*120. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Brantwood, Coniston

8th August 1873

Dear Carlyle,

I’ve been putting off writing to you till I could send you my notes on Friedrich;[[1]](#footnote-1) but I’ve got so deep into it that I can’t get it done yet awhile.—Some of your bits of small print have so much in them. One I’m going to take bodily out, and print in gold—and I think you will like that I am about, generally.

One great question forces itself daily on me more and more. “Throw a quilt over it.”[[2]](#footnote-2) They are beautiful last words. But why is Friedrich never, apparently, solicitous about the succeeding reign? when solicitous about his dog’s comfort?

I am working hard at many things. Much at old chivalresque French,[[3]](#footnote-3) which is always full of things—as you know.

And always love you more and more every day and am ever more and more devotedly yours.

J. Ruskin

*121. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Brantwood, Coniston

9th Oct.73

My dearest Carlyle,

I sent a letter of loving thanks—with begging for news, to the address of this one, some two months ago. Ever since I’ve been going to write—everyday. Are you still there & little Mary?

Ever your lovingest J.R.

This is only to know where to send you a letter.

*122. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Brantwood, Coniston

9th Oct. 73

Dearest Carlyle,

I wrote to the hill Dumfries—some six weeks ago, and ever since have been wanting to write again—& put off from day to day. If you are now in London I hope soon to see you, but I’ve some little books to send you where shall they come?

Love to little Mary if with you. Your lovingest

J. Ruskin

*123. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Nov. [actually October], 1873

My Dearest Carlyle,

If I were in good heart, or felt happy either for you or for your poor scholar, I should write often. But my own discouragement, and my sorrow at the silence to the public which mere bodily weakness now imposes on you, still in the full strength of your intellect, prevent my ever writing with joy—& practically, my own hands and eyes have generally of late been past writing, before the day was over.

I have not the least pleasure in my work any more, except because you and Froude and one or two other friends still care for it. One might as well talk to the March dust as to the English of today—young or old; nor can they help it, poor things—any more than the dust can;—the general dustman will deposit them I suppose, some day where something will grow on them—if some beneficient wateringpan, or Aquarius ex machina, lay them in the “mud-deluge”[[4]](#footnote-4) at rest.

—Besides this, the loss of my mother and my old nurse leaves me without any root, or, in the depth of the word any home, and what pleasant things I have, seem to me only a kind of museum of which I have now merely to arrange the bequest,—while, so long as I *do* keep at work at all, the forms of it are too many and too heavy for my digestion (Literal)—& therefore only increase, instead of relieving despondency.

I am very careful however about not doing too much.—If I do not write to *you*, think how many things I must leave undone—of duty and comfort.

—I have ordered two copies of the lectures[[5]](#footnote-5) to be sent to you and one to Froude. (There will be ten altogether, I hope—two a week till 28th Nov.)

Ever, with love to Mary, your affectionate

J. Ruskin

I read the bit about Servant Tenure in Shooting Niagara[[6]](#footnote-6) to my class yesterday—with much (for the moment) effect on them.

*124. Carlyle to Ruskin*

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea

31 October, 1873

Dear Ruskin,

After several weeks of eager expectation, I received, morning before yesterday, the sequel to you kind little note, in the shape of four bright 4to lectures (forwarded by an Aylesbury printer) on the Historical and Artistic development of Val D’Arno. Many thanks to you for so pleasant and instructive a gift. The work is full of beautiful and delicate perceptions, new ideas, both new and true, which throw a bright illumination over that important piece of History, and awake fresh curiosities and speculations on that and on other much wider subjects. It is all written with the old nobleness and fire, in which no other living voice to my knowledge equals yours *Perge, perge* [“continue, continue”];—and, as the Irish say, “more power to your elbow!”—

I have yet read this *Val d’Arno* only once. Froude snatched it away from me yesterday; and it has then to go to my Brother at Dumfries. After that I shall have it back. Your visit to me still hangs in the vague; your very pen to me-wards continues uncomfortably stingy; but we will hope, we will hope. I am not very well; but it is mainly Old Age that ails me, so that there is nothing to be said, or complained of. Have you read poor Mill’s *Autobiography*; and did you ever before read such a book?[[7]](#footnote-7)

Adieu, dear Ruskin; work while it is called today!

Yours affectionately,

T. Carlyle

*125. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Early Nov. ’73

Dearest Carlyle,

I have sent you none of the enclosed proof[[8]](#footnote-8) before, because I thought it my highest duty to you to act in absolute independence in this case, and not to allow myself the pleasure even of obedience.

