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*The Works of*  
*John Keats*  
*Edited by*   
*H. Duxton Forman*





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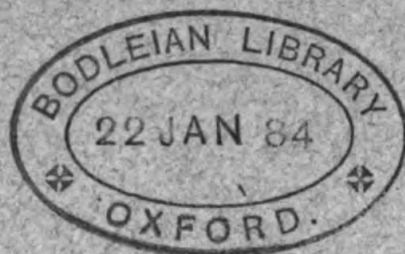
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KEATS'S WORKS—VOLUME III

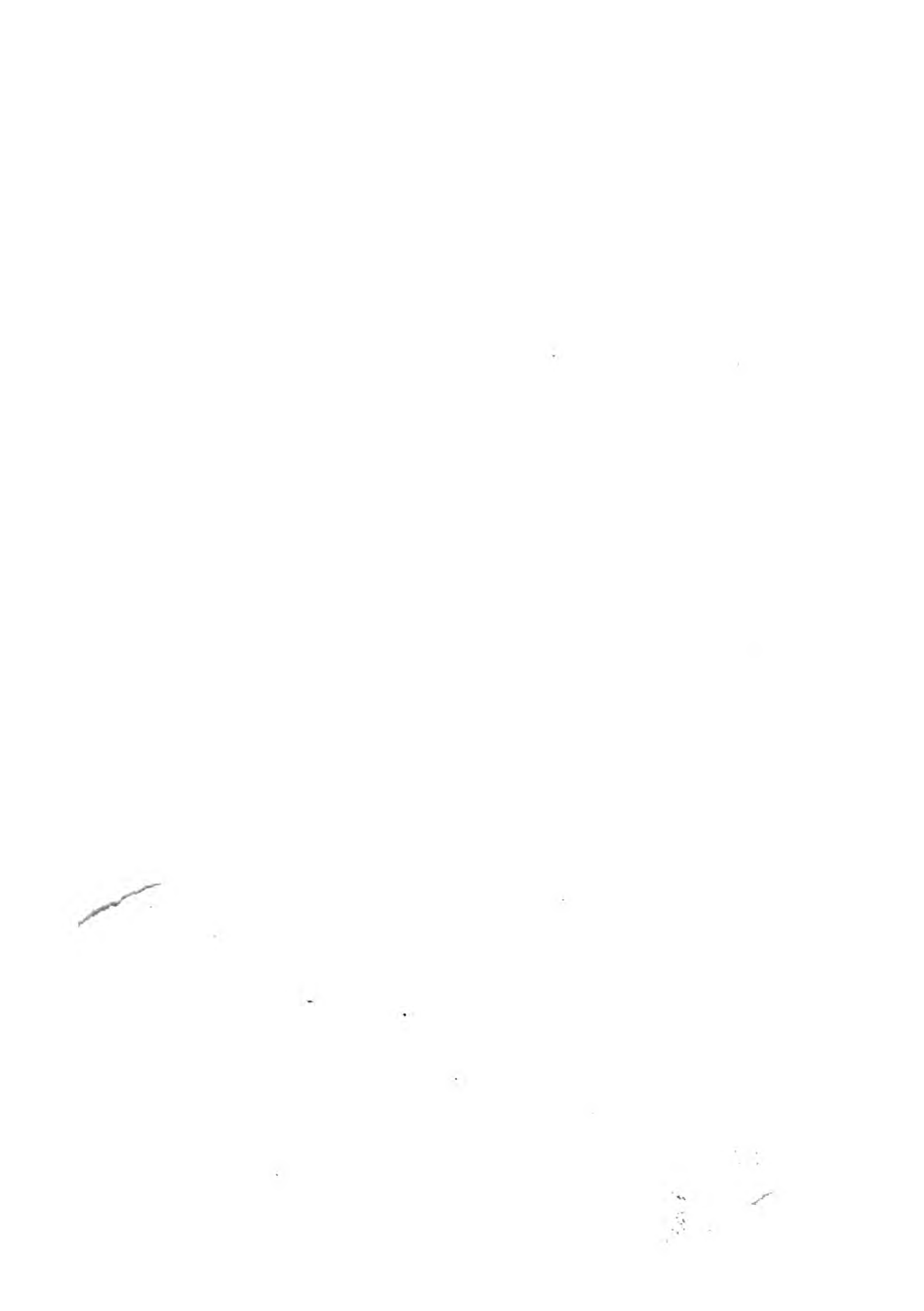
O, for a draught of vintage ! that hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !...  
That I might drink and leave the world unseen,...  
Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget...  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret...







*Facsimile of a charcoal drawing by Severn.*





THE POETICAL WORKS  
AND OTHER WRITINGS  
OF  
JOHN KEATS

NOW FIRST BROUGHT TOGETHER  
INCLUDING POEMS AND NUMEROUS LETTERS  
NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED

EDITED  
WITH NOTES AND APPENDICES  
BY  
HARRY BUXTON FORMAN



IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME III

LONDON  
REEVES & TURNER 196 STRAND  
1883

280. d. 48.



CHISWICK PRESS: C. WHITTINGHAM AND CO., TOOKS COURT,  
CHANCERY LANE.

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NOTES ON SHAKESPEARE  
AND ON  
THE ACTING OF EDMUND KEAN.

VOL. III.

B

[These Notes consist of two short papers contributed to *The Champion*, and some marginalia in the autograph of Keats in a copy of the 1808 reprint of the Shakespeare folio of 1623, now in the collection of Sir Charles Dilke. The late Joseph Severn had a copy of Johnson and Steevens's edition of Shakespeare, more or less annotated in manuscript by Keats ; but I have not seen it, and I believe it has found its way to America. The first of the two published papers appeared in *The Champion* for Sunday the 21st of December 1817, the second in that for the following Sunday. The treasurable folio of 1808 contains two poems in Keats's autograph,—the *King Lear* sonnet and the Lines on Seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair (see notes to those poems). The underlinings and annotations (the latter very few) are confined to five plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth*, and *Romeo and Juliet* ; and of these the two last-mentioned are only marked, without being annotated. *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth* is marked only in the first eight pages ; and some few errors of the edition are corrected from a better copy ; in *Romeo and Juliet* the markings extend over the first half of the play.—H. B. F.]

NOTES ON SHAKESPEARE  
AND ON  
THE ACTING OF EDMUND KEAN.

I.  
ON EDMUND KEAN AS A SHAKESPEARIAN  
ACTOR.

"IN our unimaginary days,"—Habeas Corpus'd as we are out of all wonder, curiosity, and fear;—in these fire-side, delicate, gilded days,—these days of sickly safety and comfort, we feel very grateful to Mr. Kean for giving us some excitement by his old passion in one of the old plays. He is a relict of romance; a posthumous ray of chivalry, and always seems just arrived from the camp of Charlemagne. In Richard he is his sword's dear cousin; in Hamlet his footing is german to the platform. In Macbeth his eye laughs siege to scorn; in Othello he is welcome to Cyprus. In Timon he is of the palace—of Athens—of the woods, and is worthy to sleep in a grave "which once a day with its embossed froth, the turbulent surge doth cover."

For all these was he greeted with enthusiasm on his reappearance in Richard; for all these his sickness will ever be a public misfortune. His return was full of power. He is not the man to "bate a jot." On Thursday evening he acted Luke in "Riches," as far as the

stage will admit, to perfection. In the hypocritical self-possession, in the caution, and afterwards the pride, cruelty, and avarice, Luke appears to us a man incapable of imagining to the extreme heinousness of crimes. To him they are mere magic-lantern horrors. He is at no trouble to deaden his conscience. Mr. Kean's two characters of this week, comprising as they do, the utmost of quiet and turbulence, invite us to say a few words on his acting in general. We have done this before, but we do it again without remorse. Amid his numerous excellencies, the one which at this moment most weighs upon us, is the elegance, gracefulness, and music of elocution. A melodious passage in poetry is full of pleasures both sensual and spiritual. The spiritual is felt when the very letters and points of characted language show like the hieroglyphics of beauty; the mysterious signs of our immortal freemasonry! "A thing to dream of, not to tell!" The sensual life of verse springs warm from the lips of Kean, and to one learned in Shakespearian hieroglyphics—learned in the spiritual portion of those lines to which Kean adds a sensual grandeur; his tongue must seem to have robbed the Hybla bees and left them honeyless! There is an indescribable *gusto* in his voice, by which we feel that the utterer is thinking of the past and future while speaking of the instant. When he says in Othello "Put up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them," we feel that his throat had commanded where swords were as thick as reeds. From eternal risk, he speaks as though his body were unassailable. Again, his exclamation of "blood, blood, blood!" is direful and slaughterous to the deepest degree; the very words appear stained and gory. His nature hangs over them, making a prophetic repast. The voice is loosed on them, like the wild dog on the savage relics of an eastern

conflict; and we can distinctly hear it "gorging and growling o'er carcase and limb." In Richard, "Be stirring with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk!"<sup>1</sup> comes from him, as through the morning atmosphere, towards which he yearns. We could cite a volume of such immortal scraps, and dote upon them with our remarks—but as an end must come, we will content ourselves with a single syllable. It is in those lines of impatience to the night who, "like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp so tediously away." Surely this intense power of anatomizing the passions of every syllable, of taking to himself the airings of verse, is the means by which he becomes a storm with such fiery decision; and by which, with a still deeper charm, he does his spiriting gently. Other actors are continually thinking of their sum-total effect throughout a play. Kean delivers himself up to the instant feeling, without a shadow of a thought about anything else. He feels his being as deeply as Wordsworth, or any other of our intellectual monopolists. From all his comrades he stands alone, reminding us of him, whom Dante has so finely described in his Hell:

"And sole apart retir'd, the Soldan fierce."<sup>2</sup>

Although so many times he has lost the battle of Bosworth Field, we can easily conceive him really expectant of victory, and a different termination of the piece. Yet we are as moths about a candle in speaking of this great man.

"Great, let us call him, for he conquered us!"

We will say no more. Kean! Kean! have a carefulness

<sup>1</sup> Stir with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk.

KING RICHARD III, Act v, Scene 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cary's Dante, *Inferno*, Canto iv, line 126.



of thy health, a nursing regard for thy own genius, a pity for us in these cold and enfeebling times! Cheer us a little in the failure of our days! for romance lives but in books. The goblin is driven from the hearth, and the rainbow is robbed of its mystery.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

## ON KEAN IN "RICHARD DUKE OF YORK."

THE Committee of Drury Lane have thought proper to give the name of Richard to the last born of that ancient house, without considering that they have a child still living who bears the same title. A confusion has very naturally arisen in the minds of those who have been introduced to both as to *which is which*, and we will venture to say that more than half the spectators believe, in the innocence of their hearts, that there are not two Duke Richards, but one Duke Richard. "'Tis yet to know" with many that this same Duke of York is the father of their old, savage, crafty, and courageous favourite, Richard the Third. The present ingenious compilation, or rather the essence of three of Shakespeare's historical dramas, only throws us back into the breaking of the stormy day of the Lancastrian strife. We have on the stage been used to the noontide of the struggle, and to its tempestuous night. It is the morning of the Plantagenets: the white rose is but just budding on the tree, and we have known it only when it was wide dispersed

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<sup>1</sup> See note at page 37 of Volume II. It is curious that Keats should have taken this idea into the stock of his conversation within a week after publishing it.

and flaunting in the busy air, or when it was struck, and the leaves beat from the stem. Perhaps there is not a more interesting time in history than this pelican strife, for it has a locality which none of us can misstate, at the same time that it relishes of romance in its wildness and chivalrous encounters. We read of royal deeds of valour and endurance, and of the personal conflicts between armed and youthful princes, under waving and crested banners, till we might almost think the most knightly days were come again; but then we read of Tewkesbury and Gloucester, and of cities and towns which lie all about us, and we find the most romantic occurrences realized in our minds. What might almost have been deemed an airy nothing acquires at once a local habitation and a name. The meeting with such places as the Temple Hall and Crosby House flatly contradicts the half-formed notion that "'Tis but our fantasies," and we readily "let belief take hold of us." We have no doubt but that Shakespeare intended to have written a complete dramatic history of England, for from Richard the Second to Richard the Third the links are unbroken. The three parts of Henry VI. fall in between the two Richards. They are written with infinite vigour, but their regularity tied the hand of Shakespeare. Particular facts kept him in the high road, and would not suffer him to turn down leafy and winding lanes, or to break wildly and at once into the breathing fields. The poetry is for the most part ironed and manacled with a chain of facts, and cannot get free; it cannot escape from the prison house of history, nor often move without our being disturbed with the clanking of its fetters. The poetry of Shakespeare is generally free as is the wind—a perfect thing of the elements, winged and sweetly coloured. Poetry must be free! It is of the air, not of the earth;

and the higher it soars the nearer it gets to its home. The poetry of "Romeo and Juliet," of "Hamlet," of "Macbeth," is the poetry of Shakespeare's soul—full of love and divine romance. It knows no stop in its delight, but "goeth where it listeth"—remaining, however, in all men's hearts a perpetual and golden dream. The poetry of "Lear," "Othello," "Cymbeline," &c., is the poetry of human passions and affections, made almost ethereal by the power of the poet. Again, the poetry of "Richard," "John," and the Henries is the blending the imaginative with the historical: it is poetry!—but often times poetry wandering on the London Road. We hate to say a word against a word of Shakespeare's, and we can only do so by comparing himself with himself. On going into the three parts of "Henry the Sixth" for themselves, we extract all dispraise and accusation, and declare them to be perfect works. Indeed, they are such. We live again in the olden time. The Duke of York plucks the pale rose before our eyes. Talbot stands before us majestic, huge, appalling—"in his habit as he lived." Henry, the weak, careless, and good Henry, totters palpably under his crown. The Temple Hall is in our sight. By way of making some reparation for having put these plays last in our estimate, and for the real pleasure of contradicting the critical remarks which we in our petty wisdom have urged, and for the simple and intense delight we take in copying and feeding upon noble passages in Shakespeare, we will here give one of the speeches of Richard Duke of York, which is in itself rich enough to buy an immortality for any man:—

" Oft have I seen a corse from whence the ghost  
Hath 'timely parted, meagre, pale, the blood  
Being all descended to the labouring heart ;  
Who in the conflict that it holds with death,  
Attracts the same for aidance 'gainst the enemy,

Which with the heart, then cools, and ne'er returneth  
To blush and beautify the cheek again.  
But see—his face is black and full of blood :  
His eye-balls further out than when he lived,  
Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man ;  
His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretch'd with struggling,  
His hands abroad displayed, like one that grasp'd  
And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.  
Look on the sheets—his hair you see is sticking,  
His well-proportion'd beard made rough and rugged,  
Like to the summer corn by tempest lodged.  
—Oh ! those soft natural deaths, that are joint-twins  
To sweetest slumber ! No rough-bearded comet  
Glares on thy mild departure—the dull owl  
Beats not against thy casement—the hoarse wolf  
Scents not thy carrion. Pity winds thy corse  
While horror waits on princes."

We haste now to look at the manner in which this compilation has been made, for we feel that criticism has no right to purse its little brow in the presence of Shakespeare.

He has, to our belief, very few imperfections, and perhaps these might vanish from our minds, if *we* had the perfection properly to scan them. The play, as it is compressed, is most interesting, clear, and vigorous. It bears us from the beginning to the middle of that tremendous struggle, and very properly stops at the death of the first of the Richards. Richard, Duke of York, has all the quickness, resolution, and ability, which would naturally exist in a man that was inwardly stirred to wrestle for the crown. He has not that rushing stream of thoughts and purposes which characterized Richard III., his son, who was born in the cause of an aspiring father ; and with all the excitement of a parent's and a brother's death urging him on. The individuality of Shakespeare's character is most strongly exemplified in the two Richards ;—but in what is it not ? Perhaps the

faults of the compilation are these:—First, the characters are too hastily introduced and despatched, and their language clipped too closely. They are “curtailed of their fair proportions.” Jack Cade and his rabble are put into strait-waistcoats, as a body might say, and the armourer and his man are cut short in their dispute most abruptly and unsatisfactorily. We see nothing of Talbot, and missing him is like walking among the Elgin Marbles and seeing an empty place where the Theseus had reclined. In the next place the party is too much *modernized*. We speak of it as we heard it. Again, the events are not harmonized well, and Shakespeare felt that they could not be put together in less than fifteen acts, “and we would take the ghost’s word for a thousand pounds.” The present play appears to go on by fits and starts, and to be made up too much of unmatchable events. It is inlaid with facts of different colour, and we can see the cracks which the joiner’s hand could not help leaving.

After these little objections, all our observations on this compilation are full of praise.

Great ingenuity is displayed, and we should think Kean had a hand in it. The author has extracted veins of gold from a huge mine, and he is liberal enough to share it with other people. The workings of Richard’s mind are brought out as it were by the hand of the anatomist, and all the useless parts are cut away and laid aside.

But with all we fear the public will not take the obligation as it is meant, and as it ought to be received. The English people do not care one fig about Shakespeare,—only as he flatters their pride and their prejudices. We are not sure that this has not been remarked before, though we do not remember where; nevertheless it is

our firm opinion. But let us say a few words of the actors.

Kean stands like a tower. He is "all power, passion, self-will." His animations flow from his lips as "musical as is Apollo's lute."

It is impossible to point out any peculiar and little felicities where the whole piece of acting is of no mingled web. If we were to single a favourite part, we should choose that in which he parts with his son, young Rutland, just before the battle. It was pathetic to oppression. Our hearts swelled with the feeling of tears, which is a deeper feeling than the starting of them in the eye. His tongue lingered on the following passage as fondly as his eyes clung to the object which occasioned them, and as tenderly as the heart dwells and dotes upon some long-loved object:—

"Bring in my dear boy, Rutland.  
   [*Enter RUTLAND with attendants.*  
 My darling ! let me kiss thee ere I go—  
 I know not if I e'er shall see thee more.  
 If I should fall, I leave thee to thy brothers,  
 All valiant men ; and I will charge them all,  
 On my last blessing, to take care of thee,  
 As of their souls."

His death was very great. But Kean always "dies as erring men do die." The bodily functions wither up, and the mental faculties hold out till they crack. It is an extinguishment, not a decay. The hand is agonized with death ; the lip trembles with the last breath, as we see the autumn leaf thrill in the cold wind of evening. The very eye-lid dies. The acting of Kean is Shakespearian—he will fully understand what we mean. There is little to be said of the rest. Pope as a *Cardinal* (how aptly chosen) balances a red hat. Holland wears insipid white hair, and is even more insipid than the hair that he

carries. Rae plays the adulterous Suffolk, and proves how likely he is to act amiss. Wallack, as young Clifford, "towers above his sex." Mr. Maywood is more miserable in Henry VI. than winters or wet nights, or Death on a pale horse, or want of money, or deceitful friends, or any other crying evil.

The comic parts are sadly mangled, owing to illness of Munden and Oxberry. Jack Cade dies of a lock-jaw ; and Dick the butcher is become a grave man. Mrs. Glover chews the blank verse past endurance ; her comedy is round and comfortable ; her tragedy is worse than death.

One thing we are convinced of on looking over the three parts of *Henry*, from which this play is gleaned ; which is, that Shakespeare was the only lonely and perfectly happy creature God ever formed. He could never have a mate,—being most unmatchable.

### III.

#### MARGINALIA FROM THE FOLIO.

##### *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*<sup>1</sup>

These are the forgeries of jealousy,  
 And never since the middle Summers spring  
 Met we on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,  
 By paved fountaine, or by rushie brooke,  
 Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde,  
 But with thy braules thou hast disturb'd our sport.

ACT II [SCENE I].

THERE is something exquisitely rich and luxurious in Titania's saying "since the middle summer's spring" as

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<sup>1</sup> In this play there are but two pages which show any trace of Keats's hand. They are in Act II, and bear the above note.

if bowers were not exuberant and covert enough for fairy sports until their second sprouting—which is surely the most bounteous overwhelming of all Nature's goodnesses. She steps forth benignly in the spring and her conduct is so gracious that by degrees all things are becoming happy under her wings and nestle against her bosom: she feels this love and gratitude too much to remain selfsame, and unable to contain herself buds forth the overflowings of her heart about the middle summer. O Shakespeare thy ways are but just searchable! The thing is a piece of profound verdure.

*Troilus and Cressida.*<sup>1</sup>

I have (as when the Sunne doth light a-scorne)  
Buried this sigh, in wrinkle of a smile :

ACT I [SCENE I].

I have not read this copy much and yet have had time to find many faults—however 'tis certain that the Commentators have contrived to twist many beautiful passages into commonplaces as they have done with respect to "a scorn" which they have hocus pocus'd into "a storm" thereby destroying the depth of the simile—taking away all the surrounding atmosphere of Imagery and leaving a bare and unapt picture. Now however beautiful a Comparison may be for a bare aptness—Shakespeare is seldom guilty of one—he could not be content to "the sun lighting a storm," but he gives us Apollo in the act of drawing back his head and forcing a smile upon the world—"the Sun doth light a-scorn."

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<sup>1</sup> *Troilus and Cressida* is much underlined throughout, and has the above note at the opening of the first Act. The reading *a storm* is persisted in in the Globe edition.



*Pandarus.*—But to proove to you that *Hellen* loves him,  
she came and puts me her white hand to his cloven chin.

*Cressida.*—*Juno* have mercy, how came it cloven?

ACT I [SCENE 2].

A most delicate touch—*Juno* being the Goddess of  
Childbirth.

Sith every action that hath gone before,  
Whereof we have Record, Triall did draw  
Bias and thwart, not answering the ayme :  
And that unbodied figure of the thought  
That gave 't surmised shape.

ACT I [SCENE 3].

The genius of Shakespeare was an in[n]ate universality—wherefore he had the utmost atchievement of human intellect prostrate beneath his indolent and kingly gaze. He could do easily Man's utmost. His plans of tasks to come were not of this world—if what he purposed to do hereafter would not in his own Idea "answer the aim" how tremendous must have been his Conception of Ultimates.

Blunt wedges rive hard knots : the seeded Pride  
That hath to this maturity blowne up  
In ranke *Achilles*, must or now be cropt,  
Or shedding breed a Nursery of like evil  
To over-bulke us all.

ACT I [SCENE 3].

"Blowne up" &c. One's very breath while leaning  
over these pages is held for fear of blowing this line away  
—as easily as the gentlest breeze

Robs dandelions of their fleecy Crowns.

Sweete, rouse yourselfe ; and the weake wanton *Cupid*  
Shall from your necke unloose his amorous fould,

And like a dew drop from the Lyons mane,  
Be shooke to ayrie ayre.

ACT III [SCENE 3].

Wherefore should this *ayrie* be left out? <sup>1</sup>

*King Lear.*<sup>2</sup>

*Goneril.*—You see how full of changes his age is ...

ACT I, SCENE 1.

How finely is the brief of Lear's character sketched in this conference—from this point does Shakspeare spur him out to the mighty grapple—"the seeded pride that hath to this maturity blowne up" Shakspeare doth scatter abroad on the winds of Passion, where the germs take b[u]oyant root in stormy Air, suck lightning sap, and become voiced dragons—self-will and pride and wrath are taken at a rebound by his giant hand and mounted to the Clouds—there to remain and thunder evermore—

... though she's as like this, as a Crabbe's like an Apple,...

ACT I, SCENE 5.

"Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty."

[LEAR, ACT II, SCENE 4.]

*Regan.*—Was he not companion with the riotous Knights that tended upon my Father?

*Gloster.*—I know not Madam, 'tis too bad, too bad.

*Bastard.*—Yes Madam, he was of that consort.

ACT II, SCENE 1.

This bye-writing is more marvellous than the whole ripped up contents of Pernambuco—or any buca whatever—on the earth or in the waters under the earth.

<sup>1</sup> Echo answers *why*? But it is left out of even the Globe edition, perhaps the best of the popular editions.

<sup>2</sup> *King Lear* is copiously marked throughout, but has only these three notes.



NOTES ON MILTON'S PARADISE  
LOST.

VOL. III.

C

[In *The Dial* for April 1843, in a memoir of George Keats, signed "J. F. C.", we read: "He preserved and highly prized John's letters, and unpublished verses, the copy of Spenser filled with his works [*sic* but *quære, marks?*], which he had read when a boy, and which had been to him a very valuable source of poetic inspiration, and a Milton in which were preserved in a like manner John's marks and comments. From a fly-leaf of this book, I was permitted to copy the passages I now send you. I know not whether you will agree with me in their being among the most striking criticisms we possess upon this great author." The memoir is in the form of a letter to the Editor of *The Dial*; and the author seems to have been a Unitarian clergyman, the Rev. J. Freeman Clarke. Following the letter are the notes, headed "Remarks on John Milton, by John Keats, written in the fly-leaf of *Paradise Lost*." It is possible that Keats may have written some of his notes in two copies of Milton; but certainly all the notes given in *The Dial* and reprinted by Lord Houghton exist with others in Keats's autograph on one of the fly-titles and in the margins of a copy of *Paradise Lost* inscribed (also in Keats's writing) to his friend Mrs. Dilke. This book, a pocket edition in two volumes published in 1807 by W. and J. Deas of High Street, Edinburgh, is still in the possession of Sir Charles Dilke; and, as *The Dial* does not say George Keats's book contained *autograph* notes, it seems likely that it was a copy into which the notes made in the other had been transcribed. Such a copy, indeed, is in my own collection,—a small volume containing only *Paradise Lost*, with a preface by Elijah Fenton, but with no title-page whereby to identify the edition: into this, one of the Misses Reynolds, with great pains-taking and exactness, copied not only all Keats's notes in the Dilke copy, but also all his very numerous underlinings. I have not had occasion to use this little volume, as Sir Charles Dilke placed the original at my disposal among the rest of the highly important documents in his hands. The four longer notes now added to those given in *The Dial* have already appeared in *The Athenæum* for the 26th of October 1872. In now placing over each note the passage from the poem to which it refers, I have shown in italics what words or lines are underscored by Keats in these passages; but the book is very copiously underlined throughout.—H. B. F.]

## NOTES ON MILTON'S PARADISE LOST.

THE Genius of Milton, more particularly in respect to its span in immensity, calculated him, by a sort of birth-right, for such an 'argument' as the *Paradise Lost*: he had an exquisite passion for what is properly, in the sense of ease and pleasure, poetical Luxury; and with that it appears to me he would fain have been content, if he could, so doing, have preserved his self-respect and feel of duty performed; but there was working in him as it were that same sort of thing as operates in the great world to the end of a Prophecy's being accomplish'd: therefore he devoted himself rather to the ardours than the pleasures of Song, solacing himself at intervals with cups of old wine; and those are with some exceptions the finest parts of the poem. With some exceptions—for the spirit of mounting and adventure can never be unfruitful or unrewarded: had he not broken through the clouds which envelope so deliciously the Elysian field of verse, and committed himself to the Extreme, we should never have seen Satan as described—

“ But his face  
Deep scars of thunder had entrench'd,” &c.

There is a greatness which the *Paradise Lost* possesses over every other Poem—the *Magnitude of Contrast*, and that is softened by the contrast being ungrotesque to a degree. Heaven moves on like music throughout.

Hell is also peopled with angels; it also moves on like music, not grating and harsh, but like a grand accompaniment in the Base to Heaven.

There is always a great charm in the openings of great Poems, more particularly where the action begins—that of Dante's Hell. Of Hamlet, the first step must be heroic and full of power; and nothing can be more impressive and shaded than the commencement of the action here—

“Round he throws his baleful eyes.”

But his doom

Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought  
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
 Torments him: *round he throws his baleful eyes,*  
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,  
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.  
*At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views*  
*The dismal situation waste and wild.*  
 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,  
 As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames  
 No light; but rather darkness visible  
 Served only to discover *sights of woe,*  
*Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace*  
*And rest can never dwell, hope never comes*  
*That comes to all, but torture without end*  
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed  
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.  
 Such place Eternal Justice had prepared  
 For those rebellious; here their prison ordained  
 In utter darkness, and their portion set,  
 As far removed from God and light of Heaven  
 As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.  
 Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!

BOOK I, lines 53 to 75.

One of the most mysterious of semi-speculations is, one would suppose, that of one Mind's imagining into another. Things may be described by a Man's self in parts so as to make a grand whole which that Man himself would scarcely inform to its excess. A Poet can seldom have

justice done to his imagination—for men are as distinct in their conceptions of material shadowings as they are in matters of spiritual understanding: it can scarcely be conceived how Milton's Blindness might here aid<sup>1</sup> the magnitude of his conceptions as a bat in a large gothic vault.

Or have ye chosen this place  
After the toil of battle to repose  
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find  
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?

BOOK I, lines 318-21.

There is a cool pleasure in the very sound of vale. The English word is of the happiest chance. Milton has put vales in heaven and hell with the very utter affection and yearning of a great Poet. It is a sort of Delphic Abstraction—a beautiful thing made more beautiful by being reflected and put in a Mist. The next mention of Vale is one of the most pathetic in the whole range of Poetry

Others, more mild,  
Retreated in a silent Valley &c.

[BOOK II, lines 546-7.]

How much of the charm is in the Valley!—

But he, his wonted pride  
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore  
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised  
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears:  
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound  
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared

---

<sup>1</sup> Keats wrote *here ade*, in such a way that it might be read for *pervade*; but his manuscript is full of slips of this kind; and the sense leaves no doubt that *here aid* is what he meant. The sense is not after all fully expressed; but the meaning is clear—that Milton's blindness might so sharpen his imagination as to give him the same advantage in the realm of the unseen as a bat has in the darkness of a gothic vault.



His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed  
 Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall :  
 Who forthwith from *the glittering staff unfurled*  
*The imperial ensign ; which, full high advanced,*  
*Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,*  
*With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,*  
*Seraphic arms and trophies ; all the while*  
*Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds :*  
*At which the universal host up-sent*  
*A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond*  
*Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.*  
*All in a moment through the gloom were seen*  
*Ten thousand banners rise into the air,*  
*With orient colours waving : with them rose*  
*A forest huge of spears ; and thronging helms*  
*Appeared, and serried shields in thick array*  
*Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move*  
*In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood*  
*Of flutes and soft recorders—such as raised*  
*To highth of noblest temper heroes old*  
*Arming to battle, and instead of rage*  
*Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved*  
*With dread of death to flight or foul retreat ;*  
*Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage*  
*With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase*  
*Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain*  
*From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,*  
*Breathing united force with fixed thought,*  
*Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed*  
*Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now*  
*Advanced in view they stand—a horrid front*  
*Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise*  
*Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield,*  
 Awaiting what command their mighty Chief  
 Had to impose.

BOOK I, lines 527-67.

The light and shade—the sort of black brightness—the ebon diamonding—the Ethiop Immortality—the sorrow, the pain, the sad-sweet Melody—the P[h]alanges of Spirits so depressed as to be “uplifted beyond hope”—the short mitigation of Misery—the thousand Melan-

chologies and Magnificences of this Page—leaves no room for anything to be said thereon but “so it is.”

*His form had not yet lost  
All her original brightness, nor appeared  
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess  
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen  
Looks through the horizontal misty air  
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,  
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs.*

BOOK I, lines 591-9.

How noble and collected an indignation against Kings, “and for fear of change perplexes Monarchs” &c. His very wishing should have had power to pull that feeble animal Charles from his bloody throne. “The evil days” had come to him; he hit the new system of things a mighty mental blow; the exertion must have had or is yet to have some sequences.

*Anon out of the earth a fabric huge  
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound  
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet—  
Built like a temple, where pilasters round  
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid  
With golden architrave; nor did there want  
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven:  
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon  
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence  
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine  
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat  
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove  
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile  
Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight the doors,  
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide  
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth  
And level pavement: from the arched roof,  
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row*

*Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed  
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light  
As from a sky.*

BOOK I, lines 710-30.

What creates the intense pleasure of not knowing? A sense of independence, of power, from the fancy's creating a world of its own by the sense of probabilities. We have read the Arabian Nights and hear there are thousands of those sort of Romances lost—we imagine after them—but not their realities if we had them nor our fancies in their strength can go further than this Pandemonium—

“Straight the doors opening” &c.  
“rose like an exhalation”.

*Others, more mild,  
Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
With notes angelical to many a harp  
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall  
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate  
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.  
Their song was partial; but the harmony  
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)  
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment  
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet  
(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense)  
Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high  
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate—  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—  
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.*

BOOK II, lines 546-61.

Milton is godlike in the sublime pathetic. In Demons, fallen Angels, and Monsters the delicacies of passion, living in and from their immortality, is of the most softening and dissolving nature. It is carried to the utmost here—“Others more mild”—nothing can express the sensation one feels at “Their song was partial” &c. Examples of this nature are divine to the utmost in other

poets—in Caliban “*Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments*” &c. In Theocritus, Polyphemus—and Homer’s Hymn to Pan where Mercury is represented as taking his “*homely fac’d*”<sup>1</sup> to Heaven. There are numerous other instances in Milton—where Satan’s progeny is called his “*daughter dear,*” and where this same Sin, a female, and with a feminine instinct for the showy and martial, is in pain lest death should sully his bright arms, “*nor vainly hope to be invulnerable in those bright arms.*” Another instance is “*Pensive I sat alone.*” We need not mention “*Tears such as Angels weep.*”

Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born !

\* \* \* \* \*

So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate ; there plant eyes ; all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a reminiscence of the quaint but vigorous translation of Chapman. As the Hymn to Pan is not one of the happiest examples of Chapman’s manner it will probably be sufficiently unfamiliar to make the following extract serviceable :

For soft love entering him  
Conform’d his state to his conceited trim,  
And made him long, in an extreme degree,  
T’ enjoy the fair-hair’d virgin Dryope.  
Which ere he could, she made him consummate  
The flourishing rite of Hymen’s honour’d state ;  
And brought him such a piece of progeny,  
As show’d, at first sight, monstrous to the eye ;...  
Yet the most useful Mercury embraced,  
And took into his arms, his homely-faced ;  
Beyond all measure joyful with his sight :  
And up to heaven with him made instant flight,  
Wrapt in the warm skin of a mountain hare ;  
Set him by Jove ; and made most merry fare  
To all the Deities else with his son’s sight ;  
Which most of all fill’d Bacchus with delight ;...

Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,  
From the pure Empyrean where He sits  
High throned above all highth, bent down his eye,  
His own works and their works at once to view.

BOOK III, lines 1 and 51-9.

The management of this Poem is Apollonian. Satan first "*throws round his baleful eyes*", the[n] awakes his legions, he consults, he sets forward on his voyage—and just as he is getting to the end of it we see the Great God and our first parent, and that same Satan all brought in one's vision—we have the invocation to light before we mount to heaven—we breathe more freely—we feel the great author's consolations coming thick upon him at a time when he complains most—we are getting ripe for diversity—the immediate topic of the Poem opens with a grand Perspective of all concerned.

Thus while God spake ambrosial fragrance filled  
All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect  
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.

BOOK III, lines 135-7.

Hell is finer than this.

A violent cross wind from either coast  
Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry,  
Into the devious air.

BOOK III, lines 487-9.

This part in its sound is unaccountably expressive of the description.

What wonder then if fields and regions here  
*Breathe forth elixir pure*, and rivers run  
Potable gold, *when, with one virtuous touch,*  
*The arch-chemic Sun*, so far from us remote,  
Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed,  
Here in the dark so many precious things

Of colour glorious and effects so rare?  
 Here matter new to gaze the Devil met  
 Undazzled. Far and wide his eye commands ;  
 For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,  
 But all sunshine, *as when his beams at noon*  
*Culminate from the equator,...*

BOOK III, lines 606-17.

A Spirit's eye.

*O for that warning voice, which he who saw*  
*The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,*  
*Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,*  
*Came furious down to be revenged on men,*  
 "Woe to the Inhabitants on Earth!"

BOOK IV, lines 1-5.

A friend of mine says this Book has the finest opening of any. The point of time is gigantically critical—the wax is melted, the seal is about to be applied—and Milton breaks out, "*O for that warning voice,*" &c. There is moreover an opportunity for a Grandeur of Tenderness. The opportunity is not lost. Nothing can be higher—nothing so more than Delphic.

*Not that fair field*  
*Of Enna where Proserpin gathering flowers,*  
*Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis*  
*Was gathered—which cost Ceres all that pain*  
*To seek her through the world—*

BOOK IV, lines 268-72.

There are two specimens of a very extraordinary beauty in the Paradise Lost ; they are of a nature as far as I have read, unexampled elsewhere—they are entirely distinct from the brief pathos of Dante—and they are not to be found even in Shakespeare—these are according to the great prerogative of poetry better described in themselves than by a volume. The one is in the fol[lowing]—"which cost Ceres all that pain"—the other is that

ending "Nor could the Muse defend her son"—they appear exclusively Miltonic without the shadow of another mind ancient or modern.<sup>1</sup>

*reluctant flames, the sign*  
*Of wrath awaked;...*

BOOK VI, lines 58-9.

"Reluctant" with its original and modern meaning combined and woven together, with all its shades of signification has a powerful effect.

but feathered soon and fledge  
They summed their pens, and, soaring the air sublime  
*With clang despised the ground, under a cloud*  
*In prospect.*

BOOK VII, lines 420-3.

Milton in every instance pursues his imagination to the utmost—he is "sagacious of his Quarry," he sees Beauty on the wing, pounces upon it and gorges it to the producing his essential verse. "So from the root springs lighter the green stalk." &c.<sup>2</sup> But in no instance is this sort of perseverance more exemplified, than in what may be called his *stationing or statuary*. He is not content

<sup>1</sup> The second passage, Book VII, lines 32-8, is entirely underlined in Keats's copy; but there is no further note upon it than that in Book IV given above. The lines are—

But drive far off the barbarous dissonance  
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race  
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard  
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears  
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned  
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend  
Her son.

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book V, lines 479-80.

with simple description, he must station,—thus here we not only see how the Birds “*with clang despised the ground,*” but we see them “*under a cloud in prospect.*” So we see Adam “*Fair indeed, and tall—under a plantane*” —and so we see Satan “*disfigured—on the Assyrian Mount.*” This last with all its accompaniments, and keeping in mind the Theory of Spirits’ eyes and the simile of Galileo, has a dramatic vastness and solemnity fit and worthy to hold one amazed in the midst of this Paradise Lost.

Me, of these  
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument  
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise  
That name, unless an age too late, or cold  
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing  
Depressed; and much they may if all be mine  
Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.

BOOK IX, lines 41-7.

Had not Shakespeare liv'd ?

*So saying, through each thicket, dank or dry,  
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on  
His midnight search, where soonest he might find  
The Serpent. Him fast sleeping soon he found,  
In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,  
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles :  
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,  
Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy herb,  
Fearless, unfeared, he slept. In at his mouth  
The Devil entered, and his brutal sense,  
In heart or head, possessing soon inspired  
With act intelligential; but his sleep  
Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.*

BOOK IX, lines 179-91.

Satan having entered the Serpent, and inform'd his brutal sense—might seem sufficient—but Milton goes on “*but his sleep disturb'd not.*” Whose spirit does not ache



at the smothering and confinement—the unwilling stillness—the “*waiting close*”? Whose head is not dizzy at the possible speculations of Satan in the serpent prison? No passage of poetry ever can give a greater pain of suffocation.

**A NOW, DESCRIPTIVE OF A HOT DAY;**

**WRITTEN BY**

**LEIGH HUNT WITH KEATS'S HELP.**

[Hunt says in his Autobiography (one volume edition, page 274), speaking of *The Indicator*, "the paper that was most liked by Keats, if I remember, was the one on a hot summer's day, entitled *A Now*. He was with me while I was writing and reading it to him, and contributed one or two of the passages." The greater part of the paper is so much in the taste and humour of Keats that I can scarcely err in adding its slight bulk to the scanty relics we have of his prose outside the fortunate mass of his letters. The paper appeared in *The Indicator* for the 28th of June 1820,—the number which had on its last page the sonnet on A Dream (Volume II, pages 334-6).—H. B. F.]

## A NOW,

### DESCRIPTIVE OF A HOT DAY.

NOW the rosy- (and lazy-) fingered Aurora, issuing from her saffron house, calls up the moist vapours to surround her, and goes veiled with them as long as she can ; till Phœbus, coming forth in his power, looks every thing out of the sky, and holds sharp uninterrupted empire from his throne of beams. Now the mower begins to make his sweeping cuts more slowly, and resorts oftener to the beer. Now the carter sleeps a-top of his load of hay, or plods with double slouch of shoulder, looking out with eyes winking under his shading hat, and with a hitch upward of one side of his mouth. Now the little girl at her grandmother's cottage-door watches the coaches that go by, with her hand held up over her sunny forehead. Now labourers look well resting in their white shirts at the doors of rural ale-houses. Now an elm is fine there, with a seat under it ; and horses drink out of the trough, stretching their yearning necks with loosened collars ; and the traveller calls for his glass of ale, having been without one for more than ten minutes ; and his horse stands wincing at the flies, giving sharp shivers of his skin, and moving to and fro his ineffectual docked tail ; and now Miss Betty Wilson, the host's daughter, comes streaming forth in a flowered gown and ear-rings, carrying with four of her

beautiful fingers the foaming glass, for which, after the traveller has drank it, she receives with an indifferent eye, looking another way, the lawful two-pence: that is to say, unless the traveller, nodding his ruddy face, pays some gallant compliment to her before he drinks, such as "I'd rather kiss you, my dear, than the tumbler,"—or "I'll wait for you, my love, if you'll marry me;" upon which, if the man is good-looking and the lady in good-humour, she smiles and bites her lips, and says "Ah—men can talk fast enough;" upon which the old stage-coachman, who is buckling something near her, before he sets off, says in a hoarse voice, "So can women too for that matter," and John Boots grins through his ragged red locks, and doats on the repartee all the day after. Now grasshoppers "fry," as Dryden says. Now cattle stand in water, and ducks are envied. Now boots and shoes, and trees by the road side, are thick with dust; and dogs, rolling in it, after issuing out of the water, into which they have been thrown to fetch sticks, come scattering horror among the legs of the spectators. Now a fellow who finds he has three miles further to go in a pair of tight shoes, is in a pretty situation. Now rooms with the sun upon them become intolerable; and the apothecary's apprentice, with a bitterness beyond aloes, thinks of the pond he used to bathe in at school. Now men with powdered heads (especially if thick) envy those that are unpowdered, and stop to wipe them up hill, with countenances that seem to expostulate with destiny. Now boys assemble round the village pump with a ladle to it, and delight to make a forbidden splash and get wet through the shoes. Now also they make suckers of leather, and bathe all day long in rivers and ponds, and follow the fish into their cool corners, and say millions of "MY eyes!" at "tittle-bats." Now the bee, as he hums

along, seems to be talking heavily of the heat. Now doors and brick-walls are burning to the hand ; and a walled lane, with dust and broken bottles in it, near a brick-field, is a thing not to be thought of. Now a green lane, on the contrary, thick-set with hedge-row elms, and having the noise of a brook "rumbling in pebble-stone," is one of the pleasantest things in the world. Now youths and damsels walk through hay-fields, by chance ; and the latter say, "Ha' done then, William ;" and the overseer in the next field calls out to "let thic thear hay thear bide ;" and the girls persist, merely to plague "such a frumpish old fellow."

Now, in town, gossips talk more than ever to one another, in rooms, in door-ways, and out of window, always beginning the conversation with saying that the heat is overpowering. Now blinds are let down, and doors thrown open, and flannel waistcoats left off, and cold meat preferred to hot, and wonder expressed why tea continues so refreshing, and people delight to sliver lettuces into bowls, and apprentices water door-ways with tin-canisters that lay several atoms of dust. Now the water-cart, jumbling along the middle of the street, and jolting the showers out of it's box of water, really does something. Now boys delight to have a water-pipe let out, and see it bubbling away in a tall and frothy volume. Now fruiterers' shops and dairies look pleasant, and ices are the only things to those who can get them. Now ladies loiter in baths ; and people make presents of flowers ; and wine is put into ice ; and the after-dinner lounge recreates his head with applications of perfumed water out of long-necked bottles. Now the lounge, who cannot resist riding his new horse, feels his boots burn him. Now buck-skins are not the lawn of Cos. Now jockies, walking in great coats to lose flesh, curse in-

wardly. Now five fat people in a stage coach, hate the sixth fat one who is coming in, and think he has no right to be so large. Now clerks in offices do nothing, but drink soda-water and spruce-beer, and read the newspaper. Now the old clothes-man drops his solitary cry more deeply into the areas on the hot and forsaken side of the street; and bakers look vicious; and cooks are aggravated: and the steam of a tavern kitchen catches hold of one like the breath of Tartarus. Now delicate skins are beset with gnats: and boys make their sleeping companion start up, with playing a burning-glass on his hand; and blacksmiths are super-carbonated; and cobblers in their stalls almost feel a wish to be transplanted; and butter is too easy to spread; and the dragoons wonder whether the Romans liked their helmets; and old ladies, with their lappets unpinned, walk along in a state of dilapidation; and the servant-maids are afraid they look vulgarly hot; and the author, who has a plate of strawberries brought him, finds that he has come to the end of his writing.

We cannot conclude this article however without returning thanks, both on our own account and on that of our numerous predecessors who have left so large a debt of gratitude unpaid, to this very useful and ready monosyllable—"Now." We are sure that there is not a didactic poet, ancient or modern, who if he possessed a decent share of candour would not be happy to own his acknowledgments to that masterly conjunction, which possesses the very essence of wit, for it has the talent of bringing the most remote things together. And its generosity is in due proportion to its talent, for it always is most profuse of its aid, where it is most wanted.

We must enjoy a pleasant passage with the reader on

the subject of this "eternal Now" in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of the Woman Hater.—Upon turning to it, we perceive that our illustrious particle does not make quite so great a figure as we imagined ; but the whole passage is in so analogous a taste, and affords such an agreeable specimen of the wit and humour with which fine poets could rally the common-places of their art, that we cannot help proceeding with it. Lazarello, a foolish table-hunter, has requested an introduction to the Duke of Milan, who has had a fine lamprey presented him. Before the introduction takes place, he finds that the Duke has given the fish away ; so that his wish to be known to him goes with it ; and part of the drollery of the passage arises from his uneasiness at being detained by the consequences of his own request, and his fear lest he should be too late for the lamprey elsewhere.

COUNT. (Aside to the Duke.) Let me entreat your  
Grace to stay a little,  
To know a gentleman, to whom yourself  
Is much beholding. He hath made the sport  
For your whole court these eight years, on my knowledge.

DUKE. His name ?

COUNT. Lazarello.

DUKE. I heard of him this morning :—which is he ?

COUNT. (Aside to Laz.) Lazarello, pluck up thy  
spirits. Thy fortune is now raising. The Duke calls  
for thee, and thou shalt be acquainted with him.

LAZ. He's going away, and I must of necessity stay  
here upon business.

COUNT. 'Tis all one : thou shalt know him first.

LAZ. Stay a little. If he should offer to take me with  
him, and by that means I should lose that I seek for !  
But if he should, I will not go with him.



COUNT. Lazarello, the Duke stays. Wilt thou lose this opportunity ?

LAZ. How must I speak to him ?

COUNT. 'Twas well thought of. You must not talk to him as you do to an ordinary man, honest plain sense ; but you must wind about him. For example if he should ask you what o'clock it is, you must not say, " If it please your Grace, 'tis nine ;"—but thus ;—" Thrice three o'clock, so please my Sovereign :"—or thus ;—

" Look how many Muses there doth dwell  
Upon the sweet banks of the learned well,  
And just so many strokes the clock hath struck ;"—

And so forth. And you must now and then enter into a description.

LAZ. I hope I shall do it.

COUNT. Come.—May it please your Grace to take note of a gentleman, well seen, deeply read, and thoroughly grounded, in the hidden knowledge of all sallets and pot-herbs whatsoever ?

DUKE. I shall desire to know him more inwardly.

LAZ. I kiss the ox-hide of your Grace's foot.

COUNT. (Aside to Laz.) Very well.—Will your Grace question him a little.

DUKE. How old are you ?

LAZ. Full eight-and-twenty several almanacks  
Have been compiled, all for several years,  
Since first I drew this breath. Four prenticeships  
Have I most truly served in this world :  
And eight-and-twenty times hath Phœbus' car  
Run out his yearly course, since——

DUKE. I understand you, Sir.

LUCIO. How like an ignorant poet he talks !

DUKE. You are eight-and-twenty years old ? What time of the day do you hold it to be ?

LAZ. About the time that mortals whet their knives  
On thresholds, on their shoe-soles, and on stairs.  
Now bread is grating, and the testy cook  
Hath much to do now : now the tables all——

DUKE. 'Tis almost dinner-time ?

LAZ. Your Grace doth apprehend me very rightly.



MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.

[The letters given under the head "Miscellaneous" include all Keats's letters published by Lord Houghton, and all outlying letters, whether published or hitherto unpublished, which I have been able to collect, excepting only the letters to Fanny Brawne; and these appear to me to be more appropriately placed in a separate section.—H. B. F.]

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.

### I.

*To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.*

[31 October 1816]

My daintie Davie,

I will be as punctual as the Bee to the Clover. Very glad am I at the thoughts of seeing so soon this glorious Haydon and all his creation. I pray thee let me know when you go to Ollier's and where he resides—this I forgot to ask you—and tell me also when you will help me waste a sullen day—God 'ield you—

J K

---

This note, addressed to "Mr. C. C. Clarke, Mr. Towers, Warner Street, Clerkenwell", seems to have been written before Keats's introduction to Haydon—which apparently took place at Leigh Hunt's, for in Haydon's *Autobiography* (1853, Volume I, page 331) we read—"About this time I met John Keats, at Leigh Hunt's, and was amazingly interested by his prematurity of intellectual and poetical power . . . After a short time I liked him so much that a general invitation on my part followed, and we became extremely intimate. He visited my painting-room at all times, and at all times was welcome." In a hurried inspection of the manuscript of Keats's note, I observed no date; but in a sale catalogue of autographs it is assigned to the 31st of October 1816.

## II.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

20 November 1816.

My dear Sir—

Last evening wrought me up, and I cannot forbear sending you the following.

Yours unfeignedly

John Keats—

Removed to 76 Cheapside

“The following” was the sonnet beginning—

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning ;

which will be found at page 82 of Volume I of this edition. Lord Houghton says—“Haydon in his acknowledgment, suggested the omission of a part of it ;” and the hiatus was certainly not in the sonnet originally, the line being filled up with the words *in a distant Mart* ; but in a second copy written by Keats and inserted in Haydon’s journal those words are omitted and points are substituted. It should perhaps be mentioned that this little note has already been printed in the second volume of *Benjamin Robert Haydon : Correspondence and Table-Talk*, where it closes thus—

“Yours imperfectly,

John Keats.”

But, although the word *unfeignedly* is not very clearly written, that is certainly the word. The correspondence with Haydon opened briskly : it will be seen that the next letter is dated the afternoon of the same day as the above.







## III.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Thursday afternoon, 20 November 1816.

[*Imperfect Postmark*, No. 21]

My dear Sir,

Your letter has filled me with a proud pleasure, and shall be kept by me as a stimulus to exertion—I begin to fix my eye upon one horizon. My feelings entirely fall in with yours in regard to the E[1]lipsis, and I glory in it. The Idea of your sending it to Words-

---

Lord Houghton says—"It should here be remembered that Wordsworth was not then what he is now, that he was confounded with much that was thought ridiculous and unmanly in the new school, and that it was something for so young a student to have torn away the veil of prejudice then hanging over that now-honoured name, and to have proclaimed his reverence in such earnest words, while so many men of letters could only scorn or jeer." It was perhaps between this date and that of the next letter that the following excellent sonnet by Reynolds was written. I give it and the letter accompanying it, from the manuscript preserved in Haydon's journal, as a link in the chain of recollections whereby we may follow more or less closely the relations of Keats with a brilliant circle of friends :—

Lamb's Cond<sup>t</sup>. Street

Friday morning 10 o'Clock

My dear Haydon,

As you are now getting "golden opinions from all sorts of men," it was not fitting that One who is sincerely your Friend should be found wanting. Last night when you left me—I went to my bed—And the Sonnet on the other side absolutely started into my mind. I send it you, because I really *feel* your Genius, and because I know that things of this kind are the dearest rewards of Genius. It is not equal to anything you have yet had, in power, I know;—but it is sincere, and that is a recommendation. Will you, at my

worth put me out of breath—you know with what Reverence I would send my Well-wishes to him.

Yours sincerely

John Keats

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desire, send a copy to Mr. Keats, and say to him, how much I was pleased with his. Yours affectionately

J. H. Reynolds

#### SONNET TO HAYDON

Haydon!—Thou'rt born to Immortality!—  
 I look full on ;—And Fame's Eternal Star  
 Shines out o'er Ages which are yet afar ;—  
 It hangs in all its radiance over thee !  
 I watch whole Nations o'er thy works sublime  
 Bending ;—And breathing,—while their spirits glow,—  
 Thy name with that of the stern Angelo,  
 Whose giant genius braves the hate of Time !  
 But not alone in agony and strife  
 Art thou majestic ;—Thy fancies bring  
 Sweets from the sweet :—The loveliness of life  
 Melts from thy pencil like the breath of Spring.  
 Soul is within thee :—Honours wait without thee :—  
 The wings of Raphael's Spirit play about thee !

J. H. Reynolds

In Haydon's writing, underneath the sonnet, is the note, "Wild enthusiasm—B. R. Haydon, 1842."

## IV.

To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

Tuesday—

[*Postmark*, Lombard Street,  
17 December 1816.]

My dear Charles,

You may now look at Minerva's Ægis with impunity, seeing that my awful Visage did not turn you into a John Doree. You have accordingly a legitimate title to a Copy—I will use my interest to procure it for you. I'll tell you what—I met Reynolds at Haydon's a few mornings since—he promised to be with me this Evening and Yesterday I had the same promise from Severn and I must put you in Mind that on last All hallowmas' day you gave me you[r] word that you would spend this Evening with me—so no putting off. I have done little to *Endymion* lately—I hope to finish it in one more attack—I believe you I went to Richards's—it was so whoreson a Night that I stopped there all the next day. His Remembrances to you. (Ext. from the common place Book of my Mind—Mem.—Wednesday—Hampstead—call in Warner Street—a Sketch of Mr. Hunt.)—I will ever consider you my sincere and affectionate friend—you will not doubt that I am your's.

God bless you—

John Keats—

This letter, addressed similarly to Number I, probably refers to one of Severn's portraits of Keats, and to the poem "I stood tip-toe" &c. (Volume I, page 7), which was originally meant to be called *Endymion* as is proved by an autograph manuscript of the poem which I had not the advantage of seeing until after Volume I had passed the press.

## V.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[March 1817.]

My dear Reynolds,

My brothers are anxious that I should go by myself into the country ; they have always been extremely fond of me, and now that Haydon has pointed out how necessary it is that I should be alone to improve myself,

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Lord Houghton says Keats "found himself on his first entrance into manhood thrown on the world almost without the means of daily subsistence, but with many friends interested in his fortunes, and with the faith in the future which generally accompanies the highest genius. Mr. Haydon seems to have been to him a wise and prudent counsellor, and to have encouraged him to brace his powers by undistracted study, while he advised him to leave London for awhile, and take more care of his health. The following note, written in March, shows that Keats did as he was recommended." The date of Haydon's letter to Keats on the Elgin Marbles Sonnets (Volume II, page 562) appears from the manuscript in his journal to be the 3rd of March 1817. The passage omitted from the end of the first paragraph, as given in the *Correspondence*, is "You filled me with fury for an hour, and with admiration for ever"; and in a postscript he says "I shall expect you and Clarke and Reynolds tonight." The second paragraph seems to have been an afterthought, or rather an after-feeling, for it runs thus in the manuscript—

My dear Keats,

I have really opened my letter to tell you how deeply I feel the high enthusiastic praise with which you have spoken of me in the first Sonnet—be assured you shall never repent it—the time shall come if God spare my life—when you will remember it with delight—

Once more God bless you

B R Haydon.

