*160. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Lucca, 19th Augt., ’74

My Dearest Papa,

Yesterday evening I was climbing among the ravines of marble to the south; and came on a cottage like a Highland one—for roughness of look—only the mountain path winding round beneath it, went under a roof of vines trellised from its eaves, and opened before it entered the darkness of green leaves, into a golden threshing floor—the real “area” of the Latins. That so few people past [*sic*] that the people could make their threshing floor of the path, was the first deep prettiness of it. Then, they *had* been threshing and winnowing—the little level field was soft with chaff. The marble rocks—bright gray—came down steep into it, as at Loch Katrine[[1]](#footnote-1) the rocks into the water below, on the other side, the hill went down steep to the blue plain of Lucca—itself (the hillside) one grove of olive—but—as I saw—without fruit—or nearly so.

I crossed the threshing floor, and met the peasant under his vines, looking pale and worn—the Lucchese “Good even Signoria, [*sic*]” given with more than usual gentleness. I said to him what I thought of his happy place,—as well as I could. Yes, he said, but it was a “very dry” country. “The olives had no fruit this year—see—the berries had all fallen, withered for want of rain. For want of *water*, yes, I said—why don’t you catch it on the hillside, before it runs to the Serchio and the sea? In short, I found him able to hear, and think—He was actually building a cistern behind his house to catch the rain. “From the *roof”*! (And the Roof from which he ought to receive it rose above him—1500 feet of pure marble!)—I had a long talk—I examined the place; and though I’ve got to go to Florence today to hunt down St. Dominic,[[2]](#footnote-2) if I don’t come back to do a little bit of engineering beside that man’s threshing floor—it will be, not my fault, God willing.

I’ve written a shabby little letter to Mary,—but couldn’t help it.

[J.R.]

*161. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Florence, 28th Aug. ’74

My dear Mary,

In looking over your letter again yesterday, I found a little note of admiration which I had not observed before, after Mr. Elwin’s name.[[3]](#footnote-3)

I do believe, under that grave little face of yours, there lies hidden as hearty a love of mischief as ever any young lady or kitten, or other charming juvenile animal was blessed with—and that you knew very well what you were about.

Well, I’ll forgive your mischievousness, in thanks for your having read Fors—even to the notes.[[4]](#footnote-4)—And now, seriously, remember that a life may be entirely *exemplary*; yet entirely selfish.

I have no doubt that Mr. Elwin *enjoys himself* moral, with his charming and well brought up family, his swallows in church, his—no doubt excellent—sermons, and his very learned and accurate biography of Pope, than he could in any other life.

Meantime, while he is proving that the most intelligibly more poet of England lied about his letters, Mr Elwin goes up into his pulpit every 7th day, to tell his congregation that such and such things are so, concerning God and his ways.

Now, if he tells them one word more, positively, than Pope has written in his universal prayer—He tells them—what is in all probability a lie—at least what no man living can prove to be true—and he tells them this, assuming to be a messenger from God. Which, think you, is the worst Liar—Pope—or the self-styled God’s messanger with no credentials?

But that is not all.

He is perfectly happy with his children and his swallows. So could I be, with my pictures and nightengales [*sic*]—if I liked—and perhaps something else than a nightengale, in a cage.—Well, I could perhaps even get *that*, if I looked for it;—But, I choose to consider whether other people are happy—Bill Sykes and Nancy[[5]](#footnote-5)—shall we say?

And I enquire, why Bill Sykes and Nancy are not happy.

And I find—briefly—that it is because people listen to Mr. Elwin, instead of to Pope, whose one couplet

“Never elated,—while one man’s opprest,

Never dejected, while another’s blest”[[6]](#footnote-6)

—is worth all the Sermons, taking the best of them, and leaving out the lies, that I’ve heard since I was born—And I’ve heard better than Mr. Elwin’s, I can tell you.

Ever my dear Mary, your affectionate

J. Ruskin

Love to Papa, and tell him to keep *you* in order.

*162. Mary Aitken to Ruskin*

[Chelsea, August 1874]

…your little account of Michael Angelo’s David. I don’t know if it is to be returned but in any case it is quite safe.

I am somewhat alarmed at the size this letter has grown to! Of course I don’t want you to answer it; not indeed if it is too much trouble, even to read it at all.

Uncle who is reading beside me sends his “love and the very best prayers he can form for you.”

Dear Mr Ruskin

Yours respectfully and affectionately,

Mary Carlyle Aitken

*163. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Florence, 13th Sept. ’74

My dearest Papa,

I have not been writing lately, a great overpress of new discovery having kept me at work, even at night, vainly trying to set the things down. They show themselves to me and then vanish, and I can’t keep up with the story of the magic lantern.

But I *must* send you the enclosed which I have no doubt is wholly trustworthy.[[7]](#footnote-7) hope Froude will see through it all, and be indignant. I have known it has been going on for years.

My chief discovery here is that the old Etruscan race has never failed and that Florentine art is *all* Etruscan—Greek—down to the 15th century, when it expires in modern confusion.

Ever your loving

J.R.

*164. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

28th Oct. [1874]

Dearest Papa,

I find it must be Saturday, not Friday, when I come to see you: my lecture is, (to my own surprise) on Friday instead of Thursday.—I do hope Saturday will not be an inconvenient day for you,—but if it mischances to be so I shall be up again next week only I want to get into the way of coming to see you every week,[[8]](#footnote-8)if I can.

Saturday then at 2 if I may.

Love to Mary

Ever you affectionate

J. Ruskin

*165. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Friday evening,

[November 28, 1874]

My dearest Papa,

I have been hindered from getting up to town this evening; and must dine at Balliol tomorrow, so that I fear the cold double journey in this snowtime, and must resign myself to the loss of my happy hour tomorrow with you; I was going to have brought poor Rosie to see you, but she is too ill to bear coming out just now[[9]](#footnote-9)— next Saturday, at all events, I shall keep tryste, if I’m well; my lectures will be over, and I shall be free-hearted.

I expect a report soon from Mr. Merritt on John Knox:[[10]](#footnote-10) but he is displeased with me for not going to see *him*, and may be dilatory.

Three of my men have asked leave to come to talk—or learn—about St. George’s Company.[[11]](#footnote-11) I’ve asked them to breakfast on Monday.

Love to good little Mary.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin

*166. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

[December 7, 1874]

My dear Mary,

I send you a “revise” of our card[[12]](#footnote-12)—they stupidly used only one name. If you are pouring thee yourself any day you will find my old servant Lucy very thankful for a little chat, and the chat with her not unpleasant. Dearest love to my papa—I thought him so sweet and dear and well the other day.

