my family, etc.) since I saw you last, and would not live it over again for quadruple the pension Peel has given me and on which you congratulate me. Well, I suppose I ought in a manner to be grateful. I have done nothing slavish to get it: I never even solicited for it either by myself or thro' others. It was all done for me without word or hint from me, and Peel tells me I 'need not by it be fettered in the public expression of any opinion I choose to take up'; so, if I take pique against the Queen, or the Court, or Peel himself, I may, if I will, bully them with as much freedom, tho' not perhaps quite so gracefully as if I were still unpensioned. Something in that word 'pension' sticks in my gizzard; it is only the name, and perhaps would smell sweeter by some other. I feel the least bit possible Miss Martineauish about it. You know she refused one, saying she 'should be robbing the people who did not make laws for themselves': however, that is nonsense: her non-acceptance of the pension did not save the people a stiver, and meantime (what any one would have thought must have been more offensive to her feelings) her friends subscribed for her and kept her from want. If the people did make laws for themselves, if these things went by universal suffrage, what literary man ever would get a lift, it being known that the mass of Englishmen have as much notion of poetry as I of fox-hunting? Meantime there is some meaning in having a gentleman and a classic at the head of affairs, who may now and then direct the stream of public bounty to us, poor devils, whom the Grundyites would only not remunerate, but kick out of society as barely *respectable*: for Calliope herself, as I have heard, never kept a *gig* but walks barefoot about the sacred hill, no better than an Irishwoman.

I wish the causelessly bitter against me and mine no worse punishment than that they could read the very flattering letter Peel wrote me; let us leave them in their limbo.

‘Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa’.

Peel's letter I would send you if I had it, but I have sent it to Hallam, and told him to keep it till I see him. I wrote to Rogers thanking him for his kindness. I thought he must have been mentioning me to Peel. He wrote me back a very pretty answer which I send Sophy for an autograph of the old Bard; would any one think that pretty little hand was written by a man somewhere between eighty and ninety?

Now, Sophy, if as a matron you do not care for autographs, or intend to lose it or give it away, why let me have it back again, for I have some value for it; particularly as the old man and I fell out one wet day in Pall Mall about half a year ago, when I said something that offended him, and his face flushed and he plucked his arm out of mine and told me I was ‘affecting the smart’, and since then I haven't seen him. How is ‘Mamma’? you do not say a word about her health, and I want to know, for she was always like a mother to me. I wonder whether she recollects my playing the drunken son at Bristol. Many a pleasant talk have I had with her, and I much regret that I cannot come and see you now. Tell Mundy I retain a lively recollection of his puns; and remember me to Coltman (George, I mean), who always seems to me a real good fellow. I recollect him sending me, when I lived at Boxley, a book of poems by a friend. I forget now what my answer was, but I hope I said nothing to hurt him or his friend's feelings. If you knew what a nuisance these volumes of verse are! Rascals send me their's per post from America, and I have more than once been knocked up out of bed, to pay three or four shillings for books of which I can't get thro' one page, for of all books the most insipid reading is second-rate verse.

Blue books, red books, almanacks, peerages, anything is better. See! how I keep chattering, just as if I were sitting by your fireside, in the little book-room, pipe in hand.

I shall not be in London in November, for I have only just returned from thence, but do you never by any chance mean to come and visit us? Are we in these days, who live East and West, to be as badly off as if we lived one at each Ind or in the heart of the eighteenth century? Come and see us, you can do it some time, going to or from the Hallidays, and we shall be at least as glad to see you as they. Why don't you clip a few days from them and let us have the advantage? Here is a handsome town of thirty-five thousand inhabitants, a polka-parson-worshipping place, of which the Rev. Francis Close is Pope, besides pumps and pumprooms, chalybeates, quadrilles (as you have taken to them again), and one of the prettiest countries in Great Britain. My mother would be delighted to see you, and the girls would coax you, and make so much of you, you would feel yourself in a new planet. Edmund Lushington and Cissy have been with us and have just gone on to Glasgow. Their little one looks like a young Jupiter with his head full of Greek: but she, poor thing, was out of health, and dreaded the winter in Glasgow, which does not agree with her.

Tell Edward and Drummond that I expected them to have called on me the day after I met them at Moxon's, and I was very savage. Remember me to them with all kindness and to 'Mamma' and Sophy: and not *me* only but all of us here to all of you there (if that's sense).

Now dinner's ready and I must say Good-bye.

Ever yours affectionately,
A. TENNYSON.

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### LORD TENNYSON TO JOHN FORSTER

[*The 'Charge at Balaclava' and its Popularity in the Crimea*]

1855.

MY DEAR FORSTER,—

In the first place thanks for your critique which seems to me good and judicious. Many thanks; my wife will write to you about it; but what I am writing to you now about is a matter which interests me very much. My friend Chapman, of 3, Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, writes to me thus:—'An acquaintance of mine in the department of the S.P.G. as he calls it (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) was saying how a chaplain in the Crimea sent by the Society writes to the Society—(neither he nor the society being suspected of any Tennysonian prejudices)—'The *greatest service you can do* just now is to send out on printed slips Mr. A. T.'s *Charge at Balaclava*. It is the greatest favourite of the soldiers—half are singing it, and all want to have it in black and white, so to read what has so taken them'.

Now, my dear Forster, you see I cannot possibly be deaf to such an appeal. I wish to send out about 1,000 slips, and I don't at all want the S.P.G. or any one to send out the *version last printed*; it would, I believe, quite disappoint the soldiers. Don't you live quite close to the S.P.G.? Could you not send Henry over to say that I am sending over the soldiers' version of my ballad, and beg them not to stir in the matter? The soldiers are the best critics in what pleases them. I send you a copy which retains the *Light Brigade*, and the 'blunder'd'; and I declare it is the best of the two, and that the criticism of two or three London friends (not yours) induced me to spoil it. For Heaven's sake get *this* copy fairly printed at once, and sent out. I have sent it by this post likewise to Moxon, but you are closer to your printer. Concoct with him how it is all to be managed: I am so sorry that I am not in town to have done it at once. I have written a little note to the soldiers which need not be sent—just as you like.[1] It might be merely printed 'From A. Tennyson'. Please see to all this: and see that there are *no mistakes*; and I will be bound to you for evermore, and more than ever yours in great haste,

A. TENNYSON.

PS. I am convinced now after writing it out that this is the best version.

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[1] Tennyson's note reads as follows: 'Having heard that the brave soldiers before Sebastopol, whom I am proud to call my countrymen, have a liking for my ballad on the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, I have ordered a thousand copies of it to be printed for them. No writing of mine can add to the glory they have acquired in the Crimea; but if what I have heard be true, they will not be displeased to receive these copies from me, and to know that those who sit at home love and honour them.' —ALFRED TENNYSON.'

## GEORGE ELIOT

### 1819–1880

'GEORGE ELIOT'—or Mary Ann Cross, to give her her right name, though she called herself Marian—was three years older than Charlotte Brontë, and, while the author of *Jane Eyre* and her sisters were growing up in their gloomy Northern parsonage, she was keeping house for her father on the Warwickshire estate, of which he was then acting as land agent. She was only sixteen when her mother died, and her elder sister left home to be married in the following year. Of her father's self-made career George Eliot writes with a creditable pride, in one of the following letters; and much of his strongly-marked individuality is reflected in the characters both of Caleb Garth in *Middlemarch* and Adam Bede. Charlotte Brontë's career came to an end before George Eliot discovered her own natural bent. 'My mind', she writes in 1839, presents 'an assemblage of disjointed specimens of history, ancient and modern; scraps of poetry picked up from Shakespeare, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Milton; newspaper topics, morsels of Addison and Bacon, Latin verbs, geometry, entomology, and chemistry; reviews and metaphysics—all arrested and petrified and smothered by the fast-thickening everyday accession. of actual events, relative anxieties, and household cares and vexations How deplorably and unaccountably evanescent are our forms of mind, as various as forms and hues of the summer clouds'! George Eliot was then a girl of nineteen. She was only a few years older—after moving to Coventry and meeting the Brays and Hennells—when she nearly caused her father to break up their little home by her refusal, on conscientious grounds, to go to Church. Father and daughter were only reconciled by the withdrawal of her objection; but though she abandoned her position she did not modify her views. In 1846 appeared her first book—the translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, which had been begun by Miss Brabant. George Eliot's father died on May 31, 1849, only a few weeks after she had written the first part of the letters now reprinted, in which she describes her life at thirty as 'a perpetual nightmare, and always haunted by something to be done'. The next letter is written from London, where, two years later, she became assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, and found her 'brightest spot, next to my love of old friends" in 'the deliciously calm new friendship that Herbert Spencer gave me'. It was Herbert Spencer who introduced George Eliot to George Henry Lewes. 'To know her was to love her', writes Lewes in a journal of 1859, 'and since then my life has been a new birth. To her I owe all my prosperity and all my happiness. God bless her!' The letter in which George Eliot defends her conduct in forming the union with Lewes, which she regarded as equivalent to a legal marriage, was written six months after their return from Germany, whither he had gone in the preceding year to prepare his *Life of Goethe*. They had been settled in England about eighteen months when she at length turned her thoughts to fiction, and, encouraged by Lewes, began the series of books by which she was to become famous. The remaining letters may be left without commentary, save perhaps, for the remark that Lewes had been dead a year and a half when George Eliot married Mr. J. W. Cross. 'Mr. Cross's family' she writes after her marriage, 'welcomed me with the utmost tenderness. All this is a wonderful blessing falling to me beyond my share after I had thought that life was ended, and that, so to speak, my coffin was ready for me in the next room. Deep down below there is a river of sadness, and this must always be with those who have lived long—and I am able to enjoy my newly reopened life. I shall be a better, more loving creature than I could have been in solitude. To be constantly, lovingly grateful for the gift of a perfect love is the best illumination of one's mind to all the possible good there may be in store for man on this troublous little planet'. We owe it to the kindness of Mr. W. J. Cross, and the courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. Blackwood and Sons, that we are able to reprint the following correspondence from '*George Eliot's Life, as related in her Letters and Journals*', arranged and edited by Mr. Cross in three volumes in 1885–86.

### GEORGE ELIOT TO MISS SARA HENNELL

### [*The Influence of Rousseau and George Sand*]

*February* 9, 1849.

MY life is a perpetual nightmare, and always haunted by something to be done, which I have never the time, or rather the energy, to do. Opportunity is kind, but only to the industrious, and, I, alas, am not one of them. I have sat down in desperation this evening, though dear father is very uneasy, and his moans distract me, just to tell you that you have full absolution for your criticism, which I do not reckon of the impertinent order. I wish you thoroughly to understand that the writers who have most profoundly influenced me—who have rolled away the waters from their bed, raised new mountains and spread delicious valleys for me—are not in the least oracles to me. It is just possible that I may not embrace one of their opinions,—that I may wish my life to be shaped quite differently from theirs. For instance, it would signify nothing to me if a very wise person were to stun me with proofs that Rousseau's views of life, religion and government are miserably erroneous,—that he was guilty of some of the worst *bassesses* that have degraded civilized man. I might admit all this: and it would be not the less true that Rousseau's genius has sent that electric thrill through my intellectual and moral frame which has awakened me to new perceptions, which has made man and nature a fresh world of thought and feeling to me; and this by not teaching me any new belief. It is simply that the rushing mighty wind of his inspiration has so quickened my faculties that I have been able to shape more definitely for myself ideas which had previously dwelt as dim *Ahnungen* in my soul; the fire of his genius has so fused together old thoughts and prejudices, that I have been ready to make new combinations.

It is thus with George Sand. I should never dream of going to her writings as a moral code or text-book. I don't care whether I agree with her about marriage or not—whether I think the design of her plot correct, or that she had no precise design at all, but began to write as the spirit moved her, and trusted to Providence for the catastrophe, which I think the more probable case. It is sufficient for me, as a reason for bowing before her in eternal gratitude to that 'great power of God manifested in her', that I cannot read six pages of hers without feeling that it is given to her to delineate human passion and its results, and (I must say, in spite of your judgment) some of the moral instincts and their tendencies with such truthfulness, such nicety of discrimination, such tragic power, and withal, such loving, gentle humour, that one might live a century with nothing but one's own dull faculties, and not know so much as those six pages will suggest. The psychological anatomy of Jacques and Fernande in the early days of their marriage seems quite preternatural. Fernande and Jacques are merely the feminine and the masculine nature, and their early married life an everyday tragedy; but I will not dilate on the book or on your criticism, for I am so sleepy that I should write nothing but *bêtises*. I have at last the most delightful *De Imitatione Christi*, with quaint woodcuts. One breathes a cool air as of cloisters in the book,—it makes one long to be a saint for a few months. Verily its piety has its foundations in the depth of the divine-human soul.

### GEORGE ELIOT TO MISS SARA HENNELL

[*Her Friendship with Herbert Spencer*]

*May* 27, 1852.

MY brightest spot, next to my love of old friends, is the deliciously calm new friendship that Herbert Spencer gives me. We see each other every day, and have a delightful *cameraderie* in everything. But for him my life would be desolate enough. What a wretched lot of shrivelled creatures we shall be by-and-by. Never mind—the uglier we get in the eyes of others, the lovelier we shall be to each other ; that has always been my firm faith about friendship, and now it is in a slight degree my experience. Mme. d'Albert has sent me the sweetest letter, just like herself ; and I feel grateful to have such a heart remembering and loving me on the other side of the Jura. They are very well and flourishing.