The following highly remarkable letter, of which also an extract is given in the *Correspondence*, appears, like the foregoing, to have

they give up the temporary pleasure of living with me continually for a great good which I hope will follow; so I shall soon be out of town. You must soon bring all your present troubles to a close, and so must I, but we must, like the Fox, prepare for a fresh swarm of flies. Banish

---

been written before Keats carried out the intention of going into the Country, for a leaf fastened into Haydon's journal with it, apparently its cover, bears the address "John Keats, 76 Cheapside". I say apparently its cover, because the one leaf was evidently once attached to the other, and the outer one bears on the inside the words "I confide these feelings to your honor". The occasion is the recent issue of the *Poems* of 1817:—

My dear Keats,

Consider this letter a sacred secret.—Often have I sat by my fire after a day's effort, as the dusk approached, and a gauzey veil seemed dimming all things—and mused on what I had done, and with a burning glow on what I would do till filled with fury I have seen the faces of the mighty dead crowd into my room, and I have sunk down and prayed the great Spirit that I might be worthy to accompany these immortal beings in their immortal glories, and then I have seen each smile as it passed over me, and each shake his hand in awful encouragement. My dear Keats, the Friends who surrounded me were sensible to what talent I had,—but no one reflected my enthusiasm with that burning ripeness of soul, my heart yearned for sympathy,—believe me from my soul, in you I have found one,—you add fire, when I am exhausted, and excite fury afresh—I offer my heart and intellect and experience—at first I feared your ardor might lead you to disregard the accumulated wisdom of ages in moral points—but the feelings put forth lately have delighted my soul—always consider principle of more value than genius—and you are safe—because on the score of genius, you can never be vehement enough. I have read your "Sleep and Poetry"—it is a flash of lightning that will rouse men from their occupations, and keep them trembling for the crash of thunder that *will* follow.

God bless you! let our hearts be buried on each other.

B. R. Haydon.

I'll be at Reynolds tonight but latish.

March 1817.

money—Banish sofas—Banish wine—Banish music ; but  
right Jack Health, honest Jack Health, true Jack Health  
—Banish Health and banish all the world.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

VI.

*To* GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Tuesday Morn—[15 April 1817].

[*Postmark*, 16 April 1817.]

My dear Brothers,

I am safe at Southampton—after having ridden  
three stages outside and the rest in for it began to be  
very cold. I did not know the Names of any of the  
Towns I passed through—all I can tell you is that some-  
times I saw dusty Hedges—sometimes Ponds—then  
nothing—then a little Wood with trees look you like  
Launce's Sister "as white as a Lilly and as small as a  
Wand"—then came houses which died away into a few  
straggling Barns—then came hedge trees aforesaid again.  
As the Lamplight crept along the following things were  
discovered—"long heath broom furze"—Hurdles here and  
there half a Mile—Park palings when the Windows of a  
House were always discovered by reflection—One Nymph  
of Fountain—*N.B. Stone*—lopped Trees—Cow rumi-  
nating—ditto Donkey—Man and Woman going gingerly  
along—William seeing his Sisters over the Heath—John  
waiting with a Lanthorn <sup>2</sup> for his Mistress—Barber's Pole

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(VI) This letter, which is doubtless the one referred to in the first  
line of the next, is preserved in Haydon's journal, and is addressed  
to "Mr G. Keats, No. 1 Well Walk, Hampstead, Middx."

<sup>2</sup> In the original, *Lanthen*.

—Doctor's<sup>1</sup> Shop—However after having had my fill of these I popped my Head out just as it began to Dawn—*N.B. this tuesday Morn saw the Sun rise*—of which I shall say nothing at present. I felt rather lonely this Morning at breakfast so I went and unbox'd a Shakspeare—“There's my Comfort”—I went immediately after Breakfast to Southampton Water where I enquired for the Boat to the Isle of Wight as I intend seeing that place before I settle—it will go at 3, so shall I after having taken a Chop—I know nothing of this place but that it is long—tolerably broad—has bye streets—two or three Churches—a very respectable old Gate with two Lions to guard it—the Men and Women do not materially differ from those I have been in the Habit of seeing—I forgot to say that from dawn till half past six I went through a most delightful Country—some open Down but for the most part thickly wooded. What surprised me most was an immense quantity of blooming Furze on each side the road cutting a most rural dash. The Southampton water when I saw it just now was no better than a low Water Water which did no more than answer my expectations—it will have mended its Manners by 3. From the W[h]arf are seen the shores on each side stretching to the isle of Wight. You, Haydon, Reynolds &c. have been pushing each other out of my Brain by turns—I have conned over every Head in Haydon's Picture—you must warn them not to be afraid should my Ghost visit them on Wednesday—tell Haydon to Kiss his Hand at Betty over the Way for me yea and to spy at her for me. I hope one of you will be competent to take part in a Trio while I am away—you need only ag[g]ravate your voices a little and mind not to speak Cues and all—

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<sup>1</sup> In the original, *Docter's*.



when you have said Rum-ti-ti—you must not be rum any more or else another will take up the ti-ti alone and then he might be taken God shield us for little better than a Titmouse. By the by talking of Titmouse Remember me particularly to all my Friends—give my Love to the Miss Reynoldses and to Fanny who I hope you will soon see. Write to me soon about them all—and you George particularly how you get on with Wilkinson's plan. What could I have done without my Plaid? I don't feel inclined to write any more at present for I feel rather muzzy—you must be content with this fac simile of the rough plan of Aunt Dinah's Counterpane.

Your most affectionate Brother

John Keats

Reynolds shall hear from me soon.

## VII.

*To* JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Carisbrooke,

April 17th, 1817.

My Dear Reynolds,

Ever since I wrote to my brother[s] from Southampton, I have been in a taking, and at this moment I am about to become settled, for I have unpacked my books, put them into a snug corner, pinned up Haydon, Mary Queen [of] Scots, and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a head of Shakspeare,

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(VII) Lord Houghton, speaking here of Reynolds, calls attention to "the invaluable worth of his friendship to Keats," and says "one can only regret that both portions of" their correspondence "are not preserved."

which I had not before seen. It is most likely the same that George spoke so well of, for I like it extremely. Well, this head I have hung over my books, just above the three in a row, having first discarded a French Ambassador; now this alone is a good morning's work. Yesterday I went to Shanklin, which occasioned a great debate in my mind whether I should live there or at Carisbrooke. Shanklin is a most beautiful place; sloping wood and meadow ground reach round the Chine, which is a cleft between the cliffs, of the depth of nearly 300 feet at least. This cleft is filled with trees and bushes in the narrow part; and as it widens becomes bare, if it were not for primroses on one side, which spread to the very verge of the sea, and some fishermen's huts on the other, perched midway in the balustrades of beautiful green hedges along their steps down to the sands. But the sea, Jack, the sea, the little waterfall, then the white cliff, then St. Catherine's Hill, "the sheep in the meadows, the cows in the corn." Then why are you at Carisbrooke? say you. Because, in the first place, I should be at twice the expense, and three times the inconvenience; next, that from here I can see your continent from a little hill close by, the whole north angle of the Isle of Wight, with the water between us; in the third place, I see Carisbrooke Castle from my window, and have found several delightful wood-alleys, and copses, and quiet freshes; as for primroses, the Island ought to be called Primrose Island, that is, if the nation of Cowslips agree thereto, of which there are divers clans just beginning to lift up their heads. Another reason of my fixing is, that I am more in reach of the places around me. I intend to walk over the Island, east, west, north, south. I have not seen many specimens of ruins. I don't think, however, I shall ever see one to surpass Carisbrooke Castle. The

trench is overgrown with the smoothest turf, and the walls with ivy. The Keep within side is one bower of ivy; a colony of jackdaws have been there for many years. I dare say I have seen many a descendant of some old cawer who peeped through the bars at Charles the First, when he was there in confinement. On the road from Cowes to Newport I saw some extensive Barracks, which disgusted me extremely with the Government for placing such a nest of debauchery in so beautiful a place. I asked a man on the coach about this, and he said that the people had been spoiled. In the room where I slept at Newport, I found this on the window—  
“O Isle spoilt by the military!”

The wind is in a sulky fit, and I feel that it would be no bad thing to be the favourite of some Fairy, who would give one the power of seeing how our friends got on at a distance. I should like, of all loves, a sketch of you, and Tom, and George in ink: which Haydon will do if you tell him how I want them. From want of regular rest I have been rather *nervous*, and the passage in Lear, “Do you not hear the sea!” has haunted me intensely.

April 18th [1817].

I'll tell you what—on the 23rd was Shakespeare born. Now if I should receive a letter from you, and another from my brother[s] on that day, 'twould be a parlous good thing. Whenever you write, say a word or two on some passage in Shakespeare that may have come rather new to you, which must be continually happening, notwithstanding that we read the same play forty times—for

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At the point where the letter breaks off to recommence on a fresh date Keats appears to have written the sonnet on the Sea given in Volume II of this edition, page 228. The reference to the “Sonnet over-leaf” further on is of course to this sonnet.

instance, the following from the "Tempest" never struck me so forcibly as at present :—

Urchins

Shall, for the vast of night that they may work,  
All exercise on thee.

How can I help bringing to your mind the line—

In the dark backward and abysm of time.

I find I cannot exist without Poetry—without eternal Poetry; half the day will not do—the whole of it; I began with a little, but habit has made me a leviathan. I had become all in a tremble from not having written anything of late: the Sonnet over-leaf did me good; I slept the better last night for it; this morning, however, I am nearly as bad again. Just now I opened Spenser, and the first lines I saw were these—

The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,  
And is with child of glorious great intent,  
Can never rest until it forth have brought  
Th' eternal brood of glory excellent.

Let me know particularly about Haydon, ask him to write to me about Hunt, if it be only ten lines. I hope all is well. I shall forthwith begin my "Endymion," which I hope I shall have got some way with by the time you come, when we will read our verses in a delightful place I have set my heart upon, near the Castle. Give my love to your sisters severally.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

The reference in the last paragraph is obviously to the real *Endymion*, to be published in the following year.

## VIII.

*To* LEIGH HUNT.

Margate, 10 May 1817.

My dear Hunt,

The little gentleman that sometimes lurks in a gossip's bowl, ought to have come in the very likeness of a *roasted* crab, and choaked me outright for not answering your letter ere this : however, you must not suppose that I was in town to receive it : no, it followed me to the Isle of Wight, and I got it just as I was going to pack up for Margate, for reasons which you anon shall hear. On arriving at this treeless affair, I wrote to my brother George to request C[harles] C[owden] C[larke] to do the thing you wot of respecting *Rimini* ; and George tells me he has undertaken it with great pleasure ; so I hope there has been an understanding between you for many proofs : C. C. C. is well acquainted with Bensley. Now why did you not send the key of your cupboard, which, I know, was full of papers ? We would have locked them all in a trunk, together with those you told me to destroy, which indeed I did not do, for fear of demolishing receipts, there not being a more unpleasant thing in the world (saving a thousand and one others) than to pay a bill twice. Mind you, old Wood's a "very varmint,"

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This letter first appeared, with some omissions, in *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*. Thornton Hunt supplied the blanks in editing his father's *Correspondence*. There are many variations, besides ; and I have followed in each case what seemed the likelier reading. Leigh Hunt, for instance, makes Margate a *treeless affair*, Thornton Hunt makes it a *treeless place* : the father makes old Wood *sharded in covetousness*—the son *shrouded*.

shrouded in covetousness :—and now I am upon a horrid subject—what a horrid one you were upon last Sunday, and well you handled it. The last *Examiner* was a battering-ram against Christianity, blasphemy, Tertullian, Erasmus, Sir Philip Sidney ; and then the dreadful Petzelians<sup>1</sup> and their expiation by blood ; and do Christians shudder at the same thing in a newspaper which they attribute to their God in its most aggravated form ? What is to be the end of this ? I must mention Hazlitt's Southey. O that he had left out the grey hairs ; or that they had been in any other paper not concluding with such a thunderclap ! That sentence about making a page of the feeling of a whole life, appears to me like a whale's back in the sea of prose. I ought to have said a word on Shakspeare's Christianity. There are two which I have not looked over with you, touching the thing : the one for, the other against : that in favour is in *Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene 2,

*Isab.* Alas, alas !

Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once ;  
And he that might the 'vantage best have took,  
Found out the remedy.

That against is in *Twelfth Night*, Act III, Scene 2,

*Maria.* For there is no Christian that means to be saved by believing rightly, can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness.

Before I come to the Nymphs, I must get through all disagreeables. I went to the Isle of Wight, thought so much about poetry, so long together, that I could not get to sleep at night ; and, moreover, I know not how it was, I could not get wholesome food. By this means, in a week or so, I became not over capable in my upper stories, and set off pell-mell for Margate, at least a hun-

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix on *The Examiner* for the 4th of May 1817.

dred and fifty miles, because, forsooth, I fancied that I should like my old lodging here, and could contrive to do without trees. Another thing, I was too much in solitude, and consequently was obliged to be in continual burning of thought, as an only resource.<sup>1</sup> However, Tom is with me at present, and we are very comfortable. We intend, though, to get among some trees. How have you got on among them? How are the *Nymphs*?<sup>2</sup> I suppose they have led you a fine dance. Where are you now?—in Judea, Cappadocia, or the parts of Libya about Cyrene? Stranger from “Heaven, Hues, and Prototypes,” I wager you have given several new turns to the old saying, “Now the maid was fair and pleasant to look on,” as well as made a little variation in “Once upon a time.” Perhaps, too, you have rather varied, “Here endeth the first lesson.” Thus I hope you have made a horseshoe business of “unsuperfluous life,” “faint bowers,” and fibrous roots. I vow that I have been down in the mouth lately at this work. These last two days, however, I have felt more confident—I have asked myself so often why I should be a poet more than other men, seeing how great a thing it is,—how great things are to be gained by it, what a thing to be in the mouth of Fame,—that at last the idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seem-

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<sup>1</sup> His friend Dilke characterizes this passage, from *I went*, as “An exact picture of the man’s mind and character,” adding, “He could at any time have ‘thought himself out’ mind and body. Thought was intense with him, and seemed at times to assume a reality that influenced his conduct—and I have no doubt helped to wear him out.”

<sup>2</sup> Shelley, writing to Hunt ten months later, says—“I have read *Foliage*, with most of the poems I am already familiar. What a delightful poem the ‘Nymphs’ is! especially the second part. It is truly *poetical*, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word.” (Prose Works, Volume IV, page 4.)

ing power of attainment, that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaeton. Yet 'tis a disgrace to fail, even in a huge attempt ; and at this moment I drive the thought from me. I began my poem about a fortnight since, and have done some every day, except travelling ones. Perhaps I may have done a good deal for the time, but it appears such a pin's point to me, that I will not copy any out. When I consider that so many of these pin-points go to form a bodkin-point, (God send I end not my life with a bare bodkin, in its modern sense !) and that it requires a thousand bodkins to make a spear bright enough to throw any light to posterity, I see nothing but continual up-hill journeying. Now is there any thing more unpleasant (it may come among the thousand and one) than to be so journeying and to miss the goal at last ? But I intend to whistle all these cogitations into the sea, where I hope they will breed storms violent enough to block up all exit from Russia. Does Shelley go on telling strange stories of the deaths of kings ?<sup>1</sup> Tell him, there are strange stories of the deaths of poets. Some have died before they were con-

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<sup>1</sup> Hunt records that " Mr. Shelley was fond of quoting the passage here alluded to in Shakspeare, and of applying it in the most unexpected manner.

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,  
And tell strange stories of the deaths of kings.

Going with me to town once in the Hampstead stage, in which our only companion was an old lady, who sat silent and stiff after the English fashion, he startled her into a look of the most ludicrous astonishment by saying abruptly ; ' Hunt,

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,' &c.

The old lady looked on the coach-floor, as if she expected to see us take our seats accordingly." Hunt adds—" The reader ... will be touched by the melancholy anticipations that follow, and that are



ceived. "How do you make that out, Master Vellum?" Does Mrs. S. cut bread and butter as neatly as ever? Tell her to procure some fatal scissors, and cut the thread of life of all to-be-disappointed poets. Does Mrs. Hunt tear linen as straight as ever? Tell her to tear from the book of life all blank leaves. Remember me to them all; to Miss Kent and the little ones all.

Your sincere friend

John Keats alias Junkets—

You shall hear where we move.

## IX.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

41 Great Marlborough Street, London.

Margate Saturday Eve [10 May 1817].

[Postmark, 13 May 1817.]

My dear Haydon,

Let Fame, that all pant after in their lives,  
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,  
And so grace us in the disgrace of death :  
When spite of cormorant devouring time  
The endeavour of this present breath may buy  
That Honor which shall bate his Scythe's keen edge  
And make us heirs of all eternity.<sup>1</sup>

To think that I have no right to couple myself with you in this speech would be death to me, so I have e'en

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made in so good-humoured a manner." He explains that *Junkets* was "an appellation that was given him in play upon his name, and in allusion to his friends of Fairy-land."

<sup>1</sup> In the quotation from the opening speech in *Love's Labour's*

written it, and I pray God that our "brazen tombs" be nigh neighbours. It cannot be long first; the "endeavour of this present breath" will soon be over, and yet it is as well to breathe freely during our sojourn—it is as

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*Lost, pant* in line 1 should be *hunt*, and *so* in line 3 should be *then*. Lord Houghton says of the reference to the "brazen tombs"—"To the copy of this letter, given me by Mr. Haydon on the 14th of May, 1846, a note was affixed at this place, in the words 'Perhaps they may be.'" On the original letter stands the note "I wonder if they will be B. R. Haydon." In Haydon's *Correspondence and Table-Talk*, Volume II, pages 2 and 3, is a letter to Keats dated the 11th of May, to which this is an obvious rejoinder. It would seem that there was some mistake about the day on one side or the other. This is an excellent example of the kind of influence the painter exercised on the poet, to whom he says—"I have been intending to write to you every hour this week, but have been so interrupted that the postman rang his bell every night in vain, and with a sound that made my heart quake. I think you did quite right to leave the Isle of Wight if you felt no relief; and being quite alone, after study you can now devote your eight hours a-day with just as much seclusion as ever. Do not give way to any forebodings. They are nothing more than the over-eager anxieties of a great spirit stretched beyond its strength, and then relapsing for a time to languid inefficiency. Every man of great views is, at times, thus tormented, but begin again where you left off without hesitation or fear. Trust in God with all your might, my dear Keats. This dependence, with your own energy, will give you strength, and hope, and comfort. I am always in trouble, and wants, and distresses; here I found a refuge. From my soul I declare to you I never applied for help, or for consolation, or for strength, but I found it. I always rose up from my knees with a refreshed fury, an iron-clenched firmness, a crystal piety of feeling that sent me streaming on with a repulsive power against the troubles of life. Never despair while there is this path open to you. By habitual exercise you will have habitual intercourse and constant companionship; and at every want turn to the Great Star of your hopes with a delightful confidence that will never be disappointed. I love you like my own brother: Beware, for God's sake, of the delusions and sophistications that are ripping up the talents and morality of our friend! He will go out of the world the victim of his own weakness and the dupe of his own self-delusions, with the

well as if you have not been teased with that Money affair, that bill-pestilence. However, I must think that difficulties nerve the Spirit of a Man—they make our Prime Objects a Refuge as well as a Passion. The Trumpet of Fame is as a tower of Strength, the ambitious bloweth it and is safe. I suppose, by your telling me not to give way to forebodings, George has mentioned to you what I have lately said in my Letters to him—truth is I have been in such a state of Mind as to read over my Lines and hate them. I am one that “gathers Samphire, dreadful trade”—the Cliff of Poesy towers above me—yet when Tom who meets with some of Pope’s Homer in Plutarch’s Lives reads some of those to me they seem like Mice to mine. I read and write about eight hours a day. There is an old saying “well begun is half done”—’tis a bad one. I would use instead, “Not begun at all till half done;” so according to that I have not begun my Poem and consequently (*à priori*) can say nothing about it. Thank God! I do begin arduously where I leave off, notwithstanding occasional depressions; and I hope for the support of a High Power while I climb this little eminence, and especially in my Years of more momentous Labor. I remember your saying that you had notions of a good Genius presiding over you. I have of late had the same thought, for things which [I] do half at Random are afterwards confirmed

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contempt of his enemies and the sorrow of his friends, and the cause he undertook to support injured by his own neglect of character. I wish you would come up to town for a day or two that I may put your head in my picture. I have rubbed in Wordsworth’s, and advanced the whole. God bless you, my dear Keats! do not despair; collect incident, study character, read Shakespeare, and trust in Providence, and you will do, you must.” Mr. Frederick Wordsworth Haydon says the passage about “our friend” and his sophistications “is in reference to Leigh Hunt.”

by my judgment in a dozen features of Propriety. Is it too daring to fancy Shakespeare this Presider? When in the Isle of Wight I met with a Shakespeare in the Passage of the House at which I lodged—it comes nearer to my idea of him than any I have seen—I was but there a Week, yet the old woman made me take it with me though I went off in a hurry. Do you not think this is ominous of good? I am glad you say every man of great views is at times tormented as I am.

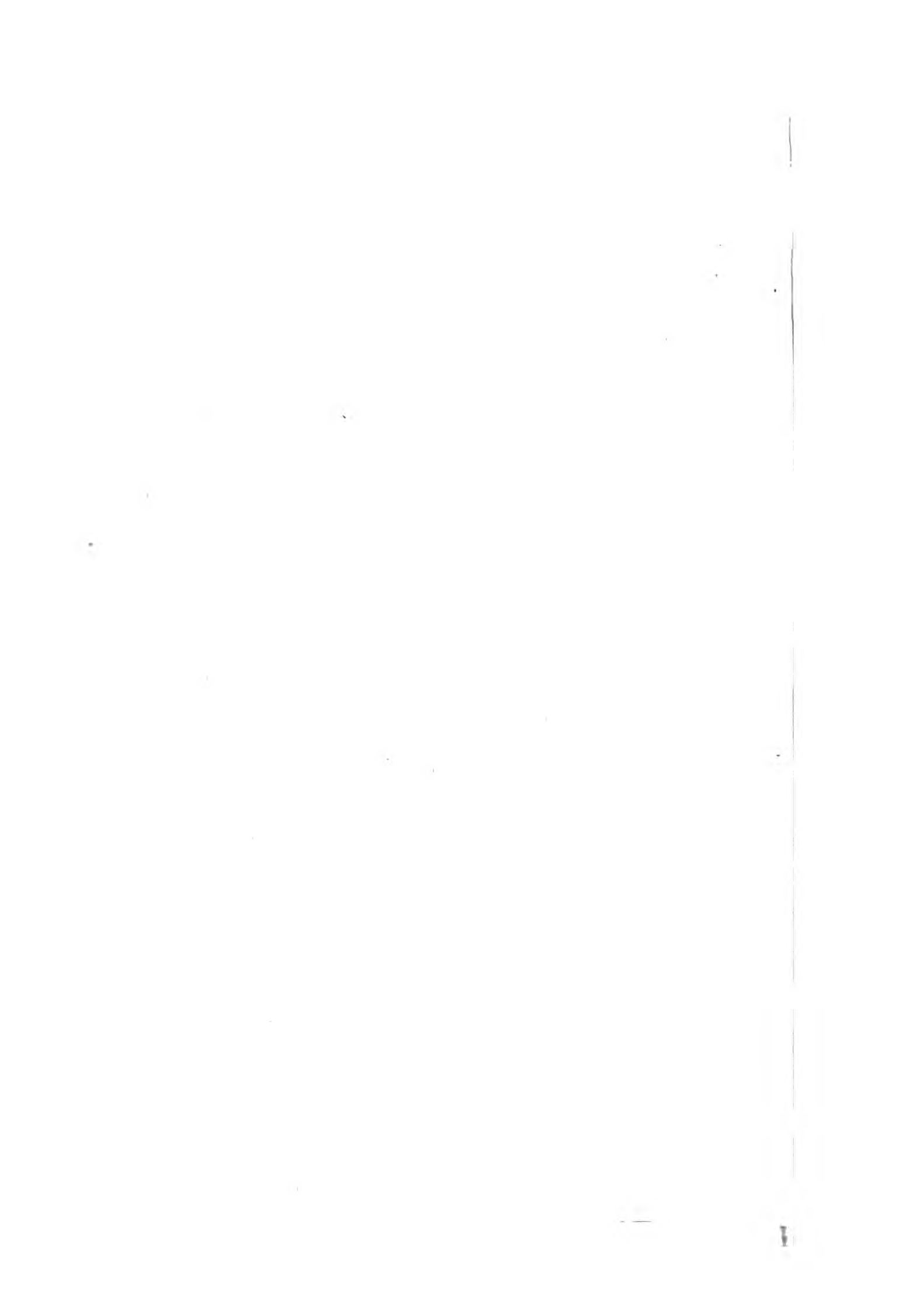
*Sunday after* [11 May 1817]. This Morning I received a letter from George by which it appears that Money Troubles are to follow us up for some time to come—perhaps for always—these vexations are a great hindrance to one—they are not like Envy and detraction stimulants to further exertion as being immediately relative and reflected on at the same time with the prime object—but rather like a nettle leaf or two in your bed. So now I revoke my Promise of finishing my Poem by the Autumn which I should have done had I gone on as I have done—but I cannot write while my spirit is fevered in a contrary direction and I am now sure of having plenty of it this Summer. At this moment I am in no enviable Situation—I feel that I am not in a Mood to write any to day; and it appears that the loss of it is the beginning of all sorts of irregularities. I am extremely glad that a time must come when every thing will leave not a wrack behind. You tell me never to despair—I wish it was as easy for me to observe the saying—truth is I have a horrid Morbidity of Temperament which has shown itself at intervals—it is I have no doubt the greatest Enemy and stumbling block I have to fear—I may even say that it is likely to be the cause of my disappointment. However every ill has its share of good—this very bane would at any time enable me to look with an obstinate

eye on the Devil Himself—aye to be as proud of being the lowest of the human race as Alfred could be in being of the highest. I feel confident I should have been a rebel angel had the opportunity been mine. I am very sure that you do love me as your very Brother—I have seen it in your continual anxiety for me—and I assure you that your welfare and fame is and will be a chief pleasure to me all my Life. I know no one but you who can be fully sensible of the turmoil and anxiety, the sacrifice of all what is called comfort, the readiness to measure time by what is done and to die in six hours could plans be brought to conclusions—the looking upon the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Earth and its contents, as materials to form greater things—that is to say ethereal things—but here I am talking like a Madman,—greater things than our Creator himself made!!

I wrote to Hunt yesterday—scarcely know what I said in it. I could not talk about Poetry in the way I should have liked for I was not in humor with either his or mine. His self delusions are very lamentable—they have inticed him into a Situation which I should be less eager after than that of a galley Slave—what you observe thereon is very true must be in time.

Perhaps it is a self delusion to say so—but I think I could not be deceived in the manner that Hunt is—may I die tomorrow if I am to be. There is no greater Sin after the seven deadly than to flatter oneself into an idea of being a great Poet—or one of those beings who are privileged to wear out their Lives in the pursuit of Honor—how comfortable a feel it is to feel that such a Crime must bring its heavy Penalty? That if one be a Self-deluder accounts must be balanced? I am glad you are hard at Work—'t will now soon be done—I long to see Wordsworth's as well as to have mine

Vertical line of text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.



in:<sup>1</sup> but I would rather not show my face in Town till the end of the Year—if that will be time enough—if not I shall be disappointed if you do not write for me even when you think best. I never quite despair and I read Shakespeare—indeed I shall I think never read any other Book much. Now this might lead me into a long Confab but I desist. I am very near agreeing with Hazlitt that Shakespeare is enough for us. By the by what a tremendous Southean article his last was—I wish he had left out “grey hairs.” It was very gratifying to meet your remarks on<sup>2</sup> the manuscript—I was reading Anthony and Cleopatra when I got the Paper and there are several Passages applicable to the events you commentate. You say that he arrived by degrees and not by any single struggle to the height of his ambition—and that his Life had been as common in particulars as other Men’s. Shakespeare makes Enobarb say—

Where’s Antony?

*Eros*—He’s walking in the garden, and *spurns*  
*The rush that lies* before him ; cries, Fool, Lepidus !

In the same scene we find—

Let determined things  
To destiny hold unbewailed their way.

Dolabella says of Anthony’s Messenger,

An argument that he is pluck’d when hither  
He sends so poor a pinion of his wing.

Then again—

*Eno.*—I see Men’s Judgments are  
A parcel of their fortunes ; and things outward

<sup>1</sup> The portraits of Wordsworth and Keats in the picture of the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, now in Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> In the original, *of*; but I presume Lord Houghton was right in substituting *on*. See Appendix on *The Examiner* for the 4th of May 1817.



Do draw the inward quality after them,  
To suffer all alike.

The following applies well to Bertrand :<sup>1</sup>

Yet he that can endure  
To follow with allegiance a fallen Lord,  
Does conquer him that did his Master conquer,  
And earns a place i' the story.

But how differently does Buonap[arte] bear his fate from  
Anthony !

'Tis good, too, that the Duke of Wellington has a good  
Word or so in the Examiner. A Man ought to have the  
Fame he deserves—and I begin to think that detracting  
from him as well as from Wordsworth is the same thing.  
I wish he had a little more taste—and did not in that  
respect “deal in Lieutenantry.” You should have heard  
from me before this—but in the first place I did not like  
to do so before I had got a little way in the First Book,  
and in the next as G. told me you were going to write I  
delayed till I had heard from you. Give my Respects  
the next time you write to the North and also to John  
Hunt. Remember me to Reynolds and tell him to write.  
Ay, and when you send Westward tell your Sister that  
I mentioned her in this. So now in the name of Shake-  
speare, Raphael and all our Saints, I commend you to  
the care of heaven !

Your everlasting friend  
John Keats—

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<sup>1</sup> In the original *Bertram* ; but the reference is clearly to General  
Bertrand.

## X.

*To* JOHN TAYLOR.Margate,  
16 May 1817.

My dear Sir,

I am extremely indebted to you for your liberality in the shape of manufactured rag, value 20*l.*, and shall immediately proceed to destroy some of the minor heads of that hydra the Dun ; to conquer which the knight need have no sword, shield, cuirass, cuisses, her-badgion, spear, casque, greaves, paldrons, spurs, chevron, or any other scaly commodity, but he need only take the Bank-note of Faith and Cash of Salvation, and set out against the monster, invoking the aid of no Archimago or Urganda, but finger me the paper, light as the Sybil's leaves in Virgil, whereat the fiend skulks off with his tail between his legs. Touch him with this enchanted paper, and he whips you his head away as fast as a snail's

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Having now started upon *Endymion*, Keats had, as Lord Houghton records, "come to an arrangement with Messrs. Taylor and Hessey (who seem to have cordially appreciated his genius) respecting its publication." In regard to the "tangible proofs of their interest in his welfare" indicated in the following letters, his Lordship observes that Keats's "reliance on their generosity was, probably, only equal to his trust in his own abundant powers of repayment. The physical symptoms he alludes to had nothing dangerous about them and merely suggested some prudence in his mental labours. Nor had he then experienced the harsh repulse of ungenial criticism, but, although never unconscious of his own deficiencies, nor blind to the jealousies and spites of others, still believed himself to be accompanied on his path to fame by the sympathies and congratulations of all the fellow-men he cared for : and they were many." I do not know whether there is any old authority for spelling *habergeon* as it is spelt at the beginning of this letter.

horn ; but then the horrid propensity he has to put it up again has discouraged many very valiant knights. He is such a never-ending, still-beginning, sort of a body, like my landlady of the Bell. I think I could make a nice little allegorical poem, called "The Dun," where we would have the Castle of Carelessness, the Drawbridge of Credit, Sir Novelty Fashion's expedition against the City of Tailors, &c., &c. I went day by day at my poem for a month ; at the end of which time, the other day, I found my brain so over-wrought, that I had neither rhyme nor reason in it, so was obliged to give up for a few days. I hope soon to be able to resume my work. I have endeavoured to do so once or twice ; but to no purpose. Instead of poetry, I have a swimming in my head, and feel all the effects of a mental debauch, lowness of spirits, anxiety to go on, without the power to do so, which does not at all tend to my ultimate progression. However, to-morrow I will begin my next month. This evening I go to Canterbury, having got tired of Margate ; I was not right in my head when I came. At Canterbury I hope the remembrance of Chaucer will set me forward like a billiard ball. I have some idea of seeing the Continent some time this summer.

In repeating how sensible I am of your kindness, I remain, your obedient servant and friend,

John Keats.

I shall be happy to hear any little intelligence in the literary or friendly way when you have time to scribble.

## XI.

*To JOHN TAYLOR.*

10 July 1817.

My Dear Sir,

A couple of Duns that I thought would be silent till the beginning, at least, of next month, (when I am certain to be on my legs, for certain sure,) have opened upon me with a cry most "untunable;" never did you hear such "ungallant chiding." Now, you must know, I am not desolate, but have, thank God, twenty-five good notes in my fob. But then, you know, I laid them by to write with, and would stand at bay a fortnight ere they should quit me. In a month's time I must pay, but it would relieve my mind if I owed you, instead of these pelican duns.

I am afraid you will say I have "wound about with circumstance," when I should have asked plainly. However, as I said, I am a little maidenish or so, and I feel my virginity come strong upon me, the while I request the loan of a 20*l.* and a 10*l.*, which, if you would enclose to me, I would acknowledge and save myself a hot forehead. I am sure you are confident of my responsibility, and in the sense of squareness that is always in me.

Your obliged friend,

John Keats.

## XII.

To JANE REYNOLDS,

Afterwards MRS. THOMAS HOOD.

[Oxford, September 1817.]

Believe me, my dear Jane, it is a great happiness to see that you are, in this finest part of the year, winning a little enjoyment from the hard world. In truth, the great Elements we know of, are no mean comforters: the open sky sits upon our senses like a sapphire crown; the air is our robe of state; the earth is our throne; and the sea a mighty minstrel playing before it—able, like David's harp, to make such a one as you forget almost the tempest cares of life. I have found in the ocean's music,—varying (tho' self-same) more than the passion of Timotheus, an enjoyment not to be put into words; and, "though inland far I be," I now hear the voice most audibly while pleasing myself in the idea of your sensations.

\* ———<sup>1</sup> is getting well apace, and if you have a few trees, and a little harvesting about you, I'll snap my fingers in Lucifer's eye. I hope you bathe too; if you

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This letter appears in the *Life, Letters &c.* without the names of the correspondent and her sister; but these were clearly the Misses Reynolds; and as Mr. Dilke leans to the opinion that the letter was to Jane—a view to which I also lean very strongly, I have ventured to fill the blanks accordingly. Mr. Dilke records that Jane and Marianne Reynolds were "staying at Little Hampton" at the time. Lord Houghton, who assigns the letter to September 1817, while Keats was staying with Bailey, reads, near the beginning, *the ocean's music,—varying (the self-same)*; but surely *the* should be *tho'*.

<sup>1</sup> I have no clue to the person whose name is omitted.

do not, I earnestly recommend it. Bathe thrice a week, and let us have no more sitting up next winter. Which is the best of Shakespeare's plays? I mean in what mood and with what accompaniment do you like the sea best? It is very fine in the morning, when the sun,

Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,  
Turns into yellow gold his salt sea streams ;

and superb when

The sun from meridian height  
Illumines the depth of the sea,  
And the fishes, beginning to sweat,  
Cry d—— it ! how hot we shall be ;

and gorgeous, when the fair planet hastens

To his home  
Within the Western foam.

But don't you think there is something extremely fine after sunset, when there are a few white clouds about and a few stars blinking ; when the waters are ebbing, and the horizon a mystery? This state of things has been so fulfilling to me that I am anxious to hear whether it is a favourite with you. So when you and Marianne club your letter to me put in a word or two about it. Tell Dilke that it would be perhaps as well if he left a pheasant or partridge alive here and there to keep up a supply of game for next season ; tell him to rein in, if possible, all the Nimrod of his disposition, he being a mighty hunter before the Lord of the manor. Tell him to shoot fair, and not to have at the poor devils in a furrow : when they are flying, he may fire, and nobody will be the wiser.

Give my sincerest respects to Mrs. Dilke, saying that I have not forgiven myself for not having got her the little box of medicine I promised, and that, had I re-

mained at Hampstead, I would have made precious havoc with her house and furniture—drawn a great harrow over her garden—poisoned Boxer—eaten her clothes-pegs—fried her cabbages—fricaseed (how is it spelt?) her radishes—ragouted her onions—belaboured her *beat-root*—outstripped her scarlet-runners—*parlez-vous'd* with her french-beans—devoured her mignon or mignonette—metamorphosed her bell-handles—splintered her looking-glasses—bullocked at her cups and saucers—agonized her decanters—put old Phillips<sup>1</sup> to pickle in the brine-tub—disorganized her piano—dislocated her candlesticks—emptied her wine-bins in a fit of despair—turned out her maid to grass—and astonished B[rown]; whose letter to her on these events I would rather see than the original copy of the Book of Genesis.

Poor Bailey,<sup>2</sup> scarcely ever well, has gone to bed, pleased that I am writing to you. To your brother John (whom henceforth I shall consider as mine) and to you, my dear friends, I shall ever feel grateful for having made known to me so real a fellow as Bailey. He delights me in the selfish and (please God) the disinterested part of my disposition. If the old Poets have any pleasure in looking down at the enjoyers of their works, their eyes must bend with a double satisfaction upon him. I sit as at a feast when he is over them, and pray that if, after my death, any of my labours should be worth saving, they may have so “honest a chronicler” as

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke notes “the gardener,” and suggests Brown as the person referred to lower down.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Houghton says Keats “had made a valuable acquaintance in Mr. Bailey, who was at this time at Oxford, reading for the Church, and who, after many changes of clerical life, became Archdeacon of Colombo, in Ceylon, where he won much affection and esteem.”

Bailey. Out of this, his enthusiasm in his own pursuit and for all good things is of an exalted kind—worthy a more healthful frame and an untorn spirit. He must have happy years to come—“he shall not die, by God.”<sup>1</sup>

A letter from John the other day was a chief happiness to me. I made a little mistake when, just now, I talked of being far inland. How can that be when Endymion and I are at the bottom of the sea? whence I hope to bring him in safety before you leave the sea-side; and, if I can so contrive it, you shall be greeted by him upon the sea-sands, and he shall tell you all his adventures, which having finished, he shall thus proceed—“My dear Ladies, favourites of my gentle mistress, however my friend Keats may have teased and vexed you, believe me he loves you not the less—for instance, I am deep in his favour, and yet he has been hauling me through the earth and sea with unrelenting perseverance. I know for all this that he is mighty fond of me, by his contriving me all sorts of pleasures. Nor is this the least, fair ladies, this one of meeting you on the desert shore, and greeting you in his name. He sends you

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton inserts beneath this paragraph the following account by Bailey of Keats's habits at Oxford:—“He wrote and I read—sometimes at the same table, sometimes at separate desks—from breakfast till two or three o'clock. He sat down to his task, which was about fifty lines a day, with his paper before him, and wrote with as much regularity and apparently with as much ease as he wrote his letters. Indeed, he quite acted up to the principle he lays down, ‘that if Poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves of a tree, it had better not come at all.’ Sometimes he fell short of his allotted task, but not often, and he would make it up another day. But he never forced himself. When he had finished his writing for the day, he usually read it over to me, and then read or wrote letters till we went out for a walk.”



moreover this little scroll." My dear girls, I send you, per favour of Endymion, the assurance of my esteem for you, and my utmost wishes for your health and pleasure, being ever,

Your affectionate brother,  
John Keats.

### XIII.

*To* JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Oxford,  
Sunday Morning [September 1817].

My dear Reynolds,

So you are determined to be my mortal foe—draw a sword at me, and I will forgive—put a bullet in my brain, and I will shake it out as a dew-drop from the lion's mane—put me on a gridiron and I will fry with great complacency—but—oh, horror! to come upon me in the shape of a dun!—send me bills! As I say to my tailor, send me bills and I'll never employ you more. However, needs must, when the devil drives: and for fear of "before and behind Mr. Honeycomb," I'll proceed. I have not time to elucidate the forms and shapes of the grass and trees; for, rot it! I forgot to bring my mathematical case with me, which unfortunately contained my triangular prisms; so that the hues of the grass cannot be dissected for you.

For these last five or six days we have had regularly a boat on the Isis, and explored all the streams about, which are more in number than your eye-lashes. We sometimes skim into a bed of rushes, and there become naturalized river-folks. There is one particularly nice nest, which we have christened "Reynolds' Cove," in

which we have read Wordsworth, and talked as may be.

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. . . failings I am always rather rejoiced to find in a man than sorry for; they bring us to a level. ——— has them, but then his makes-up are very good. ——— agrees with the Northern Poet in this, "He is not one of those who much delight to season their fire-side with personal talk." I must confess, however, having a little itch that way, and at this present moment I have a few neighbourly remarks to make. The world, and especially our England, has, within the last thirty years, been vexed and teased by a set of devils, whom I detest so much that I almost hunger after an Acherontic promotion to a Torturer, purposely for their accommodation. These devils are a set of women, who having taken a snack or luncheon of literary scraps, set themselves up for towers of Babel in languages, Sapphos in poetry, Euclids in geometry, and everything in nothing. The thing has made a very uncomfortable impression on me. I had longed for some real feminine modesty in these things, and was therefore gladdened in the extreme, on opening, the other day, one of Bailey's books—a book of poetry written by one beautiful Mrs. Philips,<sup>1</sup> a friend of Jeremy Taylor's, and called "The Matchless Orinda." You must have heard of her, and most likely read her poetry—I wish you have not, that I may have the pleasure of treating you with a few stanzas. I do it at a venture. You will not regret reading them once more. The following, to her friend Mrs. M. A., at parting, you will judge of.<sup>1</sup>

In other of her poems there is a most delicate fancy of the Fletcher kind—which we will con over together.

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<sup>1</sup> For the poem see Appendix.

So Haydon is in town. I had a letter from him yesterday. We will contrive as the winter comes on—but that is neither here nor there. Have you heard from Rice? Has Martin met with the Cumberland Beggar, or been wondering at the old Leech-gatherer? Has he a turn for fossils? that is, is he capable of sinking up to his middle in a morass? How is Hazlitt? We were reading his Table (Round Table) last night. I know he thinks himself not estimated by ten people in the world. I wish he knew he is. I am getting on famous with my third Book—have written 800 lines thereof, and hope to finish it next week. Bailey likes what I have done very much. Believe me, my dear Reynolds, one of my chief layings-up is the pleasure I shall have in showing it to you, I may now say, in a few days.

I have heard twice from my brothers ; they are going on very well, and send their remembrances to you. We expected to have had notices from little-Hampton this morning—we must wait till Tuesday. I am glad of their days with the Dilkes.<sup>1</sup> You are, I know, very much teased in that precious London, and want all the rest possible ; so [I] shall be contented with as brief a scrawl—a word or two, till there comes a pat hour.

Send us a few of your stanzas to read in “ Reynolds’ Cove.” Give my love and respects to your mother, and remember me kindly to all at home.

Yours faithfully

John Keats

I have left the doublings for Bailey, who is going to say that he will write to you to-morrow.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke notes “ From Jane and Marianne Reynolds...They came over and stayed a few days with us at my sister’s [Mrs. Snook’s] at Bedhampton.”

## XIV.

*To FANNY KEATS.*

Oxford, Sept. 10th [1817].

My dear Fanny,

Let us now begin a regular question and answer—a little pro and con; letting it interfere as a pleasant method of my coming at your favorite little wants and enjoyments, that I may meet them in a way befitting a brother.

We have been so little together since you have been able to reflect on things that I know not whether you prefer the History of King Pepin to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress—or Cinderella and her glass slipper to Moor's Almanack. However in a few Letters I hope I shall be able to come at that and adapt my scribblings to your Pleasure. You must tell me about all you read if it be only six Pages in a Week and this transmitted to me every now and then will procure you full sheets of Writing from me pretty frequently.—This I feel as a necessity for we ought to become intimately acquainted, in order that I may not only, as you grow up love you as my only Sister, but confide in you as my dearest friend. When I saw you last I told you of my intention of going to Oxford and 'tis now a Week since I disembark'd from his Whipship's Coach the Defiance in this place. I am living in Magdalen Hall on a visit to a young Man with whom I have not been long acquainted, but whom I like very much—we lead very industrious lives—he in general Studies and I in proceeding at a pretty good rate with a Poem which I hope you will see early in the next year.—Perhaps you might like to know what I am writing

about. I will tell you. Many Years ago there was a young handsome Shepherd who fed his flocks on a Mountain's Side called Latmus—he was a very contemplative sort of a Person and lived solitary among the trees and Plains little thinking that such a beautiful Creature as the Moon was growing mad in Love with him.—However so it was ; and when he was asleep on the Grass she used to come down from heaven and admire him excessively for a long time ; and at last could not refrain from carrying him away in her arms to the top of that high Mountain Latmus while he was a dreaming—but I dare say [you] have read this and all the other beautiful Tales which have come down from the ancient times of that beautiful Greece. If you have not let me know and I will tell you more at large of others quite as delightful. This Oxford I have no doubt is the finest City in the world—it is full of old Gothic buildings—Spires—towers—Quadrangles—Cloisters—Groves &c. and is surrounded with more clear streams than ever I saw together. I take a Walk by the Side of one of them every Evening and, thank God, we have not had a drop of rain these many days. I had a long and interesting Letter from George, cross lines by a short one from Tom yesterday dated Paris. They both send their loves to you. Like most Englishmen they feel a mighty preference for every thing English—the French Meadows, the trees, the People, the Towns, the Churches, the Books, the every thing—although they may be in themselves good : yet when put in comparison with our green Island they all vanish like Swallows in October. They have seen Cathedrals, Manuscripts, Fountains, Pictures, Tragedy, Comedy,—with other things you may by chance meet with in this Country such a[s] Washerwomen, Lamplighters, Turnpikemen, Fishkettles, Dancing Masters, Kettle drums,

Sentry Boxes, Rocking Horses &c.—and, now they have taken them over a set of boxing gloves. I have written to George and requested him, as you wish I should, to write to you. I have been writing very hard lately, even till an utter incapacity came on, and I feel it now about my head: so you must not mind a little out of the way sayings—though by the bye were my brain as clear as a bell I think I should have a little propensity thereto. I shall stop here till I have finished the 3rd Book of my Story; which I hope will be accomplish'd in at most three Weeks from to day—about which time you shall see me. How do you like Miss Taylor's essays in Rhyme—I just look'd into the Book and it appeared to me suitable to you—especially since I remember your liking for those pleasant little things the Original Poems—the essays are the more mature production of the same hand. While I was speaking about France it occurred to me to speak a few Words on their Language—it is perhaps the poorest one ever spoken since the jabbering in the Tower of Babel, and when you come to know that the real use and greatness of a Tongue is to be referred to its Literature—you will be astonished to find how very inferior it is to our native Speech.—I wish the Italian would supersede French in every school throughout the Country, for that is full of real Poetry and Romance of a kind more fitted for the Pleasure of Ladies than perhaps our own.—It seems that the only end to be gained in acquiring French is the immense accomplishment of speaking it—it is none at all—a most lamentable mistake indeed. Italian indeed would sound most musically from Lips which had began to pronounce it as early as French is crammed down our Mouths, as if we were young Jackdaws at the mercy of an overfeeding Schoolboy. Now Fanny you must write soon—and write all you think

about, never mind what—only let me have a good deal of your writing—You need not do it all at once—be two or three or four day[s] about it, and let it be a diary of your little Life. You will preserve all my Letters and I will secure yours—and thus in the course of time we shall each of us have a good Bundle—which, hereafter, when things may have strangely altered and god knows what happened, we may read over together and look with pleasure on times past—that now are to come. Give my Respects to the Ladies—and so my dear Fanny I am ever

Your most affectionate Brother

John

If you direct—Post Office, Oxford—your Letter will be brought to me.—

XV.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Oxford, 28 September [1817].

My dear Haydon,

I read your letter to the young Man, whose Name is Crip[p]s. He seemed more than ever anxious to avail himself of your offer. I think I told you we asked him to ascertain his Means. He does not possess the Philosopher's stone—nor Fortunatus' purse, nor Gyges' ring—but at Bailey's suggestion, whom I assure you is a very

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(xv) The reference with which this letter opens is explained by a letter from Haydon given in Volume II of the *Correspondence*, dated the 17th of September 1817, in which the painter says to the poet—“I am delighted to hear that you are getting on with your poem. Success to it and to you, with all my heart and soul. Will you

capital fellow, we have stummed<sup>1</sup> up a kind of contrivance whereby he will be enabled to do himself the benefits you will lay in his Path. I have a great Idea that he will be a tolerable neat brush. 'Tis perhaps the finest thing that will befall him this many a year : for he is just of an age to get grounded in bad habits from which you will pluck him. He brought a copy of Mary Queen of Scots : it appears to me that he has copied the bad style of the painting, as well as coloured the eyebal[l]s yellow like the original. He has also the fault that you pointed out to me in Hazlitt on the constringing and diffusing of substance. However I really believe that he will take fire at the sight of your Picture—and set about things. If he can get ready in time to return to town with me, which will be in a few days—I will bring him to you. You will be glad to hear that within these last three weeks I have written 1000 lines—which are the third Book of my Poem. My Ideas with respect to it I assure you are very low—and I would write the subject thoroughly again—but I am tired of it and think

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oblige me by going to Magdalen College and inquiring of the porter there about a young man who, when I was lately at Oxford, was copying the altar-piece at Magdalen by Morales. I am anxious to know about that young man—the copy promised something. Will you, if you can, see the young man, and ascertain what his wishes in Art are ? if he has ambition and seems to possess power ? all of which you can soon discover. In these cases should any friend be disposed to assist him up to London and to support him for a year, I will train him in the Art with no further remuneration than the pleasure of seeing him advance. I will put him in the right way, and do all I can to advance him. Do oblige me by exerting yourself in this case for me. Perhaps Mr. Bailey may also feel interest. Remember me to him.”

<sup>1</sup> This word is certainly *stummed* in the original letter ; and I think *stummed*, in the sense of *strengthened*, is more probably what Keats meant to write than either *strummed* or *stumped*.



the time would be better spent in writing a new Romance which I have in my eye for next summer—Rome was not built in a Day—and all the good I expect from my employment this summer is the fruit of Experience which I hope to gather in my next Poem. Bailey's kindest wishes and my vow of being

Yours eternally  
John Keats—

XVI.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

8 October 1817.

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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 4000 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 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 for-

gotten and found new in a second reading,—which may be food for a week's stroll in the summer?" Do not they like this better than what they can read through before Mrs. Williams comes down stairs?—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 as a poetical excellence.<sup>1</sup> But enough of this—I put on no laurels till I shall have finished "Endymion," and I hope Apollo is not angered 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.<sup>2</sup> Would that you were as well as

Your sincere friend and brother,

John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> If invention were the only thing to desire in a romantic poem, *Endymion* would probably stand at the head of modern romance poetry, its wealth in that particular being surpassingly great.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of Keats's health during the winter of 1817-18, Lord Houghton says—"His health does not seem to have prevented him from indulging somewhat in that dissipation which is the natural outlet for the young energies of ardent temperaments, unconscious how scanty a portion of vital strength had been allotted him; but a strictly regulated and abstinent life would have appeared to him pedantic and sentimental. He did not, however, to any serious extent, allow wine to usurp on his intellect, or games of chance to impair his means, for, in his letters to his brothers, he speaks of having drunk too much as a rare piece of joviality, and of having won 10% at cards as a great hit."

## XVII.

*To* BENJAMIN BAILEY.

[October, 1817.]

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There has been a flaming attack upon Hunt in the "Edinburgh Magazine." I never read anything so virulent, —accusing him of the greatest crimes, depreciating his wife, his poetry, his habits, his company, his conversation. These philippics are to come out in numbers—called, "The Cockney School of Poetry." There has been but one number published—that on Hunt—to which they have prefixed a motto from one Cornelius Webb, "Poet-aster"—who, unfortunately, was of our party occasionally at Hampstead, and took it into his head to write the following: something about, "We'll talk on Wordsworth, Byron, a theme we never tire on;" and so forth till he comes to Hunt and Keats. In the motto they have put

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Lord Houghton gives this passage as the "Outside sheet of a letter to Mr. Bailey," and places it immediately after the letter to Mrs. Wylie at the end of the Scotch series; but it clearly belongs to October 1817, as that is the sole month in which one and only one of the articles on "The Cockney School" had appeared. Mr. Dykes Campbell has a copy of Keats's *Poems* (1817) with an inscription believed to be in Cornelius Webb's writing:—"This Book was given me by John Keats himself when published in 1817, he living at the time in lodgings near the Poultry of all places in the world for a descriptive poet!" It must have been some nine or ten months after writing the letter to Bailey that Keats received in Scotland the invitation referred to by Lord Houghton in the following passage:—"Some mutual friend had forwarded him an invitation from Messrs. Blackwood, injudiciously adding the suggestion, that it would be very advisable for him to visit the Modern Athens, and endeavour to conciliate his literary enemies in that quarter. The sensibility and moral dignity of Keats were outraged by this pro-

Hunt and Keats in large letters. I have no doubt that the second number was intended for me, but have hopes of its non-appearance, from the following advertisement in last Sunday's Examiner :—"To Z.—The writer of the article signed Z., in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, for October, 1817, is invited to send his address to the printer of the Examiner, in order that justice may be executed on the proper person." I don't mind the thing much—but if he should go to such lengths with me as he has done with Hunt, I must infallibly call him to an account, if he be a human being, and appears in squares and theatres, where we might "possibly meet." I don't relish his abuse.

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posal : it may be imagined what answer he returned, and also that this circumstance may not have been unconnected with the article on him which appeared in the August number of the 'Edinburgh Magazine,' as part of a series that had commenced the previous year, and concerning which he had already expressed himself freely." Lord Houghton gives Brown as his authority concerning the invitation, but adds—"Mr. Robert Blackwood, son of the Mr. Blackwood of that time, thinks the circumstance very improbable, and that Mr. Brown must have been mistaken or misinformed. It does, however, appear that in the July of 1818 Mr. Bailey met, at Bishop Gleig's, in Scotland, a leading contributor to 'Blackwood's Magazine,' with whom he had much conversation respecting Keats, especially about his relations with Leigh Hunt, and Mr. Bailey thought his confidence had been abused." *Somebody's* confidence was certainly abused in the most open and shameless manner ; and why not Mr. Bailey's? The magazine at that time teemed with the frowsy and unsavoury personal gibes of which the possession of "Christopher North" gave it a monopoly.

## XVIII.

*To* CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

[November 1817.]

My dear Dilke,

Mrs. Dilke or Mr. Wm. Dilke, whoever of you shall receive this present, have the kindness to send pr. bearer "Sibylline Leaves," and you[r] petitioner shall ever pray as in duty bound.

Given under my hand this Wednesday morning of Novr. 1817.

John Keats

Vivant Rex et Regina—amen.

## XIX.

*To* JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Leatherhead,  
22 November 1817.

My dear Reynolds,

There are two things which tease me here—one of them ——, and the other that I cannot go with Tom into Devonshire. However, I hope to do my duty to myself in a week or so; and then I'll try what I can do for my neighbour—now, is not this virtuous? On returning to town I'll damm all idleness—indeed, in superabundance of employment, I must not be content to run here and there on little two-penny errands, but turn Rakehell, i.e. go a masking, or Bailey will think me just as great a promise-keeper as *he* thinks you; for myself I do not, and do not remember above one complaint

against you for matter o' that. Bailey writes so abominable a hand, to give his letter a fair reading requires a little time, so I had not seen, when I saw you last, his invitation to Oxford at Christmas. I'll go with you. You know how poorly — was. I do not think it was all corporeal,—bodily pain was not used to keep him silent. I'll tell you what; he was hurt at what your sisters said about his joking with your mother. It will all blow over. God knows, my dear Reynolds, I should not talk any sorrow to you—you must have enough vexation, so I won't any more. If I ever start a rueful subject in a letter to you—blow me! Why don't you?—Now I am going to ask you a very silly question, neither you nor anybody else could answer, under a folio, or at least a pamphlet—you shall judge. Why don't you, as I do, look unconcerned at what may be called more particularly heart-vexations? They never surprise me. Lord! a man should have the fine point of his soul taken off, to become fit for this world.

I like this place very much. There is hill and dale, and a little river. I went up Box Hill this evening after the moon—"you a' seen the moon"—came down, and wrote some lines. Whenever I am separated from you, and not engaged in a continued poem, every letter shall bring you a lyric—but I am too anxious for you to enjoy the whole to send you a particle. One of the three books I have with me is "Shakspeare's Poems": I never found so many beauties in the Sonnets; they seem to be full of fine things said unintentionally—in the intensity of working out conceits. Is this to be borne? Hark ye!

When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,  
Which erst from heat did canopy the head,  
And Summer's green all girded up in sheaves,  
Borne on the bier with white and bristly head.

He has left nothing to say about nothing or anything : for look at snails—you know what he says about snails—you know when he talks about “cockled snails”—well, in one of these sonnets, he says—the chap slips into—no ! I lie ! this is in the “Venus and Adonis :” the simile brought it to my mind.

