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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HORTUS INCLUSUS ***

THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

JOHN RUSKIN

VOLUME XXIV

OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US

STORM-CLOUD OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

HORTUS INCLUSUS

HORTUS INCLUSUS

MESSAGES FROM THE WOOD TO

THE GARDEN,

SENT IN HAPPY DAYS TO THE

SISTER LADIES OF THE THWAITE, CONISTON.

DEDICATED

WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO MY DEAR FRIENDS

PROFESSOR RUSKIN

AND

ALBERT FLEMING.

S. B.

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PREFACE.

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[Pg v] The ladies to whom these letters were written have been, throughout their brightly tranquil lives, at once sources and loadstones of all good to the village in which they had their home, and to all loving people who cared for the village and its vale and secluded lake, and whatever remained in them or around of the former peace, beauty, and pride of English Shepherd Land.

Sources they have been of good, like one of its mountain springs, ever to be found at need. They did not travel; they did not go up to London in its season; they did not receive idle visitors to jar or waste their leisure in the waning year. The poor and the sick could find them always; or rather, they watched for and prevented all poverty and pain that care or tenderness could relieve or heal. Loadstones they were, as steadily bringing the light of gentle and wise souls about them as the crest of their guardian mountain gives pause to the morning clouds: in themselves, they were types of perfect womanhood in its constant happiness, queens alike of their own hearts and of a Paradise in which they knew the names and sympathized with the spirits of every living creature that God had made to play therein, or to blossom in its sunshine or shade.

[Pg vi] They had lost their dearly-loved younger sister, Margaret, before I knew them. Mary and Susie, alike in benevolence, serenity, and practical judgment, were yet widely different, nay, almost contrary, in tone and impulse of intellect. Both of them capable of understanding whatever women should know, the elder was yet chiefly interested in the course of immediate English business, policy, and progressive science, while Susie lived an aerial and enchanted life, possessing all the highest joys of imagination, while she yielded to none of its deceits, sicknesses, or errors. She saw, and felt, and believed all good, as it had ever been, and was to be, in the reality and eternity of its goodness, with the acceptance and the hope of a child; the least things were treasures to her, and her moments fuller of joy than some people's days.

What she had been to me, in the days and years when other friendship has been failing, and others' "loving, mere folly," the reader will enough see from these letters, written certainly for her only, but from which she has permitted my Master of the Rural Industries at Loughrigg, Albert Fleming, to choose what he thinks, among the tendrils of clinging thought, and mossy cups for dew in the Garden of Herbs where Love is, may be trusted to the memorial sympathy of the readers of "Frondes Agrestes."

BRANTWOOD,

June, 1887.

INTRODUCTION.

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[Pg vii] Often during those visits to the Thwaite which have grown to be the best-spent hours of my later years, I have urged my dear friend Miss Beaver to open to the larger world the pleasant paths of this her Garden Inclosed. The inner circle of her friends knew that she had a goodly store of Mr. Ruskin's letters, extending over many years. She for her part had long desired to share with others the pleasure these letters had given her, but she shrank from the fatigue of selecting and arranging them. It was, therefore, with no small feeling of satisfaction that I drove home from the Thwaite one day in February last with a parcel containing nearly two thousand of these treasured letters. I was gladdened also by generous permission, both from Brantwood and the Thwaite, to choose what I liked best for publication. The letters themselves are the fruit of the most beautiful friendship I have ever been permitted to witness, a friendship so unique in some aspects of it, so sacred in all, that I may only give it the praise of silence. I count myself happy to have been allowed to throw open to all wise and quiet souls the portals of this Armida's Garden, where there are no spells save those woven by love, and no magic save that of grace and kindliness. Here my pleasant share in this little book would have ended, but Mr. Ruskin has desired me to add a few words, giving my own description of Susie, and speaking of my relationship to them both. To him I owe the guidance of my life,—all its best impulses, all its worthiest efforts; to her some of its happiest hours, and the blessings alike of incentive and reproof. In reading over Mr. Ruskin's Preface, I note that, either by grace of purpose or happy chance, he has left me one point untouched in our dear friend's character. Her letters inserted here give some evidence of it, but I should like to place on record how her intense delight in sweet and simple things has blossomed into a kind of mental frolic and dainty wit, so that even now in the calm autumn of her days, her friends are not only lessened by her ripened wisdom, but cheered and recreated by her quaint and sprightly humor.

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In the Royal Order of Gardens, as Bacon puts it, there was always a quiet resting-place called the Pleasaunce; there the daisies grew unchecked, and the grass was ever the greenest. Such a Pleasaunce do these Letters seem to me. Here and there, indeed, there are shadows on the grass, but no shadow ever falls between the two dear friends who walk together hand in hand along its pleasant paths. So may they walk in peace till they stand at the gate of another Garden, where

"Co' fiori eterni, eterno il frutto dura."

A. F.

NEAUM CRAG,

LOUGHRIGG,

AMBLESIDE.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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[Pg ix] Since these letters were published fourteen years ago, both Mr. Ruskin and Miss Beaver have passed to the country he longed to find, "where the flowers do not fade." In this new Edition some of the earlier letters have been withdrawn, and others, of possibly wider interest, are

inserted in their place. I have also added a reproduction of Mr. Ruskin's last letter to Miss Beever. It was written about the 20th October, 1893, and was read to her on her death-bed. He was then himself in broken health, and it took him three weary hours to write this little note of eight lines. I believe this to be the last complete letter that ever came from his pen. Miss Beever sent it to me with the wish "that some day I might use it," and I now fulfill that wish by inserting it here as the pathetic close to a correspondence, in which there was so much of a gay and playful nature; commending it to the "memorial sympathy" claimed by him for his earlier letters. The word "Phoca" is a signature often used by him in writing to his old friend.

I have been asked to add illustrations to this Edition; and some fresh explanatory notes and dates will also be found.

A. F.

NEAUM CRAG,

AMBLESIDE,

1902.

HORTUS INCLUSUS.

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[Pg 1]

BRANTWOOD

,

16th March, 1874

.

MY DEAREST SUSIE,—

In a state of great defeat and torment, this morning—having much to do with the weather and—not living on milk, I have been greatly helped by—one of my own books! [1] It is the best I ever wrote—the last which I took thorough loving pains with—and the first which I did with full knowledge of sorrow.

Will you please read in it—first—from 65 at the bottom of page 79 [2] as far as and not farther than, 67 in page 81. That is what helped me this morning.

Then, if you want to know precisely the state I am in, read the account of the Myth of Tantalus, beginning at 20—p. 24 and going on to 25—page 31.

It is a hard task to set you, my dear little Susie; but when you get old, you will be glad to have done it, and another day, you must look at page 94, and then you must return me my book, for it's my noted copy and I'm using it.

The life of Tantalus doesn't often admit of crying: but I had a real cry—with quite wet tears yesterday morning, over what—to me is the prettiest bit in all Shakespeare

"Pray, be content;

Mother, I am going to the market-place—

Chide me no more." [3]

[Pg 2]

And almost next to it, comes (to me, always I mean in my own fancy) Virgilia, "Yes, certain; there's a letter for you; I saw it." [4]

THE SACRISTAN'S CELL.

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ASSISI

14th April, 1874

I got to-day your lovely letter of the 6th, but I never knew my Susie *could* be such a naughty little girl before; to burn her pretty story [5] instead of sending it to me. It would have come to me so exactly in the right place here, where St. Francis made the grasshopper (cicada, at least) sing to him upon his hand, and preached to the birds, and made the wolf go its rounds every day as regularly as any Franciscan friar, to ask for a little contribution to its modest dinner. The Bee and Narcissus would have delighted to talk in this enchanted air.

Yes, that *is* really very pretty of Dr. John Brown to inscribe your books so, and it's so like him. How these kind people understand things! And that bit of his about the child is wholly lovely; I am so glad you copied it.

I often think of you, and of Coniston and Brantwood. You will see, in the May Fors, reflections upon the temptations to the life of a Franciscan.

There are two monks here, one the sacristan who has charge of the entire church, and is responsible for its treasures; the other exercising what authority is left to the convent among the people of the town. They are both so good and innocent and sweet, one can't pity them enough. For this time in Italy is just like the Reformation in Scotland, with only the difference that the Reform movement is carried on here simply for the sake of what money can be got by Church confiscation. And these two brothers are living by indulgence, as the Abbot in the Monastery of St. Mary's in the Regent Moray's time.

[Pg 3]

The people of the village, however, are all true to their faith; it is only the governing body which is modern-infidel and radical. The population is quite charming,—a word of kindness makes them as bright as if you brought them news of a friend. All the same, it does not do to offend them; Monsieur Cavalcasella, who is expecting the Government order to take the Tabernacle from the Sanctuary of St. Francis, cannot, it is said, go out at night with safety. He decamped the day before I came, having some notion, I fancy, that I would make his life a burden to him, if he didn't, by day, as much as it was in peril by night. I promise myself a month of very happy time here (happy for *me*, I mean) when I return in May.

The sacristan gives me my coffee for lunch, in his own little cell, looking out on the olive woods; then he tells me stories of conversions and miracles, and then perhaps we go into the Sacristy and have a reverent little poke out of relics. Fancy a great carved cupboard in a vaulted chamber full of most precious things (the box which the Holy Virgin's veil used to be kept in, to begin with), and leave to rummage in it at will! Things that are only shown twice in the year or so, with fumigation! all the congregation on their knees; and the sacristan and I having a great heap of them on the table at once, like a dinner service! I really looked with great respect at St. Francis's old camel-hair dress.

I am obliged to go to Rome to-morrow, however, and to Naples on Saturday. My witch of Sicily [6] expects me this day week, and she's going to take me such lovely drives, and talks of "excursions" which I see by the map are thirty miles away. I wonder if she thinks me so horribly old that it's quite proper. It will be very nice if she does, but not flattering. I know her mother can't go with her, I suppose her maid will. If she wants any other chaperon I won't go.

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She's really very beautiful, I believe, to some people's tastes, (I shall be horribly disappointed if she isn't, in her own dark style,) and she writes, next to Susie, the loveliest letters I ever get.

Now, Susie, mind, you're to be a very good child while I'm away, and never to burn any more stories; and above all, you're to write me just what comes into your head, and ever to believe me your loving

J. R.

NAPLES

,
2d May, 1874
.

I heard of your great sorrow [7] from Joan six days ago, and have not been able to write since. Nothing silences me so much as sorrow, and for this of yours I have no comfort. I write only that you may know that I am thinking of you, and would help you if I could. And I write to-day because your lovely letters and your lovely old age have been forced into my thoughts often by dreadful contrast during these days in Italy. You who are so purely and brightly happy in all natural and simple things, seem now to belong to another and a younger world. And your letters have been to me like the pure air of Yewdale Crags breathed among the Pontine Marshes; but you must not think I am ungrateful for them when I can't answer. You can have no idea how impossible it is for me to do all the work necessary even for memory of the things I came here to see; how much escapes me, how much is done in a broken and weary way. I am the only author on art who does the work of illustration with his own hand; the only one therefore—and I am not insolent in saying this—who has learned his business thoroughly; but after a day's drawing I assure you one cannot sit down to write unless it be the merest nonsense to please Joanie. Believe it or not, there is no one of my friends whom I write so scrupulously to as to you. You may be vexed at this, but indeed I can't but try to write carefully in answer to all your kind words, and so sometimes I can't at all. I *must* tell you, however, to-day, what I saw in the Pompeian frescoes—the great characteristic of falling Rome, in her furious desire of pleasure, and brutal incapability of it. The walls of Pompeii are covered with paintings meant only to give pleasure, but nothing they represent is beautiful or delightful, and yesterday, among other calumniated and caricatured birds, I saw one of my Susie's pets, a peacock; and he had only eleven eyes in his tail. Fancy the feverish wretchedness of the humanity which in mere pursuit of pleasure or power had reduced itself to see no more than eleven eyes in a peacock's tail! What were the Cyclops to this?

[Pg 5]

I hope to get to Rome this evening, and to be there settled for some time, and to have quieter hours for my letters.

ROME, HÔTEL DE RUSSIE

,
8th May, '74
.

I have your sweet letter about Ulysses, the leaves, and the Robins. I have been feeling so wearily on this journey, the want of what—when I had it, I used—how often! to feel a burden—the claim of my mother for at least a *word*, every day. Happy, poor mother, with two lines—and I—sometimes—nay—often—thinking it hard to have to stay five minutes from what I wanted to do—to write them.

I am despising, now, in like senseless way, the privilege of being able to write to you and of knowing that it will please you to hear—even that I can't tell you anything! which I cannot, this morning—but only, it is a little peace and rest to me to write to my Susie.

ROME

,
23d May, 1874
.

A number of business letters and the increasing instinct for work here as time shortens, have kept me too long from even writing a mere mamma-note to you; though not without thought of you daily.

I have your last most lovely line about your sister—and giving me that most touching fact about poor Dr. John Brown, which I am grieved and yet thankful to know, that I may better still reverence his unfailing kindness and quick sympathy. I have a quite wonderful letter from him about you; but I will not tell you what he says, only it is so *very*, very true, and so very, very pretty, you can't think.

I have written to my bookseller to find for you, and send a complete edition of "Modern Painters," if findable. If not, I will make my assistant send you down my own fourth and fifth volumes, which

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you can keep till I come for them in the autumn.

There is nothing now in the year but autumn and winter. I really begin to think there is some terrible change of climate coming upon the world for its sin, like another deluge. It will have its rainbow, I suppose, after its manner—promising not to darken the world again, and then not to drown.

ROME

,

24th May, 1874

(

Whit-Sunday

).

[Pg 7] I have to-day, to make the day whiter for me, your lovely letter of the 15th, [8] telling me your age. I am so glad it is no more; you are only thirteen years older than I, and much more able to be my sister than mamma, and I hope you will have many years of youth yet. I think I *must* tell you in return for this letter what Dr. John Brown said, or part of it at least. He said you had the playfulness of a lamb without its selfishness. I think that perfect as far as it goes. Of course my Susie's wise and grave gifts must be told of afterwards. There is no one I know, or have known, so well able as you are to be in a degree what my mother was to me. In this chief way (as well as many other ways) (the puzzlement I have had to force that sentence into grammar!), that I have had the same certainty of giving you pleasure by a few words and by any little account of what I am doing. But then you know I have just got out of the way of doing as I am bid, and unless you can scold me back into that, you can't give me the sense of support.

Tell me more about yourself first, and how those years came to be "lost." I am not sure that they were; though I am very far from holding the empty theory of compensation; but much of the slighter pleasure you lost then is evidently still open to you, fresh all the more from having been for a time withdrawn.

The Roman peasants are very gay to-day, with roses in their hair; legitimately and honorably decorated, and looking lovely. Oh me, if they had a few Susies to take human care of them what a glorious people they would be!

THE LOST CHURCH IN THE CAMPAGNA.

ROME

,

2d June, 1874

.

Ah if you were but among the marbles here, though there are none finer than that you so strangely discerned in my study; but they are as a white company innumerable, ghost after ghost. And how you would rejoice in them and in a thousand things besides, to which I am dead, from having seen too much or worked too painfully—or, worst of all, lost the hope which gives all life.

Last Sunday I was in a lost church found again,—a church of the second or third century, dug in a green hill of the Campagna, built underground,—its secret entrance like a sand-martin's nest. Such the temple of the Lord, as the King Solomon of that time had to build it; not "the mountains of the Lord's house shall be established above the hills," but the cave of the Lord's house as the fox's hole, beneath them.

[Pg 8] And here, now lighted by the sun for the first time (for they are still digging the earth from the steps), are the marbles of those early Christian days; the first efforts of their new hope to show itself in enduring record, the new hope of a Good Shepherd:—there they carved Him, with a spring flowing at His feet, and round Him the cattle of the Campagna in which they had dug their church, the very self-same goats which this morning have been trotting past my window through the most populous streets of Rome, innocently following their shepherd, tinkling their bells, and shaking their long spiral horns and white beards; the very same dew-lapped cattle which were that Sunday morning feeding on the hillside above, carved on the tomb-marbles sixteen hundred years ago.

How you would have liked to see it, Susie!

And now to-day I am going to work in an eleventh century church of quite proud and victorious Christianity, with its grand bishops and saints lording it over Italy. The bishop's throne all marble and mosaic of precious colors and of gold, high under the vaulted roof at the end behind the altar; and line upon line of pillars of massive porphyry and marble, gathered out of the ruins of the temples of the great race who had persecuted them, till they had said to the hills, Cover us, like the wicked. And then *their* proud time came, and their enthronement on the seven hills; and now, what is to be their fate once more?—of pope and cardinal and dome, Peter's or Paul's by name only,—“My house, no more a house of prayer, but a den of thieves.”

I can't write any more this morning. Oh me, if one could only write and draw all one wanted, and have our Susies and be young again, oneself and they! (As if there were two Susies, or *could* be!)

Ever my one Susie's very loving

J. RUSKIN

REGRETS.

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[Pg 9]

ASSISI

June 9th

(1874).

Yes, I am a little oppressed just now with overwork, nor is this avoidable. I am obliged to leave all my drawings unfinished as the last days come, and the point possible of approximate completion fatally contracts, every hour to a more ludicrous and warped mockery of the hope in which one began. It is impossible not to work against time, and *that* is killing. It is not labor itself, but competitive, anxious, disappointed labor that dries one's soul out.

But don't be frightened about me, you sweet Susie. I know when I *must* stop; forgive and pity me only, because sometimes, nay often my letter (or word) to Susie must be sacrificed to the last effort on one's drawing.

The letter to one's Susie should be a rest, do you think? It is always more or less comforting, but not rest; it means further employment of the already extremely strained sensational power. What one really wants! I believe the only true restorative is the natural one, the actual presence of one's "helpmeet." The far worse than absence of mine *reverses* rest, and what is more, destroys one's power of receiving from others or giving.