Ever your affe

J. Ruskin

Perhaps Papa may like a bit of enclosed scrap. He sent the girl a word of advice which she *took—*seven or eight years ago.[[13]](#footnote-13)

*167. Ruskin to Carlyle*

2 January, [1875]

Dearest Papa,

The enclosed opinion from Merritt,[[14]](#footnote-14) though it does not go far, is pleasant, it seems to me, as far as it does go. I do not doubt our being able to get nearer the picture when the Secretary is better.

I have been terribly languid and idle, in reaction from exacting work, and worse than work. Often thinking of you and Mary; but with nothing nice today, except how faithfully I am, your loving

John Ruskin

*168. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Brantwood, [January] 13th, 1875

My dear Mary,

It was not your uncle’s fault. He is never inaccurate. It was entirely mine, I supposing, and not listening, that there was only one place where portraits were shown, and that blunt “Kensington” was enough.

I am as much delighted as I ought to be by the interest of the reports by Mr. Merritt on the true picture—and am still happier to be able to assure you that I never did mention nor could have mentioned the name of Porbus [*sic*];[[15]](#footnote-15) for—though I have often in my life heard it—I never by any chance recollect it—but confuse it with Phoebus, & thus get rid of the taste of it as soon as I can.

To [*sic*] Mr. Merritt’s testimony is crystal-clear from all prejudice or adulteration.

I’ve had ten days of unbroken black fog, and can’t get up in the morning.

I can always be at my work in winter at seven if—between seven and eight—I see the blue of dawn. But to get up at seven when one is to breakfast by full candlelight at nine, beats me.

That’s why papa has had no letters. The little light between nine or ten goes in my day’s work and leaves me—to disguised to speak, and ashamed of myself, Coniston, and the Universe—but ever faithfully and affectionately Papa’s and yours

J. Ruskin

*169. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

4th March [1875?]

Dearest Papa,

May I come and see you tomorrow?—and will two be nice time—just send me word by bearer how are you are and if I may come.

Ever your loving,

J.R.

With love to Mary, and all thanks to her for help to St. George.

*170. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

6th May, ‘75

Dearest Papa,

The book found me today,[[16]](#footnote-16) more than usually helpless and, earthy. How should it be so, when you say—what you have said in your gift—and feel me to be anything to you. And yet day by day, my soul cleaves to the dust—or—rather the dust to what soul I had.

—Absolute illness though not serious, alters my thoughts just now, and I will not grieve you by telling you ow needful your precious words were.

—I had but begun glancing at the book, deeply thankful for the Northern History in this consummate form.—I must try to get stronger, that I may not feel too poor to live, in the presence of such creatures.

—I shall see you again next week, unless it may be, I can’t shake off the cold without some change of air. But I’ll write to you—if I go anywhere it will be to see one of my best pupils at Arundel.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Love to Mary. Ever your affecte &—far more than grateful

John Ruskin

*Letter 171. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

4th June, 1875

Dearest Papa,

I have had so little to say of myself, pleasing to a Papa’s ear, that I neither wrote nor came when I was last in London—for the rest, the Academy work[[18]](#footnote-18) involved much weariness. I had just got it done, with other worldliness, and was away into the meadows to see buttercup and clover and bean blossom, when the news came that the little story of my wild Rose was ended,[[19]](#footnote-19) and the hawthorn blossoms, this year—would fall—over her. Since which piece of news, I have not had a day but in more or less active business, in which everybody congratulates & felicitates me, and must be met with civil cheerfulness. Among the few rests or goods I get indeed—the reading of the Knox’s portraits has been the chief. I never saw a more close, inevitable piece of picture criticism; and the incidental sketches of Wishart and Knox are invaluable.

I am coming to town in a week or ten days now.[[20]](#footnote-20) What possesses Froude to go away again so soon? Love to Mary.—

Ever, dear Papa,

Your affectionate

J. Ruskin

*172. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire

[July 12, 1875]

Dearest Papa,

Please let Mary read enclosed to you and send it back to me and send me a line to say how you are.

I’ve had a pleasant journey here, *but for* weather. Now I’m at work on the flowers—& they get blown to pieces before I can gather them, sometimes.—Oh me, if Spring would last—and one’s strength, and one’s time—What one could do!

Ever your loving

J.R.

*173. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Brantwood,

21st [July 1875]

Dearest Papa,

I would fain write to you every morning, but am at present so depressed, and so overworked, inevitably by the mere interests and thoughts of the passing spring days, so few of them—so full of cloud and flower sight or question, now—as it seems to me—only to be rightly or at all dealt with by the knowledge and feelings which I have only gained in declining life, and, by warnings too clear, know cannot last but a few years, if that, in available strength—what obscure stuff I am writing!—I mean, that every cloud on the hills is a problem to me, every weed on the banks; every sentence I read of old books, has new force to me, and I want to begin work over again, with a boy’s strength.

I wonder how far you have this same feeling, increased by the sorrowful quiet in which you now stay;—surely—age should not, those who have laboured so nobly, be sorrowful; and yet, my own sorrow certainly is rooted in the sense of inability to work for ever.

You see *I* can’t write, neither—Indeed, I would write beautifully and legibly to you, if I could, but I scrawl so much—it can’t be. Mary sent me such a lovely bit of yours about books.—please thank her for it and for her letter.

Ever your most loving and faithful

J. Ruskin

*174. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Keswick [September 1, 1875]

Dearest Papa,

How often I have thought of you, you won’t believe,—how much I rejoice in hearing from Allen,[[21]](#footnote-21) first of your enjoyment of peace, and then, of your kindness to Allen, and then, of your having been pleased with my new books[[22]](#footnote-22)—you will I trust believe—most totally.

I am in confused helplessness of overwork, which I only carry through by resolved quietude for some piece of the morning—so *very* short lately, inevitably, that even my letters to you have become impossible. I *must* find some way out of all this turmoil, but can’t today say more than how I love you always and am your affectionate God-son in the most solemn sense.

J. Ruskin

*175. Ruskin to Carlyle*

[Oxford, November 27, 1875]

Dearest Papa,

I’m just putting the notes together for my last of 12 lectures.[[23]](#footnote-23) Here’s a nicish little bit just concoted. I rather like it—I hope it’ll make you laugh,

English Constitution

The Rottenest mixture of Simony, bribery

sneaking tyranny, shameless cowardice, and

accomplished lying, that ever the Devil chewed

small to spit into God’s Paradise.

I must write it fair to be sure it’s given without a slip of the tongue. They say my lectures have been rather an impression this term.