As the snail, whose tender horns being hit,  
Shrinks back into his shelly cave with pain,  
And there all smothered up in shade doth sit,  
Long after fearing to put forth again ;  
So at his bloody view her eyes are fled,  
Into the deep dark cabins of her head.

He overwhelms a genuine lover of poetry with all manner of abuse, talking about—

A poet's rage  
And stretched metre of an antique song.

Which, by the by, will be a capital motto for my poem, won't it ? He speaks too of “Time's antique pen”—and “April's first-born flowers”—and “Death's eternal cold.”—By the Whim-King ! I'll give you a stanza, because it is not material in connexion, and when I wrote it I wanted you to give your vote, pro or con.

Crystalline Brother of the belt of Heaven,  
Aquarius ! to whom King Jove hath given  
Two liquid pulse-streams, 'stead of feather'd wings—  
Two fan-like fountains—thine illuminings  
For Dian play :  
Dissolve the frozen purity of air ;  
Let thy white shoulders, silvery and bare,  
Show cold through wat'ry pinions : make more bright  
The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage-night ;  
Haste, haste away !<sup>1</sup>

I see there is an advertisement in the “Chronicle” to Poets—he is so over-loaded with poems on the “late

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<sup>1</sup> See Book IV of *Endymion*, Volume I, page 308.

Princess." I suppose you do not lack—Send me a little pullet-sperm, a few finch-eggs—and remember me to each of our card-playing Club. When you die you will all be turned into dice, and be put in pawn with the devil : for cards, they crumple up like anything.

I rest

Your affectionate friend,

John Keats.

Give my love to both houses—*hinc atque illinc*.

XX.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

[*Postmark*, Leatherhead, 22 November 1817.]

My dear Bailey,

I will get over the first part of this (*unpaid*) letter as soon as possible, for it relates to the affairs of poor Cripps. To a man of your nature such a letter as Haydon's must have been extremely cutting. What occasions the greater part of the world's quarrels? Simply this: two minds meet, and do not understand each other time enough to prevent any shock or surprise at the conduct of either party. As soon as I had known Haydon three days, I had got enough of his character not to have been surprised at such a letter as he has hurt you with. Nor, when I knew it, was it a principle with me to drop his acquaintance; although with you it would have been an imperious feeling. I wish you knew all that I think about Genius and the Heart. And yet I think that you are thoroughly acquainted with my innermost breast in that respect, or you could not have known me even



thus long, and still hold me worthy to be your dear friend. In passing, however, I must say one thing that has pressed upon me lately, and increased my humility and capability of submission—and that is this truth—Men of genius are great as certain ethereal chemicals operating on the mass of neutral intellect—but they have not any individuality, any determined character. I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self, Men of Power.

But I am running my head into a subject which I am certain I could not do justice to under five years' study, and three vols. octavo—and moreover [I] long to be talking about the Imagination: so, my dear Bailey, do not think of this unpleasant affair, if possible do not—I defy any harm to come of it—I shall write to Cripps this week, and request him to tell me all his goings-on, from time to time, by letter, wherever I may be. It will go on well—so don't, because you have suddenly discovered a coldness in Haydon, suffer yourself to be teased. Do not, my dear fellow. O! I wish I was as certain of the end of all your troubles as that of your momentary start about the authenticity of the Imagination. I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the heart's affections, and the truth of Imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth,<sup>1</sup> whether it existed before or not;—for I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. In a word, you may know my favourite speculation by my first book, and the little song I sent in my last, which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these matters. The

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<sup>1</sup> Compare this with the close of the Ode on a Grecian Urn, Volume II, page 118.

Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream: he awoke and found it truth. I am more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning,—and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections? However it may be, O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts! It is “a Vision in the form of Youth,” a shadow of reality to come—and this consideration has further convinced me,—for it has come as auxiliary to another favourite speculation of mine,—that we shall enjoy ourselves hereafter by having what we called happiness on earth repeated in a finer tone. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in Sensation, rather than hunger, as you do, after Truth. Adam's dream will do here, and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflexion is the same as human life and its spiritual repetition. But, as I was saying, the simple imaginative mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent working coming continually on the spirit with a fine suddenness. To compare great things with small, have you never, by being surprised with an old melody, in a delicious place, by a delicious voice, *felt* over again your very speculations and surmises at the time it first operated on your soul? Do you not remember forming to yourself the singer's face—more beautiful than it was possible, and yet, with the elevation of the moment, you did not think so? Even then you were mounted on the wings of Imagination, so high that the prototype must be hereafter—that delicious face you will see. Sure this cannot be exactly the case with a complex mind—one that is imaginative, and at the same time careful of its fruits,—who would exist partly on sensation, partly on thought

—to whom it is necessary that “years should bring the philosophic mind?”<sup>1</sup> Such a one I consider yours, and therefore it is necessary to your eternal happiness that you not only drink this old wine of Heaven, which I shall call the redigestion of our most ethereal musings upon earth, but also increase in knowledge, and know all things.

I am glad to hear that you are in a fair way for Easter. You will soon get through your unpleasant reading, and then!—but the world is full of troubles, and I have not much reason to think myself pestered with many.

I think — or — has a better opinion of me than I deserve; for, really and truly, I do not think my brother's illness connected with mine. You know more of the real cause than they do; nor have I any chance of being rack'd as you have been. You perhaps, at one time, thought there was such a thing as worldly happiness to be arrived at, at certain periods of time marked out. You have of necessity, from your disposition, been thus led away. I scarcely remember counting upon any happiness. I look not for it if it be not in the present hour. Nothing startles me beyond the moment. The setting sun will always set me to rights, or if a sparrow come before my window, I take part in its existence, and pick about the gravel. The first thing that strikes me on hearing a misfortune having befallen another is this—“Well, it cannot be helped: he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his spirit;” and I beg now, my dear Bailey, that hereafter, should you observe anything

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<sup>1</sup> “Mr. Bailey well remembered”, says Lord Houghton, “the exceeding delight that Keats took in Wordsworth's ‘Ode to Immortality.’ He was never weary of repeating it.”

cold in me, not to put it to the account of heartlessness, but abstraction; for I assure you I sometimes feel not the influence of a passion or affection during a whole week; and so long this sometimes continues, I begin to suspect myself, and the genuineness of my feelings at other times, thinking them a few barren tragedy-tears.

My brother Tom is much improved—he is going to Devonshire—whither I shall follow him. At present, I am just arrived at Dorking, to change the scene, change the air, and give me a spur to wind up my poem, of which there are wanting 500 lines. I should have been here a day sooner, but the Reynoldses persuaded me to stop in town to meet your friend Christie.<sup>1</sup> There were Rice and Martin. We talked about ghosts. I will have some talk with Taylor, and let you know when, please God, I come down at Christmas. I will find the “Examiner,” if possible. My best regards to Gleig, my brothers, to you, and Mrs. Bentley.

Your affectionate friend,  
John Keats.

I want to say much more to you—a few hints will set me going.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke notes—“This Christie was I think Lockhart’s friend—who was unhappily drawn into Lockhart’s quarrel with John Scott and killed him. Strange that this quarrel and the consequent loss of life of Scott, the Editor of the *London Magazine*, is not once alluded to [in the *Life, Letters &c.*], although the quarrel originated in the attack on Lockhart as the writer of the articles on the Cockney School, or as Editor of *Blackwood*. Christie I had met before and have since the duel: and he appeared to be a mild amiable man.”

## XXI.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

[No Date.]

My dear Bailey,

So you have got a Curacy—good, but I suppose you will be obliged to stop among your Oxford favourites during Term time. Never mind. When do you preach your first sermon?—tell me, for I shall propose to the two R.'s to hear it,—so don't look into any of the old corner oaken pews, for fear of being put out by us. Poor Johnny Moultrie can't be there. He is ill, I expect—but that's neither here nor there. All I can say, I wish him as well through it as I am like to be. For this fortnight I have been confined at Hampstead. Saturday evening was my first day in town, when I went to Rice's,—as we intend to do<sup>1</sup> every Saturday till we know not when. We hit upon an old gent we had known some few years ago, and had a *veiry pleasante daye*. In this world there is no quiet,—nothing but teasing and snubbing and vexation. My brother Tom looked very unwell yesterday, and I am for shipping him off to Lisbon. Perhaps I ship there with him. I have not seen Mrs. Reynolds since I left you, wherefore my conscience smites me. I think of seeing her to-morrow; have you any message? I hope Gleig<sup>2</sup> came soon after I left. I don't suppose I've

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton has *as* in place of *do*, which I have substituted on the ground that the two words are often alike in Keats's writing, and *do* makes the better sense.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. George Robert Gleig, author of *The Subaltern*, and many other well-known works, and until recently Chaplain General of the Forces.

written as many lines as you have read volumes, or at least chapters, since I saw you. However, I am in a fair way now to come to a conclusion in at least three weeks, when I assure you I shall be glad to dismount for a month or two ; although I'll keep as tight a rein as possible till then, nor suffer myself to sleep. I will copy for you the opening of the Fourth Book, in which you will see from the manner I had not an opportunity of mentioning any poets, for fear of spoiling the effect of the passage by particularizing them.

Thus far had I written when I received your last, which made me at the sight of the direction caper for despair ; but for one thing I am glad that I have been neglectful, and that is, therefrom I have received a proof of your utmost kindness, which at this present I feel very much, and I wish I had a heart always open to such sensations ; but there is no altering a man's nature, and mine must be radically wrong, for it will lie dormant a whole month. This leads me to suppose that there are no men thoroughly wicked, so as never to be self-spiritualized into a kind of sublime misery ; but, alas ! 'tis but for an hour. He is the only Man " who has kept watch on man's mortality," who has philanthropy enough to overcome the disposition to an indolent enjoyment of intellect, who is brave enough to volunteer for uncomfortable hours. You remember in Hazlitt's essay on commonplace people he says, " they read the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, and think as they do." Now, with respect to Wordsworth's " Gipsy," I think he is right, and yet I think Hazlitt is right, and yet I think Wordsworth is rightest. If Wordsworth had not been idle, he had not been without his task ; nor had the " Gipsies "—they in the visible world had been as picturesque an object as he in the invisible. The smoke of their fire, their attitudes,

their voices, were all in harmony with the evenings. It is a bold thing to say—and I would not say it in print—but it seems to me that if Wordsworth had thought a little deeper at that moment, he would not have written the poem at all. I should judge it to have been written in one of the most comfortable moods of his life—it is a kind of sketchy intellectual landscape, not a search after truth, nor is it fair to attack him on such a subject; for it is with the critic as with the poet; had Hazlitt thought a little deeper, and been in a good temper, he would never have spied out imaginary faults there. The Sunday before last I asked Haydon to dine with me, when I thought of settling all matters with him in regard to Cripps, and let you know about it. Now, although I engaged him a fortnight before, he sent illness as an excuse. He never will come. I have not been well enough to stand the chance of a wet night, and so have not seen him, nor been able to expurgatorize more masks for you; but I will not speak—your speakers are never doers. Then Reynolds,—every time I see him and mention you, he puts his hand to his head and looks like a son of Niobe's; but he'll write soon. Rome, you know, was not built in a day. I shall be able, by a little perseverance, to read your letters off-hand. I am afraid your health will suffer from over study before your examination. I think you might regulate the thing according to your own pleasure,—and I would too. They were talking of your being up at Christmas. Will it be before you have passed? There is nothing, my dear Bailey, I should rejoice at more than to see you comfortable with a little Pæona wife; an affectionate wife, I have a sort of confidence, would do you a great happiness. May that be one of the many blessings I wish you. Let me be but the one-tenth of one to you, and I shall think it great.

My brother George's kindest wishes to you. My dear Bailey, I am,

Your affectionate friend,  
John Keats.

I should not like to be pages in your way ; when in a tolerable hungry mood you have no mercy. Your teeth are the Rock Tarpeian down which you capsize epic poems like mad. I would not for forty shillings be Coleridge's Lays in your way. I hope you will soon get through this abominable writing in the schools, and be able to keep the terms with more comfort in the hope of retiring to a comfortable and quiet home out of the way of all Hopkinses and black beetles. When you are settled, I will come and take a peep at your church, your house ; try whether I shall have grown too lusty for my chair by the fireside, and take a peep at my earliest bower. A question is the best beacon towards a little speculation. Then ask me after my health and spirits. This question ratifies in my mind what I have said above. Health and spirits can only belong unalloyed to the selfish man—the man who thinks much of his fellows can never be in spirits. You must forgive, although I have only written three hundred lines ; they would have been five, but I have been obliged to go to town. Yesterday I called at Lamb's. St. Jane looked very flush when I first looked in, but was much better before I left.



## XXII.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Hampstead.

22nd December, 1817.

My dear Brothers,

I must crave your pardon for not having written ere this. \* \* \* I saw Kean return to the public in "Richard III.," and finely he did it, and, at the request of Reynolds, I went to criticize his Duke. The critique is in to-day's "Champion," which I send you, with the "Examiner," in which you will find very proper lamentation on the obsolescence of Christmas gambols and pastimes: but it was mixed up with so much egotism of that drivelling nature that all pleasure is entirely lost. Hone, the publisher's trial, you must find very amusing, and, as Englishmen, very encouraging: his *Not Guilty* is a thing, which not to have been, would have dulled still more Liberty's emblazoning. Lord Ellenborough has been paid in his own coin. Wooler and Hone have done us an essential service. I have had two very pleasant evenings with Dilke, yesterday and to-day, and am at this moment just come from him, and feel in the humour to go on with this, begun in the morning, and from which he came to fetch me. I spent Friday evening with Wells,<sup>1</sup> and went next morning to see "Death on the Pale Horse." It is a wonderful picture, when West's age is considered; but there is nothing to be intense upon, no women one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling into

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Wells, the author of *Stories after Nature* and *Joseph and his Brethren*. See the sonnet to him in Volume I (page 68).

reality. The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate from their being in close relationship with beauty and truth. Examine "King Lear," and you will find this exemplified throughout: but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness. The picture is larger than "Christ Rejected."

I dined with Haydon the Sunday after you left, and had a very pleasant day. I dined too (for I have been out too much lately) with Horace Smith, and met his two brothers, with Hill and Kingston, and one Du Bois. They only served to convince me how superior humour is to wit, in respect to enjoyment. These men say things which make one start, without making one feel; they are all alike; their manners are alike; they all know fashionables; they have all a mannerism in their very eating and drinking, in their mere handling a decanter. They talked of Kean and his low company. "Would I were with that company instead of yours," said I to myself! I know such like acquaintance will never do for me, and yet I am going to Reynolds on Wednesday. Brown and Dilke walked with me and back to the Christmas pantomime. I had not a dispute, but a disquisition, with Dilke upon various subjects; several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *negative capability*, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the penetratum of Mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge. This pursued through

volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great Poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration. Shelley's poem<sup>1</sup> is out, and there are words about its being objected to as much as "Queen Mab" was. Poor Shelley, I think he has his quota of good qualities.  
\* \* \* Write soon to your most sincere friend and affectionate brother, John.

## XXIII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove North, Paddington.

Saturday Morn.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead 10 January 1818.]

My dear Haydon,

I should have seen you ere this, but on account of my sister being in Town: so that when I have sometimes made ten paces towards you, Fanny has called me into the City; and the Christmas Holydays are your only time to see Sisters, that is if they are so situated as mine. I will be with you early next week—to night it should be, but we have a sort of a Club every Saturday evening—tomorrow, but I have on that day an insuper-

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<sup>1</sup> *Laon and Cythna*.

(XXIII) Haydon's journal contains what appears to be the rough draft of his answer to this letter. He begins with the closing theme, thus:—

My dear Keats,

I feel greatly delighted by your high opinion, allow me to add sincerely a fourth to be proud of—*John Keats' genius!*—This I speak from my heart.—You and Bewick are the only men I ever liked with all my heart, for Wordsworth being older, there is no

able engagement. Crip[p]s has been down to me, and appears sensible that a binding to you would be of the greatest advantage to him—if such a thing be done it cannot be before 150£ or 200£ are secured in subscriptions to him. I will write to Bailey about it, give a Copy of the Subscribers' names to every one I know who is likely to get a 5£ for him. I will leave a Copy at Taylor and Hessey's, Rodwell and Martin, and will ask Kingston and Co. to cash up.

Your friendship for me is now getting into its teens—and I feel the past. Also every day older I get—the greater is my idea of your achievements in Art: and I am convinced that there are three things to rejoice at in this Age—The Excursion, Your Pictures, and Hazlitt's depth of Taste.

Yours affectionately  
John Keats—

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equality tho' I reverence him and love him devotedly—and now you know my peculiar feelings in wishing to have a notice when you cannot keep an engagement with me; there can never be as long as we live any ground of dispute between us. My friendship for you is beyond its teens, and beginning to ripen to maturity—I always saw through your nature at once and you shall always find me a devoted and affectionate brother.—With respect to Cripps, I sincerely think it would be for our mutual advantage to have him bound, I would instruct him for the first two years, and then in the last he would be a great assistance to me. I will subscribe 5£—it is all I can afford, and all which ought to be expected of me, as I will do all in my power to inform him—I like him much, he is docile and industrious and improves rapidly—I hope we shall succeed in getting the money—do your utmost and so will I.—In the mean time I will go on with his Studies.—With respect to our meeting, the sooner my dear Keats the better—but accept this engagement as long as we live—every Sunday at *three* I shall be happy to see you as long as I live and you live, and as long as I have a bit of beef to give you. When you have other engagements more important come the Sunday following.

## XXIV.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Hampstead,  
21 January [1818].

My dear Brothers,

I am certain, I think, of having a letter to-morrow morning ; for I expected one so much this morning, having been in town two days, at the end of which my expectations began to get up a little. I found two on the table, one from Bailey and one from Haydon. I am quite perplexed in a world of doubts and fancies ; there is nothing stable in the world ; uproar's your only music. I don't mean to include Bailey in this, and so I dismiss him from this, with all the opprobrium he deserves ; that is, in so many words, he is one of the noblest men alive at the present day. In a note to Haydon, about a week ago (which I wrote with a full sense of what he had done, and how he had never manifested any little mean drawback in his value of me), I said, if there were three things superior in the modern world, they were "The Excursion," Haydon's Pictures, and Hazlitt's depth of Taste. So I believe—not thus speaking with any poor vanity—that works of genius are the first things in this world. No ! for that sort of probity and disinterestedness which such men as Bailey possess does hold and grasp the tip-top of any spiritual honors that can

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This letter as given by Lord Houghton is dated the 21st of April, probably by accident. It must clearly belong to January, as it refers to the preceding letter to Haydon ; and the allusion to the second Book of Endymion in the next letter seems to imply that the first was delivered as intended.

be paid to anything in this world. And, moreover, having this feeling at this present come over me in its full force, I sat down to write to you with a grateful heart, in that I had not a brother who did not feel and credit me for a deeper feeling and devotion for his uprightness, than for any marks of genius however splendid. I have just finished the revision of my First Book, and shall take it to Taylor's to-morrow.

Your most affectionate brother,  
John.

## XXV.

*To* JOHN TAYLOR.

23 January 1818.

My dear Taylor,

I have spoke to Haydon about the drawing. He would do it with all his Art and Heart too, if so I will it; however, he has written this to me; but I must tell you, first, he intends painting a finished Picture from the Poem. Thus he writes—"When I do anything for your Poem it must be effectual—an honour to both of us: to hurry up a sketch for the season won't do. I think an engraving from your head, from a chalk drawing of mine, done with all my might, to which I would put my name, would answer Taylor's idea better than the other. Indeed, I am sure of it."

\* \* \* \* \*

What think you of this? Let me hear. I shall have my second Book in readiness forthwith.

Yours most sincerely  
John Keats

## XXVI.

*To* BENJAMIN BAILEY.

23 January 1818.

My dear Bailey,

Twelve days have pass'd since your last reached me.—What has gone through the myriads of human minds since the 12th? We talk of the immense number of books, the volumes ranged thousands by thousands—but perhaps more goes through the human intelligence in twelve days than ever was written. *How has that unfortunate family lived through the twelve?* One saying of yours I shall never forget: you may not recollect it, it being, perhaps, said when you were looking on the surface and seeming of Humanity alone, without a thought of the past or the future, or the deeps of good and evil. You were at that moment estranged from speculation, and I think you have arguments ready for the man who would utter it to you. This is a formidable preface for a simple thing—merely you said, “Why should woman suffer?” Aye, why should she? “By heavens, I'd coin my very soul, and drop my blood for drachmas!” These things are, and he, who feels how incompetent the most skyey knight-errantry is to heal this bruised fairness, is like a sensitive leaf on the hot hand of thought.

Your tearing, my dear friend, a spiritless and gloomy letter up, to re-write to me, is what I shall never forget—it was to me a real thing.

Things have happened lately of great perplexity; you must have heard of them; Reynolds and Haydon retorting and recriminating, and parting for ever. The same thing has happened between Haydon and Hunt.

It is unfortunate: men should bear with each other: there lives not the man who may not be cut up, aye, lashed to pieces, on his weakest side. The best of men have but a portion of good in them—a kind of spiritual yeast in their frames, which creates the ferment of existence—by which a man is propelled to act, and strive, and buffet with circumstance. The sure way, Bailey, is first to know a man's faults, and then be passive. If, after that, he insensibly draws you towards him, then you have no power to break the link. Before I felt interested in either Reynolds or Haydon, I was well read in their faults; yet, knowing them, I have been cementing gradually with both. I have an affection for them both, for reasons almost opposite; and to both must I of necessity cling, supported always by the hope, that when a little time, a few years, shall have tried me more fully in their esteem, I may be able to bring them together. The time must come, because they have both hearts; and they will recollect the best parts of each other, when this gust is overblown.

I had a message from you through a letter to Jane<sup>1</sup>—I think, about Cripps. There can be no idea of binding until a sufficient sum is sure for him; and even then the thing should be maturely considered by all his helpers. I shall try my luck upon as many fat purses as I can meet with. Cripps is improving very fast: I have the greater hopes of him because he is so slow in development. A man of great executing powers at twenty, with a look and a speech almost stupid, is sure to do something.

I have just looked through the second side of your letter. I feel a great content at it.

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Reynolds.



I was at Hunt's the other day, and he surprised me with a real authenticated lock of *Milton's Hair*. I know you would like what I wrote thereon, so here it is—as they say of a Sheep in a Nursery Book.<sup>1</sup>

This I did at Hunt's, at his request. Perhaps I should have done something better alone and at home.

I have sent my first Book<sup>2</sup> to the press, and this afternoon shall begin preparing the second. My visit to you will be a great spur to quicken the proceeding. I have not had your sermon returned. I long to make it the subject of a letter to you. What do they say at Oxford?

I trust you and Gleig pass much fine time together. Remember me to him and Whitehead. My brother Tom is getting stronger, but his spitting of blood continues.

I sat down to read "King Lear" yesterday, and felt the greatness of the thing up to the writing of a sonnet preparatory thereto: in my next you shall have it.

There were some miserable reports of Rice's health—I went, and lo! Master Jemmy had been to the play the night before, and was out at the time. He always comes on his legs like a cat.

<sup>1</sup> For the poem see Volume II, page 249. Lord Houghton remarks on this composition:

"The assumption, in the above lines, of Beauty being 'the kernel' of Milton's love, rather accords with the opinion of many of Keats's friends, that at this time he had not studied 'Paradise Lost,' as he did afterwards. His taste would naturally have rather attracted him to those poems which Milton had drawn out of the heart of old mythology, 'Lycidas' and 'Comus;' and those 'two exquisite jewels, hung, as it were, in the ears of antiquity,' the 'Penseroso' and 'Allegro,' had no doubt been well enjoyed; but his full appreciation of the great Poem was reserved for the period which produced 'Hyperion.'"

<sup>2</sup> Of *Endymion*.

I have seen a good deal of Wordsworth. Hazlitt is lecturing on Poetry at the Surrey Institution. I shall be there next Tuesday.

Your most affectionate friend,  
John Keats.

## XXVII.

*To* GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

23 January 1818.

My dear Brothers,

I was thinking what hindered me from writing so long, for I have so many things to say to you, and know not where to begin. It shall be upon a thing most interesting to you, my Poem. Well! I have given the first Book to Taylor; he seemed more than satisfied with it, and, to my surprise, proposed publishing it in quarto, if Haydon could make a drawing of some event therein, for a frontispiece. I called on Haydon. He said he would do anything I liked, but said he would rather paint a finished picture from it, which he seems eager to do. This, in a year or two, will be a glorious thing for us; and it will be, for Haydon is struck with the first Book. I left Haydon, and the next day received a letter from him, proposing to make, as he says, with all his might, a finished chalk sketch of my head, to be engraved in the first style, and put at the head of my Poem, saying, at the same time, he had never done the thing for any human being, and that it must have considerable effect, as he will put his name to it. I begin to-day to copy my second Book: "thus far into the bowels of the land." You shall hear whether it will be quarto or non-quarto, picture or non-picture. Leigh Hunt I showed

my first Book to. He allows it not much merit as a whole; says it is unnatural, and made ten objections to it, in the mere skimming over. He says the conversation is unnatural, and too high-flown for Brother and Sister; says it should be simple,—forgetting, do ye mind, that they are both overshadowed by a supernatural Power, and of force could not speak like Francesca, in the “Rimini.” He must first prove that Caliban’s poetry is unnatural. This, with me, completely overturns his objections. The fact is, he and Shelley are hurt,<sup>1</sup> and perhaps justly, at my not having showed them the affair officiously; and, from several hints I have had, they appear much disposed to dissect and anatomize any trip or slip I may have made.—But who’s afraid? Aye! Tom! Demme if I am. I went last Tuesday, an hour too late, to Hazlitt’s lecture on Poetry; got there just as they were coming out, when all these pounced upon me:—Hazlitt, John Hunt and Son, Wells, Bewick, all the Landseers, Bob Harris, aye and more.

I think a little change has taken place in my intellect lately; I cannot bear to be uninterested or unemployed, I, who for so long a time have been addicted to passiveness. Nothing is finer for the purposes of great productions than a very gradual ripening of the intellectual powers. As an instance of this—observe—I sat down yesterday to read “King Lear” once again: the thing appeared to demand the prologue of a sonnet. I wrote it, and began to read. (I know you would like to see it.)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Not knowing whence Keats received his “several hints”, I cannot say how far his suppositions as to Shelley and Hunt were well founded; but it seems probable there was some misapprehension.

<sup>2</sup> For the sonnet see Volume II, page 252.

So you see I am getting at it with a sort of determination and strength, though, verily, I do not feel it at this moment: this is my fourth letter this morning, and I feel rather tired, and my head rather swimming—so I will leave it open till to-morrow's post.

I am in the habit of taking my papers to Dilke's and copying there; so I chat and proceed at the same time. I have been there at my work this evening, and the walk over the Heath<sup>1</sup> takes off all sleep, so I will even proceed with you. \* \* \* Constable, the bookseller, has offered Reynolds ten guineas a sheet to write for his Magazine. It is an Edinburgh one, which Blackwood's started up in opposition to. Hunt said he was nearly sure that the "Cockney School" was written by Scott;<sup>2</sup> so you are right, Tom! There are no more little bits of news I can remember at present.

I remain,

My dear brothers, your affectionate brother,  
John.

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<sup>1</sup> Presumably the walk from Wentworth Place to Well Walk.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Dilke notes that it was written by Lockhart, "which is so close akin that it is by no means impossible that Scott encouraged the thing. That Lockhart was the writer was admitted to an American who published it on his return."

## XXVIII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 30 January 1818.]

My dear Taylor,

These lines, as they now stand, about "happiness," have rung in my ears like "a chime a mending." See here :

Behold

Wherein lies happiness, Peona? fold, &c.<sup>1</sup>

It appears to me the very contrary of "blessed." I hope this will appear to you more eligible :

Wherein lies happiness? In that which beck  
Our ready minds to fellowship divine ;  
A fellowship with essence, till we shine  
Full alchemized and free of space. Behold  
The clear religion of Heaven—Peona ! fold, &c.

You must indulge me by putting this in ; for, setting aside the badness of the other, such a preface is necessary to the subject. The whole thing must, I think, have appeared to you, who are a consecutive man, as a thing almost of mere words. But I assure you that, when I wrote it, it was a regular stepping of the imagination towards a truth. My having written that argument will perhaps be of the greatest service to me of anything I ever did. It set before me the gradations of happiness, even like a kind of pleasure-thermometer, and is my first

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<sup>1</sup> See *Endymion*, Book I (Volume I, page 161).

step towards the chief attempt in the drama : the playing of different natures with joy and sorrow.

Do me this favour, and believe me,

Your sincere friend,

J. Keats.

I hope your next work will be of a more general interest. I suppose you cogitate a little about it now and then.

### XXIX.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Hampstead,  
31 January 1818.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now I purposed to write to you a serious poetical letter, but I find that a maxim I met with the other day is a just one: "On cause mieux quand on ne dit pas *causons*." I was hindered, however, from my first intention by a mere muslin handkerchief, very neatly pinned—but "Hence, vain deluding," &c. Yet I cannot write in prose; it is a sunshiny day and I cannot, so here goes.

Hence Burgundy, Claret, and Port, &c.<sup>1</sup>

My dear Reynolds, you must forgive all this ranting; but the fact is, I cannot write sense this morning; however, you shall have some. I will copy out my last sonnet.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The verses will be found at pages 239-40 of Volume II.

<sup>2</sup> The sonnet in question, "When I have fears", &c., is given at page 236 of Volume II.

I must take a turn, and then write to Teignmouth.  
Remember me to all, not excepting yourself.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

XXX.

*To* JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Hampstead, 3 February 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

I thank you for your dish of filberts. Would I could get a basket of them by way of dessert every day for the sum of twopence (two sonnets on Robin Hood sent by the twopenny post).<sup>1</sup> Would we were a sort of ethereal pigs, and turned loose to feed upon spiritual mast and acorns! which would be merely being a squirrel and feeding upon filberts; for what is a squirrel but an airy pig, or a filbert but a sort of archangelical acorn? About the nuts being worth cracking, all I can say is, that where there are a throng of delightful images ready drawn, simplicity is the only thing. It may be said that we ought to read our contemporaries, that Wordsworth &c. should have their due from us. But, for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are we to be bullied into a certain philosophy engendered in the whims of an egotist? Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brood and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself. Many a man can travel to the very bourne of Heaven, and yet

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, pages 132-6 and 560-1. The passage of the text given above in parenthesis stands so in Lord Houghton's editions, but should perhaps be in square brackets, to imply interpolation.

want confidence to put down his half-seeing. Sancho will invent a journey heavenward as well as anybody. We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us, and, if we do not agree, seems to put its hand into its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject. How beautiful are the retired flowers! How would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway, crying out, "Admire me, I am a violet! Dote upon me, I am a primrose!" Modern poets differ from the Elizabethans in this: each of the moderns, like an Elector of Hanover, governs his petty state, and knows how many straws are swept daily from the causeways in all his dominions, and has a continual itching that all the housewives should have their coppers well scoured. The ancients were Emperors of vast provinces; they had only heard of the remote ones, and scarcely cared to visit them. I will cut all this. I will have no more of Wordsworth or Hunt in particular. Why should we be of the tribe of Manasseh, when we can wander with Esau? Why should we kick against the pricks when we can walk on roses? Why should we be owls, when we can be eagles? Why be teased with "nice-eyed wagtails," when we have in sight "the cherub Contemplation?" Why with Wordsworth's "Matthew with a bough of wilding in his hand," when we can have Jacques "under an oak," &c.? The secret of the "bough of wilding" will run through your head faster than I can write it. Old Matthew spoke to him some years ago on some nothing, and because he happens in an evening walk to imagine the figure of the old man, he must stamp it down in black and white, and it is henceforth sacred. I don't mean to deny Wordsworth's grandeur and Hunt's merit, but I mean to say



we need not be teased with grandeur and merit when we can have them uncontaminated and unobtrusive.<sup>1</sup> Let us have the old Poets and Robin Hood. Your letter and its sonnets gave me more pleasure than will the Fourth Book of "Childe Harold," and the whole of anybody's life and opinions.

In return for your dish of filberts, I have gathered a few catkins.<sup>2</sup> I hope they'll look pretty.

I hope you will like them—they are at least written in the spirit of outlawry. Here are the Mermaid lines.<sup>3</sup>

In the hope that these scribblings will be some amusement for you this evening, I remain, copying on the hill,

Your sincere friend and co-scribbler,  
John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton comments on this passage thus :—"Keats was perhaps unconsciously swayed in his estimate of Wordsworth at this moment, by an incident which had occurred at Mr. Haydon's. The young Poet had been induced to repeat to the elder the fine 'Hymn to Pan,' out of 'Endymion,' which Shelley, who did not much like the poem, used to speak of as affording the 'surest promise of ultimate excellence;' Wordsworth only remarked, 'it was a pretty piece of Paganism.' The mature and philosophic genius, penetrated with Christian associations, probably intended some slight rebuke to his youthful compeer, whom he saw absorbed in an order of ideas, that to him appeared merely sensuous, and would have desired that the bright traits of Greek mythology should be sobered down by a graver faith, as in his own 'Dion' and 'Laodamia.'" Mr. Dilke adds—"When Keats first called on Wordsworth he was kept waiting for a long time, and when Wordsworth entered he was in full flower, kneebreeches, silk stockings &c., and in a great hurry as he was going to dine with one of the Commissioners of Stamps. As Keats told this story, and with something of anger the circumstance perhaps had unconsciously &c."

<sup>2</sup> A modest way of referring to the charming poem *Robin Hood*, given at pages 132-6 of Volume II.

<sup>3</sup> They will be found in Volume II, pages 130-1.

## XXXI.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Hampstead,  
16 February [1818].

My dear Brothers,

When once a man delays a letter beyond the proper time, he delays it longer, for one or two reasons; first, because he must begin in a very common-place style, that is to say, with an excuse; and secondly, things and circumstances become so jumbled in his mind, that he knows not what, or what not, he has said in his last. I shall visit you as soon as I have copied my Poem all out. I am now much beforehand with the printers: they have done none yet, and I am half afraid they will let half the season by before the printing. I am determined they shall not trouble me when I have copied it all. Hazlitt's last lecture was on Thomson, Cowper, and Crabbe. He praised Thomson and Cowper, but he gave Crabbe an unmerciful licking. I saw "Fazio"<sup>1</sup> the first night; it hung rather heavily on me. I am in the high way of being introduced to a squad of people, Peter Pindar, Mrs. Opie, Mrs. Scott. Mr. Robinson,<sup>2</sup> a great friend of Coleridge's, called on me. Richards tells me that my Poems are known in the west country, and that he saw a very clever copy of verses headed with a motto from my sonnet to George. Honors rush so thickly upon me that I shall not be able to bear up against them.

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<sup>1</sup> By the Rev. Henry (afterwards Dean) Milman.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Crabb Robinson, I presume; but I do not find any notice of the visit in the published Diary.

What think you—am I to be crowned in the Capitol? Am I to be made a Mandarin? No! I am to be invited, Mrs. Hunt tells me, to a party at Ollier's, to keep Shakespeare's birthday. Shakespeare would stare to see me there.<sup>1</sup> The Wednesday before last, Shelley, Hunt, and I, wrote each a sonnet on the river Nile: some day you shall read them all.<sup>2</sup> I saw a sheet of "Endymion," and have all reason to suppose they will soon get it done; there shall be nothing wanting on my part. I have been writing, at intervals, many songs and sonnets, and I long to be at Teignmouth to read them over to you; however, I think I had better wait till this book is off my mind; it will not be long first.

Reynolds has been writing two very capital articles, in the "Yellow Dwarf," on Popular Preachers.

Your most affectionate brother

John

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's reason for staring may be found in the letter from Messrs. Ollier to George Keats, given in the Appendix to Volume I.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, pages 254 and 566-7.

## XXXII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 19 February 1818.]

My dear Reynolds,

I had an idea that a Man might pass a very pleasant life in this manner—let him on a certain day read a certain Page of full Poesy or distilled Prose, and let him wander with it, and muse upon it, and reflect upon it, and bring home to it, and prophesy upon it, and dream upon it, until it becomes stale—but when will it do so? Never. When Man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting-post towards all “the two-and-thirty Palaces.” How happy is such a voyage of conception, what delicious diligent Indolence! A doze upon a sofa does not hinder it, and a nap upon Clover engenders ethereal finger-pointings—the prattle of a child gives it wings, and the converse of middle-age a strength to beat them—a strain of music conducts to “an odd angle of the Isle,” and when the leaves whisper it puts a girdle round the earth. Nor will this sparing touch of noble Books be any irreverence to their Writers—for perhaps the honors paid by Man to Man are trifles in comparison to the Benefit done by great Works to the Spirit and pulse of good by their mere passive existence. Memory should not be called knowledge. Many have original minds who do not think it—they are led away by Custom. Now it appears to me that almost any Man may like the spider spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel—the points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful

circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury. But the Minds of Mortals are so different and bent on such diverse journeys that it may at first appear impossible for any common taste and fellowship to exist between two or three under these suppositions. It is however quite the contrary. Minds would leave each other in contrary directions, traverse each other in numberless points, and at last greet each other at the journey's end. An old Man and a child would talk together and the old Man be led on his path and the child left thinking. Man should not dispute or assert but whisper results to his neighbour and thus by every germ of spirit sucking the sap from mould ethereal every human [being] might become great, and Humanity instead of being a wide heath of Furze and Briars with here and there a remote Oak or Pine, would become a grand democracy of Forest Trees! It has been an old comparison for our urging on—the Beehive; however, it seems to me that we should rather be the flower than the Bee—for it is a false notion that more is gained by receiving than giving—no, the receiver and the giver are equal in their benefits. The flower, I doubt not, receives a fair guerdon from the Bee—its leaves blush deeper in the next spring—and who shall say between Man and Woman which is the most delighted? Now it is more noble to sit like Jove than to fly like Mercury—let us not therefore go hurrying about and collecting honey, bee-like buzzing here and there impatiently from a knowledge of what is to be aimed at; but let us open our leaves like a flower and be passive and receptive—budding patiently under the eye of Apollo and taking

hints from every noble insect that favours us with a visit—sap will be given us for meat and dew for drink. I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness—I have not read any Books—the Morning said I was right—I had no idea but of the morning, and the thrush said I was right—seeming to say,

O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,  
 Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,  
 And the black elm-tops 'mong the freezing stars,  
 To thee the Spring will be a harvest-time.  
 O thou, whose only book has been the light  
 Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on  
 Night after night when Phœbus was away,  
 To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.  
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,  
 And yet my song comes native with the warmth.  
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,  
 And yet the Evening listens. He who saddens  
 At thought of idleness cannot be idle,  
 And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.<sup>1</sup>

Now I am sensible all this is a mere sophistication (however it may neighbour to any truths), to excuse my own indolence—so I will not deceive myself that Man should be equal with Jove—but think himself very well off as a sort of scullion-Mercury, or even a humble Bee. It is no matter whether I am right or wrong, either one way or another, if there is sufficient to lift a little time from your shoulders.

Your affectionate friend  
 John Keats—

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<sup>1</sup> See note to this poem at pages 255-6 of Volume II.

## XXXIII.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Hampstead,  
21 February [1818].

My dear Brothers,

I am extremely sorry to have given you so much uneasiness by not writing; however, you know good news is no news, or *vice versâ*. I do not like to write a short letter to you, or you would have had one long before. The weather, although boisterous to-day, has been very much milder, and I think Devonshire is not the last place to receive a temperate change. I have been abominably idle since you left, but have just turned over a new leaf, and used as a marker a letter of excuse to an invitation from Horace Smith. I received a letter the other day from Haydon, in which he says his "Essays on the Elgin Marbles" are being translated into Italian, the which he superintends. I did not mention that I had seen the British Gallery; there are some nice things by Stark, and "Bathsheba," by Wilkie, which is condemned. I could not bear Alston's "Uriel."

The thrushes and blackbirds have been singing me into an idea that it was spring, and almost that leaves were on the trees. So that black clouds and boisterous winds seem to have mustered and collected in full divan, for the purpose of convincing me to the contrary. Taylor says my poem shall be out in a month. \* \* \* The thrushes are singing now as if they would speak to the winds, because their big brother Jack—the Spring—was not far off. I am reading Voltaire and Gibbon, although I wrote to Reynolds the other day to prove reading of no

use. I have not seen Hunt since. I am a good deal with Dilke and Brown; they are kind to me. I don't think I could stop in Hampstead but for their neighbourhood. I hear Hazlitt's lectures regularly: his last was on Gray, Collins, Young, &c., and he gave a very fine piece of discriminating criticism on Swift, Voltaire, and Rabelais. I was very disappointed at his treatment of Chatterton. I generally meet with many I know there. Lord Byron's Fourth Canto is expected out, and I heard somewhere, that Walter Scott has a new Poem in readiness. \* \* \* I have not yet read Shelley's Poem: I do not suppose you have it yet at the Teignmouth libraries. These double letters must come rather heavy; I hope you have a moderate portion of cash, but don't fret at all, if you have not—Lord! I intend to play at cut and run as well as Falstaff, that is to say, before he got so lusty.

I remain, praying for your health, my dear brothers,  
Your affectionate brother,  
John.

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Lord Houghton says—"Keats passed the winter of 1817-18 at Hampstead, gaily enough among his friends; his society was much sought after, from the delightful combination of earnestness and pleasantry which distinguished his intercourse with all men. There was no effort about him to say fine things, but he did say them most effectively, and they gained considerably by his happy transition of manner. He joked well or ill, as it happened, and with a laugh which still echoes sweetly in many ears; but at the mention of oppression or wrong, or at any calumny against those he loved, he rose into grave manliness at once, and seemed like a tall man. His habitual gentleness made his occasional looks of indignation almost terrible: on one occasion, when a gross falsehood respecting the young artist Severn was repeated and dwelt upon, he left the room, declaring 'he should be ashamed to sit with men who could utter and believe such things.'"



## XXXIV.

*To* JOHN TAYLOR.

Hampstead,  
27 February [1818].

My dear Taylor,

Your alteration strikes me as being a great improvement. And now I will attend to the punctuation you speak of. The comma should be at *soberly*, and in the other passage the comma should follow *quiet*. I am extremely indebted to you for this alteration, and also for your after admonitions. It is a sorry thing for me that any one should have to overcome prejudices in reading my verses. That affects me more than any hypercriticism on any particular passage. In "Endymion," I have most likely but moved into the go-cart from the leading-strings. In poetry I have a few axioms, and you will see how far I am from their centre.

1st. I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

2nd. Its touches of beauty should never be half-way, thereby making the reader breathless, instead of content. The rise, the progress, the setting of imagery, should, like the sun, come natural to him, shine over him, and set soberly, although in magnificence, leaving him in the luxury of twilight. But it is easier to think what poetry should be, than to write it. And this leads me to

Another axiom—That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all. However it may be with me, I cannot help looking into

new countries with "Oh, for a muse of fire to ascend!" If "Endymion" serves me as a pioneer, perhaps I ought to be content, for, thank God, I can read, and perhaps understand, Shakespeare to his depths; and I have, I am sure, many friends, who, if I fail, will attribute any change in my life and temper to humbleness rather than pride—to a cowering under the wings of great poets, rather than to a bitterness that I am not appreciated.<sup>1</sup> I am anxious to get "Endymion" printed that I may forget it, and proceed. I have copied the Third Book, and begun the Fourth. I will take care the printer shall not trip up my heels.

Remember me to Percy Street.

Your sincere and obliged friend

John Keats

P.S.—I shall have a short preface in good time.

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<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Bailey has informed me", says Lord Houghton, "that one of Keats's favourite topics of conversation was the principle of melody in verse, which he believed to consist in the adroit management of open and close vowels. He had a theory that vowels could be as skilfully combined and interchanged as differing notes of music, and that all sense of monotony was to be avoided, except when expressive of a special purpose. Uniformity of metre is so much the rule of English poetry, that, undoubtedly, the carefully varied harmonies of Keats's verse were disagreeable, even to cultivated readers, often producing exactly the contrary impression from what was intended, and, combined as they were with rare and curious rhymes, diverted the attention from the beauty of the thoughts and the force of the imagery. In 'Endymion,' indeed, there was much which not only seemed, but was, experimental; and it is impossible not to observe the superior mastery of melody, and sure-footedness of the poetic paces, in 'Hyperion.'"

## XXXV.

To MESSRS. TAYLOR AND HESSEY.

My dear Sirs,

I am this morning making a general clearance of all lent Books—all—I am afraid I do not return all—I must fog your memories about them—however with many thanks here are the remainder—which I am afraid are not worth so much now as they were six months ago—I mean the fashions may have changed—

Yours truly

John Keats

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Although undated, this letter may perhaps be safely assigned to the end of February or beginning of March 1818, just before Keats's departure for Teignmouth. In the *Life, Letters &c.*, Lord Houghton mentions that Keats visited his brothers three times at that place in the early part of 1818; and I regret that the documents which I have been enabled to consult do not place me in a position to trace the dates of his flittings backwards and forwards between Hampstead and Teignmouth.

## XXXVI.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Teignmouth,  
14 March [1818].

Dear Reynolds,

I escaped being blown over, and blown under, and trees and house being toppled on me. I have, since hearing of Brown's accident, had an aversion to a dose of parapet, and being also a lover of antiquities, I would sooner have a harmless piece of Herculaneum sent me quietly as a present than ever so modern a chimney-pot tumbled on to my head.<sup>1</sup> Being agog to see some Devonshire, I would have taken a walk the first day, but the rain would not let me ; and the second, but the rain would not let me ; and the third, but the rain forbade it. Ditto fourth, ditto fifth, ditto—so I made up my mind to stop in-doors, and catch a sight flying between the showers : and, behold, I saw a pretty valley, pretty cliffs, pretty brooks, pretty meadows, pretty trees, both standing as they were created, and blown down as they were uncreated. The green is beautiful, as they say, and pity it is that it is amphibious—*mais !* but alas ! the flowers here wait as naturally for the rain twice a day as the muscles do for the tide ; so we look upon a brook in

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke says "This alludes to an accident which befell Brown many years before and which must have been about that time first mentioned to Keats and Reynolds. A parapet stone fell and struck Brown on the *calf of the leg*—a narrower escape a man could not well have. Apparently no great harm done—but it got worse and worse and it was doubtful at last whether he would not have lost the limb. This was years before he knew either Keats or Reynolds."

these parts as you look upon a splash in your country. There must be something to support this—aye, fog, hail, snow, rain, mist blanketing up three parts of the year. This Devonshire is like Lydia Languish, very entertaining when it smiles, but cursedly subject to sympathetic moisture. You have the sensation of walking under one great Lamp-lighter : and you can't go on the other side of the ladder to keep your frock clean. Buy a girdle, put a pebble in your mouth, loosen your braces—for I am going among scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe.<sup>1</sup> I'll cavern you, and grotto you, and water-fall you, and wood you, and water you, and immense-rock you, and tremendous-sound you, and solitude you. I'll make a lodgment on your glaxis by a row of pines, and storm your covered way with bramble-bushes. I'll have at you with hip-and-haw small-shot, and cannonade you with shingles. I'll be witty upon salt-fish,<sup>2</sup> and impede your cavalry with clotted-cream. But ah, Coward! to talk at this rate to a sick man, or, I hope, to one that was sick—for I hope by this you stand on your right foot. If you are not—that's all—I intend to cut all sick people if they do not make up their minds to cut Sickness—a fellow to whom I have a complete aversion, and who, strange to say, is harboured and countenanced in several houses where I visit : he is sitting now, quite impudent, between me and Tom ; he

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<sup>1</sup> Why Mrs. Radcliffe should be thus shorn of her matronly dignity one cannot guess : in another place Keats scarcely magnifies the dignity of maternity by alluding to her as "Mother Radcliffe." The stock in trade of *The Romance of the Forest* looks curious beside the ensuing reminiscence of Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim.

<sup>2</sup> Teignmouth used to have a considerable trade in salt cod from Newfoundland.

insults me at poor Jem Rice's ; and you have seated him, before now, between us at the Theatre, when I thought he looked with a longing eye at poor Kean. I shall say, once for all, to my friends, generally and severally, cut that fellow, or I cut you.

I went to the Theatre here the other night, which I forgot to tell George, and got insulted, which I ought to remember to forget to tell anybody ; for I did not fight, and as yet have had no redress—" Lie thou there, sweetheart!" I wrote to Bailey yesterday, obliged to speak in a high way, and a damme who's afraid? for I had owed him so long : however, he shall see I will be better in future. Is he in town yet? I have directed to Oxford as the better chance.

I have copied my Fourth Book, and shall write the Preface soon. I wish it was all done ; for I want to forget it, and make my mind free for something new. Atkins the coachman, Bartlet[t] the surgeon, Simmons<sup>1</sup> the barber, and the girls over at the bonnet-shop, say we shall now have a month of seasonable weather—warm, witty, and full of invention.

Write to me and tell me that you are well, or thereabouts ; or, by the holy Beaucœur, which I suppose is the Virgin Mary, or the repented Magdalen (beautiful name, that Magdalen), I'll take to my wings and fly away to anywhere, but old or Nova Scotia.<sup>1</sup>

I wish I had a little innocent bit of metaphysic in my head, to criss-cross the letter : but you know a favourite tune is hardest to be remembered when one wants it most ; and you, I know, have, long ere this, taken it for

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<sup>1</sup> Probably these are all the names of real inhabitants. Mr. Bartlett, at all events, I well remember as the senior medical practitioner of the place in 1850 and onwards.

granted that I never have any speculations without associating you in them, where they are of a pleasant nature: and you know enough of me to tell the places where I haunt most, so that if you think for five minutes after having read this, you will find it a long letter, and see written in the air before you,

Your affectionate friend,

John Keats.

### XXXVII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Teignmouth,

Saturday Morn.

[*Postmark*, 23 March 1818.]

My dear Haydon,

In sooth, I hope you are not too sanguine about that seal—in sooth I hope it is not Brumidgeum—in double sooth I hope it is his—and in triple sooth I hope I shall have an impression. Such a piece of intelligence came doubly welcome to me while in your own County and in your own hand—not but I have blown up the said County for its urinal qualifications—the six first days I was here it did nothing but rain; and at that time having to write to a friend I gave Devonshire a good blowing up—it has been fine for almost three days,

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(xxxvii) On the 4th of March 1818 Haydon appears to have written the following letter, still preserved in his journal:—

My dear Keats,

I shall certainly go mad!—In a field at Stratford-upon-Avon, in a field that belonged to Shakespeare, they have found a gold ring and seal, with the initial thus—a true Lover's knot be-

and I was coming round a bit ; but to day it rains again —with me the County is yet upon its good behaviour. I have enjoyed the most delightful Walks these three fine days beautiful enough to make me content here all the summer could I stay.<sup>1</sup>

I know not of this rhyming fit has done anything—it will be safe with you if worthy to put among my Lyrics.

How does the work go on? I should like to bring out my *Dentatus* at the time your Epic makes its appearance. I expect to have my Mind soon clear for something new. Tom has been much worse : but is now getting better—his remembrances to you. I think of seeing the Dart and Plymouth—but I don't know. It has as yet been a Mystery to me how and where Wordsworth went. I can't help thinking he has returned to his Shell—with his beautiful Wife and his enchanting Sister. It is a great Pity that People should by associating themselves with the finest things, spoil them. Hunt has damned Hampstead a[nd] masks and sonnets and Italian tales. Wordsworth has damned the lakes—Milman has

tween W. S. ; if *this* is not Shakespeare who is it?—a true-Lover's knot!!—I saw an impression to-day, and am to have one as soon as possible. As sure as you breathe, and that he was the first of beings, the seal belonged to him.—

Oh Lord!

B. R. Haydon.

At pages 260-2 of Volume II, I have shown that Keats's reply to this letter, above, was written on the 14th of March ; and I presume from the Postmark, a London one, that it was either detained by Keats or delayed in the post.

<sup>1</sup> At this point Keats goes off without further ceremony into the verses headed *Teignmouth*, Volume II, pages 260-3, which done, he remarks—"Here's some dogrel for you—Perhaps you would like a bit of B—hrell"—and proceeds to give *The Devon Maid*, Volume II, pages 264-5.



damned the old drama—West has damned——wholesale. Peacock has damned satire—Ollier has damn'd Music—Hazlitt has damned the bigoted and the blue-stock-in[g]ed; how durst the Man?! he is your only good damner, and if ever I am damn'd—damn me if I

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Haydon's reply to Keats has been mainly given by Mr. F. W. Haydon in the *Correspondence &c.*, Volume II; but I now give it entire from the actual copy sent through the post, and subsequently recovered and wafered into the journal: it is dated the 25th of March 1818:—

My dear Keats,

Your bi—ell as you call it is beautiful and I take it as a great friendly kindness to remember me in that way—as often as you feel inclined to give vent remember I am always ready with pleasure to receive the result.—Surely you will not leave Devonshire without going to Plymouth, the country round which is most exquisite. I will give you letters, and promise you a kind and a welcome reception. Do go, my dear Keats; and if you consent, let me know, and I will write my Friends immediately; and go round by the Totness road, which is very fine, and come home by Ashburton and then by Bridgewater, where I have a sister, who will be most happy to see you.—I am getting on well, and have got my Christ better than I have ever had it yet—and in a good state to complete it. I am most happy to hear your Poem is advancing to publication, God grant it the most complete success, and may its reputation equal your genius. Devonshire has somehow or other the character of being rainy, but I must own to you I do not think it more so than any other County, and pray remember the time of year; it has rained in Town almost incessantly ever since you went away, the fact is, you dog, you carried the rain with you as Ulysses did the Winds, and then opening your rain bags you look round with a knowing wink and say “curse this Devonshire, how it rains!” Stay till the Summer, and then look into its deep blue summer Sky, and lush grass, and tawny banks, and silver bubbling rivers—you must not leave Devonshire without seeing some of its wild Scenery, rocky, mossy, craggy, with roaring rivers and as clear as crystal—it will do your mind good.

Shakespeare in speaking of somebody who is gradually dying makes some one say—“how is he?”—“Still ill—Nature and sickness *debate it at their leisure*”—is this not exquisite? When I die I'll

shouldn't like him to damn me. It will not be long ere I see you, but I thought I would just give you a line out of Devon.

Yours affectionately

John Keats

Rem[em]ber me to all we know.

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have my Shakespeare placed on my heart, with Homer in my right hand and Ariosto in the other, Dante under my head, Tasso at my feet, and Corneille under my ———. I hate that Corneille, a heartless, tirade maker—I leave my other side, that is my right one, for you, if you realize all of which your Genius is capable, as I am sure you will.

Write me if you go to Devonshire. Mrs. Scott "con occhi neri" is as interesting as ever and desires to be remembered. I have heard nothing of Wordsworth ever since he went, which I take to be unkind.—Hazlitt is going to lecture at Crown and Anchor.—I am sorry for it, tho' he will get money, it is letting his talents down a little.—What affectation in Hunt's title—"Foliage"!—I met that horrid creature Miss Kent, looking like a fury and an old maid, mixed.—

Yours ever dear Keats,

B. R. Haydon.

For *Devonshire* in the final paragraph we should of course read *Plymouth*.

## XXXVIII.

To MESSRS. TAYLOR AND HESSEY.

Teignmouth, Saturday Morn.

[*Postmark*, 23 March 1818.]

My dear Sirs,

I had no idea of your getting on so fast—I thought of bringing my 4th Book to Town all in good time for you—especially after the late unfortunate chance.

I did not however for my own sake delay finishing the copy which was done a few days after my arrival here. I send it off to day, and will tell you in a Postscript at what time to send for it from the Bull and Mouth or

A letter from George Keats, addressed to “Jno. Keats, Post Office, Teignmouth”, and dated “Pancras Lane—March 18—1818,” appears to have given rise to letters XXXVIII and XXXIX. It supplies some links in the story of that period ; so I give it here :

My dear John—

Poor Tom—who could have imagined such a change ? I have indeed been sanguine ; whenever he has occur[r]ed to my thoughts he has appeared nearly in good health, every answer I have given to enquiring Friends has been “much better” and “improving every day.” I can hardly believe this melancholy news, having so long accustomed myself to think altogether otherwise—I hope and trust that your *kind* superintendence will prevent any violent bleeding in future, and consequently that this alarm may prove in the end advantageous ; Tom must never again presume on his strength, at all events untill he has *completely* recover’d. John Reynolds is little better, in many respects worse, he has a very bad rheumatic Fever, and suffers constant pain : it is not said that he is dangerously ill, but I cannot help thinking that so many evils acting upon his most irritable disposition ; deadening his hopes of his advance in business, consequently all his hopes, must make this illness somewhat dangerous.—I called yesterday but he was not sufficiently well to be seen. His sisters are well.—Your letter was

other Inn. You will find the Preface and dedication and the title Page as I should wish it to stand—for a romance is a fine thing notwithstanding the circulating Libraries. My respects to Mrs. Hessey and to Percy Street.