I to day send the sheets for press,—and, this larger portion seeming to me in fair type enough, and as it will be a month’s job, probably before I get out the book, I send you these, trusting that you will forgive what may displease you in them in the knowledge you cannot but have now securely, that I am in all things your faithful and loving servant

J. Ruskin

Thomas Carlyle, Esq.

*126. Mary Aitken to Ruskin*

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea

12 Nov. 1873

Dear Mr Ruskin

My uncle bids me say how very much he has been surprised and gratified about your Appendix. He says that the work is beautifully done; that you have seen into the very heart of the matter; and that he is more flattered than he can express by the trouble you have taken in this matter.

My uncle thinks that it would be much better to refer to the people’s edition (which is only 2/a vol., and is extremely popular) than to the little 1869 editn. I have therefore in each case substituted the page of *it* in the parenthesis for that of the one you had chosen; so that should you agree with him, and not have time to look it over, you could send the proof direct to the printer, — the numbers are perfectly correct (I have been used to doing work of the kind for him). If you in the least care for a copy of this edition, which is very pleasant to read, being in small voll. easily carried about & light to hold, he would be delighted to send you one at once. If your Ms. is already in the printer’s hands, I should be so very happy to alter the numbers in the parenthesis of the proofs which are still to come.

With all kind messages to you from Uncle,

Yours affectionately & respectfully,

Mary Carlyle Aitken

*127. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

[November 13, 1873]

My dear Mary,

It is a great relief to my mind that your uncle likes the Appendix. I was resolved it should be done clearly, so far before he saw it, but I was very nervous.

So many thanks for the beautifully made alterations. I’ve sent them straight to printers.

Ever affectionately Yours

J. Ruskin

Dear love to Mr. Carlyle

*128. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College,

Oxford

3rd December, ’73

My Dearest Carlyle,

It is a wonderful thing to me, that I do not know your birthday,[[9]](#footnote-9) — that I write this evening, only because a good girl who loves you[[10]](#footnote-10)— though not so much—I hope—as I do—wrote to me of it, thinking it was as it ought to be, a festival with me always. I have been irreligious in these things and would fain have a little altar tomorrow to be wreathed with vervain—and the good girl for a pretty priestess to make a little sacred feast for me, and a—Well, I don’t think there’s anybody else I would feast with on your birthday—because there’s no one who is so entirely thankful for it as I am.

Accept my faithful love on all days—in that largeness of it—pardon its want of care for one—hitherto—I hope not hereafter.

Ever your loving disciple—son—I have almost now a right to say—in what is best of power in me

J. Ruskin

*129. Ruskin to Carlyle*

[December 1873]

Dearest Papa,[[11]](#footnote-11)

Here’s the book—I do hope you’ll like some little its in it. I’m not sure that you even have the end of the Future of England, which is all yours as much as this Frederick part.[[12]](#footnote-12)

—I find Saturday will be the best day for me to come after all.

Ever your lovingest.

J.R.

*130. Ruskin to Carlyle*

[December 30, 1873]

Dearest Carlyle,

I hope you will enjoy reading the enclosed letter,[[13]](#footnote-13) a little. The “extinguisher” it speaks of was a lovely one of yours, which has borne good fruit. I’ve never seen this girl, but I hope she will be one of my best helpers henceforward, and find happiness in becoming so,—instead of merely “harmless” member of society. Alas—if only one could reduce nine tenths of everybody about us to “harmlessness” what a world it would be.

I’m soon coming to Chelsea again. If I could but remember all you say to me, in its own words! That bit about the ordering a new world at *their* shop, was so delicious.

Ever your lovingest

J. Ruskin

When Miss Blanche says I “*can’t* give her up”, she means that I’ve promised to answer her letter if there’s anything to be answered in them and she does what I bid.—in the meantime I’ve made a secretary of her, to keep list and order of now too fast accumulating letters needing reference afterwards.

*131. Ruskin to Carlyle*

March 1874

[actually February 1874]

Dearest Carlyle,

Both you and Froude must know what I feel to you both. I have not written to Froude—nor called. He will know it was not in neglect.

—*You* may well wonder—(but you have been with Froude very constantly, since, I believe?) why I have been so long from Chelsea—and even a day or two now in town without coming.