Oh dear, I mustn’t go on, the morning is the only time I can find things rightly in my head, and I’ve two lectures today, the closing one here and one at Eton.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Ever your loving

J.R.

*176. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

4th Feb., ’76

My dear Mary,

You should before now have received Ulric de Knecht,[[25]](#footnote-25) and I cannot tell you how very happy I am in the thought of your translating it, with occasionally a flash of guidance or sprinkle of salt from you uncle.—It will give three times the value to the book that it has been so done; and the character of Frenel deserves it, no less than of the housemistress.

I think it would be well to keep the German Knecht in our title, and call it, “Ulrich the Knecht,”—this will serve to lead us to another kind of knighthood.

For, in our company,[[26]](#footnote-26) the title of Servant is to be the highest!—There are to be three orders of companies;—namely (lowest) C. Retainers, who though taking the vow, are paid as labourers: clerks, & Companions simple; who are paid nothing, but attend more to their own business than the Company’s, giving the tenth of their income however, always,—and Companion-Servants who devote themselves wholly to the Company’s work. They will write themselves

C.C. of stGeorge

C. of stGeorge

C.S. of stGeorge, which will be equivalent to the Knighthood in other orders.

The book has perhaps been sent to Broadland,[[27]](#footnote-27) by mistake, but will soon come.

Dearest love to Papa,

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin

I’ve told the printers to send you a revise of the preface to Xenophon’s Economist which begins the series.[[28]](#footnote-28)

*177. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

[March 6, 1876]

Dearest Papa,

Was it a sparrow, or robin, I forget, that you were watching the little eyes and ways and pleasures of, when the sense of its having been a bit of yellow jelly not a year before, and the miracle of it, came on you so? I wish I could recollect what you called the egg aspect of it—perhaps Mary can? it was infinitely better than any “bit of yellow jelly”—yet I can’t think.

I’ve been looking at Humboldt.[[29]](#footnote-29) I see he “defines” the vital force as “that which prevents the original affinities from acting.” Not at all which act itself! What a lovely and cheerful view of life! (Mortal and other). God—as the Preventor of Original Affinities from acting—an omnipotent Drag upon Originality? *isn’t* it nice?

Ever you loving Filius

J.R.

Isn’t my French-Revolutionary shell in last Fors[[30]](#footnote-30) rather nice too?

178*. Mary Aitken to Ruskin*

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea

7 Mary, 1876

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

My Uncle’s little friend is a sparrow. I did not hear him tell the story about it on Sunday, but when I did, a day or two before, he said “it had been only a small speck of *slobber*”! He, too, thinks this is the word he used.

We have a good many birds here,—robins, sparrows, & some blackbirds; and last summer a nightingale used to make his “tender and strong” note heard quite close to us; a little robin built her nest in a tool house in the garden adjoining ours. Our neighbours left the window open so that she could always be free even when the door was closed, and thence she sent out nine little redbreasts to the world. They are disposed to be very friendly but we never become intimate because of the cat who usually follows me into the garden. If the poor little things reason about a personal devil, I am sure they must think of our cat and have no doubt about his existence.

My Uncle was much interested in what you said about Humboldt. He had missed the passage which you refer to.

My Uncle sends his love & I am always, dear Master and Teacher

Yours affectionately & respectfully

Mary Carlyle Aitken

*179. Mary Aitken to Ruskin*

June 6, 1876

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

I take the liberty of sending with this a note that has come tonight from Lady Lothian,[[31]](#footnote-31) who, as you will see, is anxious to have a nomination to the Blue Coat School, for a boy she is interested in. I do not know whether the lady is right in supposing that you have the power of nomination,[[32]](#footnote-32) but if you had and were willing to give the required promise for next year, you would be doing a kindness to one of the hardest-working and most self-denying people in the world.

I hardly know how to put into words the awful fact I have to communicate. I have failed utterly and ignominiously in any attempt to translate Uli into English.[[33]](#footnote-33) I have tried over and over again and can’t get on at all. It is written in cramped, foreign German,[[34]](#footnote-34) largely interspersed with Swiss words, which no dictionary will explain. My uncle has goaded me on with cruel jibes; but he read the book himself, and says now that *he* could at no period of his life have translated it. I need say no more, except that I am much grieved to find what would have been a great pleasure to me so far beyond my very small powers.

You will be sorry to know that my uncle has been very weak and poorly of late weeks. He is, however, getting a little better as the weather improves.

He sends his kindest and best love to you; and I am ever, dear Mr. Ruskin,

Yours affectionately and respectfully,

Mary Carlyle Aitken

*180. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Brantwood, 18th June ’76

My dear Mary,

A strange and to me most blessed, continuance of truly natural & sweet summer weather has kept me out nearly all day long,—though always your letter in my breast pocket, to be answered,— “tomorrow, at latest”.—Had my presentation been free I had answered at once it was given away months ago. The Ulrich is a more important matter. There is no reason whatever for you translating it from the German. If you can do it from the French; with notes on any German word you happen to know, it will be all I want. I am greatly set on having it done by you, with your Uncle’s help.

Your report of his health troubles me, but I think the change from that bitter weather to gentler, *seemed* at first weakening to us all. I had a week when it first came fine—of extraordinary & helpless lassitude.

Write me word soon again how he is, and whether you are both sick of Ulrich, or will try the French.

Ever your grateful

J.R.

Dearest love to my Papa. Tell him I’m on Frederick again now.[[35]](#footnote-35)

*181. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Venice, 9th Sept. ’76

My dearest Papa,

I am so thankful to hear from Mary that you are better. I have not been writing because I thought you would scarcely care to hear of my many failures and languid progresses; or of my “scientific” museum work,[[36]](#footnote-36) slowly organizing itself; but I think it will please you to hear that I have good hope now of recasting the Stones of Venice[[37]](#footnote-37) into a book such as you would have a pupil of yours write. I shall throw off at least half of the present text, and add what I now better know of the real sources of Venetian energy,—and what I—worse—know of the cause of Venetian ruin,—with some notes on modern Italy which I do eagerly hope you will be satisfied with. Only we must keep clear of Barbarossa![[38]](#footnote-38)

And I trust you will like a bit of preface I’m writing for an edition of Sir Philip Sidney’s Psalter,[[39]](#footnote-39) bearing on the psalms before and after Leuther [*sic*], and on sundry other musical “performances”—not paid for by spectacular managers. I have a great deal to think out about Scotch music, and song; partly with the help of Mary’s book,[[40]](#footnote-40)—as soon as I get a clear proof I’ll send you one.