Yours very sincerely

John Keats

P. S. I have been advised to send it to you—you may expect it on Monday for I sent it by the Post-man to Exeter at the same time with this letter. Adieu.

most welcome to him. Bailey's in town for a few days, on business for Glegg—I have not seen him.—Mrs. Scott desires her compliments to you and Tom. I have repeatedly called on Taylor and Hessey and have never found them at home, or you should long since have known the progress of your book. Brown has I understand written to you and given you the pleasant information that the printers are in immediate want of the fourth book and preface. By the time you have received this I have no doubt but T. and J. H. will have received them.—The inclosed 20 pounds No. 834 dated 3rd Feby—1818, will reach you before you are quite aground. I am about paying yours as well as Tom's bills, of which I shall keep regular accounts and for the sake of justice and a future proper understanding I intend calculating the probable amount Tom and I are indebted to you, something of this kind must be done, or at the end of two or three years we shall be all at sixes and sevens. Let me know when you want money. I have paid Hodgkinson who desires his best rem[embrance]s.—I'll write Tom soon—give my love to him—rem[embrance]s to Miss M and C—and love to the Miss I's—Miss Wylie as usual desires her *respects* to you and *best wishes* to Tom—R Draper has been teasing throughout the writing of this to my great annoyance—.

Good bye for the present

Your most affectionate Brother

— George.

## XXXIX.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Teignmouth,  
25 March 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

In hopes of cheering you through a minute or two, I was determined, will he nill he, to send you some lines, so you will excuse the unconnected subject and careless verse. You know, I am sure, Claude's "Enchanted Castle," and I wish you may be pleased with my remembrance of it. The rain is come on again. I think with me Devonshire stands a very poor chance. I shall damn it up hill and down dale, if it keep up to the average of six fine days in three weeks. Let me have better news of you.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

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The poem which this little note was written to accompany is the charming *Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds* printed at pages 266-70 of the second volume. It is by far the most notable of Keats's Poetical Epistles, as indeed it naturally should be, being so much the latest of them. As regards Claude's picture of The Enchanted Castle, see the foot-note to the poem. The close of the piece is in a more thoughtful vein than usual, and might afford a useful argument to any one who should care to be at the pains of justifying Mr. Matthew Arnold's claim for Keats to the quality of "high seriousness" in his criticism of life.

## XL.

*To* JAMES RICE.Teignmouth,  
25 March 1818.

My dear Rice,

Being in the midst of your favourite Devon, I should not, by rights, pen one word but it should contain a vast portion of wit, wisdom, and learning; for I have heard that Milton, ere he wrote his answer to Salmasius, came into these parts, and for one whole month, rolled himself for three whole hours a day, in a certain meadow hard by us, where the mark of his nose at equidistances is still shown. The exhibitor of the said meadow further saith, that, after these rollings, not a nettle sprang up in all the seven acres for seven years, and that from the said time a new sort of plant was made from the whitethorn, of a thornless nature, very much used by the bucks of the present day to rap their boots withal. This account made me very naturally suppose that the nettles and thorns etherealized by the scholar's rotatory motion, and garnered in his head, thence flew, after a process of fermentation, against the luckless Salmasius, and occasioned his well-known and unhappy end. What a happy thing it would be if we could settle our thoughts and make our minds up on any matter in five minutes, and remain content, that is, build a sort of mental cottage of feelings, quiet and pleasant—to have a sort of philosophical back-garden, and cheerful holiday-keeping front one. But, alas! this never can be; for, as the material cottager knows there are such places as France and Italy, and the Andes, and burning mountains, so the spiritual cottager has knowledge of the terra semi-incognita of things un-

earthly, and cannot, for his life, keep in the check-rein—or I should stop here, quiet and comfortable in my theory of—nettles. You will see, however, I am obliged to run wild, being attracted by the load-stone, concatenation. No sooner had I settled the knotty point of Salmasius, than the devil put this whim into my head in the likeness of one of Pythagoras's questionings—Did Milton do more good or harm in the world? He wrote, let me inform you (for I have it from a friend who had it of—,) he wrote "Lycidas," "Comus," "Paradise Lost," and other Poems, with much delectable prose; he was moreover an active friend to man all his life, and has been since his death. Very good. But, my dear fellow, I must let you know that, as there is ever the same quantity of matter constituting this habitable globe, as the ocean, notwithstanding the enormous changes and revolutions taking place in some or other of its demesnes, notwithstanding waterspouts, whirlpools, and mighty rivers emptying themselves into it, it still is made up of the same bulk, nor ever varies the number of its atoms; and, as a certain bulk of water was instituted at the creation, so, very likely, a certain portion of intellect was spun forth into the thin air, for the brains of man to prey upon it. You will see my drift, without any unnecessary parenthesis. That which is contained in the Pacific could not lie in the hollow of the Caspian; that which was in Milton's head could not find room in Charles the Second's. He, like a moon, attracted intellect to its flow—it has not ebbed yet, but has left the shore-pebbles all bare—I mean all bucks, authors of Hengist, and Castlereaghs of the present day, who, without Milton's gormandizing, might have been all wise men. Now for as much as I was very predisposed to a country I had heard you speak so highly of, I took particular notice of

everything during my journey, and have bought some nice folio asses' skins for memorandums. I have seen everything but the wind—and that, they say, becomes visible by taking a dose of acorns, or sleeping one night in a hog-trough, with your tail to the sow-sow-west.

I went yesterday to Dawlish fair.

Over the Hill and over the Dale,  
And over the Bourne to Dawlish,  
Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,  
And ginger-bread nuts are smallish, &c. &c.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

XLI.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove North,  
Paddington, Middx.

Wednesday —

[*Postmarks*, Teignmouth, and 10 April 1818.]

My dear Haydon,

I am glad you were pleased with my nonsense, and if it so happen that the humour takes me when I have set down to prose to you I will not gainsay it. I should be (God forgive me) ready to swear because I cannot make use of your assistance in going through Devon if I was not in my own Mind determined to visit it thoroughly at some more favorable time of the year. But now Tom (who is getting greatly better) is anxious to be in Town—therefore I put off my threading the

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\* (XLI) I presume this letter was written on the 9th of April, which was a Wednesday.



County. I purpose within a month to put my knapsack at my back and make a pedestrian tour through the North of England, and part of Scotland—to make a sort of Prologue to the Life I intend to pursue—that is to write, to study and to see all Europe at the lowest expence. I will clamber through the Clouds and exist. I will get such an accumulation of stupendous recollections that as I walk through the suburbs of London I may not see them—I will stand upon Mount Blanc and remember this coming Summer when I intend to straddle Ben-Lomond—with my soul!—galligaskins are out of the Question. I am nearer myself to hear your Christ is being tinted into immortality. Believe me Haydon your picture is part of myself—I have ever been too sensible of the labyrinthian path to eminence in Art (judging from Poetry) ever to think I understood the emphasis of painting. The innumerable compositions and decompositions which take place between the intellect and its thousand materials before it arrives at that trembling delicate and snail-horn perception of beauty. I know not you[r] many havens of intenseness—nor ever can know them: but for this I hope not you achieve is lost upon me:<sup>1</sup> for when a Schoolboy the abstract Idea I had of an heroic painting—was what I cannot describe. I saw it somewhat sideways, large, prominent, round, and colour'd with magnificence—somewhat like the feel I have of Anthony and Cleopatra. Or of Alcibiades leaning on his Crimson Couch in his Galley, his broad shoulders imperceptibly heaving with the Sea. That passage in Shakespeare is finer than this—

See how the surly Warwick mans the Wall.

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<sup>1</sup> Such is the phrase in the letter. I suppose the sense is “but for all this I hope what you achieve is not lost upon me.”

I like your consignment of Corneille—that's the humour of it. They shall be called your Posthumous Works. I don't understand you[r] bit of Italian.<sup>1</sup> I hope she will awake from her dream and flourish fair—my respects to her. The Hedges by this time are beginning to leaf—Cats are becoming more vociferous—young Ladies who wear Watches are always looking at them. Women about forty five think the Season very backward—Ladies' Mares have but half an allowance of food. It rains here again, has been doing so for three days—however as I told you I'll take a trial in June, July, or August next year.

I am afraid Wordsworth went rather huff'd out of Town—I am sorry for it—he cannot expect his fireside Divan to be infallible—he cannot expect but that every man of worth is as proud as himself. O that he had not fit with a Warrener—that is din'd at Kingston's. I shall be in town in about a fortnight and then we will have a day or so now and then before I set out on my northern expedition—we will have no more abominable Rows—for they leave one in a fearful silence—having settled the Methodists let us be rational—not upon compulsion—no—if it will out let it—but I will not play the Bassoon any more deliberately.<sup>2</sup> Remember me to Hazlitt, and Bewick—

Your affectionate friend

John Keats—

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<sup>1</sup> The allusion to Mrs. Scott's black eyes—page 131, where also will be found the reference to Corneille. The next passage, on the season, should be compared with *A Now*, pages 33-9 of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. F. W. Haydon says in the *Correspondence*, Volume II, page 11, that Keats “appears to allude here to the violent political and religious discussions of the set, as much as to an absurd practice they had, when they met, of amusing themselves after dinner by a

## XLII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Teignmouth,  
9 April 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

Since you all agree that the thing<sup>1</sup> is bad, it must be so—though I am not aware 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 it over again, and examine into the motives, the seeds, from which any one sentence sprung.

I have not the slightest feel 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

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concert, each imitating a different instrument. The fun was as boisterous by all accounts as the discussion was heated." The next trace I find of the correspondence with the painter is a letter in Haydon's journal dated the 8th of May 1817 or 1818, the final figure of the year-date being altered and uncertain; but it is inserted opposite to a letter of May 1818, and clearly points to *Endymion*: it is as follows:

My dear Keats,

I have read your delicious Poem, with exquisite enjoyment, it is the most delightful thing of the time—you have taken up the great trumpet of nature and made it sound with a voice of your own—I write in a great hurry—You will realize all I wish or expect—Success attend you my glorious fellow—& Believe me

ever & ever yours

B. R. Haydon

<sup>1</sup> The first Preface to *Endymion*, given at pages 115-17 of Volume I.

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 torch. You will say my Preface is not much of a torch. 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 affectation, 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.<sup>1</sup> If it should not reach you in four or five days,

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<sup>1</sup> As to the Preface to *Endymion*, Lord Houghton remarks—“He did ‘think about it,’ and within the next twenty-four hours he produced in its stead one of the most beautiful ‘Introductions’ in the range of our literature. The personal circumstance is touched with a delicacy and tenderness that could only be overlooked by

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 the 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 ca[ve?] 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-criti-

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stupidity, or misrepresented by malice, and the deep truth of the latter periods implies a justice of psychological intuition as surprising as anything in the poem itself. What might one not be authorized to expect from a genius that could thus gauge its own capacity, and, in the midst of the consciousness of its power, apprehend so wisely the sources and extent of its deficiencies?"

cism;<sup>1</sup> 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 meet him at the top o' the hill. My love to your nurses.

I am ever  
Your affectionate friend,  
John Keats.

## XLIII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Teignmouth,  
10 April 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

I am anxious you should find this Preface tolerable. If there is an affectation in it 'tis natural to me. Do let the printer's devil cook it, and let me be as "the casing air."

You are too good in this matter; were I in your state, I am certain I should have no thought but of discontent and illness. I might, though, be taught patience. I had an idea of giving no Preface; however, don't you think this had better go? O! let it—one should not be too timid of committing faults.

The climate here weighs us [down] completely; Tom is quite low-spirited. It is impossible to live in a country which is continually under hatches. Who would live in

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke suggests that the reference may be to the Kingston whom Keats had met at Horace Smith's (see page 99), and adds "If so he was I think a Commissioner of Stamps."

a region of mists, game laws, indemnity bills, &c., when there is such a place as Italy? It is said this England from its clime produces a spleen, able to engender the finest sentiments, and covers the whole face of the isle with green. So it ought, I'm sure.

I should still like the Dedication simply, as I said in my last.<sup>1</sup>

I wanted to send you a few songs, written in your favorite Devon. I cannot be! Rain, rain, rain! I am going this morning to take a facsimile of a letter of Nelson's very much to his honour; you will be greatly pleased when you see it, in about a week.

What a spite it is one cannot get out! The little way I went yesterday, I found a lane banked on each side with a store of primroses, while the earlier bushes are beginning to leaf.

I shall hear a good account of you soon.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

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<sup>1</sup> Keats's insistence on this point may be in requisition some of these days. The late Gabriel Rossetti was anxious to see the original Dedication substituted for the final and simpler one; and other critics of the future may have the same preference, which I am sure Rossetti would have been the last to push to execution had he noticed these passages on the subject.

## XLIV.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Teignmouth,  
27 April, 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

It is an awful while since you have heard from me. I hope I may not be punished, when I see you well, and so anxious as you always are for me, with the remembrance of my so seldom writing when you were so horribly confined. The most unhappy hours in our lives are those in which we recollect times past to our own blushing. If we are immortal, that must be the Hell. If I must be immortal, I hope it will be after having taken a little of "that watery labyrinth," in order to forget some of my school-boy days, and others since those.

I have heard from George, at different times, how slowly you were recovering. It is a tedious thing; but all medical men will tell you how far a very gradual amendment is preferable. You will be strong after this, never fear.

We are here still enveloped in clouds. I lay awake last night listening to the rain, with a sense of being drowned and rotted like a grain of wheat. There is a continual courtesy between the heavens and the earth. The heavens rain down their unwelcomeness, and the earth sends it up again, to be returned to-morrow.

Tom has taken a fancy to a physician here, Dr. Turton, and, I think, is getting better; therefore I shall, perhaps, remain here some months. I have written to George for some books—shall learn Greek, and very likely Italian; and, in other ways, prepare myself to ask Hazlitt, in about



a year's time, the best metaphysical road I can take. For, although I take Poetry to be chief, yet there is something else wanting to one who passes his life among books and thoughts on books. I long to feast upon old Homer as we have upon Shakspeare, and as I have lately upon Milton. If you understand Greek, and would read me passages now and then, explaining their meaning, 'twould be, from its mistiness, perhaps, a greater luxury than reading the thing one's self. I shall be happy when I can do the same for you.

I have written for my folio Shakspeare, in which there are the first few stanzas of my "Pot of Basil." I have the rest here, finished, and will copy the whole out fair shortly, and George will bring it you. The compliment is paid by us to Boccace, whether we publish or no: so there is content in this world.<sup>1</sup> Mine is short; you must be deliberate about yours: you must not think of it till many months after you are quite well:—then put your passion to it, and I shall be bound up with you in the shadows of mind, as we are in our matters of human life. Perhaps a stanza or two will not be too foreign to your sickness.

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Give my love to your mother and sisters. Remember me to the Butlers—not forgetting Sarah.

Your affectionate friend,

John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, pages 43-4. The stanzas transcribed for Reynolds appear to have been XII, XIII, and XXX.

## XLV.

*To* JOHN TAYLOR.Teignmouth,  
27 April 1818.

My dear Taylor,

I think I did wrong to leave to you all the trouble of "Endymion." But I could not help it then—another time I shall be more bent to all sorts of troubles and disagreeables. Young men, for some time, have an idea that such a thing as happiness is to be had, and therefore are extremely impatient under any unpleasant restraining. In time, however,—of such stuff is the world about them,—they know better, and instead of striving from uneasiness, greet it as an habitual sensation, a pannier which is to weigh upon them through life. And in proportion to my disgust at the task is my sense of your kindness and anxiety. The book pleased me much. It is very free from faults; and, although there are one or two words I should wish replaced, I see in many places an improvement greatly to the purpose.

I was proposing to travel over the North this summer. There is but one thing to prevent me. I know nothing—I have read nothing—and I mean to follow Solomon's directions, "Get learning—get understanding." I find earlier days are gone by—I find that I can have no enjoyment in the world but continual drinking of knowledge. I find there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good to the world. Some do it with their society; some with their wit; some with their benevolence; some with a sort of power of conferring pleasure and good humour on all they meet—and in a thousand ways, all dutiful to the command of great Nature. There

is but one way for me. The road lies through application, study, and thought. I will pursue it ; and, for that end, purpose retiring for some years. I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious, and a love for philosophy : were I calculated for the former I should be glad. But as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter.

My brother Tom is getting better, and I hope I shall see both him and Reynolds better before I retire from the world. I shall see you soon, and have some talk about what books I shall take with me.

Your very sincere friend

John Keats

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Lord Houghton appends the following note to this remarkable letter : " It is difficult to add anything to the passages in these letters, which show the spirit in which ' Endymion ' was written and published. This first sustained work of a man whose undoubted genius was idolised by a circle of affectionate friends, whose weaknesses were rather encouraged than repressed by the intellectual atmosphere in which he lived, who had rarely been enabled to measure his spiritual stature with that of persons of other schools of thought and habits of mind, appears to have been produced with a humility that the severest criticism might not have engendered. Keats, it is clear, did not require to be told how far he was from the perfect Poet. The very consciousness of the capability to do something higher and better, which accompanies the lowly estimate of his work, kept the ideal ever before him, and urged him to complete it rather as a process of poetical education, than as a triumph of contented power. Never was less presumption exhibited—never the sharp stroke of contemptuous censure less required. His own dissatisfaction with his book, and his brother's ill-health, cast over his mind the gloom which he hardly conceals in the letters of this period, though it is remarkable how free they are, at all times, from any merely querulous expressions, and from the vague sentimentality attributed to some of his literary associates."

## XLVI.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Teignmouth,  
3 May [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 overburthened 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. One would think there has been growing up, for these last four thousand years, a grand-child 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, black with thundrous clouds  
From Serraliona." <sup>1</sup>

Tom wants to be in town : we will have some such days

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<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book X, lines 702-3.

upon the heath like that of last summer—and why not with the same book? or what say you 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 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, to become a sort of pip-civilian. An extensive knowledge is needful to thinking people; 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 letter. The difference of high sensations, with and without knowledge, appears to me this: in the latter case we are falling continually 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 impossible 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 school-boys 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 a 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.

Mother of Hermes ! and still youthful Maia !  
 May I sing to thee  
 As thou wast 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 bards 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<sup>1</sup> of gold being the meridian line of worldly

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<sup>1</sup> So in Lord Houghton's edition; but possibly we should read *matter for manner*.

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 further 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 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 not there 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 said 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.

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This crossing a letter is not without its association—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 impercep-



tibly impelled by the awakening 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 heartbreak, 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 now 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 newly born to be doubted, and too much opposed by the mass 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 time 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 certainly 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 *leetle* 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, 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. 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

XLVII.

*To* BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Hampstead,  
25 May, 1818.

My dear Bailey,

I should have answered your letter on the moment, if I could have said Yes, to your invitation. What hinders me is insuperable: I will tell it at a little length. You know my brother George has been out of employ for some time. It has weighed very much upon him, and driven him to scheme and turn over things in his mind. The result has been his resolution to emigrate to the back settlements of America, become farmer, and work with his own hands, after purchasing fourteen hundred acres of the American Government. This, for many reasons, has met with my entire consent—and the chief one is this; he is of too independent and liberal a mind to get on in trade in this country, in which a generous man with a scanty resource must be ruined. I would sooner he should till the ground than bow to a customer. There is no choice with him: he could not bring himself to the latter. I would not consent to his going alone; —no—but that objection is done away with: he will

marry, before he sets sail, a young lady<sup>1</sup> he has known for several years, of a nature liberal and high-spirited enough to follow him to the banks of the Mississippi. He will set off in a month or six weeks, and you will see how I should wish to pass that time with him.—And then I must set out on a journey of my own. Brown and I are going a pedestrian tour through the north of England, and Scotland, as far as John o'Grot's.

I have this morning such a lethargy that I cannot write. The reason of my delaying is oftentimes from this feeling,—I wait for a proper temper. Now you ask for an immediate answer, I do not like to wait even till to-morrow. However, I am now so depressed that I have not an idea to put to paper; my hand feels like lead. And yet it is an unpleasant numbness; it does not take away the pain of existence. I don't know what to write.

[*Monday.*—You see how I have delayed; and even now I have but a confused idea of what I should be about. My intellect must be in a degenerating state—it must be—for when I should be writing about—God knows what—I am troubling you with moods of my own mind, or rather body, for mind there is none. I am in that temper that if I were under water I would scarcely kick to come up to the top. I know very well 'tis all nonsense. In a short time I hope I shall be in a temper to feel sensibly your mention of my book. In vain have I waited till Monday to have any interest in that, or anything else. I feel no spur at my brother's going to America, and am almost stony-hearted about his wedding. All this will blow over. All I am sorry for is having to write to you in such a time—but I cannot force my

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<sup>1</sup> Georgiana Augusta Wylie.

letters in a hotbed. I could not feel comfortable in making sentences for you. I am your debtor ; I must ever remain so ; nor do I wish to be clear of my rational debt : there is a comfort in throwing oneself on the charity of one's friends—'tis like the albatross sleeping on its wings. I will be to you wine in the cellar, and the more modestly, or rather, indolently, I retire into the backward bin, the more Falerne will I be at the drinking. There is one thing I must mention : my brother talks of sailing in a fortnight ; if so, I will most probably be with you a week before I set out for Scotland. The middle of your first page should be sufficient to rouse me. What I said is true, and I have dreamt of your mention of it, and my not answering it has weighed on me since. If I come, I will bring your letter, and hear more fully your sentiments on one or two points. I will call about the Lectures at Taylor's, and at Little Britain, to-morrow. Yesterday I dined with Hazlitt, Barnes, and Wilkie, at Haydon's. The topic was the Duke of Wellington—very amusingly pro-and-con'd. Reynolds has been getting much better ; and Rice may begin to crow, for he got a little so-so at a party of his, and was none the worse for it the next morning. I hope I shall soon see you, for we must have many new thoughts and feelings to analyse, and to discover whether a little more knowledge has not made us more ignorant.

Yours affectionately

John Keats

## XLVIII.

*To* BENJAMIN BAILEY.London,  
10 June 1818.

My dear Bailey,

I have been very much gratified and very much hurt by your letters in the Oxford Paper ; because, independent of that unlawful and mortal feeling of pleasure at praise, there is a glory in enthusiasm ; and because the world is malignant enough to chuckle at the most honourable simplicity. Yes, on my soul, my dear Bailey, you are too simple for the world, and that idea makes me sick of it. How is it that, by extreme opposites, we have, as it were, got discontented nerves ? You have all your life (I think so) believed everybody. I have suspected everybody. And, although you have been so deceived, you make a simple appeal. The world has something else to do, and I am glad of it. Were it in my choice, I would reject a Petrarchal coronation—on account of my dying day, and because women have cancers. I should not, by rights, speak in this tone to you, for it is an incendiary spirit that would do so. Yet I am not old enough or magnanimous enough to annihilate self—and it would, perhaps, be paying you an ill compliment. I was in hopes, some little time back, to be able to relieve your dulness by my spirits—to point out things in the world worth your enjoyment—and now I am never alone without rejoicing that there is such a thing as death—without placing my ultimate in the glory of dying for a great human purpose. Perhaps if my affairs were in a different state I should not have written the above—you shall judge : I have two brothers ; one is driven, by the

“burden of society,” to America ; the other, with an exquisite love of life, is in a lingering state. My love for my brothers, from the early loss of our parents, and even from earlier misfortunes, has grown into an affection, “passing the love of women.” I have been ill-tempered with them, I have vexed them,—but the thought of them has always stifled the impression that any woman might otherwise have made upon me. I have a sister too ; and may not follow them either to America or to the grave. Life must be undergone ; and I certainly derive some consolation from the thought of writing one or two more poems before it ceases.

I have heard some hints of your retiring to Scotland. I should like to know your feeling on it : it seems rather remote. Perhaps Gleig will have a duty near you. I am not certain whether I shall be able to go any journey, on account of my brother Tom and a little indisposition of my own. If I do not, you shall see me soon, if not on my return, or I’ll quarter myself on you next winter. I had known my sister-in-law some time before she was my sister, and was very fond of her. I like her better and better. She is the most disinterested woman I ever knew—that is to say, she goes beyond degree in it. To see an entirely disinterested girl quite happy is the most pleasant and extraordinary thing in the world. It depends upon a thousand circumstances. On my word it is extraordinary. Women must want imagination, and they may thank God for it ; and so may we, that a delicate being can feel happy without any sense of crime. It puzzles me, and I have no sort of logic to comfort me : I shall think it over. I am not at home, and your letter being there I cannot look it over to answer any particular—only, I must say I feel that passage of Dante. If I take any book with me it shall be those

minute volumes of Carey, for they will go into the aptest corner.

Reynolds is getting, I may say, robust. His illness has been of service to him. Like every one just recovered, he is high-spirited. I hear also good accounts of Rice. With respect to domestic literature, the "Edinburgh Magazine," in another blow-up against Hunt, calls me "the amiable Mister Keats," and I have more than a laurel from the "Quarterly Reviewers," for they have smothered me in "Foliage." I want to read you my "Pot of Basil." If you go to Scotland, I should much like to read it there to you, among the snows of next winter. My brother's remembrances to you.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

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Number 36 of *The Quarterly Review*, published in June 1818, contained a review of the volume of Poems just then issued by Leigh Hunt under the title of *Foliage*; and the "other blow-up" was one of the series of articles on the "Cockney School," which was appearing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Keats is not expressly mentioned in the *Quarterly* article; but there are covert references both to him and to Shelley—indicating that the shameful articles on *Laon and Cythna* and *Endymion* were probably already in contemplation. As to "Carey," see foot-note at page 197 of the present volume.



## XLIX.

*To* THOMAS KEATS.Keswick,  
June 29 [1818].

My dear Tom,

I cannot make my journal as distinct and actual as I could wish, from having been engaged in writing to George, and therefore I must tell you, without circumstance, that we proceeded from Ambleside to Rydal, saw the waterfalls there, and called on Wordsworth, who was not at home, nor was any one of his family. I wrote a note and left it on the mantel-piece. Thence, on we came to the foot of Helvellyn, where we slept, but could not ascend it for the mist. I must mention that from Rydal we passed Thirlswater, and a fine pass in the mountains. From Helvellyn we came to Keswick on Derwent Water. The approach to Derwent Water surpassed Windermere : it is richly wooded, and shut in with rich-toned mountains. From Helvellyn to Keswick was eight miles to breakfast, after which we took a complete circuit

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Lord Houghton makes the following observations before the letters from the North published by his Lordship :—" The agreeable diversion to his somewhat monotonous life by a walking-tour through the Lakes and Highlands with his friend Mr. Brown, was now put into execution. They set off in the middle of June for Liverpool, where they parted with George Keats, who embarked with his wife for America. On the road he stopped to see a former fellow-student at Guy's, who was settled as a surgeon in a country town, and whom he informed that he had definitely abandoned that profession and intended to devote himself to poetry. Mr. Stephens remembers that he seemed much delighted with his new sister-in-law, who was a person of most agreeable appearance, and introduced her with evident satisfaction. From Lancaster they started on foot, and

of the lake, going about ten miles, and seeing on our way the fall of Lodore. I had an easy climb among the streams, about the fragments of rocks, and should have got, I think, to the summit, but unfortunately I was damped by slipping one leg into a squashy hole. There is no great body of water, but the accompaniment is delightful; for it oozes out from a cleft in perpendicular rocks, all fledged with ash and other beautiful trees. It is a strange thing how they got there. At the south end of the lake, the mountains of Borrowdale are perhaps as fine as anything we have seen. On our return from this circuit, we ordered dinner, and set forth about a mile and a half on the Penrith road, to see the Druid temple. We had a fag up hill, rather too near dinner-time, which was rendered void by the gratification of seeing those aged stones on a gentle rise in the midst of the mountains, which at that time, darkened all around, except at the fresh opening of the Vale of St. John. We went to bed rather fatigued, but not so much so as to hinder us getting up this morning to mount Skiddaw. It promised all along to be fair, and we had fagged and tugged nearly to the top, when, at half-past six, there came a mist upon

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Mr. Brown has recorded the rapture of Keats when he became sensible, for the first time, of the full effect of mountain scenery. At a turn of the road above Bowness, where the Lake of Windermere first bursts on the view, he stopped as if stupified with beauty. That evening he read aloud the Poem of the 'Pot of Basil,' which he had just completed. His disappointment at missing Wordsworth was very great, and he hardly concealed his vexation when he found that he owed the privation to the interest which the elder poet was taking in the general Election. This annoyance would perhaps have been diminished if the two poets had happened to be on the same side in politics; but, as it was, no views and objects could be more opposed." It perhaps also accounts for Wordsworth's presence in his mind when composing *The Gadfly*

us, and shut out the view. We did not, however, lose anything by it: we were high enough without mist to see the coast of Scotland, the Irish Sea, the hills beyond Lancaster, and nearly all the large ones of Cumberland and Westmoreland, particularly Helvellyn and Scawfell. It grew colder and colder as we ascended, and we were glad, at about three parts of the way, to taste a little rum which the guide brought with him, mixed, mind ye, with mountain water. I took two glasses going and one returning. It is about six miles from where I am writing to the top; so we have walked ten miles before breakfast to-day. We went up with two others, very good sort of fellows. All felt, on arising into the cold air, that same elevation which a cold bath gives one. I felt as if I were going to a tournament.

Wordsworth's house is situated just on the rise of the foot of Mount Rydal; his parlour-window looks directly down Windermere; I do not think I told you how fine the Vale of Grasmere is, and how I discovered "the ancient woman seated on Helm Crag."

*July 1st* [1818].—We are this morning at Carlisle. After Skiddaw, we walked to Treby, the oldest market town in Cumberland, where we were greatly amused by a country dancing-school, holden at the "Tun." It was indeed "no new cotillion fresh from France." No, they kickit and jumpit with mettle extraordinary, and whiskit, and friskit, and toed it, and go'd it, and twirl'd it, and whirl'd it, and stamped it, and sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad. The difference between our country dances and these Scottish figures is about the same as leisurely stirring a cup of tea and beating up a batter-pudding. I was extremely gratified to think that, if I had pleasures they knew nothing of, they had also some into which I could not possibly enter. I hope I shall not

return without having got the Highland fling. There was as fine a row of boys and girls as you ever saw ; some beautiful faces, and one exquisite mouth. I never felt so near the glory of patriotism, the glory of making, by any means, a country happier. This is what I like better than scenery. I fear our continued moving from place to place will prevent our becoming learned in village affairs : we are mere creatures of rivers, lakes, and mountains. Our yesterday's journey was from Treby to Wigton, and from Wigton to Carlisle. The cathedral does not appear very fine ; the castle is very ancient, and of brick. The city is very various : old, white-washed narrow streets, broad, red-brick ones, more modern. I will tell you anon whether the inside of the cathedral is worth looking at. It is built of sandy red stone, or brick. We have now walked 114 miles, and are merely a little tired in the thighs and a little blistered. We shall ride 38 miles to Dumfries, when we shall linger awhile about Nithsdale and Galloway. I have written two letters to Liverpool. I found a letter from sister George ; very delightful indeed : I shall preserve it in the bottom of my knapsack for you.<sup>1</sup>

July 2nd [1818].

You will see by this sonnet that I am at Dumfries. We have dined in Scotland. Burns's tomb is in the church-yard corner, not very much to my taste, though on a scale large enough to show they wanted to honour him. Mrs. Burns lives in this place ; most likely we shall see her to-morrow. This sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half-asleep. I know not how it is, the

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<sup>1</sup> Here follows the Sonnet on visiting the Tomb of Burns (see Volume II, pages 285-6).

clouds, the sky, the houses, all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish. I will endeavour to get rid of my prejudices and tell you fairly about the Scotch.

In Devonshire they say, "Well, where be ye going?" Here it is, "How is it wi' yoursel?"<sup>1</sup> A man on the coach, said the horses took a "hellish heap o' drivin;" the same fellow pointed out Burns's Tomb with a deal of life—"There! de ye see it, amang the trees—white, wi' a roond tap?" The first well-dressed Scotchman we had any conversation with, to our surprise, confessed himself a deist. The careful manner of delivering his opinions, not before he had received several encouraging hints from us, was very amusing. Yesterday was an immense horse-fair at Dumfries, so that we met numbers of men and women on the road, the women nearly all barefoot, with their shoes and clean stockings in hand, ready to put on and look smart in the towns. There are plenty of wretched cottages whose smoke has no outlet but by the door. We have now begun upon whisky, called here "whuskey,"—very smart stuff it is. Mixed like our liquors, with sugar and water, 'tis called toddy; very pretty drink, and much praised by Burns.

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<sup>1</sup> See foot-note to *The Devon Maid*, pages 264-5, Volume II.

L.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rich<sup>d</sup>. Abbey's Esq<sup>re</sup>.

Walthamstow.

Dumfries, July 2nd [1818].

My dear Fanny,

I intended to have written to you from Kircudbright, the town I shall be in tomorrow—but I will write now because my Knapsack has worn my coat in the Seams, my coat has gone to the Taylors [*sic*] and I have but one Coat to my back in these parts. I must tell you how I went to Liverpool with George and our new Sister and the Gentleman my fellow traveller through the Summer and autumn—We had a tolerable journey to Liverpool—which I left the next morning before George was up for Lancaster—Then we set off from Lancaster on foot with our Knapsacks on, and have walked a Little zig zag through the mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland—We came from Carlisle yesterday to this place—We are employed in going up Mountains, looking at strange towns, prying into old ruins and eating very hearty breakfasts. Here we are full in the Midst of broad Scotch “How is it a' wi' yoursel”—the Girls are walking about bare footed and in the worst cottages the smoke finds its way out of the door. I shall come home full of news for you and for fear I should choak you by too great a dose at once I must make you used to it by a letter or two. We have been taken for travelling Jewellers, Razor sellers and Spectacle vendors because friend Brown wears a pair—The first place we stopped at with our Knapsacks contained one Richard Bradshaw, a notorious tippler. He stood in the shape of a 3 and bal-

lanced himself as well as he could saying with his nose right in Mr. Brown's face "Do— yo—u sell spect—ta—cles?" Mr. Abbey says we are Don Quixotes—tell him we are more generally taken for Pedlars. All I hope is that we may not be taken for excisemen in this whiskey country. We are generally up about 5 walking before breakfast and we complete our 20 miles before dinner.—Yesterday we visited Burns's Tomb and this morning the fine Ruins of Lincluden.—I had done thus far when my coat came back fortified at all points—so as we lose no time we set forth again through Galloway—all very pleasant and pretty with no fatigue when one is used to it—We are in the midst of Meg Merrilies' country of whom I suppose you have heard.<sup>1</sup>

If you like these sort of Ballads I will now and then scribble one for you—if I send any to Tom I'll tell him to send them to you. I have so many interruptions that I cannot manage to fill a Letter in one day—since I scribbled the song we have walked through a beautiful Country to Kirkudbright—at which place I will write you a song about myself.<sup>2</sup>

My dear Fanny, I am ashamed of writing you such stuff, nor would I if it were not for being tired after my day's walking, and ready to tumble into bed so fatigued that when I am asleep you might sew my nose to my great toe and trundle me round the town, like a Hoop, without waking me. Then I get so hungry a Ham goes but a very little way and fowls are like Larks to me—A Batch of Bread I make no more ado with than a sheet of parliament; and I can eat a Bull's head as easily as I used to

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<sup>1</sup> Here follows the ballad of *Meg Merrilies*. See Volume II, pages 287-9.

<sup>2</sup> For the song in question see Volume II, pages 290-4.

do Bull's eyes. I take a whole string of Pork Sausages down as easily as a Pen'orth of Lady's fingers. Ah dear I must soon be contented with an acre or two of oaten cake a hogshead of Milk and a Cloaths basket of Eggs morning noon and night when I get among the Highlanders. Before we see them we shall pass into Ireland and have a chat with the Paddies, and look at the Giant's Causeway which you must have heard of—I have not time to tell you particularly for I have to send a Journal to Tom of whom you shall hear all particulars or from me when I return. Since I began this we have walked sixty miles to Newton Stewart at which place I put in this Letter—to night we sleep at Glenluce—tomorrow at Portpatrick and the next day we shall cross in the passage boat to Ireland. I hope Miss Abbey has quite recovered. Present my Respects to her and to Mr. and Mrs. Abbey. God bless you.

Your affectionate Brother John—

Do write me a Letter directed to *Inverness*, Scotland.



## LI.

*To* THOMAS KEATS.Auchencairn,  
3 July [1818].

My dear Tom,

We are now in Meg Merrilies' country, and have, this morning, passed through some parts exactly suited to her. Kirkcudbright County is very beautiful, very wild, with craggy hills, somewhat in the Westmoreland fashion. We have come down from Dumfries to the sea-coast part of it. The following song you will have from Dilke, but perhaps you would like it here :—<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday was passed in Kirkcudbright ; the country is very rich, very fine, and with a little of Devon. I am now writing at Newton Stewart, six miles from Wigtown. Our landlady of yesterday said, "very few Southerners passed hereaways." The children jabber away, as if in a foreign language ; the bare-footed girls look very much in keeping,—I mean with the scenery about them. Brown praises their cleanliness and appearance of comfort, the neatness of their cottages, &c. It may be. They are very squat among trees and fern, and heath and broom, on levels, slopes, and heights ; but I wish they were as snug as those up the Devonshire valleys. We are lodged and entertained in great varieties. We dined, yesterday, on dirty bacon, dirtier eggs, and dirtiest potatoes, with a slice of salmon ; we breakfast, this morning, in a nice carpeted room, with sofa, hair-bottomed chairs, and green-baized mahogany. A spring by the road-side is

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<sup>1</sup> The Meg Merrilies ballad, Volume II, pages 287-9.

always welcome : we drink water for dinner, diluted with a gill of whisky.

*July 6th* [1818].—Yesterday morning we set out for Glenluce, going some distance round to see some rivers : they were scarcely worth the while. We went on to Stranraer, in a burning sun, and had gone about six miles when the mail overtook us : we got up, were at Port Patrick in a jiffy, and I am writing now in little Ireland. The dialects on the neighbouring shores of Scotland and Ireland are much the same, yet I can perceive a great difference in the nations, from the chamber-maid at this *nate toone* kept by Mr. Kelly. She is fair, kind, and ready to laugh, because she is out of the horrible dominion of the Scotch Kirk. These Kirk-men have done Scotland good. They have made men, women, old men, young men, old women, young women, boys, girls, and infants, all<sup>1</sup> careful ; so that they are formed into regular phalanges of savers and gainers. Such a thrifty army cannot fail to enrich their country, and give it a greater appearance of comfort than that of their poor rash neighbourhood. These Kirk-men have done Scotland harm ; they have banished puns, love, and laughing. To remind you of the fate of Burns :—poor, unfortunate fellow ! his disposition was Southern ! How sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged, in self-defence, to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity and in things attainable, that it may not have leisure to go mad after things that are not ! No man, in such matters, will be content with the experience of others. It is true that out of suffering there is no dignity, no greatness, that in the most abstracted pleasure there is no lasting happiness.

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton places the word *all* before *infants*. I have ventured to transpose the words without manuscript authority.

Yet, who would not like to discover, over again, that Cleopatra was a gipsy, Helen a rogue, and Ruth a deep one? I have not sufficient reasoning faculty to settle the doctrine of thrift, as it is consistent with the dignity of human society—with the happiness of cottagers: all I can do is by plump contrasts: were the fingers made to squeeze a guinea or a white hand?—were the lips made to hold a pen or a kiss? And yet, in cities, man is shut out from his fellows if he is poor; the cottager must be very dirty, and very wretched, if she be not thrifty—the present state of society demands this, and this convinces me that the world is very young, and in a very ignorant state. We live in a barbarous age. I would sooner be a wild deer, than a girl under the dominion of the Kirk; and I would sooner be a wild hog, than be the occasion of a poor creature's penance before those execrable elders.

It is not so far to the Giant's Causeway as we supposed: we thought it seventy, and hear it is only forty-eight miles;—so we shall leave one of our knapsacks here at Donaghadee, take our immediate wants, and be back in a week, when we shall proceed to the County of Ayr. In the Packet, yesterday, we heard some ballads from two old men. One was a Romance, which seemed very poor; then there was "The Battle of the Boyne," then "Robin Hood," as they call him—"Before the King you shall go, go, go; before the King you shall go."

*July 9th* [1818].—We stopped very little in Ireland; and that you may not have leisure to marvel at our speedy return to Port Patrick, I will tell you that it is as dear living in Ireland as at the Hummums<sup>1</sup>—thrice the

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<sup>1</sup> This once renowned hotel still exists in the Piazzas, Covent Garden.

expenditure of Scotland—it would have cost us £15 before our return ; moreover we found those forty-eight miles to be Irish ones, which reach to seventy English ; so having walked to Belfast one day, and back to Donaghadee the next, we left Ireland with a fair breeze. We slept last night at Port Patrick, when I was gratified by a letter from you. On our walk in Ireland, we had too much opportunity to see the worse than nakedness, the rags, the dirt, and misery of the poor common Irish. A Scotch cottage, though in that sometimes the smoke has no exit but at the door, is a palace to an Irish one. We had the pleasure of finding our way through a peat-bog, three miles long at least—dreary, flat, dank, black, and spongy—here and there were poor dirty creatures, and a few strong men cutting or carting peat. We heard, on passing into Belfast, through a most wretched suburb, that most disgusting of all noises, worse than the bagpipes, the laugh of a monkey, the chatter of women, the scream of [a] macaw—I mean the sound of the shuttle. What a tremendous difficulty is the improvement of such people. I cannot conceive how a mind “with child” of philanthropy could grasp at its possibility—with me it is absolute despair. At a miserable house of entertainment, half-way between Donaghadee and Belfast, were two men sitting at whisky—one a labourer, and the other I took to be a drunken weaver : the labourer took me to be a Frenchman, and the other hinted at bounty-money, saying he was ready to take it. On calling for the letters at Port Patrick, the man snapped out, “What regiment?” On our return from Belfast we met a sedan—the Duchess of Dunghill. It is no laughing matter though. Imagine the worst dog-kennel you ever saw, placed upon two poles from a mouldy fencing. In such a wretched thing sat a squalid old woman, squat like an

ape half-starved from a scarcity of biscuit in its passage from Madagascar to the Cape, with a pipe in her mouth, and looking out with a round-eyed, skinny-lidded inanity, with a sort of horizontal idiotic movement of her head: squat and lean she sat, and puffed out the smoke, while two ragged, tattered girls carried her along. What a thing would be a history of her life and sensations; I shall endeavour, when I have thought a little more, to give you my idea of the difference between the Scotch and Irish.<sup>1</sup> The two Irishmen I mentioned were speaking of their treatment in England, when the weaver said—"Ah! you were a civil man, but I was a drinker."

Till further notice, you must direct to Inverness.

Your most affectionate Brother

John

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<sup>1</sup> For the promised comparative analysis see Letter LIII, fortunately found in Haydon's journal.

## LII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Maybole.

11 July [1818].

My dear Reynolds,

I'll not run over the ground we have passed; that would be merely 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 and clouds, with beautiful, enchanting, gothic, picturesque,—fine, delightful, enchanting, grand, sublime—a few blisters, &c.—and now you have our journey thus far; where I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns's cottage very fast. We have made continual inquiries from the time we saw 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 *mony* sensible things." One of the pleasantest means 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 upon my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey. I shall fill this sheet for you in the Bardie's country, going no further than this, till I get to the town of Ayr, which will be a nine miles walk to tea.

[13 July 1818?]

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-worm makes 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 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> in the office.

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<sup>1</sup> The illiterate Scot, and at times the Scot not wholly illiterate will even describe a smoked salmon as “split from head till foot.”

<sup>2</sup> In elucidation of this witticism, Mr. Dilke makes a very interesting note. After recording that Reynolds was originally a clerk in an Insurance Office in Serjeant’s Inn, he says—“Rice suggested that he should become a lawyer, and his relation Mr. Fladgate—himself a literary man in early life and editor of the ‘Sun’ newspaper—consented to receive him as an Articled Pupil, and dear

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

generous noble James Rice—the best, and in his quaint way one of the wittiest and wisest men I ever knew—paid the fee or stamp or whatever it is called—about £110 I believe—and promised if he ever succeeded to his father's business to take him in partner. He not only kept his word, but in a few years gave up the business to him. Reynolds unhappily threw away this certain fortune. The Frank Fladgate here mentioned was Mr. Fladgate's eldest son, then Articled to his father." Mr. Dilke adds that Lady Dryden left Frank Fladgate her fortune. To return for a moment to Reynolds—I presume it was on the occasion above explained that he wrote in the copy of Shakespeare's Poems which he afterwards gave to Keats (and in which Keats wrote his last sonnet) the following charming sonnet entitled

FAREWELL TO THE MUSES.

I have no chill despondence that I am  
 Self banished from those rolls of honoring men  
 That keep a temperate eye on airy Fame  
 And write songs to her with a golden pen.  
 I do not wail because the Muses keep  
 Their secrets on the top of Helicon  
 Nor do I in my wayward moments weep  
 That from my youth Romance is past and gone.  
 My boat is trimm'd—my sail is set—And I  
 Shall coast the shallows of the tide of Time  
 And rest me happily—where others lie,  
 Who pass oblivious days. No feelings climb  
 Ambitiously within me. Sweet Farewell  
 Be to those Nymphs that on the old Hill dwell.

J. H. R.

14 Feb. 1818.

VOL. III.

N



bad I cannot transcribe them.<sup>1</sup> 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 birthplace! 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 a 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 with bitches, 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 latter 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

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, pages 297-8.

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 resolve to have a care of my health—you must be as careful.

The rain has stopped us to-day at the end of a dozen miles, yet we hope to see Loch Lomond the day after to-morrow. I will piddle out my information, as Rice says, next winter, at any time when a substitute is wanted for Vingt-un. We bear the fatigue very well: twenty miles a day in general. A cloud came over us in getting up Skiddaw—I hope to be more lucky in Ben Lomond—and more lucky still in Ben Nevis. What I think you would enjoy is, poking about ruins, sometimes Abbey, sometimes Castle.

Tell my friends I do all I can for them, that is, drink their healths in Toddy. Perhaps I may have some lines, by and by, to send you fresh, on your own letter.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

## LIII.

*To* THOMAS KEATS.

Well Walk, Hampstead.

Belantree, July 10

[*Postmark*, Glasgow, 14 July 1818].

Ah! ken ye what I met the day  
     Out oore the Mountains  
 A coming down by craggi[e]s grey  
     An mossie fountains—  
 A[h] goud hair'd Marie yeve I pray           5  
     Ane minute's guessing—  
 For that I met upon the way  
     Is past expressing.  
 As I stood where a rocky brig  
     A torrent crosses                               10  
 I spied upon a misty rig  
     A troup o' Horses—  
 And as they trotted down the glen  
     I sped to meet them  
 To see if I might know the Men               15  
     To stop and greet them.  
 First Willie on his sleek mare came  
     At canting gallop  
 His long hair rustled like a flame  
     On board a shallop.                           20

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Although the recovery of this letter is fortunate, it would have been more so had it occurred in time to admit of the opening verses taking their place among the rest of those included in the Scotch tour series in Volume II. I presume Keats's way of spelling *Ballantrae* has no authority; but I leave the place-name as I find it.



am afraid we shall be imprisoned a while by the weather. Yesterday we came 27 Miles from Stranraer—entered Ayrshire a little beyond Cairn, and had our path through a delightful Country. I shall endeavour that you may follow our steps in this walk—it would be uninteresting in a Book of Travels—it can not be interesting but by my having gone through it. When we left Cairn our Road lay half way up the sides of a green mountainous shore, full of clefts of verdure and eternally varying—sometimes up sometimes down, and over little Bridges going across green chasms of moss, rock and trees—winding about every where. After two or three Miles of this we turned suddenly into a magnificent glen finely wooded in Parts—seven Miles long—with a Mountain stream winding down the Midst—full of cottages in the most happy situations—the sides of the Hills covered with sheep—the effect of cattle lowing I never had so finely. At the end we had a gradual ascent and got among the tops of the Mountains whence in a little time I descried in the Sea Ailsa Rock 940 feet high—it<sup>1</sup> was 15 Miles distant and seemed close upon us. The effect of Ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling gave me a complete Idea of a deluge. Ailsa struck me very suddenly—really I was a little alarmed.

Thus far had I written before we set out this morning. Now we are at Girvan 13 Miles north of Belantree. Our Walk has been along a more grand shore to day than yesterday—Ailsa beside us all the way.—From the heights we could see quite at home Cantire and the large Mountains of Annan, one of the Hebrides. We

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<sup>1</sup> In the original, *hight—is was &c.*

are in comfortable Quarters. The Rain we feared held up bravely and it has been "fu fine this day."—Tomorrow we sh[all be] at Ayr.<sup>1</sup>

[11 July 1818.]

'Tis now the 11th of July and we have come 8 Miles to Breakfast to Kirkoswald. I hope the next Kirk will be Kirk Alloway. I have nothing of consequence to say now concerning our journey—so I will speak as far as I can judge on the Irish and Scotch—I know nothing of the higher Classes—yet I have a persuasion that there the Irish are victorious. As to the "profanum vulgus" I must incline to the Scotch. They never laugh—but they are always comparatively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the Irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point—he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be refer[r]ed to as a meridian in his notion of things—so that you do not know him—and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the Irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your head. A Scotchman's motive is more easily discovered than an Irishman's. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an Irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire for revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallous fellow. A Scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me they are both sensible of

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<sup>1</sup> Here follows the Sonnet to Ailsa Rock, with the remark "This is the only Sonnet of any worth I have of late written—I hope you will like it." I presume from the opening of the paragraph that the 10th of July was the date on which the sonnet, given at pages 295-6 of Volume II, was written "in the inn at Girvan."

the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over grave and over decent and the Irishman over-impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore—I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable.—The Scotchman has made up his Mind within himself in a sort of snail shell wisdom. The Irishman is full of strongheaded instinct. The Scotchman is farther in Humanity than the Irishman—there he will stick perhaps when the Irishman will be refined beyond him—for the former thinks he cannot be improved—the latter would grasp at it for ever, place but the good plain before him.

Maybole. Since breakfast we have come only four Miles to dinner, not merely, for we have examined in the way t[wo] Ruins, one of them very fine, called Crossraguel Abbey—there is a winding Staircase to the top of a little Watch Tower.

July 13 [1818]. *Kingswells*. I have been writing to Reynolds—therefore any particulars since Kirkoswald have escaped me—from said Kirk we went to Maybole to dinner—then we set forward to Burness<sup>1</sup> town Ayr—the approach to it is extremely fine—quite outwent my expectations—richly meadowed, wooded, heathed and rivuleted—with a grand Sea view terminated by the black Mountains of the isle of Annan. As soon as I saw them so nearly I said to myself “How is it they did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic.”

The bonny Doon is the sweetest river I ever saw—overhung with fine trees as far as we could see—We stood some time on the Brig across it, over which Tam o' Shanter

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<sup>1</sup> The patronymic was variously spelt *Burns*, *Burnes*, and *Burness* by various members of the family.

fled—we took a pinch of snuff on the Key stone—then we proceeded to the “auld Kirk Alloway.” As we were looking at it a Farmer pointed the spots where Mungo’s Mither hang’d hersel’ and “drunken Charlie brake’s neck’s bane.”<sup>1</sup> Then we proceeded to the Cottage he was born in—there was a board to that effect by the door side—it had the same effect as the same sort of memorial at Stratford on Avon. We drank some Toddy to Burns’s Memory with an old Man who knew Burns—damn him and damn his anecdotes—he was a great bore—it was impossible for a Southron to understand above 5 words in a hundred.—There was something good in his description of Burns’s melancholy the last time he saw him. I was determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage—I did—but it was so bad I cannot venture it here.<sup>2</sup>

Next we walked into Ayr Town and before we went to Tea saw the new Brig and the Auld Brig and Wallace tower. Yesterday we dined with a Traveller. We were

<sup>1</sup> By this time he was cross the ford,  
 Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor’d ;  
 And past the birks and meikle stane,  
 Whare drunken *Charlie* brak’s neck-bane ;  
 And thro’ the whins, and by the cairn,  
 Whare hunters fand the murder’d bairn ;  
 And near the thorn, aboon the well,  
 Whare *Mungo’s* mither hang’d hersel.—*Tam O’Shanter*.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Houghton gives this paragraph omitting the references to “drunken Charlie” and “Mungo’s mither”, as an extract from a letter to Haydon ; and I have referred to it as such in Volume II, pages 297-8 ; but when that Volume passed through the press I had not seen this letter to Tom Keats in Haydon’s journal, or I should have suspected, as I now do, that the extract, having been furnished by Haydon, was assumed to be from a letter to himself. Keats might of course have written the identical paragraph twice to different correspondents ; but it will, I think, be rash to expect another letter to Haydon containing it to come to the surface.



talking about Kean. He said he had seen him at Glasgow "in Othello in the Jew, I mean er, er, er, the Jew in Shylock." He got bother'd completely in vague ideas of the Jew in Othello, Shylock in the Jew, Shylock in Othello, Othello in Shylock, the Jew in Othello, &c. &c. &c.—he left himself in a mess at last.—Still satisfied with himself he went to the Window and gave an abortive whistle of some tune or other—it might have been Handel. There is no end to these Mistakes—he'll go and tell people how he has seen "Malvolio in the Countess"—"Twelfth night in Midsummer night's dream"—Bottom in much ado about Nothing—Viola in Barrymore—Antony in Cleopatra—Falstaff in the mouse Trap<sup>1</sup>.—

July 14 [1818]. We enter'd Glasgow last Evening under the most oppressive Stare a body could feel. When we had crossed the Bridge Brown look'd back and said its whole pop[ulation] had turned [out] to wonder at us—we came on till a drunken Man came up to me—I put him off with my Arm—he returned all up in Arms saying aloud that, "he had seen all foreigners bu - u - ut he never saw the like o' me." I was obliged to mention the word Officer and Police before he would desist.—The City of Glasgow I take to be a very fine one—I was astonished to hear it was twice the size of Edinburgh. It is built of Stone and has a much more solid appearance than London. We shall see the Cathedral this morning—they have devilled it into "High Kirk." I want very much to know the name of the ship George is g[one] in—also what port he will land in—I know nothing a[bout] it. I hope you are leading a quiet Life and gradually improving. Make a long lounge of

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<sup>1</sup> *King*. What do you call the play?  
*Hamlet*. The Mouse-trap.

the whole Summer—by the time the Leaves fall I shall be near you with plenty of confab—there are a thousand things I cannot write. Take care of yourself—I mean in not being vexed or bothered at any thing.

God bless you!

John —

LIV.

*To* THOMAS KEATS.

Cairn-something July 17th [1818].

My dear Tom,

Here's Brown going on so that I cannot bring to mind how the two last days have vanished—for example he says The Lady of the Lake went to Rock herself to sleep on Arthur's seat and the Lord of the Isles coming to Press a Piece \* \* \* remembered their last meeting at Corrystone Water so touching her with one hand \* \* \* <sup>1</sup>. I told you last how we were stared at in Glasgow—we are not out of the Crowd yet. Steam Boats on Loch Lomond and Barouches on its sides take a little from the Pleasure of such romantic chaps as Brown and I. The Banks of the Clyde are extremely beautiful—the north end of Loch Lomond grand in excess—the entrance at the lower end to the narrow part from a little distance is precious good—the Evening was beautiful nothing could surpass our fortune in the weather—yet was I worldly enough to wish for a fleet of chivalry Barges with Trumpets and Banners just to die

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<sup>1</sup> The passages omitted consist of somewhat incoherent strings of place-names arranged apparently with an ulterior view to puns ; but the intention is not quite clear, and the sentence ends abruptly without any construction as far as I can make out.

away before me into that blue place among the mountains—I must give you an outline as well as I can



Not[a] B[ene]—the Water was a fine Blue silvered and the Mountains a dark purple, the Sun setting aslant behind them—meantime the head of ben Lomond was covered with a rich Pink Cloud—We did not ascend Ben Lomond—the price being very high and a half a day of rest being quite acceptable. We were up at 4 this morning and have walked to breakfast 15 Miles through two Tremendous Glens<sup>1</sup>—at the end of the first there is a place called rest and be thankful which we took for an Inn—it was nothing but a Stone and so we were cheated into 5 more Miles to Breakfast—I have just been bathing in Loch Fyne a salt water Lake opposite the Windows,—quite pat and fresh but for the cursed Gad flies—damn 'em they have been at me ever since I left the swan and two necks.<sup>2</sup>

Last Evening we came round the End of Loch Fyne to Inverary—the Duke of Argyle's Castle is very modern magnificent and more so from the place it is in—the woods seem old enough to remember two or three changes in the Crags about them—the Lake was beautiful and there was a Band at a distance by the Castle. I

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<sup>1</sup> See foot-note, page 303 of Volume II.