—Pardon me for speaking selfishly of what must seem a poor matter, after Froude’s sorrow.[[14]](#footnote-14) —But I’ve had a bad tormenting one to bear as best I could—

—the girl whom I’ve been so long devoted to had to come to London,[[15]](#footnote-15) very nearly dying,—at the best in great danger—half mad and half starved—(and eating nothing but everything she liked—chiefly sugar almonds I believe)—Well, she had to be forbidden food & I don’t know what, and,[[16]](#footnote-16)

Never mind that, its so ill written. She’s been physically and gravely ill; —wanted to see Joan—and not to see me.—Joan goes and nurses her, and I let her do all she can, of course,—Joan goes and nurses her, and I let her do all she can, of course,—and the girls’ getting better; but I can’t stand the Tantalus life, in London: so went down home to Coniston and have done good work there and am now going to Italy tomorrow, and shall do good work there, I trust, too.

I want to see you, and I can’t get into town twice, today; and I’m to dine with John Simon[[17]](#footnote-17) at Kennington at 6. Might I come to you at ½ past four?

I’m not ill, but I can’t master my thoughts in London; and I find the little more pain is rather good for me than bad in many ways, if I’m far enough off. I’ve done a lot of work on Frederick—do you know—I think you haven’t said enough of his Dogs. The “throw a quilt over it” at the last is so lovely.

So, I want to ask you about more Frederick things, and to see you and get a word of benediction before I go—and assure you of my true duty, and that I’m

Ever your loving son

John Ruskin

Just say yes, if it may be yes, to the bearer, or No, which I’ll know meant only that you can’t not that you won’t.

Thomas Carlyle Esq.

*132. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Naples, 20th April [1874]

Dearest Papa,

I would write to you often, — and thankfully, if I had pleasant things to tell you, but every time I come abroad, I have a deeper sense of the advancing ruin of every country except your Germany,—nor do I believe that it will escape unpunished for its cruelty.

I have felt that more than ever, in passing through France this last time. Had Germany in her great strength, held herself on the defensive patiently, contented with crushing back every Frenchman who crossed Rhine, the humiliation to France would have been greater; but the shame would have been wholesome.—Now, blind with rage and pain like a dog beaten till it is mad, she will find her time.

Italy is in rapidly advancing decay;—this place was bad enough 30 years ago; but now!—what little animal beauty the people had left is in the upper classes, exchanged for a sodden pallor of malignant vice; and in the lower,—darkened with gradual loss of all that they once believed or delighted in. English companies, over-buying each other ten times succeed as proprietors of the share, and all along the bay is one wilderness of beaten down houses and dustheaps to be sold in lots. Everything is dearer by the double at least, for strangers,—and the taxes are heavier—(I hear) under the new government for the peasantry.[[18]](#footnote-18) The fault of *all*, to my thinking, is with England. Ever since I was able to understand or see,—this Naples has been the theme of all artistic, romantic, or pleasure loving creatures;—how many millions of English people of the upper classes have past winter upon winter here,—and yet, they have been absolutely without influence on the country, except to encourage manufactures of the foolishest rubbish—and any kind of amusing beggary.

I leave this afternoon at six, for Palermo; and hope to arrive there tomorrow morning.—I can only afford a week for Sicily, for I must be back and at my work in Rome this day fortnight. If Mary can send me a little line, to tell me anything you would like to hear of, Hotel de Russie, Rome, is, and will remain for some time, a safe address.

I am going to do what will be ill-thought of by many of my friends; but I do it after a fortnights very careful thought,—to refuse the gold medal of the Architects’ institute, saying that in the present state of Architecture I cannot think it a time either for bestowing or receiving honours.

—I shall explain in a private letter to the Secretary, that it is simply impossible for me at present to say anything in public that would be thought due to such a Society on such an occasion. Which is the fact.—I cannot accept medals from people who let themselves out to build Gothic Advertisements for Railroads—Greek Advertisements for firms in the city—and—whatever Lord Palmerston for Mr. Gladstone chose to order opposite Whitehall—while they allow every beautiful building in France and Italy to be destroyed, for the “job” of its restoration.[[19]](#footnote-19)

I hope I may have some better subject for a letter from Palermo,—this is merely to tell you I am ever and ever your affectionate

John Ruskin

*133. Carlyle to Ruskin*

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea, 13 May 1874

Dear Ruskin;

Your Naples letter was a welcome appearance here, & all the more as testifying (I hope) the intention of promise *fulfilled* by performance, & that other letters from you will follow this! I well comprehend the incessant business you have, leaving you only minutes of leisure; so that no impatience is permitted me, though as much desire as I like. All I will say is, that I read this Naples letter with a pleasure & interest entirely unusual in these late years, & that it will be very charitable in you to write as often as you fairly can.