I shall be here for a month at least, but hope to see you before going to Oxford in November.—And do not think, however seldom I *can* now see you, that I am less your loving,

John Ruskin

*182. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Venice, 9th Sept. ’76

My dearest Mary,

I’ve no paper but this tonight, and will not put off till tomorrow my thanks—I am just beginning some drawings and other work requiring some cheerfulness to do it well; and your letter with better news of your uncle just comes to cheer me,—besides its pleasant holding out of hope that you will still do Ulrich for me.

I had nearly come to see you in Scotland; but I lost so much time in the fine weather, merely in drinking light and air that at last I found all the summers tasks had to be done in a fortnight, and I was bound by most religious promise to be here this autumn.

Will you please give the enclosed line to Papa. I have less and less power, somehow, continually to say how much I regard him, but I am ever faithfully his & yours,

J. Ruskin

I’ve put Papa’s note in a separate envelope to avoid double folding.

*183. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Venice, 15th Nov. ’76

My dearest Papa,

I have been much too sad to write, lately, but am so thankful to hear of you today from Joanna that I cannot but tell you so. I am so very lonely now, missing the father and mother more and more every day, and having no more anything to look forward to here, but the gradual closing in of all, and feeling, for you, with continually increasing respect & love, more and more sorrow as I felt myself also entering with you the time of waiting, that what comfort I might otherwise have taken in telling you what I was doing quite left me. Also, I have been failing so utterly in keeping up to my plans, or fulfilling my promises,—so many things “gone to water” with the work done for them, that I have little heart for giving account of myself. I have an immense quantity of notes made for the life of Scott;[[41]](#footnote-41) and I had done much work in gathering the pieces I wanted of Frederick;[[42]](#footnote-42) and now here is another year gone, and nothing got into form, and new claims on me, it seems, from my own old work. For, coming here only to put myself into some temper of fancy, in recasting the Stones of Venice, I have got a new clue, utterly unseen by me when I wrote it, which will give, and ought to give me, many hours of added toil; but I believe I shall now leave the book a sound piece of work, and connect it with a short history of Venice for the schools of St. George,[[43]](#footnote-43) which I am not without hope will give you pleasure. I have sent a little piece to be printed, and will send you the first revise in any readable state. I shall keep close at it all this winter.

Also, concluding now the sixth year and volume of Fors, I am going in the seventh year, to gather it all into connected force, and drive it home, not any more enigmatically; but with literal and quiet advice to the men, what to do. First of all I shall take up the organization of food supply, then of clothes;[[44]](#footnote-44) getting actual answer or question from the Sheffield operatives on all principles. I have sent, through my secretary Mr. Tyrrwhitt, (Revd RstJ),[[45]](#footnote-45) a formal and careful interrogation to the Bishop of Manchester, whether he means to answer my challenge or not; and the same to Mr. Fawcett,[[46]](#footnote-46) and their replies shall be kept in the Sheffield Museum.

I must send this poor note to day. My love to Mary. Posta in Firma [?], Venezia, will always find me, if she has word of Ulrich to give me.

Ever your loving

John Ruskin

*184. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Venice, 1st December, 1876

Dearest Papa,

I am so thankful to hear from Mary that you are yourself again, and bright, and reading Shakespeare to her. What a blessed girl that is, to have you and another uncle to “do for,” and to able to do for them!—and to be witty and insighted besides; and have her uncle liking to read Shakespeare to her.

There is something left in “the Present” still, if we can get the mischief of it quieted—cocks not to crow except on properly far off dunghills & so on.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Then it’s so nice having your beautiful letter to read. I didn’t mean to stay out this winter, and I’ve no Carlyle with me—not a bit—and I’ve been reading French novels instead with no benefit in the change.

All the same, I think if you will glance over two stories in an English-French one, which I told Joanna to get and will tell her to send to Cheyne Row—“Our New Bishop” and “A Hero of the Commune,”[[48]](#footnote-48)—you will find some good in them.

I’m very unhappy in my work here—I don’t want to write about Venice, now, but about Sheffield: and yet I think, I ought to finish rightly what I have done so much of, and dot all the i’s. I get in a fury because whenever I come to the original statement of anything it’s always a reference to a MS. in the Vatican—or the like.

Fancy, papa, what times you and I should have had if those beasts of aristocrats, instead of spending all their money in horses, had set up printing presses, and printed all the first documents of their own history (the worthless dishwashing that they are)—and nice Indexes!

Please give my love to Froude, and impart the above idea to him. I’m a little proud of it, because it’s the first time it ever occurred to me what printing was good for.

Love to Mary, and thank her for her letter, and say, I rather like that notion of the bursting bubble—only I fear it’s more like a bursting balloon—with small chance for the car.

Forgive my ill writing. I’ve tried so hard to do better but it’s not in me.

Ever you loving and faithful

J. Ruskin

It is very dear of you to revise Ulric for me.

*185. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Venice, 9th Jan., ’77

Dear Mary,

All good and dear wishes are with you and your uncle from me, always—but so much has been happening I can’t tell you, yet awhile, but it will interest your uncle much I think. Enclosed little note will perhaps please him. I write this only to enclose it, not for your Christmas letter.

Your grateful & affectionate

J. Ruskin

*186. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Venice, 16th Jan., ’77

My dear Mary,

I am so very glad of your letter, and laurel leaf.—It comes with benediction to me—for truly, the horses of St. Mark’s are I think putting on their harness for me,—and I do hope you uncle will like some of the harness-bronze, in next Fors.[[49]](#footnote-49)

My dear love to him. I’m so thankful you’ve taken poor Alice home again. Nobody, you will find, can do him, but—great and simple people—Not that you’re very “simple” neither! I’m glad to hear of the Elwins.[[50]](#footnote-50) But my dear, I will answer your question in a word—“No one should ever write a biography, or paint a picture in Hatred.”

I do not intend to write a biography of John Stewart [*sic*] Mill, nor should Mr. Elwin have written one of Pope. He has done quite limitless mischief to the cause of all truth. How he was so Godabandoned as to do it, he will find out some day, being good at heart as you tell me.

Ever your grateful and affectionate

J.R.

I do not mask or deny Turner’s sins,—nor do I wish any one who understands Turner to be ignorant of them. But not to know the sins without the Virtues.

*187. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Venice, 10th May, ’77

My dearest Papa,

This was my dead Papa’s birthday, and he will like me to write to you. I should, often, if I were in good heart: but my work here is full of discouragements keeping me silent. Also I’ve rather been expecting some little compliment from you on something or other in Fors, and have been chilled by getting none; lastly, I have been reading Frederick right through, with care, and am a little vexed;—I don’t like him as well as I did. His treatment of his brother after the Zittau business seems to me quite brutal[[51]](#footnote-51) —and I am *entirely* vexed at finding him always speaking of himself and Prussia, never of the *interests of Silesia*. I am very thankful for your letter in Times on the “Interests of England”[[52]](#footnote-52)

—That Pottery, field *chiefly*, the buildings very shabby I believe—I’ve never seen it!!!—is—and will be, mine.