<sup>2</sup> Here follows the ballad of *The Gadfly*. See Volume II, pages 303-6.

must say I enjoyed two or three common tunes—but nothing could stifle the horrors of a solo on the Bag-pipe—I thought the Beast would never have done.—Yet was I doomed to hear another.—On entering Inverary we saw a Play Bill. Brown was knocked up from new shoes—so I went to the Barn alone where I saw the Stranger accompanied by a Bag-pipe. There they went on about interesting creators and human nater till the Curtain fell and then came the Bag-pipe. When Mrs. Haller fainted down went the Curtain and out came the Bag-pipe—at the heartrending, shoemending reconciliation the Piper blew amain. I never read or saw this play before ; not the Bag-pipe nor the wretched players themselves were little in comparison with it—thank heaven it has been scoffed at lately almost to a fashion.<sup>1</sup>

I think we are the luckiest fellows in Christendom—Brown could not proceed this morning on account of his feet and lo there is thunder and rain.

July 20th [1818]. For these two days past we have been so badly accommodated more particularly in coarse food that I have not been at all in cue to write. Last night poor Brown with his feet blistered and scarcely able to walk, after a trudge of 20 Miles down the side of Loch Awe had no supper but Eggs and Oat Cake—we have lost the sight of white bread entirely—Now we had eaten nothing but Eggs all day—about 10 a piece and they had become sickening—To-day we have fared rather better—but no oat Cake wanting—we had a small Chicken and even a good bottle of Port but all together the fare is too coarse—I feel it a little.—Another week will break us in. I forgot to tell you that when we came

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<sup>1</sup> Here follows the sonnet *On hearing the Bag-pipe and seeing "The Stranger" played at Inverary.* See Volume II, pages 307-8.

through Glenside it was early in the morning and we were pleased with the noise of Shepherds, Sheep and dogs in the misty heights close above us—we saw none of them for some time, till two came in sight creeping among the Craggs like Emmets, yet their voices came quite plainly to us—The approach to Loch Awe was very solemn towards nightfall—the first glance was a streak of water deep in the Bases of large black Mountains.—We had come along a complete mountain road, where if one listened there was not a sound but that of Mountain Streams. We walked 20 Miles by the side of Loch Awe—every ten steps creating a new and beautiful picture—sometimes through little wood—there are two islands on the Lake each with a beautiful ruin—one of them rich in ivy.—We are detained this morning by the rain. I will tell you exactly where we are. We are between Loch Craignish and the sea just opposite Long Island. Yesterday our walk was of this description—the near Hills were not very lofty but many of them steep, beautifully wooded—the distant Mountains in the Hebrides very grand, the Saltwater Lakes coming up between Craggs and Islands full tide and scarcely ruffled—sometimes appearing as one large Lake, sometimes as three distinct ones in different directions. At one point we saw afar off a rocky opening into the main sea.—We have also seen an Eagle or two. They move about without the least motion of Wings when in an indolent fit.—I am for the first time in a country where a foreign Language is spoken—they gabble away Gælic at a vast rate—numbers of them speak English. There are not many Kilts in Argylshire—at Fort William they say a Man is not admitted into Society without one—the Ladies there have a horror at the indecency of Breeches. I cannot give you a better idea of Highland Life than by describing

the place we are in. The Inn or public is by far the best house in the immediate neighbourhood. It has a white front with tolerable windows—the table I am writing on su[r]prises me as being a nice flapped Mahogany one; at the same time the place has no \* \* \* nor any thing like it. You may if you peep see through the floor chinks into the ground rooms. The old Grandmother of the house seems intelligent though not over clean. N.B. No snuff being to be had in the village she made us some. The Guid Man is a rough looking hardy stout Man who I think does not speak so much English as the Guid wife who is very obliging and sensible and moreover though stockingless has a pair of old Shoes—Last night some Whisky Men sat up clattering Gælic till I am sure one o’Clock to our great annoyance. There is a Gælic testament on the Drawers in the next room. White and blue China ware has crept all about here—Yesterday there passed a Donkey laden with tin-pots—opposite the Window there are hills in a Mist—a few Ash trees and a mountain stream at a little distance.—They possess a few head of Cattle.—If you had gone round to the back of the House just now—you would have seen more hills in a Mist—some dozen wretched black Cottages scented of peat smoke which finds its way by the door or a hole in the roof—a girl here and there barefoot. There was one little thing driving Cows down a slope like a mad thing. There was another standing at the cowhouse door rather pretty fac’d all up to the ankles in dirt. We have walk’d 15 Miles in a soaking rain to Oban opposite the Isle of Mull which is so near Staffa—we had thought to pass to it—but the expense is 7 Guineas and those rather extorted.—Staffa you see is a fashionable place and therefore every one concerned with it either in this town or the Island are what you call up.

'Tis like paying sixpence for an apple at the playhouse—this irritated me and Brown was not best pleased—we have therefore resolved to set northward for Fort William to morrow morning. I fed upon a bit of white Bread to-day like a Sparrow—it was very fine—I cannot manage the cursed Oat Cake. Remember me to all and let me hear a good account of you at Inverness. I am sorry Georgy had not those lines. Good bye.

Your affectionate Brother

John ———

LV.

*To* BENJAMIN BAILEY.<sup>1</sup>

Inverary,

July 18 [1818].

My dear Bailey,

The only day I have had a chance of seeing you when you were last in London, I took every advantage of—some devil led you out of the way. Now I have

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton remarks justly that a part of this letter “illustrates, with singular felicity, the peculiar action of a high imagination on the ordinary relations of the sexes. The youthful companions of Keats,” continues his Lordship, “who saw how gentle and courteous was his manner to women, and who held the common belief that every Poet was essentially sentimental, could not comprehend his frequent avoidance of female society, and the apparent absence of any engrossing passion; the pardonable conceit of conscious genius suggested itself to them as the probable cause of this defective sympathy, and, when he manifested an occasional interest in any one person, it was attributed rather to satisfied vanity than to awakened love. But the careful study of the poetical character at once disproves these superficial interpretations, and the simple statement of his own feelings by such a man as Keats is a valuable addition to our knowledge of the most delicate and wonderful of the

written to Reynolds to tell me where you will be in Cumberland—so that I cannot miss you. And when I see you, the first thing I shall do will be to read that about Milton and Ceres,<sup>1</sup> and Proserpine—yet though I am not going after you to John o' Grot's, it will be but poetical to say so. 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.<sup>2</sup> Yet I think I have, as far as a

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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."

<sup>1</sup> See page 27 of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> It was in Little Britain that the Reynolds family lived, Mr. Reynolds, the father of Keats's friend, being Writing Master at the neighbouring school, Christ's Hospital. Mr. Dilke notes that Bailey was at this time in love with Marianne Reynolds, afterwards Mrs. Green. "She was", he says, "a very beautiful girl—somewhat cold and saturnine, and though always admired not generally liked. She was afterwards hardly tried by misfortune, and never yielded—



man can do who has books to read and subjects to think upon. For that reason I have been no where 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 friends 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

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indeed I never thought so highly of her until she had undergone those trials, which I think were beyond the strength of any other in the family. She was never abased by them—never complained.”

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.”<sup>1</sup> That 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 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

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<sup>1</sup> Aptly misquoted from Milton's *Comus* (816-19)—

Without his rod reversed,  
And backward mutters of dissevering power,  
We cannot free the Lady that sits here  
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.

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 fed upon oat-cake—not long enough to be very much attached to it. The first mountains I saw, though not so large as some I have since 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, from the great imposition of expense. We have come over heath, and rock, and river, and bog, to what, in England, would be called a horrid place. Yet it belongs to a shepherd pretty well off. The family speak not a word but Gaelic, and we have not yet seen their faces for the smoke, which, after visiting every cranny (not excepting my eyes, very much incommoded for writing), finds its way out at the door. I am more comfortable than I could have imagined in such a place, and so is Brown. The people are all very kind. We lost our way a little, yesterday ; and inquiring at a cottage, a young woman, without a word, threw on her cloak, and walked a mile in a mizzling rain and splashy way, to put us right again.

I could not have had a greater pleasure in these parts than your mention of my sister. She is very much prisoned from me. I am afraid it will be some time before I can take her to many places I wish.

I trust we shall see you ere long in Cumberland—at least I hope I shall, before my visit to America, more than once. I intend to pass a whole year there, if I live to the completion of the three next. My sister's welfare,

and the hopes of such a stay in America, will make me observe your advice. I shall be prudent, and more careful of my health than I have been.

I hope you will be about paying your first visit to town, after settling, when we come into Cumberland. Cumberland, however, will be no distance to me after my present journey. I shall spin to you [in] a minute. I begin to get rather a contempt of distances. I hope you will have a nice convenient room for a library. Now you are so well in health, do keep it up by never missing your dinner, by not reading hard, and by taking proper exercise. You'll have a horse, I suppose, so you must make a point of sweating him. You say I must study Dante: well, the only books I have with me are those three little volumes.<sup>1</sup> 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.

One of the pleasantest bouts we have had was our walk to Burns's Cottage, over the Doon, and past Kirk Alloway. I had determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage. I did; but it was so wretched I destroyed it: however, in a few days afterwards I wrote some lines cousin-german to the circumstance, which I will transcribe, or rather cross-scribe in the front of this.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Vision; or, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, of Dante Alighieri. Translated by the Rev. H. F. Cary, A.M. In three volumes. London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey, 93, Fleet Street. 1814.* This pretty little 32mo. is the first complete edition of Cary's renowned version of the *Commedia*, though the translation of the *Inferno* had appeared as far back as 1805. See foot-note, page 334, Volume II, of this edition of Keats.

<sup>2</sup> For the lines in question,

There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain, &c., see Volume II, pages 299-302.

Reynolds's illness has made him a new man ; he will be stronger than ever : before I left London he was really getting a fat face.

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 last, 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

LVI.

*To* THOMAS KEATS.

Derrynaculen,<sup>1</sup>

23 July [1818].

My dear Tom,

Just after my last had gone to the post, in came one of the men with whom we endeavoured to agree about going to Staffa : he said what a pity it was we should turn aside, and not see the curiosities. So we had a little tattle, and finally agreed that he should be our guide across the Isle of Mull. We set out, crossed two ferries, one to the Isle of Kerrera, of little distance ; the other from Kerrera to Mull, nine miles across. We did it in forty minutes, with a fine breeze. The road through

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<sup>1</sup> I presume this is the name intended ; but the letter has hitherto been headed *Dunancullen*.

the island, or rather track, is the most dreary you can think of ; between dreary mountains, over bog, and rock, and river, with our breeches tucked up, and our stockings in hand. About eight o'clock we arrived at a shepherd's hut, into which we could scarcely get for the smoke, through a door lower than my shoulders. We found our way into a little compartment, with the rafters and turf-thatch blackened with smoke, the earth-floor full of hills and dales. We had some white bread with us, made a good supper, and slept in our clothes in some blankets ; our guide snored in another little bed about an arm's length off. This morning we came about *sax* miles to breakfast, by rather a better path, and we are now in, by comparison, a mansion. Our guide is, I think, a very obliging fellow. In the way, this morning, he sang us two Gaelic songs—one made by a Mrs. Brown, on her husband's being drowned—the other a Jacobin one on Charles Stuart. For some days Brown has been inquiring out his genealogy here ; he thinks his grandfather came from Long Island. He got a parcel of people round him at a cottage door last evening, chatted with one who had been a Miss Brown, and who, I think, from a likeness, must have been a relation : he jawed with the old woman, flattered a young one, and kissed a child, who was afraid of his spectacles, and finally drank a pint of milk. They handle his spectacles as we do a sensitive leaf.

*July 26th.*—Well ! we had a most wretched walk of thirty-seven miles, across the Island of Mull, and then we crossed to Iona, or Icolmkill ; from Icolmkill we took a boat at a bargain to take us to Staffa, and land us at the head of Loch Nakeal, whence we should only have to walk half the distance to Oban again and by a better road. All this is well passed and done, with this singular

piece of luck, that there was an interruption in the bad weather just as we saw Staffa, at which it is impossible to land but in a tolerably calm sea. But I will first mention Icolmkill. I know not whether you have heard much about this island; I never did before I came nigh it. It is rich in the most interesting antiquities. Who would expect to find the ruins of a fine cathedral church, of cloisters, colleges, monasteries, and nunneries, is so remote an island? The beginning of these things was in the sixth century, under the superstition of a would-be-bishop-saint, who landed from Ireland, and chose the spot for its beauty; for, at that time, the now treeless place was covered with magnificent woods. Columba in the Gaelic is Colm, signifying "dove"; "kill" signifies "church"; and I is as good as island: so I-colm-kill means, the Island of St. Columba's Church. Now this St. Columba became the Dominic of the Barbarian Christians of the North, and was famed also far south, but more especially was revered by the Scots, the Picts, the Norwegians, and the Irish. In a course of years, perhaps the island was considered the most holy ground of the north; and the old kings of the aforementioned nations chose it for their burial place. We were shown a spot in the church-yard where they say sixty-one kings are buried; forty-eight Scotch, from Fergus II. to Macbeth; eight Irish; four Norwegians; and one French. They lay in rows compact. Then we were shown other matters of later date, but still very ancient, many tombs of Highland chieftains—their effigies in complete armour, face upward, black and moss-covered; abbots and bishops of the island, always of the chief clans. There were plenty Macleans and Macdonalds; among these latter, the famous Macdonald, Lord of the Isles. There have been three hundred

crosses in the island, but the Presbyterians destroyed all but two, one of which is a very fine one, and completely covered with a shaggy coarse moss. The old school-master, an ignorant little man, but reckoned very clever, showed us these things. He is a Maclean, and as much above four feet as he is under four feet three inches. He stops at one glass of whisky, unless you press another, and at the second, unless you press a third.

I am puzzled how to give you an idea of Staffa. It can only be represented by a first-rate drawing. One may compare the surface of the island to a roof: this roof is supported by grand pillars of basalt, standing together as thick as honeycomb. The finest thing is Fingal's Cave. It is entirely a hollowing out of basalt pillars. Suppose, now, the giants who rebelled against Jove, had taken a whole mass of black columns and bound them together like bunches of matches, and then, with immense axes, had made a cavern in the body of these columns. Of course the roof and floor must be composed of the ends of these columns. Such is Fingal's Cave, except that the sea has done the work of excavation, and is continually dashing there. So that we walk along the sides of the cave, on the pillars which are left, as if for convenient stairs. The roof is arched somewhat Gothic-wise, and the length of some of the entire side-pillars is fifty feet. About the island you might seat an army of men, each on a pillar. The length of the cave is 120 feet, and from its extremity, the view into the sea, through the large arch at the entrance, is sublime. The colour of the columns is black, with a lurking gloom of purple therein. For solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest cathedrals. At the extremity of the cave there is a small perforation into another cave, at



which, the waters meeting and buffeting each other, there is sometimes produced a report as if of a cannon, heard as far as Iona, which must be twelve miles. As we approached in the boat, there was such a fine swell of the sea that the pillars appeared immediately arising from the crystal. But it is impossible to describe it.

Not Aladdin magian  
Ever such a work began ; &c.<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry I am so indolent as to write such stuff as this. It can't be helped.

The western coast of Scotland is a most strange place ; it is composed of rocks, mountains, mountainous and rocky islands, intersected by lochs ; you can go but a short distance anywhere from salt-water in the Highlands.

I assure you I often long for a seat and a cup o' tea at Well Walk, especially now that mountains, castles, and lakes are becoming common to me. Yet I would rather summer it out, for on the whole I am happier than when I have time to be glum : perhaps it may cure me. Immediately on my return I shall begin studying hard, with a peep at the theatre now and then. I have a slight sore throat, and think it better to stay a day or two at Oban ; then we shall proceed to Fort William and Inverness. Brown, in his letters, puts down every little circumstance ; I should like to do the same, but I confess myself too indolent, and besides, next winter they

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<sup>1</sup> At this point in the *Life, Letters &c.* is given the whole of the fragment *Staffa* printed at pages 309-11 of Volume II. Compare with this account of Iona and Staffa the almost but not quite identical passages which appear to have been written to George Keats also, and, not having been sent at the time, to have been copied into the great Winchester letter of September 1819.

will come up in prime order as we speak of such and such things.

Remember me to all, including Mr. and Mrs. Bentley.<sup>1</sup>

Your most affectionate brother

John

LVII.

To THOMAS KEATS.

Well Walk, Hampstead.

Letter Findlay, August 3rd

[*Postmark*, Inverness, 6 August 1818].

Ah mio Ben.

My dear Tom,

We have made but poor progress lately, chiefly from bad weather, for my throat is in a fair way of getting quite well, so I have had nothing of consequence to tell you till yesterday when we went up Ben Nevis, the highest Mountain in Great Britain. On that account I will never ascend another in this empire—Skiddaw is

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<sup>1</sup> The young Keatses occupied the first floor at a house in Well Walk, Hampstead,—the house of Bentley, who, says Mr. Dilke, “was Postman of the district.” Mrs. Bentley is described by the same authority as “a well-behaved kind and motherly person.”

(LVII) In the note to the Sonnet on Ben Nevis (Volume II, page 312) it was suggested that the ascent took place “about the 1st” of August. If Keats’s date is right, it took place on the 2nd; but I had not seen this letter when the second volume passed through the press. The interval between the beginning of the letter and its consignment to the Post Office would seem to have been three days; and in the mean time the sore throat appears to have held its own even by Keats’s own admission at the close; and a day later Brown wrote very seriously of it (Volume II, page 312). Letterfinlay is about twelve miles (as the crow flies) from Ben Nevis, in the direct line for Inverness, and is close to the banks of Loch Lochy.

nothing to it either in height or in difficulty. It is above 4300 feet from the Sea level, and Fortwilliam stands at the head of a Salt water Lake, consequently we took it completely from that level. I am heartily glad it is done—it is almost like a fly crawling up a wainscoat. Imagine the task of mounting ten Saint Pauls without the convenience of Staircases. We set out about five in the morning with a Guide in the Tartan and Cap, and soon arrived at the foot of the first ascent which we immediately began upon—after much fag and tug and a rest and a glass of whiskey apiece we gained the top of the first rise and saw then a tremendous chap above us, which the guide said was still far from the top. After the first Rise our way lay along a heath valley in which there was a Loch—after about a Mile in this Valley we began upon the next ascent, more formidable by far than the last, and kept mounting with short intervals of rest until we got above all vegetation, among nothing but loose Stones which lasted us to the very top—the Guide said we had three Miles of a stony ascent—we gained the first tolerable level after the valley to the height of what in the Valley we had thought the top and saw still above us another huge crag which still the Guide said was not the top—to that we made with an obstinate fag, and having gained it there came on a Mist, so that from that part to the very top we walked in a Mist. The whole immense head of the Mountain is composed of large loose stones—thousands of acres. Before we had got halfway up we passed large patches of snow and near the top there is a chasm some hundred feet deep completely glutted with it.—Talking of chasms they are the finest wonder of the whole—the[y] appear great rents in the very heart of the mountain though they are not, being at the side of it, but other huge crags arising round it give the appear-

ance to Nevis of a shattered heart or Core in itself. These Chasms are 1500 feet in depth and are the most tremendous places I have ever seen—they turn one giddy if you choose to give way to it. We tumbled in large stones and set the echoes at work in fine style. Sometimes these chasms are tolerably clear, sometimes there is a misty cloud which seems to steam up and sometimes they are entirely smothered with clouds.

After a little time the Mist cleared away but still there were large Clouds about attracted by old Ben to a certain distance so as to form as it appeared large dome curtains which kept sailing about, opening and shutting at intervals here and there and everywhere: so that although we did not see one vast wide extent of prospect all round we saw something perhaps finer—these cloud-veils opening with a dissolving motion and showing us the mountainous region beneath as through a loophole—these cloudy loopholes ever varying and discovering fresh prospect east, west, north and south. Then it was misty again, and again it was fair—then puff came a cold breeze of wind and bared a craggy chap we had not yet seen though in close neighbourhood. Every now and then we had overhead blue Sky clear and the sun pretty warm. I do not know whether I can give you an Idea of the prospect from a large Mountain top. You are on a stony plain which of course makes you forget you are on any but low ground—the horizon or rather edges of this plain being above 4000 feet above the Sea hide all the Country immediately beneath you, so that the next object you see all round next to the edges of the flat top are the Summits of Mountains of some distance off. As you move about on all side[s] you see more or less of the near neighbour country according as the Mountain you stand upon is in different parts steep

or rounded—but the most new thing of all is the sudden leap of the eye from the extremity of what appears a plain into so vast a distance. On one part of the top there is a handsome pile of Stones done pointedly by some soldiers of artillery; I clim[b]ed onto them and so got a little higher than old Ben himself. It was not so cold as I expected—yet cold enough for a glass of W[h]iskey now and then. There is not a more fickle thing than the top of a Mountain—what would a Lady give to change her head-dress as often and with as little trouble!—There are a good many red deer upon Ben Nevis—we did not see one—the dog we had with us kept<sup>1</sup> a very sharp look out and really languished for a bit of a worry. I have said nothing yet of our<sup>2</sup> getting on among the loose stones large and small sometimes on two, sometimes on three, sometimes four legs—sometimes two and stick, sometimes three and stick, then four again, then two, then a jump, so that we kept on ringing changes on foot, hand, stick, jump, boggle, s[t]umble, foot, hand, foot (very gingerly), stick again, and then again a game at all fours. After all there was one Mrs. Cameron of 50 years of age and the fattest woman in all Invernessshire who got up this Mountain some few years ago—true she had her servants—but then she had her self. She ought to have hired Sisyphus,<sup>3</sup>—“Up the high hill he heaves a huge round—Mrs. Cameron.” ’Tis said a little conversation took place between the mountain and the Lady. After taking a glass of W[h]iskey as she was tolerably seated at ease she thus began—<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the original manuscript, *keep* instead of *kept*.

<sup>2</sup> The word *out* for *our* is written in the letter.

<sup>3</sup> Keats wrote *Sisyphus*.

<sup>4</sup> It is hardly necessary to apologize for the absence of this doggerel from Volume II; but as I should certainly, for uniformity's

MRS. C.

Upon my Life Sir Nevis I am pique'd  
 That I have so far panted tugg'd and reek'd  
 To do an honor to your old bald pate  
 And now am sitting on you just to bate,  
 Without your paying me one compliment. 5  
 Alas 'tis so with all, when our intent  
 Is plain, and in the eye of all Mankind  
 We fair ones show a preference, too blind!  
 You Gentle man immediately turn tail—  
 O let me then my hapless fate bewail! 10  
 Ungrateful Baldpate have I not disdain'd  
 The pleasant Valleys—have I not madbrain'd  
 Deserted all my Pickles and preserves  
 My China closet too—with wretched Nerves  
 To boot—say wretched ingrate have I not 15  
 Le[f]t my soft cushion chair and caudle pot.  
 'Tis true I had no corns—no! thank the fates  
 My Shoemaker was always Mr. Bates.  
 And if not Mr. Bates why I'm not old!  
 Still dumb ungrateful Nevis—still so cold! 20

Here the Lady took some more w[h]iskey and was putting even more to her lips when she dashed [it] to the Ground for the Mountain began to grumble—which continued for a few minutes before he thus began,

BEN NEVIS.

What whining bit of tongue and Mouth thus dares  
 Disturb<sup>1</sup> my slumber of a thousand years?

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sake, have included it in the series of Scottish poems had I been able, I may explain that this letter, like Number LIII, was only found in Haydon's journal after Volume II had passed the press.

<sup>1</sup> In the manuscript, *distur'd*.

Even so long my sleep has been secure—  
 And to be so awaked I'll not endure.  
 Oh pain—for since the Eagle's earliest scream 25  
 I've had a dam[n]'d.<sup>1</sup> confounded ugly dream,  
 A Nightmare sure. What Madam was it you?  
 It cannot be! My old eyes are not true!  
 Red-Crag,<sup>2</sup> my Spectacles! Now let me see!  
 Good Heavens Lady how the gemini 30  
 Did you get here? O I shall split my sides!  
 I shall earthquake——

MRS. C.

Sweet Nevis do not quake, for though I love  
 You[r] honest Countenance all things above  
 Truly I should not like to be convey'd 35  
 So far into your Bosom—gentle Maid  
 Loves not too rough a treatment gentle Sir—  
 Pray thee be calm and do not quake nor stir  
 No not a Stone or I shall go in fits—

BEN NEVIS.

I must—I shall—I meet not such tit bits— 40  
 I meet not such sweet creatures every day—  
 By my old night cap night cap night and day  
 I must have one sweet Buss—I must and shall!  
 Red-Crag!—What Madam can you then repent  
 Of all the toil and vigour you have spent 45  
 To see Ben Nevis and to touch his nose?  
 Red Crag I say! O I must have them close!  
 Red Crag, there lies beneath my farthest toe  
 A vein of Sulphur—go dear Red Crag, go—

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<sup>1</sup> It is not quite clear whether the word in the letter is *dam'd* or *darn'd*.

<sup>2</sup> A domestic of Ben's [KEATS'S NOTE].

And rub your flinty back against it—budge! 50  
 Dear Madam I must kiss you, faith I must!  
 I must Embrace you with my dearest gust!  
 Block-head,<sup>1</sup> d'ye hear—Block-head I'll make her feel  
 There lies beneath my east leg's northern heel  
 A cave of young earth dragons—well my boy 55  
 Go thither quick and so complete my joy  
 Take you a bundle of the largest pines  
 And when the sun on fiercest Phosphor shines  
 Fire them and ram them in the Dragon's nest  
 Then will the dragons fry and fizz their best 60  
 Until ten thousand now no bigger than  
 Poor Al[l]igators—poor things of one span—  
 Will each one swell to twice ten times the size  
 Of northern whale—then for the tender prize—  
 The moment then—for then will Red Crag rub 65  
 His flinty back—and I shall kiss and snub  
 And press my dainty morsel to my breast.  
 Block-head make haste!

O Muses weep the rest—

The Lady fainted and he thought her dead  
 So pulled the clouds again about his head 70  
 And went to sleep again—soon she was rous'd  
 By her affrighted servants—next day hous'd  
 Safe on the lowly ground she bless'd her fate  
 That fainting fit was not delayed too late.

But what surprises me above all is how this Lady got down again. I felt it horribly. 'Twas the most vile descent—shook me all to pieces. Over leaf you will find a Sonnet I wrote on the top of Ben Nevis. We have just entered Inverness. I have three Letters from you

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<sup>1</sup> Another domestic of Ben's [KEATS'S NOTE].



and one [from] Fanny—and one from Dilke. I would set about crossing this all over for you but I will first write to Fanny and Mrs. Wylie.<sup>1</sup> Then I will begin another to you and not before because I think it better you should have this as soon as possible. My Sore throat is not quite well and I intend stopping here a few days.<sup>2</sup>

Good bye till to morrow.

Your most affectionate Brother

John —

LVIII.

To MRS. WYLIE.<sup>3</sup>

Inverness,

6 August [1818].

My dear Madam,

It was a great regret to me that I should leave all my friends, just at the moment when I might have helped to soften away the time for them. I wanted not to leave my brother Tom, but more especially, believe me, I should like to have remained near you, were it but for an atom of consolation after parting with so dear a daughter. My brother George has ever been more than a brother to me; he has been my greatest friend, and I can never forget the sacrifice you have made for his happiness. As I walk along the mountains here I am full

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<sup>1</sup> Misspelt *Wilie* in the original.

<sup>2</sup> The Sonnet on Ben Nevis follows here in the manuscript. There is no variation of consequence from the text as printed at pages 312-13 of Volume II. In the fourth line we have the dissyllable *Vaprous* instead of the trisyllable *Vapourous*, and in the fifth line *Mankind do know* instead of *Mankind doth know*.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Wylie was the mother of Mrs. George Keats.

of these things, and lay in wait, as it were, for the pleasure of seeing you immediately on my return to town. I wish, above all things, to say a word of comfort to you, but I know not how. It is impossible to prove that black is white ; it is impossible to make out that sorrow is joy, or joy is sorrow.

Tom tells me that you called on Mrs. Haslam, with a newspaper giving an account of a gentleman in a fur cap, falling over a precipice in Kirkcudbrightshire. If it was me, I did it in a dream, or in some magic interval between the first and second cup of tea ; which is nothing extraordinary when we hear that Mahomet, in getting out of bed, upset a jug of water, and, whilst it was falling, took a fortnight's trip, as it seemed, to Heaven ; yet was back in time to save one drop of water being spilt. As for fur caps, I do not remember one beside my own, except at Carlisle : this was a very good fur cap I met in High Street, and I dare say was the unfortunate one. I dare say that the Fates, seeing but two fur caps in the north, thought it too extraordinary, and so threw the dies which of them should be drowned. The lot fell upon Jones : I dare say his name was Jones. All I hope is that the gaunt ladies said not a word about hanging ; if they did I shall repent<sup>1</sup> that I was not half-drowned in Kirkcudbright. Stop ! let me see !—being half-drowned by falling from a precipice, is a very romantic affair : why should I not take it to myself ? How glorious to be introduced in a drawing-room to a lady who reads novels, with “ Mr. So-and-so—Miss So-and-so ; Miss So-and-so, this is Mr. So-and-so, who fell off a precipice and was half-drowned.” Now I refer to you, whether I should

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<sup>1</sup> In Lord Houghton's editions the word here is *repeat* ; but I think there can be no doubt that *repent* is the right word.

lose so fine an opportunity of making my fortune. No romance lady could resist me—none. Being run under a wagon ; side-lamed in a playhouse ; apoplectic through brandy ; and a thousand other tolerably decent things for badness, would be nothing ; but being tumbled over a precipice into the sea—oh ! it would make my fortune—especially if you could contrive<sup>1</sup> to hint, from this bulletin's authority, that I was not upset on my own account, but that I dashed into the waves after Jessy of Dumblane, and pulled her out by the hair ;—but that, alas ! she was dead, or she would have made me happy with her hand. However, in this you may use your own discretion. But I must leave joking, and seriously aver, that I have been very romantic indeed among these mountains and lakes. I have got wet through, day after day ; eaten oat-cake, and drank whisky ; walked up to my knees in bog ; got a sore throat ; gone to see Icolmkill and Staffa ; met with unwholesome food, just here and there as it happened ; went up Ben Nevis, and—N.B., came down again : sometimes, when I am rather tired, I lean rather languishingly on a rock, and long for some famous beauty to get down from her palfrey in passing, approach me, with—her saddle-bags, and give me—a dozen or two capital roast-beef sandwiches.

When I come into a large town, you know there is no putting one's knapsack into one's fob, so the people stare. We have been taken for spectacle-vendors, razor-sellers, jewellers, travelling linen-drapers, spies, excisemen, and many things I have no idea of. When I asked for letters at Port Patrick, the man asked,—What regiment ? I have

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<sup>1</sup> This word has been printed *continue* in previous editions ; but that scarcely makes sense ; and, as *continue* for *contrive* is one of the commonest of printers' errors, there need be no hesitation about rectifying the apparent inaccuracy.

had a peep also at Little Ireland. Tell Henry I have not camped quite on the bare earth yet, but nearly as bad, in walking through Mull; for the shepherds' huts you can scarcely breathe in for the smoke, which they seem to endeavour to preserve for smoking on a large scale.

I assure you, my dear Madam, that one of the greatest pleasures I shall have on my return, will be seeing you, and that I shall ever be

Yours, with the greatest respect and sincerity,  
John Keats.

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In *Papers of a Critic*, Volume I, page 5, there are two notes of Mrs. Dilke's connected with the termination of Keats's Scotch tour: under date the 16th of August 1818 she writes—"John Keats' brother is extremely ill, and the doctor begged that his brother might be sent for. Dilke accordingly wrote off to him, which was a very unpleasant task. However, from the journal received from Brown last Friday, he says Keats has been so long ill with his sore throat, that he is obliged to give up. I am rather glad of it, as he will not receive the letter, which might have frightened him very much, as he is extremely fond of his brother. How poor Brown will get on alone I know not, as he loses a cheerful, good-tempered, clever companion." And again, on the 19th of August, Mrs. Dilke writes—"John Keats arrived here last night, as brown and as shabby as you can imagine; scarcely any shoes left, his jacket all torn at the back, a fur cap, a great plaid, and his knapsack. I cannot tell what he looked like."

## LIX.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tucker's,  
Walthamstow.

Hampstead, August 18th [1818].

My dear Fanny,

I am afraid you will [think?] me very negligent in not having answered your Letter—I see it is dated June 12. I did not arrive at Inverness till the 8th<sup>1</sup> of this Month so I am very much concerned at your being disappointed so long a time. I did not intend to have returned to London so soon but have a bad sore throat from a cold I caught in the island of Mull: therefore I thought it best to get home as soon as possible, and went on board the Smack from Cromarty. We had a nine days passage and were landed at London Bridge yesterday. I shall have a good deal to tell you about Scotland—I would begin here but I have a confounded tooth ache. Tom has not been getting better since I left London and for the last fortnight has been worse than ever—he has been getting a little better for these two or three days.<sup>2</sup> I shall ask Mr. Abbey to let me

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<sup>1</sup> The previous letter, written from Inverness to Mrs. Wylie, is dated the 6th in Lord Houghton's editions; so that Keats would seem to have made a mistake about the date in one letter or the other—probably in this to his sister, for there is a letter from Brown dated "Inverness, 7th August 1818." In that letter (see Appendix) Brown writes very seriously of his friend's illness.

<sup>2</sup> This would seem as if Tom was at Hampstead. Lord Houghton says (*Life, Letters &c.*, Volume I, page 215), "On returning to the south, Keats found his brother alarmingly ill, and immediately joined him at Teignmouth. They returned together to Hampstead,

bring you to Hampstead. If Mr. A. should see this Letter tell him that he still must if he pleases forward the Post Bill to Perth as I have empowered my fellow traveller to receive it. I have a few Scotch pebbles for you from the Island of Icolmkill—I am afraid they are rather shabby—I did not go near the Mountain of Cairn Gorm. I do not know the Name of George's ship—the Name of the Port he has gone to is Philadelphia when[c]e he will travel to the Settlement across the Country—I will tell you all about this when I see you. The Title of my last Book is 'Endymion'—you shall have one soon.—I would not advise you to play on the Flageolet—however I will get you one if you please. I will speak to Mr. Abbey on what you say concerning school. I am sorry for your poor Canary. You shall have another volume of my first Book. My tooth ache keeps on so that I cannot write with any pleasure—all I can say now is that you[r] Letter is a very nice one without fault and that you will hear from or see in a few days if his throat will let him,

Your affectionate Brother

John.

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where he gradually sunk under the disease, affectionately tended and fraternally mourned." But taking the passage in the text with the fact that Keats was writing from Hampstead on the 1st of September, and yet wrote to Bailey from Teignmouth in that month, the inference might rather be that the younger brother went for a second trial of Devonshire air after the elder brother's return from the North.

LX.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Miss Tucker's,  
Walthamstow.

Hampstead, Tuesday

[*Postmark*, 25 August 1818].

My dear Fanny,

I have just written to Mr. Abbey to ask him to let you come and see poor Tom who has lately been much worse. He is better at present—sends his Love to you and wishes much to see you—I hope he will shortly—I have not been able to come to Walthamstow on his account as well as a little Indisposition of my own. I have asked Mr. A. to write me—if he does not mention any thing of it to you, I will tell you what reasons he has though I do not think he will make any objection. Write me what you want<sup>1</sup> with a Flageolet and I will get one ready for you by the time you come.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

Although the post-mark of the original letter is not distinct, there can be no real doubt about the date of this letter. The year and month are clearly stamped ; the letter was certainly not written the same day as the previous one ; the previous one was written on the 18th of August, which was a Tuesday ; on Tuesday the 11th and Tuesday the 4th Keats was in Scotland ; and Tuesday the 25th is the only one remaining. On that day, therefore, the brothers were certainly at Hampstead together.

<sup>1</sup> In the original the word *what* is inadvertently repeated in place of *want*.

## LXI.

To JANE REYNOLDS,  
Afterwards Mrs. Thomas Hood.  
Little Britain.

Well Walk, Sept. 1st [1818].

My dear Jane,

Certainly your kind note would rather refresh than trouble me, and so much the more would your coming if as you say, it could be done without agitating my Brother too much. Receive on your Hearth our deepest thanks for your Solicitude concerning us.

I am glad John is not hurt, but gone safe<sup>1</sup> into Devonshire—I shall be in great expectation of his Letter—but the promise of it in so anxious and friendly a way I prize more than a hundred. I shall be in town today on some business with my guardian ‘as was’<sup>2</sup> with scar[c]e a hope of being able to call on you. For these two last days Tom has been more cheerful: you shall hear again soon how he will be.

Remember us particularly to your Mother.

Your sincere friend

John Keats —

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<sup>1</sup> The word in the original might possibly be *sane*; but it is more probably *save*, written in mistake for *safe*.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Abbey, who is mentioned in the two previous letters.



## LXII.

*To* BENJAMIN BAILEY.Teignmouth,  
September 1818.

My dear Bailey,

When a poor devil is drowning, it is said he comes thrice to the surface ere he makes his final sink ; if, however, even at the third rise, he can manage to catch hold of a piece of weed or rock, he stands a fair chance, as I hope I do now, of being saved. I have sunk twice in our correspondence, have risen twice, and have been too idle, or something worse, to extricate myself. I have sunk the third time, and just now risen again at this two of the clock P.M., and saved myself from utter perdition by beginning this, all drenched as I am, and fresh from the water. And I would rather endure the present inconvenience of a wet jacket than you should keep a laced one in store for me. Why did I not stop at Oxford in my way? How can you ask such a question? Why did I not promise to do so? Did I not, in a letter to you, make a promise to do so? Then how can you be so unreasonable as to ask me why I did not?

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If this letter really belongs to September 1818, the date under which Lord Houghton gives it, it must be placed somewhere between the 1st and the 21st ; and supposing Tom to have gone to Devonshire by himself, the passage referring to a letter from him gives rise to no difficulty. It is even possible that John had taken him down to Teignmouth after the 1st and left him for a few days. I presume the reference to a promise to stop at Oxford on his way may be to the passage at page 160 of this volume, "If I do not [go any journey], you shall see me soon, if not on my return, or I'll quarter myself on you next winter."

This is the thing—(for I have been rubbing up my invention ; trying several sleights : I first polished a cold, felt it in my fingers, tried it on the table, but could not pocket it : I tried chilblains, rheumatism, gout, tight boots, —nothing of that sort would do,—so this is, as I was going to say, the thing)—I had a letter from Tom, saying how much better he had got, and thinking he had better stop. I went down to prevent his coming up. Will not this do? Turn it which way you like—it is selvaged all round. I have used it, these three last days, to keep out the abominable Devonshire weather. By the by, you may say what you will of Devonshire : the truth is, it is a splashy, rainy, misty, snowy, foggy, haily, floody, muddy, slipshod county. The hills are very beautiful, when you get a sight of 'em ; the primroses<sup>1</sup> are out,—but then you are in ; the cliffs are of a fine deep colour, but then the clouds are continually vieing with them. The women like your London people in a sort of negative way—because the native men are the poorest creatures in England—because government never have thought it worth while to send a recruiting party among them. When I think of Wordsworth's Sonnet, "Vanguard of Liberty! ye men of Kênt!" the degenerated race about me are *pulvis Ipecac. simplex*—a strong dose. Were I a corsair, I'd make a descent on the south coast of Devon ; if I did not run the chance of having cowardice imputed to me. As for the men, they'd run away into the Methodist meeting-houses ; and the women would be glad of it. Had England been

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<sup>1</sup> If it were quite clear that this was meant literally of the moment, it would bear strongly against the correctness of the date ; but in the absence of the original letter it would be over rash to accept as testimony what may very well have been meant in a general sense.

a large Devonshire, we should not have won the Battle of Waterloo. There are knotted oaks, there are lusty rivulets, there are meadows such as are not elsewhere,—but there are no thews and sinews. “Moore’s Almanack” is here a curiosity: arms, neck, and shoulders may at least be seen there, and the ladies read it as some out-of-the-way romance. Such a quelling power have these thoughts over me that I fancy the very air of a deteriorating quality. I fancy the flowers, all precocious, have an Acrasian spell about them; I feel able to beat off the Devonshire waves like soap-froth. I think it well, for the honour of Britain, that Julius Cæsar did not first land in this county. A Devonshirer, standing on his native hills, is not a distinct object; he does not show against the light; a wolf or two would dispossess him. I like, I love England—I like its living men—give me a long brown plain for my money, so I may meet with some of Edmund Ironside’s descendants; give me a barren mould, so I may meet with some shadowing of Alfred in the shape of a gipsey, a huntsman, or a shepherd. Scenery is fine, but human nature is finer; the sward is richer for the tread of a real nervous English foot; the eagle’s nest is finer, for the mountaineer having looked into it. Are these facts or prejudices? Whatever they be, for them I shall never be able to relish entirely any Devonshire scenery. Homer is fine, Achilles is fine, Diomed is fine, Shakspeare is fine—Hamlet is fine, Lear is fine—but dwindled Englishmen are not fine. Where, too, the women are so passable, and have such English names, such as Ophelia, Cordelia, &c., that they should have such paramours, or rather imparamours! As for them, I cannot, in thought, help wishing, as did the cruel emperor, that they had but one head, and I might cut it off, to deliver them from any horrible courtesy they may

do their undeserving countrymen. I wonder I meet with no born monsters. O! Devonshire, last night I thought the moon had dwindled in heaven.

I have never had your Sermon from Wordsworth, but Mr. Dilke lent it me. You know my ideas about Religion. I do not think myself more in the right than other people, and that nothing in this world is proveable. I wish I could enter into all your feelings on the subject, merely for one short ten minutes, and give you a page or two to your liking. I am sometimes so very sceptical as to think Poetry itself a mere Jack o' Lanthorn to amuse whoever may chance to be struck with its brilliance. As tradesmen say every thing is worth what it will fetch, so probably every mental pursuit takes its reality and worth from the ardour of the pursuer—being in itself a nothing. Ethereal things may at least be thus real, divided under three heads—things real, things semi-real, and nothings: things real, such as existences of sun, moon, and stars, and passages of Shakspeare; things semi-real, such as love, the clouds, &c., which require a greeting of the spirit to make them wholly exist; and nothings, which are made great and dignified by an ardent pursuit—which, by the by, stamp the Burgundy-mark on the bottles of our minds, insomuch as they are able to "*consecrate what'er they look upon.*" I have written a sonnet here of a somewhat collateral nature. So don't imagine it an "*apropos des bottles.*"<sup>1</sup>

Aye, this may be carried—but what am I talking of? It is an old maxim of mine, and of course must be well known, that every point of thought is the centre of an intellectual world. The two uppermost thoughts in a

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<sup>1</sup> For the sonnet, *The Human Seasons*, see Volume II, pages 247-8.

man's mind are the two poles of his world ; he revolves on them, and every thing is southward or northward to him through their means. We take but three steps from feathers to iron. Now, my dear fellow, I must, once for all, tell you I have not one idea of the truth of any of my speculations : I shall never be a reasoner, because I care not to be in the right, when retired from bickering and in a proper philosophical temper. So you must not stare, if, in any future letter, I endeavour to prove that Apollo, as he had catgut strings to his lyre, used a cat's paw as a pecten—and, further, from said pecten's reiterated and continual teasing, came the term *hen-pecked*.

My brother Tom desires to be remembered to you ; he has just this moment had a spitting of blood, poor fellow ! Remember me to Gleig<sup>1</sup> and Whitehead.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Life, Letters &c.* (1848), *Grey* : in the *Life and Letters* (1867), *Greig* ; but I presume there is no doubt that the reference is to the Rev. George Robert Gleig. See page 94 of this volume.

## LXIII.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

At Mr. Snook's,  
Bedhampton, near Havant, Hants.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 21 September 1818.]

My dear Dilke,

According to the Wentworth place Bulletin you have left Brighton much improved: therefore now a few lines will be more of a pleasure than a bore. I have things to say to you, and would fain begin upon them in this fo[u]rth line: but I have a Mind too well regulated to proceed upon any thing without due preliminary remarks.—You may perhaps have observed that in the simple process of eating radishes I never begin at the root but constantly dip the little green head in the salt—that in the Game of Whist if I have an ace I constantly play it first. So how can I with any face begin without a dissertation on letter-writing? Yet when I consider that a sheet of paper contains room only for three pages and a half, how can I do justice to such a pregnant subject? However, as you have seen the history of the world stamped as it were by a diminishing glass in the form of a chronological Map, so will I “with retractile claws” draw this into the form of a table—whereby it will occupy merely the remainder of this first page—

Folio—Parsons, Lawyers, Statesmen, Phys[ic]ians out of place—ut—Eustace—Thornton—out of practice or on their travels.

Foolscap—1. Superfine—Rich or noble poets—ut Byron. 2. common ut egomet.

Quarto—Projectors, Patentees, Presidents, Potato growers.

Bath—Boarding s[c]hools, and suburbans in general.

Gilt edge—Dandies in general, male, female and literary.

Octavo or tears—All who make use of a lascivious seal.

Duodec.—May be found for the most part on Milliners' and Dressmakers' Parlour tables.

Strip—At the Playhouse-doors, or any where.

Slip—Being but a variation.

Snip—So called from its size being disguised by a twist.

I suppose you will have heard that Hazlitt has on foot a prosecution against Blackwood.<sup>1</sup> I dined with him a few days since at Hessey's—there was not a word said about it, though I understand he is excessively vexed. Reynolds, by what I hear, is almost over-happy,<sup>2</sup> and Rice is in town. I have not seen him, nor shall I for some time, as my throat has become worse after getting

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<sup>1</sup> The August number of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (Number XVII), which contained the infamous attack upon Keats, bristled also with the most scurrilous of its habitual scurrilities, directed against William Hazlitt. Besides a blatant and vulgar article entitled *Hazlitt Cross-questioned*, full of the most insolent personal abuse, there was a paper on Shakespeare's Sonnets, bringing in Hazlitt for another dose of the like nauseous stuff. It is curious that we find so little trace in Keats's letters of the kind of impression made upon him by the attack on himself and his poetry in the paper Number IV of *The Cockney School of Poets*. At pages 84-5 of the present volume will be found a portion of a letter written to Bailey in the course of October 1817, when Number I of the series had just appeared, from the tone of which we should have anticipated less of dignified silence on the appearance of Number IV.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably concerning his marriage.

well, and I am determined to stop at home till I am quite well. I was going to Town tomorrow with Mrs. D. but I thought it best to ask her excuse this morning. I wish I could say Tom was any better. His identity presses upon me so all day that I am obliged to go out—and although I intended to have given some time to study alone, I am obliged to write and plunge into abstract images to ease myself of his countenance, his voice, and feebleness—so that I live now in a continual fever. It must be poisonous to life, although I feel well. Imagine “the hateful siege of contraries”<sup>1</sup>—if I think of fame, of poetry, it seems a crime to me, and yet I must do so or suffer. I am sorry to give you pain—I am almost resolved to burn this—but I really have not self-possession and magnanimity enough to manage the thing otherwise—after all it may be a nervousness proceeding from the Mercury.

Bailey I hear is gaining his spirits, and he will yet be what I once thought impossible, a cheerful Man—I think he is not quite so much spoken of in Little Britain. I forgot to ask Mrs. Dilke if she had any thing she wanted to say immediately to you. This morning look'd so unpromising that I did not think she would have gone—but I find she has, on sending for some volumes of Gibbon. I was in a little funk yesterday, for I sent in an unseal'd note of sham abuse, until I recollected, from what I heard Charles<sup>2</sup> say, that the servant could neither

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<sup>1</sup> But I in none of these  
Find place or refuge ; and the more I see  
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel  
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege  
Of contraries ;... *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, lines 118-22.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Wentworth Dilke, the son of Keats's friend, and afterwards the first baronet of that name, was born in 1810 and died in 1869.



read nor write—not even to her Mother as Charles observed. I have just had a Letter from Reynolds—he is going on gloriously. The following is a translation of a line of Ronsard<sup>1</sup>—

Love poured her beauty into my warm veins.

You have passed your Romance, and I never gave in to it, or else I think this line a feast for one of your Lovers. How goes it with Brown?

Your sincere friend

John Keats —

#### LXIV.

*To* JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[Hampstead, 21 or 22 September 1818.]

My dear Reynolds,

Believe me, I have rather rejoiced at your happiness than fretted at your silence. Indeed I am grieved, on your account, that I am not at the same time happy. But I conjure you to think, at present, of nothing but pleasure; “Gather the rose,” &c., gorge the honey of life. I pity you as much that it cannot last for ever, as I

<sup>1</sup> See the Sonnet from Ronsard at pages 317-18 of Volume II.

(LXIV) This interesting letter has had the chance to play a more important part in Keats's biography than it is entitled to maintain. The absence of a date left it natural to suppose that the woman referred to in it in such a serious tone was Fanny Brawne; and Lord Houghton, acting upon that assumption, places the letter after one dated the 18th of December—a position which, in the absence of documentary evidence to the contrary, I readily accepted when writing the introduction to the Letters to Fanny Brawne. But

do myself now drinking bitters. Give yourself up to it—you cannot help it—and I have a consolation in thinking so. I never was in love, yet the voice and shape of a woman has haunted me these two days—at such a

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documents bearing on the date of this letter, now in my hands, make it certain that the date is several weeks earlier than the 18th of December; and leave, I think, no reasonable doubt that this letter to Reynolds was written about the same time as the foregoing letter to Dilke. When Keats began the letter to Dilke he had clearly been to Little Britain and heard *of* Reynolds; but he had not heard *from* him; when he ended he had “just had a Letter” from him. That letter we may presume he immediately proceeded to answer—for he says “the voice and shape of a woman has haunted me these two days”—no doubt referring to the lady whose impression upon him he describes on the 29th of October, to George, as having been made on his return to Town when he visited the Reynoldses. Now he had but just returned from Teignmouth, for he wrote thence to Bailey some time in September. Then the state of mind about Tom and Poetry, the inability through temporary confinement to see Rice, and the occupation over Ronsard’s sonnet, are all identical in the two letters. But even if this ascription of date be not admitted as proved, nothing can push the letter on later than the second week in October; for he had not heard from George; and on the 16th of October he had. Thus the reasons which make it clear he was not in love with Miss Brawne when he described “Charmian” on the 29th are valid against any connexion between Miss Brawne and the present letter; and leave barely any supposition except that the person mentioned to Reynolds was Reynolds’s cousin, Miss Cox. Not being pleased with Reynolds’s sisters in this connexion, Keats’s natural delicacy would prevent his saying who the woman was. It must have been very soon after this that Keats met Fanny Brawne; for, in the annotated copy of the *Life, Letters &c.* frequently referred to, Mr. Dilke records that about October or November 1818 Keats “met Miss Brawne for the first time at my house. Brown let his house when he and Keats went to Scotland to Mrs. Brawne, a stranger to all of us. As the house adjoined mine in a large garden, we almost necessarily became acquainted. When Brown returned, the Brawnes took another house at the top of Downshire Hill; but we kept up our acquaintance and no doubt Keats, who was daily with me, met her soon after his return from Teignmouth.”

time, when the relief, the feverous relief of poetry, seems a much less crime. This morning poetry has conquered—I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life—I feel escaped from a new, strange, and threatening sorrow, and I am thankful for it. There is an awful warmth about my heart, like a load of Immortality.

Poor Tom—that woman and poetry were ringing changes in my senses. Now I am, in comparison, happy. I am sensible this will distress you—you must forgive me. Had I known you would have set out so soon I would have sent you the “Pot of Basil,” for I had copied it out ready. Here is a free translation of a Sonnet of Ronsard, which I think will please you. I have the loan of his works—they have great beauties.

Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies, &c.<sup>1</sup>

I had not the original by me when I wrote it, and did not recollect the purport of the last lines.

I should have seen Rice ere this, but I am confined by Sawrey’s mandate in the house now, and have, as yet, only gone out in fear of the damp night. I shall soon be quite recovered. Your offer I shall remember as though it had even now taken place in fact. I think it cannot be. Tom is not up yet—I cannot say he is better. I have not heard from George.

Your affectionate friend,  
John Keats.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sonnet see Volume II, pages 317-18.

## LXV.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Miss Tuckey's,  
Walthamstow.[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 9 October 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

Poor Tom is about the same as when you saw him last ; perhaps weaker—were it not for that I should have been over to pay you a visit these fine days. I got to the stage half an hour before it set out and counted the buns and tarts in a Pastry-cook's window and was just beginning with the Jellies. There was no one in the Coach who had a Mind to eat me like Mr. Sham-deaf. I shall be punctual in enquiring about next Thursday—

Your affectionate Brother

John

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The situation is not very clearly indicated in this note, unless we are to read *half an hour before it set out* as an elliptical expression for *half an hour before it would have set out had there been passengers enough*. Otherwise, one cannot well see what was the explanation of the change of plan.

## LXVI.

*To* JAMES AUGUSTUS HESSEY.

9 October 1818.

My dear Hessey,

You are very good in sending me the letters from the Chronicle,<sup>1</sup> and I am very bad in not acknowledging such a kindness sooner : pray forgive me. It has so chanced that I have had that paper every day. I have seen to-day's. I cannot but feel indebted to those gentlemen who have taken my part. As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness. Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what "Blackwood" or the "Quarterly" could possibly inflict : and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine. J. S. is perfectly right in regard to the "slip-shod Endymion." That it is so is no fault of mine. No! though it may sound a little paradoxical, it is as good as I had power to make it by myself. Had I been nervous about its being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice, and trembled over every page, it would not have been written ; for it is not in my nature to fumble. I will write independently. I have written independently *without judgment*. I may write independently, and *with judgment*, hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In "Endymion" I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest. But I am nigh getting into a rant; so, with remembrances to Taylor and Woodhouse, &c., I am,

Yours very sincerely,  
John Keats.

## LXVII.

*To* FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tuckey's,  
Walthamstow.

Hampstead, Friday Morn  
[*Postmark*, 16 October 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

You must not condemn me for not being punctual to Thursday, for I really did not know whether it would not affect poor Tom too much to see you. You know how it hurt him to part with you the last time. At all events you shall hear from me; and if Tom keeps pretty well tomorrow, I will see Mr. Abbey the next day, and endeavour to settle that you shall be with us on Tuesday or Wednesday. I have good news from George—He has landed safely with our Sister—they are both in good health—their prospects are good—and they are by this time nighing to their journey's end—you shall hear the particulars soon.

Your affectionate Brother  
John

Tom's love to you.

## LXVIII.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Miss Tuckey's,  
Walthamstow.[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 26 October 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

I called on Mr. Abbey in the beginning of last Week : when he seemed averse to letting you come again from having heard that you had been to other places besides Well Walk. I do not mean to say you did wrongly in speaking of it, for there should rightly be no objection to such things : but you know with what People we are obliged in the course of Childhood to associate, whose conduct forces us into duplicity and fa[l]shood to them. To the worst of People we should be openhearted : but it is as well as things are to be prudent in making any communication to any one, that may throw an impediment in the way of any of the little pleasures you may have. I do not recommend duplicity but prudence with such people. Perhaps I am talking too deeply for you : if you do not now, you will understand what I mean in the course of a few years. I think poor Tom is a little Better : he sends his love to you. I shall call on Mr. Abbey to morrow : when I hope to settle when to see you again. Mrs. Dilke has been for some time at Brighton—she is expected home in a day or two. She will be pleased I am sure with your present. I will try for permission for you to remain here all Night should Mrs. D. return in time.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

## LXIX.

*To* RICHARD WOODHOUSE.[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 27 October 1818.]