Your con-spectus of the Foreign nations is gloomy & mournful, & I doubt but too well-founded: I suppose this long while they are all, like ourselves, got into the Niagara Rapids, & hastening towards a nameless doom. Not towards absolute destruction, I always hope, but towards black centuries of Anarchy & agony, & sordid tribulation, till a better spirit rise in them, Sometimes in late months I have been fancyin the poor English Nation to be getting faintly sensible of this & the other long-continued delusion & feebly preparing to get rid of it: but the curse of Boundless wealth which they call “unexampled prosperity” lies heavy on them; giving such unbounded arena to the development of all their low desires & endeavors, that nothing of real spiritual health is likely to be possible for a long while yet. God help them, poor wretches,—& us too ditto, ditto!

As is now, alas, nearly inevitable for me, I have been *doing* nothing, merely reading mostly idle books (not one book in twenty can be called other than a bad book), & drowsily musing over them with many silent-feelings; among which, willingness to close up shop on signal given is constantly present,—mixed also with other still more inarticulate, unutterable glimpses of things that have a certain dignity & even blessedness, which would be lost by speaking of them.—Latterly I have lost my chief walking companion, Froude having gone to Wales for the Summer; solitary walking, which is next-best, seldom falls to my share, though in general I rather do avoid what is clearly foolish, insincere & frivolous in my collocutors, peripatetic or other. In short, I am grown very old, & have made, I notice, very rapid progress in that operation during the last year. If you did not so unjustly dislike the Germans, I would translate for you a beautiful “Tame *Xenion* [sic]” of Goethe’s[[20]](#footnote-20) which is often privately in my mouth while contemplating the Finale of my affairs.

You appear to me to be clearly in the right in reference to your Architectural Society Medal. The offer of it I find to be a decidedly pretty little thing; but,—for a name so clothed with lightning & quack-devouring Fire, it is at least equally becoming & imperative to decline speech or acceptance on any terms which exist at present in that quarter. Architecture, down to the very art of making bricks, has fallen fatuous at present, —fatuous & false, to be shunned by every one who is sane, & not under clear compulsion to it.

One thing will perhaps seem curious to you: the real excellency, in a kindred province, of our Chelsea Embankment, which was at last opened the other day. It was done by our Board of Works; essentially, so far as I can find, by one Bazalgette;[[21]](#footnote-21)—& my testimony is that it entirely surprises me. Miles of the noblest Promenade. The Thames pushing grandly past you, & even at low-water leaving a foot or two of *pure* gravel; a labarynthic [*sic*] flower-garden, with all manner of planted young trees, green spaces, subsidiary walks, & grand pavements; Cheyne Walk look altogether royal on you through the old umbrage & the new; I was obliged to say, & still repeat, I have never seen anything, of any description whatever, nearly so well done in this monstrous City since I knew it first. I long to shew it you, & hear your judgement of it. To me it will be a great resource for the rest of my appointed days here. In another 50 years, were the shrubs & saplings all grown, I think it will be admitted universally that there is no other such pretty region in all London & its environs. This Bazalgette I have heard the name of before, but will henceforth attach a meaning to it, such as to that of few other in any line of business like his.

You “Fors,” two numbers of it at once, came punctually on May 1st, & were, as always, eagerly read. Winged Words, tipped with empyrean fire. Not in my time has the dark weltering, blind & base mass of things been visited by such showers & torrents of an Element altogether amazing to it *Euge, Euge*.

Adieu dear Ruskin. Do not forget me, in your Grotto, or other Italian Studies;—& write a line or two when you have a minute of leisure. Mary, you see, is gone from me; on a visit of some few weeks to her mother; I am sitting (by compulsion) for a statuette to one Boehm,[[22]](#footnote-22) who is worth your knowing, if I do not altogether mistake his artistic talent. The one sitting more will set free [*sic*] from him. All good be with you dear R. –Yours Ever

T. Carlyle

*134. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Rome, 19th May [1874]

Dearest Papa,

I had yesterday your most kind and loving letter, for a treat, on returning from a vexed expedition to Assisi where I could do nothing for the cold. Please, you must translate that song of Goethe’s for me, and you must not get old this long while yet.

I have not been so much pleased by anything this many a day as by what you tell me of the Thames embankment,—for—steady grumbler as I am, there is really nothing that gives me so much comfort as hearing of anything well done. And also I was afraid that change at Chelsea was all for the worse for you.

I am going to write for a little while to you, as I used to my own father,—who had his letter every day, whether there was anything in it or not,—So, sometimes, I may tell you of things which I do not remember when I sit down for a regular letter, (and alas—too often—the proposed “regularity” becomes—emptiness, at last)—

I am almost paralyzed in my own work, now, by horror and pity at the state of all things here. Chiefly, the aspect taken by religion,—staggering me in what I most want to be strong in faith of, and giving me endless problems and difficulty. If only I could enter into the hearts of one or two of these friars!