### GEORGE ELIOT TO MRS BRAY

[*Early Acquaintance with George H. Lewes*]

*April* 16, 1853.

WE had an agreeable soirée last Wednesday. I fell in love with Helen Faucit. She is the most poetic woman I have seen for a long time, there is the ineffable charm of a fine character which makes itself felt in her face, voice, and manner. I am taking doses of agreeable follies, as you recommend. Last night I went to the French theatre, and to-night I am going to the opera to hear *William Tell*. People are very good to me. Mr. Lewes especially is kind and attentive, and has quite won my regard, after having had a good deal of my vituperation. Like a few other people in the world, he is much better than he seems. A man of heart and conscience wearing a mask of flippancy. When the warm days come, and the bearskin is under the acacia, you must have me again.

### GEORGE ELIOT TO MRS BRAY

[*Her Union with George H. Lewes*]

*September* 4, 1855.

IF there is any one action or relation of my life which is, and always has been, profoundly serious, it is my relation to Mr. Lewes. It is, however, natural enough that you should mistake me in many ways, for not only are you unacquainted with Mr. Lewes' real character and the course of his actions, but also it is several years now since you and I were much together, and it is possible that the modifications my mind has undergone may be quite in the opposite direction of what you imagine. No one can be better aware than yourself that it is possible for two people to hold different opinions on momentous subjects with equal sincerity, and an equally earnest conviction that their respective opinions are alone the truly moral ones. If we differ on the subject of the marriage laws, I, at least, can believe of you that you cleave to what you believe to be good; and I don't know of anything in the nature of your views that should prevent you from believing the same of me. *How far* we differ, I think we neither of us know, for I am ignorant of your precise views; and apparently you attribute to me both feelings and opinions which are not mine. We cánnot set each other quite right in this matter in letters, but one thing I can tell you in a few words. Light and easily-broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically, nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with such ties do *not* act as I have done. That any unworldly, unsuperstitious person, who is sufficiently acquainted with the realities of life can pronounce my relation to Mr. Lewes immoral, I can only understand by remembering how subtle and complex are the influences that mould opinion. But I do remember this: and I indulge in no arrogant or uncharitable thoughts about those who condemn us, even though we might have expected a somewhat different verdict From the majority of persons, of course, we never looked for anything but condemnation. We are leading no life of self-indulgence, except indeed. that, being happy in each other, we find everything easy. We are working hard to provide for others better than we provide for ourselves, and to fulfil every responsibility that lies upon us. Levity and pride would not be a sufficient basis for that. Pardon me if, in vindicating myself from some unjust conclusions, I seem too cold and self-asserting. I should not care to vindicate myself if I did not love you, and desire to relieve you of the pain which you say these conclusions have given you. Whatever I may have misinterpreted before, I do not misinterpret your letter this morning, but read it in nothing else than love and kindness towards me, to which my heart fully answers yes. I should like never to write about myself again; it is not healthy to dwell on one's own feelings and conduct, but only to try and live more faithfully and lovingly every fresh day. I think not one of the endless words and deeds of kindness and forbearance you have ever shown me has vanished from my memory. I recall them often, and feel, as about everything else in the past, how deficient I have been in almost every relation of my life. But that deficiency is irrevocable, and I can find no strength or comfort, except in 'pressing forward towards the things that are before', and trying to make the present better than the past. But if we should never be very near each other again, dear Cara, do bear this faith in your mind, that I was not insensible or ungrateful to all your goodness, and that I am one amongst the many for whom you have not lived in vain. I am very busy just now, and have been obliged to write hastily. Bear this in mind, and believe that no meaning is mine which contradicts my assurance that I am your affectionate and earnest friend.

### GEORGE ELIOT TO CHARLES BRAY

[*Her Father*]

*September* 30, 1859.

My father did not raise himself from being an artisan to be a farmer [1]: he raised himself from being an artisan to be a man whose extensive knowledge in every varied practical department made his services valued through several counties. He had large knowledge of building, of mines, of plantations, of varous branches of valuation and measurement—of all that is essential to the management of large estates. He was held, by those competent to judge, as unique amongst land agents for his manifold knowledge and experience, which enabled him to save the special fees usually paid by landowners for special opinions on the different questions incident to the proprietorship of land. So far as I am personally concerned, I should not write a stroke to prevent any one in the zeal of antithetic eloquence, from calling me a tinker's daughter; but if my father is to be mentioned at all—if he is to be identified with an imaginary character—my piety towards his memory calls on me to point out to those who are supposed to speak with information, what he really achieved in life.

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[1] Referring to a description of her as a 'self-educated farmer's daughter', written by some one after the publication of *Adam Bede*.

### GEORGE ELIOT TO MADAME BODICHON

['*Little Sympathy with Freethinkers*']

*November* 26, 1862.

PRAY don't ever ask me again not to rob a man of his religious belief, as if you thought my mind tended to such robbery. I have too profound a conviction of the efficacy that lies in all sincere faith, and the spiritual blight that comes with no faith, to have any negative propagandism in me. In fact, I have very little sympathy with Freethinkers as a class, and have lost all interest in the mere antagonism to religious doctrines. I care only to know, if possible, the last meaning that lies in all religious doctrine from the beginning till now. That speech of Carlyle's [1] which sounds so odious, must, I think, have been provoked by something in the manner of the statement to which it came as an answer—else it would hurt me very much that he should have uttered it.

You left a handkerchief at our house. I will take care of it till next summer. I look forward with some longing to that time when I shall have enlightened my soul of one chief thing I wanted to do, and be freer to think and feel about other people's work. We shall see you oftener, I hope, and have a great deal more talk than ever we have had before, to make amends for our stinted enjoyment of you this summer.

God bless you, dear Barbara. You are very precious to us.

### GEORGE ELIOT TO MRS. CONGREVE

[*The Eve of her Marriage to Mr. J. W. Cross*]

*May* 5, 1880.

I HAVE something to tell you which will doubtless be a great surprise to you; but since I have found that other friends, less acquainted with me and my life than you are, have given me their sympathy, I think that I can count on yours. I am going to do what, not very long ago, I should myself have pronounced impossible for me, and therefore I should not wonder at any one else who found my action incomprehensible. By the time you receive this letter I shall (so far as the future can be matter of assertion) have been married to Mr. J. W. Cross, who, you know, is a friend of years, a friend much loved and trusted by Mr. Lewes, and who, now that I am alone, sees his happiness in the dedication of his life to me. This change in my position will make no change in my care for Mr. Lewes' family, and in the ultimate disposition of my property. Mr. Cross has a sufficient fortune of his own. We are going abroad for a few months, and I shall not return to live at this house. Mr. Cross has taken the lease of a house, No. 4, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where we will spend the winter and early spring, making Witley our summer home.

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[1] Mr. Cross says that this was some general remark of Carlyle's, but Mme. Bodichon could not remember exactly what it was.

I indulge the hope that you will some day look at the river from the windows of our Chelsea house, which is rather quaint and picturesque.

Please tell Bessie [1] for me, with my love to her. I cannot write to more than two or three persons.

## CHARLES KINGSLEY

### 1819–1875

When Charles Kingsley, at the age of twenty-three, settled down at Eversley—burying ' my first class in a country curacy '—he little thought that, with one short interval, it would remain his home for thirty-three years. ' It was in this year (1842), in a great crisis of his life ', to quote from the *Letters and Memories*, edited by his widow—from which the following letters, by the kind permission of his daughter, Miss Kingsley, and Messrs. Macmillan & Co., are now reprinted—' that Mr. Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ* was put into his hands—a book to which he always said that he owed more than any he had ever read '. Two years later he met F. D. Maurice himself, soon to become his dear ' Master ' in the Christian Socialist movement, into which he threw himself at the time of the Chartist riots with almost supernatural fervour, without, however, sympathizing with the distinctly revolutionary section of that movement. ' Englishmen ! Saxons ! Workers of the great, cool-headed, strong-handed nation of England, the workshop of the world, the leader of freedom for 700 years ', he wrote at that exciting period, in his placard headed ' Workmen of England ' ! ' men say you have common sense ! then do not humbug yourselves into meaning "license" when you cry for "liberty". Who would dare refuse you freedom ? For the Almighty God, and Jesus Christ, the poor Man, who died for poor men, will bring it about for you, though all the Mammonites of the earth were against you. A nobler day is dawning for England, a day of freedom, science, industry ! But there will be no true freedom without virtue, no true science without religion, no true industry without the fear of God, and love to your fellow-citizens '. That was Kingsley's political creed; and, as 'Parson Lot', he wrote innumerable articles on the subject, besides giving it fictional form in *Yeast*—'written with his heart's blood' in 1848—and *Alton Locke* (1850). *Hypatia*, to which he refers in the following letter to Maurice, appeared in 1853; *Westward Ho!* which has a wider sale to-day probably than at any time in its history, in 1855; *Two Years Ago*, in which the author returned to the problems of conduct and religion, and wrote some of his finest passages on the scenery of the West Country, in 1857; and *Hereward the Wake* the last of a noble series of romances, in 1866—six years after his appointment as Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. Of Kingsley's other works—the collected edition comprises twenty-eight volumes—the most popular is his delightful fairy tale, *The Water Babies*, which easily holds its own among the favourite books for the bairns.

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[1] Madame Belloc.

### Charles Kingsley to the Rev. Peter Wood [1]

### [*First Months of Curate Life*]

Eversley, 1842.

Peter!—Whether in the glaring saloons of Almack's, or making love in the equestrian stateliness of the park, or the luxurious recumbency of the ottoman, whether breakfasting at one, or going to bed at three, thou art still Peter, the beloved of my youth, the staff of my academic days, the regret of my parochial retirement!—Peter! I am alone! Around me are the everlasting hills, and the everlasting bores of the country! My parish is peculiar for nothing but want of houses and abundance of peat bogs; my parishioners remarkable only for aversion to education, and a predilection for fat bacon. I am wasting my sweetness on the desert air—I say my sweetness, for I have given up smoking, and smell no more. Oh, Peter, Peter, come down and see me! O that I could behold your head towering above the fir trees that surround my lonely dwelling. Take pity on me! I am like a kitten in the washhouse copper with the lid on! And, Peter, prevail on some of your friends here to give me a day's trout fishing, for my hand is getting out of practice. But, Peter, I am, considering the oscillations and perplexing circumgurgitations of this piece-meal world, an improved man. I am much more happy, much more comfortable, reading, thinking, and doing my duty—much more than ever I did before in my life. Therefore I am not discontented with my situation, or regretful that I buried my first-class in a country curacy, like the girl who shut herself up in a bandbox on her wedding night (*vide* Rogers *Italy*) And my lamentations are not general (for I do not want an inundation of the froth and tide-wash of Babylon the Great), but particular, being solely excited by want of thee, oh Peter, who art very pleasant to me, and wouldst be more so if thou wouldst come and eat my mutton, and drink my wine, and admire my sermons, some Sunday at Eversley.

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[1] The Rev. Peter Wood, an old Cambridge friend, who readily responded to the call. 'I paid him a visit at Eversley', he writes, 'where he lives in a thatched cottage. So roughly was he lodged that I recollect taking him some game, which was dried to a cinder in the cooking, and quite spoiled; but he was as happy as if he were in a palace' (*Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of his Life*, vol. i. p. 69).

Your faithful friend,

BOANERGES ROAR-AT-THE-CLODS.

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## CHARLES KINGSLEY TO F. D. MAURICE

### [*The 'Christian Socialist'*]

Eversley, *January* 16, 1851.

A THOUSAND thanks for all your advice and information, which encourages me to say more. I don't know how far I shall be able to write much for the *Christian Socialist*. Don't fancy that I am either lazy or afraid. But, if I do not use my pen to the uttermost in earning my daily bread, I shall not get through this year. [1] I am paying off the loans which I got to meet the expenses of repairing and furnishing; but, with an income reduced this year by more than £200, having given up, thank God, that sinecure clerkship, and having had to return ten per cent. of my tithes, owing to the agricultural distress, I have also this year, for the first time, the opportunity, and therefore the necessity, of supporting a good school. My available income, therefore, is less than £400. I cannot reduce my charities, and I am driven either to give up my curate, or to write, and either of these alternatives, with the increased parish work, for I have got either lectures or night school every night in the week, and three services on Sunday, will demand my whole time. What to do unless I get pupils I know not. Martineau leaves me in June. My present notion is to write a historical romance of the beginning of the fifth century, which has been breeding in my head this two years.[1] But how to find time I know not. And if there is a storm brewing, of course I shall have to help to fight the Philistines. Would that I had wings as a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest. I have written this selfish and egotistical letter to ask for your counsel; but I do not forget that you have your own troubles. My idea in the romance is to set forth Christianity as the only really democratic creed, and philosophy, above all, spiritualism, as the most exclusively aristocratic creed. Such has been my opinion for a long time, and what I have been reading lately confirms it more and more. Even Synesius, 'the philosophic' bishop, is an aristocrat by the side of Cyril. It seems to me that such a book might do good just now, while the Scribes and Pharisees, Christian and heathen, are saying, 'This people, which knoweth not the law, is accursed'! Of English subjects I write no more just now. I have exhausted both my stock and my brain, and really require to rest it by turning it to some new field, in which there is richer and more picturesque life, and the elements are less confused, or rather, may be handled more in the mass than English ones now. I have long wished to do something antique, and get out my thoughts about the connexion of the old world and the new; Schiller's *Gods of Greece* expresses, I think, a tone of feeling very common, and which finds its vent in modern Neo-Platonism—Anythingarianism. But if you think I ought not, I will not. I will obey *your* order.