My dear Woodhouse,

Your letter gave me great satisfaction, more on account of its friendliness than any relish of that matter in it which is accounted so acceptable in the "genus irritabile." The best answer I can give you is in a clerklike manner to make some observations on two principal points which seem to point like indices into the midst of the whole *pro* and *con* about genius, and views, and achievements, and ambition, *et cætera*. 1st. As to the poetical character itself (I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member; that sort distinguished from the Wordsworthian, or egotistical sublime; which is a thing *per se*, and stands alone), it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—it has no character—it enjoys light and shade—it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated,—it has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the cameleon poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things, any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity; he is continually in for, and filling, some other body. The sun, the moon, the sea, and men and women, who are creatures of impulse, are poetical, and have about them an unchangeable attribute; the poet has none, no identity. He is certainly the most un-



poetical of all God's creatures. If, then, he has no self, and if I am a poet, where is the wonder that I should say I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the characters of Saturn and Ops? It is a wretched thing to confess, but it is a very fact, that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature. How can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with people, if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then, not myself goes home to myself, but the identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me, [so] that I am in a very little time annihilated—not only among men; it would be the same in a nursery of children. I know not whether I make myself wholly understood: I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be placed on what I said that day.

In the second place, I will speak of my views, and of the life I purpose to myself. I am ambitious of doing the world some good: if I should be spared, that may be the work of maturer years—in the interval I will assay to reach to as high a summit in poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer. The faint conceptions I have of poems to come bring the blood frequently into my forehead. All I hope is, that I may not lose all interest in human affairs—that the solitary indifference I feel for applause, even from the finest spirits, will not blunt any acuteness of vision I may have. I do not think it will. I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labours should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever shine upon them. But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself, but from some character in whose soul I now live.

I am sure, however, that this next sentence is from myself.—I feel your anxiety, good opinion, and friendship, in the highest degree, and am

Yours most sincerely,  
John Keats.

## LXX.

*To* GEORGE KEATS.

29 October 1818.

My dear George,

There was a part in your letter which gave me great pain ; that where you lament not receiving letters from England. I intended to have written immediately on my return from Scotland (which was two months earlier than I intended, on account of my own, as well as Tom's health), but then I was told by Mrs. W[ylie] that you had said you did not wish any one to write, till we had heard from you. This I thought odd, and now I see that it could not have been so. Yet, at the time, I suffered my unreflecting head to be satisfied, and went on in that sort of careless and restless life with which you are well acquainted. I am grieved to say that I am not sorry you had not letters at Philadelphia : you could have had no good news of Tom ; and I have been withheld, on his account, from beginning these many

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(LXX) I find no reason for doubting that this letter was finished on the day upon which it was begun, namely the 29th of October 1818. On the contrary, if Keats went as intended to see Mrs. Wylie the day after he began the letter, and was still adding to it, he would infallibly have given his sister-in-law some details of the visit.

days. I could not bring myself to say the truth, that he is no better, but much worse : however, it must be told, and you, my dear brother and sister, take example from me, and bear up against any calamity, for my sake, as I do for yours. Ours are ties, which, independent of their own sentiment, are sent us by Providence, to prevent the effects of one great solitary grief : I have Fanny,<sup>1</sup> and I have you—three people whose happiness, to me, is sacred, and it does annul that selfish sorrow which I should otherwise fall into, living, as I do, with poor Tom, who looks upon me as his only comfort. The tears will come into your eyes : let them ; and embrace each other : thank Heaven for what happiness you have, and, after thinking a moment or two that you suffer in common with all mankind, hold it not a sin to regain your cheerfulness.

Your welfare is a delight to me which I cannot express. The moon is now shining full and brilliant ; she is the same to me in matter that you are in spirit. If you were here, my dear sister, I could not pronounce the words which I can write to you from a distance. I have a tenderness for you, and an admiration which I feel to be as great and more chaste than I can have for any woman in the world. You will mention Fanny—her character is not formed ; her identity does not press upon me as yours does. I hope from the bottom of my heart that I may one day feel as much for her as I do for you. I know not how it is, my dear brother, I have never made any acquaintance of my own—nearly all through your medium ; through you I know, not only a sister, but a glorious human being ; and now I am talking of

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<sup>1</sup> This reference, as noted by Lord Houghton, is to Keats's sister.

those to whom you have made me known, I cannot forbear mentioning Haslam, as a most kind, and obliging, and constant friend. His behaviour to Tom during my absence, and since my return, has endeared him to me for ever, besides his anxiety about you.

To-morrow I shall call on your mother and exchange information with her. I intend to write you such columns that it will be impossible for me to keep any order or method in what I write; that will come first which is uppermost in my mind; not that which is uppermost in my heart. Besides, I should wish to give you a picture of our lives here, whenever by a touch I can do it.

I came by ship from Inverness, and was nine days at sea without being sick. A little qualm now and then put me in mind of you; however, as soon as you touch the shore, all the horrors of sickness are soon forgotten, as was the case with a lady on board, who could not hold her head up all the way. We had not been into the Thames an hour before her tongue began to some tune—paying off, as it was fit she should, all old scores. I was the only Englishman on board. There was a downright Scotchman, who, hearing that there had been a bad crop of potatoes in England, had brought some triumphant specimens from Scotland. These he exhibited with natural pride to all the ignorant lightermen and watermen from the Nore to the Bridge. I fed upon beef all the way, not being able to eat the thick porridge which the ladies managed to manage, with large, awkward, horn-spoons into the bargain. Reynolds has returned from a six-weeks' enjoyment in Devonshire; he is well, and persuades me to publish my "Pot of Basil," as an answer to the attack made on me in "Blackwood's Magazine" and the "Quarterly Review." There have been two letters in my defence in the Chronicle, and one

in the *Examiner*, copied from the *Exeter paper*,<sup>1</sup> and written by Reynolds. I don't know who wrote those in the *Chronicle*. This is a mere matter of the moment : I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death. Even as a matter of present interest, the attempt to crush me in the "Quarterly" has only brought me more into notice, and it is a common expression among book-men, "I wonder the 'Quarterly' should cut its own throat." It does me not the least harm in society to make me appear little and ridiculous : I know when a man is superior to me, and give him all due respect ; he will be the last to laugh at me ; and, as for the rest, I feel that I make an impression upon them which ensures me personal respect while I am in sight, whatever they may say when my back is turned.

The Misses Reynolds<sup>2</sup> are very kind to me, but they have lately displeased me much, and in this way :—now I am coming the Richardson!—On my return, the first

<sup>1</sup> In *The Alfred, West of England Journal, and General Advertiser*, for Tuesday, the 6th of October 1818, there is an article on the subject, which was reprinted in *The Examiner* of the 11th of the same month. This article by Reynolds, together with *The Examiner's* remarks and the two letters from *The Morning Chronicle*, will be found in the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> The late Joseph Severn assured me that the reference here was to Mrs. and the Misses Reynolds, and a cousin of theirs whose name he had forgotten. In Mr. Dilke's copy of the *Life, Letters &c.*, the name of Reynolds, hitherto left out, is inserted in manuscript, and the name of the cousin is supplied as in the text. Mr. John Snook of Belmont Castle, near Havant, confirms this view on the authority of Miss Charlotte Reynolds the youngest of the sisters who figure in the tale. Miss Jane Cox, it seems, was born in India, and was a daughter of the only brother of Mrs. Reynolds, whose maiden name was Cox. The quarrel of the dark beauty Jane with her grandfather did not arise from bad temper ; but from some other cause. Her grandfather was very fond of her, and they were ultimately reconciled.

day I called, they were in a sort of taking or bustle about a cousin of theirs, Miss Cox, who, having fallen out with her grandpapa in a serious manner, was invited by Mrs. Reynolds to take asylum in her house. She is an East-Indian, and ought to be her grandfather's heir. At the time I called, Mrs. Reynolds was in conference with her up stairs, and the young ladies were warm in her praise down stairs, calling her genteel, interesting, and a thousand other pretty things, to which I gave no heed, not being partial to nine-days' wonders. Now all is completely changed : they hate her, and, from what I hear, she is not without faults of a real kind ; but she has others, which are more apt to make women of inferior claims hate her. She is not a Cleopatra, but is, at least, a Charmian : she has a rich Eastern look ; she has fine eyes, and fine manners. When she comes into the room she makes the same impression as the beauty of a leopardess. She is too fine and too conscious of herself to repulse any man who may address her ; from habit she thinks that *nothing particular*. I always find myself more at ease with such a woman : the picture before me always gives me a life and animation which I cannot possibly feel with anything inferior. I am, at such times, too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or in a tremble : I forget myself entirely, because I live in her. You will, by this time, think I am in love with her, so, before I go any further, I will tell you I am not. She kept me awake one night, as a tune of Mozart's might do. I speak of the thing as a pastime and an amusement, than which I can feel none deeper than a conversation with an imperial woman, the very "yes" and "no" of whose life is to me a banquet. I don't cry to take the moon home with me in my pocket, nor do I fret to leave her behind me. I like her, and her

like, because one has no *sensations* ; what we both are is taken for granted. You will suppose I have, by this, had much talk with her—no such thing ; there are the Misses Reynolds on the look out. They think I don't admire her because I don't stare at her ; they call her a flirt to me—what a want of knowledge ! She walks across a room in such a manner that a man is drawn towards her with a magnetic power ; this they call flirting ! They do not know things ; they do not know what a woman is. I believe, though, she has faults, the same as Charmian and Cleopatra might have had. Yet she is a fine thing, speaking in a worldly way ; for there are two distinct tempers of mind in which we judge of things—the worldly, theatrical and pantomimical ; and the unearthly, spiritual and ethereal. In the former, Bonaparte, Lord Byron, and this Charmian, hold the first place in our mind ; in the latter, John Howard, Bishop Hooker rocking his child's cradle, and you, my dear sister, are the conquering feelings. As a man of the world, I love the rich talk of a Charmian ; as an eternal being, I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me.

I am free from men of pleasure's cares,  
By dint of feelings far more deep than theirs.

This is " Lord Byron," and is one of the finest things he has said.

I have no town-talk for you : as for politics, they are, in my opinion, only sleepy, because they will soon be wide awake. Perhaps not ; for the long-continued peace of England has given us notions of personal safety which are likely to prevent the re-establishment of our national honesty. There is, of a truth, nothing manly or sterling in any part of the Government. There are many mad-

men in the country, I have no doubt, who would like to be beheaded on Tower-hill, merely because of the sake of *éclat*; there are many men, who, like Hunt, from a principle of taste, would like to see things go on better; there are many, like Sir F. Burdett, who like to sit at the head of political dinners;—but there are none prepared to suffer in obscurity for their country. The motives of our worst men are interest, and of our best vanity; we have no Milton, or Algernon Sidney. Governors, in these days, lose the title of man, in exchange for that of Diplomat or Minister. We breathe a sort of official atmosphere. All the departments of Government have strayed far from simplicity, which is the greatest of strength. There is as much difference in this, between the present Government and Oliver Cromwell's, as there is between the Twelve Tables of Rome and the volumes of Civil Law which were digested by Justinian. A man now entitled Chancellor has the same honour paid him, whether he be a hog or a Lord Bacon. No sensation is created by greatness, but by the number of Orders a man has at his button-hole. Notwithstanding the noise the Liberals make in favour of the cause of Napoleon, I cannot but think he has done more harm to the life of Liberty than any one else could have done. Not that the Divine Right gentlemen have done, or intend to do, any good—no, they have taken a lesson of him, and will do all the further harm he would have done, without any of the good. The worst thing he has taught them is, how to organize their monstrous armies. The Emperor Alexander, it is said, intends to divide his Empire, as did Dioclesian, creating two Czars besides himself, and continuing supreme monarch of the whole. Should he do so, and they, for a series of years, keep peaceable among themselves, Russia may spread her conquest even



to China. I think it a very likely thing that China may fall of itself: Turkey certainly will. Meanwhile European North Russia will hold its horn against the rest of Europe, intriguing constantly with France. Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin-perfectibility man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where England leaves off. I differ there with him greatly: a country like the United States, whose greatest men are Franklins and Washingtons, will never do that: they are great men doubtless; but how are they to be compared to those, our countrymen, Milton and the two Sidneys? The one is a philosophical Quaker, full of mean and thrifty maxims; the other sold the very charger who had taken him through all his battles. Those Americans are great, but they are not sublime men; the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime. Birkbeck's mind is too much in the American style; you must endeavour to enforce a little spirit of another sort into the settlement,—always with great caution; for thereby you may do your descendants more good than you may imagine. If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your children should be the first American poet. I have a great mind to make a prophecy; and they say that prophecies work out their own fulfilment.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding your happiness and your recommendations, I hope I shall never marry: though the most beautiful creature were waiting for me at the end of a journey or a walk; though the carpet were of silk, and

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<sup>1</sup> At this point occurs, in the *Life, Letters &c.*, the poem entitled *A Prophecy* given at pages 314-16 of Volume II.

the curtains of the morning clouds, the chairs and sofas stuffed with cygnet's down, the food manna, the wine beyond claret, the window opening on Winandermere, I should not feel, or rather my happiness should not be, so fine ; my solitude is sublime—for, instead of what I have described, there is a sublimity to welcome me home ; the roaring of the wind is my wife ; and the stars through my window-panes are my children ; the mighty abstract Idea of Beauty in all things, I have, stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness. An amiable wife and sweet children I contemplate as part of that Beauty, but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart. I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone, but in a thousand worlds. No sooner am I alone, than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my spirit the office which is equivalent to a King's Body-guard : "then Tragedy with scepter'd pall comes sweeping by : " according to my state of mind, I am with Achilles shouting in the trenches, or with Theocritus in the vales of Sicily ; or throw my whole being into Troilus, and, repeating those lines, " I wander like a lost soul upon the Stygian bank, staying for waftage," I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate, that I am content to be alone. Those things, combined with the opinion I have formed of the generality of women, who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a sugar-plum than my time, form a barrier against matrimony which I rejoice in. I have written this that you might see that I have my share of the highest pleasures of life, and that, though I may choose to pass my days alone, I shall be no solitary ; you see there is nothing splenetic in all this. The only thing that can ever affect me personally for more than one short passing day, is

any doubt about my powers for poetry : I seldom have any ; and I look with hope to the nighing time when I shall have none. I am as happy as a man can be—that is, in myself ; I should be happier if Tom were well, and if I knew you were passing pleasant days. Then I should be most enviable—with the yearning passion I have for the Beautiful, connected and made one with the ambition of my intellect. Think of my pleasure in solitude in comparison with my commerce with the world : there I am a child, there they do not know me, not even my most intimate acquaintance ; I give in to their feelings as though I were refraining from irritating<sup>1</sup> a little child. Some think me middling, others silly, others foolish : every one thinks he sees my weak side against my will, when, in truth, it is with my will. I am content to be thought all this, because I have in my own breast so great a resource. This is one great reason why they like me so, because they can all show to advantage in a room, and eclipse (from a certain tact) one who is reckoned to be a good poet. I hope I am not here playing tricks “to make the angels weep.” I think not ; for I have not the least contempt for my species ; and, though it may sound paradoxical, my greatest elevations of soul leave me every time more humbled. Enough of this, though, in your love for me, you will not think it enough.

Tom is rather more easy than he has been, but is still so nervous that I cannot speak to him of you ;—indeed it is the care I have had to keep his mind aloof from feelings too acute, that has made this letter so rambling. I did not like to write before him a letter he knew was to

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton gives this word as *imitating* ; but it seems safe to substitute *irritating* without manuscript authority.

reach your hands; I cannot even now ask him for any message; his heart speaks to you.

Be as happy as you can, and believe me, dear Brother and Sister, your anxious and affectionate Brother,

John.

This is my birth-day.

LXXI.

*To* FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tuckey's,  
Walthamstow.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 5 November 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

I have seen Mr. Abbey three times about you, and have not been able to get his consent. He says that once more between this and the Holydays will be sufficient. What can I do? I should have been at Walthamstow several times, but I am not able to leave Tom for so long a time as that would take me. Poor Tom has been rather better these 4 last days in consequence of obtaining a little rest a nights. Write to me as often as you can, and believe that I would do any thing to give you any pleasure—we must as yet wait patiently.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

## LXXII.

*To* JAMES RICE.

Well Walk,

24 November 1818.

My dear Rice,

Your *amende honorable* I must call "*un surcroit d'amitié*," for I am not at all sensible of any thing but that you were unfortunately engaged, and I was unfortunately in a hurry. I completely understand your feeling in this mistake, and find in it that balance of comfort which remains after regretting your uneasiness. I have long made up my mind to take for granted the genuine-heartedness of my friends, notwithstanding any temporary ambiguousness in their behaviour or their tongues,—nothing of which, however, I had the least scent of this morning. I say, completely understand; for I am everlastingly getting my mind into such-like painful trammels—and am even at this moment suffering under them in the case of a friend of ours. I will tell you two most unfortunate and parallel slips—it seems down-right pre-intention: A friend says to me, "Keats, I shall go and see Severn this week."—"Ah! (says I) you want him to take your portrait." And again, "Keats," says a friend, "when will you come to town again?"—"I will," says I, "let you have the MS. next week." In both these cases I appeared to attribute an interested motive to each of my friends' questions—the first made him flush, the second made him look angry:—and yet I am innocent in both cases; my mind leapt over every interval, to what I saw was, *per se*, a pleasant subject with him. You see I have no allowances to make—you see how far I am

from supposing you could show me any neglect. I very much regret the long time I have been obliged to exile from you ; for I have one or two rather pleasant occasions to confer upon with you. What I have heard from George is favourable. I expect a letter from the settlement itself.

Your sincere friend,  
John Keats.

I cannot give any good news of Tom.

## LXXIII.

*To FANNY KEATS.*

Miss Caley's School,  
Walthamstow.

Tuesday Morn  
[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 1 December 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

Poor Tom has been so bad that I have delayed your visit hither—as it would be so painful to you both. I cannot say he is any better this morning—he is in a very dangerous state—I have scarce any hopes of him. Keep up your spirits for me my dear Fanny—repose entirely in

Your affectionate Brother  
John.

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(LXXIII) Thomas Keats was buried at the Church of St. Stephen, Coleman Street, on the 7th of December 1818.

## LXXIV.

*To* RICHARD WOODHOUSE.

Wentworth Place, Hampstead,  
18 December 1818.

My dear Woodhouse,

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

Yours most sincerely

John Keats

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It seems not unlikely that the "set of ladies" here alluded to was the same that Keats mentions in the letter to George and Georgiana Keats dated "1818-19." If so, Miss Porter and Miss Fitzgerald would scarcely have reciprocated the feeling of being flattered.

## LXXV.

To MRS. REYNOLDS.

Little Britain,  
Christ's Hospital.

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

My dear Mrs. Reynolds,

When I left you yesterday, 'twas with the conviction that you thought I had received no previous invitation for Christmas day: the truth is I had, and had accepted it under the conviction that I should be in Hampshire at the time: else believe me I should not have done so, but kept in Mind my old friends. I will not speak of the proportion of pleasure I may receive at different Houses—that never enters my head—you may take for a truth that I would have given up even what I

Miss Charlotte Reynolds tells me this letter was sent to her mother a few days before Christmas-day 1818. The choice is therefore between Tuesday the 15th of December and Tuesday the 22nd of December; and the later date seems the likelier. Miss Reynolds thinks the other invitation was from Mrs. Brawne. Mrs. Reynolds (Charlotte Reynolds, born Cox) was born on the 15th of November 1761, and died on the 13th of May 1848. Miss Charlotte, the heroine of Hood's charming poem *Number One*, points out to me that it was on their mother's birthday that her brother John Hamilton Reynolds died. It is worth observing in connexion with this letter the correspondence of thought between the final epigram and Shelley's noted saying (*Shelley Memorials*, pages 211-12), "If I die tomorrow, I have lived to be older than my father. I am ninety years of age." He *did* die tomorrow; and who shall say that his scant thirty years were not as ninety of ordinary life?



did see to be a greater pleasure, for the sake of old acquaintanceship—time is nothing—two years are as long as twenty.

Yours faithfully

John Keats

LXXVI.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove,  
Paddington.

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

My dear Haydon,

Upon my Soul I never felt your going out of the room at all—and believe me I never rhodomontade anywhere but in your Company—my general Life in Society is silence. I feel in myself all the vices of a Poet, irrita-

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

Keats ! Upon my Soul I could have wept at your letter ; to find one of real heart and feeling is to me a blessed solace ; I have met with such heartless treatment from those to whom without reserve I had given my friendship, that I expected no[t] what I wished in human Nature. There is only one besides yourself who ever offer[ed to] act and did act affection, he wa[s] of a different temperament from us ; coo[ler] but not kinder, he did his best from *moral* feeling, and not from bursting impulse ; but still he did it ; you have behaved to me as I would have behaved to you my dear fellow, and if I am constrained to come to you at last, your property shall only be a transfer for a limited time on such security as will ensure you repayment in case of my Death—that is whatever part

bility, love of effect and admiration—and influenced by such devils I may at times say more ridiculous things than I am aware of—but I will put a stop to that in a manner I have long resolved upon—I will buy a gold ring and put it on my finger—and from that time a Man of superior head shall never have occasion to pity me, or one of inferior Nunskull to chuckle at me. I am certainly more for greatness in a shade than in the open day—I am speaking as a mortal—I should say I value

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

Your affectionate Friend

B. R. Haydon

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

Yours most faithfully  
John Keats.

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<sup>1</sup> Haydon notes—"my Servant".

## LXXVII.

*To FANNY KEATS.*

Rd. Abbey's Esqre.,  
Pancras Lane, Queen Street,  
Cheapside.

Wentworth Place, Wednesday.

[*Postmark*, 31 December 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

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

Your affectionate Brother

John —

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

## LXXVIII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place.

My dear Haydon,

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

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

God bless you  
J. Keats

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

My dear Keats,

I am gone out to walk in a positive agony—my eyes are so weak I can do nothing to day—if I did to day I should be totally incapacitated to-morrow—therefore you will confer a great favor on me to come to-morrow instead between ten and eleven—as I shall walk about all day in the air, and perhaps will call on you before three—I hope in God, by rest to day—to be quite adequate to it tomorrow.

Yours most affect<sup>ly</sup>

dear Keats

Friday Morning

B. R. Haydon

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

## LXXIX.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place  
Monday Aft

My dear Haydon,

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

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

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

My dear Keats

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

I am dear Keats

Your affectionate Friend

Jany. 7th 1819.

B. R. Haydon

LXXX.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esqre.,  
Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place—

My dear Fanny,

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

Your affectionate Brother

John —

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

## LXXXI.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place

My dear Haydon,

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

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

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

14th January, 1819.

My dear Keats,

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

God bless you my dear Keats !

Yours ever

B. R. Haydon.

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



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

Your's for ever  
John Keats —

## LXXXII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove North, Paddington.

Wentworth Place.

My dear Haydon,

My throat has not suffered me yet to expose myself to the night air : however I have been to town in the day time—have had several interviews with my guardian—have written him rather a plain-spoken Letter—which has had its effect ; and he now seems inclined to put no stumbling block in my way : so that I see a good prospect of performing my promise. What I should have lent you ere this if I could have got it, was belonging to poor Tom—and the difficulty is whether I am to

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

My dear Keats,

I have been long, long convinced of the paltry subterfuges of conversation to weaken the effect of unwelcome truth, and have left company where truth is never found ; of this be assured, effect and effect only, self-consequence and dictatorial controul, are what those love who shine in conversation, at the expense of truth, principle, and every thing else which interferes with their appetite for dominion—temporary dominion. I am most happy you approve of my last Sunday's defence, I hope you will like next equally well. My dear Keats—now I feel the want of your promised assistance—as soon as it is convenient it would indeed be a great, the greatest of blessings. I shall come and see you as soon as this contest is

inherit it before my Sister is of age; a period of six years. Should it be so I must incontinently take to Corderoy Trowsers. But I am nearly confident 'tis all a Bam. I shall see you soon—but do let me have a line to day or to morrow concerning your health and spirits.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

LXXXIII.

*To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE  
AND MRS. DILKE,  
from Charles Armitage Brown and Keats.*

Bedhampton, 24 January 1819.

Dear Dilke,

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

My charming dear Mrs. Dilke,

It was delightful to receive a letter from you,—but such a letter! what presumption in me to attempt to

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clear of my hands. I cannot before, every moment is so precious.—Take care of your throat, and believe me my dear fellow truly and affectionately your Friend—

B. R. Haydon.

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

(LXXXIII) Of this joint composition Keats's portion is printed in ordinary black ink—Brown's portion in blue.

answer it! Where shall I find, in my poor brain, such gibes, such jeers, such flashes of merriment? Alas! you will say, as you read me, Alas! poor Brown! quite chop fallen! But that's not true; my chops have been beautifully plumped out since I came here: my dinners have been good & nourishing, & my inside never washed by a red herring broth. Then my mind has been so happy! I have been smiled on by the fair ones, the Lacy's, the Prices, & the Mullings's, but not by the Richards's; Old Dicky has not called here during my visit,—I have not seen him; the whole of the family are *shuffling* to carriage folks for acquaintances, *cutting* their old friends, and *dealing* out pride & folly, while we allow they have got the *odd trick*, but dispute their *honours*. I was determined to be beforehand with them, & behaved cavalierly & neglectingly to the family, & passed the girls in Havant with a slight bow.—Keats is much better, owing to a strict forbearance from a third glass of wine. He & I walked from Chichester yesterday, we were here at 3, but the Dinner was finished; a brace of Muir fowl had been dressed; I ate a piece of the breast cold, & it was not tainted; I dared not venture further. Mr. Snook was nearly turned sick by being merely asked to take a mouthful. The other brace was so *high*, that the cook declined preparing them for the spit, & they were thrown away. I see your husband declared them to be in excellent order; I suppose he enjoyed them in a disgusting manner,—sucking the rotten flesh off the bones, & crunching the putrid bones. Did you eat any? I hope not, for an *ooman* should be delicate in her food.—O you Jezabel! to sit quietly in your room, while the thieves were ransacking my house! No doubt poor Ann's throat was cut; has the Coroner sat on her yet?—Mrs. Snook says she knows how to hold a

pen very well, & wants no lessons from me; only think of the vanity of the *ooman!* She tells me to make honourable mention of your letter which she received at Breakfast time, but how can I do so? I have not read it; & I'll lay my life it is not a tenth part so good as mine,—pshaw on your letter to her!—On Tuesday night I think you'll see me. In the mean time I'll not say a word about spasms in the way of my profession, tho' as your friend I must profess myself very sorry. Keats & I are going to call on Mr. Butler & Mr. Burton this morning, & to-morrow we shall go to Sanstead to see Mr. Way's Chapel consecrated by the two Big-wigs of Gloucester & St. Davids. If that vile Carver & Gilder does not do me justice, I'll annoy him all his life with legal expences at every quarter, if my rent is not sent to the day, & that will not be revenge enough for the trouble & confusion he has put me to.—Mrs. Dilke is remarkably well for Mrs. Dilke<sup>1</sup> in winter.—Have you heard any thing of John Blagden; he is off! want of business has made him play the fool,—I am sorry—that Brown and you are getting so very witty—my modest feathered Pen frizzles like baby roast beef at making its entrance among such tantrum sentences—or rather ten senses. Brown *super* or *supper* sir named the Sleek has been getting thinner a little by pining opposite Miss Muggins—(Brown says Mullins but I beg leave to differ from him)—we sit it out till ten o'Clock—Miss M. has persuaded Brown to shave his whiskers—he came down to Breakfast like the sign of the full Moon—his Profile is quite alter'd. He looks more like an oman than I ever could think it possible—and on putting on Mrs. D's Calash the deception was complete especially as his voice is trebled by making love in the

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Dilke of Chichester, the mother of Keats's friend.

draught of a doorway. I too am metamorphosed—a young oman here in Bed - - - hampton has over persuaded me to wear my shirt collar up to my eyes. Mrs. Snook I catch smoaking it every now and then and I believe Brown does but I cannot now look sideways. Brown wants to scribble more so I will finish with a marginal note—Viz. Remember me to Wentworth Place and Elm Cottage—not forgetting Millamaut—

Your's if possible

J. Keats—

This is abominable! I did but go up stairs to put on a clean & starched handkerchief, & that overweening rogue read my letter & scrawled over one of my sheets, and given him a counterpain,—I wish I could blank-it

all over and beat him with a { k  
certain rod, & have a  
fresh one bolstered up. Ah! he may dress me as he

likes but he shan't tic { k be }  
kle me pil } low the feathers,—I  
would not give a tester for such puns, let us *ope* brown  
(erratum—a large *B*—a Bumble B.) will go no further in  
the Bedroom & not call Mat Snook a relation to Matt-  
rass— This is grown to a conclusion—I had excellent  
puns in my head but one bad one from Brown has quite  
upset me but I am quite set-up for more, but I'm content  
to be conqueror. Your's in love,

Cha<sup>s</sup>. Brown.

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

## LXXXIV.

*To* GEORGE AND GEORGIANA KEATS.

[1818—19.]

My dear Brother and Sister,

You will have been prepared, before this reaches you, for the worst news you could have, nay, if Haslam's letter arrived in proper time, I have a consolation in thinking the first shock will be passed before you receive this. The last days of poor Tom were of the most distressing nature ; but his last moments were not so painful, and his very last was without a pang. I will not enter into any parsonic comments on death. Yet the commonest observations of the commonest people on death are true as their proverbs. I have a firm belief in immortality, and so had Tom.

During poor Tom's illness I was not able to write, and since his death the task of beginning has been a hindrance to me. Within this last week I have been everywhere, and I will tell you, as nearly as possible, how I go on. I am going to domesticate with Brown, that is, we shall

Lord Houghton places the following paragraph before this letter :—  
 “The journal-letters to his brother and sister in America are the best records of his outer existence. I give them in their simplicity, being assured that thus they are best. They are full of a genial life which will be understood and valued by all to whom a book of this nature presents any interest whatever : and, when it is remembered how carelessly they are written, how little the writer ever dreamt of their being redeemed from the far West or exposed to any other eyes than those of the most familiar affection, they become a mirror in which the individual character is shown with indisputable truth, and from which the fairest judgment of his very self can be drawn.”  
 I presume this instalment belongs to December 1818 and January 1819.

keep house together. I shall have the front-parlour, and he the back one, by which I shall avoid the noise of Bentley's children, and be able to go on with my studies, which have been greatly interrupted lately, so that I have not the shadow of an idea of a book in my head, and my pen seems to have grown gouty for verse. How are you going on now? The going on of the world makes me dizzy. There you are with Birkbeck, here I am with Brown; sometimes I imagine an immense separation, and sometimes, as at present, a direct communication of spirit with you. That will be one of the grandeurs of immortality. There will be no space, and consequently the only commerce between spirits will be by their intelligence of each other—when they will completely understand each other, while we, in this world, merely comprehend each other in different degrees; the higher the degree of good, so higher is our Love and Friendship. I have been so little used to writing lately that I am afraid you will not smoke my meaning, so I will give you an example. Suppose Brown, or Haslam, or any one else, whom I understand in the next degree to what I do you, were in America, they would be so much the further from me in proportion as their identity was less<sup>1</sup> impressed upon me. Now the reason why I do not feel, at the present moment, so far from you, is that I remember your ways, and manners, and actions; I know your manner of thinking, your manner of feeling; I know what shape your joy or your sorrow would take; I know the manner of your walking, standing, sauntering, sitting down, laughing, punning, and every action, so truly that you seem near to me. You will remember me in the

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton gives the word *more* in this place; but *less* must clearly be what Keats meant to write.



same manner, and the more when I tell you that I shall read a page of Shakspeare every Sunday at ten o'clock ; you read one at the same time, and we shall be as near each other as blind bodies can be in the same room.

*Thursday.*—This morning is very fine. What are you doing this morning ? Have you a clear hard frost, as we have ? How do you come on with the gun ? Have you shot a Buffalo ? Have you met with any Pheasants ? My thoughts are very frequently in a foreign country. I live more out of England than in it. The mountains of Tartary are a favorite lounge, if I happen to miss the Alleghany ridge, or have no whim for Savoy. There must be great pleasure in pursuing game—pointing your gun—no, it won't do—now—no—rabbit it—now, bang—smoke and feathers—where is it ? Shall you be able to get a good pointer or so ? Now I am not addressing myself to G. minor—and yet I am, for you are one. Have you some warm furs ? By your next letter I shall expect to hear exactly how you get on ; smother nothing ; let us have all—fair and foul—all plain. Will the little bairn have made his entrance before you have this ? Kiss it for me, and when it can first know a cheese from a caterpillar show it my picture twice a week. You will be glad to hear that Gifford's attack upon me has done me service—it has got my book among several *sets*, nor must I forget to mention, once more, what I suppose Haslam has told you, the present of a 25*l.* note I had anonymously sent me. Another pleasing circumstance I may mention, on the authority of Mr. Neville, to whom I had sent a copy of "Endymion." It was lying on his cousin's table, where it had been seen by one of the Misses Porter, (of Romance celebrity,) who expressed a wish to read it ; after having dipped into it, in a day or two she returned it, accompanied by the following letter :—

Dear Sir,

As my brother is sending a messenger to Esher, I cannot but make the same the bearer of my regrets for not having had the pleasure of seeing you the morning you called at the gate. I had given orders to be denied, I was so very unwell with my still adhesive cold ; but had I known it was you, I should have taken off the interdict for a few minutes, to say how very much I am delighted with "Endymion." I had just finished the poem, and have now done as you permitted, lent it to Miss Fitzgerald.

I regret you are not personally acquainted with the author, for I should have been happy to have acknowledged to him, through the advantage of your communication, the very rare delight my sister and myself have enjoyed from this first fruits of his genius. I hope the ill-natured review will not have damped such true Parnassian fire. It ought not, for when life is granted to the possessor, it always burns its brilliant way through every obstacle. Had Chatterton possessed sufficient manliness of mind to know the magnanimity of patience, and been aware that great talents have a commission from heaven, he would not have deserted his post, and his name might have paged with Milton.

Ever much yours,

Jane Porter.

Ditton Cottage, Dec. 4, 1818.

To H. Neville, Esq., Esher.

Now I feel more obliged than flattered by this—so obliged that I will not, at present, give you an extravaganza of a Lady Romance. I will be introduced to them first, if it be merely for the pleasure of writing you about them. Hunt has asked me to meet Tom Moore, so you shall hear of him also some day.

I am passing a quiet day, which I have not done for a long time, and if I do continue so, I feel I must again begin with my poetry, for if I am not in action, mind or body, I am in pain, and from that I suffer greatly by going into parties, when from the rules of society and a natural pride, I am obliged to smother my spirits and look like an idiot, because I feel my impulses, if given way to, would too much amaze them. I live under an everlasting restraint, never relieved except when I am composing, so I will write away.

*Friday.*—I think you knew before you left England, that my next subject would be the "Fall of Hyperion." I went on a little with it last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again. I will not give you any extracts, because I wish the whole to make an impression. I have, however, a few poems which you will like, and I will copy them out on the next sheet. I will write to Haslam this morning to know when the packet sails, and till it does I will write something every day. After that my journal shall go on like clockwork, and you must not complain of its dulness; for what I wish is to write a quantity to you, knowing well that dulness itself from me will be interesting<sup>1</sup> to you. You may conceive how this not having been done has weighed upon me. I shall be better able to judge from your next what sort of information will be of most service or amusement to you. Perhaps, as you are fond of giving me sketches of characters, you may like a little pic-nic of scandal, even across the Atlantic. Shall I give you Miss ——?<sup>2</sup> She is about my height, with a fine style

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<sup>1</sup> In Lord Houghton's editions, *instructing*.

<sup>2</sup> That this sketch has reference to Miss Brawne, I feel a very positive conviction, shared by members of her family, who assure

of countenance of the lengthened sort ; she wants sentiment in every feature ; she manages to make her hair look well ; her nostrils are very fine, though a little painful ; her mouth is bad and good ; her profile is better than her full face, which, indeed, is not full, but pale and thin, without showing any bone ; her shape is very graceful, and so are her movements ; her arms are good, her hands bad-ish, her feet tolerable. She is not seventeen, but she is ignorant ; monstrous in her behaviour, flying out in all directions, calling people such names that I was forced lately to make use of the term—Minx : this is, I think, from no innate vice, but from a penchant she has for acting stylishly. I am, however, tired of such style, and shall decline any more of it. She had a friend to visit her lately ; you have known plenty such—she plays the music, but without one sensation but the feel of the ivory at her fingers ; she is a downright Miss, without one set-off. We hated her, and smoked her, and baited her, and, I think, drove her away. Miss — thinks her a paragon of fashion, and says she is the only woman in the world she would change persons with. What a stupe—she is as superior as a rose to a dandelion.

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me that the description answers to the facts in every particular except that of age : the correct expression would be “not nineteen” ; but Keats might naturally enough have made a mistake on such a point ; or, likelier still, the figure “19” may have been mistranscribed as “17.” When he wrote this passage, he was, I should judge, feeling a certain resentment analogous to what found a much more tender expression in the first letter of the series addressed to Miss Brawne, when the circumstances made increased tenderness a matter of course,—a resentment of the feeling that he was becoming enslaved. In Mr. Dilke’s copy of the *Life, Letters &c.*, the name Brawne is inserted ; and as regards the friend who came “to visit her,” he notes in the margin, “Qy. a Miss Robinson.”

It is some days since I wrote the last page, but I never know ; but I must write. I am looking into a book of Dubois'—he has written directions to the players. One of them is very good, "In singing, never mind the music—observe what time you please. It would be a pretty degradation indeed, if you were obliged to confine your genius to the dull regularity of a fiddler—horse-hair and cat-guts. No, let him keep *your* time and play *your* time ; *dodge him.*" I will now copy out the sonnet and letter I have spoken of. The outside cover was thus directed, "Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, Booksellers, 93, Fleet-street, London," and it contained this : "Messrs. Taylor and Hessey are requested to forward the enclosed letter by some *safe* mode of conveyance to the author of 'Endymion,' who is not known at Teignmouth ; or, if they have not his address, they will return the letter by post, directed as below, within a fortnight. Mr. P. Fenbank, P. O., Teignmouth, 9th November, 1818." In this sheet was enclosed the following, with a superscription, "Mr. John Keats, Teignmouth ;" then came "Sonnet to John Keats," which I could not copy for any in the world but you, who know that I scout "mild light and loveliness," or any such nonsense, in myself.

Star of high promise ! Not to this dark age  
 Do thy mild light and loveliness belong ;  
 For it is blind, intolerant, and wrong,  
 Dead to empyreal soarings, and the rage  
 Of scoffing spirits bitter war doth wage  
 With all that bold integrity of song ;  
 Yet thy clear beam shall shine through ages strong,  
 To ripest times a light and heritage.  
 And those breathe now who dote upon thy fame,  
 Whom thy wild numbers wrap beyond their being,

Who love the freedom of thy lays, their aim  
Above the scope of a dull tribe unseeing,  
And there is one whose hand will never scant,  
From his poor store of fruits, all thou canst want.

*(Turn over.)*

I turned over, and found a 25*l.* note. Now this appears to me all very proper; if I had refused it, I should have behaved in a very braggadocio dunderheaded manner; and yet the present galls me a little, and I do not know that I shall not return it, if I ever meet with the donor, after whom to no purpose have I written.

I must not forget to tell you that a few days since I went with Dilke a-shooting on the heath, and shot a tomtit; there were as many guns abroad as birds.

*Thursday.*—On my word, I think so little, I have not one opinion upon anything except in matters of taste. I never can feel certain of any truth, but from a clear perception of its beauty, and I find myself very young-minded, even in that perceptive power, which I hope will increase. A year ago I could not understand, in the slightest degree, Raphael's Cartoons; now I begin to read them a little. And how did I learn to do so? By seeing something done in quite an opposite spirit; I mean a picture of Guido's, in which all the Saints, instead of that heroic simplicity and unaffected grandeur, which they inherit from Raphael, had, each of them, both in countenance and gesture, all the canting, solemn, melo-dramatic mawkishness of Mackenzie's Father Nicholas. When I was last at Haydon's, I looked over a book of prints, taken from the fresco of the church at Milan, the name of which I forget. In it were comprised specimens of the first and second age in Art in Italy. I do not think I ever had a greater

treat, out of Shakspeare ; full of romance and the most tender feeling ; magnificence of drapery beyond everything I ever saw, not excepting Raphael's,—but grotesque to a curious pitch ; yet still making up a fine whole, even finer to me than more accomplished works, as there was left so much room for imagination. I have not heard one of this last course of Hazlitt's Lectures. They were upon Wit and Humour, the English Comic Writers, &c.

I do not think I have anything to say in the business-way. You will let me know what you would wish done with your property in England—what things you would wish sent out. But I am quite in the dark even as to your arrival in America. Your first letter will be the key by which I shall open your hearts and see what spaces want filling with any particular information. Whether the affairs of Europe are more or less interesting to you ; whether you would like to hear of the Theatres, the Bear-Garden, the Boxers, the Painters, the Lecturers, the Dress, the progress of Dandyism, the progress of Courtship, or the fate of Mary Miller,<sup>1</sup> being a full, true, and *très* particular account of Miss Mary's ten suitors ; how the first tried the effect of swearing, the second of stammering, the third of whispering, the fourth of sonnets, the fifth of Spanish-leather boots, the sixth of flattering her body, the seventh of flattering her mind, the eighth of flattering himself, the ninth of sticking to the mother, the tenth of kissing the chamber-maid and bidding her tell her mistress,—but he was soon discharged.

And now, for the time, I bid you good-bye.

Your most affectionate Brother,

John.

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<sup>1</sup> The name is supplied on the authority of Mr. Dilke.

## LXXXV.

*To FANNY KEATS.*

Wentworth Place—  
Feby. [1819]. Thursday

My dear Fanny,

Your Letter to me at Bedhampton hurt me very much,—What objection can the[r]e be to your receiving a Letter from me? At Bedhampton I was unwell and did not go out of the Garden Gate but twice or thrice during the fortnight I was there—Since I came back I have been taking care of myself—I have been obliged to do so, and am now in hopes that by this care I shall get rid of a sore throat which has haunted me at intervals nearly a twelvemonth. I had always a presentiment of not being able to succeed in persuading Mr. Abbey to let you remain longer at School—I am very sorry that he will not consent. I recommend you to keep up all that you know and to learn more by yourself however little. The time will come when you will be more pleased with Life—look forward to that time and, though it may appear a trifle be careful not to let the idle and retired Life you lead fix any awkward habit or behaviour on you—whether you sit or walk endeavour to let it be in a seemly and if possible a graceful manner. We have been very little together: but you have not the less been with me in thought. You have no one in the world besides me who would sacrifice any thing for you—I feel myself the only Protector you have. In all your little troubles think of me with the thought that there is at least one person in England who if he could would help you out of them—I live in hopes of being able to make you happy.—I should



not perhaps write in this manner, if it were not for the fear of not being able to see you often or long together. I am in hopes Mr. Abbey will not object any more to your receiving a letter now and then from me. How unreasonable! I want a few more lines from you for George—there are some young Men, acquaintances of a School-fellow of mine, going out to Birkbeck's at the latter end of this Month—I am in expectation every day of hearing from George—I begin to fear his last letters miscarried. I shall be in town tomorrow—if you should not be in town, I shall send this little parcel by the Walthamstow Coach—I think you will like Goldsmith—Write me soon—

Your affectionate Brother

John —

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

LXXXVI.

*To* GEORGE AND GEORGIANA KEATS.

[Wentworth Place]

February 14 [1819].

My dear Brother and Sister,

How is it that we have not heard from you at the Settlement? Surely the letters have miscarried. I am still at Wentworth Place; indeed, I have kept in doors lately, resolved, if possible, to rid myself of my sore throat; consequently I have not been to see your mother since my return from Chichester.<sup>1</sup> Nothing worth speak-

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke notes, "He went with Brown on a visit to my father's at Chichester and my sister's at Bedhampton." See ante.

ing of happened at either place. I took down some of the thin paper, and wrote on it a little poem called "St. Agnes' Eve," which you will have as it is, when I have finished the blank part of the rest for you. I went out twice, at Chichester, to old dowager card-parties. I see very little now, and very few persons,—being almost tired of men and things. Brown and Dilke are very kind and considerate towards me. Another satire is expected from Lord Byron, called "Don Giovanni." Yesterday I went to town for the first time these three weeks. I met people from all parts and of all sects. Mr. Woodhouse was looking up at a book-window in Newgate-street, and, being short-sighted, twisted his muscles into so queer a style, that I stood by, in doubt whether it was him or his brother, if he has one; and, turning round, saw Mr. Hazlitt, with his son. Woodhouse proved to be Woodhouse, and not his brother, on his features subsiding. I have had a little business with Mr. Abbey; from time to time he has behaved to me with a little *brusquerie*; this hurt me a little, especially when I knew him to be the only man in England who dared to say a thing to me I did not approve of, without its being resented, or, at least, noticed;—so I wrote him about it, and have made an alteration in my favour. I expect from this to see more of Fanny, who has been quite shut up from me. I see Cobbett has been attacking the Settlement; but I cannot tell what to believe, and shall be all at elbows till I hear from you. Mrs. S. met me the other day. I heard she said a thing I am not at all content with. Says she, "O, he is quite the little poet." Now this is abominable; you might as well say Bonaparte is "quite the little soldier." You see what it is to be under six feet, and not a Lord.

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In my next packet I shall send you my "Pot of Basil," "St. Agnes' Eve," and, if I should have finished it, a little thing, called the "Eve of St. Mark." You see what fine Mother Radcliffe names I have. It is not my fault; I did not search for them. I have not gone on with "Hyperion," for, to tell the truth, I have not been in great cue for writing lately. I must wait for the spring to rouse me a little.

*Friday, 19th February [1819].*—The day before yesterday I went to Romney-street; your mother was not at home. We lead very quiet lives here; Dilke is, at present, at Greek history and antiquities; and talks of nothing but the Elections of Westminster and the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. I never drink above three glasses of wine, and never any spirits and water; though, by the bye, the other day Woodhouse took me to his coffee-house, and ordered a bottle of claret. How I like claret! when I can get claret, I must drink it. 'Tis the only palate affair that I am at all sensual in. Would it not be a good spec. to send you some vine-roots? Could it be done? I'll inquire. If you could make some wine like claret, to drink on summer evenings in an arbour! It fills one's mouth with a gushing freshness, then goes down cool and feverless: then, you do not feel it quarrelling with one's liver. No; 'tis rather a peace-maker and lies as quiet as it did in the grape. Then it is as fragrant as the Queen Bee, and the more ethereal part mounts into the brain, not assaulting the cerebral apartments, like a bully looking for his trull, and hurrying from door to door, bouncing against the wainscot, but rather walks like Aladdin about his enchanted palace, so gently that you do not feel his step. Other wines of a heavy and spirituous nature transform a man into a Silenus, this makes him a Hermes, and gives a woman the soul and

immortality of an Ariadne, for whom Bacchus always kept a good cellar of claret, and even of that he never could persuade her to take above two cups. I said this same claret is the only palate-passion I have ; I forgot game ; I must plead guilty to the breast of a partridge, the back of a hare, the backbone of a grouse, the wing and side of a pheasant, and a wood-cock *passim*. Talking of game (I wish I could make it), the lady whom I met at Hastings, and of whom I wrote you, I think, has lately sent me many presents of game, and enabled me to make as many. She made me take home a pheasant the other day, which I gave to Mrs. Dilke. The next I intend for your mother. I have not said in any letter a word about my own affairs. In a word, I am in no despair about them. My poem has not at all succeeded. In the course of a year or so I think I shall try the public again. In a selfish point of view I should suffer my pride and my contempt of public opinion to hold me silent ; but for yours and Fanny's sake, I will pluck up spirit and try it again. I have no doubt of success in a course of years, if I persevere ; but I must be patient ; for the reviewers have enervated men's minds, and made them indolent ; few think for themselves. These reviews are getting more and more powerful, especially the "Quarterly." They are like a superstition, which, the more it prostrates the crowd, and the longer it continues, the more it becomes powerful, just in proportion to their increasing weakness. I was in hopes that, as people saw, as they must do now, all the trickery and iniquity of these plagues, they would scout them ; but no ; they are like the spectators at the Westminster cock-pit, they like the battle, and do not care who wins or who loses. On Monday we had to dinner Severn and Cawthorn, the bookseller and print-virtuoso ;

in the evening Severn went home to paint, and we other three went to the play, to see Sheil's new tragedy ycleped "Evadne." In the morning Severn and I took a turn round the Museum; there is a sphinx there of a giant size, and most voluptuous Egyptian expression; I had not seen it before. The play was bad, even in comparison with 1818, the "Augustan age of the drama." The whole was made up of a virtuous young woman, an indignant brother, a suspecting lover, a libertine prince, a gratuitous villain, a street in Naples, a cypress grove, lillies and roses, virtue and vice, a bloody sword, a spangled jacket, one "Lady Olivia," one Miss O'Neil, *alias* "Evadne," *alias* "Bellamira." The play is a fine amusement, as a friend of mine once said to me: "Do what you will," says he, "a poor gentleman who wants a guinea cannot spend his two shillings better than at the play-house." The pantomime was excellent; I had seen it before, and enjoyed it again.

Your mother and I had some talk about Miss —. Says I, "Will Henry have that Miss —, a lath with a boddice, she who has been fine-drawn,—fit for nothing but to cut up into cribbage-pins; one who is all muslin; all feathers and bone? Once, in travelling, she was made use of as a linch-pin. I hope he will not have her, though it is no uncommon thing to be *smitten with a staff*;—though she might be useful as his walking-stick, his fishing-rod, his tooth-pick, his hat-stick (she runs so much in his head). Let him turn farmer, she would cut into hurdles; let him write poetry, she would be his turn-style. Her gown is like a flag on a pole: she would do for him if he turn freemason; I hope she will prove a flag of truce. When she sits languishing, with her one foot on a stool, and one elbow on the table, and her head inclined, she looks like the sign of the Crooked Billet, or the

frontispiece to 'Cinderella,' or a tea-paper wood-cut of Mother Shipton at her studies."

The nothing of the day is a machine called the "Velo-cipede." It is a wheel-carriage to ride cock-horse upon, sitting astride and pushing it along with the toes, a rudder-wheel in hand. They will go seven miles an hour. A handsome gelding will come to eight guineas; however, they will soon be cheaper, unless the army takes to them.

I look back upon the last month, and find nothing to write about; indeed, I do not recollect one thing particular in it. It's all alike; we keep on breathing; the only amusement is a little scandal, of however fine à shape, a laugh at a pun,—and then, after all, we wonder how we could enjoy the scandal, or laugh at the pun.

I have been, at different times, turning it in my head, whether I should go to Edinburgh, and study for a physician. I am afraid I should not take kindly to it; I am sure I could not take fees: and yet I should like to do so; it is not worse than writing poems, and hanging them up to be fly-blown on the Review shambles. Every body is in his own mess: here is the Parson at Hampstead quarrelling with all the world; he is in the wrong by this same token; when the black cloth was put up in the church, for the Queen's mourning,<sup>1</sup> he asked the workmen to hang it the wrong side outwards, that it might be better when taken down, it being his perquisite.

*Friday, 19th March* [1819].—This morning I have been reading "The False One." Shameful to say, I was in bed at ten—I mean, this morning. The "Blackwood's Reviewers" have committed themselves to a scandalous

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<sup>1</sup> Queen Charlotte had died during the winter—namely on the 17th of November 1818.

heresy ; they have been putting up Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, against Burns: the senseless villains ! The Scotch cannot manage themselves at all, they want imagination ; and that is why they are so fond of Hogg, who has so little of it. This morning I am in a sort of temper, indolent and supremely careless ; I long after a stanza or two of Thomson's " Castle of Indolence " ; my passions are all asleep, from my having slumbered till nearly eleven, and weakened the animal fibre all over me, to a delightful sensation, about three degrees on this side of faintness. If I had teeth of pearl, and the breath of lillies, I should call it languor ; but as I am I must call it laziness. In this state of effeminacy, the fibres of the brain are relaxed, in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree, that pleasure has no show of enticement, and pain no unbearable frown ; neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love, have any alertness of countenance ; as they pass by me, they seem rather like three figures on a Greek vase, two men and a woman, whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguise. This is the only happiness, and is a rare instance of advantage in the body overpowering the mind.<sup>1</sup>

I have this moment received a note from Haslam, in which he writes that he expects the death of his father, who has been for some time in a state of insensibility ; I shall go to town to-morrow to see him. This is the world ; thus we cannot expect to give away many hours to pleasure ; circumstances are like clouds, continually gathering and bursting ; while we are laughing, the seed of trouble is put into the wide arable land of events ;

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<sup>1</sup> Compare this passage with the *Ode on Indolence*, Volume II, pages 329-32.

while we are laughing, it sprouts, it grows, and suddenly bears a poisonous fruit, which we must pluck. Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends: our own touch us too nearly for words. Very few men have ever arrived at a complete disinterestedness of mind; very few have been interested by a pure desire of the benefit of others: in the greater part of the benefactors of humanity, some meretricious motive has sullied their greatness, some melo-dramatic scenery has fascinated them. From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortune I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness; yet this feeling ought to be carried to its highest pitch, as there is no fear of its ever injuring society. In wild nature, the Hawk would lose his breakfast of robins, and the Robin his of worms; the Lion must starve as well as the Swallow. The great part of men sway their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness, as the Hawk: the Hawk wants a mate, so does the Man; look at them both; they set about it, and procure one in the same manner; they want both a nest, and they both set about one in the same manner. The noble animal, Man, for his amusement, smokes his pipe, the Hawk balances about the clouds: that is the only difference of their leisures. This is that which makes the amusement of life to a speculative mind; I go among the fields, and catch a glimpse of a stoat or a field-mouse, peeping out of the withered grass; the creature hath a purpose, and its eyes are bright with it; I go amongst the buildings of a city, and I see a man hurrying along—to what?—the creature hath a purpose, and its eyes are bright with it:—but then, as Wordsworth says, "We have all one human heart!" There is an electric fire in human nature, tend-



ing to purify ; so that, among these human creatures, there is continually some birth of new heroism ; the pity is, that we must wonder at it, as we should at finding a pearl in rubbish. I have no doubt that thousands of people, never heard of, have had hearts completely disinterested. I can remember but two, Socrates and Jesus. Their histories evince it. What I heard Taylor observe with respect to Socrates is true of Jesus : that, though he transmitted no writing of his own to posterity, we have his mind, and his sayings, and his greatness, handed down to us by others. Even here, though I am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest animal you can think of—I am, however young and writing at random, straining after particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion—yet, in this may I not be free from sin ? May there not be superior beings, amused with any graceful, though instinctive, attitude my mind may fall into, as I am entertained with the alertness of the stoat, or the anxiety of the deer ? Though a quarrel in the street is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine ; the commonest man shows a grace in his quarrel. By a superior Being our reasonings may take the same tone ; though erroneous, they may be fine. This is the very thing in which consists Poetry, and if so, it is not so fine a thing as Philosophy, for the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as truth. Give me this credit, do you not think I strive to know myself ? Give me this credit, and you will not think, that on my own account I repeat the lines of Milton :—

How charming is divine philosophy,  
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute.

No, not for myself, feeling grateful, as I do, to have got .

into a state of mind to relish them properly. Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced ; even a proverb is no proverb to you till life has illustrated it.

I am afraid that your anxiety for me leads you to fear for the violence of my temperament, continually smothered down : for that reason, I did not intend to have sent you the following Sonnet ; but look over the two last pages, and ask yourself if I have not that in me which will bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet ; it will show you that it was written with no agony but that of ignorance, with no thirst but that of knowledge ; when pushed to the point, though the first steps to it were through my human passions, they went away, and I wrote with my mind, and, perhaps, I must confess, a little bit of my heart.

Why did I laugh to-night ? No voice will tell : &c.

I went to bed and enjoyed uninterrupted sleep : sane I went to bed, and sane I arose.

15th April [1819].—You see what a time it is since I wrote ; all that time I have been, day after day, expecting letters from you. I write quite in the dark. In hopes of a letter to-day I deferred till night, that I might write in the light. It looks so much like rain, I shall not go to town to-day, but put it off till to-morrow. Brown, this morning, is writing some Spenserian stanzas against Miss B[rawne] and me : so I shall amuse myself with him a little, in the manner of Spenser.

He is to weet a melancholy carle : &c.<sup>2</sup>

This character would ensure him a situation in the esta-

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, page 333.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, pages 337-8.

blishment of the patient Griselda. Brown is gone to bed, and I am tired of writing ; there is a north wind playing green-gooseberry with the trees, it blows so keen. I don't care, so it helps, even with a side-wind, a letter to me.