More tomorrow, I hope, Ever your loving,

J.R.

*135. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Rome, 20th May, ’74

Dearest Papa,

This is merely to be a Papa’s scrap of a letter, for I’ve had to draw up my formal letter to the Architects’ Institute,—and must get to my work by the morning light,—little enough of that I’ve had lately, but here is some.

I chanced this morning, upon Hosea—no, Amos, VIII, 4 and 9:—I am thinking of drawing up some meteorological views founded on those two verses.[[23]](#footnote-23)—I’ve got so much in my head if I had only time to take it out!—time and strength,—the latter I believe much diminished by overeating myself. I’m drawing in the Sistine chapel, *before* Michael Angelo’s Last Judgement which disgusts me more and more every day (as I turn casually to it from my own work on Sandro Botticelli’s maid—Zipporah)[[24]](#footnote-24)—and I think continually how strange it is that none of the great old and true painters really worked out that subject in any detail. Fancy the look of a person with some good in him, convinced of all he had lost in *this* life—certainly, in the next, if any probably, merely for the sake of green pease and raspberry [*sic*] tarts.

—More tomorrow Papa, if you don’t mind scraps.

Ever your loving

John Ruskin

*136. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Rome, 21st May, ‘74

Dearest Papa,

I am greatly exercised in mind about the monks here. One sees more of them than in other towns; and last night, close by the temple of Vesta, in a little eleventh century church (Sta M. in Cosmedin),[[25]](#footnote-25) a priest was preaching energetically standing on a raised platform only,—no desk or anything before him, but as an actor from a small stage—Energetically—vociferously—it seemed in sincerity. But if one could only be in their hearts for one moment. What puzzles me is that the rougher monks certainly live entirely wretched lives. What do they gain by hypocrisy? My life is one of swollen luxury and selfishness compared with theirs; and yet it seems to me that I see what is right and *they* don’t. How is it—how *can* it be?

Anything so dismal as the state of transitional and galvanized Rome I never saw. Two kinds of digging go on side by side—antiquarian excavations—and foundations of factories and lodging-houses. The ground, torn newly up in every direction, yawns dusty and raw round the feet of the ruins of Imperial—that is to say, of clumsy, monstrous, and even then dying Rome.—New chimneys and the white front of the Pope’s new Tobacco manufactory,[[26]](#footnote-26) tower up and glare beside the arches of the Palatine—the lower Roman mob distributing its ordure indiscriminately about—and the priests—singing and moaning all day long in any shady church not yet turned into barracks—

What *will* it come to?

Ever your loving

J.R.

*137. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Rome, WhitSunday [May 24], 1874

My dearest Papa,

I’ve just been correcting the introduction and bit of first chapter of my Botany book, Proserpina[[27]](#footnote-27)—that I’ve been underground with so long; and I hope it will be a little refreshing to you after the sulky Fors. I shall order the printer to send you the clear revise.

I’ve had a little comfort to day in seeing the peasants come driving in to their festa in festa dress. Not much of the common pictorial costume, but the dresses strong and fresh and clean; firmly and decently put on, and always flowers in the hair, not for vanity, but in honour to the day, and with true enjoyment in the look of *each other*: and therefore, a really wilful use of the decoration they had, setting themselves off to real, natural, and wise advantage. The men, with a feather or two and flower in their hats looked like gentlemen, and not the least like our “foresters”[[28]](#footnote-28) or the like.

I never was glad to see flies before—two or three are plaguing me to day, to my great contentment.—it is the first *not cold* day I have had here. But I think it will be long before I shall have had enough of the sun.

I have good news too of my Oxford roadmakers.[[29]](#footnote-29) I believe my class in *that* art will be the good one, and go on with me to all others.

Ever your loving

J. Ruskin

*138. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Rome, Wednesday

27th May, ‘74

My dearest Papa,

On Whitsunday, and last night I was at a church-service entirely beautiful and satisfactory to me, as far as anything human ought to be—that of the nuns of the Trinita di Monte,[[30]](#footnote-30) (of the Sacred Heart). It is an educational Convent, and for all the years I can remember—(now thirty five) has been notable for its beautifully sung service, organ and women’s voices only, but very highly trained, yet remaining entirely modest and quiet, strong in effortless execution and perfectly right doing of the duty of sweet voices what charm may justly belong to the externals of such things—what allowable picturesqueness and romance of association, in the true remnant of a piece of old religion, really serviceable is all here added to the pleasant sense that all is for the patient and secluded preparation for active life; and not merely the refusal, or the weary close of it.[[31]](#footnote-31)

The perfect order, reverence and loveliness of the thing throughout, were a great comfort to me, the rest of my day being necessarily spent either with the sad wrecks of a good past, or under the intrusion of frightful and unseemly modern life.