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[1] 'Times were bad, rates were high, ratepayers discontented, and all classes felt the pressure. The Rector felt it also, but he met it by giving the tenants back ten per cent. on their tithe payments, and thus at once and for ever he won their confidence. He had, since his marriage, held the office of Clerk in Orders in his father's parish of St. Luke's, Chelsea, which added considerably to his income, and in those days was not considered incompatible with non-residence; but though his deputy was well paid, and he himself occasionally preached and lectured in Chelsea, he had long looked upon the post as a sinecure, and decided to resign it. The loss of income must, however, be met, and this could only be done by his pen.' (Mrs. Kingsley, p. 188 of the *Letters and Memories* of her husband—in which this letter is printed, Vol. I. p. 214.)

### CHARLES KINGSLEY TO MRS. GASKELL

[*The 'Beauty and Righteousness' of her 'Ruth'*]

*July* 25, 1853

I AM sure that you will excuse my writing to you thus abruptly when you read the cause of my writing. I am told, to my great astonishment, that you have heard painful speeches on account of *Ruth* ;[1] what was told me raised all my indignation and disgust. Now I have read only a little (though, of course, I know the story) of the book ; for the same reason that I cannot read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or *Othello*, or *The Bride of Lammermoor*. It is too painfully good, as I found before I had read half a volume. But this I can tell you, that among all my large acquaintance I never heard, or have heard, but one unanimous opinion of the beauty and righteousness of the book, and that, above all, from real ladies, and really good women. If you could have heard the things which I heard spoken of it this evening by a thorough High Church fine lady of the world, and by her daughter, too, as pure and pious a soul as one need see, you would have no more doubt than I have, that whatsoever the 'snobs' and the bigots may think, English people, in general, have but one opinion of *Ruth*, and that is, one of utter satisfaction. I doubt not you have had this said to you already, often. Believe me, you may have had it said to you as often as you will by the purest and most refined of English women. May God bless you, and help you to write many more such books as you have already written, is the fervent wish of your very faithful servant.

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[1] *Hypatia*, published in 1853.

C. KINGSLEY.

### CHARLES KINGSLEY TO THOMAS HUGHES [2]

[*The Crimea and 'Westward Ho'* !]

Bideford, *December* 18, 1854

. . . . As to the War (Crimean), I am getting more of a Government man every day. As for the Ballad—oh ! my dear lad, there is no use fiddling while Rome is burning. I have nothing to sing about those glorious fellows, except 'God save the Queen and them.' I tell you the whole thing stuns me, so I cannot sit down to make fiddle rhyme with diddle about it—or blundered with hundred, like Alfred Tennyson. . . . Every man has his calling, and my novel is mine, because I am fit for nothing better. The book (*Westward Ho!*) will be out the middle or end of January. It is a sanguinary book, but perhaps containing doctrine profitable for these times.

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[1] Mrs. Gaskell's *Ruth and Other Tales*, published in 1853—much discussed on account of its demands for a single standard of purity for men and women. Kingsley's letter is printed in his *Letters and Memories*. Vol. I. p. 294.

[2] Thomas Hughes was early associated with Kingsley and Maurice in their social and sanitary work for the poor. His *Tom Brown's School Days* appeared a year after *Westward Ho !* Kingsley's letter is printed in his *Letters and Memories*, Vol. I. p. 331.

Tummas! Have you read the story of Abou Zennab, his horse, in Stanley's *Sinai*, p. 67? What a myth! What a poem old Wordsworth would have writ thereon! If I didn't cry like a baby over it. What a brick of a horse he must have been, and what a brick of an old head-splitter Abou Zennab must have been, to have his commandments keeped unto this day concerning of his horse; and no one to know who he was, nor when, nor how, nor nothing. I wonder if anybody'll keep our commandments after we be gone, much less say, 'Eat, eat, oh horse of Abou Kingsley'!

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

### 1822–1888

Readers of the two volumes of Matthew Arnold's correspondence, published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co.,—to whom we are indebted for permission to reprint the following small selection—will agree with Mr. G. W. E. Russell's preface that the peculiar charm of the letters lies in their perfect naturalness. Like the correspondence of most writers they reveal various traits in his character to which his published works give but little clue—his tenderness, his playfulness, and the powers of the parental instinct which found such vivid expression in his poetic treatment of the story of *Sohrab and Rustum*. They also show how the harassing demands of his position as an Inspector of Schools—a post which he held from 1857–85—must have sapped his inspiration as a poet, and helped to turn the bent of his genius from the sphere of creation to the sphere of criticism.

### Matthew Arnold to his Mother

### [*The Moral Discipline of his Literary Work*]

Crown Court Schools, *January* 22, 1864.

My dearest Mother,—

I have been quite unable to write till now. I have begun inspecting again, and at the same time I have my Report to finish. I was sure you would be pleased with Joubert,[1] and you say just what I like when you speak of 'handing on the lamp of life' for him. That is just what I wish to do, and it is by doing that, that one does good. I can truly say, not that I would rather have the article not mentioned at all than called a brilliant one, but that I would far rather have it said how delightful and interesting a man was Joubert than how brilliant my article is. In the long run one makes enemies by having one's brilliancy and ability praised; one can only get oneself really accepted by men by making oneself forgotten in the people and doctrines one recommends. I have had this much before my mind in doing the second part of my *French Eton*. I really want to *persuade* on this subject, and I have felt how necessary it was to keep down many and many sharp and telling things that rise to one's lips, and which one would gladly utter if one's object was to show one's own abilities. You must read this article, though it is on a professional kind of subject, and the third and concluding article will be the most general and interesting one. But you must read it that you may notice the effect of the effort of which I have told you. I think such an effort of moral discipline of the very best sort for one. I hope Dr. Davy will go along with me here as well as in the first article. Lend Mrs. Davy the *National*, that she may read Joubert; the true old Wordsworthians, to which band she and I both belong, are just the people for whom Joubert is properly meant. My dear Lady de Rothschild has written me the kindest of notes begging me to come and stay at Aston Clinton next week to meet the Bishop of Oxford and Disraeli. It would be interesting certainly, but I don't see how I am to manage it. On Tuesday fortnight Budge goes back to school. It was his own choice to remain at home, but I was glad of it, as you have so many children on your hands already. I am sorry to say he and Tom quarrel not unfrequently, so your praise in your letter to Flu this morning read rather painfully. However, my consolation is that we most of us quarrel as children, and yet we have not grown up quite monsters. Children with Dick's disposition are, I am sure, the exceptions. To-morrow between two and five think of me at the Princess's, with Lucy, Budge, and Mrs. Tuffin.

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[1] Included in the famous *Essay in Criticism*, published in 1865.

Your ever affectionate,

M. A.

### MATTHEW ARNOLD TO J. DYKES CAMPBELL[1]

[*A Criticism on Tennyson*]

Fox How, *September* 22, 1864.

I AM much tempted to say something about the *Enoch Arden* volume. I agree with you in thinking *Enoch Arden* itself very good indeed—perhaps the best thing Tennyson has done; *Tithonus* I do not like quite so well. But is it possible for one who has himself published verses to print a criticism on Tennyson in which perfect freedom shall be used? And without perfect freedom what is a criticism worth? I do not think Tennyson a great and powerful spirit in any line—as Goethe was in the line of modern thought, Wordsworth in that of contemplation, Byron even in that of passion; and unless a poet at this time of day, is that, my interest in him is only slight, and my conviction that he will not finally stand high is firm. But is it possible or proper for me to say this about Tennyson, when my saying it would inevitably be attributed to odious motives? Therefore, though the temptation to speak—especially because I should probably say something so totally different from what the writer in the *Spectator* supposes—is great, I shall probably say nothing.

### MATTHEW ARNOLD TO HIS MOTHER

[*On his Position as a Poet*]

Harrow, *June* 5, 1869.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—

At Fox How to-day it must be quite heavenly, and how I wish I was there! I have had a hard week, and indeed, my work will not leave me a single free day till the end of July. But from the first of August I shall be free and ready for Fox How whenever you like. The summer holidays here are a strict six weeks, and end quite early in September. . . .

My book[2] was out yesterday. This new edition is really a very pretty book, but you had better not buy it, because I am going to give it to Fan, and shall bring it with me to Fox How, and the order of arrangement in this edition is not quite the final one I shall adopt. On this final order I could not decide till I saw this collected edition. The next edition will have the final order, and then the book will be stereotyped. That edition I shall then have bound, and give you. I expect the present edition will be sold out in about a year. Macmillan tells me the booksellers are subscribing very well for it. My poems represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century, and thus they will probably have their day as people become conscious to themselves of what that movement of mind is, and interested in the literary productions which reflect it. It might be fairly urged that I have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson, and less intellectual vigour and abundance than Browning; yet, because I have perhaps more of a fusion of the two than either of them, and have more regularly applied that fusion to the main line of modern development, I am likely enough to have my turn, as they have had theirs. Two articles in *Temple Bar*, one on Tennyson, the other on Browning, are worth reading, both for their ability and as showing with what much greater independence those poets are now judged, and what much more clearly conceived demands are now made both upon them and upon any modern poet. Jane will very likely have told you that my chance of a commissionership under William's Bill[1] seems small, Gladstone stopping the way. This is natural enough, and if I can get income enough to be at ease, I can hardly bring myself to wish for a position which will substitute, more than my present position, administrative work for literary, which latter work is, after all, my true business. I have been reading a book by Reuss, a French Protestant, on the first development of a theology out of data supplied by Christianity, which papa would have delighted in. You know that Stanley has been at the General Assembly of the Scotch Church. He says he heard my Preface most intelligently quoted by one of their divines. My love to Aunt Jane, Fan, and Rowland. Your ever affectionate,

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[1] James Dykes Campbell (1838–1895), biographer of Coleridge.

[2] *Poems*, two volumes, 1869.

M. A.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD TO MISS ARNOLD

[*Beaconsfield and the Prophet of Sweetness and Light*]

Athenaeum Club, *February* 21, 1881.

I HAVE been very busy with my Report, but I hope to finish it to-morrow or Wednesday; then I shall be free for two years from one of the most troublesome tasks possible. I was asked to dine to-night at Lady Airlie's, to meet Lowe, but he does not much interest me, and I am not going. We dine quietly at home, and Ted[1] dines with us. He and Lucy have just walked with me to the door of this Club, and Lucy has been much interested in seeing the people in uniform coming from the Levee. On Friday night I had a long talk with Lord Beaconsfield at Lady Airlie's. He was in a good humour, and had evidently resolved to be civil. He got up, took me to a settee at the end of the room, and said, pointing to it—The poet's sofa! I told him of my having mentioned to Gladstone some of the epigrammatic sayings in *Endymion*, and he said—'But I don't want to talk about my things, I want to talk about you'; He went on to say that he read me with delight, that I was doing very great good, and ended by declaring that I was the only living Englishman who had become a classic in his own lifetime. The fact is, that what I have done in establishing a number of current phrases—such as Philistinism, sweetness and light, and all that—is just the sort of thing to strike him. He had told Lady Airlie before I came that he thought it a great thing to do, and when she answered that she thought it was rather a disadvantage, for people thought they knew all about my work, he answered—Never mind, it's a great achievement! He said that W. E. F. was too old to carry well through the H. of C. such a bill as his Coercion Bill—that it needed such a man as the late Lord Derby was in his youth, as Mr. Stanley in the House of Commons—a man full of nerve, dash, fire, and resource, who carried the House irresistibly along with him. He ended by begging me to 'come and find him' in Curzon Street, which rather embarrasses me, because I must ask whether he is at home, and I don't the least believe that he really wants a visit from me. However, I shall leave a card this afternoon, when he will have gone to the House. People say I ought to have gone to see him yesterday afternoon, when he stays at home; but we know what his opinion is of the social ambitiousness and pushing of men of letters.

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[1] The Endowed Schools Act, 1869.

Your ever affectionate,

M. A.

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[1] Arnold's nephew, E. A. Arnold.

## DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

### 1828–1882

The year 1848, in which was written the first of the letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti here reprinted, is memorable in the history of British art, as well as in the life story of Rossetti himself. In March of that year Rossetti wrote to Ford Madox Brown, then personally unknown to him, to ask whether Brown would take him as a pupil in the practical work of painting. He had already been an art student six years—the last two in the Antique school of the Royal Academy—and he was eager to get to work as a practising painter. Madox Brown asked Rossetti to call, and they became fast friends from their first interview. The new friendship indirectly led on to Holman Hunt, and Holman Hunt led on directly to Millais. And out of this association, as Mr. W.M. Rossetti says in the Memoirs which he has prefixed to the two volumes of *Dante Gabriel Rossetti : His Family Letters,* 'was the Præ-Raphaelite Brotherhood constituted as the autumn of 1848 began'. Anxious to distinguish himself in literature as well as in art, Rossetti had been writing verse from his boyhood. Some of his best-known original poems, including *The Blessed Damozel, The Portrait, The Choice,* and *Retro me Sathana,* were written in or about his nineteenth year—he was only twenty when the Præ-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed—and many of the translations, including the *Vita Nuova,* published in his volume of *Early Italian Poets* in 1861, belong rightfully to the same period. It was Gabriel Rossetti who originated the *Germ,* the short-lived magazine—edited by Mr. W. M. Rossetti—in which the Præ-Raphaelites published their poetry, and gave expression to their views on art. Gabriel Rossetti's letter to his brother on the subject shows how keenly he took it up, though obviously bored by the inevitable business details which the preliminaries of the scheme involved. The 1861 volume, *The Early Italian Poets*—Rossetti's first volume—was issued through the generous influence of John Ruskin, who appears to have induced Messrs. Smith and Elder to undertake the risk of publication, subject to an advance, on his part, or guarantee, of £100. The book was well received. 'I might even say', writes Mr. W. M. Rossetti, 'it was received with general acclaim, so far as a work of poetical translation ever *can* be welcomed and applauded in England. By 1869 about 600 copies of it had been sold ; and the profits covered the £100 of Mr. Ruskin, and a minute dole of less than £9 to Rossetti. A few copies, 64, remained on hand.' The volume came out in the only completed year of Rossetti's marriage (it was in this year that his friend, Mr. Swinburne, also published his first volume, the two dramas of *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamund*), and the sudden death of his wife in February, 1862, made him renounce for a time all his ambitions as a poet. It is well known how, in the first agony of his despair, he insisted on burying with her the manuscript volume of original poems which he had advertised in his translations from *The Early Italian Poets.* Rossetti now devoted himself to his profession as an artist, painting many of his most famous pictures, and living at Tudor House, in Cheyne Row, with Mr. Swinburne, Mr. George Meredith, and his brother, Mr. W. M. Rossetti. The letter to his brother, written on October 13, 1869, shows how, at length, he was persuaded by his friends to recover the manuscript buried in his wife's coffin seven and a half years before. It was this volume, published with some additions, in 1870, which led to Robert Buchanan's outburst against what he termed 'The Fleshly School of Poetry'. Writing to Mr. Hall Caine shortly after Rossetti's death Buchanan admitted that he had been unjust in this attack, and 'most unjust when I impugned the purity, and misconceived the passion of writings too hurriedly read'. The accompanying letters are reprinted—thanks to the courtesy of Mr. W. M. Rossetti and of Messrs. Ellis, the publishers—from *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters, with a Memoir by William Michael Rossetti*, published in two volumes in 1895.

### D. G. ROSSETTI TO W. M. ROSSETTI

### [*A Family of Budding Poets*]

50, Charlotte Street, *August* 30, 1848.

DEAR WILLIAM,—

First, of the sonnets. I grinned tremendously over Christina's *Plague*, which, however, is forcible, and has something good in it. Her other is first-rate. Pray impress upon her that this and the one commencing 'Methinks the ills of life', are as good as anything she has written, and well worthy of revision. Of your own, *The Completed Soul* and *The Shadow of the Flower* (as I should laconize it) are admirable. 'I drink deep-throated of the life of life', splendid. *The Great Gulf Betwixt*, and the *Holy of Holies*, are also very good, though a shade less so. I do not think you have improved *The One Dark Shade*; touching which, moreover, I hereby solemnly declare that 'The trees waving which breezes seem to woo', is no verse at all, and should say, 'The waving trees'. Let me earnestly assure you that this *is the fact*. As for *Thither*, you will never make sense of that till you cut away the simile about the poet. If you have written anything since, send it in your answer, which make as speedy as possible, as I am awfully low and want something to stir me up.

I have not read a line of anything since I wrote, and of course, therefore, have not finished *Keats*. I dare say, after all, you will have read it before I shall. The only book I have picked up is L. E. L.'s *Improvisatrice*, for which I gave ninepence. By-the-bye, have you got her *Violet* and *Bracelet* with you? I cannot find them in our library.

There was no meeting of the Literary Society on Saturday. Collinson was at the Isle of Wight (whither I did *not* go with him), Hancock also out of town, and Deverell of course, anywhere but where he ought to be. He explained his former absence by saying two engagements kept him away, he having otherwise prepared a dramatic scene for the occasion. This I have not yet inspected, but he sent me the other day a poem, something about a distressingly ideal poet yearning for the insane, which is not quite so incongruous, and contained one or two good things. Munro has *not* been to Brighton; but the other day, in London, he fancied he saw *you* on the top of an omnibus. As he is a Scotchman, this is dangerous or rather encouraging. There can be no doubt that one at least is to die. Pray to God that it may be you.[1]

A propos of death, Hunt and I are going to get up among our acquaintance a Mutual Suicide Association, by the regulations whereof any member, being weary of life, may call at any time upon another to cut his throat for him. It is all of course, to be done very quietly, without weeping or gnashing of teeth. I, for instance, am to go in and say, 'I say, Hunt, just stop painting that head a minute, and cut my throat'; to which he will respond by telling the model to keep the position as he shall only be a moment, and having done his duty, will proceed with the painting.

The Cyclographic gets on fast. From discontent it has already reached conspiracy. There will soon be a blow-up somewhere.

Hunt and I have prepared a list of immortals, forming our creed, and to be pasted up in our study for the affixing of all decent fellows' signatures. It has already caused considerable horror among our acquaintance. I suppose we shall have to keep a hair-brush. The list contains four distinct classes of immortality; in the first of which three stars are attached to each name, in the second two, in the third one, and in the fourth none. The first class consists only of Jesus

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[1] 'My brother and I at this time—and in a minor degree our sister Christina—were much addicted to writing sonnets to *bouts rimés*; one of us giving the rhyme-endings, and the other knocking off the sonnet thereto as fast as practicable. A large proportion of the "poems" of mine, published in the *Germ*, had been thus composed. We were all three dexterous practitioners in this line, Gabriel the best. A sonnet would sometimes be reeled off in five or seven minutes—ten to twelve minutes was counted a long spell. The sonnets of which he speaks in the present letter had been concocted on this plan by my sister and myself at Brighton. Hancock was a young sculptor of some repute. It seems that I had seen in Brighton some one whom I supposed to be Munro the sculptor.'—W. M. Rossetti.

Christ and Shakespeare. We are also about to transcribe various passages from our poets, together with forcible and correct sentiments to be stuck up about the walls.

The night before last I sat up and made a design of Coleridge's *Genevieve*, which is certainly the best thing I have done. It took me from eleven to six in the morning. I have also designed very carefully *Hist, said Kate the Queen*, which has come well. I have not written a line.

I went the other night to see *Lucrezia* at Covent Garden. Grisi is most tremendous, and Alboni's song, with the funeral chaunt between the stanzas, very fine—in fact, the whole of the last scene is tremendous, as is also the denunciation at the end of the first act. In this, Grisi screamed continuously for about two minutes, and was immense. We must go and see it together. Love to all.

Your affectionate brother,

D. G. R.

### DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI TO HIS BROTHER, W. M. ROSSETTI

[*Starting the 'Germ'*][1]

London, *Monday, September* 24, 1849.

DEAR WILLIAM,—

Coming to Woolner's[2] at the moment of his receiving your last, I undertake (in consequence of a miserable prostration produced in him by unmanly sloth) to answer it for him.

In the matter of editorship, your objections are, I think, set at rest by the fact that we have excluded from the title the words 'Conducted by Artists'. You are thus on the same footing as all other contributors. The publishers (whose names appear in the prospectus) are Messrs. Aylott and Jones, who were found on enquiry to be highly respectable. The prospectus is now at the printer's, and in a day or two I expect to send you a copy. Patmore,[1] to whom it was shown, seemed considerably impressed in its favour, and was even induced thereby (open thine ears, eyes, or whatever other organs may be most available) to contribute for the first number a little poem of three stanzas called *The Seasons*, which I copy here, not to inflict on you the agony of hope deferred :

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[1] 'Some sonnets of mine are referred to in this letter. *Her First Season* appears printed in the *Germ*. It was a *bouts-rimés* performance. The sonnets on *Death* were earlier by, I think, a year or two. They have never been inflicted on the public eye. My sister's sonnet, *Vanity Fair*, was a sportive effusion, also done to *bouts-rimés*. "A Prospectus of the Thoughts" means "A Prospectus of the Thoughts towards Nature"—this being the sub-title (at that date the intended title) of the *Germ* magazine. "Woolner's Poems" included, no doubt, *My Beautiful Lady*, printed in the first number of the *Germ* '.—W. M. ROSSETTI.

[2] Thomas Woolner (1825–1892), sculptor and poet. One of the original 'Præ-Raphaelite Brethren'.

> The Crocus, in the shrewd March morn,
> Thrusts up his saffron spear ;
> And April dots the sombre thorn
> With gems and lovliest cheer.
>
> Then sleep the Seasons, full of might,
> While slowly swells the pod,
> And rounds the peach, and in the night
> The mushroom bursts the sod.
>
> The Winter falls ; the frozen rut
> Is bound with silver bars :
> The white drift heaps against the hut :
> And night is pierced with stars.

Stunning, is it not ? But unluckily, we are not to publish his name, which he intends to keep back altogether from all articles until his new volume is out. Woolner showed him some of your sonnets, which he thought first-rate in many respects, but wanting in melody. The *First Season*, he said, was in all points quite equal to Wordsworth, except in this one. The sonnets on Death he admired as poetry, but totally eschewed as theory, so much so indeed, that he says it prevented him from enjoying them in any regard. This, of course, will not keep you awake at nights, since Shelley was with you, and watches (perhaps) from his grave. Mrs. Patmore was greatly pleased with Christina's poems. I do not think that Coventry himself read much of them, but he was delighted with the sonnet *Vanity Fair*. You seem to be getting on like fury with your poem. How the deuce can you manage to do 103 lines in a day ? I agree, however, with Woolner as regards your surgeon, who is a wretched sneak —quite a sniggering squelch of a fellow. Do something, by all means, to pull him out of his present mire.

For my part I have done scarcely anything—having been sadly knocked about in the matter of this prospectus and other bores. I wrote last night to W. B. Scott, returning him his books, and saying that I should send him a prospectus of the 'Thoughts' in a few days, with a request for contributions in the poetical or literary line.

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[1] Coventry Patmore (1823–1896) made the acquaintance of the 'Præ-Raphaelite Brethren' in 1849 and became a contributor to the *Germ*.

I believe Hunt and myself will start on Monday at the latest, so that I fear I may not see you. If you really think you will be up on Tuesday, however, let me know, as I would then manage to defer our departure and say good-bye to you personally. Moreover, I long to hear your poem. I have done nothing to *Hand and Soul.* There is time, however, as I believe the first number is to be delayed yet a month, in order to have it out at Christmas, which every one thinks desirable. 'November' is at present in the prospectus; but when I get a proof I shall alter it to 'December'.

I was at Collinson's the other evening, who seems to have been disgracefully lazy at the Isle of Wight. Seddon, who knows that ilk well, says that you should go on to a place called Niton, about six miles from Ventnor, and by far the best in the Island.

With respect to Woolner's poems, I can tell you that Patmore was stunned; the only defect he found being that they were a trifle too much in earnest in the passionate parts, and too 'sculpturesque' generally. He means by this, that each stanza stands too much alone, and has its own ideas too much to itself. I think you will agree with me in thinking this objection groundless, or at least irrelevant. Write soon.

D. G. ROSSETTI.

### DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI TO W. M. ROSSETTI

[*The Recovery of the Poems which he had buried in his Wife's Grave*]

*October* 13, 1869.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—

I wished last night to speak to you on a subject which, however, I find it necessary to put in writing. I am very anxious to know your view of it, and to remind you beforehand that no mistrust or unbrotherly feeling could possibly have caused my silence till now.

Various friends have long hinted from time to time at the possibility of recovering my lost MSS., and when I was in Scotland last year Scott particularly referred to it. Some months ago Howell of his own accord entered on the matter, and offered to take all the execution of it on himself. This, for some time, I still hung back from accepting ; but eventually, I yielded, and the thing was done, after some obstacles, on Wednesday or Thursday last, I forget which. An order had first to be obtained from the Home Secretary, who strangely enough, is an old and rather intimate acquaintance of my own—H. A. Bruce. . . . All in the coffin was found quite perfect ; but the book, though not in any way destroyed, is soaked through and through, and had to be still further saturated with disinfectants. It is now in the hands of the medical man who was associated with Howell in the disinterment, and who is carefully drying it leaf by leaf. There seems reason to fear that some minor portion is obliterated, but I must hope this may not prove to be the most important part. I shall not, I believe, be able to see it for at least a week yet.

I trust you will not—but I know you cannot—think that I showed any want of confidence in not breaking this painful matter to you before its issue. It was a service I could not ask you to perform for me, nor do I know any one except Howell who could well have been entrusted with such a trying task. It was necessary, as we found, that a lawyer should be employed in the matter, to speak as to the real nature of the MSS., as difficulties were raised to the last by the Cemetery Authorities as to their possibly being papers the removal of which involved a fraud.

### DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI TO CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

(*Appreciation and Criticism of his Sister's Poems*]

Bognor, *December* 3, 1875.

MY DEAR CHRISTINA,—

I told George to tell you how very glad I shall be to accept the new volume of your *Poems*, but that there is no need of sending it now, as *his* copy is here. To-day I have been looking through it with the same intense sympathy which your work always excites in me. Some of the matter newly added is most valuable. *Amor Mundi* is one of your choicest masterpieces ; the *Venus* sonnet and the one following, most exquisite ; *Confluents*, lovely, and penetrating in its cadence ; and the two poems on the Franco-Prussian war very noble—

particularly the second, which is, I dare say, the best thing said in verse on the subject. . . . The first of the two poems seems to me just a little echoish of the Barrett-Browning style —fine as the verses and genuine as the motive must be plainly discerned to be. Here, however, it is only in cadence that I seem to notice something of the kind. A real taint, to some extent, of modern vicious style derived from the same source—what might be called a fasletto muscularity—always seemed to me much too prominent in the long piece called *The Lowest Room*. This, I think, is now included for the first time, and I am sorry for it. I should also have omitted '*No thank you, John*' (and perhaps the preceding piece also). The '*John*' one has the same genesis more or less, and everything in which this tone appears is utterly foreign to your primary impulses. The *Royal Princess* has a good deal of it unluckily, but then that poem is too good to omit. If I were you, I would rigidly keep guard of this matter if you write in the future, and ultimately exclude from your writings everything (or almost everything) so tainted. I am sure you will pardon my speaking so frankly.[1]

Mrs. Morris is delighted with the Walpole book. In fact, I think the amusement she derives from it is very beneficial in giving her strength for the sittings, which are arduous in her delicate state. However, by easy stages, I am getting on successfully with the 'Astarte', which was an anxious question for me, as the commission is an important one. Mrs. M (orris) sends thanks and kindest regards.

What a dreadful story this is about Shelley! I must say that, considering the fact that it seems to have come primarily through such a credulous man as Kirkup,[2] I think it might have been better to wait a little before putting it in print. Shelley's son must be greatly shocked by it. If the *confession* itself is a fact, *then* I suppose its purport must be viewed as perfectly true.

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[1] 'Speaking of Christina's poems, my brother here inclines to think that a piece preceding *No. thank you, John*, were better omitted. The piece in question is *The Queen of Hearts*—a slight playful effusion, but to my mind a very pleasant one. The "dreadful story about Shelley" was the allegation of a deathbed confession, to the effect that Shelley had come to his death by the misdeed of some Italian fishermen who had plotted to steal a sum of money in his boat. It was, I believe, I who first put the story into print; it had come to the aged Edward John Trelawny in a letter from his daughter, and he asked me (I think rightly) to get it published. He was convinced of the truth of the allegation'.—W. M. Rossetti.

[2] Seymour S. Kirkup (1788–1880), artist, and leader of a literary circle at Florence He was present at the funeral of Keats, at Rome, in 1821, and of Shelley in the following year.

George has been most attentive to your feathered tribe since the snow set in ; a style of attention opposite (as I am always pointing out to him) to a favourite one with which he takes notice of them at other times through a cylindrical medium.

An article on Dr. Hake's poems by Watts in the *Examiner* contains some perfect fireworks in your honour. So I'll send it on. W (atts) wanted to ' do ' you for same paper, but was told you were in the hands of Gosse.[1]

Love to the Teakum and to all, from

Your loving brother,

GABRIEL.

## JAMES THOMSON (' B.V. ')

### 1834–1882

THE ' Poet of Despair ' would probably have sung to a happier tune had Fate dealt less harshly with him in his youth. Thomson's mother died when he was little more than eight years old: his father was a physical and mental wreck in consequence of a paralytic stroke ; and his early love died just when fortune seem disposed to smile upon him.

> You would have kept me from the desert sands
> Bestrewn with bleaching bones,
> And led me through the friendly fertile lands,
> And changed my weary moans
> To hymns of triumph and enraptured love,
> And made our earth as rich as Heaven above.

It is impossible to say how true this might have been, for, as Mr. H S. Salt says in his excellent *Life of James Thomson*, ' there are equally noticeable passages in which Thomson more philosophically regards his own unhappiness as the inevitable result of his destiny ; and it is contended with great force by some of those who knew him that, being the victim of an inherited melancholia, he would in any case have seen his life grow dark around him as time went on '. On the evidence collected by Mr. Salt, however, it seems clear that the death of the young girl to whom he plighted his troth, while serving as an army school teacher in Ireland, left him with a wound which never healed. It was during his early teaching days in Ireland that he first met Charles Bradlaugh—then a private soldier in the army—and the close friendship which at once sprang up between them lasted nearly a quarter of a century. Bradlaugh had already become proprietor of the *National Reformer* when Thomson, through being concerned in a breach of discipline, lost his position as an army schoolmaster. Bradlaugh found him a post in a lawyer's office, and work on the *National Reformer* ; and the poet proved a powerful helper in the cause of liberty and free thought, though the remarkable individuality which characterized all his work prevented him from always seeing eye to eye with his own party. The uncompromising strength of this individuality barred him from ever succeeding in the ordinary paths of journalism. Thomson never could 'write to order', though he often needed money badly enough. He was indifferent to fame. 'Luckily I am an author thoroughly unknown', he writes in one of his essays, 'and writing for a periodical of the deepest disrepute.' Had he not had Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*, in which—under the initals 'B. V.'[1]—he could give full play to his peculiar genius until he parted company with Bradlaugh in 1875, he might have remained unknown for ever. 'For me its supreme merit consists in the fact that I can say in it what I like how I like; and I know not another periodical in Britain which would grant me the same liberty or license', he writes, in terms similar to those expressed in one of the following letters; 'and English literature', adds his biographer, 'thus received a valuable addition in an age when virility of thought is not too common, in the works of a poet who refused to be cramped by any conventional formula, and was not afraid to express the utmost conclusions to which his speculations led him.' For permission to reproduce our three letters from the *Life of James Thomson* we are indebted to the kindness of his biographer, Mr. H. S. Salt, and of Mr. Bertram Dobell, of Charing Cross Road, to whom the copyright now belongs. Thomson's correspondence with Mr. Dobell began through the original publication of the *City of Dreadful Night* in the *National Reformer* in 1874, (it was through his influence and support that it appeared in book form with other poems in 1880), and the correspondence led to a friendship which continued to the end of the poet's life.

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[1] Mr. Edmund Gosse, who first met Rossetti towards the end of 1870.

## JAMES THOMSON TO BERTRAM DOBELL

[*Charles Bradlaugh and the 'City of Dreadful Night'*]

17 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C., *April* 9, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—

I have just received from Mr. Bradlaugh your note about myself, and hasten to thank you heartily for your very generous expression of approval of my writings. While I have neither tried nor cared to win any popular applause, the occasional approbation of an intelligent and sympathetic reader cheers me on a somewhat lonely path.

You must not blame Mr. Bradlaugh for the delay in continuing my current contribution to his paper. He is my very dear friend, and always anxious to strain a point in my favour; but as an editor he must try to suit his public, and the great majority of these care nothing for most of what I write. As for this *City of Dreadful Night*, it is so alien from common thought and feeling that I knew well (as stated in the Proem) that scarcely any reader would care for it, and Mr. B. tells me that he has received three or four letters energetically protesting against its publication in the *N.R.*[1], yours, I think, being the only one praising it. Moreover, we must not forget that there is probably no other periodical in the kingdom which would accept such writings, even were their literary merits far greater than they are.

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[1] 'B.' was for Bysshe, in honour of Shelley, and 'V.' for Vanolis, the acrostic of Novalis.

I address from the office of the *N.R.*, because I am just now rather unsettled, and not sure what will be my private address for some time to come. While preferring to remain anonymous for the public, I have no reason to hide my name from such correspondents as yourself.

I am, dear sir, yours truly,
JAMES THOMSON (' B.V.')

### JAMES THOMSON TO BERTRAM DOBELL

[*Making Headway*]

60 Tachbrook Street, *June* 24, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—

I have found out what set some people calling for my *City*. I had a letter from Rossetti the day before yesterday in which he asked me whether I had seen a notice in the *Academy*, treating my poem with distinguished respect. He himself writes in that paper, but had nothing to do with the notice in question, nor does he know who wrote it. Yesterday I got the number (that for June 6). The paragraph leads off the notes on magazine articles, coming under the head of ' Notes and News ', and certainly does me more than justice, especially as compared with Leopardi. They also quote complete the twentieth section about the Sphinx and the Angel. But I dare say you are in the way of getting to see the paper.

I have just written to the editor of the *Academy*, thanking him and his critic, and saying that it seems to me a very brave act, on the part of a respectable English periodical, to spontaneously call attention to an atheistical writing (less remote than, say, Lucretius), treating it simply and fairly on its literary merits, without obloquy or protesting cant.

Yours truly,
JAMES THOMSON.

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[1] *National Reformer.*

### JAMES THOMSON TO MISS BARRS

[*A Day with George Meredith*][1]

7 Huntley Street, Gower Street, London, W.C.,

*Thursday, September* 15, 1881.

DEAR MISS BARRS,—

Pray thank brother Jack for letter received this morning. . . . Jack kindly asks me to come down to pay a last tribute of respect to Mr. W.'s memory. I shall certainly do so if I can manage it, when I learn that the end is come. I would promise it absolutely, but I have a lot of work to do between now and Christmas ; too much already, I fear, and I may have some more. Last night I received proof of Part I. of certain notes on the structure of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, which I had sent to the *Athenæum* by way of an introduction, in the hope of getting some occasional employment on that paper. Ask Jack whether he read the 'Reminiscences of George Borrow', by Theodore Watts, in the last two numbers of the *Athenæum*. I found the second part very interesting, Borrow being an old special favourite of mine.

Tuesday I spent with George Meredith at Box Hill ; a quiet, pleasant day, cloudy but rainless, with some sunshine and blue sky in the afternoon. We had a fine stroll over Mickleham Downs, really parklike, with noble yew-trees and many a mountain-ash (rowan, we Scots call it) glowing with thick clusters of red berries,—but you have some at Forest Edge. . . . We had some good long chat, in which you may be sure that Forest Edge and its inmates, as well as certain Leicester people, figured. M. read me an unpublished poem of considerable length, which, so far as I can judge by a single hearing (not like reading at one's leisure), is very fine, and ought to be understood even by that laziest and haziest of animals, the general reader. He says that having suspended work on a novel, poems began to spring up in his mind, and I am glad that he thinks of bringing out a new collection.

Jack tells me that he has all *Omar Kháyyám*, four hundred lines, by heart. Tell him from me that he is a prodigy, and profoundly impresses me with a sense of my own ineptitude. For, long as I have read *Omar*, I don't think I could repeat half a dozen verses without book.

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[1] 'In July, 1879, through Mr. Foote's introduction, Thomson became engaged in a correspondence with Mr. George Meredith, for whose genius he had long felt and expressed the utmost respect and admiration ; and he had now the great satisfaction of learning that his own writings were held in high esteem by one whose good opinion he probably valued above that of any living critic'.—H. S. SALT.

Friendly regards to all friends there from all friends here.

With best wishes, yours truly,
JAMES THOMSON.

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1850–1894

THERE are good critics who believe that Stevenson, the letter writer, essayist and poet, will be remembered long after Stevenson, the Teller of Stories, has been forgotten. This is more than likely—especially as regards Stevenson, the letter writer, for there is a Lamb-like lightness about his intimate correspondence which should enable it to live at least as long as that of Elia. As an example of fortitude Stevenson's letters reveal him, perhaps, as even greater than Charles Lamb, for his own life, like that of poor Tom Hood—another heroic letter writer—was one long struggle with disease. How brave was the fight may be judged from his letter to George Meredith. 'I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle'. No wonder he sometimes felt sick at heart—never for long, however, for he is soon in the thick of the fight again, using his golden gift of words to cheer his hearers on. No better inscription could have been chosen for the tomb in which he rests on the top of the mountain behind his Samoan home than the words which he wrote himself:

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me—
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Three of the letters here reprinted are from the *Letters* edited by Mr. Sidney Colvin in two volumes in 1899; the last is from the *Vailima Letters* (1895) addressed to Mr. Colvin. They are all reproduced by permission of the publishers, Messrs. Methuen & Co.

### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*The Wolverine on his Shoulders; Carlyle and his 'Reminiscences'*]

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, *Spring*, 1881.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—

My health is not just what it should be; I have lost weight, pulse, respiration, etc., and gained nothing in the way of my old bellows. But these last few days, with tonic, cod-liver oil, better wine (there is some better now) and perpetual beef-tea, I think I have progressed. To say truth, I have been here a little over long. I was reckoning up, and since I have known you, already quite a while, I have not, I believe, remained so long in any place as here in Davos. That tells on my old gipsy nature; like a violin hung up, I begin to lose what music there was in me; and with the music, I do not know what besides, or do not know what to call it, but something radically part of life, a rhythm, perhaps, in one's old and so brutally over-ridden nerves, or perhaps a kind of variety of blood that the heart has come to look for.