The enclosed note will admit your friend I doubt not.

Love to Mary always,

Ever your devoted

John Ruskin

*188. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Sunday afternoon, [late July 1877]

Dearest Papa,

I send this by my good framemaker—or his man whom you may entirely trust to remove the encumbering frames from the dining room.[[53]](#footnote-53) I will write as soon as I get home—here I am very dismal somehow, and having nothing to tell or say, except that I am your faithful and devoted son, in the Florentine sense.

J. Ruskin

My very true regards to Mary.

*189. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Herne Hill

Tuesday, 6th Nov.[1877]

Dearest Papa,

I send my gardner only to ask for you—myself captive here to printers and what not—I can’t get over to Chelsea till four, tomorrow. I have an hour then of quiet. Is it your resting or walking time, or sleeping:—just send verbal message if I’m to come—I must get away to Oxford rail after & chat—but I shall be soon in town again.

In hope of *hearing* at least that you are well.

Your lovingest

J. Ruskin

*190. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

5th January, ’78

Dearest Papa,

Might I come to see you tomorrow about ½ past one? or at any hour after that you would like better? Merely send out *word* yes, with the hour, if changed, or No, if it cannot be.

Ever your faithful & loving

John Ruskin

*191. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Hawarden Castle, Chester

15th Jan. ’78

Dearest Papa,

I am going home today, but I think it will be only to bid the servants good New Year, and that I shall be quickly up in Oxford again; and the more that I want to see you again, soon, and not let you say any more “how long?”

Also, I want to bring with me to your quiet presence-chamber a youth who deeply loves you;[[54]](#footnote-54) and for whom the permission to look upon your face will be strength and memory in the future, much helpful to the resolution and the beauty of his life,—and to please let Mary write and say that I may bring him—and give *me* also better will to return to my Oxford duty from the Calypso woods of Coniston. And so believe me ever your faithful and loving son,

J. Ruskin

*192. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Brantwood, Coniston

17th February 1878

My dearest Mary,

It *is* so kind of Papa to let me bring Mr. Lyttleton, but it may be a little while yet—and please—I want to know how Ulrich is going on—or anything else you are about. I’ve never time to say a word when I’m there. Write me a nice long letter—there’s a dear.

Ever your loving

John Ruskin

*193. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Brantwood, Coniston

17th February 1878

Dearest Papa,

I know you don’t care quite so much as foolish I do for Walter Scott—But please don’t think it saucy of me then, to write you this with his pen, which the Master of Harrow D. Butler[[55]](#footnote-55) has lent me.—It’s to thank you for—ever so many things—but lastly for bringing that youth to see you, (the Hone Alfred Lyttleton, of Trinity, Cambridge)—I can’t come yet for ten days or so, but then, I shall be so happy to be by the fireside again. And now, please, for this is my chief business, make that sweet Mary tell me a little of what you would have me say in next Fors—of *anything.*

Ever your faithful and loving servant, & son,

John Ruskin

*Letter 194. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Brantwood, Coniston

23rd June, ’78

My dearest Papa,

I have not written to you, because my illness broke me all to pieces, and every little bit has a different thing to say,—which makes it difficult in the extreme to write to any one whom wants to tell things to, just as they are, and who cares very truly whether they are right or wrong. It was utterly wonderful to me to find that I could go so heartily and headily mad;[[56]](#footnote-56) for you know I had been priding myself on peculiar sanity! And it was more wonderful yet to find the madness made up into things so dreadful, out of things so trivial. One of the most provoking and disagreeable of the spectres was developed out of the firelight on my mahogany bedpost[[57]](#footnote-57)—and my fate, for all futurity, seemed continually to turn on the humour of dark personages who were materially nothing but the stains of damp on the ceiling. But the sorrowfullest part of the matter was, and is, that, while my illness at Matlock encouraged me by all its dreams in after work,[[58]](#footnote-58) this one has done nothing but humiliate and terrify me; and leaves me nearly unable to speak any more except of the natures of stones and flowers.

I have regained great part of my strength, and am not in bad *spirits*,—on the condition, otherwise absolutely essential, that I think of nothing that would vex me. But this means a very trifling form of thought and direction of work, throughout the day.

Nevertheless, I am working out some points in the history and geography of Arabia[[59]](#footnote-59) which I think will be useful, and reading you, and Gibbon! alternately—or Mahomet! I am going to stigmatize Gibbon’s as the worst style of language ever yet invented by man—its affectation and platitude being both comsummate. It is like the most tasteless water-gruel, with a handful of Epsom salts strewed in for flowers, and served with the airs of being turtle.[[60]](#footnote-60) Has Mary done any more Gotthelf—I never read him without renewed refreshment.

By the way, *you* are very unsatisfactory about Mahomet’s death,[[61]](#footnote-61)—which I want to know all that may be known of; and also, in re-reading *Frederick*, the first book I got to, after I got my natural eyes again, I was worried of questions in his life—how far it was good for Silesia to be Prussian or Austrian—whether Silesia itself is Prussian or Austrian tempered—and how its geography marks its relations to south and north. I might make out this from detached passages; but the great impression left on me was, how blessed it would have been for Silesia, Prussia, and Austria, if all their soldiers, generals & Princes had been made at the first outbreak of the war one grand auto da fe [*sic*] of, in the style of—my recent scenic effects deduced from damp in the ceiling.

I can’t write more today, but am ever your lovingest

J. Ruskin

*195. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Herne Hill

10th July, ’78

Dearest Papa,

I got pleasantly up from Brantwood yesterday, and shall be most thankful to hear from Mary that I may come and see you, if I may, and what time now you like best for people to come.

Ever your lovingest

J. Ruskin

*196. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Arthur Severn’s, Herne Hill

Friday [March 28, 1879]

My dearest Papa,

I couldn’t come today—it was so cold in the train, yesterday, it took all the life out of me; and I’ve been forced to rest—and now I’ve no day till Tuesday, when I can come, I hope, whenever you would like me.

I am fairly well and can do much, yet—if I keep myself quiet; but if I read *papers*, or try to talk, I get excited and weary very soon, so that my days are passed either in my wood, or my library, and I dare not come up to London. The lawyers forced me just now.[[62]](#footnote-62)

I won’t say how it grieves me never to see you,[[63]](#footnote-63)—or would, if I could now let myself grieve. But I am ever

Your faithful and loving

John Ruskin

*197. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Brantwood, Coniston

[June 1879]

Dear Mary,

So many thanks for your letter—long expected—now, today at least unanswerable before post time. Dearest love to Papa.