I am sorely puzzled what element of this kind to try for, in the education which I ought very soon now to be more specially describing in Fors. But I can’t think it out, yet, and am resting with my botany a little.

Steady darkness and rain again, to day, all day long.

Ever my dear Papa,

Your affectionate filius

John Ruskin

*139. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Rome, 1st June, [1874]

Dear Papa,

I haven’t written for a day or two because I had nothing to tell you—but yesterday I saw what may interest you—a buried—or (properly), *dug* church of the 2nd or 3rd century.[[32]](#footnote-32) Most of the *show* churches here have been altered by half a dozen popes,[[33]](#footnote-33) and finally gone all over with new paint and putty by a modern upholsterer—But this little church has just been dug down into, in a hill of the Campagna. I suppose it *fell* in first, and so showed where it was, or rather, the roof having fallen and brought down the aisle pillars, ages ago, there remained a depression in the soil which attracted the excavators.

There, however, one stood among the fallen pillars and broken tombs, not one touched—nor one added—since the last tomb was closed—and one saw exactly how far the first thoughts of Christianity changed the temper and work of the Roman. One sculpture of “the good shepherd” in the midst of a group of sheep and cattle—the same that were grazing in the Campagna at the moment—overhead—with the same long horns, and great effort on the part of the rude sculptor to show the projecting balls of the large eyes, would have been impressive to me, if anything could be impressive, now. But all things have become to me so ghastly a confusion, and grotesque mistake and misery, that I *feel* nothing,—(except that the man with the grinding organ outside is a nuisance at seven in the morning and not in the same order of things as my singing nuns at seven in the evening),[[34]](#footnote-34) and enjoy nothing. All dawn light seems to me only on the smoke of Etna.

Etna is in a mess, because I had nearly written, the smoke of *dinner*; for I was thinking, in advance, whether my views this morning were not a little more desperate than usual, in consequence of having eaten green pease as well as asparagus, last night.

—Ever my dearest papa

Your inconsistent and ashamed filius

J. Ruskin.

1. *Letter* 120. MS:NLS, 555.61. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 70-71.

   Published in December 1873 as appendix I to a revised edition of *The Crown of Wild Olive.* See *Works*, XVIII, 515-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “One of his dogs sat on its stool near him: about midnight her noticed it shivering for cold: ‘Throw a quilt over it,’ said or beckoned he; that , I think, was his last completely- conscious utterance” (Carlyle’s *Frederick*, book XXI, chapter ix; in *Works*, XIX, 298). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. On August 13, 1870, Ruskin had purchased and was now reading “the *Romance of the Rose* in fourteenth-century MS, a little before Chaucer; the very text he translated—delicious old French—worse than Joinville to make out a great deal” (Letter to C.E. Norton, July 15, 1873 in *Works,*  XXXVII.

   *Letter 121.* M.S: NLS, 555.62. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Letter 122*. MS: NLS, 555.63. Hitherto unpbd.

   *Letter 123*. MS: NLS, 555.64. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 72-73.

   See *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, in Carlyle’s *Works,* XX, 65. Carlyle’s sympathy with Ruskin’s dark views is expressed in a letter written a few days later (November 3) to C.E. Norton: “Ruskin is treading the winepress alone; and sometimes feels his labours very heavy. God be with him, poor fellow. I hear at the present time, no other Voice like him in this dreary Mother of dead dogs which is still commonly called a world” (MS: Harvard College Library, 5.) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A series of ten lectures on Tuscan art, delivered at Oxford in October and November of 1873. They were published in 1874 as *Val d’Arno*, but they had been printed in quarto form before the lecture series began, and in this form they were sent to Carlyle. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Carlyle’s “Shooting Niagara: and After?” See *Works*, XXX, 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Letter 124.* MS: Estate of Mrs. Helen Gill Viljoen. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works,* XXIII, iv; and (incomplete) in Collingwood, II, 431-32.

   The *Autobiography* of John Stuart Mill had recently been published. Elsewhere Carlyle calls it “the autobiography of a Steam-engine.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Letter 125.* MS: 555.65. Hitherto unpbd.

   The appendix (no.1) Ruskin was adding to an edition of *The Crown of Wild Olive* that was to be published in December 1873. The appendix, which Ruskin mentions in his next letter to Carlyle, was entitled “Notes on the Political Economy of Prussia,” and was based on the early chapters of Carlyle’s *Frederick*. See *Works*, XVIII, 515-33.