How much love of mine have *others* lost, because that poor sick child would not have the part of love that belonged to her!

I am very anxious about your eyes too. For any favor don't write more extracts just now. The books are yours forever and a day—no loan; enjoy any bits that you find enjoyable, but don't copy just now.

I left Rome yesterday, and am on my way home; but, alas! might as well be on my way home from Cochin China, for any chance I have of speedily arriving. Meantime your letters will reach me here with speed, and will be a great comfort to me, if they don't fatigue *you*.

"FRONDES AGRESTES."

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PERUGIA

12th June

(1874).

I am more and more pleased at the thought of this gathering of yours, and soon expect to tell you what the bookseller says.

Meantime I want you to think of the form the collection should take with reference to my proposed re-publication. I mean to take the botany, the geology, the Turner defense, and the general art criticism of "Modern Painters," as four separate books, cutting out nearly all the preaching, and a good deal of the sentiment. Now what you find pleasant and helpful to you of general maxim or reflection, *must* be of some value; and I think therefore that your selection will just do for me what no other reader could have done, least of all I myself; keep together, that is to say, what may be right and true of those youthful thoughts. I should like you to add anything that specially pleases you, of whatever kind; but to keep the notion of your book being the didactic one as opposed to the other picturesque and scientific volumes, will I think help you in choosing between passages when one or other is to be rejected.

HOW HE FELL AMONG THIEVES.

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ASSISI

,
17th June

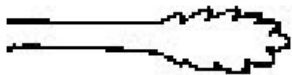
(1874).

I have been having a bad time lately, and have no heart to write to you. Very difficult and melancholy work, deciphering what remains of a great painter [9] among stains of ruin and blotches of repair, of five hundred years' gathering. It makes me sadder than idleness, which is saying much.

[Pg 11]

I was greatly flattered and petted by a saying in one of your last letters, about the difficulty I had in unpacking my mind. That is true; one of my chief troubles at present is with the quantity of things I want to say at once. But you don't know how I find things I laid by carefully in it, all moldy and moth-eaten when I take them out; and what a lot of mending and airing they need, and what a wearisome and bothering business it is compared to the early packing,—one used to be so proud to get things into the corners neatly!

I have been failing in my drawings, too, and I'm in a horrible inn kept by a Garibaldian bandit; and the various sorts of disgusting dishes sent up to look like a dinner, and to be charged for, are a daily increasing horror and amazement to me. They succeed in getting *everything* bad; no exertion, no invention, could produce such badness, I believe, anywhere else. The hills are covered for leagues with olive trees, and the oil's bad; there are no such lovely cattle elsewhere in the world, and the butter's bad; half the country people are shepherds, but there's no mutton; half the old women walk about with a pig tied to their waists, but there's no pork; the vine grows wild anywhere, and the wine would make my teeth drop out of my head if I took a glass of it; there are no strawberries, no oranges, no melons, the cherries are as hard as their stones, the beans only good for horses, or Jack and the beanstalk, and this is the size of the biggest asparagus—



I live here in a narrow street ten feet wide only, winding up a hill, and it was full this morning of sheep as close as they could pack, at least a thousand, as far as the eye could reach,—tinkle tinkle, bleat bleat, for a quarter of an hour.

IN PARADISE.

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ASSISI, SACRISTAN'S CELL

[Pg 12]

This letter is all upside down, and this first page written last; for I didn't like something I had written about myself last night when I was tired, and have torn it off.

That star you saw beat like a heart must have been a dog star. A planet would not have twinkled. Far mightier, he, than any planet; burning with his own planetary host doubtless round him; and, on some speckiest of the specks of them, evangelical persons thinking our sun was made for *them*.

Ah, Susie, I do not pass, unthought of, the many sorrows of which you kindly tell me, to show me—for that is in your heart—how others have suffered also.

But, Susie, *you* expect to see your Margaret again, and you will be happy with her in heaven. I wanted my Rosie *here*. In heaven I mean to go and talk to Pythagoras and Socrates and Valerius Publicola. I shan't care a bit for Rosie there, she needn't think it. What will gray eyes and red cheeks be good for *there*?

These pious sentiments are all written in my sacristan's cell.

This extract book [10] of yours will be most precious in its help to me, provided it is kept within somewhat narrow limits. As soon as it is done I mean to have it published in a strong and pretty but *cheap* form, and it must not be too bulky. Consider, therefore, not only what you like, but how far and with whom each bit is likely to find consent and service. You will have to choose perhaps, after a little while, among what you have already chosen. I mean to leave it *wholly* in your hands; it is to be Susie's choice of my writings.

Don't get into a flurry of responsibility, but don't at once write down all you have a mind to; I know you'll find a good deal! for you are exactly in sympathy with me in all things.

[Pg 13]

ASSISI

,
9th July, 1874
.

Your lovely letters are always a comfort to me; and not least when you tell me you are sad. You would be far less in sympathy with me if you were not, and in the "everything right" humor of some, even of some really good and kind persons, whose own matters are to their mind, and who understand by "Providence" the power which particularly takes care of *them*. This favoritism which goes so sweetly and pleasantly down with so many pious people is the chief of all stumbling-blocks to *me*. I must pray for everybody or nobody, and can't get into any conceptions of relation between Heaven and *me*, if not also between Heaven and earth, (and why Heaven should allow hairs in pens I can't think).

I take great care of myself, be quite sure of that, Susie; the worst of it is, here in Assisi everybody else wants me to take care of them.

Catharine brought me up as a great treat yesterday at dinner, ham dressed with as much garlic as could be stewed into it, and a plate of raw figs, telling me I was to eat them together!

The sun is changing the entire mountains of Assisi into a hot bottle with no flannel round it; but I can't get a ripe plum, peach, or cherry. All the milk turns sour, and one has to eat one's meat at its toughest or the thunder gets into it next day.

FOAM OF TIBER.

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PERUGIA

,
17th July
(1874).

I am made anxious by your sweet letter of the 6th saying you have been ill and are "not much better."

The letter is all like yours, but I suppose however ill you were you would always write prettily, so that's little comfort.

About the Narcissus, please. I want them for my fishpond stream rather than for the bee-house one. The fishpond stream is very doleful, and wants to dance with daffodils if they would come and teach it. How happy we are in our native streams. A thunder-storm swelled the Tiber yesterday, and it rolled over its mill weirs in heaps, literally, of tossed water, the size of haycocks, but black brown like coffee with the grounds in it, mixed with a very little yellow milk. In some lights the foam flew like cast handfuls of heavy gravel. The chief flowers here are only broom and bindweed, and I begin to weary for my heather and for my Susie; but oh dear, the ways are long and the days few.

LUCCA

,

29th July

(1874).

I'm not going to be devoured when I come, by anybody, unless *you* like to. I shall come to your window with the birds, to be fed myself.

And please at present always complain to me whenever you like. It is the over boisterous cheerfulness of common people that hurts me; your sadness is a help to me.

You shall have whatever name you like for your book provided you continue to like it after thinking over it long enough. You will not like "Gleanings," because you know one only gleans refuse—dropped ears—that other people don't care for. *You* go into the garden and gather with choice the flowers you like best. That is not gleaning!

LUCCA

,

10th August

(1874).

I have been grieved not to write to you; but the number of things that vex me are so great just now, that unless by false effort I could write you nothing nice. It is very dreadful to live in Italy, and more dreadful to see one's England and one's English friends, all but a field or two, and a stream or two, and a one Susie and one Dr. Brown, fast becoming like Italy and the Italians.

I have too *much sympathy* with your sorrow to write to you of it. What I have not sympathy with, is your hope; and how cruel it is to say this! But I am driven more and more to think there is to be no more good for a time, but a reign of terror of men and the elements alike; and yet it is so like what is foretold before the coming of the Son of man that perhaps in the extremest evil of it I may some day read the sign that our redemption draws nigh.

Now, Susie, invent a nice cluster of titles for the book and send them to me to choose from, to Hôtel de l'Arno, Florence. I must get that out before the day of judgment, if I can. I'm so glad of your sweet flatteries in this note received to-day.

FLORENCE

,

25th August

(1874).

I have not been able to write to you, or any one lately, whom I don't want to tease, except Dr. Brown, whom I write to for counsel. My time is passed in a fierce steady struggle to save all I can every day, as a fireman from a smoldering ruin, of history or aspect. To-day, for instance, I've been just in time to ascertain the form of the cross of the Emperor, representing the power of the State in the greatest *political* fresco of old times—fourteenth century. By next year, it may be next month, it will have dropped from the wall with the vibration of the railway outside, and be touched up with new gilding for the mob.

I am keeping well, but am in a terrible spell (literally, "spell," enchanted maze, that I can't get out of) of work.

I was a little scandalized at the idea of your calling the book "word-painting." My dearest Susie, it is the chief provocation of my life to be called a "word-painter" instead of a thinker. I hope you haven't filled your book with descriptions. I thought it was the thoughts you were looking for?

[Pg 16]

"Posie" would be pretty. If you ask Joanie she will tell you perhaps *too* pretty for *me*, and I can't think a bit to-night, for instead of robins singing I hear only blaspheming gamesters on the other side of the narrow street.

FLORENCE

,

1st September

(1874).

Don't be in despair about your book. I am sure it will be lovely. I'll see to it the moment I get home, but I've got into an entirely unexpected piece of business here, the interpretation of a large chapel [11] full of misunderstood, or not at all understood, frescoes; and I'm terribly afraid of breaking down, so much drawing has to be done at the same time. It has stranded botany and everything.

I was kept awake half of last night by drunken blackguards howling on the bridge of the Holy Trinity in the pure half-moonlight. This is the kind of discord I have to bear, corresponding to your uncongenial company. But, alas! Susie, you ought at ten years old to have more firmness, and to resolve that you won't be bored. I think I shall try to enforce it on you as a very solemn duty not to *lie* to people as the vulgar public do. If they bore you, say so, and they'll go away. That is the right state of things.

How am I to know that *I* don't bore you, when *I* come, when you're so civil to people you hate?

PASS OF BOCCHETTA

,

1st October

(1874).

All that is lovely and wonderful in the Alps may be seen without the slightest danger, in general, and it is especially good for little girls of eleven who can't climb, to know this—all the best views of hills are at the bottom of them. I know one or two places indeed where there is a grand peeping over precipices, one or two where the mountain seclusion and strength are worth climbing to see. But all the entirely beautiful things I could show you, Susie; only for the very highest sublime of them sometimes asking you to endure half an hour of *chaise à porteurs*, but mostly from a post-chaise or smoothest of turnpike roads.

[Pg 17]

But, Susie, do you know, I'm greatly horrified at the penwipers of peacocks' feathers! *I* always use my left-hand coat-tail, indeed, and if only I were a peacock and a pet of yours, how you'd scold me!

Sun just coming out over sea (at Sestri), which is sighing in towards the window, within your drive, round before the door's breadth of it, [12] seen between two masses of acacia copse and two orange trees at the side of the inn courtyard.

GENEVA

,

19th October

(1874).

How I have been neglecting you! Perhaps Joanie may have told you that just at my last gasp of hand-work, I had to write quite an unexpected number of letters. But poor Joanie will think

herself neglected now, for I have been stopped among the Alps by a state of their glaciers entirely unexampled, and shall be a week after my "latest possible" day, in getting home. It is eleven years since I was here, and very sad to me to return, yet delightful with a moonlight paleness of the past, precious of its kind.

I shall be at home with Joan in ten days now, God willing. I have much to tell you, which will give you pleasure and pain; but I don't know how much it will be—to tell you—for a little while yet, so I don't begin.

OXFORD

,
26th October
(1874).

Home at last with your lovely, most lovely, letter in my breast pocket.

I am so very grateful to you for not writing on black paper.

Oh, dear Susie, why should we ever wear black for the guests of God?

WHARFE IN FLOOD.

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[Pg 18]

BOLTON ABBEY

,
24th January, 1875.

The black rain, much as I growled at it, has let me see Wharfe in flood; and I would have borne many days in prison to see that.

No one need go to the Alps to see wild water. Seldom unless in the Rhine or Rhone themselves at their rapids, have I seen anything much grander. An Alpine stream, besides, nearly always has its bed full of loose stones, and becomes a series of humps and dumps of water wherever it is shallow; while the Wharfe swept round its curves of shore like a black Damascus saber, coiled into eddies of steel. At the Strid, it had risen eight feet vertical since yesterday, sheeting the flat rocks with foam from side to side, while the treacherous mid-channel was filled with a succession of boiling domes of water, charged through and through with churning white, and rolling out into the broader stream, each like a vast sea wave bursting on a beach.

There is something in the soft and comparatively unbroken slopes of these Yorkshire shales which must give the water a peculiar sweeping power, for I have seen Tay and Tummel and Ness, and many a big stream besides, savage enough, but I don't remember anything so grim as this.

I came home to quiet tea and a black kitten called Sweep, who lapped half my cream jugful (and yet I had plenty) sitting on my shoulder,—and Life of Sir Walter Scott. I was reading his great Scottish history tour, when he was twenty-three, and got his materials for everything nearly, but especially for Waverley, though not used till long afterwards.

[Pg 19]

Do you recollect Gibbie Gellatly? I was thinking over that question of yours, "What did I think?" [13] But, my dear Susie, you might as well ask Gibbie Gellatly what *he* thought. What does it matter what any of us think? We are but simpletons, the best of us, and I am a very inconsistent and wayward simpleton. I know how to roast eggs, in the ashes, perhaps—but for the next world! Why don't you ask your squirrel what *he* thinks too? The great point—the one for all of us—is, not to take false words in our mouths, and to crack our nuts innocently through winter and rough weather.

I shall post this to-morrow as I pass through Skipton or any post-worthy place on my way to Wakefield. Write to Warwick. Oh me, what places England had, when she was herself! Now, rail stations mostly. But I never can make out how Warwick Castle got built by that dull bit of river.

"FRONDES."

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WAKEFIELD

,
25th January

, 1875.

Here's our book in form at last, and it seems to me just a nice size, and on the whole very taking. I've put a touch or two more to the preface, and I'm sadly afraid there's a naughty note somewhere. I hope you won't find it, and that you will like the order the things are put in.

Such ill roads as we came over to-day, I never thought to see in England.

CASTLETON

,
26th January

, 1875.

Here I have your long dear letter. I am very thankful I can be so much to you. Of all the people I have yet known, you are the only one I can find complete sympathy in; you are so nice and young without the hardness of youth, and may be the best of sisters to me. I am not so sure about letting you be an elder one; I am not going to be lectured when I'm naughty.

[Pg 20] I've been so busy at *wasps* all day coming along, having got a nice book about them. It tells me, too, of a delightful German doctor who kept tame hornets,—a whole nest in his study! They knew him perfectly, and would let him do anything with them, even pull bits off their nest to look in at it.

Wasps, too, my author says, are really much more amiable than bees, and never get angry without cause. All the same, they have a tiresome way of inspecting one, too closely, sometimes, I think.

I'm immensely struck with the Peak Cavern, but it was in twilight.

I'm going to stay here all to-morrow, the place is so entirely unspoiled. I've not seen such a primitive village, rock, or stream, this twenty years; Langdale is as sophisticated as Pall Mall in comparison.

WASP STINGS.

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BOLTON BRIDGE

,
Saturday

I never was more thankful than for your sweet note, being stopped here by bad weather again; the worst of posting is that one has to think of one's servant outside, and so lose a day.

It was bitter wind and snow this morning, too bad to send any human creature to sit idle in. Black enough still, and I more than usual, because it is just that point of distinction from brutes which I truly say is our only one, [14] of which I have now so little hold.

The bee Fors [15] will be got quickly into proof, but I must add a good deal to it. I can't get into good humor for natural history in this weather.

[Pg 21] I've got a good book on wasps which says they are our chief protectors against flies. In Cumberland the wet cold spring is so bad for the wasps that I partly think this may be so, and the terrible plague of flies in August might perhaps be checked by our teaching our little Agneses to keep wasps' nests instead of bees.

Yes, that is a pretty bit of mine about Hamlet, and I think I must surely be a little pathetic sometimes, in a doggish way.

"You're so dreadfully faithful!" said Arthur Severn to me, fretting over the way I was being ill-treated the other day by R.

Oh dear, I wish I were at Brantwood again, now, and could send you my wasp book! *It* is pathetic, and yet so dreadful,—the wasp bringing in the caterpillar for its young wasp, stinging each enough to paralyze but not to kill, and so laying them up in the cupboard.

I wonder how the clergymen's wives will feel after the next Fors or two! I've done a bit to-day which I think will go in with a shiver. Do you recollect the curious *thrill* there is—the cold *tingle* of the pang of a nice deep wasp sting?

Well, I'm not in a fit temper to write to Susie to-day, clearly.

BOLTON STRID.

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I stopped here to see the Strid again—not seen these many years. It is curious that life is embittered to me, now, by its former pleasantness; while *you* have of these same places painful recollections, but you could enjoy them now with your whole heart.

[Pg 22]

Instead of the drive with the poor over-labored one horse through the long wet day, here, when I was a youth, my father and mother brought me, [16] and let me sketch in the Abbey and ramble in the woods as I chose, only demanding promise that I should not go near the Strid. Pleasant drives, with, on the whole, well paid and pleased drivers, never with over-burdened cattle; cheerful dinner or tea waiting for me always, on my return from solitary rambles. Everything right and good for me, except only that they never put me through any trials to harden me, or give me decision of character, or make me feel how much they did for me.

But that error was a fearful one, and cost them and me, Heaven only knows how much. And now, I walk to Strid, and Abbey, and everywhere, with the ghosts of the past days haunting me, and other darker spirits of sorrow and remorse and wonder. Black spirits among the gray, all like a mist between me and the green woods. And I feel like a caterpillar,—stung *just enough*. Foul weather and mist enough, of quite a real kind besides. An hour's sunshine to-day, broken up speedily, and now veiled utterly.