I purposely knocked myself off first. As to F.A.S.,[1] I believe I am no sound authority; I alternate between a stiff disregard and a kind horror. In neither mood can a man judge at all. I know the thing to be terribly perilous; I fear it to be now altogether hopeless. Luck has failed; the weather has not been favourable; and in her true heart the mother hopes no more. But well, I feel a great deal, that I either cannot or will not say, as you well know. It has helped to make me more conscious of the wolverine on my own shoulders, and that also makes me a poor judge and poor adviser. Perhaps, if we were all marched out in a row, and a piece of platoon firing to the drums performed, it would be well for us; although, I suppose—and yet I wonder—so ill for the poor mother and for the dear wife. But you can see this makes me morbid. *Sufficit; explicit.*

You are right about the Carlyle book;[2] F. and I are in a world not ours; but pardon me, as far as sending on goes, we take another view: the first volume, *a la bonne heure!* but not—never—the second. Two hours of hysterics can be no good matter for a sick nurse, and the strange, hard old being, in so lamentable and yet human a desolation—crying out like a burnt child, and yet always wisely and beautifully—how can that end, as a piece of reading, even to the strong—but on the brink of the most cruel kind of weeping? I observe the old man's style is stronger on me than ever it was, and by rights, too, since I have just laid down his most attaching book. God rest the baith o' them! But even if they do not meet again, how we should all be strengthened to be kind, and not only in act, in speech also, that so much more important part. See what this apostle of silence most regrets, not speaking out his heart.

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[1] 'A sad turn of destiny', writes Mr. Colvin, 'had brought out to the same place, at the same time, his old friend of Suffolk and Edinburgh days, to watch beside the death-bed of her son—the youth commemorated in the verses headed 'F.A.S In Memoriam', afterwards published in '*Underwoods*'.

[2] Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, which Mr. Colvin had sent out to him.

I was struck, as you were, by the admirable, sudden, clear sunshine upon Southey—even on his works. Symonds, to whom I repeated it, remarked at once, a man who was thus respected by both Carlyle and Landor must have had more in him than we can trace. So I feel with true humility.

It was to save my brain that Symonds proposed reviewing. He and, it appears, Leslie Stephen, fear a little some eclipse. I am not quite without sharing the fear. I know my own languor as no one else does; it is a dead down-draught, a heavy fardel. Yet if I could shake off the wolverine aforesaid, and his fangs are lighter, though perhaps I feel them more, I believe I could be myself again a while. I have not written any letter for a great time; none saying what I feel, since you were here, I fancy. Be duly obliged for it, and take my most earnest thanks, not only for the books, but for your letter.

Your affectionate

R. L. S.

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### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON TO W. E. HENLEY

[*The Beginning of 'Treasure Island*]

Braemar, *August*, 1881.

MY DEAR HENLEY,—

Of course I am a rogue. Why, Lord, it's known, man; but you should remember I have had a horrid cold. Now I'm better, I think: and see here—nobody, not you, nor Lang, nor the devil, will hurry me with our crawlers. They are coming. Four of them are as good as done, and the rest will come when ripe; but I am now on another lay for the moment, purely owing to Lloyd,[1] this one; but I believe there's more coin in it than in any amount of crawlers: now, see here, *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island; A Story for Boys.*

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[1] His then little stepson, Samuel Lloyd Osborne, early and late his keen collaborator.

If this don't fetch the kids, why, they have gone rotten since my day. Will you be surprised to learn that it is about buccaneers, that it begins in the *Admiral Benbow* public-house on Devon coast, that it's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney (the real Tre, purged of literature and sin, to suit the infant mind) and a doctor, and another doctor, and a sea-cook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus 'Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum' (at the third Ho you heave at the capstan bars), which is a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the late Captain Flint (died of rum at Key West, much regretted; friends will please accept this intimation); and lastly, would you be surprised to hear, in this connexion, the name of Routledge? That's the kind of man I am, blast your eyes. Two chapters are written, and have been tried on Lloyd with great success; the trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths, bricks without straw. But youth and the fond patient have to be consulted.

And now look here—this is next day—and three chapters are written and read. (Chapter I, The Old Sea-dog at the *Admiral Benbow*; Chapter II, Black Dog appears and disappears; Chapter III, The Black Spot.) All now heard by Lloyd, F., and my father and mother, with high approval. It's quite silly and horrid fun, and what I want is the best book about the Buccaneers that can be had—the latter B's above all, Blackbeard and sich, and get Nutt or Bain to send it skimming by the fastest post. And now I know you'll write to me, for *The Sea Cook's* sake.

Your *Admiral Guinea* is curiously near my line, but of course I'm fooling, and your Admiral sounds like a sublime gent. Stick to him like wax—he'll do. My Trelawney is, as I indicate, several thousand sea-miles off the line of the original or your Admiral Guinea; and besides, I have no more about him yet but one mention of his name, and I think it likely he may turn yet farther from the model in the course of handling. A chapter a day I mean to do—they are short—and perhaps in a month *The Sea Cook* may to Routledge[1] go, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum. No woman in the story, Lloyd's orders; and who so blithe to obey? It's awful fun, boys' stories; you must indulge the pleasure of your heart, that's all; no trouble, no strain. The only stiff thing is to get it ended—that I don't see, but I look to a volcano. O sweet, O generous, O human toils.

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[1] *Treasure Island*—or *The Sea Cook* as Stevenson called it originally—ran through Mr. James Henderson's *Young Folks* in the Autumn of 1881, but was a comparative failure as a serial. It was published in book form in 1883, by Messrs. Cassell and Co., and had an immediate success.

R. L. S.
Author of *Boys' Stories.*

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### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON TO GEORGE MEREDITH

['*Tusitala*' *at Home*']

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoa, *September* 5, 1893.

MY DEAR MEREDITH,—

I have again and again taken up the pen to write to you, and many beginnings have gone into the waste paper basket (I have one now—for the second time in my life—and feel a big man on the strength of it). And no doubt it requires some decision to break so long a silence. My health is vastly restored, and I am now living patriarchally in this place, 600 feet above the sea, on the shoulder of a mountain of 1,500. Behind me, the unbroken bush slopes up to the backbone of the island (3 to 4,000) without a house, with no inhabitants save a few runaway black boys, wild pigs and cattle, and wild doves and flying foxes, and many parti-coloured birds, and many black, and many white; a very eerie, dim, strange place, and hard to travel. I am the head of a household of five whites, and of twelve Samoans, to all of whom I am the chief and father: my cook comes to me and asks leave to marry; and his mother, a fine old chief woman, who has never lived here, does the same. You may be sure I granted the petition. It is a life of great interest, complicated by the Tower of Babel, that old enemy. And I have all the time on my hands for literary work. My house is a great place; we have a hall fifty feet long, with a great red-wood stair ascending from it, where we dine in state—myself usually dressed in a singlet and a pair of trousers—and attended on by servants in a single garment, a kind of kilt—also flowers and leaves—and their hair often powdered with lime. The European who came upon it suddenly would think it was a dream. We have prayers on Sunday night—I am a perfect pariah in the island not to have them oftener, but the spirit is unwilling and the flesh proud, and I cannot go it more. It is strange to see the long line of the brown folk crouched along the wall, with lanterns at intervals before them in the big shadowy hall, with an oak cabinet at one end of it, and a group of Rodin's (which native taste regards as *prodigieusement leste*) presiding over all from the top; and to hear the long, rambling Samoan hymn rolling up. (God bless me, what style! But I am off business to-day, and this is not meant to be Literature.)

I have asked Colvin to send you a copy of *Catriona*, which I am sometimes tempted to think is about my best work. I hear word occasionally of the *Amazing Marriage*. It will be a brave day for me when I get hold of it. Gower Woodseer is now an ancient, lean, grim, exiled Scot, living and labouring as for a wager in the tropics; still active, still with lots of fire in him; but the youth—ah, the youth—where is it? [1] For years after I came here, the critics (those genial gentlemen) used to deplore the relaxaton of my fibre and the idleness to which I had succumbed. I hear less of this now; the next thing is they will tell me I am writing myself out! and that my unconscientious conduct is bringing their grey hairs with sorrow to the dust. I do not know—I mean I do know one thing. For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary, and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hæmorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific, and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on—ill or well is a trifle—so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one, of the bed and the physic bottle. At least I have not failed, but I would have preferred a place of trumpetings and the open air over my head.

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[1] 'It is only in the last few chapters of Mr. Meredith's *Amazing Marriage* that the character of Gower Woodseer has been allowed to retain any likeness to that of R.L.S.' —Sidney Colvin.

This is a devilish egotistical yarn. Will you try to imitate me in that if the spirit ever moves you to reply? And meantime be sure that away in the midst of the Pacific there is a house on a wooded island where the name of George Meredith is very dear, and his memory (since it must be no more) is continually honoured.

Ever your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Remember me to Mariette, if you please; and my wife sends her most kind remembrances to yourself.—R. L. S.

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### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Two Months before he Died*]

Vailima, Samoa, *October* 6, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—

We have had quite an interesting month, and mostly in consideration of that road which I think I told you was about to be made. It was made without a hitch, though I confess I was considerably surprised. When they got through, I wrote a speech to them, sent it down to a Missionary to be translated, and invited the lot to a feast. I thought a good deal of this feast. The occasion was really interesting. I wanted to pitch it in hot. And I wished to have as many influential witnesses present as possible. Well, as it drew towards the day I had nothing but refusals. Everybody supposed it was to be a political occasion, that I had made a hive of rebels up here, and was going to push for new hostilities.

The amanuensis has been ill, and after the above trial petered out. I must return to my own, lone Waverley. The captain refused, telling me why, and at last I had to beat up for people almost with prayers. However, I got a good lot, as you will see by the accompanying newspaper report. The road contained this inscription, drawn up by the chiefs themselves:

'THE ROAD OF GRATITUDE.'

'Considering the great love of Tusitala in his loving care of us in our distress in the prison, we have therefore prepared a splendid gift. It shall never be muddy, it shall endure for ever, this road that we have dug'. This the newspaper reporter could not give, not knowing Samoan. The same reason explains his references to Seumanutafa's speech, which was not long and *was* important, for it was a speech of courtesy and forgiveness to his former enemies. It was very much applauded. Secondly, it was not Poè; it was Mataafā (don't confuse with Mataafa) who spoke for the prisoners. Otherwise it is extremely correct.

I beg your pardon for so much upon my aboriginals. Even you must sympathize with me in this unheard-of compliment, and my having been able to deliver so severe a sermon with acceptance. It contains a nice point of conscience what I should wish done in the matter. I think this meeting, its immediate results, and the terms of what I have said to them, desirable to be known. It will do a little justice to me, who have not had too much justice done me. At the same time, to send this report to the papers is truly an act of self-advertisement, and I dislike the thought. Query, in a man who has been so much calumniated, is that not justifiable? I do not know; be my judge. Mankind is too complicated for me, even myself. Do I wish to advertise? I think I do, God help me! I have had hard times here, as every man must have who mixes up with public business; and I bemoan myself, knowing that all I have done has been in the interest of peace and good government; and having once delivered my mind, I would like it, I think, to be made public. But the other part of me *regimbs*.

I know I am at a climacteric for all men who live by their wits, so I do not despair. But the truth is I am pretty nearly useless at literature, and I will ask you to spare *St. Ives* when it goes to you; it is a sort of *Count Robert of Paris*. But I hope rather a *Dombey and Son*, to be succeeded by *Our Mutual Friend* and *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. No toil has been spared over the ungrateful canvas; and it *will not* come together, and I must live, and my family. Were it not for my health, which made it impossible, I could not find it in my heart to forgive myself that I did not stick to an honest, commonplace trade when I was young, which might have now supported me during these ill years. But do not suppose me to be down in anything else; only, for the nonce, my skill deserts me, such as it is, or was. It was a very little dose of inspiration, and a pretty little trick of style, long lost, improved by the most heroic industry. So far, I have managed to please the journalists. But I am a fictitious article, and have long known it. I am read by journalists, by my fellow-novelists, and by boys; with these, *incipit et explicit* my vogue. Good thing, anyway! for it seems to have sold the Edition. And I look forward confidently to an after-. math; I do not think my health can be so hugely improved, without some subsequent improvement in my brains. Though, of course, there is the possibility that literature is a morbid secretion, and abhors health! I do not think it is possible to have fewer illusions than I. I sometimes wish I had more. They are amusing. But I cannot take myself seriously as an artist; the limitations are so obvious. I did take myself seriously as a workman of old, but my practice has fallen off. I am now an idler and cumberer of the ground; it may be excused to me perhaps by twenty years of industry and ill-health, which have taken the cream off the milk.

As I was writing this last sentence, I heard the strident rain drawing near across the forest, and by the time I was come to the word 'cream' it burst upon my roof, and has since redoubled and roared upon it. A very welcome change. All smells of the good wet earth, sweetly, with a kind of Highland touch; the crystal rods of the shower, as I look up, have drawn their criss-cross over everything; and a gentle and very pleasant coolness comes up around me in little draughts, blessed draughts, not chilling, only equalising the temperature. Now the rain is off in this spot, but I hear it still roaring in the nigh neighbourhood—and at that moment, I was driven from the verandah by random rain drops, spitting at me through the Japanese blinds. These are not tears with which the page is spotted! Now the windows stream, the roof reverberates. It is good; it answers something which is in my heart; I know not what; old memories of the wet moorland belike.