   *Letter 126.* MS: Yale University Library. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Letter 127.* MS: NLS, 555.66. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “P.Mk. 13 November 1873” in another hand.

   *Letter 128.* MS: NLS, 555.67. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 74-75.

   Which was on December 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Probably Miss Blanche Atkinson, a young member of St. George’s Guild, who later (1900) published *Ruskin’s Social Experiment at Barmouth*. See Letters 130 and 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Letter 129. MS: NLS, 555.69.* Hitherto unpbd.

    Ruskin here uses for the first time the salutation “Papa” in writing to Carlyle. He laid the foundation for this by calling himself Carlyle’s “son” in the last paragraph of the previous letter. See Letter 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. “The Future of England” was the last section of *The Crown of Wild Olive* to come before the appendix mentioned in Letter 125. Carlyle identifies it as volume VII (though it was actually volume VI) of the “Works Series” Ruskin was editing from 1871 to 1880: “Ruskin has been here again and is coming back, I think, Saturday; full to overflowing with far glancing projects and speculations; a beautiful new vol. of his, beautifully bound in blue morocco with gilded edge (vol vii of his*Works*) is by far the most interesting I have received; but except that part of it which is new and relates to Friedrich of Prussia I can get no part of it read at present” (to Dr. John A. Carlyle, January 8, 1874: MS: NLS, 2509). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Letter 130*. MS: NLS, 555.68. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “30 December, 1873” in another hand.

    From Blanche Atkinson. See Letter 128, n.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Letter 131*. MS: NLS, 556.70. Hitherto unpbd. Ruskin dates the letter “March” in hasty error. Above the date, the MS has “Feb. 1874” in another hand.

    J.A. Froude’s wife, Henrietta Elizabeth, died on February 12, 1874. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Rose La Touche, who was nearing the stages of a fatal illness, had been placed in a nursing home in London. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ruskin her writes, and then crosses out, a second version of this paragraph: “—the girl whom I’ve been so long devoted to had to move to London—vey nearly dying—at the best in great danger—half mad and half starved—& eating nothing but everything she liked—(chiefly sugar and almonds, I believe)—Well—she had to be forbidden food & I don’t know what—and.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Sir John Simon, M.D., F.R.S. (1816-1904), a friend of Ruskin since 1856.

    *Letter 132.* MS: NLS, 556.71. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The kingdom of the Two Sicilies, with Naples as its capital, has been subsumed into the new kingdom of Italy after Giuseppe Garibaldi’s recognition of Victor Emmanuel II on October 26, 1860. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ruskin had for years been incensed over the destruction of valuable buildings and works of art in the name of “progress” and “restoration,” and he blamed all those who had anything to do with the situation, either actively or passively. Thus he refused the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, which had been offered to him in March 1874. His letter to the institute can be found in *Works*, XXXIV, 513-14.

    Ruskin’s remarks about “Gothic” and “Greek” refer to the famous “Battle of the Styles” in which English architects championed both Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance styles during the late 1850s and 1860s. Gilbert Scott, one of Ruskin’s friends and president of the Royal Institute of Architects in 1874, was once forced by Lord Palmerston to change his Gothic design for the India Office (opposite Whitehall) to Italian Classical—an act that did not endear Palmerston to Ruskin. For more information, see *Works*, XVI, xxxi-xxxiv; and Cook, I, 441-54.

    *Letter 133.* MS: Bembridge. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The “tame Xenia” (*zahm Xenien)* are a series of 161 classical distichs on literature and art composed jointly by Goethe and Schiller for publication in the latter’s journal,  *Musenalmanach*, in 1795-96.The adjective *“tame”* was to distinguish them from another series of 414 epigrams published in the same journal, which were aggressive replies to hostile criticism of the work of both poets. The title of the whole collection is taken from the thirteenth book of Martial’s *Epigrams*.

    Ruskin,  *Diaries*, III, 819, records a conversation with Carlyle on October 25, 1874, in which Carlyle translated one of the “tame Xenia,” which begins with the line “*Hätte Gott mic anders gewolt*…” Carlyle’s impromptu translation, which Ruskin took down at the time, reads in the entry as follows:

    Had God wished me otherwise

    He would have built me otherwise,

    But as he put talent into me

    He has greatly trusted me.