HERNE HILL, LONDON

11th February, 1875.

I have your sweet letter with news of Dr. John and his brother. I have been working on the book to-day very hard, after much interruption; it is two-thirds done now. So glad people are on tiptoe.

Paddocks are frogs, not toads in that grace. [17] And why should not people smile? Do you think that God does not like smiling graces? He only dislikes frowns. But you know when once habitual, the child would be told on a cold day to say "Cold as paddocks;" and everybody would know what was coming. Finally the deep under-meaning, that as the cold hand is lifted, so also the cold heart, and yet accepted, makes it one of the prettiest little hymns I know.

[Pg 23]

I cannot tell you how very apposite to my work these two feathers are. I am just going to dwell on the exquisite result of the division into successive leaves, by which nature obtains the glittering look to set off her color; and you just send me two feathers which have it more in perfection than any I ever saw, and I think are more vivid in color.

How those boys must tease you! but you will be rewarded in the world that good Susies go to.

HERNE HILL

4th October
(1875).

All your letter is delicious, but chiefest the last sentence where you say you like your Chaucer so much.—And you need never fear touching that wound of mine—It is never more—never less—without its pain. I like you to lay your pure—gentle hand on it.

But I am not despondent or beaten at all, and I'm at work on your peacock's feathers—and oh me, they should be put into some great arch of crystal where one could see them like a large rainbow—I use your dear little lens deep in and in—and can't exhaust their wonderfulness.

HÔTEL MEURICE, PARIS

26th August, '76.

I'm so very miserable just now that I can't write to you: but I don't want you to think that I am going so far away without wishing to be near you again. A fit of intense despondency coming on the top, or under the bottom, of already far-fallen fatigue leaves me helpless to-day, my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth. Oh dear, the one pleasant thing I've to say is that it will make me know the blessings of Brantwood and dearness of the Thwaite, twenty fold more, when I get back.

VENICE

10th September

, '76.

I am a sad long way from the pretty garden steps of the Thwaite, now, yet in a way, at home, here also—having perhaps more feeling of old days at Venice than at any other place in the world, having done so much work there, and I hope to get my new "Stones of Venice" into almost as nice a form as "Frondes." I'm going to keep all that I think Susie would like, and then to put in some little bits to my own liking, and some other little bits for the pleasure of teasing, and I think the book will come out quite fresh.

I am settled here for a month at least—and shall be very thankful for Susie notes, when they cross the Alps to me in these lovely days.

Love to Mary—I wish I could have sent both some of the dark blue small Veronica I found on the Simplon!

VENICE

12th September

, 1876.

I must just say how thankful it makes me to hear of this true gentleness of English gentlewomen in the midst of the vice and cruelty in which I am forced to live here, where oppression on one side and license on the other rage as two war-wolves in continual havoc.

It is very characteristic of fallen Venice, as of modern Europe, that here in the principal rooms of one of the chief palaces in the very headmost sweep of the Grand Canal there is not a room for a servant fit to keep a cat or a dog in (as Susie would keep cat or dog, at least).

VENICE

18th September

(1876).

I never knew such a fight as the good and wicked fairies are having over my poor body and spirit just now. The good fairies have got down the St. Ursula for me and given her to me all to myself, and sent me fine weather and nice gondoliers, and a good cook, and a pleasant waiter; and the bad fairies keep putting everything upside down, and putting black in my box when I want white, and making me forget all I want, and find all I don't, and making the hinges come off my boards, and the leaves out of my books, and driving me as wild as wild can be; but I'm getting something done in spite of them, only I never *can* get my letters written.

VENICE

,
September 29th
.

I have woeful letters telling me you also were woeful in saying good-bye. My darling Susie, what *is* the use of your being so good and dear if you can't enjoy thinking of heaven, and what fine goings on we shall all have there?

All the same, even when I'm at my very pioucest, it puts me out if my drawings go wrong. I'm going to draw St. Ursula's blue slippers to-day, and if I can't do them nicely shall be in great despair. I've just found a little cunning inscription on her bedpost, 'IN FANNTIA.' The double N puzzled me at first, but Carpaccio spells anyhow. My head is not good enough for a bedpost....Oh me, the sweet Grange!—Thwaite, I mean (bedpost again); to think of it in this mass of weeds and ruin!

ST. URSULA.

VENICE

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,
13th November

(1876).

I have to-day your dear little note, and have desired Joan to send you one just written to her in which I have given some account of myself, that may partly interest, partly win your pardon for apparent neglect. Coming here, after practically an interval of twenty-four years,—for I have not seriously looked at anything during the two hurried visits with Joan, [18] —my old unfinished work, and the possibilities of its better completion, rise grievously and beguilingly before me, and I have been stretching my hands to the shadow of old designs and striving to fulfill shortcomings, always painful to me, but now, for the moment, intolerable.

I am also approaching the close of the sixth year of Fors, and have plans for the Sabbatical year of it, which make my thoughts active and troubled. I am drawing much, and have got a study of St. Ursula which will give you pleasure; but the pain of being separate from my friends and of knowing they miss me! I wonder if you will think you are making me too vain, Susie. Such vanity is a very painful one, for I know that you look out of the window on Sundays now, wistfully, for Joan's handkerchief. This pain seems always at my heart, with the other which is its own.

I am thankful, always, you like St. Ursula. *One* quite fixed plan for the last year of Fors, is that there shall be absolutely no abuse or controversy in it, but things which will either give pleasure or help; and some clear statements of principle, in language as temperate as hitherto violent; to show, for one thing, that the violence was not for want of self-command.

I'm going to have a good fling at the Bishops in next Fors to finish with, and then for January!—only I mustn't be too good, Susie, or something would happen to me. So I shall say naughty things still, but in the mildest way.

I am very grateful to you for that comparison about my mind being as crisp as a lettuce. I am *so* thankful you can feel that still. I was beginning to doubt, myself.

ST. MARK'S DOVES.

VENICE

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,
2d December

(1876).

[Pg 27]

I have been very dismal lately. I hope the next captain of St. George's Company will be a merrier one and happier, in being of use. I am inherently selfish, and don't enjoy being of use. And here I've no Susies nor Kathleens nor Diddies, and I'm only doing lots of good, and I'm very miserable. I've been going late to bed too. I picked myself up last night and went to bed at nine, and feel cheerful enough to ask Susie how she does, and send her love from St. Mark's doves. They're really tiresome now, among one's feet in St. Mark's Place, and I don't know what it will come to. In old times, when there were not so many idlers about, the doves were used to brisk walkers, and moved away a foot or two in front of one; but now everybody lounges, or stands talking about the Government, and the doves won't stir till one just touches them; and I who walk fast [19] am always expecting to tread on them, and it's a nuisance.

If I only had time I would fain make friends with the sea-gulls, who would be quite like angels if they would only stop on one's balcony. If there were the least bit of truth in Darwinism, Venice would have had her own born sea-gulls by this time building their nests at her thresholds.

VENICE

,
11th December

(1876).

My mouth's watering so for that Thwaite currant jelly, you can't think. I haven't had the least taste of anything of the sort this three months. These wretches of Venetians live on cigars and garlic, and have no taste in their mouths for anything that God makes nice.

The little drawing (returned) is nice in color and feeling, but, which surprises me, not at all intelligent in line. It is not weakness of hand but fault of perspective instinct, which spoils so many otherwise good botanical drawings.

Bright morning. Sickle moon just hiding in a red cloud, and the morning stars just vanished in light. But we've had nearly three weeks of dark weather, so we mustn't think it poor Coniston's fault—though Coniston *has* faults.

[Pg 28]

ST. MARK'S REST.

23d January, 1877.

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A great many lovely things happened to me this Christmas, but if I were to tell Susie of them I am sure she would be frightened out of her bright little wits, and think I was going to be a Roman Catholic. I'm writing *such* a Catholic history of Venice, and chiseling all the Protestantism off the old "Stones" as they do here the grass off steps.

All the pigeons of St. Mark's Place send you their love. St. Ursula adds hers to the eleven thousand birds' love. And the darlingest old Pope who went a pilgrimage with her, hopes you won't be too much shocked if he sends *his* too! (If you're not shocked, *I* am!)

My new Catholic history of Venice is to be called "St. Mark's Rest."

27th January (1877).

Joanie tells me you are writing her such sad little letters. How *can* it be that any one so good and true as my Susie should be sad? I am sad, bitterly enough and often, but only with sense of fault and folly and lost opportunity such as you have never fallen into or lost. It is very cruel of Fate, I think, to make us sad, who would fain see everybody cheerful, and (cruel of Fate too) to make so many cheerful who make others wretched. The little history of Venice is well on, and will be clear and interesting, I think,—more than most histories of anything. And the stories of saints and nice people will be plenty.

Such moonlight as there is to-night, but nothing to what it is at Coniston! It makes the lagoon water look brown instead of green, which I never noticed before.

VENICE

,
4th February
, 1877.

[Pg 29] Your praise and sympathy do me double good, because you could not praise me so nicely and brightly without pleasure of your own. I'm always sure a Fors will be good if I feel it will please Susie;—but I can only write them now as they're given me; it all depends on what I'm about. But I'm doing a great deal just now which you will enjoy—I'm thankful to say, I know you will. St. Theodore's horse is delightful [20] —and our Venetian doggie—and some birds are coming too! This is not a letter—but just a purr.

SAINTS AND FLOWERS.

VENICE

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,
17th February
(1877).

It is very grievous to me to hear of your being in that woeful weather while I have two days' sunshine out of three, and starlight or moonlight always; to-day the whole chain of the Alps from Vicenza to Trieste shining cloudless all day long, and the sea-gulls floating high in the blue, like little dazzling boys' kites.

Yes, St. Francis would have been greatly pleased with you watching pussy drink your milk; so would St. Theodore, as you will see by next Fors, which I have ordered to be sent you in first proof, for I am eager that you should have it. What wonderful flowers these pinks of St. Ursula's are, for life! They seem to bloom like everlastings.

[Pg 30] I get my first rosebud and violets of this year from St. Helena's Island to-day. How I begin to pity people who have no saints to be good to them! Who is yours at Coniston? There must have been some in the country once upon a time.

With their help I am really getting well on with my history and drawing, and hope for a sweet time at home in the heathery days, and many a nice afternoon tea at the Thwaite.

VENICE

,
8th March
, 1877.

That is entirely new and wonderful to me about the singing mouse. [21] Douglas (was it the Douglas?) saying "he had rather hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak" needs revision. It is a marvelous fact in natural history.

The wind is singing a wild tune to-night—cannot be colder on our own heaths—and the waves dash like our Waterhead. Oh me, when I'm walking round it again how like a sad dream all this Venice will be!

VENICE

,
15th May

, 1877.

I've not tumbled into the lagoons, nor choked myself in a passion, nor gone and made a monk of myself—nor got poisoned by the Italian cooks.

I'm packing up, and coming to the Thwaite as soon as ever I can—after a little Alpine breathing of high air.

I'm pretty well—if you'll forgive me for being so naughty—else I can't be even plain well—but I'm always your loving—

[Transcriber's Note: no ending to the sentence here.]

OXFORD

,
2d December

(1877).

[Pg 31]

I write first to you this morning to tell you that I gave yesterday the twelfth and last [22] of my course of lectures this term, to a room crowded by six hundred people, two-thirds members of the University, and with its door wedged open by those who could not get in; this interest of theirs being granted to me, I doubt not, because for the first time in Oxford, I have been able to speak to them boldly of immortal life. I intended when I began the course only to have read "Modern Painters" to them; but when I began, some of your favorite bits interested the men so much, and brought so much larger a proportion of undergraduates than usual, that I took pains to reinforce and press them home; and people say I have never given so useful a course yet. But it has taken all my time and strength, and I have not been able even to tell Susie a word about it until now. In one of my lectures I made my text your pretty peacock and the design [23] of him. But did not venture to say what really must be true, that his voice is an example of "the Devil sowed tares," and of the angels letting both grow together. My grateful compliments to the peacock. And little (but warm) loves to all your little birds. And best of little loves to the squirrels, only you must send *them* in dream-words, I suppose, up to their nests.

HERNE HILL

,
Sunday, 16th December (1877).

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It is a long while since I've felt so good for nothing as I do this morning. My very wristbands curl up in a dog's-eared and disconsolate manner; my little room is all a heap of disorder. I've got a hoarseness and wheezing and sneezing and coughing and choking. I can't speak and I can't think, I'm miserable in bed and useless out of it; and it seems to me as if I could never venture to open a window or go out of a door any more. I have the dimmest sort of diabolical pleasure in thinking how miserable I shall make Susie by telling her all this; but in other respects I seem entirely devoid of all moral sentiments. I have arrived at this state of things, first by catching cold, and since by trying to "amuse myself" for three days. I tried to read "Pickwick," but found that vulgar, [24] and, besides, I know it all by heart. I sent from town for some chivalric romances, but found them immeasurably stupid. I made Baxter read me the *Daily Telegraph*, and found that the Home Secretary had been making an absurd speech about art, without any consciousness that such a person as I had ever existed. I read a lot of games of chess out of Mr. Staunton's handbook, and couldn't understand any of them. I analyzed the Dock Company's bill of charges on a box from Venice, and sent them an examination paper on it. I think *that* did amuse me a little, but the account doesn't. £1 8s. 6d. for bringing a box two feet square from the Tower Wharf to here! But the worst of all is, that the doctor keeps me shut up here, and I can't get my business done; and now there isn't the least chance of my getting down to Brantwood for Christmas, nor, as far as I can see, for a fortnight after it. There's perhaps a little of the diabolical enjoyment again in that estimate; but really the days *do* go, more like dew shaken off branches than real sunrisings and settings. But I'll send you word every day now for a little while how things are going on.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD

26th December, 1877.

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I don't know really whether I *ought* to be at Brantwood or here on Christmas. Yesterday I had two lovely services in my own cathedral. You know the *cathedral* of Oxford is the chapel of Christ Church College, and I have my own high seat in the chancel, as an honorary student, besides being bred there, and so one is ever so proud and ever so pious all at once, which is ever so nice, you know; and my own dean, that's the Dean of Christ's Church, who is as big as any bishop, read the services, and the psalms and anthems were lovely; and then I dined with Henry Acland and his family, where I am an adopted son,—all the more wanted yesterday because the favorite son Herbert died this year in Ceylon,—the first death out of seven sons. So they were glad to have me. Then I've all my Turners here, and shall really enjoy myself a little to-day, I think; but I do wish I could be at Brantwood too.

Oh dear, I've scribbled this dreadfully. Can you really read my scribble, Susie? Love, you may always read, however scribbled.

OXFORD

27th December

, 1877.

By the way, what a shame it is that we keep that word "jealous" in the second commandment, as if it meant that God was jealous of images. It means burning, zealous or full of life, visiting, etc., *i.e.*, necessarily when leaving the father leaving the child; necessarily, when giving the father life, giving life to the child, and to thousands of the race of them that love me.

It is very comic the way people have of being so particular about the second and fourth commandments, and breaking all the rest with the greatest comfort. For me, I try to keep all the rest rather carefully, and let the second and fourth take care of themselves.

Cold quite gone; now it's your turn, Susie. I've got a love letter in Chinese, and can't read it!

WINDSOR CASTLE

2d January, 1878.

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I'm horribly sulky this morning, for I expected to have a room with a view, if the room was ever so little, and I've got a great big one looking into the Castle yard, and I feel exactly as if I was in a big modern county jail with beautiful turrets of modern Gothic.

I came to see Prince Leopold, who has been a prisoner to his sofa lately, but I trust he is better; he is very bright and gentle, under severe and almost continual pain. My dear little Susie, about that rheumatism of yours? If it wasn't for that, how happy we both ought to be, living in Thwaites and woods, instead of nasty castles! Well, about that Shakespeare guide? I cannot, cannot, at all fancy what it is. In and out among the stars; it sounds like a plan for stringing the stars. I am so very glad you told me of it.

"Unwritten books in my brain?" Yes, but also in how many other brains of quiet people, books unthought of, "In the Book and Volume" which will be read some day in Heaven, aloud, "When saw we thee?" Yes, and "When *read* we ourselves?"

My dear Susie, if I were to think really *lost*, what you for instance have new found in your own powers of receiving and giving pleasure, the beautiful faculties you have, scarcely venturing even to show the consciousness of them, when it awakes in you, what a woeful conception I should have of God's not caring for us. He will gather all the wheat into His garner.

INGLETON

17th January

(1878).

[Pg 35]

It's a charming post here, and brings me my letters the first thing in the morning; and I took care to tell nobody where I was going, except people I wanted to hear from. What a little busy bee of a Susie you've been to get all those extracts ready by this time. I've got nothing done all the while I've been away, but a few mathematical figures, and the less I do the less I find I can do it; and yesterday, for the first time these twenty years at least, I hadn't so much as a "plan" in my head all day. But I had a lot to look at in the moorland flowers and quiet little ancient Yorkshire farmhouses, not to speak of Ingleborough, who was, I think, a little depressed because he knew you were only going to send your remembrances and not your love to him. The clouds gathered on his brow occasionally in a fretful manner, but towards evening he resumed his peace of mind and sends you his "remembrances" and his "blessing." I believe he saves both you and me from a great deal of east wind.

Well, I've got a plan in my head *this* morning for the new extracts. Shall we call them "Lapides (or "Marmora") Portici"; and put a little preface to them about the pavement of St. Mark's porch and its symbolism of what the education of a good man's early days must be to him? I think I can write something a little true and trustworthy about it.

26th November.