Well, it has blown by again, and I am in my place once more, with an accompaniment of perpetual dripping on the verandah—and very much inclined for a chat. The exact subject I do not know! It will be bitter at least, and that is strange, for my attitude is essentially *not* bitter, but I have come into these days when a man sees above all the seamy side, and I have dwelt some time where he has an opportunity of reading little motives that he would miss in the great world, and indeed, to-day, I am almost ready to call the world an error. Because? Because I have not drugged myself with successful work, and there are all kinds of trifles buzzing in my ear, unfriendly trifles, from the least to the—well, to the pretty big. All these that touch me are Pretty Big; and yet none touch me in the least, if rightly looked at, except the one eternal burthen to go on making an income. If I could find a place where I could lie down and give up for (say) two years, and allow the sainted public to support me; if it were a lunatic asylum, wouldn't I go, just! But we can't have both extremes at once, worse luck! I should like to put my savings into a proprietarian investment, and retire in the meanwhile into a communistic retreat, which is double-dealing. But you men with salaries don't know how a family weighs on a fellow's mind.

I hear the article in next week's *Herald* is to be a great affair, and all the officials who came to me the other day are to be attacked! This is the unpleasant side of being (without a salary) in public life; I will leave any one to judge if my speech was well intended and calculated to do good. It was even daring—I assure you one of the chiefs looked like a fiend at my description of Samoan warfare. Your warning was not needed; we are all determined to *keep the peace* and to *hold our peace*. I know, my dear fellow, how remote this all sounds! Kindly pardon your friend. I have my life to live here; these interests are for me immediate; and if I do not write of them, I might as soon not write at all. There is the difficulty in a distant correspondence. It is perhaps easy for me to enter into and understand your interests; I own it is difficult for you; but you must just wade through them for friendship's sake, and try to find tolerable what is vital for your friend. I cannot forbear challenging you to it, as to intellectual lists. It is the proof of intelligence, the proof of not being a barbarian, to be able to enter into something outside of oneself, something that does not touch one's next neighbour in the city omnibus.

Good-bye, my lord. May your race continue and you flourish.

Yours ever,

TUSITALA.

## JOHN RUSKIN

1819—1900

Our Ruskin selection begins in 1851 with his famous letter to the *Times* in which he boldly defends the cause of the Præ-Raphaelites, and ends at Brantwood a few years after the first of the breakdowns which gradually brought his exhausting career to a close. Unfortunately, we are unable to include any of Ruskin's deeply interesting letters to his intimate friend, Professor Norton—originally published in the United States and distributed through the monumental Library Edition of Ruskin's works—which form, as Professor Norton remarks in printing them, a sort of sequel to *Præterita* and ' a tragic record of the perplexities of a great and generous soul, the troubles of a tender heart, the spendthrift use, and at last the failure of exceptional powers. Such genius, such high aim, such ardent yet often ill-directed effort, and such great, yet broken achievement, such splendours sinking into such glooms—it is a sorrowful story ! Though this be the main impression made by these letters, yet they show that while there was little happiness in the last forty years of Ruskin's life, there was much in them of enjoyment. Though the background of his life was dark, many gleams of sunshine passed over its foreground '. Not a few of these gleams of sunshine sprang from the long and affectionate friendship which existed between Ruskin and Kate Greenaway, whose drawings, he declared, in one of his famous Oxford lectures, had ' the radiance and innocence of reinstated infant divinity showered again among the flowers of English meadows '. How helpful was this friendship on both sides is charmingly shown in the *Life of Kate Greenaway* by M. H. Spielmann and G. S. Layard—published by Messrs. A. & C. Black in 1905—from which we are permitted to take the correspondence with which our Ruskin series closes. Ruskin, as these letters show, was much concerned with regard to Kate Greenaway's occasional lack of form and was always imploring her to study from the nude in order to improve in that respect. Who conversant with Miss Greenaway's drawings, add her biographers, can doubt that Ruskin's advice was sound ? In this matter, however, the artist remained stubborn. Ruskin's letter to Lord Tennyson belongs to an earlier period—1860—and is printed from the Memoir of the poet by his son, published by Messrs. Macmillan. Our thanks are due to the various authors and publishers already mentioned, and especially to Mr. George Allen, Ruskin's publisher and life-long friend. The two following letters to the *Times* were reprinted by Mr. Allen, in *Arrows of the Chace*.

### John Ruskin to the Editor of the *Times*

[*The Præ-Raphaelite Brethren*]

Denmark Hill, *May* 9, 1851.

Sir,—

Your usual liberality will, I trust, give a place in your columns to this expression of my regret that the tone of the critique which appeared in *The Times* of Wednesday last, [1] on the works of Mr. Millais and Mr. Hunt, now in the Royal Academy, should have been scornful as well as severe.

I regret it, because the mere labour bestowed on those works, and their fidelity to a certain order of truth (labour and fidelity which are altogether indisputable) ought at once to have placed them above the level of mere contempt; and secondly, because I believe these young artists to be at a most critical period of their career—at a turning-point from which they may either sink into nothingness or rise to very real greatness; and I believe also, that whether they choose the upward or the downward path, may in no small degree depend upon the character of the criticism which their works have to sustain. I do not wish in any way to dispute or invalidate the general truth of your critique on the Royal Academy; nor am I surprised at the estimate which the writer formed of the pictures in question when rapidly compared with works of totally different style and aim; nay, when I first saw the chief picture by Millais in the Exhibition of last year, I had nearly come to the same conclusion myself. But I ask your permission, in justice to artists who have at least given much time and toil to their pictures, to institute some more serious inquiry into their merts and faults than your general notice of the Academy could possibly have admitted.

Let me state, in the first place, that I have no acquaintance with any of these artists, and very imperfect sympathy with them. No one who has met with any of my writings will suspect me of desiring to encourage them in their Romanist and Tractarian tendencies. I am glad to see that Mr. Millais' lady in blue [2] is heartily tired of her painted windows and idolatrous toilet table; and I have no particular respect for Mr. Collins' lady in white [3], because her sympathies are limited by a dead wall, or divided between some gold fish and a tadpole (the latter Mr. Collins may, perhaps, permit me to suggest *en passant*, as he is already half a frog, is rather too small for his age). But I happen to have a special acquaintance with the water plant *Alisma Plantago*, among which the said gold fish are swimming ; and as I never saw it so thoroughly or so well drawn, I must take leave to remonstrate with you, when you say sweepingly that these men 'sacrifice *truth* as well as feeling to eccentricity'. For as a mere botanical study of the water lily and *Alisma*, as well as of the common lily and several other garden flowers, this picture would be invaluable to me, and I heartily wish it were mine.

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[1] 'We can extend no toleration', wrote the art critic of the *Times* in this connexion 'to a mere servile imitation of the cramped style, false perspective and crude colour of remote antiquity. We want not to see what Fuseli termed drapery "snapped instead of folded;" faces bloated into apoplexy, or extenuated to skeletons; colour borrowed from the jars in a druggist's shop, and expression forced into caricature. . . . That morbid infatuation which sacrifices truth, beauty and genuine feeling to mere eccentricity, deserves no quarter at the hands of the public.'

[2] The pictures by Millais in the 1851 Exhibition were: 'Mariana'—here referred to—'The Return of the Dove to the Ark', and 'The Woodman's Daughter'.

[3] 'Convent Thoughts', by Charles Allston Collins, a Præ-Raphaelite who was subsequently better known as an author than as a painter. C. A. Collins was the son of William Collins, R.A., and younger brother of Wilkie Collins, the novelist. He died in 1873.

But, before entering into such particulars, let me correct an impression which your article is likely to induce in most minds, and which is altogether false. These Præ-Raphaelites (I cannot compliment them on common sense in choice of a *nom de guerre*) do *not* desire or pretend in any way to imitate antique painting as such. They know very little of ancient paintings who suppose the work of these young artists to resemble them. As far as I can judge of their aim—for, as I said, I do not know the men themselves—the Præ-Raphaelites intend to surrender no advantage which the knowledge or inventions of the present time can afford to their art. They intend to return to early days in this one point only—that, as far as in them lies, they will draw either what they see, or what they suppose might have been the actual facts of the scene they desire to represent, irrespective of any conventional rules of picture-making ; and they have chosen their unfortunate, though not inaccurate name, because all artists did this before Raphael's time, and after Raphael's time did *not* this, but sought to paint fair pictures, rather than represent stern facts ; of which the consequence has been that, from Raphael's time to this day, historical art has been in acknowledged decadence.

Now, sir, presupposing that the intention of these men was to return to archaic *art* instead of to archaic honesty, your critic borrows Fuseli's expression respecting ancient draperies 'snapped instead of folded', and asserts that in these pictures there is a *servile* imitation of *false* perspective'. To which I have just this to answer : That there is not one single error in perspective in four out of the five pictures in question; and that in Millais' 'Mariana' there is but this one—that the top of the green curtain in the distant window has too low a vanishing point; and that I will undertake, if need be, to point out and prove a dozen worse errors in perspective in any twelve pictures, containing architecture, taken at random from among the works of the popular painters of the day.

Secondly, that putting aside the small Mulready, and the works of Thorburn and Sir W. Ross, and perhaps some others of those in the miniature room which I have not examined, there is not a single study of drapery in the whole Academy, be it in large work or small, which for perfect truth, power, and finish could be compared for an instant with the black sleeve of the Julia, or with the velvet on the breast and the chain mail of the Valentine, of Mr. Hunt's picture[1]; or with the white draperies on the table of Mr. Millais' 'Mariana', and of the right-hand figure in the same painter's 'Dove returning to the Ark'.

And further: that as studies both of drapery and of every minor detail, there has been nothing in art so earnest or so complete as these pictures since the days of Albert Durer. This I assert generally and fearlessly. On the other hand, I am perfectly ready to admit that Mr. Hunt's 'Sylvia' is not a person whom Proteus or any one else would have been likely to fall in love with at first sight; and that one cannot feel very sincere delight that Mr. Millais' 'Wives of the Sons of Noah' should have escaped the Deluge; with many other faults besides on which I will not enlarge at present, because I have already occupied too much of your valuable space, and I hope to enter into more special criticism in a future letter.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
The Author of *Modern Painters.*

Denmark Hill, *May* 9.

### JOHN RUSKIN TO THE 'TIMES'

['*The Light of the World*']

SIR,— Denmark Hill, *May* 4, 1854.

I trust that, with your usual kindness and liberality, you will give me room in your columns for a few words respecting the principal Præ-Raphaelite picture in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy this year. Its painter is travelling in the Holy Land, and can neither suffer nor benefit by criticism. But I am solicitous that justice should be done to his work, not for his sake, but for that of the large number of persons who, during the year, will have an opportunity of seeing it, and on whom, if rightly understood, it may make an impression for which they will ever afterwards be grateful.

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[1] Holman Hunt's 'Valentine receiving Sylvia from Proteus'.

I speak of the picture called 'The Light of the World', by Holman Hunt. Standing by it yesterday for upwards of an hour, I watched the effect it produced upon the passers-by. Few stopped to look at it, and those who did almost invariably with some contemptuous expression, founded on what appeared to them the absurdity of representing the Saviour with a lantern in His hand. Now, it ought to be remembered that, whatever may be the fault of a Præ-Raphaelite picture, it must at least have taken much time; and therefore it may not unwarrantably be presumed that conceptions which are to be laboriously realized are not adopted in the first instance without some reflection. So that the spectator may surely question with himself whether the objections which now strike every one in a moment might not possibly have occurred to the painter himself, either during the time devoted to the design of the picture, or the months of labour required for its execution; and whether, therefore, there may not be some reason for his persistence in such an idea, not discoverable at the first glance.

Mr. Hunt has never explained his work to me. I give what appears to me its palpable interpretation.

The legend beneath it is the beautiful verse: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me' (Rev. iii. 20). On the left-hand side of the picture is seen this door of the human soul. It is fast barred; its bars and nails are rusty; it is knitted and bound to its stanchions by creeping tendrils of ivy, showing that it has never been opened. A bat hovers about it; its threshold is overgrown with brambles, nettles and fruitless corn—the wild grass 'whereof the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth the sheaves his bosom'. Christ approaches in the night time—Christ, in his everlasting offices of prophet, priest and king. He wears the white robe, representing the power of the Spirit upon him; the jewelled robe and breastplate, representing the sacerdotal investiture; the rayed crown of gold, inwoven with the crown of thorns; not dead thorns, but now bearing soft leaves, for the healing of the nations.

Now, when Christ enters any human heart, he bears with him a twofold light: first, the light of conscience, which displays past sin, and afterwards the light of peace, the hope of salvation. The lantern, carried in Christ's left hand, is this light of conscience. Its fire is red and fierce; it falls only on the closed door, on the weeds which encumber it, and on an apple shaken from one of the trees of the orchard, thus marking that the entire awakening of the conscience is not merely to committed, but to hereditary guilt.

The light is suspended by a chain, wrapped about the wrist of the figure, showing that the light which reveals sin appears to the sinner also to chain the hand of Christ.

The light which proceeds from the head of the figure, on the contrary, is that of the hope of salvation; it springs from the crown of thorns, and, though itself sad, subdued, and full of softness, is yet so powerful that it entirely melts into the glow of it the forms of the leaves and boughs, which it crosses, showing that every earthly object must be hidden by this light, where its sphere extends.