The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more ; it is that one in which he meets with Paulo and Francesca. I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind, and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life ; I floated about the wheeling atmosphere, as it is described, with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined, it seemed for an age ; and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm ; ever-flowery tree-tops sprung up, and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a Sonnet on it : there are fourteen lines in it, but nothing of what I felt. Oh ! that I could dream it every night.<sup>1</sup>

I want very much a little of your wit, my dear sister—a letter of yours just to bandy back a pun or two across the Atlantic, and send a quibble over the Floridas. Now, by this time you have crumpled up your large bonnet, what do you wear?—a cap ! Do you put your hair in paper of nights ? Do you pay the Misses Birkbeck a morning visit ? Have you any tea, or do you milk-and-water with them ? What place of worship do you go to—the Quakers, the Moravians, the Unitarians, or the Methodists ? Are there any flowers in bloom you like ? Any beautiful heaths ? Any streets full of corset-makers ? What sort of shoes have you to put those pretty feet of yours in ? Do you desire compliments to

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<sup>1</sup> For the sonnet see Volume II, pages 334-6.

one another? Do you ride on horseback? What do you have for breakfast, dinner, and supper, without mentioning lunch and bite, and wet and snack, and a bit to stay one's stomach? Do you get any spirits? Now you might easily distil some whisky, and, going into the woods, set up a whisky-shop for the monkeys! Do you and the other ladies get groggy on anything? A little so-so-ish, so as to be seen home with a lanthorn? You may perhaps have a game at Puss-in-the-corner: ladies are warranted to play at this game, though they have not whiskers. Have you a fiddle in the Settlement, or, at any rate, a Jew's-harp which will play in spite of one's teeth? When you have nothing else to do for a whole day, I'll tell you how you may employ it: first get up, and when you are dressed, as it would be pretty early, with a high wind in the woods, give George a cold pig, with my compliments, then you may saunter into the nearest coffee-house, and after taking a dram and a look at the "Chronicle," go and frighten the wild boars<sup>1</sup> on the strength of it. You may as well bring one home for breakfast, serving up the hoofs, garnished with bristles, and a grunt or two, to accompany the singing of the kettle. Then, if George is not up, give him a colder pig, always with my compliments. After you have eaten your breakfast, keep your eye upon dinner, it is the safest way; you should keep a hawk's eye over your dinner, and keep hovering over it till due time, then pounce upon it, taking care not to break any plates. While you are hovering with your dinner in prospect, you may do a thousand things—put a hedge-hog into George's hat, pour a little water into his rifle, soak his boots in a pail of water, cut his jacket round into shreds, like a Roman

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<sup>1</sup> In previous editions, *bears*.

kilt, or the back of my grandmother's stays, tear off his buttons——

The following poem, the last I have written, is the first and only one with which I have taken even moderate pains ; I have, for the most part, dashed off my lines in a hurry ; this one I have done leisurely ; I think it reads the more richly for it, and it will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit. You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist, who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour, and perhaps never thought of in the old religion : I am more orthodox than to let a heathen goddess be so neglected.<sup>1</sup>

I have been endeavouring to discover a better Sonnet stanza than we have. The legitimate does not suit the language well, from the pouncing rhymes ; the other appears too elegiac, and the couplet at the end of it has seldom a pleasing effect. I do not pretend to have succeeded. It will explain itself:—

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd, &c.<sup>2</sup>

This is the third of May, and everything is in delightful forwardness : the violets are not withered before the peeping of the first rose. You must let me know everything, how<sup>3</sup> parcels go and come—what papers you have, and what newspapers you want, and other things. God bless you, my dear brother and sister,

Your ever affectionate brother,  
John Keats.

<sup>1</sup> For the poem, the *Ode to Psyche*, see Volume II, pages 119-21.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, page 339.

<sup>3</sup> In previous editions, *now*.

LXXXVII.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.Wentworth Place  
Saturday Morn—  
[*Postmark*, 27 February 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I intended to have not failed to do as you requested, and write you as you say once a fortnight. On looking to your letter I find there is no date; and not knowing how long it is since I received it I do not precisely know how great a sinner I am. I am getting quite well, and Mrs. Dilke is getting on pretty well. You must pay no attention to Mrs. Abbey's unfeeling and ignorant gabble. You can't stop an old woman's crying more than you can a Child's. The old woman is the greatest nuisance because she is too old for the rod. Many people live opposite a Bla[c]ksmith's till they cannot hear the hammer. I have been in Town for two or three days and came back last night. I have been a little concerned at not hearing from George—I continue in daily expectation. Keep on reading and play as much on the music and the grassplot as you can. I should like to take possession of those Grassplots for a Month or so; and send Mrs. A. to Town to count coffee berries instead of currant Bunches, for I want you to teach me a few common dancing steps—and I would buy a Watch

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The last letter, finished on the 3rd of May 1819, had been kept about ever since the 14th of February; and it seemed better to submit to a little see-sawing of dates than to break up the journal by the interpolation of other letters between its paragraphs.

box to practise them in by myself. I think I had better always pay the postage of these Letters. I shall send you another book the first time I am in Town early enough to book it with one of the morning Walthamstow Coaches. You did not say a word about your Chilblains. Write me directly and let me know about them—Your Letter shall be answered like an echo.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

LXXXVIII.

*To* FANNY KEATS.

Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place

March 13th [1819].

My dear Fanny,

I have been employed lately in writing to George—I do not send him very short letters, but keep on day after day. There were some young Men I think I told you of who were going to the Settlement: they have changed their minds, and I am disappointed in my expectation of sending Letters by them.—I went lately to the only dance I have been to these twelve months or shall go to for twelve months again—it was to our Brother in laws' cousin's—She gave a dance for her Birthday and I went for the sake of Mrs. Wylie. I am waiting every day to hear from George—I trust there is no harm in the silence: other people are in the same expectation as we are. On looking at your seal I cannot tell whether it is done or not with a Tassi[e]<sup>1</sup>—it seems

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<sup>1</sup> Tassie's imitation gems were very popular in Keats's set. Shelley (Prose Works, Volume IV, page 198) writes to Peacock to go

to me to be paste. As I went through Leicester Square lately I was going to call and buy you some, but not knowing but you might have some I would not run the chance of buying duplicates. Tell me if you have any or if you would like any—and whether you would rather have motto ones like that with which I seal this letter; or heads of great Men such as Shakspeare, Milton &c.—or fancy pieces of Art; such as Fame, Adonis &c.—those gentry you read of at the end of the English Dictionary. Tell me also if you want any particular Book; or Pencils, or drawing paper—anything but live stock. Though I will not now be very severe on it, remembering how fond I used to be of Goldfinches, Tomtits, Minnows, Mice, Ticklebacks, Dace, Cock salmon and all the whole tribe of the Bushes and the Brooks: but verily they are better in the Trees and the water—though I must confess even now a partiality for a handsome Globe of gold-fish—then I would have it hold 10 pails of water and be fed continually fresh through a cool pipe with another pipe to let through the floor—well ventilated they would preserve all their beautiful silver and Crimson. Then I would put it before a handsome painted window and shade it all round with myrtles and Japonicas. I should like the window to open onto the Lake of Geneva—and there I'd sit and read all day like the picture of somebody reading. The weather now and then begins to feel like spring; and therefore I have begun my walks on the heath again. Mrs. Dilke is getting better than she has been as she has at length taken a Physician's advice. She ever and anon asks after you and always bids me

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to Leicester Square and get him two pounds' worth, "among them, the head of Alexander"; and Hunt has a laudatory article on them in one of his publications.



remember her in my Letters to you. She is going to leave Hampstead for the sake of educating their son Charles at the Westminster school. We (Mr. Brown and I) shall leave in the beginning of May; I do not know what I shall do or where be all the next summer. Mrs. Reynolds has had a sick house; but they are all well now. You see what news I can send you I do—we all live one day like the other as well as you do—the only difference is being sick and well—with the variations of single and double knocks, and the story of a dreadful fire in the Newspapers. I mentioned Mr. Brown's name—yet I do not think I ever said a word about him to you. He is a friend of mine of two years standing, with whom I walked through Scotland: who has been very kind to me in many things when I most wanted his assistance and with whom I keep house till the first of May—you will know him some day. The name of the young Man who came with me is William Haslam.

Ever,

Your affectionate Brother  
John.

## LXXXIX.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Pancras Lane, Queen Street.[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 24 March 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

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

Your affectionate Brother

John —

## XC.

*To* JOSEPH SEVERN.19 Frederick Place,  
Goswell Street Road.Wentworth Place  
Monday-af.

My dear Severn,

Your note gave me some pain, not on my own account, but on yours. Of course I should never suffer any petty vanity of mine to hinder you in any wise; and therefore I should say 'put the miniature in the exhibi-

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(xc) The subject of this letter places it before the Royal Academy exhibition of 1819, in which both the portrait of Keats and the picture of "Hermia and Helena" figured. Probably the last Monday in

tion' if only myself was to be hurt. But, will it not hurt you? What good can it do to any future picture. Even a large picture is lost in that canting place—what a drop of water in the ocean is a Miniature. Those who might chance to see it for the most part if they had ever heard of either of us and know what we were and of what years would laugh at the puff of the one and the vanity of the other. I am however in these matters a very bad judge—and would advise you to act in a way that appears to yourself the best for your interest. As your *Hermia and Helena* is finished send that without the prologue of a Miniature. I shall see you soon, if you do not pay me a visit sooner—there's a Bull for you.

Yours ever sincerely  
John Keats —

March (the 29th) would not be far from the date : indeed the letter bears an imperfect postmark in which 29 appears to be the figure for the day ; and the 29th of March is the only feasible 29th that was a Monday. Severn's profession at that time was that of a miniature painter ; and, as "The Cave of Despair" was only his second attempt at oil-painting, it follows that "*Hermia and Helena*" was his first. It figured in the Academy catalogue as Number 267, with a quotation from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Act III, Scene II, lines 203-11 :—

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

The portrait of Keats was Number 940 in the catalogue.

XCI.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place.

[*Postmark*, 13 April 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I have been expecting a Letter from you about what the Parson said to your answers. I have thought also of writing to you often, and I am sorry to confess that my neglect of it has been but a small instance of my idleness of late—which has been growing upon me, so that it will require a great shake to get rid of it. I have written nothing and almost read nothing—but I must turn over a new leaf. One most discouraging thing hinders me—we have no news yet from George—so that I cannot with any confidence continue the Letter I have been preparing for him. Many are in the same state with us and many have heard from the Settlement. They must be well however: and we must consider this silence as good news. I ordered some bulbous roots for you at the Gardener's, and they sent me some, but they were all in bud—and could not be sent—so I put them in our Garden. There are some beautiful heaths now in bloom in Pots—either heaths or some seasonable plants

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

I will send you instead—perhaps some that are not yet in bloom that you may see them come out. Tomorrow night I am going to a rout, a thing I am not at all in love with. Mr. Dilke and his Family have left Hampstead—I shall dine with them to day in Westminster where I think I told you they were going to reside for the sake of sending their son Charles to the Westminster School. I think I mentioned the Death of Mr. Haslam's Father. Yesterday week the two Mr. Wylies dined with me. I hope you have good store of double violets—I think they are the Princesses of flowers, and in a shower of rain, almost as fine as barley sugar drops are to a schoolboy's tongue. I suppose this fine weather the lambs' tails give a frisk or two extraordinary—when a boy would cry huzza and a Girl O my! a little Lamb frisks its tail. I have not been lately through Leicester Square—the first time I do I will remember your Seals. I have thought it best to live in Town this Summer, chiefly for the sake of books, which cannot be had with any comfort in the Country—besides my Scotch journey gave me a dose of the Picturesque with which I ought to be contented for some time. Westminster is the place I have pitched upon—the City or any place very confined would soon turn me pale and thin—which is to be avoided. You must make up your mind to get stout this summer—indeed I have an idea we shall both be corpulent old folks with tripple chins and stumpy thumbs.

Your affectionate Brother

John

## XCII.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Tuesday [13 April 1819].

My dear Haydon,

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

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

Monday

My dear Keats,

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

I am dear Keats

Yours ever

B. R. Haydon

(over)

only by parcels that I found all those petty obstacles which for my own sake should not exist a moment—and yet why not—for from my own imprudence and neglect all my accounts are entirely in my Guardian's Power. This has taught me a Lesson. Hereafter I will be more correct. I find myself possessed of much less than I thought for and now if I had all on the table all I could do would be to take from it a moderate two years subsistence and lend you the rest; but I cannot say how soon I could become possessed of it. This would be no sacrifice nor any matter worth thinking of—much less than parting as I have more than once done with little sums which might have gradually formed a library to my taste. These sums amount together to nearly 200 [£], which I have but a chance of ever being repaid or paid at a very distant period. I am humble enough to put this in writing from the sense I have of your struggling situation and the great desire that you should [do] me the justice to credit me the unostentatious and willing state of my nerves on all such occasions. It has not been my fault. I am doubly hurt at the slightly reproachful tone of your note and at the occasion of it,—for it must be some other disappointment; you seem'd so sure of some important help when I last saw you—now you have maimed me again; I was whole, I had began reading

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

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

again—when your note came I was engaged in a Book. I dread as much as a Plague the idle fever of two months more without any fruit. I will walk over the first fine day: then see what aspect your affairs have taken, and if they should continue gloomy walk into the City to Abbey and get his consent for I am persuaded that to me alone he will not concede a jot.

## XCIII.

*To FANNY KEATS.*

Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.

Wentworth Place, Saturday—  
[17 April 1819?]

My dear Fanny,

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

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(XCIII) This charming letter seems likely enough to belong to the Saturday immediately following the Tuesday (the 13th of April) upon which Keats had enquired how his sister got on with the parson—apparently in the matter of her preparation for being confirmed. He has had the answer, and is glad to find it so favourable. Or the letter might perhaps belong to Saturday the 24th of April.



who is going out soon—so if you will let me have a few more lines, they will be in time. I am glad you got on so well with Mons<sup>r</sup>. le Curé. Is he a nice clergyman?—a great deal depends upon a cock'd hat and powder—not gunpowder, lord love us, but lady-meal, violet-smooth, dainty-scented, lilly-white, feather-soft, wigsby-dressing, coat-collar-spoiling, whisker-reaching, pig-tail-loving, swans-down-puffing, parson-sweetening powder. I shall call in passing at the Tottenham nursery and see if I can find some seasonable plants for you. That is the nearest place—or by our la'kin or lady kin, that is by the virgin Mary's kindred, is there not a twig-manufacturer in Walthamstow? \*Mr. and Mrs. Dilke are coming to dine with us to day. They will enjoy the country after Westminster. O there is nothing like fine weather, and health, and Books, and a fine country, and a contented Mind, and diligent habit of reading and thinking, and an amulet against the ennui—and, please heaven, a little claret wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep—with a few or a good many ratafia cakes—a rocky basin to bathe in, a strawberry bed to say your prayers to Flora in, a pad nag to go you ten miles or so; two or three sensible people to chat with; two or three spiteful folkes to spar with; two or three odd fishes to laugh at and two or three numskul[1]s to argue with—instead of using dumb bells on a rainy day—

Two or three Posies  
 With two or three simples—  
 Two or three Noses  
 With two or three pimples—  
 Two or three wise men  
 And two or three ninny's—  
 Two or three purses  
 And two or three guineas—

Two or three raps  
 At two or three doors—  
 Two or three naps  
 Of two or three hours—  
 Two or three Cats  
 And two or three mice—  
 Two or three sprats  
 At a very great price—  
 Two or three sandies  
 And two or three tabbies—  
 Two or three dandies  
 And two Mrs ——                      mum !<sup>1</sup>  
 Two or three Smiles  
 And two or three frowns—  
 Two or three Miles  
 To two or three towns—  
 Two or three pegs  
 For two or three bonnets—  
 Two or three dove eggs  
 To hatch into sonnets—

Good bye I've an appointment—can't  
 stop pon word—good bye—now  
 dont get up—open the door my-  
 self—good bye—see ye Monday  
 J. K.

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<sup>1</sup> The omission of Mrs. Abbey's name was probably more for the sake of pointing the joke than anything else : he writes freely enough of her in other letters to his sister.

## XCIV.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 13 May 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

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

John Keats —

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<sup>1</sup> As far as I am aware, this is the only one of the "several notes" which has as yet come to the surface; but it is quite likely that others may be extant, and will be brought to light sooner or later.

XCV.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 26 May 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I have been looking for a fine day to pass at Walthamstow : there has not been one Morning (except Sunday and then I was obliged to stay at home) that I could depend upon. I have I am sorry to say had an accident with the Letter—I sent it to Haslam and he returned it torn into a thousand pieces.<sup>1</sup> So I shall be obliged to tell you all I can remember from Memory. You would have heard from me before this but that I was in continual expectation of a fine Morning—I want also to speak to you concerning myself. Mind I do not purpose to quit England, as George [h]as done ; but I am afraid I shall be forced to take a voyage or two. However we will not think of that for some Months. Should it be a fine morning tomorrow you will see me.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

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<sup>1</sup> I have not come upon anything explanatory of the reasons which Mr. William Haslam may have had for tearing “into a thousand pieces” the letter entrusted to him by his friend.

## XCVI.

*To* FANNY KEATS.R. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.Wentworth Place.  
[*Postmark*, 9 June 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

I shall be with you next monday at the farthest. I could not keep my promise of seeing you again in a week because I am in so unsettled a state of mind about what I am to do—I have given up the Idea of the Indian<sup>1</sup>; I cannot resolve to give up my favorite studies : so I purpose to retire into the Country and set my Mind at work once more. A Friend of Mine who has an ill state of health<sup>2</sup> called on me yesterday and proposed to spend a little time with him at the back of the Isle of Wight where he said we might live very cheaply. I agreed to his proposal. I have taken a great dislike to Town—I never go there—some one is always calling on me and as we have spare beds they often stop a couple of days. I have written lately to some acquaintances in Devonshire concerning a cheap Lodging and they have been very kind in letting me know all I wanted. They have described a pleasant place which I think I shall eventually retire to. How came you on with my young Master Yorkshire Man? Did not Mrs. A. sport her

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<sup>1</sup> He had an idea of taking an appointment as surgeon on board a vessel trading to the East Indies—an idea which was revived later on : see the last letter which he wrote to Mr. Dilke before leaving for Italy.

<sup>2</sup> This must of course have been James Rice, of whose ill health when in the Isle of Wight with him Keats wrote later on.

Carriage and one? They really surprised me with super civility—how did Mrs. A. manage it? How is the old tadpole gardener and little Master next door? it is to be hop'd they will both die some of these days. Not having been to Town I have not heard whether Mr. A. purposes to retire from business. Do let me know if you have heard any thing more about it. I[f] he should not I shall be very disappointed. If any one deserves to be put to his shifts it is that Hodgkinson—as for the other he would live a long time upon his fat and be none the worse for a good long lent. How came miledi to give one Lisbon wine—had she drained the Gooseberry? Truly I cannot delay making another visit—asked to take Lunch, whether I will have ale, wine, take sugar,—objection to green—like cream—thin bread and butter—another cup—agreeable—enough sugar—little more cream—too weak—12 shillin &c &c &c—Lord I must come again. We are just going to Dinner I must [run <sup>1</sup>] with this to the Post—

Your affectionate Brother

John —

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<sup>1</sup> In the original, *I must must with &c.*

## XCVII.

To JAMES ELMES.

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

Sir,

I did not see your Note till this Saturday evening, or I should have answered it sooner—However as it happens I have but just received the Book which contains the only copy of the verses in question. I have asked for it repeatedly ever since I promised Mr. Haydon and could not help the delay; which I regret. The verses can be struck out in no time, and will I hope be quite in time. If you think it at all necessary a proof may be forwarded; but as I shall transcribe it fairly perhaps there may be no need.

I am

Sir

Your obed<sup>t</sup>. Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Keats

The original letter, in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, bears a note signed "J. E." that the letter is "about a sonnet to Haydon." But I do not think this is the case, and scarcely doubt that the real subject is the *Ode to a Nightingale*, which appeared in the *Annals of the Fine Arts*, under the editorship of James Elmes, in July 1819. I do not think Keats would call a sonnet or sonnets "the verses in question"; but he would very likely apply to the Ode both that term and the term "those lines," which he uses in the next letter to Haydon in regard, as it seems to me, to the same poem as he here mentions to Elmes. Supposing the date to which I have assigned that letter to be right,—and I have no doubt about it,—this one clearly belongs to the 12th of June 1819. Elmes was an architect, and author or editor of many works on subjects connected with the fine arts, besides the *Annals*,—among others a handy *General and Biographical Dictionary of the Fine Arts* (1826), in which he had much assistance from James Ollier.

## XCVIII.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow.Wentworth Place  
[*Postmark*, Lombard Street, 14 June 1819.]

My dear Fanny,

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

Your affectionate Brother  
John

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



## XCIX.

*To FANNY KEATS.*Wentworth Place  
[16 June 1819].

My dear Fanny,

Still I cannot afford to spend money by Coach-[h]ire and still my throat is not well enough to warrant my walking. I went yesterday<sup>1</sup> to ask Mr. Abbey for some money; but I could not on account of a Letter he showed me from my Aunt's solicitor. You do not understand the business. I trust it will not in the end be detrimental to you. I am going to try the Press once more, and to that end shall retire to live cheaply in the country and compose myself and verses as well as I can. I have very good friends ready to help me—and I am the more bound to be careful of the money they lend me. It will all be well in the course of a year I hope. I am confident of it, so do not let it trouble you at all. Mr. Abbey showed me a Letter he had received from George containing the news of the birth of a Niece for us—and all doing well—he said he would take it to you—so I suppose to day you will see it. I was preparing to enq[ui]re for a situation with an apothecary, but Mr. Brown persuad[e]s me to try the press once more; so I will with all my industry and ability. Mr. Rice a friend of mine in ill health has proposed ret[ir]ing

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<sup>1</sup> This evidently refers to the same visit that is mentioned in the next letter to Haydon as having taken place "the day before yesterday". If therefore the 17th of June is the right date for that letter, the 16th is the right date for this—of which the original has no date or postmark.

to the back of the Isle of Wight—which I hope will be cheap in the summer—I am sure it will in the winter. Thence you shall frequently hear from me and in the Letters I will copy those lines I may write which will be most pleasing to you in the confidence you will show them to no one. I have not run quite aground yet I hope, having written this morning to several people to whom I have lent money requesting repayment. I shall henceforth<sup>1</sup> shake off my indolent fits, and among other reformation be more diligent in writing to you, and mind you always answer me. I shall be obliged to go out of town on Saturday<sup>2</sup> and shall have no money till to-morrow, so I am very sorry to think I shall not be able to come to Walthamstow. The Head Mr Seve[r]n did of me is now too dear, but here inclosed is a very capital Profile done by Mr. Brown. I will write again on Monday or Tuesday—Mr. and Mrs. Dilke are well.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

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<sup>1</sup> In the original, *hencefore*.

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

C.

*To* BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Wentworth Place

Thursday Morning [17 June 1819].

My dear Haydon,

I know you will not be prepared for this, because your Pocket must needs be very low having been at ebb tide so long: but what can I do? mine is lower. I was the day before yesterday much in want of Money: but some news I had yesterday has driven me into necessity. I went to Abbey's for some Cash, and he put into my hand a letter from my Aunt's Solicitor containing the pleasant information that she was about to file a Bill in Chancery against us. Now in case of a defeat Abbey will be very undeservedly in the wrong box; so I could not ask him for any more money, nor can I till the affair is decided; and if it goes against him I must in conscience make over to him what little he may have remaining. My purpose is now to make one more attempt in the Press—if that fail, "ye hear no more of me" as

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The original manuscript of this letter is wafered into Haydon's journal on the next leaf to that whereto the letters of the 12th and 13th of April are fastened. This one has an imperfect postmark: the day of the month is 17—the year 1819; and there can be no doubt the month is June. The circumstances are clearly those detailed in the previous letter to his sister, which, as clearly, comes after the one postmarked the 14th of June and before that of the 6th of July from Shanklin. It will be borne in mind that Keats was only seeking from Haydon the return of money lent: that the correspondence already given eventuated in a small loan to Haydon there can be no doubt, seeing that Keats gives his brother an account of the affair later on, in the Winchester journal—letter of September 1819.

Chaucer says. Brown has lent me some money for the present. Do borrow or beg some how what you can for me. Do not suppose I am at all uncomfortable about the matter in any other way than as it forces me to apply to the needy. I could not send you those lines, for I could not get the only copy of them before last Saturday evening. I sent them Mr. Elmes on Monday. I saw Monkhouse on Sunday—he told me you were getting on with the Picture. I would have come over to you to day, but I am fully employed—

Yours ever sincerely

John Keats —

CI.

*To* FANNY KEATS.

Rd. Abbey Esq.,  
Walthamstow, near London.

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

My dear Fanny,

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

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(CI) Between the last letter to Haydon and this to his sister may be read the first of the Fanny Brawne series, written on the 1st of July.

in my success: but in every event, believe me my dear sister, I shall be sufficiently comfortable, as, if I cannot lead that life of competence and society I should wish, I have enough knowledge of my gallipots to ensure me an employment and maintenance. The Place I am in now I visited once before<sup>1</sup> and a very pretty place it is were it not for the bad weather. Our window looks over house-tops and Cliffs onto the Sea, so that when the Ships sail past the Cottage chimneys you may take them for weathercocks. We have Hill and Dale, forest and Mead, and plenty of Lobsters. I was on the Portsmouth Coach the Sunday before last in that heavy shower—and I may say I went to Portsmouth by water—I got a little cold, and as it always flies to my throat I am a little out of sorts that way. There were on the Coach with me some common French people but very well behaved—there was a woman amongst them to whom the poor Men in ragged coats were more gallant than ever I saw gentleman to Lady at a Ball. When we got down to walk up hill—one of them pick'd a rose, and on remounting gave it to the woman with 'Ma'mselle voila une bell[e] rose!' I am so hard at work that perhaps I should not have written to you for a day or two if George's Letter had not diverted my attention to the interests and pleasure of those I love—and ever believe that when I do not behave punctually it is from a very necessary occupation, and that my silence is no proof of my not thinking of you, or that I want more than a gentle fillip<sup>2</sup> to bring your image with every claim before me. You have never seen mountains, or I might tell you that the hill at Steepphill is I think almost

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<sup>1</sup> In April 1817: see Letter VII.

<sup>2</sup> In the original, *philip*.

of as much consequence as Mount Rydal on Lake Winander. Bonchurch too is a very delightful Place—as I can see by the Cottages, all romantic—covered with creepers and honeysuckles, with roses and eglantines peeping in at the windows. Fit abodes for the People I guess live in them, romantic old maids fond of novels, or soldiers' widows with a pretty jointure—or any body's widows or aunts or anythings given to Poetry and a Piano-forte—as far as in 'em lies—as people say. If I could play upon the Guitar I might make my fortune with an old song—and get t[w]o blessings at once—a Lady's heart and the Rheumatism. But I am almost afraid to peep at those little windows—for a pretty window should show a pretty face, and as the world goes chances are against me. I am living with a very good fellow indeed, a Mr. Rice.—He is unfortunately labouring under a complaint which has for some years been a burthen to him. This is a pain to me. He has a greater tact in speaking to people of the village than I have, and in those matters is a great amusement as well as good friend to me. He bought a ham the other day for say[s] he 'Keats, I don't think a Ham is a wrong thing to have in a house.' Write to me, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, as soon as you can; for a Letter is a great treat to me here—believing me ever

Your affectionate brother, John —

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The letter of the 8th of July 1819 to Fanny Brawne precedes chronologically the next letter of the present series.

## CII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Shanklin,  
12 July 1819.

\* \* \* \* \*

You will be glad to hear, under my own hand, (though Rice says we are like Sauntering Jack and Idle Joe,) how diligent I have been, and am being. I have finished the act, and in the interval of beginning the second have proceeded pretty well with "Lamia," finishing the first part, which consists of about four hundred lines. \* \* \* I have great hopes of success, because I make use of my judgment more deliberately than I have yet done; but in case of failure with the world, I shall find my content. And here (as I know you have my good at heart as much as a brother), I can only repeat to you what I have said to George—that however I should like to enjoy what the competencies of life procure, I am in no wise dashed at a different prospect.<sup>1</sup> I have spent too many thoughtful days, and moralized through too many nights for that, and fruitless would they be indeed, if they did not, by degrees, make me look upon the affairs of the world with a healthy deliberation. I have of late been moulting:—not for fresh feathers and wings,—they are gone, and in their stead I hope to have a pair of patient sublunary legs. I have altered, not from a chrysalis into a butterfly, but the contrary; having two little loopholes, whence I may look out into the stage of the

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<sup>1</sup> This is very much what he had said also to his sister, in the letter of the 6th of July.

world ; and that world, on our coming here, I almost forgot. The first time I sat down to write, I could scarcely believe in the necessity for so doing. It struck me as a great oddity. Yet the very corn which is now so beautiful, as if it had only took to ripening yesterday, is for the market ; so, why should I be delicate ?<sup>1</sup>

## CIII.

*To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.*

Shanklin, Saturday Evening

[*Postmark*, 2 August 1819].

My dear Dilke,

I will not make my diligence an excuse for not writing to you sooner—because I consider idleness a much better plea. A Man in the hurry of business of any sort is expected and ought to be expected to look to every thing—his mind is in a whirl, and what matters it—what whirl? But to require a Letter of a Man lost in idleness is the utmost cruelty ; you cut the thread of his existence, you beat, you pummel him, you sell his goods and chattels, you put him in prison ; you impale

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton says at this point—“Sir James Mackintosh, who had openly protested against the mode of criticism employed against *Endymion*, and had said, in a letter still extant, that ‘such attacks will interest every liberal mind in the author’s success,’ writing to Messrs. Taylor, on the 19th of July in this year, enquires, ‘Have you any other literary novelties in verse? I very much admire your young poet, with all his singularities. Where is he? and what high design does he meditate?’” Between this fragment to Reynolds and the following letter to Dilke stand, chronologically speaking, Numbers III and IV to Fanny Brawne.



him ; you crucify him. If I had not put pen to paper since I saw you this would be to me a *vi et armis* taking up before the Judge ; but having got over my darling lounging habits a little, it is with scarcely any pain I come to this dating from Shanklin and D[ea]r Dilke. The Isle of Wight is but so so &c. Rice and I passed rather a dull time of it.<sup>1</sup> I hope he will not repent coming with me. He was unwell, and I was not in very good health : and I am afraid we made each other worse by acting upon each other's spirits. We would grow as melancholy as need be. I confess I cannot bear a sick person in a House, especially alone—it weighs upon me day and night—and more so when perhaps the Case is irretrievable. Indeed I think Rice is in a dangerous state. I have had a Letter from him which speaks favourably of his health at present. Brown and I are pretty well harnessed again to our dog-cart. I mean the Tragedy, which goes on sinkingly. We are thinking of introducing an Elephant, but have not historical reference within reach to determine us as to Otho's Menagerie. When Brown first mentioned this I took it for a joke ; however he brings such plausible reasons, and discourses so eloquently on the dramatic effect that I am giving it a serious consideration. The Art of Poetry is not sufficient for us, and if we get on in that as well as we do in painting, we shall by next winter crush the Reviews and the Royal Academy. Indeed, if Brown would take a little of my advice, he could not fail to be first pallet[te] of his day. But odd as it may appear, he says plainly that he cannot see any force in my plea of putting skies in the background, and leaving Indian ink out of an ash

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<sup>1</sup> Rice had gone away by the 25th of July : see letter to Fanny Brawne of that date.

tree. The other day he was sketching Shanklin Church, and as I saw how the business was going on, I challenged him to a trial of skill—he lent me Pencil and Paper—we keep the Sketches to contend for the Prize at the Gallery. I will not say whose I think best—but really I do not think Brown's done to the top of the Art.

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, the father of the present Baronet.

Hampshire all day—I hope she is now at supper with a good appetite.

So Reynolds's Piece<sup>1</sup> succeeded—that is all well. Papers have with thanks been duly received. We leave this place on the 13th, and will let you know where we may be a few days after—Brown says he will write when the fit comes on him. If you will stand law expenses I'll beat him into one before his time. When I come to town I shall have a little talk with you about Brown and one Jenny Jacobs.<sup>2</sup> Open daylight! he don't care. I am afraid there will be some more feet for little stockings—[*of Keats' making. (I mean the feet.)*] Brown here tried at a piece of Wit but it failed him, as you see, though long a brewing.—[*this is a 2<sup>d</sup>. lie.*] Men should never despair—you see he has tried again and succeeded to a miracle.—He wants to try again, but as I have a right to an inside place in my own Letter—I take possession.

Your sincere friend

John Keats —

<sup>1</sup> *One, Two, Three, Four, Five: by Advertisement.* See note on a reference to this play in Letter CXIII.

<sup>2</sup> The patronymic recalls a passage in Keats's Spenserian stanzas on Brown written in the spring of 1819

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

The interpolations printed above in italics within brackets are of course by Brown. They stand in his writing in the original letter still in the collection of Sir Charles Dilke. Before reading the next letter in the present series, the student may like to turn to the fifth and sixth letters to Fanny Brawne, both written in August 1819.

## CIV.

*To* BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Winchester.

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

I was glad to see, by a passage of one of Brown's letters,

some time ago, from the North, that you were in such good spirits.<sup>1</sup> Since that, you have been married, and in congratulating you, I wish you every continuance of them. Present my respects to Mrs. Bailey. This sounds oddly to me, and I dare say I do it awkwardly enough; but I suppose by this time it is nothing new to you.

Brown's remembrances to you. As far as I know, we shall remain at Winchester for a goodish while.

Ever your sincere friend,

John Keats.

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

CV.

*To* JOHN TAYLOR.Winchester,  
23 August, 1819.

My dear Taylor,

\* \* \* \* \*

I feel every confidence that, if I choose, I may be a popular writer. That I will never be ; but for all that I will get a livelihood. I equally dislike the favour of the public with the love of a woman. They are both a cloying treacle to the wings of independence. I shall ever consider them (the people) as debtors to me for verses, not myself to them for admiration, which I can do without. I have of late been indulging my spleen by composing a preface AT them ; after all resolving never to write a preface at all. "There are so many verses," would I have said to them ; "give so much means for me to buy pleasure with, as a relief to my hours of labour." You will observe at the end of this, if you put down the letter, "How a solitary life engenders pride and egotism !" True—I know it does : but this pride and egotism will enable me to write finer things than anything else could, so I will indulge it. Just so much as I am humbled by the genius above my grasp, am I exalted and look with hate and contempt upon the literary world. A drummer-boy who holds out his hand familiarly to a field-marshal,—that drummer-boy with me is the good word and favour of the public. Who could wish to be among the common-place crowd of the little-famous, who are each individually lost in a throng made up of themselves ? Is this worth louting or playing the hypocrite for ? To beg suffrages for a seat on the benches of a

myriad-aristocracy in letters? This is not wise—I am not a wise man. 'Tis pride. I will give you a definition of a proud man. He is a man who has neither vanity nor wisdom—one filled with hatreds cannot be vain, neither can he be wise. Pardon me for hammering instead of writing. Remember me to Woodhouse, Hessey, and all in Percy Street.

Ever yours sincerely  
John Keats

## CVI.

*To* JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Winchester,  
25 August [1819.]

My dear Reynolds,

By this post I write to Rice, who will tell you why we have left Shanklin, and how we like this place. I have indeed scarcely anything else to say, leading so monotonous a life, 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



## CVII.

*To* FANNY KEATS.Rd. Abbey's Esq.,  
Walthamstow, near London.

Winchester, August 28th

[*Postmark*, 29 August 1819].

My dear Fanny,

You must forgive me for suffering so long a space to elapse between the dates of my letters. It is more than a fortnight since I left Shanklin chiefly for the purpose of being near a tolerable Library, which after all is not to be found in this place. However we like it very much : it is the pleasantest Town I ever was in, and has the most recommendations of any. There is a fine Cathedral which to me is always a source of amusement, part of it built 1400 years ago ; and the more modern by a magnificent Man, you may have read of in our History, called William of Wickham. The whole town is beautifully wooded. From the Hill at the eastern extremity you see a prospect of Streets, and old Buildings mixed up with Trees. Then there are the most beautiful streams about I ever saw—full of Trout. There is the Foundation of St. Croix about half a mile in the fields—a charity greatly abused. We have a Collegiate School, a Roman catholic School ; a chapel ditto and a Nunnery ! And what improves it all is, the fashionable inhabitants are all gone to Southampton. We are qui[e]t—except a fiddle that now and then goes like a gimlet through my Ears—our Landlady's son not being quite a Proficient. I have still been hard at work, having completed a Tragedy I think I spoke of to you. But there I fear all my labour will be thrown away for the present, as I

hear Mr. Kean is going to America. For all I can guess I shall remain here till the middle of October—when Mr. Brown will return to his house at Hampstead : whither I shall return with him. I some time since sent the Letter I told you I had received from George to Haslam with a request to let you and Mrs. Wylie see it : he sent it back to me for very insufficient reasons without doing so ; and I was so irritated by it that I would not send it travelling about by the post any more : besides the postage is very expensive. I know Mrs. Wylie will think this a great neglect. I am sorry to say my temper gets the better of me—I will not send it again. Some correspondence I have had with Mr. Abbey about George's affairs—and I must confess he has behaved very kindly to me as far as the wording of his Letter went. Have you heard any further mention of his retiring from Business ? I am anxious to hear w[h]ether Hodgkinson, whose name I cannot bear to write, will in any likelihood be thrown upon himself. The delightful Weather we have had for two Months is the highest gratification I could receive—no chill'd red noses—no shivering—but fair atmosphere to think in—a clean towel mark'd with the mangle and a basin of clear Water to drench one's face with ten times a day : no need of much exercise—a Mile a day being quite sufficient. My greatest regret is that I have not been well enough to bathe though I have been two Months by the sea side and live now close to delicious bathing—Still I enjoy the Weather—I adore fine Weather as the greatest blessing I can have. Give me Books, fruit, French wine and fine weather and a little music out of doors, played by somebody I do not know—not pay the price of one's time for a jig<sup>1</sup>—but a

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<sup>1</sup> In the original, *gig*.

little chance music : and I can pass a summer very quietly without caring much about Fat Louis,<sup>1</sup> fat Regent or the Duke of Wellington. Why have you not written to me ? Because you were in expectation of George's Letter and so waited ? Mr. Brown is copying out our Tragedy of Otho the Great in a superb style—better than it deserves—there as I said is labour in vain for the present. I had hoped to give Kean another opportunity to shine. What can we do now ? There is not another actor of Tragedy in all London or Europe. The Covent Garden Company is execrable. Young is the best among them and he is a ranting coxcombical tasteless Actor—a Disgust, a Nausea—and yet the very best after Kean. What a set of barren asses are actors ! I should like now to promenade round you[r] Gardens—apple tasting—pear-tasting—plum-judging—apricot-nibbling—peach-scrunching—nectarine-sucking and Melon-carving. I have also a great feeling for antiquated cherries full of sugar cracks—and a white currant tree kept for company. I admire lolling on a lawn by a water lillied pond to eat white currants and see gold fish : and go to the Fair in the Evening if I'm good. There is not hope for that—one is sure to get into some mess before evening. Have these hot days I brag of so much been well or ill for your health ? Let me hear soon—

Your affectionate Brother

John —

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<sup>1</sup> Louis XVIII of France.

## CVIII.

*To* JOHN TAYLOR.

Winchester,

5 September [1819].

My dear Taylor,

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

land is like the steam from cabbage water. What makes the great difference between valesmen, flatlandmen, and mountaineers? The cultivation of the earth in a great measure. Our health, temperament, and disposition, are taken more (notwithstanding the contradiction of the history of Cain and Abel) from the air we breathe, than is generally imagined. See the difference between a peasant and a butcher. I am convinced a great cause of it is the difference of the air they breathe: the one takes his mingled with the fume of slaughter, the other from the dank exhalation from the glebe; the teeming damp that comes up from the plough-furrow is of more effect in taming the fierceness of a strong man than his labour. Let him be mowing furze upon a mountain, and at the day's end his thoughts will run upon a pick-axe if he ever had handled one;—let him leave the plough, and he will think quietly of his supper. Agriculture is the tamer of men—the steam from the earth is like drinking their mother's milk—it enervates their nature. This appears a great cause of the imbecility of the Chinese: and if this sort of atmosphere is a mitigation to the energies of a strong man, how much more must it injure a weak one, unoccupied, unexercised. For what is the cause of so many men maintaining a good state in cities, but occupation? An idle man, a man who is not sensitively alive to self-interest, in a city, cannot continue long in good health. This is easily explained. If you were to walk leisurely through an unwholesome path in the fens, with a little horror of them, you would be sure to have your ague. But let Macbeth cross the same path, with the dagger in the air leading him on, and he would never have an ague or anything like it. You should give these things a serious consideration. Notts, I believe, is a flat county. You should be on the slope of one of the dry

barren hills in Somersetshire. I am convinced there is as harmful air to be breathed in the country as in town.

I am greatly obliged to you for your letter. Perhaps, if you had had strength and spirits enough, you would have felt offended by my offering a note of hand, or, rather expressed it. However, I am sure you will give me credit for not in anywise mistrusting you ; or imagining that you would take advantage of any power I might give you over me. No, it proceeded from my serious resolve not to be a gratuitous borrower, from a great desire to be correct in money matters, to have in my desk the chronicles of them to refer to, and know my worldly non-estate : besides, in case of my death, such documents would be but just, if merely as memorials of the friendly turns I had done to me.

Had I known of your illness I should not have written in such fiery phrase in my first letter. I hope that shortly you will be able to bear six times as much.

Brown likes the tragedy very much, but he is not a fit judge of it, as I have only acted as midwife to his plot, and of course he will be fond of his child. I do not think I can make you any extracts without spoiling the effect of the whole when you come to read it. I hope you will then not think my labour misspent. Since I finished it I have finished "Lamia," and am now occupied in revising "St. Agnes' Eve," and studying Italian. Ariosto I find as diffuse, in parts, as Spenser. I understand completely the difference between them. I will cross the letter with some lines from "Lamia."

Brown's kindest remembrances to you, and I am ever your most sincere friend,

John Keats.

I shall be alone here for three weeks, expecting account of your health.

## CIX.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Winchester,  
22nd Sept. 1819.

My dear Reynolds,

I was very glad to hear from Woodhouse that you would meet in the country. I hope you will pass some pleasant time together; which I wish to make pleasanter by a brace of letters, very highly to be estimated, as really I have had very bad luck with this sort of game this season. I "kepen in solitarinesse,"<sup>1</sup> for Brown has gone a-visiting. I am surprised myself at the pleasure I live alone in. I can give you no news of the place here, or any other idea of it but what I have to this effect written to George. Yesterday, I say to him, was a grand day for Winchester. They elected a mayor. It was indeed high time the place should receive some sort of excitement. There was nothing going on—all asleep—not an old maid's sedan returning from a card-party; and if any old women got tipsy at christenings they did not expose it in the streets.

The side streets here are excessively maiden-lady-like; the door-steps always fresh from the flannel. The knockers have a staid, serious, nay almost awful quietness about them. I never saw so quiet a collection of lions' and rams' heads. The doors are most part black, with a little brass handle just above the keyhole, so that

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Between this and the last letter should be read that to Fanny Brawne written in Fleet Street on the 13th of September 1819.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Eve of St. Mark*, line 106 (Volume II, page 324).

in Winchester a man may very quietly shut himself out of his own house.

How beautiful the season is now. How fine the air—a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies. I never liked stubble-fields so much as now—aye, better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble field looks warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> Here follows the ode *To Autumn* (Volume II, pages 137-8).



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

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

Your sisters, by this time, must have got the Devonshire “ees”—short ees—you know 'em ; they are the

prettiest ees in the language. O, how I admire the middle-sized delicate Devonshire girls of about fifteen. There was one at an inn door holding a quartern of brandy ; the very thought of her kept me warm a whole stage—and a sixteen-miler too. “ You’ll pardon me for being jocular.”

Ever your affectionate friend  
John Keats

CX.

*To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.*

Winchester, Wednesday Eve.  
[22 September 1819.]

My dear Dilke,

Whatever I take to for the time I cannot l[e]ave off in a hurry ; letter writing is the go now ; I have consumed a quire at least. You must give me credit, now, for a free Letter when it is in reality an interested one, on two points, the one requestive, the other verging to the pros and cons. As I expect they will lead me to seeing and conferring with you in a short time, I shall not enter at all upon a letter I have lately received from George, of not the most comfortable intelligence : but proceed to these two points, which if you can theme out into sexions and subsexions, for my edification, you will oblige me. The first I shall begin upon, the other will

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

follow like a tail to a Comet. I have written to Brown on the subject, and can but go over the same Ground with you in a very short time, it not being more in length than the ordinary paces between the Wickets. It concerns a resolution I have taken to endeavour to acquire something by temporary writing in periodical works. You must agree with me how unwise it is to keep feeding upon hopes, which depending so much on the state of temper and imagination, appear gloomy or bright, near or afar off, just as it happens. Now an act has three parts—to act, to do, and to perform—I mean I should *do* something for my immediate welfare. Even if I am swept away like a spider from a drawing room, I am determined to spin—homespun any thing for sale. Yea, I will traf[f]ic. Anything but Mortgage my Brain to Blackwood. I am determined not to lie like a dead lump. If Reynolds had not taken to the law, would he not be earning something? Why cannot I[?] You may say I want tact—that is easily acquired. You may be up to the slang of a cock pit in three battles. It is fortunate I have not before this been tempted to venture on the common. I should a year or two ago have spoken my mind on every subject with the utmost simplicity. I hope I have learned a little better and am confident I shall be able to cheat as well as any literary Jew of the Market and shine up an article on any thing without much knowledge of the subject, aye like an orange. I would willingly have recourse to other means. I cannot; I am fit for nothing but literature. Wait for the issue of this Tragedy? No—there cannot be greater uncertainties east, west, north, and south than concerning dramatic composition. How many months must I wait! Had I not better begin to look about me now? If better events supersede this necessity what harm will be done? I have

no trust whatever on Poetry. I don't wonder at it—the ma[r]vel is to me how people read so much of it. I think you will see the reasonableness of my plan. To forward it I purpose living in cheap Lodging in Town, that I may be in the reach of books and information, of which there is here a plentiful lack. If I can [find] any place tolerably comfortable I will settle myself and fag till I can afford to buy Pleasure—which if [I] never can afford I must go without. Talking of Pleasure, this moment I was writing with one hand, and with the other holding to my Mouth a Nectarine—good God how fine. It went down soft, pulpy, slushy, oozy—all its delicious embonpoint melted down my throat like a large beatified Strawberry. I shall certainly breed. Now I come to my request. Should you like me for a neighbour again? Come, plump it out, I won't blush. I should also be in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Wylie, which I should be glad of, though that of course does not influence me. Therefore will you look about Marsham, or Rodney<sup>1</sup> Street for a couple of rooms for me. Rooms like the gallant's legs in Massinger's time, "as good as the times allow, Sir." I have written to-day to Reynolds, and to Woodhouse. Do you know him? He is a Friend of Taylor's at whom Brown has taken one of his funny odd dislikes. I'm sure he's wrong, because Woodhouse likes my Poetry—conclusive. I ask your opinion and yet I must say to you as to him, Brown, that if you have any thing to say against it I shall be as obstinate and heady as a Radical. By the Examiner coming in your handwriting you must be in Town. They have put me into spirits.

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

Notwithstand[ing] my aristocratic temper I cannot help being very much pleased with the present public proceedings. I hope sincerely I shall be able to put a Mite of help to the Liberal side of the Question before I die. If you should have left Town again (for your Holidays<sup>1</sup> cannot be up yet) let me know when this is forwarded to you. A most extraordinary mischance has befallen two letters I wrote Brown—one from London whither I was obliged to go on business for George ; the other from this place since my return. I can't make it out. I am excessively sorry for it. I shall hear from Brown and from you almost together, for I have sent him a Letter to-day : you must positively agree with me or by the delicate toe nails of the virgin I will not open your Letters. If they are as David says "suspicious looking letters" I won't open them. If St. John had been half as cunning he might have seen the revelations comfortably in his own room, without giving angels the trouble of breaking open seals. Remember me to Mrs. D.—and the Westmonasterian and believe me

Ever your sincere friend  
John Keats —

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dilke was in the Admiralty, as his father had been before him.

## CXI.

*To* CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Winchester,  
23 September 1819.

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Now I am going to enter on the subject of self. It is quite time I should set myself doing something, and live no longer upon hopes. I have never yet exerted myself. I am getting into an idle-minded, vicious way of life, almost content to live upon others. In no period of my life have I acted with any self-will, but in throwing up the apothecary profession. That I do not repent of. Look at Reynolds,<sup>1</sup> if he was not in the law, he would be acquiring, by his abilities, something towards his support. My occupation is entirely literary: I will do so, too. I will write, on the liberal side of the question, for whoever will pay me. I have not known yet what it is to be diligent. I purpose living in town in a cheap lodging, and endeavouring, for a beginning, to get the theatricals of some paper. When I can afford to compose deliberate poems, I will. I shall be in expectation of an answer to this. Look on my side of the question. I am convinced I am right. Suppose the tragedy should succeed,—there will be no harm done. And here I will take an opportunity of making a remark or two on our friendship, and on all your good offices to me. I have a natural timidity of mind in these matters; liking better to take the feeling between us for granted, than to speak of it. But,

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<sup>1</sup> I have substituted this name for a blank because it is clear from the last letter to Dilke that the allusion is to Reynolds.

good God! what a short while you have known me! I feel it a sort of duty thus to recapitulate, however unpleasant it may be to you. You have been living for others more than any man I know. This is a vexation to me, because it has been depriving you, in the very prime of your life, of pleasures which it was your duty to procure. As I am speaking in general terms, this may appear nonsense; you, perhaps, will not understand it; but if you can go over, day by day, any month of the last year, you will know what I mean. On the whole, however, this is a subject that I cannot express myself upon. I speculate upon it frequently; and, believe me, the end of my speculations is always an anxiety for your happiness. This anxiety will not be one of the least incitements to the plan I purpose pursuing. I had got into a habit of mind of looking towards you as a help in all difficulties. This very habit would be the parent of idleness and difficulties. You will see it is a duty I owe myself to break the neck of it. I do nothing for my subsistence—make no exertion. At the end of another year you shall applaud me, not for verses, but for conduct. While I have some immediate cash,<sup>1</sup> I had better settle myself quietly, and fag on as others do. I shall apply to Hazlitt, who knows the market as well as any one, for something to bring me in a few pounds as soon as possible. I shall not suffer my pride to hinder me. The whisper may go round; I shall not hear it. If I can get an article in the “Edinburgh,” I will. One must not be delicate. Nor let this disturb you longer than a moment. I look forward, with a good hope that we shall one day be passing free, untrammelled, unanxious

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<sup>1</sup> “The cash,” observes Mr. Dilke, “borrowed from Taylor—£30 a fortnight before—on the 5th.” See page 325.

time together. That can never be if I continue a dead lump. I shall be expecting anxiously an answer from you. If it does not arrive in a few days this will have miscarried, and I shall come straight to ——— before I go to town, which you, I am sure, will agree had better be done while I still have some ready cash. By the middle of October I shall expect you in London. We will then set at the theatres. If you have anything to gainsay, I shall be even as the deaf adder which stoppeth her ears.

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## CXII.

To CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Winchester,  
23 September 1819.

\* \* \* \* \*

Do not suffer me to disturb you unpleasantly: I do not mean that you should not suffer me to occupy your thoughts, but to occupy them pleasantly; for, I assure you, I am as far from being unhappy as possible. Imaginary grievances have always been more my torment than real ones. You know this well. Real ones will never have any other effect upon me than to stimulate me to get out of or avoid them. This is easily accounted

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Between these two extracts, Lord Houghton notes—"On the same day he wrote another letter, having received one from Mr. Brown in the interval. He again spoke of his purpose." I suppose the blank for the name of a place in the first extract should be filled by *Bedhampton*. Brown was staying there with Mr. and Mrs. Snook.



for. Our imaginary woes are conjured up by our passions, and are fostered by passionate feeling: our real ones come of themselves, and are opposed by an abstract exertion of mind. Real grievances are displacers of passion. The imaginary nail a man down for a sufferer, as on a cross; the real spur him up into an agent. I wish, at one view, you would see my heart towards you. 'Tis only from a high tone of feeling that I can put that word upon paper—out of poetry. I ought to have waited for your answer to my last before I wrote this. I felt, however, compelled to make a rejoinder to yours. I had written to Dilke on the subject of my last, I scarcely know whether I shall send my letter now. I think he would approve of my plan; it is so evident. Nay, I am convinced, out and out, that by prosing for a while in periodical works, I may maintain myself decently.

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Lord Houghton here adds:—"The gloomy tone of this correspondence soon brought Mr. Brown to Winchester. Up to that period Keats had always expressed himself most averse to writing for any periodical publication. The short contributions to the 'Champion' were rather acts of friendship than literary labours. But now Mr. Brown, knowing what his pecuniary circumstances were, and painfully conscious that the time spent in the creation of those works which were destined to be the delight and solace of thousands of his fellow-creatures, must be unprofitable to him in procuring the necessities of life, and, above all, estimating at its due value that spirit of independence which shrinks from materialising the obligations of friendship into daily bread, gave every encouragement to these designs, and only remonstrated against the project of taking a solitary lodging in Westminster, "on account of the pain he would himself suffer from the privation of Keats's society," and "from the belief that the scheme of life would not be successful."

APPENDIX TO VOLUME III.

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- I. Analysis of *Richard Duke of York*, from *Some Account of the English Stage*, by Geneste.
- II. Extracts from *The Examiner* for the 4th of May 1817.
- III. Poem by Katherine Philips, *To Mrs. M[ary] A[wbrey] at Parting*.
- IV. Letters from Scotland by Charles Armitage Brown.
- V. The "Cockney School" attack on Keats.
- VI. John Hamilton Reynolds on Keats and *The Quarterly Review*.
- VII. Two letters to the Editor of *The Morning Chronicle* on Keats and *The Quarterly Review*.
- VIII. Shelley's Letter to the Editor of *The Quarterly Review* concerning Keats.

I.

ANALYSIS OF RICHARD DUKE OF YORK

EXTRACTED FROM VOLUME VIII

OF

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE ENGLISH STAGE, BY GENESTE.

BY way of illustrating Keats's only serious attempt at professional criticism, it seems worth while to give here an analysis of the compilation-play in which Kean appears to have been so striking,—a play which, if printed at all, is scarce enough to be quite inaccessible for reference by the general reader. Keats deals with this play at pages 6 to 12 of the present volume. Geneste's analysis is as follows:—

“[Drury Lane 22nd Decr. 1817.] First time. Richard Duke of York, or the Contention of York and Lancaster—compiled from Shakespeare's three parts of Henry 6th—Richard Plantagenet, afterwards Duke of York=Kean: King Henry VIth=Maywood: Gloucester=Holland: Cardinal Beaufort=Pope: Mortimer=Powell: Somerset=S. Penley: Suffolk=Rae: Old Lord Clifford=Bengough: Young Clifford=Wallack: Buckingham=T. P. Cooke: Salisbury=R. Phillips: Warwick=Barnard: Vernon=Fisher: Horner=Wewitzer: Peter=Knight: Jack Cade=Munden: Dick=Oxberry: Queen Margaret=Mrs. Glover:—the bill was foolishly

printed with the names of the performers only—acted 7 times.

“Act 1st begins with the scene in the Temple Garden—then follows the scene in the prison—Mortimer, instead of dying on the stage, is borne off—Plantagenet speaks a soliloquy, 20 lines of which are from Chapman—both these changes are for the worse—the latter part of this scene did not require the slightest alteration—scene 3d—the Parliament—the contention between Vernon and Clifford (or as Shakespeare calls them Vernon and Basset) is improperly omitted in representation—when the king, &c. go out, Shakespeare’s short scene is foolishly eked out with 18 lines from Chapman—these scenes are from the first part of Henry 6th—then follows the 1st scene of the 2d part, badly altered.

“Act 2d begins with the petitioners—the scene is foolishly changed from the palace to a wood—and some sad stuff is added to Peter’s part—scene 2d, the Council room—after some few short speeches, Gloucester enters and says—

‘Now, lords, my choler being overblown’

this is wrong, as Gloucester’s choler and the reasons of it have been both omitted—the whole, or a part of the reproaches made to Gloucester should have been retained, and then Gloucester (without going out) might have replied—

‘As for your spiteful false objections,  
Prove them and I lie open to the law :  
But Heav’n in mercy, &c.’

Horner and Peter are brought in guarded—it would have been better to have omitted these 2 characters entirely—and Buckingham might have entered, as he now does—Gloucester in Shakespeare says—

‘Ah, thus King Henry throws away his crutch,’ &c.

—this speech is with much impropriety given to the King.