Ever your affe

J.R.

*198. Ruskin to Mary Aitken*

Brantwood, Coniston

6th June, ’79

My dear Mary,

I haven’t it in me to write you a word, yet I am very thankful for all you tell me,—for your uncle’s blessing, very solemnly, for I need it.

I hope all possible good for him and you, in what Heaven has brought about thus.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin

*199. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Herne Hill

December, 1879

My dearest Papa,

And did you come here—yourself—actually –you dearest, kindest papa—to see your poor unfilial prodigal?—Oh me, I’m always being routed about by the pigs—(not that I mean that, I mean by pigs everything that’s bad)—and can’t get away. I’ve been working—as I never thought to do again—against time lately—and have been writing letters to my clerical friends—e.g., grey pamphlet[[65]](#footnote-65) sent with this I hope—and a quantity of talk besides—as useless probably—about pictures, which you’ll get on Monday, and I hope to go over myself early in the week to get some forgiveness and blessing from you.

Very good it was of Froude to come too—after what I’ve been writing to him[[66]](#footnote-66)—but certainly the Devil’s got into him lately—though he’s still himself all but that contents.

Love to Mary. –Ever your faithfullest & lovingest

J. Ruskin

1. *Letter 160*. MS: NLS, 556.95. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 134.

   Loch Katrine is about nine and a half miles long and is separated by a ridge from the larger Loch Lomond, to the southwest. The topography Ruskin describes is characteristic of the eastern end of the loch, which is also the site of “Ellen’s Isle,” made famous by Scott in *The Lady of the Lake*, which is set in this region. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A reference to the *badia*  (“abbey”) of San Domenico di Fiesole, near Florence. The monastery was founded in 1028 on the site of an earlier cathedral of Fiesole and was first a Benedictine congregation. Later, after 1445, it fell into the hands of the Augustinians. It was entirely rebuilt in 1456-66 after plans by a pupil of Brunelleschi under the patronage of Cosimo de’ Medici, *Pater Patriae.* Under Lorenzo the Magnificient, Cosimo’s grandson, this harmonious set of buildings was a frequent meeting place of the Platonic Academy, and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola resided here for some time. In Ruskin’s time the ruins of the printing establishment of the Florentine scholar Francesco Inghirami filled the site, but two years after this visit the Padri Scolopi (“Brothers of Christian Schools”) established one of their institutions in the edifice. See the catalogue in *Works*, XXXVIII, 251, numbers 676-80. A note in Ruskin, *Diaries*, III, 806, says that he “got pretty sketch of San Domenico of Fiesole, in calm sweet evening.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Letter 161.* MS: NLS, 556.96. Hitherto unpbd.

   Rev. Whitwell Elwin (1816-1900), a former editor of the *Quarterly Review* (1853-60). In 1871 and 1872 he published five volumes of his edition of the works of Pope, with notes both biographical and critical. The edition was finished by W.J. Courthope during the years 1881-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ruskin has been an admirer of Pope since his early youth. Mary Aitken’s “mischievousness” must have come from her knowledge that Ruskin had already attacked Elwin in print. *Fors Clavigera*, letter 32, for instance, contains Ruskin’s resolution, made in August 1873, to “at least rescue Pope from the hands of his present scavenger biographer” (*Works*, XXVII, 586). The “Fors” that Ruskin thanks Mary for reading may be letter 40, written in April 1874. It has a long note defending Pope against Elwin, and its argument follows the one expressed above (*Works*, XXVIII, 76): “He [Pope] cringed—yes—to his friends;…to how many more than their friends do average clergymen cringe?...and for lying—any average partisan of religious dogma tells more lies in his pulpit in defence of what in his heart he knows to be indefensible, on any given Sunday, than Pope did in his whole life. Nay, how often is your clergyman himself nothing but a lie rampant…” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Characters in Dickens’*Oliver Twist* (1837-39) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Pope’s *Essay on Man*, IV, 323-24.

   *Letter 163*. MS: NLS, 556.97. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A letter is enclosed from Frances D. Colenso, daughter of Bishop Colenso, to Ruskin describing how her father had been “fighting, almost single-handed, against falsehood and wrong” and “the amazing falseness of the people in power” in Natal. The letter is dated July 15, 1874, and therefore is relevant to Ruskin’s letter of July 19 (Letter 152). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Letter 164.*  MS: NLS, 556.99. Hitherto unpbd.

   Ruskin had already paid one visit to Carlyle, on October 25, and the visit mentioned in this letter was made on October 30. It is described at some length in *Praeterita* (*Works,* XXXV, 460) as a pleasant visit in which Carlyle talked about his early life and the death of his sister Margaret. Ruskin’s diary records further pleasant visits made to Carlyle on November 7, 21 and 24. For Carlyle’s description of these visits, see his letter to his brother John on November 6, in the Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Letter 165.* MS: NLS, 556.100. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 148. The MS has “Post Mark 28 Nov., 1874” in another hand.

   Rose La Touche was, in fact, only a few months from death. In January 1875, Ruskin wrote in *Fors Clavigera* (letter 49) that she was dying. See *Works*, XXVIII, 246. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The “Somerville” portrait of John Knox, at the National Portrait Gallery in South Kensington, was currently the subject of Carlyle’s study, and was to be discussed by him in his “Essay on the Portraits of John Knox,” published in *Fraser’s Magazine* in April 1875. Henry Merritt’s report on it is printed at the end of this essay. See also Letter 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ruskin’s rustic, communal society, for which *Fors Clavigera* was written. See Letters 108 and 176. For Carlyle’s opinion of the organization, see the Introduction.

    *Letter 166.* MS: NLS, 556.101. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “P.M.k 7 Decr, ’74” in another hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ruskin had opened a tea shop on Paddington Street in London, designed to supply his customers with pure tea at a very low price. He put it in the care of two of his mother’s old servants, and debated on the color of the shop sign at great length in *Fors Clavigera*, letter 48 (*Works*, XXVIII, 246). In this letter to Mary Aitken, Ruskin enclosed a business card, which reads “Mr. Ruskin’s Teashop, kept/by Lucy and Harriet Tovy / ~~Tea and Coffee Dealer~~/ 29 Paddington Street, W.” The shop did little business however, and finally closed when one of the old servants died. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ruskin here sends part of a letter from Blanche Atkinson (see Letter 130). “I think of that grand old Carlyle,” she says, “it’s his birthday again on Friday. How glad we ought to be that we have him still among us! It vexes me so, that the whole nation does not show its pride and delight in him, before he is gone. We have still a king in the earth and we take no notice of him…” The “word of advice” may be found in *Good Words*, XXXIII (1892), 460, where a letter from Carlyle to Miss Atkinson, written on October 29, 1866, is printed. In it Carlyle advised her that “a young lady’s chief duty and outlook is not to write novels…but…to be queen of a household.” [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Letter 167.* MS: NLS, 556.102. Ruskin has erroneously dated the letter 1874. Hitherto unpbd.