I have entirely resigned all hope of ever thanking you rightly for bread, sweet odors, roses and pearls, and must just allow myself to be fed, scented, rose-garlanded and bepearled as if I were a poor little pet dog or pet pig. But my cold is better, and I *am* getting on with this botany; but it is really too important a work to be pushed for a week or a fortnight. And Mary and you will be pleased at last, I am sure.

I have only to-day got my four families, Clarissa, Lychnis, Scintilla, and Mica, perfectly and simply defined. [25] See how nicely they come.

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A. Clarissa changed from Dianthus, which is bad Greek (and all

my pretty flowers have names of girls). Petal *jagged* at the

outside.

B. Lychnis. Petal *divided in two* at the outside, and the

fringe retired to the top of the limb.

C. Scintilla. (Changed from Stellaria, because I want Stella for

the house leeks.) Petal formed by the *two* lobes of lychnis

without the retired fringe.

D. Mica. *Single* lobed petal.

When once these four families are well understood in typical examples, how easy it will be to attach either subordinate groups or specialities of habitat, as in America, to some kinds of them! The entire order, for their purity and wildness, are to be named, from Artemis, "Artemides", instead of Caryophyllaceæ; and next them come the Vestals (mints, lavenders, etc.); and then the Cytheride Viola, Veronica, Giulietta, the last changed from Polygala.

That third Herb Robert one is just the drawing that nobody but me (never mind grammar) could have made. Nobody! because it means ever so much careful watching of the ways of the leaf, and

a lot of work in cramp perspective besides. It is not quite right yet, but it *is* nice.

It is so nice to be able to find anything that is in the least new to *you*, and interesting; my rocks are quite proud of rooting that little saxifrage.

I'm scarcely able to look at one flower because of the two on each side, in my garden just now. I want to have bees' eyes, there are so many lovely things.

I must tell you, interrupting my botanical work this morning, something that has just chanced to me.

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I am arranging the caryophylls, which I mass broadly into "Clarissa," the true jagged-leaved and clove-scented ones; "Lychnis," those whose leaves are essentially in two lobes; "Arenaria," which I leave untouched; and "Mica," a new name of my own for the pearlworts of which the French name is to be *Miette*, and the representative type (now *Sagina procumbens*) is to be in—

Latin— *Mica amica*.

French— *Miette l'amie*.

English— Pet pearlwort.

Then the next to this is to be—

Latin— *Mica millegrana*.

French— *Miette aux mille perles*.

English— Thousand pearls.

Now this on the whole I consider the prettiest of the group, and so look for a plate of it which I can copy. Hunting all through my botanical books, I find the best of all is Baxter's Oxford one, and determine at once to engrave that. When turning the page of his text I find: "The specimen of this curious and interesting little plant from which the accompanying drawing was made was communicated to me by Miss Susan Beever. To the kindness of this young lady, and that of her sister, Miss Mary Beever, I am indebted for the four plants figured in this number."

I have copied lest you should have trouble in looking for the book, but now, you darling Susie, please tell me whether I may not separate these lovely pearlworts wholly from the *spergulas*,—by the pearlworts having only two leaves like real pinks at the joints, and the *spergulas*, a *cluster*; and tell me how the *spergulas* scatter their seeds, I can't find any account of it.

I would fain have come to see that St. Bruno lily; but if I don't come to see Susie and you, be sure I am able to come to see nothing. At present I am very deeply involved in the classification of the minerals in the Sheffield Museum, important as the first practical arrangement ever yet attempted for popular teaching, and this with my other work makes me fit for nothing in the afternoon but wood-chopping. But I will call to-day on Dr. Brown's friends.

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I hope you will not be too much shocked with the audacities of the new number [26] of "Proserpina", or with its ignorances. I am going during my wood-chopping really to ascertain in my own way what simple persons ought to know about tree growth, and give it clearly in the next number. I meant to do the whole book very differently, but can only now give the fragmentary pieces as they chance to come, or it would never be done at all.

You must know before anybody else how the exogens are to be completely divided. I keep the four great useful groups, mallow, geranium, mint, and wallflower, under the head of domestic orders, that their sweet service and companionship with us may be understood; then the water-lily and the heath, both four foils, are to be studied in their solitudes (I shall throw all that are not four foils out of the *Ericaceæ*); then finally there are to be seven orders of the dark proserpine, headed by the *draconids* (snapdragons), and including the *anemones*, *hellebores*, *ivies*, and *forget-me-nots*.

What plants I cannot get ranged under these $12+4+2+7=25$ in all, orders, I shall give broken notices of, as I have time, leaving my pupils to arrange them as they like. I can't do it all.

The whole household was out after breakfast to-day to the top of the moor to plant cranberries;

and we squeezed and splashed and spluttered in the boggiest places the lovely sunshine had left, till we found places squashy and squeezy enough to please the most particular and coolest of cranberry minds; and then each of us choosing a little special bed of bog, the tufts were deeply put in with every manner of tacit benediction, such as might befit a bog and a berry, and many an expressed thanksgiving to Susie and to the kind sender of the luxuriant plants. I have never had gift from you, dear Susie, more truly interesting and gladdening to me, and many a day I shall climb the moor to see the fate of the plants and look across to the Thwaite. I've been out most of the forenoon and am too sleepy to shape letters, but will try and get a word of thanks to the far finder of the dainty things to-morrow.

What loveliness everywhere in a duckling sort of state just now.

BRANTWOOD

I hope you did not get a chill in the garden. The weather is a little wrong again, but I am thankful for last night's sunset.

You know our English Bible is only of James 1st time—Stalk is a Saxon word, and gets into English I fancy as early as the Plantagenets—but I have not hunted it down.—I'm just in the same mess with "pith," but I'm finding out a great deal about the thing though not the word, for next "Deucalion," in chopping my wood.

You know, "Funkia" won't last long. I am certain I shall have strength enough to carry my system of nomenclature at least as far, as to exclude people's individual names.

I won't even have a "Susia"—stay—that's Christian—yes, I will have a Susia. But not a "Beeveria," though—

TO MISS BEEVER.

20th January, 1879.

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You will not doubt the extreme sorrow with which I have heard of all that was ordered to be, of terrible, in your peaceful and happy household. Without for an instant supposing, but, on the contrary, utterly refusing to admit, that such calamities [27] may be used to point a moral (all useful morality having every point that God meant it to have, perfectly sharp and bright without any burnishing of *ours*), still less to adorn a tale (the tales of modern days depending far too much upon Scythian decoration with Death's heads), I, yet, if I had been Mr. Chapman, would have pointed out that all concealments, even of trivial matters, on the part of young servants from kind mistresses, are dangerous no less than unkind and ungenerous, and that a great deal of preaching respecting the evil nature of man and the anger of God might be spared, if children and servants were only taught, as a religious principle, to tell their mothers and mistresses, when they go out, exactly where they are going and what they are going to do. I think both you and Miss Susan ought to use every possible means of changing, or at least checking, the current of such thoughts in your minds; and I am in hopes that you may have a little pleasure in examining the plates in the volume of Sibthorpe's "F. Græca" which I send to-day, in comparison with those of "F. Danica." The vulgarity and lifelessness of Sibthorpe's plates are the more striking because in mere execution they are the more elaborate of the two; the chief point in the "F. Danica" being the lovely artistic skill. The drawings for Sibthorpe, by a young German, were as exquisite as the Dane's, but the English engraver and colorist spoiled all.

I will send you, if you like them, the other volumes in succession. I find immense interest in comparing the Greek and Danish forms or conditions of the same English flower.

I send the second volume, in which the Rufias are lovely, and scarcely come under my above condemnation. The *first* is nearly all of grass.

BRANTWOOD

,
4th February
 (1879).

You know I'm getting my Oxford minerals gradually to Brantwood, and whenever a box comes, I think whether there are any that I don't want myself, which might yet have leave to live on Susie's table. And to-day I've found a very soft purple agate, that looks as if it were nearly melted away with pity for birds and flies, which is like Susie; and another piece of hard wooden agate with only a little ragged sky of blue here and there, which is like me; and a group of crystals with grass of Epidote inside, which is like what my own little cascade has been all the winter by the garden side; and so I've had them all packed up, and I hope you will let them live at the Thwaite.

Then here are some more bits, if you will be a child. Here's a green piece, long, of the stone they cut those green weedy brooches out of, and a nice mouse-colored natural agate, and a great black and white one, stained with sulphuric acid, black but very fine always, and interesting in its lines.

Oh dear, the cold; but it's worth *any* cold to have that delicious Robin dialogue. Please write some more of it; you hear all they say, I'm sure.

I cannot tell you how delighted I am with your lovely gift to Joanie. The perfection of the stone, its exquisite color, and superb weight, and flawless clearness, and the delicate cutting, which makes the light flash from it like a wave of the Lake, make it altogether the most perfect mineralogical and heraldic jewel that Joanie could be bedecked with, and it is as if Susie had given her a piece of Coniston Water itself.

And the setting is delicious, and positively must not be altered. I shall come on Sunday to thank you myself for it. Meantime I'm working hard at the Psalter, which I am almost sure Susie will like.

BRANTWOOD

I am so very glad you like Sir Philip so much.

I've sent for, and hope to get him for you. He was shot before he had done half his Psalter—His sister finished it, but very meanly in comparison, you can tell the two hands on the harp at a mile off.

The photograph—please say—like all photos whatsoever, is only nature dirtied and undistanced.—If that is all one wants in trees,—they might be dead all the year round.

25th May (1879).

This is a most wonderful stone that Dr. Kendall has found—at least to *me*. I have never seen anything quite like it, the arborescent forms of the central thread of iron being hardly ever assumed by an ore of so much metallic luster. I think it would be very desirable to cut it, so as to get a perfectly smooth surface to show the arborescent forms; if Dr. Kendall would like to have it done, I can easily send it up to London with my own next parcel.

I want very much to know exactly where it was found; might I come and ask about it on Dr. Kendall's next visit to you? I could be there waiting for him any day.

What lovely pictures you would have made in the old butterfly times, of opal and felspar! What lost creatures we all are, we nice ones! The Alps and clouds that *I* could have done, if I had been shown how.

27th June (1879).

Everybody's gone! and I have all the new potatoes, and all the asparagus, and all the oranges and everything, and my Susie too, all to myself.

I wrote in my diary this morning that really on the whole I never felt better in my life. Mouth, eyes, head, feet, and fingers all fairly in trim; older than they were, yes, but if the head and heart grow wiser, they won't want feet or fingers some day.

And I'll come to be cheered and scolded myself the moment I've got things a little to rights here. I think imps get into the shelves and drawers, if they're kept long locked, and must be caught like mice. The boys have been very good, and left everything untouched; but the imps; and to hear people say there aren't any! How happy you and I should always be if it weren't for them!

How gay you were and how you cheered me up after the dark lake.

Please say "John Inglesant" is harder than real history and of no mortal use. I couldn't read four pages of it. Clever, of course.

HERNE HILL

,
14th August

, 1880.

I've *just* finished my Scott paper: [28] but it has retouchings and notings yet to do. I couldn't write a word before; haven't so much as a syllable to Diddie, and only a move at chess to Macdonald, for, you know, to keep a chess player waiting for a move is like keeping St. Lawrence unturned.

21st August, 1880.

I'm leaving to-day for Dover, and a line from you to-morrow or Monday would find me certainly at Poste Restante, Abbeville.

I have not been working at all, but enjoying myself (only that takes up time all the same) at Crystal Palace concerts, and jugglings, and at Zoological Gardens, where I had a snake seven feet long to play with, only I hadn't much time to make friends, and it rather wanted to get away all the time. And I gave the hippopotamus *whole* buns, and he was delighted, and saw the cormorant catch fish thrown to him six yards off; never missed one; you would have thought the fish ran along a wire up to him and down his throat. And I saw the penguin swim under water, and the sea lions sit up, four of them on four wooden chairs, and catch fish also; but they missed sometimes and had to flop off their chairs into the water and then flop out again and flop up again.

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And I lunched with Cardinal Manning, and he gave me *such* a plum pie. I never tasted a Protestant pie to touch it.

Now you're just wrong about my darling Cardinal. See what it is to be jealous! He gave me lovely soup, roast beef, hare and currant jelly, puff pastry like Papal pretensions—you had but to breathe on it and it was nowhere—raisins and almonds, and those lovely preserved cherries like kisses kept in amber. And told me delicious stories all through lunch. *There!*

And we really do see the sun here! And last night the sky was all a spangle and delicate glitter of stars, the glare of them and spikiness softened off by a young darling of a moon.

AMIENS

,
29th August

, 1880.

You have been made happy doubtless with us by the news from Herne Hill. I've only a telegram yet though, but write at once to congratulate you on your little goddaughter.

Also to say that I am very well, and sadly longing for Brantwood; but that I am glad to see some vestige of beloved things here, once more.

We have glorious weather, and I am getting perfect rest most of the day—mere saunter in the sunny air, taking all the good I can of it. To-morrow we get (D.V.) to Beauvais, where perhaps I may find a letter from Susie; in any case you may write to Hotel Meurice, Paris.

The oleanders are coming out and geraniums in all cottage windows, and golden corn like Etruscan jewelry over all the fields.

,
3d September

, 1880.

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We are having the most perfect weather I ever saw in France, much less anywhere else, and I'm taking a thorough rest, writing scarcely anything and sauntering about old town streets all day.

I made a little sketch of the lake from above the Waterhead which goes everywhere with me, and it is so curious when the wind blows the leaf open when I am sketching here at Beauvais, where all is so differently delightful, as if we were on the other side of the world.

I think I shall be able to write some passages about architecture yet, which Susie will like. I hear of countless qualities being discovered in the new little Susie! And all things will be happy for me if you send me a line to Hotel Meurice saying *you* are happy too.

PARIS

,
4th September

(1880).

I have all your letters, and rejoice in them; though it is a little sadder for you looking at empty Brantwood, than for me to fancy the bright full Thwaite, and then it's a great shame that I've everything to amuse me, and lovely Louvres and shops and cathedrals and coquettes and pictures and plays and prettinesses of every color and quality, and you've only your old, old hills and quiet lake. Very thankful I shall be to get back to them, though.

We have finished our Paris this afternoon, and hope to leave for Chartres on Monday.

HÔTEL DE MEURICE, PARIS

,
4th September (1880).

Is it such pain to you when people say what they ought not to say about *me*? But when do they say what they ought to say about anything? Nearly everything I have ever done or said is as much above the present level of public understanding as the Old Man is above the Waterhead.

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We have had the most marvelous weather thus far, and have seen Paris better than ever I've seen it yet,—and to-day at the Louvre we saw the Casette of St. Louis, the Coffre of Anne of Austria, the porphyry vase, made into an eagle, of an old Abbé Segur, or some such name. All these you can see also, you know, in those lovely photographs of Miss Rigbye's, if you can only make out in this vile writing of mine what I mean.

But it is so hot. I can scarcely sit up or hold the pen, but tumble back into the chair every half minute and unbutton another button of waistcoat, and gasp a little, and nod a little, and wink a little, and sprinkle some eau de Cologne a little, and try a little to write a little, and forget what I had to say, and where I was, and whether it's Susie or Joan I'm writing to; and then I see some letters I've never opened that came by this morning's post, and think I'd better open them perhaps; and here I find in one of them a delightful account of the quarrel that goes on in this weather between the nicest elephant in the Zoo' and his keeper, because he won't come out of his bath. I saw them at it myself, when I was in London, and saw the elephant take up a stone and throw it hard against a door which the keeper was behind,—but my friend writes, "I *must* believe from what I saw that the elephant knew he would injure the man with the stones, for he threw them hard to the *side* of him, and then stood his ground; when, however, he threw water and wetted the man, he plunged into the bath to avoid the whip; not fearing punishment when he merely showed what he could do and did not."

The throwing the stone hard at the door when the keeper was on the other side of it, must have been great fun for him!

I am so sorry to have crushed this inclosed scrawl. It has been carried about in my pocket to be finished, and I see there's no room for the least bit of love at the bottom. So here's a leaf full from

the Bois de Boulogne, which is very lovely; and we drive about by night or day, as if all the sky were only the roof of a sapphire palace set with warm stars.

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CHARTRES

,
8th September

(1880).

(*Hôtel du Grande Monarque.*)

I suppose *I'm* the grand Monarque! I don't know of any other going just now, but I don't feel quite the right thing without a wig. Anyhow, I'm having everything my own way just now,—weather, dinner, news from Joanie and news from Susie, only I don't like her to be so very, very sad, though it *is* nice to be missed so tenderly. But I do hope you will like to think of my getting some joy in old ways again, and once more exploring old streets and finding forgotten churches.

The sunshine is life and health to me, and I am gaining knowledge faster than ever I could when I was young.

This is just to say where I am, and that you might know where to write.

The cathedral here is the grandest in France, and I stay a week at least.

CHARTRES

,
13th September

(1880)

I must be back in England by the 1st October, and by the 10th shall be myself ready to start for Brantwood, but may perhaps stay, if Joanie is not ready, till she can come too. Anyway, I trust very earnestly to be safe in the shelter of my own woodside by the end of October. I wonder what you will say of my account of the Five Lovers of Nature [29] and seclusion in the last *Nineteenth Century*?

I am a little ashamed to find that in spite of my sublimely savage temperament, I take a good deal more pleasure in Paris than of old, and am even going back there on Friday for three more days.

We find the people here very amiable, and the French old character unchanged. The perfect cleanliness and unruffledness of white cap, is always a marvel, and the market groups exquisite, but our enjoyment of the fair is subdued by pity for a dutiful dog, who turns a large wheel (by walking up it inside) the whole afternoon, producing awful sounds out of a huge grinding organ, of which his wheel and he are the unfortunate instruments. Him we love, his wheel we hate! and in general all French musical instruments. I have become quite sure of one thing on this journey, that the French of to-day have no sense of harmony, but only of more or less lively tune, and even, for a time, will be content with any kind of clash or din produced in time.