“Act 3d begins with the low characters in rebellion—then follows the 2d scene in Shakespeare’s 3d Act—York speaks what belongs to Warwick, and 6 lines from Webster, badly brought in—Warwick speaks what belongs to Salisbury—this change is not only unnecessary, but improper—it was evidently made for the sake of giving more importance to Kean’s part—York, who was no friend to Gloucester, is here represented as extremely zealous in his cause—besides, York was at this time in Ireland—the act concludes with Beaufort’s death.

“Act 4th begins with a short scene which would have been better omitted—in the 2d scene when Cade, &c. enter, about 2 pages are inserted from Crowne—this was not necessary—scene 3d is omitted in representation, but it ought to have been retained, as otherwise it does not appear what becomes of Jack Cade—scene 4th, York enters and speaks 6 lines from Chapman—scene 5th—in Shakespeare the king says—

‘ See Buckingham ! Somerset comes with the Queen,  
Go bid her hide him quickly from the Duke ’

these lines should have been retained, as without them the Queen’s first speech is not to the purpose—the 4th and 5th scenes are taken from the 1st scene of Shakespeare’s 5th Act—scene 6th—the field of battle near St. Alban’s—some lines are omitted, because Cibber has introduced them into his Richard 3d—for that very reason they ought to have been retained—the act closes with the King, Queen and Young Clifford.

“Act 5th begins with the 1st scene of the 3d part—divided into 2 scenes and badly altered—scene 3d, Sandal Castle—the characters of Edward and Richard Plantagenet are improperly omitted—in Shakespeare

York doubts whether they ought to meet the Queen in the field as they have only 5000 men—Richard replies

‘Ay, with 500, *father*, for a need,  
A woman’s general; What should we fear?’

in the alteration, this speech is absurdly given to York, who addresses it to Salisbury—scene 4th & 5th—a field of battle—Clifford kills Rutland behind the scenes—York enters wounded and bleeding—in his soliloquy, Shakspeare’s simile of the swan would have been better omitted—York dies, and the play ends—there is a field at no great distance from the ruins of Sandal Castle, which is still pointed out by tradition as the precise spot where the Duke of York was killed.

“Love’s Labour Lost is the only one of Shakespeare’s plays, which has not been performed, in some shape or other since the Restoration—even the 1st part of Henry 6th was acted once at C. G—Mch 13 1738—Crowne revived the 2d and 3d parts with very material alterations—see D. G. 1681—Cibber compressed the History of Henry 6th into one play—see D. L. July 5 1723—the compiler of the modern play ought, as far as the history is concerned, to have followed the example of Crowne or T. Cibber—instead of which he finishes his play without any conclusion to the History of Henry 6th—it is true that he calls his piece Richard Duke of York, but this is so far from being an excuse, that it is in reality an aggravation of the impropriety of which he has been guilty—his preface makes it pretty plain why this lame and impotent conclusion was adopted—his grand object was to get Kean to play the Duke of York—he knew that Bottom the weaver would not play Pyramus, unless Pyramus were made decidedly the superior part—and he did not dare to add an act, or an act and a half, after Kean was dead—he acknowledges that Shakespeare has drawn

the early part of Richard the third's character in a masterly manner—yet he has omitted all those scenes—he has with much want of judgment foisted in passages from Chapman, &c., whereas Shakespeare's materials were so ample, that the only difficulty lay, in selecting his best scenes and compressing them within 5 acts—the compiler says he is not aware of any instance in which the language of Shakespeare has been altered, except where the reason for alteration was obvious and decisive—the fine scene, in which Cardinal Beaufort dies, is so perfect, that not a letter should have been changed—the Cardinal says—

‘ Give me some drink, and bid the apothecary  
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him.’

the modern editor has had the temerity to alter ‘the apothecary’ to ‘that wretched slave’—on the whole this alteration of Shakespeare's plays is a bad one, yet some things are done well, and Richard Duke of York deserved much better success than it met with—it appears from a note, that several passages, which had been retained by the compiler, were omitted in the representation.

“ Jan. 3. Richard Duke of York 3d time. Jack Cade = Harley.”

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The abbreviations *C. G.*, *D. G.*, and *D. L.* in this extract stand, of course, for *Covent Garden*, *Dorset Gardens*, and *Drury Lane*.



## II.

EXTRACTS FROM  
 THE EXAMINER FOR SUNDAY THE  
 4TH OF MAY 1817.

IN Letters VIII and IX Keats writes to Leigh Hunt and Haydon, on the 10th and 11th of May 1817, concerning papers which had appeared in *The Examiner* of the previous Sunday, the 4th of May. Hunt, Haydon, and Hazlitt had taken up a large proportion of the whole paper in dealing with subjects which appear to have interested Keats. The "horrid subject" mentioned at page 57 as Hunt's was in the seventh of a series of Letters "to the English People." This dealt especially with the subject of religious intolerance, defining *blasphemy* from different points of view, and reducing ad absurdum the blasphemy persecutions and prosecutions of the day (not yet, it seems, obsolete). The Letter is not by any means a remarkable one for Hunt to have written; and the allusions to and quotations from Tertullian, Erasmus, Sir Philip Sidney, are familiar enough. But "the dreadful Petzelians and their expiation by blood," is a phrase requiring elucidation, if for no other reason, because the word *Petzelians* has hitherto been printed *Patzelicians*. The Petzelians do not figure in Hunt's Letter; but in another part of the same number of *The Examiner* is the following paragraph:—

"VIENNA, APRIL 16.—Letters from Upper Austria

speak of a Sect formed there, called Petzelians, from the name of the founder, Petzel, a Priest of Branaw. Atrocious accounts are related of this Sect. In imitation of the Spenceans of England, they preach the equality and community of property, and they sacrifice (I dare scarcely touch upon these horrors) men, to purify others from their sins. It is added, that this Sect sacrificed, during Passion Week, several men, who died in the most horrible torments. A girl of 13 was put to death in the village of Afflewang, on Good Friday. Seven men have been the victims of this abominable faith. The author of the Sect, Petzel, with 86 followers, are arrested : military detachments have been quartered in the villages, and tranquillity has been restored to the hearts of the wretched inhabitants. Petzel has been sent to the fortress of Spielberg, where he will soon be brought to trial."

"Hazlitt's Southey," mentioned by Keats at the same page (57), was the first part, to be followed by a second and third, of a review of a pamphlet entitled *A Letter to William Smith, Esq. M.P. from Robert Southey, Esq.* (Murray, 1817). The occasion of the letter was the fact that Mr. Smith, in a discussion in Parliament, had compared certain passages in *The Quarterly Review* with the opinions held by Southey twenty-three years earlier, when he wrote *Wat Tyler*, a comparison made pointedly to the disadvantage of Southey. Not only to Hunt does Keats express the wish that Hazlitt had "left out the grey hairs" in reviewing this pamphlet; but at page 65 he expresses the same wish to Haydon. To appreciate fully the soundness of the young poet's taste in this matter, we must have the particular passage in evidence. Here it is:—

"As some persons bequeath their bodies to the surgeons to be dissected after their death, Mr. Southey

publicly exposes his mind to be anatomised while he is living. He lays open his character to the scalping knife, guides the philosophic hand in its painful researches, and on the bald crown of our *petit tondu*, in vain concealed under withered bay-leaves and a few contemptible grey hairs, you see the organ of vanity triumphant—sleek,—smooth, round, perfect, polished, horned and shining, as it were in a transparency. This is the handle of his intellect, the index of his mind; ‘the guide, the anchor of his purest thoughts, and soul of all his moral being;’ the clue to the labyrinth of all his tergiversations and contradictions; the *medius terminus* of his political logic.”

The “concluding thunderclap,” and the sentence “like a whale’s back in the sea of prose,” are as follows :—

“In advocating the cause of the French people, Mr. Southey’s principles and his interest were at variance, and therefore he quitted his principles when he saw a good opportunity: in taking up the cause of the Allies, his principles and his interest became united and thenceforth indissoluble. His engagement to his first love, the Republic, was only upon liking; his marriage to Legitimacy is *for better, for worse*, and nothing but death shall part them. Our simple Laureate was sharp upon his hoyden Jacobin mistress, who brought him no dowry, neither place nor pension, who ‘found him poor and kept him so,’ by her prudish notions of virtue. He divorced her, in short, for nothing but the spirit and success with which she resisted the fraud and force to which the old bawd Legitimacy was for ever resorting to overpower her resolution and fidelity. He said she was a virago, a cunning gipsy, always in broils about her honour and the inviolability of her person, and always getting the better in them, furiously scratching the face or cruelly tearing

off the hair of the said pimping old lady, who would never let her alone, night or day. But since her foot slipped one day on the ice, and the detestable old hag tripped up her heels, and gave her up to the kind keeping of the Allied Sovereigns, Mr. Southey has devoted himself to her more fortunate and wealthy rival : he is become uxorious in his second matrimonial connection ; and though his false Duessa has turned out a very witch, a foul, ugly witch, a murderess, a sorceress, perjured, and a harlot, drunk with insolence, mad with power, a griping rapacious wretch, bloody, luxurious, wanton, malicious, not sparing steel, or poison, or gold, to gain her ends—bringing famine, pestilence, and death in her train—infecting the air with her thoughts, killing the beholders with her looks, claiming mankind as her property, and using them as her slaves—driving every thing before her, and playing the devil wherever she comes, Mr. Southey sticks to her in spite of every thing, and for very shame lays his head in her lap, paddles with the palms of her hands, inhales her hateful breath, leers in her eyes and whispers in her ears, calls her little fondling names, Religion, Morality, and Social Order, takes for his motto,

‘ Be to her faults a little blind,  
Be to her virtues very kind ’—

sticks close to his filthy bargain, and will not give her up, because she keeps him, and he is down in her will. Faugh !

‘ What’s here ?  
Gold ! yellow, glittering, precious gold !  
—————The wappened widow,  
Whom the spittle-house and ulcerous sores  
Would heave the gorge at, this embalms and spices  
To the April day again.’

The above passage is, we fear, written in the style of

Aretin, which Mr. Southey condemns in the *Quarterly*. It is at least a very sincere style: Mr. Southey will never write so, till he can keep in the same mind for three and twenty years together. Why should not one make a sentence of a page long, out of the feelings of one's whole life? The early Protestant Divines wrote such prodigious long sentences from the sincerity of their religious and political opinions. Mr. Coleridge ought not to imitate them."

Truly there was enough of biting invective here to have enabled<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt to dispense with the grim personality about the grey hairs!

Haydon's "remarks on the manuscript" to which Keats also alludes at page 65 are the views put forward by the painter in a letter on the subject of a book which made a great stir at the time,—*Manuscrit Venu de St. Helène*. It is not a favourable example of Haydon's contributions to *The Examiner*. The conclusion is as follows:—

"Never was a little book so interesting! never was such a laying open of characters, events, and circumstances, mutually acting on each other!—never were words so pregnant with meaning, or the mightiest events so concisely expressed!—never were political errors so courageously acknowledged, or the deepest crimes so sophistically glossed. It can only proceed from a mind long used to such conclusions. And if it be not by Napoleon, it is from an intellect of similar construction.  
B. R. H."

## III.

## POEM "BY ONE BEAUTIFUL MRS. PHILIPS"

("THE MATCHLESS ORINDA")

TO MRS. M[ARY] A[WBREY] AT PARTING.

## I.

I HAVE examin'd and do find,  
 Of all that favour me  
 There's none I grieve to leave behind  
 But only, only thee.  
 To part with thee I needs must die,  
 Could parting sep'rate thee and I.

## 2.

But neither Chance nor Complement  
 Did element our Love ;  
 'Twas sacred sympathy was lent  
 Us from the Quire above.  
 That Friendship Fortune did create,  
 Still fears a wound from Time or Fate.

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This is the poem transcribed by Keats for Reynolds in the letter written from Oxford in September 1817 (see page 75). I presume Bailey's copy of "the matchless Orinda's" works was the folio of 1669, with which I have collated the poem as given in Lord Houghton's *Life, Letters &c.* (1848) and have found no variations of consequence.

## 3.

Our chang'd and mingled Souls are grown  
 To such acquaintance now,  
 That if each would resume their own,  
 Alas ! we know not how.  
 We have each other so engrost,  
 That each is in the Union lost.

## 4.

And thus we can no Absence know,  
 Nor shall we be confin'd ;  
 Our active Souls will daily go  
 To learn each others mind.  
 Nay, should we never meet to Sense,  
 Our Souls would hold Intelligence.

## 5.

Inspired with a Flame Divine  
 I scorn to court a stay ;  
 For from that noble Soul of thine  
 I ne're can be away.  
 But I shall weep when thou dost grieve ;  
 Nor can I die whil'st thou dost live.

## 6.

By my own temper I shall guess  
 At thy felicity,  
 And only like my happiness  
 Because it pleaseth thee.  
 Our hearts at any time will tell  
 If thou, or I, be sick, or well.

## 7.

All Honour sure I must pretend,  
 All that is good or great ;

She that would be *Rosania's* Friend,  
Must be at least compleat.  
If I have any bravery,  
'Tis cause I have so much of thee.

8.

Thy Leiger Soul in me shall lie,  
And all thy thoughts reveal ;  
Then back again with mine shall flie,  
And thence to me shall steal.  
Thus still to one another tend ;  
Such is the sacred name of *Friend*.

9.

Thus our twin-Souls in one shall grow,  
And teach the World new Love,  
Redeem the Age and Sex, and shew  
A Flame Fate dares not move :  
And courting Death to be our friend,  
Our Lives together too shall end.

10.

A Dew shall dwell upon our Tomb  
Of such a quality,  
That fighting Armies, thither come,  
Shall reconciled be.  
We'll ask no Epitaph, but say  
*ORINDA* and *ROSANIA*.

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(7) The *Life, Letters &c.* has by way of foot-note to line 4 of this stanza,—“‘A compleat friend’—this line sounded very oddly to me at first.” It is not stated whether the note is Keats's.



IV.  
LETTERS FROM SCOTLAND

BY

CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

SIR CHARLES DILKE has recorded in the Memoir of his grandfather prefixed to *Papers of a Critic* (Volume I, pages 2 and 3) that, in July 1818, Brown wrote to Mr. Dilke as follows: "Keats has been these five hours abusing the Scotch and their country. He says that the women have large splay feet, which is too true to be controverted, and that he thanks Providence he is not related to a Scot, nor any way connected with them." I presume the letter contained nothing else about Keats, as it is not among the Keats collections placed unreservedly at my disposal by Sir Charles, and is believed to have been destroyed with others of Brown's which there seemed no occasion to preserve. The following letter addressed to the late Henry Snook while prosecuting his studies at Eton is valuable as placing Keats's Scotch Tour on record from his companion's point of view.

Inverness, 7th August 1818.

My dear Henry,

Yesterday I had a letter from your Uncle. He told me you had been for a day at Wentworth Place. Why did he not say how you got on at Eton? I am very—very anxious to hear of your success in the Classics. I have thought of you, and your brother, and

my two nephews, every day on my walk. To have left you all, after so long having been your companion, sometimes comes across my mind in a painful manner, and the farther I have travelled away the stronger has been the feeling. There may be many who cannot understand why I should think of you so much, but my dear boys know how much I have loved them, and they must likewise know it is not in my nature to be changeable with them. But let the proof of this remain till some future day, that is, the proof of my unchangeableness for in the meanwhile I can have nothing to offer but assurances of affection. It gives me delight to think I have friends growing round me.

Do you want to hear about my journey? I think you do; and what else can I have to write about? Come,—listen! You shall have an abridgement of the history of Charles Brown's adventures, first part. We set out from Lancaster and went to Windermere Lake, then to Keswick and Derwent Water, and up Mount Skiddaw; these Lakes like all fresh water ones must be in the neighbourhood of great mountains, for they are fed by the springs and rain from the sides of them; it is for this reason they are so beautiful; imagine if you can a large piece of clear, smooth water not round or square like a pond in a Garden but winding about to and fro with parts of the rocks jutting forward in them, and with several little islands peeping up here and there, all wooded with different kinds of trees, while the view upwards rests on grand mountains, one rising above another, with the clouds sailing beneath their summits, and sometimes spreading downwards into the valleys. When we had seen many of these scenes in Cumberland and Westmoreland, we trudged to Carlisle, from which City we took the stage to Dumfries, which was an unin-

teresting distance of 36 miles. We travelled all over the coast of Kircudbright with great pleasure ; the country there is very fruitful, and the views delightful. It was our intention to see the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, and we took the packet from Port Patrick to Donaghadee, but did not proceed further than Belfast and returned back again, for the Irish people did not please us, and the expence was enormous. You must now follow me, up the coast to Ayr, and I heartily wish I had time to detain you on the road, for it's worth admiring, even at second hand. Near Ayr, we paid a visit to the Cottage in which Burns was born,—thousands go there for no other purpose but the happiness of being under the roof, and I was not the least among them in that happiness ; we likewise took a survey of the Ruins of Kirk Alloway, where, you will remember, Tam o' Shanter saw the Witches dancing as he peeped thro' the west window, and we saw the "banks and braes o' bonny Doon," and the "auld Brig" and the "new Brig" in the Town ; and every thing we could think of that was connected with Burns' poetry. I ought to tell you Burns had as charming a country to live in, as he himself has described,—indeed the sight of it is almost enough to make a man a Poet. In a little time after, we entered the City of Glasgow,—the largest City in all Scotland, and a noble place it is. Then journeying by the banks of the Clyde, we reached Dumbarton, and turned northwards by the side of Loch Lomond, the famous Lake that people go in such crowds to have a sight of. Who shall attempt to describe such scenery ? I believe I must pass it over, and take you across the country to the top of Loch Awe, where we had one of our pleasantest days in walking by its side to the south end. We afterwards went to the coast,—a rough and moun-

tainous coast, where the sea breaks in between the hills, twenty and thirty miles up the Country, forming what they call salt water Lakes. At last we arrived at Oban, and took the ferries, first to the Island of Kerrera, and then to the Island of Mull. Here a Guide led us thro' the Country; no stranger could possibly find the road—for in fact *road there was none*, nearly for the whole journey of 37 miles,—sometimes it was over smooth rock, then we had for miles to hop from one stone to another, up hill and down hill, then to cross rivers up to our knees, and, what was worst of all, to walk thro' bogs. At the extremity of Mull, we crossed to the little Island of Iona or Ikolmkill, which is only three miles long, but it was here that Christianity was first taught in Scotland, and for that reason perhaps it was thought a more sacred ground, and it became the burial place of Kings; 48 Scotch Kings have been buried here, 8 Irish, 4 Norwegian, and 1 French; besides there are very interesting ruins of the Cathedral, the College, a Nunnery, Monasteries, and Chapels. We hired a Boat at Iona to take us to Staffa,—that astonishing island of Basaltic Pillars, which you know I so much desired to look at. We went into the cave, nearly to the end, and I shall never forget the solemn impression it made on me;—the pillars on each side, the waves beneath, and the beautiful roof,—all surpassed the work of man,—it seemed like a Cathedral, built by the Almighty to raise the minds of his creatures to the purest and the grandest devotion,—no one could have an evil thought in such a place. We returned to Oban by a different road, and I ought to tell you of the strange sight we had of a swarm of sea gulls attacking a shoal of herrings, with now and then a porpoise heaving about among them for a supper,—I assure you that as our boat passed the spot, the

water was literally spangled with herring scales, so great had been the destruction by these Gulls. And now come on with me to Fort William, near Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Great Britain. We went to the very top of it, and we had to toil up a prodigious steep, chiefly over large loose stones, for eight miles, before we could boast of being above all His Majesty's subjects, and as for the coming down, it was worse than the ascent. It is 4,370 feet above the level of the sea; there is always snow upon it in the hollows of the mountain, where the sun never shines; I walked about on snow, which they said was 100 feet deep; the air is very cold, and there is no vegetation near the top,—not even so much as a little moss on the edges of the stones. I went near,—not *too near* you may be sure,—to some most frightful precipices, they were most tremendous places perhaps 1500 feet deep,—if you holla over them the voice is echoed all the way down till it dies away, and the effect of throwing stones down is extraordinary. I won't trouble you much in my travels to Inverness, along the banks of Loch Lochy and Loch Ness, but I must mention my having seen the grandest fall of water in Europe,—called the Falls of Foyers.—As for the natives,—the Highlanders,—I like them very well; they are very civil, kind, and attentive; I think they are always sincere in what they say; they are much more civilised than I expected to find them in the wild places I have visited. But oh! what a poor Country it is; mountains are fine to look at, but they will not bear corn, and even the valleys afford very scanty crops. We have sometimes been nearly starved; for 3 or 4 days together we have not been able to procure a morsel of meat, and their oat-bread I thought my dainty stomach never would accept of, but I contrive to eat it now;—all this is hard work in such long walks.

I have stumped my ten toes over 642 miles, and shall have twice as much more to accomplish if I can, but Mr. Keats will leave me here, and I am full of sorrow about it ; he is not well enough to go on ; a violent cold and an ulcerated throat make it a matter of prudence that he should go to London in the Packet ; he has been unwell for some time, and the Physician here is of opinion he will not recover if he journeys on foot, thro' all weathers, and under so many privations. Give my compliments to Mrs. Woods and Mrs. Snook if they will accept of them from one in a tartan dress and with a Highland plaid thrown across my shoulder ;—Keats calls me the Red Cross Knight, and declares my own shadow laughs at me ! As for cousin John, remember me to him, I have wanted both of you with me, but you are both too young yet, and you must first get learning in wholesale. If you write to me before 20th August, addressed "*Mr Charles Brown, from London, Post Office, Edinburgh,*" I shall receive the letter. When you write to Jack, give my true love to him,—and to your father and mother, my sincere friendship. God keep you well, my dear Boy, and believe me your more than brother-friend,

Cha<sup>s</sup>. Brown.

The following is a fragment of a letter addressed to Mr. Dilke of Chichester, the father of Keats's particular friend, and great grandfather of the present Baronet, who published this, as well as the fragment at page 354, in the Memoir prefixed to *Papers of a Critic* (pages 3-5). The ground covered by these two accounts written on the same day is sufficiently dissimilar to make it desirable to preserve both in the present connexion.

Inverness, 7th August 1818.

My dear Sir,

What shall I write about? I am resolved to send you a letter; but where is the subject? I have already stumped away on my ten toes 642 miles, and seen many fine sights, but I am puzzled to know what to make choice of. Suppose I begin with myself,—there must be a pleasure in that,—and, by way of variety, I must bring in Mr. Keats. Then, be it known, in the first place, we are in as continued a bustle as an old dowager at home—always moving—moving from one place to another, like Dante's inhabitants of the Sulphur Kingdom in search of cold ground—prosing over the map—calculating distances—packing up knapsacks, and paying bills. There's so much for yourself, my dear. 'Thank ye, sir.' How many miles to the next town? 'Seventeen lucky miles, sir.' That must be at least twenty; come along, Keats; here's your stick; why, we forgot the map! now for it; seventeen lucky miles! I must have another hole taken up in the strap of my knapsack. Oh, the misery of coming to the meeting of three roads without a finger post! There's an old woman coming,—God bless her! she'll tell us all about it. Eh! she can't speak English! Repeat the name of the town over in all ways, but the true spelling way, and possibly she may understand. No, we have not got the brogue. Then toss up heads or tails, for right and left, and fortune send us the right road! Here's a soaking shower coming! ecod! it rolls between the mountains as if it would drown us. At last we come, wet and weary, to the long-wished-for inn. What have you for dinner? 'Truly nothing.' No eggs? 'We have two.' Any loaf-bread? 'No, sir, but we've nice oat-cakes.' Any bacon? any dried fish? 'No, no, no, sir!' But you've plenty of whiskey? 'O yes, sir,

plenty of whiskey!' This is melancholy. Why should so beautiful a country be poor? Why can't craggy mountains, and granite rocks, bear corn, wine, and oil? These are our misfortunes,—these are what make me 'an eagle's talon in the waist.' But I am well repaid for my sufferings. We came out to endure, and to be gratified with scenery, and lo! we have not been disappointed either way. As for the oat-cakes, I was once in despair about them. I was not only too dainty, but they absolutely made me sick. With a little gulping, I can manage them now. Mr. Keats, however, is too unwell for fatigue and privation. I am waiting here to see him off in the smack for London.

He caught a violent cold in the Island of Mull, which, far from leaving him, has become worse, and the physician here thinks him too thin and fevered to proceed on our journey. It is a cruel disappointment. We have been as happy as possible together. Alas! I shall have to travel through Perthshire and all the counties round in solitude! But my disappointment is nothing to his; he not only loses my company (and that's a great loss), but he loses the country. Poor Charles Brown will have to trudge by himself,—an odd fellow, and moreover an odd figure; imagine me with a thick stick in my hand, the knapsack on my back, 'with spectacles on nose,' a white hat, a tartan coat and trousers, and a Highland plaid thrown over my shoulders! Don't laugh at me, there's a good fellow, although Mr. Keats calls me the Red Cross Knight, and declares my own shadow is ready to split its sides as it follows me. This dress is the best possible dress, as Dr. Pangloss would say. It is light and not easily penetrated by the wet, and when it is, it is not cold,—it has little more than a kind of heavy smoky sensation about it.



I must not think of the wind, and the sun, and the rain, after our journey through the Island of Mull. There's a wild place! Thirty-seven miles of jumping and flinging over great stones along no path at all, up the steep and down the steep, and wading through rivulets up to the knees, and crossing a bog, a mile long, up to the ankles. I should like to give you a whole and particular account of the many, many wonderful places we have visited; but why should I ask a man to pay vigentiple postage? In one word then,—that is to the end of the letter,—let me tell you we have seen one-half of the lakes in Westmoreland and Cumberland,—we have travelled over the whole of the coast of Kirkcudbrightshire, and skudded over to Donaghadee. But we did not like Ireland,—at least that part—and would go no farther than Belfast. So back came we in a whirlingig,—that is, in a hurry—and trotted up to Ayr, where we had the happiness of drinking whiskey in the very house that Burns was born in, and saw the banks of bonny Doon, and the brigs of Ayr, and Kirk Alloway,—we saw it all! After this we went to Glasgow, and then to Loch Lomond; but you can read all about that place in one of the fashionable guide-books. Then to Loch Awe, and down to the foot of it,—oh, what a glen we went through to get at it! At the top of the glen my Itinerary mentioned a place called 'Rest and be thankful,' nine miles off; now we had set out without breakfast, intending to take our meal there, when, horror and starvation! "Rest and be thankful" was not an inn, but a stone seat!

## V.

## COCKNEY SCHOOL OF POETRY.

## No IV.

————— OF KEATS,  
 THE MUSES' SON OF PROMISE, AND WHAT FEATS  
 HE YET MAY DO, &C.

CORNELIUS WEBB.

OF all the manias of this mad age, the most incurable, as well as the most common, seems to be no other than the *Metromanie*. The just celebrity of Robert Burns and Miss Baillie has had the melancholy effect of turning the heads of we know not how many farm-servants

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It scarcely seems needful to weight or to soil a critical edition of Keats's writings with the whole mass of "Cockney School" articles; but the one article in *Blackwood's Magazine* specially devoted to the vilification of Keats himself is necessary to a full understanding of this particularly unpleasant episode in the literary history of the nineteenth century. This article, Number IV of the series *On the Cockney School of Poetry*, appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for August 1818. For those who care to dig further into an unseemly brawl of words it may be recorded here that Numbers I, II, and III, concerning Leigh Hunt, had appeared in the magazine for October 1817, November 1817, and July 1818, that Leigh Hunt had addressed the anonymous author of these attacks twice in *The Examiner*, that is to say on the 2nd of November 1817 very briefly, and at greater length on the 16th of the same month, and that in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January 1818 the anonymous author had replied with more scurrility, if possible, than ever, adding to the untruths he had already uttered the false denial that any of his previous statements had regarded Hunt's personal character.

and unmarried ladies; our very footmen compose tragedies, and there is scarcely a superannuated governess in the island that does not leave a roll of lyrics behind her in her band-box. To witness the disease of any human understanding, however feeble, is distressing; but the spectacle of an able mind reduced to a state of insanity is of course ten times more afflicting. It is with such sorrow as this that we have contemplated the case of Mr John Keats. This young man appears to have received from nature talents of an excellent, perhaps even of a superior order—talents which, devoted to the purpose of any useful profession, must have rendered him a respectable, if not an eminent citizen. His friends, we understand, destined him to the career of medicine, and he was bound apprentice some years ago to a worthy apothecary in town. But all has been undone by a sudden attack of the malady to which we have alluded. Whether Mr John had been sent home with a diuretic or composing draught to some patient far gone in the poetical mania, we have not heard. This much is certain, that he has caught the infection, and that thoroughly. For some time we were in hopes, that he might get off with a violent fit or two; but of late the symptoms are terrible. The Phrenzy of the "Poems" was bad enough in its way; but it did not alarm us half so seriously as the calm, settled, imperturbable drivelling idiocy of "Endymion." We hope, however, that in so young a person, and with a constitution originally so good, even now the disease is not utterly incurable. Time, firm treatment, and rational restraint, do much for many apparently hopeless invalids; and if Mr Keats should happen, at some interval of reason, to cast his eye upon our pages, he may perhaps be convinced of the existence of his malady, which, in such cases, is often all that is

necessary to put the patient in a fair way of being cured.

The readers of the Examiner<sup>1</sup> newspaper were informed, some time ago, by a solemn paragraph, in Mr Hunt's best style, of the appearance of two new stars of glorious magnitude and splendour in the poetical horizon of the land of Cockaigne. One of these turned out, by and by, to be no other than Mr John Keats. This precocious adulation confirmed the wavering apprentice in his desire to quit the gallipots, and at the same time excited in his too susceptible mind a fatal admiration for the character and talents of the most worthless and affected of all the versifiers of our time. One of his first productions was the following sonnet, "*written on the day when Mr Leigh Hunt left prison.*" It will be recollected, that the cause of Hunt's confinement was a series of libels against his sovereign, and that its fruit was the odious and incestuous "Story of Rimini."<sup>2</sup>

The absurdity of the thought in this sonnet is, however, if possible, surpassed in another, "*addressed to Haydon*" the painter, that clever, but most affected artist, who as little resembles Raphael in genius as he does in person, notwithstanding the foppery of having his hair curled over his shoulders in the old Italian fashion. In this exquisite piece it will be observed, that Mr Keats classes together WORDSWORTH, HUNT and HAYDON, as the three greatest spirits of the age, and that he alludes to himself, and some others of the rising brood of Cockneys, as likely to attain hereafter an

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<sup>1</sup> For the 1st of December 1816. See foot-note, page 331 of Volume I of this edition.

<sup>2</sup> The writer here quotes in full the sonnet (for which see Volume I, pages 64-6), and goes through a little of the usual Wilsonian buffoonery of imported italics and notes of exclamation.

equally honourable elevation. Wordsworth and Hunt! what a juxta-position! The purest, the loftiest, and, we do not fear to say it, the most classical of living English poets, joined together in the same compliment with the meanest, the filthiest, and the most vulgar of Cockney poetasters. No wonder that he who could be guilty of this should class Haydon with Raphael, and himself with Spencer.<sup>1</sup>

The nations are to listen and be dumb! and why, good Johnny Keats?<sup>2</sup> because Leigh Hunt is editor of the Examiner, and Haydon has painted the Judgment of Solomon, and you and Cornelius Webb, and a few more city sparks, are pleased to look upon yourselves as so many future Shakspeares and Miltons! The world has really some reason to look to its foundations! Here is a *tempestat in matulâ* with a vengeance. At the period when these sonnets were published, Mr Keats had no hesitation in saying, that he looked on himself as "*not yet* a glorious denizen of the wide heaven of poetry," but he had many fine soothing visions of coming greatness, and many rare plans of study to prepare him for it. The following we think is very pretty raving.<sup>3</sup>

Having cooled a little from this "fine passion," our youthful poet passes very naturally into a long strain of foaming abuse against a certain class of English Poets, whom, with Pope at their head, it is much the fashion

<sup>1</sup> Here follows the sonnet to Haydon ending with

Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.

This also is given with italics "to taste." It will be found at page 82 of Volume I.

<sup>2</sup> Let us bear in mind George Keats's memorable saying that his brother "was as much like the Holy Ghost as Johnny Keats."

<sup>3</sup> The passage quoted is from *Why so sad a moan?* in line 89 of *Sleep and Poetry*, to the end of line 121. See Volume I, pages 92-3.

with the ignorant unsettled pretenders of the present time to undervalue. Begging these gentlemen's [*sic*] pardon, although Pope was not a poet of the same high order with some who are now living, yet, to deny his genius, is just about as absurd as to dispute that of Wordsworth, or to believe in that of Hunt. Above all things, it is most pitiably ridiculous to hear men, of whom their country will always have reason to be proud, reviled by uneducated and flimsy striplings, who are not capable of understanding either their merits, or those of any other *men of power*—fanciful dreaming tea-drinkers, who, without logic enough to analyse a single idea, or imagination enough to form one original image, or learning enough to distinguish between the written language of Englishmen and the spoken jargon of Cockneys, presume to talk with contempt of some of the most exquisite spirits the world ever produced, merely because they did not happen to exert their faculties in laborious, affected descriptions of flowers seen in window-pots, or cascades heard at Vauxhall ; in short, because they chose to be wits, philosophers, patriots, and poets, rather than to found the Cockney school of versification, morality, and politics, a century before its time. After blaspheming himself into a fury against Boileau &c. Mr Keats comforts himself and his readers with a view of the present more promising aspect of affairs ; above all with the ripened glories of the poet of Rimini. Addressing the manes of the departed chiefs of English poetry, he informs them, in the following clear and touching manner, of the existence of "him of the Rose," &c.

" From a thick brake,  
Nested and quiet in a valley mild,  
Bubbles a pipe ; fine sounds are floating wild  
About the earth. Happy are ye and glad."

From this he diverges into a view of "things in general." We smile when we think to ourselves how little most of our readers will understand of what follows.<sup>1</sup>

From some verses addressed to various amiable individuals of the other sex, it appears, notwithstanding all this gossamer-work, that Johnny's affections are not entirely confined to objects purely ethereal. Take, by way of specimen, the following prurient and vulgar lines, evidently meant for some young lady east of Temple-bar.

"Add too, the sweetness  
Of thy honied voice; the neatness  
Of thine ankle lightly turn'd:" &c.<sup>2</sup>

Who will dispute that our poet, to use his own phrase (and rhyme),

"Can mingle music fit for the soft ear  
Of Lady *Cytherea*."

So much for the opening bud; now for the expanded flower. It is time to pass from the juvenile "Poems," to the mature and elaborate "Endymion, a Poetic Romance." The old story of the moon falling in love with a shepherd, so prettily told by a Roman Classic, and so exquisitely enlarged and adorned by one of the most elegant of German poets, has been seized upon by Mr John Keats, to be done with as might seem good unto the sickly fancy of one who never read a single line of Ovid or of Wieland. If the quantity, not the quality, of the verses dedicated to the story is to be taken into

<sup>1</sup> Namely lines 248 to 276, both inclusive, of *Sleep and Poetry*. See Volume I, pages 97-8.

<sup>2</sup> The extract extends down to line 40 of the poem *To \* \* \* \**. See page 32 of Volume I. The next is a Wilsonian misquotation. The words in *Endymion* (Volume I, page 274) are *Of Goddess Cytherea!*

account, there can be no doubt that Mr John Keats may now claim *Endymion* entirely to himself. To say the truth, we do not suppose either the Latin or the German poet would be very anxious to dispute about the property of the hero of the "Poetic Romance." Mr Keats has thoroughly appropriated the character, if not the name. His *Endymion* is not a Greek shepherd, loved by a Grecian goddess; he is merely a young Cockney rhymester, dreaming a phantastic dream at the full of the moon. Costume, were it worth while to notice such a trifle, is violated in every page of this goodly octavo. From his prototype Hunt, John Keats has acquired a sort of vague idea, that the Greeks were a most tasteful people, and that no mythology can be so finely adapted for the purposes of poetry as theirs. It is amusing to see what a hand the two Cockneys make of this mythology; the one confesses that he never read the Greek Tragedians, and the other knows Homer only from Chapman; and both of them write about Apollo, Pan, Nymphs, Muses, and Mysteries, as might be expected from persons of their education. We shall not, however, enlarge at present upon this subject, as we mean to dedicate an entire paper to the classical attainments and attempts of the Cockney poets. As for Mr Keats' "*Endymion*," it has just as much to do with Greece as it has with "old Tartary the fierce;" no man whose mind has ever been imbued with the smallest knowledge or feeling of classical poetry or classical history, could have stooped to profane and vulgarise every association in the manner which has been adopted by this "son of promise." Before giving any extracts, we must inform our readers, that this romance is meant to be written in English heroic rhyme. To those who have read any of Hunt's, this hint might indeed be needless.



Mr Keats has adopted the loose, nerveless versification, and Cockney rhymes of the poet of Rimini; but in fairness to that gentleman, we must add, that the defects of the system are tenfold more conspicuous in his disciple's work than in his own. Mr Hunt is a small poet, but he is a clever man. Mr Keats is a still smaller poet, and he is only a boy of pretty abilities, which he has done every thing in his power to spoil.

The poem sets out with the following exposition of the reasons which induced Mr Keats to compose it.<sup>1</sup>

After introducing his hero to us in a procession, and preparing us, by a few mystical lines, for believing that his destiny has in it some strange peculiarity, Mr Keats represents the beloved of the Moon as being conveyed by his sister Peona into an island in a river. This young lady has been alarmed by the appearance of the brother, and questioned him thus :

“ Brother, 'tis vain to hide  
That thou dost know of things mysterious,  
Immortal, starry; such alone could thus  
Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught  
Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught  
A Paphian dove upon a message sent?  
Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,  
Sacred to Dian? Haply thou hast seen  
Her naked limbs among the alders green;  
And that, alas! is death. No, I can trace  
Something more high perplexing in thy face!”

Endymion replies in a long speech, wherein he describes his first meeting with the Moon. We cannot

<sup>1</sup> Here the writer quotes the opening of *Endymion*—lines 1 to 35—putting *Therefore* in line 34 in unmeaning italics, and setting three notes of exclamation at the end of line 35, as a part of the quotation.

make room for the whole of it, but shall take a few pages here and there.<sup>1</sup>

Not content with the authentic love of the Moon, Keats makes his hero captivate another supernatural lady, of whom no notice occurs in any of his predecessors.<sup>2</sup>

But we find that we really have no patience for going over four books filled with such amorous scenes as these, with subterraneous journeys equally amusing, and submarine processions equally beautiful; but we must not omit the most interesting scene of the whole piece.<sup>3</sup>

After all this, however, the "modesty," as Mr Keats expresses it, of the Lady Diana prevented her from owning in Olympus her passion for Endymion. Venus, as the most knowing in such matters, is the first to discover the change that has taken place in the temperament of the goddess. "An idle tale," says the laughter-loving dame,

"A humid eye, and steps luxurious,  
When these are new and strange, are ominous."

The innamorata, to vary the intrigue, carries on a romantic intercourse with Endymion, under the disguise of an Indian damsel. At last, however, her scruples, for some reason or other, are all overcome, and the Queen of Heaven owns her attachment.

"She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,  
Before three swiftest kisses he had told,  
They vanished far away!—Peona went  
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment."

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<sup>1</sup> To wit, from Book I, lines 554-67, 598-617 (from *methought* to *ears*), and from *She took an airy range*, line 633, to end of line 645.

<sup>2</sup> The passage extracted here is the episode of the fountain nymph, Book II, lines 98-130.

<sup>3</sup> Namely, Book II, lines 707-741, as far as *arms*.

And so, like many other romances, terminates the "Poetic Romance" of Johnny Keats, in a patched-up wedding.

We had almost forgot to mention, that Keats belongs to the Cockney School of Politics, as well as the Cockney School of Poetry.

It is fit that he who holds Rimini to be the first poem, should believe the Examiner to be the first politician of the day. We admire consistency, even in folly. Hear how their bantling has already learned to lisp sedition.

" There are who lord it o'er their fellow-men  
With most prevailing tinsel : who unpen  
Their baaing vanities, to browse away  
The comfortable green and juicy hay  
From human pastures ; or, O torturing fact !  
Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd  
Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe  
Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes." <sup>1</sup>

And now, good-morrow to "the Muses' son of Promise ;" as for "the feats he yet may do," as we do not pretend to say, like himself, "Muse of my native land am I inspired," we shall adhere to the safe old rule of *pauca verba*. We venture to make one small prophecy, that his bookseller will not a second time venture £50 upon any thing he can write. It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet ; so back to the shop Mr John, back to "plasters, pills, and ointment boxes," &c. But, for Heaven's sake, young Sangrado, be a little more sparing of extenuatives and soporifics in your practice than you have been in your poetry. Z.

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<sup>1</sup> The extract from the opening of Book III is continued down to the end of line 22.

## VI.

## KEATS AND THE QUARTERLY REVIEW;

AN ARTICLE BY JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS,

published in *The Alfred, West of England Journal and General Advertiser*, for Tuesday the 6th of October 1818.

WE have met with a singular instance, in the last number of the Quarterly Review, of that unfeeling arrogance, and cold ignorance, which so strangely marked the minds and hearts of Government sycophants and Government writers. The Poem of a young man of genius, which evinces more natural power than any other work of this day, is abused and cried down, in terms which would disgrace any other pens than those used in

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This is the article mentioned at page 238 as having been contributed by Reynolds to "the Exeter paper" and reprinted by Hunt in *The Examiner*. It was originally headed "Literature. The Quarterly Review—Mr Keats." In *The Examiner* for Sunday the 11th of October 1818 the article appears preceded by the following note under the head of "Literary Notices" :—

"A manly and judicious letter, signed J. S. appeared in the Morning Chronicle the other day, respecting the article in the Quarterly Review on the Endymion of the young poet Mr. Keats. It is one of several public animadversions, which that half-witted, half-hearted Review has called indignantly forth on the occasion. 'This is the hastily-written tribute,' says the writer, 'of a stranger, who ventures to predict that Mr. K. is capable of producing a poem that shall challenge the admiration of every reader of true taste and feeling; nay, if he will give up his acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt, and apostatise in his friendships, his principles, and his politics

the defence of an Oliver or a Castles. We have read the Poetic Romance of Endymion (the book in question) with no little delight; and could hardly believe that it was written by so young a man as the preface infers. Mr. Keats, the author of it, is a genius of the highest order; and no one but a Lottery Commissioner and Government Pensioner (both of which Mr. William Gifford, the Editor of the Quarterly Review, is) could, with a false and remorseless pen, have striven to frustrate hopes and aims, so youthful and so high as this young Poet nurses. The Monthly Reviewers, it will be remembered, endeavoured, some few years back, to crush the rising heart of Kirk[e] White; and indeed they in part generated that melancholy which ultimately destroyed him; but the world saw the cruelty, and, with one voice, hailed the genius which malignity would have repressed, and lifted it to fame. Reviewers are creatures "that stab men in the dark:"—young and enthusiastic spirits are their dearest prey. Our readers will not easily forget the brutality with which the Quarterly Reviewers, in a late number of their ministerial book, commented on a work of an intelligent and patriotic woman, whose ardour and independence happened to be high enough to make them her enemies. The language used by these Government critics, was lower than man would dare to utter to female ears; but Party knows no distinctions,—no proprieties,—and a woman is the best of prey for its

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(if he have any), he may even command the approbation of the Quarterly Review.'—We really believe so; but Mr. Keats is of a spirit which can afford to dispense with such approbation, and stand by his friend. We should have given the whole of this letter, but we have since met with another in the Alfred Exeter paper, which is more elaborate on the subject; and we have not room for both."

The letters from the *Chronicle* form the next Appendix.

malignity, because it is the gentlest and the most undefended. We certainly think that Criticism might vent its petty passions on other subjects ; that it might chuse its objects from the vain, the dangerous, and the powerful, and not from the young and the unprotected.

“ It should strike hearts of age and care,  
And spare the youthful and the fair.”

The cause of the unmerciful condemnation which has been passed on Mr. Keats, is pretty apparent to all who have watched the intrigues of literature, and the wily and unsparing contrivances of political parties. This young and powerful writer was noticed, some little time back, in the Examiner ; and pointed out, by its Editor, as one who was likely to revive the early vigour of English poetry. Such a prediction was a fine, but dangerous compliment, to Mr. Keats : it exposed him instantly to the malice of the Quarterly Review. Certain it is, that hundreds of fashionable and flippant readers, will henceforth set down this young Poet as a pitiable and nonsensical writer, merely on the assertions of some single heartless critic, who has just energy enough to despise what is good, because it would militate against his pleasantries, if he were to praise it.

The genius of Mr. Keats is peculiarly classical ; and, with the exception of a few faults, which are the natural followers of youth, his imaginations and his language have a spirit and an intensity which we should in vain look for in half the popular poets of the day. Lord Byron is a splendid and noble egotist.—He visits Classical shores ; roams over romantic lands, and wanders through magnificent forests ; courses the dark and restless waves of the sea, and rocks his spirit on the midnight lakes ; but no spot is conveyed to our minds, that is not peopled by the

gloomy and ghastly feelings of one proud and solitary man. It is as if he and the world were the only two things which the air clothed.—His lines are majestic vanities ;—his poetry always is marked with a haughty selfishness ;—he writes loftily, because he is the spirit of an ancient family ;—he is liked by most of his readers, because he is a Lord. If a common man were to dare to be as moody, as contemptuous, and as misanthropical, the world would laugh at him. There must be a coronet marked on all his little pieces of poetical insolence, or the world would not countenance them. Mr. Keats has none of this egotism—this daring selfishness, which is a stain on the robe of poesy—His feelings are full, earnest, and original, as those of the olden writers were and are ; they are made for all time, not for the drawing-room and the moment. Mr. Keats always speaks of, and describes nature, with an awe and a humility, but with a deep and almost breathless affection.—He knows that Nature is better and older than he is, and he does not put himself on an equality with her. You do not see him, when you see her. The moon, and the mountainous foliage of the woods, and the azure sky, and the ruined and magic temple ; the rock, the desert, and the sea ; the leaf of the forest, and the embossed foam of the most living ocean, are the spirits of his poetry ; but he does not bring them in his own hand, or obtrude his person before you, when you are looking at them. Poetry is a thing of generalities—a wanderer amid persons and things—not a pauser over one thing, or with one person. The mind of Mr. Keats, like the minds of our older poets, goes round the universe in its speculations and its dreams. It does not set itself a task. The manners of the world, the fictions and the wonders of other worlds, are its subjects ; not the pleasures of hope, or the pleasures of memory. The true

poet confines his imagination to no one thing—his soul is an invisible ode to the passions—He does not make a home for his mind in one land—its productions are an universal story, not an eastern tale. The fancies of Moore are exquisitely beautiful, as fancies, but they are always of one colour ;—his feelings are pathetic, but they are “still harping on my daughter.” The true pathetic is to be found in the reflections on things, not in the moods and miseries of one person. There is not one poet of the present day, that enjoys any popularity that will live ; each writes for his booksellers and the ladies of fashion, and not for the voice of centuries. Time is a lover of old books, and he suffers few new ones to become old. Posterity is a difficult mark to hit, and few minds can send the arrow full home. Wordsworth might have safely cleared the rapids in the stream of time, but he lost himself by looking at his own image in the waters. Coleridge stands bewildered in the cross-road of fame ;—his genius will commit suicide, and be buried in it. Southey is Poet Laureate, “so there is no heed to be taken of him.” Campbell has relied on two stools, “The Pleasures of Hope,” and “Gertrude of Wyoming,” but he will come to the ground, after the fashion of the old proverb. The journey of fame is an endless one ; and does Mr. Rogers think that pumps and silk stockings (which his genius wears) will last him the whole way ? Poetry is the coyest creature that ever was wooed by man : she has something of the coquette in her ; for she flirts with many, and seldom loves one.

Mr. Keats has certainly not perfected any thing yet ; but he has the power, we think, within him, and it is in consequence of such an opinion that we have written these few hasty observations. If he should ever see this, he will not regret to find that all the country is not made



up of Quarterly Reviewers. All that we wish is, that our Readers could read the Poem, as we have done, before they assent to its condemnation—they will find passages of singular feeling, force, and pathos. We have the highest hopes of this young Poet. We are obscure men, it is true, and not gifted with that perilous power of mind, and truth of judgment which are possessed by Mr. Croker, Mr. Canning, Mr. Barrow, or Mr. Gifford, (all “honourable men,” and writers in the Quarterly Review). We live far from the world of letters,—out of the pale of fashionable criticism,—aloof from the atmosphere of a Court; but we are surrounded by a beautiful country, and love Poetry, which we read out of doors, as well as in. We think we see glimpses of a high mind in this young man, and surely the feeling is better that urges us to nourish its strength, than that which prompts the Quarterly Reviewer to crush it in its youth, and for ever. If however, the mind of Mr. Keats be of the quality we think it to be of, it will not be cast down by this wanton and empty attack. Malice is a thing of the scorpion kind—It drives the sting into its own heart. The very passages which the Quarterly Review quotes as ridiculous, have in them the beauty that sent us to the Poem itself. We shall close these observations with a few extracts from the romance itself:—If our Readers do not see the spirit and beauty in them to justify our remarks, we confess ourselves bad judges, and never more worthy to be trusted.

The following address to Sleep, is full of repose and feeling:—

“O magic sleep! Oh comfortable bird,  
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind,  
Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfined  
Restraint! Imprisoned Liberty! Great key  
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,

Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves,  
And moonlight !”

This is beautiful—but there is something finer,

“ — That men, who might have tower'd in the van  
Of all the congregated world to fan  
And winnow from the coming step of time,  
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime  
Left by men slugs and human serpentry ;  
Have been content to let occasion die,  
Whilst they did sleep in Love's Elysium.  
And truly I would rather be struck dumb,  
Than speak again this ardent listlessness :  
For I have ever thought that it might bless  
The world with benefits unknowingly ;  
As does the nightingale up-perched high,  
And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves,  
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives  
How tiptoe night holds back her dark grey hood.”

The turn of this is truly Shakesperian, which Mr. Keats will feel to be the highest compliment we can pay him, if we know any thing of his mind. We cannot refrain from giving the following short passage, which appears to us scarcely to be surpassed in the whole range of English Poetry. It has all the naked and solitary vigour of old sculpture, with all the energy and life of Old poetry :—

“ — At this, with madden'd stare,  
And lifted hands, and trembling lips he stood,  
Like old Deucalion mounted o'er the flood,  
Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.”

Again, we give some exquisitely classic lines, clear and reposing as a Grecian sky—soft and lovely as the waves of Ilyssus.

“ — Here is wine,  
Alive with sparkles—Never I aver,  
Since Ariadne was a vintager,  
So cool a purple ; taste these juicy pears,

Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears  
 Were high about Pomona : here is cream,  
 Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam ;  
 Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd  
 For the boy Jupiter."

This is the very fruit of poetry.—A melting repast for the imagination. We can only give one more extract—our limits are reached. Mr. Keats is speaking of the story of Endymion itself. Nothing can be more imaginative than what follows :—

" — Ye who have yearn'd  
 With too much passion, will here stay and pity,  
 For the mere sake of truth ; as 'tis a ditty  
 Not of these days, but long ago 'twas told  
 By a cavern'd wind unto a forest old ;  
 And then the forest told it in a dream  
 To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam  
 A Poet caught as he was journeying  
 To Phœbus' shrine and in it he did fling  
 His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,  
 And after, straight in that inspired place  
 He sang the story up into the air,  
 Giving it universal freedom."

We have no more room for extracts. Does the author of such poetry as this deserve to be made the sport of so servile a dolt as a Quarterly Reviewer?—No. Two things have struck us on the perusal of this singular poem. The first is, that Mr. Keats excels, in what Milton excelled—the power of putting a spirit of life and novelty into the Heathen Mythology. The second is, that in the structure of his verse, and the sinewy quality of his thoughts, Mr. Keats greatly resembles old Chapman, the nervous translator of Homer. His mind has "thews and limbs like to its ancestors." Mr. Gifford, who knows something of the old dramatists, ought to have paused before he sanctioned the abuse of a spirit kindred with them. If he could not feel, he ought to know better.

## VII.

## KEATS AND THE QUARTERLY REVIEW;

TWO LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF

THE MORNING CHRONICLE

published in that paper

on Saturday the 3rd and Thursday the 8th of October 1818.

## I.

Sir,

Although I am aware that literary squabbles are of too uninteresting and interminable a nature for your Journal, yet there are occasions when acts of malice and gross injustice towards an author may be properly brought before the public through such a medium.—Allow me, then, without further preface, to refer you to an article in the last Number of *The Quarterly Review*, professing to be a Critique on “*The Poems of John Keats*.” Of John Keats I know nothing; from his Preface I collect that he is very young—no doubt a heinous sin; and I have been informed that he has incurred the additional guilt of an acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt. That this latter Gentleman and the Editor of *The Quarterly Review* have long been at war, must be known to every one in the least acquainted with the literary gossip of the day. Mr. L. Hunt, it appears, has thought highly of the poetical talents of Mr. Keats; hence Mr. K. is doomed to feel the merciless tomahawk of the Reviewers, termed *Quarterly*, I presume from the *modus operandi*. From a perusal of the criticism, I was

led to the work itself. I would, Sir, that your limits would permit a few extracts from this poem. I dare appeal to the taste and judgment of your readers, that beauties of the highest order may be found in almost every page—that there are also many, very many passages indicating haste and carelessness, I will not deny; I will go further, and assert that a real friend of the author would have dissuaded him from an immediate publication.

Had the genius of Lord Byron sunk under the discouraging sneers of an Edinburgh Review the nineteenth century would scarcely yet have been termed the Augustan æra of Poetry. Let Mr. Keats too persevere—he has talents of [no] common stamp; this is the hastily written tribute of a stranger, who ventures to predict that Mr. K. is capable of producing a poem that shall challenge the admiration of every reader of true taste and feeling; nay if he will give up his acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt, and apostatise in his friendships, his principles and his politics (if he have any), he may even command the approbation of the Quarterly Review.

I have not heard to whom public opinion has assigned this exquisite morceau of critical acumen. If the Translator of Juvenal<sup>1</sup> be its author, I would refer him to the manly and pathetic narrative prefixed to that translation, to the touching history of genius oppressed by and struggling with innumerable difficulties, yet finally

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<sup>1</sup> These references are so well chosen as to give some countenance to the suggestion that John Scott was the writer of the letter. The translator of Juvenal was of course William Gifford, the editor of *The Quarterly Review*. The biographer of Kirke White was Robert Southey; and the author of *The Battle of Talavera* was John Wilson Croker, who, like Southey, was one of the most prominent contributors to the *Quarterly*.

triumphing under patronage and encouragement. If the Biographer of Kirke White have done Mr. Keats this cruel wrong, let him remember his own just and feeling expostulation with the Monthly Reviewer, who "sat down to blast the hopes of a boy, who had confessed to him all his hopes and all his difficulties." If the 'Admiralty Scribe' (for he too is a Reviewer) be the critic, let him compare the "Battle of Talavera" with "Endymion."

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. S.

2.

Sir,

The spirited and feeling remonstrance of your correspondent J. S. against the cruelty and injustice of the Quarterly Review, has most ably anticipated the few remarks which I had intended to address to you on the subject. But your well known liberality in giving admission to every thing calculated to do justice to oppressed and injured merit, induces me to trespass further on your valuable columns, by a few extracts from Mr. Keat's Poem. As the Reviewer professes to have read only the first book, I have confined my quotations to that part of the Poem; and I leave your readers to judge whether the Critic who could pass over such beauties as these lines contain, and condemn the whole Poem as "consisting of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language," is very implicitly to be relied on.

I am, Sir

Your obedient servant,

R. B.

Temple, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1818.

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The extracts range over pages 12 to 42 of the original edition of *Endymion* (pages 130 to 163 of the first volume of this edition).

## VIII.

## LETTER BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

CONCERNING

JOHN KEATS,

addressed but not sent to the Editor of *The Quarterly Review*.

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 so 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.”

The case is different with the unfortunate subject of

this letter, the author of "Endymion," to whose feelings and situation 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 it its due praise. Surely the poem, with all its faults, is a very remarkable production for a man of Keats'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, &c., and book iii., line 113 to 120 ; read down that page, and then again from line 193. 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,<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> It is now well known that this view of the matter was considerably exaggerated by Shelley's imagination and righteous wrath.



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. 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; but I fear that, unless his mind can be kept tranquil, little is to be hoped from the mere influence of climate.

But let me not extort anything from your pity. I have just seen a second volume, 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.

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Lord Houghton, when reprinting this letter, added,—“when Keats was dead, the voice of Shelley gave forth 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 at 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."*

END OF VOLUME III.



