    Ruskin encloses a letter from Henry Merritt concerning the “Somerville”portrait of Knox (see Letter 165). Merritt explains that the picture is “far out of reach” at the National Portrait Gallery, and that the illness of the gallery’s secretary has prevented his seeing it better. He adds that it “looks to belong to the period of Knox, when Anthony More and Lucas Deheere practiced portrait painting in England…”

    *Letter 168.* MS: NLS, 556.104. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Franz Pourbus the elder (1545-81) was thought to be the painter of the “Somerville” portrait of John Knox, but Merritt’s opinion, as well as that of others, was that the portrait was only a copy of one done in the time of the elder Pourbus, who worked exclusively in the Burgundian circle. Pourbus never got further away from his birthplace in Bruges than Antwerp. See Carlyle’s *Works*, XXX, 365-67.

    *Letter 169.* MS: NLS, 556.121. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *Letter 170*. MS: NLS, 556.105. Hitherto unpbd.

    Carlyle’s *The Early Kings of Norway: Also an Essay on the Portraits of John Knox* (May 1875). The book was dedicated by Carlyle “to dear, ethereal Ruskin, whom God preserve.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ruskin was a charter member of the Arundel Society, founded in 1849. Its purpose was to provide instruction on works of art, especially those that were fading or crumbling away and had not been described, identified, or copied. See Letter 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Letter 171.* MS: NLS, 556.106. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 167-68.

    Ruskin’s *Notes on the Royal Academy*, *1875*. See *Works*, XIV, 260-306. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Rose La Touche died on May 29, 1875. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Letter 172.* MS: NLS, 556.107. Hitherto unpbd. The MS “12 July, 1875” in another hand.

    *Letter 173.* MS: NLS, 556.108. Hitherto unpbd.

    Ruskin describes a visit with Carlyle in a letter to Mrs. Severn dated June 26, 1875 (in *Works,* XXXVII, 169). On this occasion, Carlyle took Ruskin to see the sculptor J.E. Boehm, who did a bust of Carlyle and was to do one of Ruskin as well. For additional details see Letter 133, n.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Letter 174.* MS: NLS, 556.109. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “September 1, 1875” in another hand.

    George Allen, Ruskin’s publisher. See Letter 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The “new books” could be *Mornings in Florence, Deucalion, Notes on the Royal Academy, 1875,* or any of the letters of *Fors Clavigera*, numbers 49-56—all published before September 1875. Just how pleased Carlyle was with them is questionable. See his comments in his letters to his brother John on September 9 and October 26, in the Introduction.

    *Letter 175.* MS: NLS, 556.110. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 186. The MS has “PMk Nov. 27, 1875” in another hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The “Studies in the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds,” delivered throughout the month of November at Oxford. For the “nicish little bit,” see *Works,* XXII, 507. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. A Lecture on the Spanish Chapel in S. Maria Novella in Florence. See Cook, II, 269, for a glimpse of the “impression” this lecture, and Ruskin’s lectures at Oxford, made upon his hearers. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Letter 176.* MS: NLS, 556.111. Pbd. Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 192.

    *Uli der Knecht*, a novel by Jeremias Gotthelf (Albert Bitzius). See Letters 97 and 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. In July, Ruskin had finished drafting the constitution of his St George's Guild, which was granted a license by the Privy Council in 1878. The poet William Allingham, in his diary for March 6, 1876, mentions a conversation with Carlyle about “St. George’s Society, which Carlyle thinks an absurdity, and gives nothing to” (*William Allingham’s Diary*, introd. by Geoffrey Grigson [Carbondale, III., 1967], p.245). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Broadlands was the home of Ruskin’s Irish friend, Mrs. Cowper-Temple, whom he had recently visited. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, a projected series of books chosen by Ruskin to be put into a special library for the use of the people of St. George’s Guild. Both Xenophon and Gotthelf were to be part of this series though the latter was later excluded. See Ruskin’s *Works,* volumes XXXI and XXXII.

    *Letter 177.* MS: NLS, 556.112. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “Post Mk, 6 March, 1876” in another hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Baron Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), a German naturalist, traveler, and statesman. Ruskin refers in this letter to Humboldt’s *Kosmos* (1845-62), a description of the physical universe. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. In *Fors Clavigera*, letter 63 (*Works*, XXVIII, 553), Ruskin speaks of snail shells and mentions “a French snail, revolutionary in the manner of a screw.” [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Letter 178.* MS: Frederick W. Hilles. Hitherto unpbd.

    *Letter 179.* MS not located. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXIII, 344.

    Lady Victoria Alexandrina Montagu Douglas Scott, wife of Schomberg Henry Kerr, ninth Marquess of Lothian. They had been married in 1865 and succeeded to the title in 1870. The marchioness died in 1938.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The “Blue Coat School” was Christ’s Hospital, of which Ruskin was a governor. See *Time and Tide* (*Works*, XVII, 418), where Ruskin discusses the nature of people who send him such “anxious” letters. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Gotthelf’s *Uli der Knecht*. See Letter 177. The translation eventually was done by Mrs. Julia Firth, and was published as *Ulric the Farm Servant: A Story of the Bernese Lowland*, in nine parts, from July 1886 to October 1888, with a preface and notes by Ruskin. See *Works,*  XXXII. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A note by Mrs. Firth (*Works*, XXXII, 344) adds: “This must have been a dialect edition; the one I used was in ordinary; the one I used was in ordinary German with occasional patois.”

    *Letter 180.* MS: NLS, 556.113. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ruskin was rereading Carlyle’s *Frederick the Great* in preparation for the “Notes on Frederick the Great” he was to publish in *Fors Clavigera.* [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. *Letter 181.* MS: NLS, 556.114. Hitherto unpbd.