    I use it to the right and to the left,

    Know not what comes of it,

    But when there’s no good to be got more of it

    He will surely give me the sign. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Sir Joseph William Bazalgette (1819-91), civil engineer. Though best remembered for his design of London’s modern sewer system while chief engineer of the Metropolitan Board of Works (1855-89) Balzagette also designed the Thames Embankment in three distinct sections, the Victoria, Chelsea, and Albert embankments, as well as the new Northumberland Avenue. He was knighted in 1874, on completion of the Chelsea Embankment. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm (1834-90). Though born in Vienna of Hungarian parents, Boehm made his artistic reputation in England. He would later be commissioned to do the portrait statue on the Chelsea Embankment of the seated Carlyle. He also designed the renowned “Jubilee” coinage of Queen Victoria.

    *Letter 134.* MS:NLS, 556.72. Hithero unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Letter 135*. MS: NLS, 556.73. Hitherto unpbd.

    “Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail,” and “it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.” [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ruskin’s sketch of a part of Botticelli’s “Life of Moses.” The drawing was exhibited at Brighton in April 1876. See the catalogue of Ruskin’s drawings in *Works*, XXXVIII, 234, no.253. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Letter 136.* MS: NLS, 556.74. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 99.

    This church is one of the most ancient in Rome, dating from the sixth century, with its foundation resting on the remains of the temple of Hercules. The public grain-distribution center that replaced the temple under Theodosius the Great was later transformed into a church for the use of the Greek community in Rome and was for centuries called Santa Maria in Schola Graeca. By the tenth century it had become the seat of a cardinal-deacon, and when, in 1064, it was largely destroyed by the forces of Robert Guiscard, its titulars began the long rebuilding program that gave the building its present appearance. Much of the medieval architecture was invisible during Ruskin’s time because of extensive restoration carried out in the early eighteenth century by Cardinal Annibale Albani, but this was removed in 1899, exposing the old construction.

    The sermon Ruskin describes was that of the octave of the Ascension, delivered by the vicar capitular or his deputy, as the church had no cardinal assigned to it from 1858 to 1875. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. “The Pope’s new tobacco manufactory under the Palatine,” as Ruskin calls it in *Fors Clavigera*, letter 44 (*Works*, XXVIII, 125). The Fabbrica de’ Tabacchi was erected during the reign of Pius IX, in 1863, before Rome fell to Italian troops, thus causing Ruskin to call it “the Pope’s.” It was located Anicia just beyond the church of Santa Maria dell’ Orto. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *Letter 137.* MS: NLS, 556.75. Hitherto unpbd.

    Parts one and two of *Prosperpina* were published in December 1875. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. From the Italian *forestiere, forestiero*, meaning “foreigner, visitor, guest.” [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. A group of Oxford undergraduates who, under Ruskin’s direction, had been constructing a short rural road to Ferry Hinksey since the spring of 1874. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Letter 138.* MS:NLS, 556.76. Hitherto unpbd.

    The church of Santissima Trinità de’ Monti, the French parish in Rome, was erected under the patronage of Charles VIII of France in 1495 in reparation for his occupation of Rome. In 1587 it became the title church of a cardinal-priest. Having been devasted by riots during the French Revolution, it was restored in 1816 at the expense of Louis XVIII. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See Letter 139.n.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. *Letter 139.* MS: NLS, 556.77. Hitherto unpbd.

    Ruskin’s subsequent description makes it almost unquestionable that he is referring to the little basilica of Santa Petronilla built in the center of the upper level of the Catacombs of Domitilla, one of the most ancient Christian burial grounds in Rome. The structure, originally constructed to contain the body of the saint venerated as Saint Peter’s principal Roman disciple, had a nave and aisles on an approximately square ground plan. It was in use as a place of public worship from the fifth to the eighth century, when the body of the saint was translated to the Vatican and the old site forgotten. It was rediscovered in 1874 and was fully excavated the following year. For additional details see G.B. De Rossi, “Sepolocro di S. Petronilla nella basilica in via Ardeatina e sua translazione al Vaticano,” in *Bulletino di archeologia cristiana*, 1878, pp.125-46, and 1879, pp. 5-20; and August Urbain, *Ein Martyrologium der christliche Gemeinde zu Rom* (Leipzig, 1901), p.152. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Compare Ruskin’s impressions in Santa Maria in Cosmedin. See Letter 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A reference to the famous Vespers service of the French nuns of the convent of the Dames du Sacré-Coeur, attached to the church of Santissima Trinità de’ Monti (See Letter 138). Mendelssohn was so impressed by the performance of these “singing nuns” that he dedicated his three motets, opus 39, to them after hearing them in 1830. See Lady (Grace) Wallace, *Letters from Italy and Switzerland* (1862), pp.85-86, letter of December 30, 1830. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)