The Cathedral service is, however, still impressive.

PARIS

,
18th September

, 1880.

What a *very* sad little letter, and how very naughty of my little Susie to be sad because there are still six weeks to the end of October! How thankful should we both be to have six weeks still before us of the blessed bright autumn days, with their quiet mildnesses in the midst of northern winds; and that these six weeks are of the year 1880—instead of '81 or '82—and that we both can read, and think, and see flowers and skies, and be happy in making each other happy. *What* a naughty little Susie, to want to throw any of her six weeks away!

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I've just sealed in its envelope for post the most important Fors I have yet written, addressed to the Trades Unions, [30] and their committees are to have as many copies as they like free, for distribution, free (dainty packets of Dynamite). I suspect I shall get into hot water with *some* people for it. Also I've been afraid myself, to set it all down, for once! But down it is, and out it shall come! and there's a nice new bit of article for the *Nineteenth Century*, besides anyhow I keep you in reading, Susie—do you know it's a very bad compliment to me that you find time pass so slowly!

[Pg 49] I wonder why you gave me that little lecture about being "a city on a hill." I don't want to be anything of the sort, and I'm going to-night to see the Fille du Tambour-Major at the Folies Dramatiques.

BRANTWOOD

,

16th February

, 1881.

I've much to tell you "to-day" [31] of answer to those prayers you prayed for me. But you must be told it by our good angels, for your eyes must not be worn. God willing, you shall see men as trees walking in the garden of God, on this pretty Coniston earth of ours. Don't be afraid, and please be happy, for I can't be, if you are not. Love to Mary, to Miss Rigbye, and my own St. Ursula, [32] and mind you give the messages *to all three, heartily*.

BRANTWOOD

,

22d April

, 1881.

I'm not able to scratch or fight to-day, or I wouldn't let you cover me up with this heap of gold; but I've got a rheumatic creak in my neck, which makes me physically stiff and morally supple and unprincipled, so I've put two pounds sixteen in my own "till," where it just fills up some lowering of the tide lately by German bands and the like, and I've put ten pounds aside for Sheffield Museum, now in instant mendicity, and I've put ten pounds aside till you and I can have a talk and you be made reasonable, after being scolded and scratched, after which, on your promise to keep to our old bargain and enjoy spending your little "Frondes" income, I'll be your lovingest again. And for the two pounds ten, and the ten, I am really most heartily grateful, meaning as they do so much that is delightful for both of us in the good done by this work of yours.

[Pg 50] I send you Spenser; perhaps you had better begin with the Hymn to Beauty, page 39, and then go on to the Tears; but you'll see how you like it. It's better than Longfellow; see line 52—

"The house of blessed gods which men call skye."

Now I'm going to look out Dr. Kendall's crystal. It *must* be crystal, [33] for having brought back the light to your eyes.

BRANTWOOD

,

12th July

, 1881.

How delightful that you have that nice Mrs. Howard to hear you say "The Ode to Beauty," and how nice that you can learn it and enjoy saying it! [34] I do not know it myself. I only know that it should be known and said and heard and loved.

I *am* often near you in thought, but can't get over the lake somehow. There's always somebody to be looked after here, now. I've to rout the gardeners out of the greenhouse, or I should never

have a strawberry or a pink, but only nasty gloxinias and glaring fuchsias, and I've been giving lessons to dozens of people and writing charming sermons in the "Bible of Amiens"; but I get so sleepy in the afternoon I can't pull myself over it.

I was looking at your notes on birds yesterday. How sweet they are! But I can't forgive that young blackbird for getting wild again. [35]

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Last Day of 1881. And the last letter

I write on it, with new pen.

I've lunched on *your* oysters, and am feasting eyes and mind on *your* birds.

What birds?

Woodcock? Yes, I suppose, and never before noticed the *sheath* of his bill going over the front of the lower mandible that he may dig comfortably! But the others! the glory of velvet and silk and cloud and light, and black and tan and gold, and golden sand, and dark tresses, and purple shadows and moors and mists and night and starlight, and woods and wilds and dells and deeps, and every mystery of heaven and its finger work, is in those little birds' backs and wings. I am so grateful. All love and joy to you, and wings to fly with and birds' hearts to comfort, and mine, be to you in the coming year.

Easter Day, 1882.

I have had a happy Easter morning, entirely bright in its sun and clear in sky; and with renewed strength enough to begin again the piece of St. Benedict's life where I broke off, to lose these four weeks in London,—weeks not wholly lost neither, for I have learned more and more of what I should have known without lessoning; but I *have* learnt it, from these repeated dreams and fantasies, that we walk in a vain shadow and disquiet ourselves in vain. So I am for the present, everybody says, quite good, and give as little trouble as possible; but people *will* take it, you know, sometimes, even when I don't give it, and there's a great fuss about me yet. But *you* must not be anxious any more, Susie, for really there is no more occasion at one time than another. All the doctors say I needn't be ill unless I like, and I don't mean to like any more; and as far as chances of ordinary danger, I think one runs more risks in a single railway journey, than in the sicknesses of a whole year.

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HERNE HILL

,
8th June

(1882).

You write as well as ever, and the eyes must surely be better, and it was a joyful amazement to me to hear that Mary was able to read and could enjoy my child's botany. You always have things before other people; will you please send me some rosemary and lavender as soon as any are out? I am busy on the *Labiatae*, and a good deal bothered. Also St. Benedict, whom I shall get done with long before I've made out the nettles he rolled in.

I'm sure I ought to roll myself in nettles, burdocks, and blackthorn, for here in London I can't really think now of anything but flirting, and I'm only much the worse for it afterwards.

And I'm generally wicked and weary, like the people who ought to be put to rest. But you'd miss me, and so would Joanie; so I suppose I shall be let stay a little while longer.

SALLENCHES, SAVOY

,
13th September

(1882).

I saw Mont Blanc again to-day, unseen since 1877; and was very thankful. It is a sight that always redeems me to what I am capable of at my poor little best, and to what loves and memories are most precious to me. So I write to *you*, one of the few true loves left. The snow has fallen fresh on the hills, and it makes me feel that I must soon be seeking shelter at Brantwood and the Thwaite.

GENOA

,
Sunday, 24th September

(1882).

[Pg 53]

I got your delightful note yesterday at Turin, and it made me wish to run back through the tunnel directly instead of coming on here. But I had a wonderful day, the Alps clear all the morning all round Italy—two hundred miles of them; and then in the afternoon blue waves of the Gulf of Genoa breaking like blue clouds, thunderclouds, under groves of olive and palm. But I wished they were my sparkling waves of Coniston instead, when I read your letter again.

What a gay Susie, receiving all the world, like a Queen Susan (how odd one has never heard of a Queen Susan!), only you *are* so naughty, and you never do tell me of any of those nice girls when they're *coming*, but only when they're gone, and I never shall get glimpse of them as long as I live.

But you know you really represent the entire Ruskin school of the Lake Country, and I think these *levées* of yours must be very amusing and enchanting; but it's very dear and good of you to let the people come and enjoy themselves, and how really well and strong you must be to be able for it.

I am very glad to hear of those sweet, shy girls, poor things. [36] I suppose the sister they are now anxious about is the one that would live by herself on the other side of the Lake, and study Emerson and aspire to Buddhism.

I'm trying to put my own poor little fragmentary Ism into a rather more connected form of imagery. I've never quite set myself up enough to impress *some* people; and I've written so much that I can't quite make out what I am myself, nor what it all comes to.

TO MISS BEEVER.

10th January, 1883.

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I cannot tell you how grateful and glad I am, to have your lovely note and to know that the Bewick gave you pleasure, and that you are so entirely well now, as to enjoy anything requiring so much energy and attention to this degree. For indeed I can scarcely now take pleasure myself in things that give me the least trouble to look at, but I know that the pretty book and its chosen wood-cuts ought to be sent to you, first of all my friends (I have not yet thought of sending it to any one else), and I am quite put in heart after a very despondent yesterday, passed in vainly, in thinking of what I *couldn't* do, by feeling what you *can*, and hoping to share the happy Christmas time with you and Susie in future years. Will you please tell my dear Susie I'm going to bring over a drawing to show! (so thankful that I am still able to draw after these strange and terrible illnesses) this afternoon. I am in hopes it may clear, but dark or bright I'm coming, about half past three, and am ever your and her most affectionate and faithful servant.

24th September, 1884.

I wandered literally "up and down" your mountain garden—(how beautifully the native rocks slope to its paths in the sweet evening light, Susiesque light!)—with great happiness and admiration, as I went home, and I came indeed upon what I conceived to be—discovered in the course of recent excavations—two deeply interesting thrones of the ancient Abbots of Furness, typifying their humility in that the seats thereof were only level with the ground between two clusters of the earth; contemplating cyclamen, and their severity of penance, in the points of stone prepared for the mortification of their backs; but truly, Susie's seat of repose and meditation I was unable as yet to discern, but propose to myself further investigation of that apple-perfumed paradise, and am ever your devoted and enchanted

OXFORD

,
1st December

(1884).

I gave my fourteenth, and last for this year, lecture this afternoon with vigor and effect, and am safe and well (D.G.), after such a spell of work as I never did before. I have been thrown a week out in all my plans, by having to write two new Lectures, instead of those the University was frightened at. The scientists slink out of my way now, as if I was a mad dog, for I let them have it hot and heavy whenever I've a chance at them.

But as I said, I'm a week late, and though I start for the North this day week, I can't get home till this day fortnight at soonest, but I hope not later than to-morrow fortnight. Very thankful I shall be to find myself again at the little room door.

Fancy Mary Gladstone forgiving me even that second *naughtiness!* [37] She's going to let me come to see her this week, and to play to me, which is a great comfort.

ST. SUSIE

,
27th November

, 1885.

Behold Athena and Apollo both come to bless you on your birthday, and all the buds of the year to come, rejoice with you, and your poor cat [38] is able to purr again, and is extremely comfortable and even cheerful "to-day." And we will make more and more of all the days, won't we, and we will burn our candle at both beginnings instead of both ends, every day beginning two worlds—the old one to be lived over again, the new to learn our golden letters in. Not that I mean to write books in that world. I hope to be set to do something, there; and what lovely "receptions" you will have in your little heavenly Thwaite, and celestial teas! And you won't spoil the cream with hot water, will you, any more?

The whole village is enjoying itself, I hear, and the widows and orphans to be much the better for it, and altogether, you and I have a jolly time of it, haven't we?

20th February, 1886.

I haven't had anything nice to send you this ever so long, but here's a little bird's nest of native silver which you could almost live in as comfortably as a tit. It will stand nicely on your table without upsetting, and is so comfortable to hold, and altogether I'm pleased to have got it for you.

BRANTWOOD

,
1st March

, 1886.

Yes, I knew you would like that silver shrine! and it *is* an extremely rare and perfect specimen. But you need not be afraid in handling it; if the little bit of spar does come off it, or out of it, no matter.

But of course nobody else should touch it, till you give them leave, and show them how.

I am sorry for poor Miss Brown, and for your not having known the Doctor. He should have come here when I told him. I believe he would have been alive yet, and I never should have been ill.

I believe you know more Latin than I do, and can certainly make more delightful use of it.

Your mornings' ministry to the birds must be remembered for you by the angels who paint their feathers. They will all, one day, be birds of Paradise, and say, when the adverse angel accuses you of being naughty to *some* people, "But we were hungry and she gave us corn, and took care that nobody else ate it."

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I am indeed thankful you are better. But you must please tell me what the thing was I said which gave you so much pain. Do you recollect also what the little bit in "Proserpina" was that said so much to you? Were you not thinking of "Fors"?

I am very thankful for all your dear letters always—greatly delighted above all with the squirrel one, and Chaucer. Didn't he love squirrels! [39] and don't I wish I was a squirrel in Susie's pear trees, instead of a hobbling disconsolate old man, with no teeth to bite, much less crack, anything, and particularly forbidden to eat nuts!

Your precious letter, showing me you are a little better, came this morning, with the exquisite feathers, one, darker and lovelier than any I have seen, but please, I still want one not in the least flattened; all these have lost just the least bit of their shell-like bending. You can so easily devise a little padding to keep two strong cards or bits of wood separate for one or two to lie happily in. I don't mind giving you this tease, for the throat will be better the less you remember it. But for all of us, a dark sky is assuredly a poisonous and depressing power, which neither surgery nor medicine can resist. The difference to me between nature as she is now, and as she was ten years ago, is as great as between Lapland and Italy, and the total loss of comfort in morning and evening sky, the most difficult to resist of all spiritual hostility.

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22d May, 1886.

Of course the little pyramid in crystal is a present. With that enjoyment of Pinkerton, [40] you will have quite a new indoors interest, whatever the rain may say.

How very lucky you asked me what basalt was! How much has come out of it (written in falling asleep)! I've been out all the morning and am *so* sleepy.

But I've written a nice little bit of "Præterita" before I went out, trying to describe the Rhone at Geneva. I think Susie will like it, if nobody else.

That "not enjoying the beauty of things" goes ever so much deeper than mere blindness. It is a form of antagonism, and is essentially Satanic. A most strange form of demonology in otherwise good people, or shall we say in "good people"? You know *we* are not good at all, are we now?

I don't think you've got any green in your mica. I've sent you a bit inclosed with some jealous spots in.

26th November, 1886.

Do you know how to make sugar candy? In my present abject state the only way of amusing myself I can hit on is setting the girls of the school to garden and cook! By way of beginning in cooking I offered to pay for any quantity of wasted sugar if they could produce me a crystal or two of sugar candy. (On the way to Twelfth cakes, you know, and sugar animals. One of Francesca's friends made her a life-size Easter lamb in sugar.) The first try this morning was brought me in a state of sticky jelly.

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And after sending me a recipe for candy, would you please ask Harry to look at the school garden? I'm going to get the *boys* to keep that in order; but if Harry would look at it and order some mine gravel down for the walks, and, with Mr. Brocklebank's authority (to whom I have spoken already), direct any of the boys who are willing to form a corps of little gardeners, and under Harry's orders make the best that can be made of that neglected bit of earth, I think you and I should enjoy hearing of it.

I told a Cambridge man yesterday that he had been clever enough to put into a shilling pamphlet all the mistakes of his generation.

27th November, 1886.

For once, I have a birthday stone for you, a little worth your having, and a little gladsome to me in the giving. It is blue like the air that you were born into, and always live in. It is as deep as gentians, and has their gleams of green in it, and it is precious all through within and without, as Susie herself is. Many and many returns of all the birthdays that have gone away, and crowds yet of those that never were here before.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD

24th December, 1877.

This is just for Christmas love, and I'm quite well and up to work this morning, and the first thing I opened here was St. Ursula from Mr. Gould—and I hope the darling will be with me and you and him, and all good lovers and laborers everywhere. Love to Mary. Also to the servants. Also to the birds. If any mice are about—also to them, —and in a hush-a-bye to the Squirrels—wherever they are.

BRANTWOOD

This reminiscence of birds—entirely delightful—puts me on a thought of better work that you can do for me than even the Shakespeare notes. Each day, when you are in spirits,—never as an effort, sit down and tell me—as in this morning's note—whatever you remember about birds—going back to very childhood—and just chatting on, about all you have seen of them and done for them.

You will make a little book as delightful—nay, much more delightful than White of Selborne—and you will feel a satisfaction in the experience of your real knowledge—power of observation—and loving sentiment, in a way to make them even more exemplary and helpful.

Now don't say you can't—but begin directly to-morrow morning.

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BRANTWOOD

, 1880.

What am I about all this while?

Well—I wake every morning at four—can't help it—to see the morning light—Perhaps I go to sleep again—but never for long—then I do really very good work in the mornings—but by the afternoon I'm quite beaten and can do nothing but lie about in the wood.

However—the Prosody and Serpent lectures are just finishing off and then I shall come to see you in the morning! while I am awake.

I went out before breakfast this morning, half asleep—and saw what I thought was a red breasted woodpecker as big as a pigeon! Presently it came down on the lawn and I made up my mind it was only a robin about the size of a small partridge!

Can it have been a cross-bill?

I've had this cold five days now and it's worse than ever, and yet I feel quite well in other respects, and the glorious sunshine is a great joy to me. Also Prince Leopold's words, [41] seen to-day. Very beautiful in themselves—and—I say it solemnly—just, more than ever I read before of friend's sayings. It is strange—I had no conception he saw so far into things or into *me*.

It is the greatest help that has ever been given me (in the view the public will take of it).

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BRANTWOOD

A heap half a foot high of unanswered letters pouring and tottering across the table must pour and fall as they will, while I just say how thankful I am for yours always, and how, to-day, I must leave letters, books and all to work on that lovely *Trientalis* which Mary sent me. It has a peculiar set of trine leaves which Linnæus noticed and named it for—modern botanists have no notion of it.

I think both Mary and you will be deeply interested in seeing it worked out. I've been at it since seven o'clock.

Yes, if I had known you were in the garden! Alas—one never can know what one wants to—I was all that afternoon seeing the blacksmith make a chopper!

BROADLANDS, ROMSEY

15th October (1875).

I was very thankful for your letter this morning—having heard you were unwell and being a little despondent myself—more than of late—an Italian nobleman is here who cares for nothing but shooting, and everybody thinks it perfectly right!

It is a great joy to me that you find so much in the "Stones of Venice"—I hope that book is worth the time it took me to write it, every year of youth seems to me in looking back, now so precious.

How very strange I should give you *quietness*, myself being always disquieted in heart—a Ghost of poor Samuel—helpless—in sight of ruining Israel.

To think of the difference between these two scenes,—Samuel at his feast sending the prepared portion to the expected Saul.

And Samuel the Ghost—with his message.

Well—this is a cheering letter to send my poor Susie. It's all that Italian Duke.