    The St. George’s Museum inSheffield. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ruskin was in Venice to gather material for a new edition of his *The Stones of Venice*, which was originally published in 1851-53 (see Letter 1). The new edition was finally issued in 1879-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. A reference to Frederick Barbarossa’s wars in Italy. Carlyle, in his *Frederick the Great*, volume 1, book ii, chapter 5 (*Works*, XII, 82), called Barbarossa “the greatest of all the Kaisers of that or any other House…A magnificent magnanimous man.” Ruskin, in *Fiction Fair and Foul*, no.IV (*Works,* XXXIV, 355), says “My own estimate of Frederic’s [Barbarossa’s] character would be scarcely so favourable; it is the only point of history on which I have doubted the authority even of my own master, Carlyle.” [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *Rock Honeycomb: Broken Pieces of Sir Philip Sidney’s Psalter, Laid Up in Store for English Homes* (Orpington, 1877). It was volume II of the *Bibliotheca Pastorum* series. See *Works*, XXXI. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. *Scottish Song: A Selection of the Choicest Lyrics of Scotland* (1874), compiled and arranged by Mary Aitken. On the verso of the half-title page of the edition is marked “Golden Treasury Series”.

    *Letter 182.* MS: NLS, 556.115. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The biography was never written, but the notes can be found in several of the *Fors* *Clavigera* letters. See *Works*, XXVII, 564-601 and 606-21; XXIX, 541-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See Letter 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Published in 1876 as *St. Mark’s Rest: The History of Venice, Written for the Help of the Few Travellers Who Still Care for Her Monuments.* See *Works,* XXIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See *Fors Clavigera*, letter 73 (*Works*, XXIX, 13-29), which deals with these problems, and which is dated November 20, 1876. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Reverend Richard St. John Tyrwhitt (1827-95), Ruskin here misspells the name “Tyrrwhitt.” Besides being connected with Ruskin and the church, Tyrwhitt was well known as a writer on art and as an artist, especially at Oxford. See the doctoral dissertation by Jay Wood Claiborne, “Two Secretaries: The Letters of John Ruskin to Charles Augustus Howell and the Rev. Richard St. John Tyrwhitt,” the University of Texas at Austin, 1969. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. For Ruskin’s interrogation of Dr. James Fraser, bishop of Manchester (1870-85), see “Usury; A Reply and a Rejoinder,” in *Works*, XXXIV, 405-25. For Ruskin’s private challenge to both Fraser and Professor Henry Fawcett concerning usury and interest, see *Fors Clavigera,* letter 78 (June 1877), in *Works,* XXIX, 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The allusions are to Carlyle’s *Past and Present* (1843) and the nuisance caused by cocks crowing beside Carlyle’s complaints about this noisy incident. Ruskin, in a letter to C.E. Norton on August 28, 1886 (*Works,* XXXVII, 569), comments with grim humor: “How many wiser folk than I go mad for good and all…like poor Turner at the last, Blake always, Scott in his pride, Irving in his faith, and Carlyle because of the poultry next door.” [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See *French Pictures in English Chalk*, by E.C. Grenville Murray (1876). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *Letter 185.* MS: NLS, 556.118. Hitherto unpbd.

    *Letter 186.* MS: NLS, 556.119. Hitherto unpbd.

    See *Fors Clavigera*, letter 75 (*Works*, XXIX, 55). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. See Letter 161, n.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. *Letter 187.* MS: NLS, 556.120. Hitherto unpbd.

    See Carlyle’s *Works,* XVII, 202-15. Frederick’s brother, Prince August-Wilhelm, was bombarded and trounced by Prince Charles of Lorraine and the Austrians at Zittau. Frederick then wrote him an angry letter accusing him of treasonable cowardice, and the prince died soon afterward—of a broken heart, it was rumoured. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. “On the Crisis” in the *Times*, May 5, 1877. This letter, on Disraeli’s foreign policy was Carlyle’s last public word. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *Letter 188.* MS: NLS, 556.123. Hitherto unpbd.

    An entry in Ruskin’s diary for July 14, 1877 (*Diaries*, III, 965) may have some relevance here. “Stopped at Oxford, he says, “found …Carlyle’s last gift to me—the portrait of Knox.”

    *Letter 189.* MS: NLS, 556.122. Hitherto unpbd. Although Ruskin used letterhead stationery from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, for this letter, it was actually dated at Herne Hill. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Letter 190.* MS: NLS, 556.124. Hitherto unpbd.

    *Letter 191.* MS: NLS, 556.125. Pbd: J. Ruskin, *Letters to M[ary] G[ladstone] and H[elen] G[ladstone]*  (New York, 1903), pp x-xi; and (with omissions) in Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 237.

    Alfred Lyttelton, a nephew of Gladstone, whom Ruskin was visiting in Hawarden at the time. Lyttleton describes his visit in Wilson, VI, 423. Carlyle, he says, at first “groaned and sighed a good deal, receiving kindly enough, however, Ruskin’s kiss, most tenderly given.” See also Introduction.

    *Letter 192.* MS: NLS, 556.126. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Dr H. Montague Butler, then headmaster of Harrow School. Ruskin had given a collection of minerals to Harrow in 1866.

    *Letter 194*. MS: NLS, 556.128. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 248-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ruskin suffered an attach of delirium from February 23 until early June. Wilenski and many others agree that he suffered from a form of manic-depressive psychosis that had been building for years. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. See Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. See Ruskin’s*Works*, XXII, 445-47; and Letter 111, n.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See *The Bible of Amiens*, Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXIII, 92-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Later, in 1880, when Ruskin was amending Lord Avebury’s list of the “Best Hundred Books,” he crossed out Gibbon’s name. See *Works*, XXXIV, 582-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. See Carlyle’s *Heroes and Hero-Worship, Works,* V, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Letter 195.* MS: NLS, 556.129. Hitherto unpbd.

    *Letter 196.* MS: NLS, 556.130. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVII, 278.

    In a letter to C.E. Norton, February 27, 1879, Ruskin speaks of “being summoned to London to give evidence on a charge of forgery” (*Works*, XXXVII, 276) [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. For Carlyle’s explanation of Ruskin’s absence, see Introduction.

    *Letter 197.* MS: NLS, 556.131. Hitherto unpbd.

    *Letter 198.* MS: NLS, 556.132. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Mary Aitken married Alexander Carlyle, son of Carlyle’s brother Alick, in the summer of 1879.

    *Letter 199.* MS: NLS, 556.133. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works,* XXXVII, 303-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. The first edition of *Letters to the Clergy*, privately printed in October 1879. See *Works*, XXXIV, 179. For the “talk about pictures,” see *Notes on Prout and Hunt, Works,* XIV, 369-452. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ruskin’s remarks to Froude remain unknown, but six weeks later, in *Fors Clavigera*, letter 88 (February 8, 1880), he remarked of Froude that “year by year his words have grown more hesitating and hopeless.” He then added further derogatory remarks about Froude’s Protestantism and belief in progress. See *Works,* XXIX, 387 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)