I believe there are very few persons on whom the picture, thus justly understood, will not produce a deep impression. For my own part, I think it is one of the very noblest works of sacred art ever produced in this or any other age.

It may, perhaps, be answered, that works of art ought not to stand in need of interpretation of this kind. Indeed, we have been so long accustomed to see pictures painted without any purpose or intention whatsoever, that the unexpected existence of meaning in a work of art may very naturally at first appear to us an unkind demand on the spectator's understanding. But in a few years more I hope the English public may be convinced of the simple truth, that neither a great fact, nor a great man, nor a great poem, nor a great picture, nor any other great thing, can be fathomed to the very bottom in a moment of time; and that no high enjoyment, either in picture-seeing or any other occupation, is consistent with a total lethargy of the powers of the understanding.

As far as regards the technical qualities of Mr. Hunt's painting, I would only ask the spectator to observe this difference between true Præ-Raphaelite works and its imitations. The true work represents all objects exactly as they would appear in nature, in the position and at the distances which the arrangement of the picture supposes. The false work represents them with all their details, as if seen through a microscope. Examine closely the ivy on the door in Mr. Hunt's picture, and there will not be found in it a single clear outline. All is the most exquisite mystery of colour, becoming reality at its due distance. In like manner examine the small gems on the robe of the figure. Not one will be made out in form, and yet there is not one of all those minute points of green colour, but it has two or three distinctly varied shades of green in it, giving it mysterious value and lustre.

The spurious imitations of the Præ-Raphaelite work represent the most minute leaves and other subjects with sharp outlines, but with no variety of colour, and with none of the concealment, none of the infinity of nature. With this spurious work the walls of the Academy are half covered ; of the true school one very small example may be pointed out, being hung so low that it might otherwise escape attention. It is not by any means perfect, but still very lovely—the study of a calm pool in a mountain brook, by Mr. J. Dearle, No. 191, 'Evening, on the Marchno, North Wales'.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
The Author of *Modern Painters.*

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### JOHN RUSKIN TO LORD TENNYSON

[*On the 'Idylls of the King'*]

Strasburg (1860).

DEAR MR. TENNYSON,—

I have had the *Idylls* in my travelling desk ever since I could get them across the water, and have only not written about them because I could not quite make up my mind about the increased quietness of style. I thought you would like a little to know what I felt about it, but did not quite know myself what I did feel.

To a certain extent you yourself of course know better what the work is than any one else, as all great artists do.

If you are satisfied with it I believe it to be right. Satisfied with bits of it you must be, and so must all of us, however much we expect from you.

The four songs seem to me the jewels of the crown, and bits come every here and there; the fright of the maid, for instance, and the 'In the darkness o'er her fallen head', which seem to me finer than almost all you have done yet. Nevertheless I am not sure but I feel the art and finish in these poems a little more than I like to feel it. Yet I am not a fair judge quite, for I am so much of a realist as not by any possibility to interest myself much in an unreal subject to feel it as I should, and the very sweetness and stateliness of the words strike me all the more as pure workmanship.

As a description of various nobleness and tenderness the book is without price: but I shall always wish it had been nobleness independent of a romantic condition of externals in general.

*In Memoriam*, *Maud*, *The Miller's Daughter*, and such like, will always be my own pet rhymes; yet I am quite prepared to admit this to be as good as any, for its own peculiar audience. Treasures of wisdom there are in it, and word painting such as never was yet for concentration; nevertheless it seems to me that so great power ought not to be spent on visions of things past, but on the living present. For one hearer capable of feeling the depth of this poem, I believe ten would feel a depth quite as great, if the stream flowed through things nearer the hearer. And merely in the facts of modern life, not drawing-room formal life, but the far away and quite unknown growth of souls in and through any form of misery or servitude, there is an infinity of what men should be told, and what none but a poet can tell. I cannot but think that the masterful and unerring transcript of an actuality and the relation of a story of any real human life as a poet would watch and analyze it, would make all men feel more or less what poetry was, as they feel what Life and Fate were in their instant workings.

This seems to me the true task of the modern poet. And I think I have seen faces, and heard voices by road and street side, which claimed or conferred as much as ever the loveliest or saddest of Camelot. As I watch them, the feeling continually weighs upon me, day by day, more and more, that not the grief of the world, but the loss of it, is the wonder of it. I see creatures so full of all power and beauty, with none to understand or teach or save them. The making in them of miracles, and all cast away, for ever lost as far as we can trace. And no *In Memoriam.*

I do not ask you when you are likely to be in London, for I know you do not like writing letters, and I know you will let Mrs. Prinsep or Watts send me word about you, so that I may come and see you again, when you do come ; and then on some bright winter's day, I shall put in my plea for Denmark Hill.

Meanwhile, believe me always,

Faithfully and gratefully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

### JOHN RUSKIN TO KATE GREENAWAY

### [*Her Helpful Influence*]

Brantwood, Coniston, *Christmas Day*, 1881.

MY DEAR MISS GREENAWAY,—

You are the first friend to whom I write this morning, and among the few to whom I look for real sympathy and help. You are fast becoming—I believe you are already, except only Edward B. Jones—the helpfullest in showing me that there are yet living souls on earth who can see beauty and peace and goodwill among men—and rejoice in them.

You have sent me a little choir of such angels as are ready to sing, if we will listen, for Christ's being born—every day.

I trust you may long be spared to do such lovely things, and be an element of the best happiness in every English household that still has an English heart, as you are already in the simpler homes of Germany.

To my mind Ludwig Richter and you are the only real philosophers and . . . of the Nineteenth Century.

I'll write more in a day or two about many things that I want to say respecting the possible range of your subjects.

I was made so specially happy yesterday by finding Herrick's Grace among the little poems; but they are all delightful.

Ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

### JOHN RUSKIN TO KATE GREENAWAY

[*A Gentle Hint to Study from the Nude*]

Brantwood, 1883.

I'M beginning really to have hopes of you. This terrific sunset shows what a burden those red and yellow wafers have been on your conscience. Now, do be a good girl for once, and send me a little sunset, as you know now how to do it, reversing everything you used to do.

Then, secondly, I'm in great happiness to-day, thinking that M. Chesneau must have got that lovely Kate this morning, and be in a state words won't express the ecstasy of. Then, thirdly, as we've got so far as taking off hats, I trust we may in time get to taking off just a little more—say, mittens—and then, perhaps, even shoes, and (for fairies) even—stockings. And—then——.

My dear Kate (see my third lecture sent you to-day)—it is absolutely necessary for you to be—now—sometimes, Classical. I return you, though heartbrokenly (for the day), one of those three sylphs, come this morning.

Will you (it's all for your own good) make her stand up, and then draw her for me without her hat, and without her shoes (because of the heels), and without her mittens, and without her frock and its frills? And let me see exactly how tall she is—and how—round. (Note written in pencil: 'Do nothing of the kind. J. S.').

It will be so good of—and for—you—and to, and for—me.

[After finishing this letter, Ruskin turned it over and added the following note.]

*July* 5.

Finished right side yesterday. That naughty Joan got hold of it—never mind her—you see, she doesn't like the word 'round'—that's all.

## ROBERT BUCHANAN

### 1841–1901

The Hon. Roden Noel, to whom the following characteristic letter of Robert Buchanan was written in 1868, stepped into the place left vacant by the death of David Gray, the young poet who, eight years previously, had arranged to leave Glasgow with Buchanan to seek fame and fortune with him in the great world of London. The story told by Buchanan himself of how they missed each other on the journey, and of their subsequent privations—ending for his more delicate companion in a pitiful and untimely death—is generally familiar. Buchanan's friendship with the Hon. Roden Noel began shortly after the publication of his second volume of poems—*Idyls and Legends of Inverburn,* which added to the reputation made for him by his *Undertones* in 1863. By this time Buchanan was married, and was staying at Bexhill with his beautiful young wife, then in the early stages of the painful disease which turned their romance into tragedy, and accounted for much of Buchanan's later bitterness when brooding on religious questions. Roden Noel was staying at Hastings at the time with his father, the late Earl of Gainsborough, and he walked over one day while the Buchanans were at dinner. 'In those days Robert Buchanan was Radical to the finger tips', writes his sister-in-law, Miss Harriet Jay, in the Life from which— by her kind permission, and that of the publisher, Mr. Fisher Unwin—the two following letters are taken, 'and the prefix "honourable" on the young patrician's card awoke a strong prejudice within him; but no sooner had he come face to face with his visitor, and shaken his hand, and looked into his eyes, than he was spellbound with the thrill of love which began that day between them and lasted till the day Mr. Noel died'. Buchanan wrote the introduction to the selection of Roden Noel's Poems included in the Canterbury Poets in 1892. The letter to Noel was written from Oban, when Buchanan was then living the life of a country gentleman. He was still at Oban when he read the poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which led to his violent attack upon the Præ-Raphaelites in the article entitled 'The Fleshly School of Poetry'. Buchanan's next letter—to W. E. H. Lecky—owed its origin to a speech at the Royal Academy banquet in 1888, in which Mr. Lecky—replying to the toast of literature—referred in terms of the highest praise to the poet's *City of Dreams*, which had just been issued from the press. 'While such works are produced in England', he said, 'it cannot, I think, be said that the artistic spirit in English literature has very seriously decayed'. Unfortunately, Robert Buchanan could not live by poetry alone; he had to turn to the more popular field of fiction and the drama. Here he won both fame and fortune, but, like many another man, he found that a fortune was a great deal easier to disperse than to accumulate. He was slowly winning it back again when he was struck down by heart disease, and never really recovered from the illness which followed.

### ROBERT BUCHANAN TO THE HON. RODEN NOEL

[‘*Your Arnolds, your Swinburnes*’, *and* ‘*your Tennysons*’]

*August*, 1868.

DEAR NOEL,—

You will think me a beast for my silence, and indeed I reproach myself daily for my neglect of you and other dear friends. I cannot, however, help being a bad correspondent; and moreover each letter is so much taken from my scant literary hours. Were I to write to you as often as I think of you, and as kindly, you would be sick—with sugar.

We have had a long wander, roughing it a good deal both literally and figuratively, and we have drunk much wonder by eye and ear. The little craft we sail in has behaved bravely, and gone through her work like a lady of the old Norwegian school—with a fierce grace. I have thought much and written little, ate little and walked much. I don't know that I am much the better in health for this cruise—the cuisine has been a little too bad—but I shall enjoy civilization better when I next enter an eating-house.

How goes your book? You never told me what Chapman said, or how he said it; and you never sent me that Heroditan romance, of course. My horrid bigotry revolts you. Well! you will think my views larger some day, when I have had my full say. Meantime, I am merely mumbling an odd music with little meaning to the foreign. That I do not love all you love, that I do not see all you see, that I do not hope all you hope are misfortunes; but with a little clearer light, some day, we shall find we agree better than we think. I am doubtless silly and fantastical when your Arnolds and your Swinburnes, even your Tennysons, do not anyway move me, any more than my crude stuff moves them. I really do believe it is some vice in myself; yet were you to know me alone, when I have been reading of Sancho's government, or of the Miltonic epos, or of poor Jack Falstaff's death—of these and a thousand other beloved things—you would know I could love something, much. It is my vice that I must love a thing wholly, or dislike it wholly. Of contemporaries, I love only a few wholly. You see I have only been half educated, and my tastes are very raw.

But one thing let me confess—my total obtusity about Clough.[1] I have not read a line of him since, yet all at once the light has grown on me of its own accord, and I see that Clough was a star—not one in the same heaven with my Chaucer and my Shakespeare, and my Burns and my Cervantes—but a pure scholastic light, real and everlasting.

I don't know what will come next, but I shall try to get to London for a month soon, when I hope to get a little more of your company. I have great bothers, of course, and am still troubled, but the clouds clear. I was shipwrecked in the night, but I swam for shore, and am looking out for another ship. Where will you be in October? Write to

Yours always,
ROBERT BUCHANAN.

### ROBERT BUCHANAN TO W. E. H. LECKY

['*A Divine Thrill of Personal Sympathy*']

*May*, 1888.

DEAR MR. LECKY,—

How can I thank you sufficiently for the generous words you spoke concerning me at the Royal Academy Banquet? How can I express my sense of your goodness and your courage? Coming from even a smaller man, such praise would be very grateful; but coming from one whom I have regarded with reverence and admiration, as one of the clearest intellects of the age, to whom I owe inestimable gratitude, it almost overpowers me. And you knew what you were doing—praising a man who is not too much loved, and has met with little sympathy. What can I say further than that the act was worthy of *you*—worthy of one who is intellectually fearless, and whose noble life has been devoted to truth.

Some day I should like, if I might be so honoured, to take you by the hand and thank you by word of mouth. Need I say in this connexion that your books have long been a precious possession and help to me? Indeed, I scarcely know any writer, except yourself and Herbert Spencer, to whom I have yielded perfect acquiescence. Henceforth, when I turn to those pages which I know so well and love so much, I shall feel something more than respectful admiration—a divine thrill of personal sympathy—very precious to a wanderer in the wastes of literature.

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[1] Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861), poet. Clough is the subject of Matthew Arnold's elegy *Thyrsis*.

Yours most truly,
ROBERT BUCHANAN.

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