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BRANTWOOD

If ever a *Gentiana Verna* demeans itself to you at Brantwood—I'll disown it and be dreadfully ashamed for it! The other little things if they'll condescend to come shall be thanked and honored with my best. Only please now *don't* send me more asparagus!

I feel so piggish and rabbitish in eating you out of all your vegetables, that I'm afraid to speak lest it should turn out grunting, and to shake my head for fear of feeling flappy at the ears.

But—please—Is the bread as brown as it used to be? I think you're cossetting me up altogether and I don't like the white bread so well!

What *can* you mean about your ignorance—or my astonishment at it? Indeed you are a naughty little Susie to think such things. I never come to the Thwaite but you and your sister tell me all kinds of things I didn't know, and am so glad to know.

I send a book of architect's drawings of Pisa, which I think will interest you—only you must understand that the miserable Frenchman who did it, could not see the expression of face in any of the old sculptures, nor draw anything but hard mechanical outlines—and the charm of all these buildings is this almost *natural* grace of free line and color.

The little tiny sketch of mine, smallest in the sheet of 4 (the other sheet only sent to keep its face from rubbing) will show you what the things really are like—the whole front of the dome, plate XI. (the wretch can't even have his numbers made legibly) is of arches of this sweet variable color.

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Please can your sister or you plant a grain or grains of corn for me, and watch them into various stages of germination. [42] I want to study the mode of root and blade development. And I am sure you two will know best how to show it me.

 BRANTWOOD

,
 30th December

, 1883.

I heard with extreme sorrow yesterday of your mischance, and with the greater, that I felt the discomfort and alarm of it would be increased to you—in their depressing power by a sense of unkindness to you on my part in not having been to see you—nor even read the letter which would have warned me of your accident. But you must remember that Christmas is to me a most oppressive and harmful time—the friends of the last thirty years of life all trying to give what they cannot give—of pleasure, or receive what—from me, they can no more receive—the younger ones especially thinking they can amuse me by telling me of their happy times—which I am so mean as to envy and am doubly distressed by the sense of my meanness in doing so.

And my only resource is the quiet of my own work, to which—these last days—I have nearly given myself altogether. Yet I *had* read your letter as far as the place where you said you wanted one and then, began to think what I should say—and "read no further" [43] that day—and now here is this harm that had befallen you—which I trust, nevertheless, is of no real consequence, and this one thing I must say once for all, that whatever may be my feelings to you—you must *never* more let yourself imagine for an instant they can come of any manner of offense? *That* thought is real injustice to me. I have never, and never can have, any other feeling towards you than that of the deepest gratitude, respect, and affection—too sorrowfully inexpressible and ineffectual—but never changing. I will drive, walk, or row, over to see you on New Year's day—if I am fairly well—

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be the weather what it will. I hope the bearer will bring me back a comforting report as to the effects of your accident and that you will never let yourself again be discomforted by mistrust of me, for I am and shall ever be

Your faithful and loving servant,

JOHN RUSKIN

I never heard the like—my writing good! and just now!! If you only saw the wretched notes on the back of lecture leaves!

But I am so very glad you think it endurable, and it is so nice to be able to give you a moment's pleasure by such a thing. I'm better to-day, but still extremely languid. I believe that there is often something in the spring which weakens one by its very tenderness; the violets in the wood send one home sorrowful that one isn't worthy to see them, or else, that one isn't one of them.

It is mere Midsummer dream in the wood to-day.

You could not possibly have sent me a more delightful present than this Lychnis; it is the kind of

flower that gives me pleasure and health and memory and hope and everything that Alpine meadows and air can. I'm getting better generally, too. The sun *did* take one by surprise at first.

How blessedly happy Joanie and the children were yesterday at the Thwaite! I'm coming to be happy myself there to-morrow (D.V.).

Here are the two bits of study I did in Malham Cove; the small couples of leaves are different portraits of the first shoots of the two geraniums. I don't find in any botany an account of their little round side leaves, or of the definite central one above the branching of them.

Here's your lovely note just come. I am very thankful that the "Venice" gives you so much pleasure.

I *have*, at least, one certainty, which few authors could hold so surely, that no one was ever harmed by a book of mine; they may have been offended, but have never been discouraged or discomfited, still less corrupted.

[Pg 67] *There's* a saucy speech for Susie's friend. You won't like me any more if I begin to talk like that.

A sapphire is the same stone as a ruby; both are the pure earth of clay crystallized. No one knows why one is red and the other blue.

A diamond is pure *coal* crystallized.

An opal, pure flint—in a state of fixed *jelly*.

I'm in a great passion with the horrid people who write letters to tease my good little Susie. *I won't have it*. She shall have some more stones to-morrow.

I must have a walk to-day, and can't give account of them, but I've looked them out. It's so very nice that you like stones. If my father, when I was a little boy, would only have given me stones for bread, how I should have thanked him.

What infinite power and treasure you have in being able thus to enjoy the least things, yet having at the same time all the fastidiousness of taste and imagination which lays hold of what is greatest in the least, and best in all things!

Never hurt your eyes by writing; keep them wholly for admiration and wonder. I hope to write little more myself of books, and to join with you in joy over crystals and flowers in the way we used to do when we were both more children than we are.

TO MISS BEEVER.

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I am ashamed not to have sent you a word of expression of my real and very deep feelings of regard and respect for you, and of my, not *fervent* (in the usual phrase, which means only hasty and ebullient), but serenely *warm*, hope that you may keep your present power of benevolent happiness to length of many days to come. But I hope you will sometimes take the simpler view of the little agate box than that of birthday token, and that you will wonder sometimes at its labyrinth of mineral vegetable! I assure you there is nothing in all my collection of agates in its way quite so perfect as the little fiery forests of dotty trees in the corner of the piece which forms the bottom. I ought to have set it in silver, but was always afraid to trust it to a lapidary.

What you say of the Greek want of violets is also very interesting to me, for it is one of my little pet discoveries that Homer means the blue iris by the word translated "violet."

Thursday morning.

I'm ever so much better, and the jackdaw has come. But why wasn't I there to meet his pathetic desire for art knowledge? To think of that poor bird's genius and love of scarlet ribbons, shut up in a cage! What it might have come to!

If ever my St. George's schools come to any perfection, they shall have every one a jackdaw to give the children their first lessons in arithmetic. I'm sure he could do it perfectly. "Now, Jack, take two from four, and show them how many are left." "Now, Jack, if you take the teaspoon out of this saucer, and put it into *that*, and then if you take two teaspoons out of two saucers, and put them into this, and then if you take one teaspoon out of this, and put it into that, how many spoons are there in this, and how many in that?"—and so on.

Oh, Susie, when we *do* get old, you and I, won't we have nice schools for the birds first, and then for the children?

That photograph is indeed like a visit; how thankful I am that it is still my hope to get the real visit some day!

I was yesterday and am always, certainly at present, very unwell, and a mere trouble to my Joanies and Susies and all who care for me. But I'm painting another bit of moss which I think Susie will enjoy, and hope for better times.

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Did you see the white cloud that stayed quiet for three hours this morning over the Old Man's summit? It was one of the few remains of the heaven one used to see. The heaven one had a Father in, not a raging enemy.

I send you Rogers' "Italy," that is no more. I do think you'll have pleasure in it.

I've been made so miserable by a paper of Sir J. Lubbock's on flowers and insects, that I must come and whine to you. He says, and really as if he knew it, that insects, chiefly bees, entirely originate flowers; that all scent, color, pretty form, is owing to bees; that flowers which insects don't take care of, have no scent, color, nor honey.

It seems to me, that it is likelier that the flowers which have no scent, color, nor honey, don't get any attention from the bees.

But the man really knows so much about it, and has tried so many pretty experiments, that he makes me miserable.

So I'm afraid you're miserable too. Write to tell me about it all.

It is very lovely of you to send me so sweet a note when I have not been near you since the tenth century. But it is all I can do to get my men and my moor looked after; they have both the instinct of doing what I don't want, the moment my back's turned; and then there has not been light enough to know a hawk from a hand-saw, or a crow from a ptarmigan, or a moor from a meadow. But how much better your eyes must be when you can write such lovely notes!

I don't understand how the strange cat came to love you so quickly, after one dinner and a rest by the fire! I should have thought an ill-treated and outcast animal would have regarded everything as a trap, for a month at least,—dined in tremors, warmed itself with its back to the fire, watching the door, and jumped up the chimney if you stepped on the rug.

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If you only knew the good your peacock's feathers have done me, and if you could only see the clever drawing I'm making of one from the blue breast! You know what lovely little fern or equisetum stalks of sapphire the filaments are; they beat me so, but they're coming nice.

That is so intensely true what you say about Turner's work being like nature's in its slowness and tenderness. I always think of him as a great natural force in a human frame.

So nice all you say of the "Ethics"! And I'm a monster of ingratitude, as bad as the Dragon of Wantley. Don't like Dr. Brown's friend's book at all. It's neither Scotch nor English, nor fish nor flesh, and it's tiresome.

I'm in the worst humor I've been in this month, which is saying much; and have been writing the wickedest "Fors" I ever wrote, which is saying more; you will be *so* angry.

I'm so very glad you will mark the bits you like, but are there not a good many here and there that you *don't* like?—I mean that sound hard or ironical. Please don't mind them. They're partly because I never count on readers who will really care for the prettiest things, and it gets me into a bad habit of expressing contempt which is not indeed any natural part of my mind.

It pleases me especially that you have read "The Queen of the Air." As far as I know, myself, of my books, it is the most useful and careful piece I have done. But that again—did it not shock you to have a heathen goddess so much believed in? (I've believed in English ones long ago). If you can really forgive me for "The Queen of the Air," there are all sorts of things I shall come begging you to read some day.

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21st July.

I'm always looking at the Thwaite, and thinking how nice it is that you are there. I think it's a

little nice, too, that *I'm* within sight of you, for if I hadn't broken, I don't know how many not exactly promises, but nearly, to be back at Oxford by this time, I might have been dragged from Oxford to London, from London to France, from France who knows where? But I'm here, and settled to produce, as soon as possible, the following works—

1. New number of "Love's Meinie", on the Stormy Petrel.
2. New ditto of "Proserpina", on sap, pith, and bark.
3. New ditto of "Deucalion", on clouds.
4. New "Fors", on new varieties of young ladies.
5. Two new numbers of "Our Fathers", on Brunehaut, and Bertha her niece, and St. Augustine and St. Benedict.
6. Index and epilogue to four Oxford lectures.
7. Report and account of St. George's Guild.

And I've had to turn everything out of every shelf in the house, for mildew and moths.

And I want to paint a little bank of strawberry leaves.

And I've to get a year's dead sticks out of the wood, and see to the new oat field on the moor, and prepare lectures for October!

I'm *so* idle. I look at the hills out of bed, and at the pictures off the sofa. Let us *both* be useless beings; let us be butterflies, grasshoppers, lambs, larks, anything for an easy life. I'm quite horrified to see, now that these two have come back, what a lot of books I've written, and how cruel I've been to myself and everybody else who ever has to read them. I'm too sleepy to finish this note.

13th June.

I do not know when I have received, or how I *could* receive so great an encouragement in all my work, as I do in hearing that you, after all your long love and watchfulness of flowers, have yet gained pleasure and insight from "Proserpina" as to leaf structure. The examples you send me are indeed admirable. Can you tell me the exact name of the plant, that I may quote it?

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Yes, and the weather also is a great blessing to me—so lovely this morning.

I'm getting steadily better, and breathing the sunshine a little again in soul and lips. But I always feel so naughty after having had morning prayers, and that the whole house is a sort of little Bethel that I've no business in.

I'm reading history of early saints too, for my Amiens book, and feel that I ought to be scratched, or starved, or boiled, or something unpleasant, and I don't know if I'm a saint or a sinner in the least, in mediæval language. How did saints feel themselves, I wonder, about their saintship?

It is *such* a joy to hear that you enjoy anything of mine, and a double joy to have your sympathy in my love of those Italians. How I wish there were more like you! What a happy world it would be if a quarter of the people in it cared a quarter as much as you and I do, for what is good and true:

That Nativity *is* the deepest of all. It is by the master of Botticelli, you know; and whatever is most sweet and tender in Botticelli he owes to Lippi.

But, do you know, I quite forget about Cordelia, and where I said it! please keep it till I come. I

hope to be across to see you to-morrow.

They've been doing photographs of me again, and I'm an orang-outang as usual, and am in despair. I thought with my beard I was beginning to be just the least bit nice to look at. I would give up half my books for a new profile.

What a lovely day since twelve o'clock! I never saw the lake shore more heavenly.

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I am very thankful that you like this "St. Mark's" so much, and do not feel as if I had lost power of mind. I think the illness has told on me more in laziness than foolishness. I feel as if there was as much *in* me as ever, but it is too much trouble to say it. And I find myself reconciled to staying in bed of a morning to a quite woeful extent. I have not been affected so much by melancholy, being very thankful to be still alive, and to be able to give pleasure to some people.

You have greatly helped me by this dear little note. And the bread's all right, brown again, and I'm ready for asparagus of any stoutness, there! Are you content! But my new asparagus is quite *visible* this year, though how much would be wanted for a dish I don't venture to count, but must be congratulated on its definitely stinky appearance.

I was over the water this morning on school committee. How bad I have been to let those poor children be tormented as they are all this time! I'm going to try and stop all the spelling and counting and catechising, and teach them only—to watch and pray.

The oranges make me think I'm in a castle in Spain!

Your letters always warm me a little, not with laughing, but with the soft glow of life, for I live mostly with "la mort dans l'ame." (It is curious that the French, whom one thinks of as slight and frivolous, have this true and deep expression for the forms of sorrow that kill, as opposed to those that discipline and strengthen.) And your words and thoughts just soften and warm like west wind.

It is nice being able to please you with what I'm writing, and that you can tell people I'm not so horrid.

Here's the "Fors" you saw the proof of, but *this* isn't quite right yet.

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The Willy [44] quotations are very delightful. Do you know that naughty "Cowley" at all? There's all kind of honey and strawberries in him.

It is bitter cold here these last days. I don't stir out, but must this afternoon. I've to go out to dinner and work at the Arundel Society. And if you only knew what was in my thoughts you would be *so* sorry for me, that I can't tell you.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD

What a sad little letter! written in that returned darkness. How can *you* ever be sad, looking forward to eternal life with all whom you love, and God over all?

It is only so far as I lose hold of that hope, that anything is ever a trial to me. But I can't think how I'm to get on in a world with no Venice in it.

You were quite right in thinking I would have nothing to do with lawyers. Not one of them shall ever have so much as a crooked sixpence of mine, to save him from being hanged, or to save the Lakes from being filled up. But I really hope there may be feeling enough in Parliament to do a right thing without being deafened with lawyers' slang.

I have never thanked you for the snowdrops. They bloomed here beautifully for four days. Then I had to leave them to go and lecture in London. It was nice to see them, but my whole mind is set on finding whether there is a country where the flowers do not fade. Else there is no spring for me. People liked the lecture, and so many more wanted to come than could get in, that I had to promise to give another.

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Here's your little note first of all. And if you only knew how my wristbands are plaguing me you'd be very sorry. They're too much starched, and *would* come down like mittens; and now I've turned them up, they're just like two horrid china cups upside down, inside my coat, and I'm afraid to write for fear of breaking them. And I've a week's work on the table, to be done before one o'clock, on pain of uproar from my friends, execution from my enemies, reproach from my lovers, triumph from my haters, despair of Joanie, and—what from Susie? I've had such a bad night, too; woke at half-past three and have done a day's work since then—composing my lecture

for March, and thinking what's to become of a godson of mine whose—

Well, never mind. I needn't give *you* the trouble, poor little Susie, of thinking too.

I'm going to Oxford to-day (D.V.), really quite well, and rather merry. I went to the circus with my new pet, and saw lovely riding and ball play; and my pet said the only drawback to it all, was that she couldn't sit on both sides of me. And then I went home to tea with her, and gave mamma, who is Evangelical, a beautiful lecture on the piety of dramatic entertainments, which made her laugh whether she would or no; and then I had my Christmas dinner in advance with Joanie and Arfie and Stacy Marks, and his wife and two pretty daughters, and I had six kisses—two for Christmas, two for New Year's Day, and two for Twelfth Night—and everybody was in the best humor with everybody else. And now my room is ankle deep in unanswered letters, mostly on business, and I'm going to shovel them up and tie them in a parcel labeled "Needing particular attention;" and then that will be put into a cupboard in Oxford, and I shall feel that everything's been done in a business-like way.

That badger's beautiful. I don't think there's any need for such beasts as *that* to turn Christians.

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I am indeed most thankful you are well again, though I never looked on that deafness very seriously; but if you *like* hearing watches tick, and boots creak, and plates clatter, so be it to you, for many and many a year to come. I think I should *so* like to be deaf, mostly, not expected to answer anybody in society, never startled by a bang, never tortured by a railroad whistle, never hearing the nasty cicadas in Italy, nor a child cry, nor an owl. Nothing but a nice whisper into my ear, by a pretty girl. Ah well, I'm very glad I can chatter to you with my weak voice, to my heart's content; and you must come and see me soon now. All that you say of "Proserpina" is joyful to me. What a Susie you are, drawing like that! and I'm sure you know Latin better than I do.

I am better, but not right yet. There is no fear of sore throat, I think, but some of prolonged tooth worry. It is more stomachic than coldic, I believe, and those tea cakes are too crisply seductive! What *can* it be, that subtle treachery that lurks in tea cakes, and is wholly absent in the rude honesty of toast?

The metaphysical effect of tea cake last night was, that I had a perilous and weary journey in a desert, in which I had to dodge hostile tribes round the corners of pyramids.

A very sad letter from Joanie tells me she was going to Scotland last night, at which I am not only very sorry but very cross.

A chirping cricket on the hearth advises me to keep my heart up.

Your happy letters (with the sympathetic misery of complaint of dark days) have cheered me as much as anything could do.

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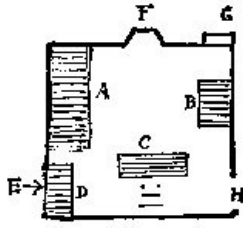
The sight of one of my poor "Companions of St. George," who has sent me, not a widow's but a parlor-maid's (an old school-mistress) "all her living," and whom I found last night, dying, slowly and quietly, in a damp room, just the size of your study (which her landlord won't mend the roof of), by the light of a single tallow candle—dying, I say, *slowly*, of consumption, not yet near the end, but contemplating it with sorrow, mixed partly with fear, lest she should not have done all she could for her children!

The sight of all this and my own shameful comforts, three wax candles and blazing fire and dry roof, and Susie and Joanie for friends!

Oh me, Susie, what *is* to become of me in the next world, who have in this life all my good things!

What a sweet, careful, tender letter this is! I re-inclose it at once for fear of mischief, though I've scarcely read, for indeed my eyes are weary, but I see what gentle mind it means.

Yes, you will love and rejoice in your Chaucer more and more. Fancy, I've never time, now, to look at him,—obliged to read even my Homer and Shakespeare at a scramble, half missing the sense,—the business of life disturbs one so.



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Here's your letter first thing in the morning, while I'm sipping my coffee in the midst of such confusion as I've not often achieved at my best. The little room, which I think is as nearly as possible the size of your study, but with a lower roof, has to begin with—A, my bed; B, my basin stand; C, my table; D, my chest of drawers; thus arranged in relation to E, the window (which has still its dark bars to prevent the little boy getting out); F, the fireplace; G, the golden or mineralogical cupboard; and H, the grand entrance. The two dots with a back represent my chair, which is properly solid and not *un*-easy. Three others of lighter disposition find place somewhere about. These with the chimney-piece and drawer's head are covered, or rather heaped, with all they can carry, and the morning is just looking in, astonished to see what is expected of it, and smiling—(yes, I may fairly say it is smiling, for it is cloudless for its part above the smoke of the horizon line)—at Sarah's hope and mine, of ever getting that room into order by twelve o'clock. The chimney-piece with its bottles, spoons, lozenge boxes, matches, candlesticks, and letters jammed behind them, does appear to me entirely hopeless, and this the more because Sarah, [45] when I tell her to take a bottle away that has a mixture in it which I don't like, looks me full in the face, and says "she *won't*, because I may want it." I submit, because it is so nice to get Sarah to look one full in the face. She really is the prettiest, round faced, and round eyed girl I ever saw, and it's a great shame she should be a housemaid; only I wish she would take those bottles away. She says I'm looking better to-day, and I think I'm feeling a little bit more,—no, I mean, a little bit less demoniacal. But I still can do that jackdaw beautifully.

I am quite sure you would have felt like Albert Dürer, had you gone on painting wrens.

The way Nature and Heaven waste the gifts and souls they give and make, passes all wonder. You might have done anything you chose, only you were too modest.

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No, I never *will* call you my dear lady; certainly, if it comes to that, something too dreadful will follow.

I am most interested in your criticism of "Queen Mary." I have not read it, but the choice of subject is entirely morbid and wrong, and I am sure all you say must be true. The form of decline which always comes on mental power of Tennyson's passionately sensual character, is always of seeing ugly things, a kind of delirium tremens. Turner had it fatally in his last years.

I am so glad you enjoy writing to me more than any one else. The book you sent me of Dr. John Brown's on books, has been of extreme utility to me, and contains matter of the deepest interest. Did you read it yourself? If not I must lend it to you.

I am so glad also to know of your happiness in Chaucer. Don't hurry in reading. I will get you an edition for your own, that you may mark it in peace.

I send you two books, neither I fear very amusing, but on my word, I think books are always dull when one really most wants them. No, other people don't feel it as you and I do, nor do the dogs and ponies, but oughtn't we to be thankful that we *do* feel it. The thing I fancy we are both wanting in, is a right power of enjoying the past. What sunshine there *has* been even in this sad year! I have seen beauty enough in one afternoon, not a fortnight ago, to last me for a year if I could rejoice in memory.

I have a painter friend, Mr. Goodwin, coming to keep me company, and I'm a little content in this worst of rainy days, in hopes there *may* be now some clearing for him.

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Our little kittens pass the days of their youth up against the wall at the back of the house, where the heat of the oven comes through. What an existence! and yet with all my indoor advantages

I am your sorrowful and repining

J. R.

I am entirely grateful for your letter, and for all the sweet feelings expressed in it, and am entirely reverent of the sorrow which you feel at my speaking thus. If only all were like you! But the chief sins and evils of the day are caused by the Pharisees, exactly as in the time of Christ, and "they make broad their phylacteries" in the same way, the Bible superstitiously read, becoming the authority for every error and heresy and cruelty. To make its readers understand that the God of their own day is as living, and as able to speak to them directly as ever in the days of Isaiah and St. John, and that He would now send messages to His Seven Churches, if the Churches would hear, needs stronger words than any I have yet dared to use, against the idolatry of the historical record of His messages long ago, perverted by men's forgetfulness, and confused by mischance and misapprehension; and if instead of the Latin form "Scripture" we put always "writing" instead of "written" or "write" in one place, and "Scripture" as if it meant our English Bible, in another, it would make such a difference to our natural and easy understanding the range of texts.

The peacock's feathers are marvelous. I am very glad to see them. I never had any of their downy ones before. My compliments to the bird, upon them, please.

I found a strawberry growing just to please itself, as red as a ruby, high up on Yewdale crag yesterday, in a little corner of rock all its own; so I left it to enjoy itself. It seemed as happy as a lamb, and no more meant to be eaten.

Yes, those are all sweetest bits from Chaucer (the pine new to me); your own copy is being bound. And all the Richard,—but you must not copy out the Richard bits, for I like all my Richard alike from beginning to end. Yes, my "seed pearl" bit is pretty, I admit; it was like the thing. The cascades here, I'm afraid, come down more like seed oatmeal.

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I believe in my hasty answer to your first kind letter I never noticed what you said about Aristophanes. If you will indeed send me some notes of the passages that interest you in the "Birds," it will not only be very pleasant to me, but quite seriously useful, for the "Birds" have always been to me so mysterious in that comedy, that I have never got the good of it which I know is to be had. The careful study of it put off from day to day, was likely enough to fall into the great region of my despair, unless you had chanced thus to remind me of it.

Please, if another chance of good to me come in your way, in another brown spotty-purple peacock's feather, will you yet send it to me, and I will be always your most grateful and faithful

J. R.

HERNE HILL

What translation of Aristophanes is that? I must get it. I've lost I can't tell you how much knowledge and power through false pride in refusing to read translations, though I couldn't read the original without more trouble and time than I could spare; nevertheless, you must not think this English gives you a true idea of the original. The English is much more "English" in its temper than its words. Aristophanes is far more dry, severe, and concentrated; his words are fewer, and have fuller flavor; this English is to him what currant jelly is to currants. But it's immensely useful to me.

Yes, that is very sweet about the kissing. I have done it to rocks often, seldom to flowers, not being sure that they would like it.

I recollect giving a very reverent little kiss to a young sapling that was behaving beautifully in an awkward chink, between two great big ones that were ill-treating it. Poor me, (I'm old enough, I hope, to write grammar my own way,) my own little self, meantime, never by any chance got a kiss when I wanted it,—and the better I behaved, the less chance I had, it seemed.

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I never thought the large packet was from you; it was thrown aside with the rest, till evening, and only opened *then* by chance. I was greatly grieved to find what I had thus left unacknowledged. The drawings are entirely beautiful and wonderful, but, like all the good work done in those

bygone days, (Donovan's own book being of inestimable excellence in this kind,) they affect me with profound melancholy in the thought of the loss to the entire body of the nation of all this perfect artistic capacity, and sweet will, for want of acknowledgment, system, and direction. I must write a careful passage on this matter in my new Elements of Drawing. Your drawings have been sent me not by you, but by my mistress Fors, for a text. It is no wonder, when you can draw like this, that you care so much for all lovely nature. But I shall be ashamed to show you my peacock's feather; I've sent it, however.

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It is *very* sweet of you to give me your book, but I accept it at once most thankfully. It is the best type I can show of the perfect work of an English lady in her own simple peace of enjoyment and natural gift of truth, in her sight and in her mind. And many pretty things are in my mind and heart about it, if my hands were not too cold to shape words for them. The book shall be kept with my Bewicks; it is in nowise inferior to them in fineness of work. The finished proof of next "Proserpina" will, I think, be sent me by Saturday's post. Much more is done, but this number was hindered by the revisal of the Dean of Christ Church, which puts me at rest about mistakes in my Greek.

It is a great joy to me that *you* like the Wordsworth bits; there are worse coming; but I've been put into a dreadful passion by two of my cleverest girl pupils "going off pious!" It's exactly like a nice pear getting "sleepy;" and I'm pretty nearly in the worst temper I *can* be in, for W. W. But what *are* these blessed feathers? Everything that's best of grass and clouds and chrysopraxe. What incomparable little creature wears such things, or lets fall! The "fringe of flame" is Carlyle's, not mine, but we feel so much alike, that you may often mistake one for the other now.

You cannot in the least tell what a help you are to me, in caring so much for my things and seeing what I try to do in them. You are quite one of a thousand for sympathy with everybody, and one of the ten times ten thousand, for special sympathy with my own feelings and tries. Yes, that second column is rather nicely touched, though I say it, for hands and eyes of sixty-two; but when once the wind stops I hope to do a bit of primrosey ground that will be richer.

Here, not I, but a thing with a dozen of colds in its head, am!

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I caught one cold on Wednesday last, another on Thursday, two on Friday, four on Saturday, and one at every station between this and Ingleborough on Monday. I never was in such ignoble misery of cold. I've no cough to speak of, nor anything worse than usual in the way of sneezing, but my hands are cold, my pulse nowhere, my nose tickles and wrings me, my ears sing—like kettles, my mouth has no taste, my heart no hope of ever being good for anything, any more. I never passed such a wretched morning by my own fireside in all my days, and I've quite a fiendish pleasure in telling you all this, and thinking how miserable you'll be too. Oh me, if I ever get to feel like myself again, won't I take care of myself.

The feathers nearly made me fly away from all my Psalters and Exoduses, to you, and my dear Peacocks. I wonder when Solomon got his ivory and apes and peacocks, whether he ever had time to look at them. He couldn't always be ordering children to be chopped in two. Alas, I suppose his wisdom, in England of to-day, would have been taxed to find out which mother lied in saying which child *wasn't* hers!

I've been writing to Miss R. again, and Miss L.'s quite right to stay at home. "She thinks I have an eagle's eye." Well, what else should I have, in day time? together with my cat's eye in the dark? But you may tell her I should be very sorry if my eyes were *no* better than eagles'! "Doth the eagle know what is in the pit?" [46] I do.

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I hope you will be comforted in any feeling of languor or depression in yourself by hearing that I also am wholly lack lustrous, *depressed*, *oppressed*, *compressed*, and *downpressed* by a quite countless pressgang of despondencies, humilities, remorsees, shamefacednesses, all overnesses, all undernesses, sicknesses, dullnesses, darknesses, sulkinesses, and everything that rhymes to lessness and distress, and that I'm sure you and I are at present the mere targets of the darts of the—the—, etc., etc., and Mattie's waiting and mustn't be loaded with more sorrow; but I can't tell you how sorry I am to break my promise to-day, but it would not be safe for me to come.

I'm a little better, but can't laugh much yet, and won't cry if I can help it. Yet it always makes me *nearly* cry, to hear of those poor working men trying to express themselves and nobody ever teaching them, nor anybody in all England, knowing that painting is an *art*, and sculpture also, and that an untaught man can no more carve or paint, than play the fiddle. All efforts of the kind, mean simply that we have neither master nor scholars in any rank or any place. And I, also, what have I done for Coniston schools yet! I don't deserve an oyster shell, far less an oyster.

KIRBY LONSDALE

Thursday evening.

You won't get this note to-morrow, I'm afraid, but after that I think they will be regular till I reach Oxford. It is very nice to know that there is some one who does care for a letter, as if she were one's sister. You would be glad to see the clouds break for me; and I had indeed a very lovely morning drive and still lovelier evening, and full moonrise here over the Lune.

I suppose it is Kirk-by-Lune's Dale? for the church, I find, is a very important Norman relic. By the way, I should tell you, that the *colored* plates in the "Stones of Venice" do great injustice to my drawings; the patches are worn on the stones. My *drawings* were not *good*, but the plates are total failures. The only one even of the engravings, which is rightly done is the (*last*, I think, in Appendix) inlaid dove and raven. I'll show you the drawing for that when I come back, and perhaps for the San Michele, if I recollect to fetch it from Oxford, and I'll fetch you the second volume, which has really good plates. That blue beginning, I forgot to say, is of the Straits of Messina, and it is really *very* like the color of the sea.

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That is intensely curious about the parasitical plant of Borneo. But—very dreadful!

You are like Timon of Athens, and I'm like one of his parasites. The oranges are delicious, the brown bread dainty; what the melon is going to be I have no imagination to tell. But, oh me, I had such a lovely letter from Dr. John, sent me from Joan this morning, and I've lost it. It said, "Is Susie as good as her letters? If so, she must be better. What freshness of enjoyment in everything she says!"

Alas! not in everything she feels in *this* weather, I fear. Was ever anything so awful?

Do you know, Susie, everything that has happened to me (and the leaf I sent you this morning may show you it has had some hurting in it) is *little* in comparison to the crushing and depressing effect on me, of what I learn day by day as I work on, of the cruelty and ghastliness of the *nature* I used to think so Divine? But, I get out of it by remembering, This is but a crumb of dust we call the "world," and a moment of eternity which we call "time." Can't answer the great question to-night.

I can only thank you for telling me; and say, Praised be God for giving him back to us.

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Worldly people say "Thank God" when they get what they want; as if it amused God to plague them, and was a vast piece of self-denial on His part to give them what they liked. But I, who am a simple person, thank God when He hurts me, because I don't think he likes it any more than I do; but I can't *praise* Him, because—I don't understand why—I can only praise what's pretty and pleasant, like getting back our doctor.

26th November.

And to-morrow I'm not to be there; and I've no present for you, and I am so sorry for both of us; but oh, my dear little Susie, the good people all say this wretched makeshift of a world is coming to an end next year, and you and I and everybody who likes birds and roses are to have new birthdays and presents of such sugar plums. Crystals of candied cloud and manna in sticks with no ends, all the way to the sun, and white stones; and new names in them, and heaven knows what besides.

It sounds all too good to be true; but the good people are positive of it, and so's the great Pyramid, and the Book of Daniel, and the "Bible of Amiens." You can't possibly believe in any more promises of mine, I know, but if I *do* come to see you this day week, don't think it's a ghost; and believe at least that we all love you and rejoice in your birthday wherever we are.

I'm so thankful you're better.

Reading my old diary, I came on a sentence of yours last year about the clouds being all "trimmed with swansdown," *so* pretty. (I copied it out of a letter.) The thoughts of you always trim *me* with swansdown.

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I never got your note written yesterday; meant at least to do it even after post time, but was too stupid, and am infinitely so to-day also. Only I *must* pray you to tell Sarah we all had elder wine to finish our evening with, and I mulled it myself, and poured it out in the saucepan into the expectants' glasses, and everybody asked for more; and I slept like a dormouse. But, as I said, I am so stupid this morning that— Well, there's no "that" able to say how stupid I am, unless the fly that wouldn't keep out of the candle last night; and *he* had some notion of bliss to be found in candles, and I've no notion of anything.

The blue sky is so wonderful to-day and the woods after the rain so delicious for walking in that I must still delay any school talk one day more. Meantime I've sent you a book which is in a nice large print and may in some parts interest you. I got it that I might be able to see Scott's material for "Peveril;" and it seems to me that he might have made more of the real attack on Latham House, than of the fictitious one on Front de Boeuf's castle, had he been so minded, but perhaps he felt himself hampered by too much known fact.

But you gave my present before [47] a month ago, and I've been presenting myself with all sorts of things ever since; and now it's not half gone. I'm very thankful for this, however, just now, for St. George, who is cramped in his career, and I'll accept it if you like for him. Meantime I've sent it to the bank, and hold him your debtor. I've had the most delicious gift besides, I ever had in my life,—the Patriarch of Venice's blessing written with his own hand, with his portrait.

I'll bring you this to see to-morrow and a fresh Turner.

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The weather has grievously depressed me this last week, and I have not been fit to speak to anybody. I had much interruption in the early part of it though, from a pleasant visitor; and I have not been able to look rightly at your pretty little book. Nevertheless, I'm quite sure your strength is in private letter writing, and that a curious kind of shyness prevents your doing yourself justice in print. You might also surely have found a more pregnant motto about bird's nests!

Am not I cross? But these gray skies are mere poison to my thoughts, and I have been writing such letters, that I don't think many of my friends are likely to speak to me again.

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SUSIE'S LETTERS.

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The following Letters and the little Notes on Birds are inserted here by the express wish of Mr. Ruskin. I had it in my mind to pay Susie some extremely fine compliments about these Letters and Notes, and to compare her method of observation with Thoreau's, and above all, to tell some very pretty stories showing her St. Francis-like sympathy with, and gentle power over, all living creatures; but Susie says that she is already far too prominent, and we hope that the readers of "Hortus" will see for themselves how she reverences and cherishes all noble life, with a special tenderness, I think, for furred and feathered creatures. To all outcast and hungry things the Thwaite is a veritable Bethlehem, or House of Bread, and to her, their sweet "Madonna Nourrice," no less than to her Teacher, the sparrows and linnets that crowd its thresholds are in a very particular sense "Sons of God."

A. F.

April 14th, 1874.

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I sent off such a long letter to you yesterday, my dear friend. Did you think of your own quotation from Homer, when you told me that field of yours was full of violets? But where are the four fountains of *white* water?—through a meadow full of violets and parsley? How delicious Calypso's fire of finely chopped cedar! How shall I thank you for allowing *me*, Susie the little, to *distill* your writings? Such a joy and comfort to me—for I shall need much very soon now. I do so thank and love you for it; I am sure I may say so to *you*. I rejoice again and again that I have such a friend. May I never love him less, never prove unworthy of his friendship! How I wanted my letter, and now it has come, and I have told our Dr. John of your safe progress so far. I trust you will be kept safe from *everything* that might injure you in any way.

The snow has melted away, and this is a really sweet April day and *ought* to be enjoyed—if only Susie *could*. But both she and her dear friend must strive with their grief. When I was a girl—I was once—I used to delight in Pope's Homer. I do believe I rather enjoyed the killing and slaying, specially the splitting down the *chine*! But when I tried to read it again not *very* long ago, I got tired of this kind of thing. If *you* had only translated Homer! then I should have had a feast. When a school-girl, going each day with my bag of books into Manchester, I used to like Don Quixote and Sir Charles Grandison with my milk porridge. I must send you only this short letter to-day. I can see your violet field from this window. How sweetly the little limpid stream would *tinkle* to-day; and how the primroses are sitting listening to it and the little birds sipping it! I have come to the conclusion that bees go more by *sight* than by scent. As I stand by my peacock with his gloriously gorgeous tail all spread out, a bee comes *right at it* (very vulgar, but expressive); and I have an Alpine Primula on this window stone brightly in flower, and a bee came and alighted, but went away again at once, not finding the expected honey. I wonder what you do the livelong day, for I know you and idleness are not acquaintances. I am so sorry your favorite places are spoiled. But dear Brantwood will grow prettier and prettier under your care.

April 9th.

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I have just been pleased by seeing a blackbird enjoying with school-boy appetite, portions of a moistened crust of bread which I threw out for him and his fellow-creatures. How he dug with his orange bill!—even more orange than usual perhaps at this season of the year. At length the robins have built a nest in the ivy in our yard—a very secure and sheltered place, and a very convenient distance from the crumb market. Like the old woman *he* sings with a merry devotion, and *she* thinks there never was such music, as she sits upon her eggs; he comes again and again, with every little dainty that his limited income allows, and *she* thinks it all the sweeter because *he* brings it to her. Now and then she leaves her nest to stretch her wings, and to shake off the dust of care, and to prevent her pretty *ankles* being cramped. But she knows her duty too well to remain absent long from her precious eggs.

Now another little note from Dr. John, and he actually begins, "My dear 'Susie,'"—and ends, "Let me hear from you soon. Ever yours affectionately." Also he says, "It is very kind in you to let me get at once close to you." The rest of his short letter (like you, he was busy) is nearly all about *you*, so of course it is interesting to *me*, and he hopes you are already getting good from the change, and I indulge the same hope.

10th April.

Brantwood looked so very nice this morning decorated by the coming into leaf of the larches. I wish you could have seen them in the distance as I did: the early sunshine had glanced upon them lighting up one side, and leaving the other in softest shade, and the tender green contrasted with the deep browns and grays stood out in a wonderful way, and the trees looked like spirits of the wood, which you might think would melt away like the White Lady of Avenel.

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Dear sweet April still looks coldly upon us—the month you love so dearly. Little white lambs are in the fields now, and so much that is sweet is coming; but there is a shadow over this house *now*; and also, my dear kind friend is far away. The horse-chestnuts have thrown away the winter coverings of their buds, and given them to that dear economical mother earth, who makes such good use of everything, and works up old materials again in a wonderful way, and is delightfully unlike most economists,—the very soul of generous liberality. Now some of your own words, so powerful as they are,—you are speaking of the Alp and of the "Great Builder"—of your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides; and in this very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations, in seeing what they saw. They have ceased to look upon it, you will soon cease to look also; and the granite wall will be for others, etc., etc.

My dear friend, was there ever any one so pathetic as you? And you have the power of bringing

things before one, both to the eye and to the mind: you do indeed paint with your pen. Now I have a photograph of you—not a very satisfactory one, but still I am glad to have it, rather than none. It was done at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Were you in search of something of Bewick's?

I have just given the squirrel his little *loaf*; (so you see I am a lady,) [48] he has bounded away with it, full of joy and gladness. I wish that this were my case and *yours*, for whatever we may wish for, that we have not. We have a variety and abundance of loaves. I have asked Dr. J. Brown whether he would like photographs of your house and the picturesque breakwater. I do so wish that you and he and I did not suffer so much, but *could* be at least moderately happy. I am sure you would be glad if you knew even in this time of sorrow, when all seems stale, flat, unprofitable, the pleasure and interest I have had in reading your Vol. 3 ["Modern Painters"]. I study your character in your writings, and I find so much to elevate, to love, to admire—a sort of education for my poor old self—and oh! such beauty of thought and word.

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Even yet my birds want so much bread; I do believe the worms are sealed up in the dry earth, and they have many little mouths to fill just now—and there is one old blackbird whose devotion to his wife and children is lovely. I should like him never to die, he is *one* of my heroes. And now a dog which calls upon me sometimes at the window, and I point kitchenwards and the creature knows what I mean, and goes and gets a good meal. So if I can only make a dog happy (as you do, only you take yours to live with you, and I cannot do that) it is a pleasant thing. I do so like to make things happier, and I should like to put bunches of hay in the fields for the poor horses, for there is very scant supply of grass, and too many for the supply.

1st May.

I cannot longer refrain from writing to you, my dear kind friend, so often are you in my thoughts. Dearest Joanie has told you, I doubt not, and I know how sorry you are, and how truly you are feeling for your poor Susie. So *knowing that* I will say no more about my sorrow. There is no need for words. I am wishing, oh, so much, to know how you are: quite safe and well, I hope, and able to have much real enjoyment in the many beautiful things by which you are surrounded. May you lay up a great stock of good health and receive much good in many ways, and then return to those who so much miss you, and by whom you are so greatly beloved.

Coniston would go into your heart if you could see it now—so very lovely, the oak trees so early, nearly in leaf already. Your beloved blue hyacinths will soon be out, and the cuckoo has come, but it is long since Susie has been out. She only stands at an open window, but she must try next week to go into the garden; and she is finding a real pleasure in making extracts from your writings, *for you*, often wondering "will he let that remain?" and hoping that he will.

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Do you ever send home orders about your Brantwood? I have been wishing so much that your gardener might be told to mix quantities of old mortar and soil together, and to fill many crevices in your new walls with it; then the breezes will bring fern seeds and plant them, or rather sow them in such fashion as no human being can do. When time and the showers brought by the west wind have mellowed it a little, the tiny beginnings of mosses will be there. The sooner this can be done the better. Do not think Susie presumptuous.

We have hot sun and a *very* cool air, which I do not at all like.

I hope your visit to Palermo and your lady have been all that you could wish. Please *do* write to me; it would do me so much good and so greatly refresh me.

This poor little letter is scarcely worth *sending*, only it says that I am your loving Susie.

14th May.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—Your letter yesterday did me so much good, and though I answered it at once, yet here I am again. A kind woman from the other side has sent me the loveliest group of drooping and very tender ferns, soft as of some velvet belonging to the fairies, and of the most exquisite green, and primroses, and a slender stalked white flower, and so arranged, that they continually remind me of that enchanting group of yours in Vol. 3, which you said I might cut out. What would you have thought of me if I had? Oh, that you would and could sketch this group—or even that your eye could rest upon it! Now you will laugh if I ask you whether harpies [49] ever increase in number? or whether they are only the "old original." They quite torment me when I open the window, and blow chaff at me. I suppose at this moment, dearest Joanie is steaming away to Liverpool; one always wants to know now whether people accomplish a journey safely. When the blackbirds come for soaked bread, they generally eat a nice little lot themselves, before carrying any away from the window for their little ones; but Bobbie, "our little English Robin," has just been twice, took none for himself, but carries beak-load after beak-load for his speckled infants. How curious the universal love of bread is; so many things like and eat it—even flies and snails!

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You know you inserted a letter from Jersey about fish. [50] A lady there tells me that formerly you might have a bucket of oysters for sixpence and that now you can scarcely get anything but such coarse kinds of fish as are not liked; and she has a sister, a sad invalid, to whom fish would be a very pleasant and wholesome change. This is really a sad state of things, and *here* the railways seem very likely to carry away our butter, and it is now such a price, quite ex[h]orbitant. Why did I put an *h* in? Is it to prove the truth of what you say, that ladies do not spell well? A letter which I once wrote when a girl was a wonderful specimen of bad spelling.

15th May.

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footnote 8]

I have found such lovely passages in Vol. 1 this morning that I am delighted, and have begun to copy one of them. You do float in such beautiful things sometimes that you make me feel I don't know how!

How I thank you for ever having written them, for though late in the day, they were written for *me*, and have at length reached me!

You are so candid about your age that I shall tell you mine! I am astonished to find myself sixty-eight—very near the Psalmist's threescore and ten. Much illness and much sorrow, and then I woke up to find myself *old*, and as if I had lost a great part of my life. Let us hope it was not all lost.

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I think *you* can understand me when I say that I have a great fund of love, and no one to spend it upon, because there are not any to whom I could give it *fully*, and I love my pets so dearly, but I *dare not* and cannot enjoy it fully because—they *die*, or get injured, and then my misery is intense. I feel as if I could tell *you* much, because your sympathy is so refined and so tender and true. Cannot I be a sort of second mother to you? I am sure the first one was often praying for blessings for you, and in this, at least, I resemble her.

Am I tiresome writing all this? It just came, and you said I was to write what did. We have had some nice rain, but followed not by warmth, but a cruel *east* wind.

ABOUT WRENS.

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This year I have seen wrens' nests in three different kinds of places—one built in the angle of a doorway, one under a bank, and a third near the top of a raspberry bush; this last was so large that when our gardener first saw it, he thought it was a swarm of bees. It seems a pleasure to this active bird to build; he will begin to build several nests sometimes before he completes one for Jenny Wren to lay her eggs and make her nursery. Think how busy both he and Jenny are when the sixteen young ones come out of their shells—little helpless gaping things wanting feeding in their turns the livelong summer day! What hundreds and thousands of small insects they devour! they catch flies with good-sized wings. I have seen a parent wren with its beak so full that the wings stood out at each side like the whiskers of a cat.

Once in America in the month of June, a mower hung up his coat under a shed near a barn: two or three days passed before he had occasion to put it on again. Thrusting his arm up the sleeve he found it completely filled with something, and on pulling out the mass he found it to be the nest of a wren completely finished and lined with feathers. What a pity that all the labor of the little pair had been in vain!

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Great was the distress of the birds, who vehemently and angrily scolded him for destroying their house; happily it was an empty one, without either eggs or young birds.

HISTORY OF A BLACKBIRD.

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We had had one of those summer storms which so injure the beautiful flowers and the young leaves of the trees. A blackbird's nest with young ones in it was blown out of the ivy on the wall, and the little ones with the exception of one, were killed! The poor little bird did not escape

without a wound upon his head, and when he was brought to me it did not seem very likely that I should ever be able to rear him; but I could not refuse to take in the little helpless stranger, so I put him into a covered basket for a while.

I soon found that I had undertaken what was no easy task, for he required feeding so early in a morning that I was obliged to take him and his bread crumbs into my bedroom, and jump up to feed him as soon as he began to chirp, which he did in very good time.

Then in the daytime I did not dare to have him in the sitting-room with me, because my sleek favorites, the cats, would soon have devoured him, so I carried him up into an attic, and as he required feeding very often in the day, you may imagine that I had quite enough of exercise in running up and down stairs.

But I was not going to neglect the helpless thing after once undertaking to nurse him, and I had the pleasure of seeing him thrive well upon his diet of dry-bread crumbs and a little scrap of raw meat occasionally; this last delicacy, you know, was a sort of imitation of worms!

Very soon my birdie knew my step, and though he never exactly said so, I am sure he thought it had "musick in't," for as soon as I touched the handle of the door he set up a shriek of joy!

[Pg 102] The bird that we nurse is the bird that we love, and I soon loved Dick. And the love was not all on one side, for my bonnie bird would sit upon my finger uttering complacent little chirps, and when I sang to him in a low voice he would gently peck my hair.

As he grew on and wanted to use his limbs, I put him into a large wicker bonnet-basket, having taken out the lining; it made him a large cheerful airy cage. Of course I had a perch put across it, and he had plenty of white sand and a pan of water; sometimes I set his bath on the floor of the room, and he delighted in bathing until he looked half-drowned; then what shaking of his feathers, what *preening* and arranging there was! And how happy and clean and comfortable he looked when his toilet was completed!

You may be sure that I took him some of the first ripe currants and strawberries, for blackbirds like fruit, and so do boys! When he was fledged I let him out in the room, and so he could exercise his wings. It is a curious fact that if I went up to him with my bonnet on he did not know me at all, but was in a state of great alarm.

Blackbirds are wild birds, and do not bear being kept in a cage, not even so well as some other birds do; and as this bird grew up he was not so tame, and was rather restless. I knew that, though I loved him so much, I ought not to keep him shut up against his will. He was carried down into the garden while the raspberries were ripe, and allowed to fly away; and I have never seen him since. Do you wonder that my eyes filled with tears when he left?

[1] "The Queen of the Air." See page 70.

[2] Cf. contemporary edition.

[3] "Coriolanus", Act iii. scene 2.

[4] "Coriolanus", Act ii. scene 1.

[5] "The Bee and Narcissus."

[6] Miss Amy Yule. See "Præterita", Vol. III., Chap. vii.

[7] The death of Miss Margaret Beever.

[8] See page [99].

[9] Cimabue.

[10] "Fronde Agrestes."

[11] Spanish chapel in S. Maria Novella.

[12] That is, within that distance of the window.—J. R.

[13] Of the things that shall be, hereafter.—J. R.

[14] I've forgotten what it was, and don't feel now as if I had 'got hold' of *any* one.—J. R.

[15] See "Fors Clavigera," Letter LI.

[16] In 1837.

[17] Herrick's. See "Fors Clavigera," Letter XLIII.

[18] May 1870 and June 1872.

[19] See "Fors Clavigera," Letter LXXXII.

[20] St. Theodore had a contest with a Dragon, and his horse gave considerable help, trampling it down with its four feet. The Saint spoke first to the horse as to a man—"Oh thou horse of Christ comfort thee, be strong like a man, and come that we may conquer the contrary enemy." See "Fors," vol. vii. also "St. Mark's Rest,"

[21] A pleasant story that a friend sent me from France. The mouse often came into their sitting-room and actually sang to them, the notes being a little like a canary's.—S. B.

[22] An Oxford Lecture. *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1878.

- [23] Decorative art of his plumage.—J. R.
- [24] "May I ask you to correct a false impression which any of your readers who still care to know my opinions would receive from the reference to Dickens in your kind notice of my letters to Miss Beever....I have not the letters here, and forget what I said about my Pickwick's not amusing me when I was ill, but it always does, to this hour, when I am well; though I have known it by heart, pretty nearly all, since it came out; and I love Dickens with every bit of my heart, and sympathize in everything he thought or tried to do, except in his effort to make more money by readings which killed him." *Letter to "Daily Telegraph," Sandgate, January 4, 1888.*
- [25] "Proserpina,"
- [26] Part 5.
- [27] One of our younger servants had gone on to the frozen lake; the ice gave way, and she was drowned.—S. B.
- [28] "Fiction Fair and Foul," No. 3.
- [29] Rousseau, Shelley, Byron, Turner, and John Ruskin.
- [30] "Fors," vol. viii., Letter 5.
- [31] The motto on Mr. Ruskin's seal. See "Præterita", vol. ii.,
- [32] Photograph of Carpaccio's.
- [33] For a present to Dr. Kendall.
- [34] I learnt the whole of it by heart, and could then say it without a break. I have always loved it, and in return it has helped me through many a long and sleepless night.—S. B.
- [35] Pages 101 *et seqq.*
- [36] Florence, Alice, and May Bennett. Florence is gone. Alice and May still sometimes at Coniston, D.G. (March 1887).—J. R.
- "One Companion, ours no more, sends you I doubt not Christmas greeting from her Home,—Florence Bennett. Of her help to us during her pure brief life, and afterwards, by her father's fulfillment of her last wishes, you shall hear at another time."—*Fors Clavigera*, vol. viii.
- [37] The first attack on Mr. Gladstone is in "Fors," September, 1875, the apology and withdrawal in "Fors," February, 1878. The second "naughtiness" will be found in "Arrows of the Chace," Vol. II., and a final attack is made in an interview in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21st April, 1884. The subject is summarized in an article in the *Daily News* of 4th July, 1898.
- [38] J. R.
- [39]
- "And many squireles, that sett
Ful high upon the trees and ete
And in his maner made festys."
"The Dethe of Blaunche," 430.
- [40] Pinkerton on "Petralogy."
- [41] In a speech delivered at the Mansion House, February 19, 1870, in support of the extension of university teaching. See Cook's "Studies in Ruskin," p. 45.
- [42] "Proserpina,"
- [43] Dante, "Inferno", v. 144.
- [44] Shakespeare.
- [45] Our Herne Hill parlor-maid for four years. One of quite the brightest and handsomest types of English beauty I ever saw, either in life, or fancied in painting.—J. R.
- [46] Blake.
- [47] "Frondes" money.
- [48] See "Fors Clavigera," Letter XLV., and "Sesame and Lilies."
- [49] See "Queen of the Air,"
- [50] See "Fors Clavigera," Letter XXX.

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