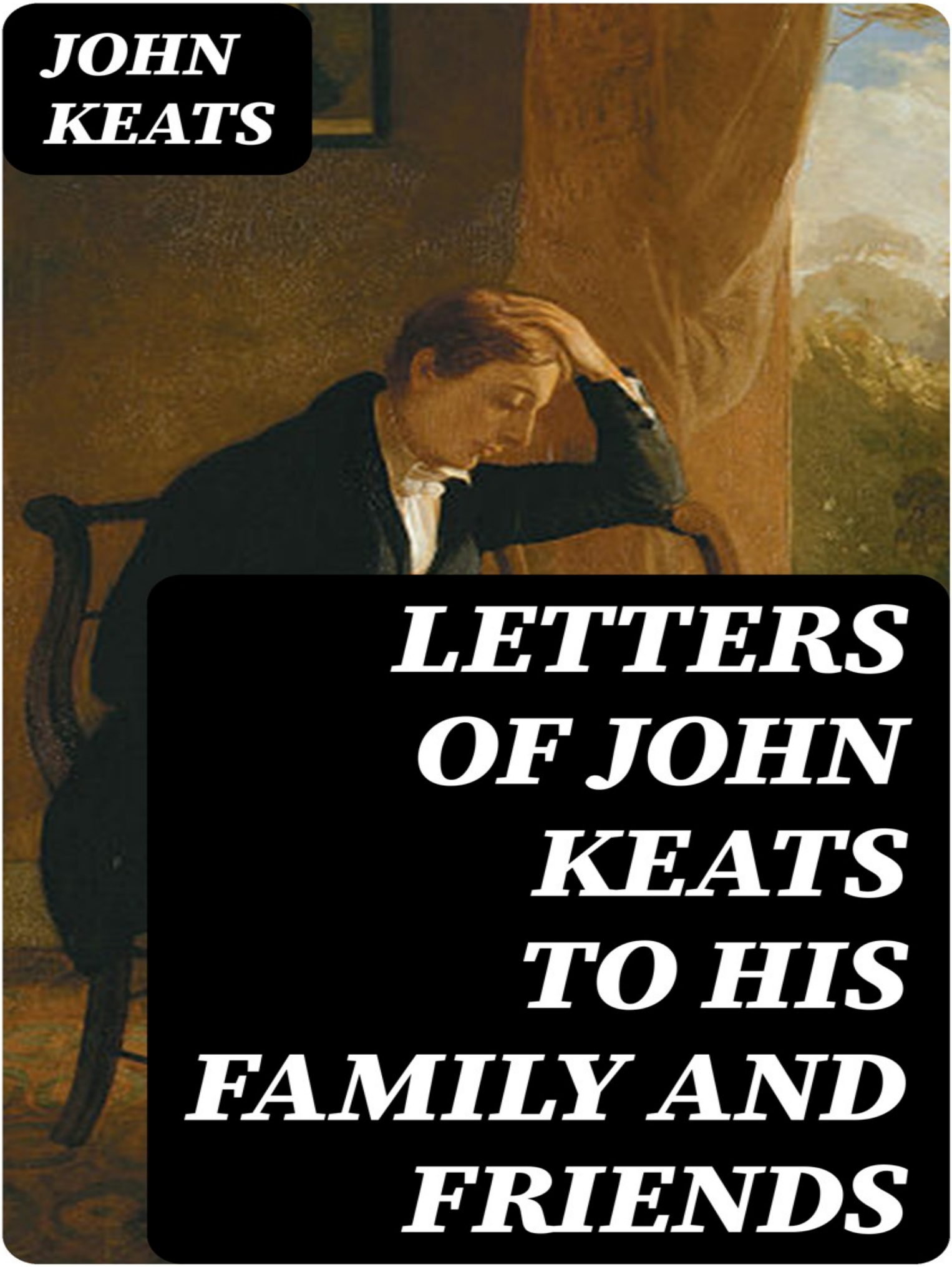
JOHN KEATS
LETTERS OF JOHN KEATS TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS

John Keats

Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends

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PREFACE

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The object of the present volume is to supply the want, which many readers must have felt, of a separate and convenient edition of the letters of Keats to his family and friends. He is one of those poets whose genius makes itself felt in prose-writing almost as decisively as in verse, and at their best these letters are among the most beautiful in our language. Portions of them lent an especial charm to a book charming at any rate—the biography of the poet first published more than forty years ago by Lord Houghton. But the correspondence as given by Lord Houghton is neither accurate nor complete. He had in few cases the originals before him, but made use of copies, some of them quite fragmentary, especially those supplied him from America; and moreover, working while many of the poet's friends were still alive, he thought it right to exercise a degree of editorial freedom for which there would now be neither occasion nor excuse. While I was engaged in preparing the life of Keats for Mr. Morley's series some years since, the following materials for an improved edition of his letters came into my hands:—

(1) The copies made by Richard Woodhouse, a few years after Keats's death, of the poet's correspondence with his principal friends, viz. the publishers, Messrs. Taylor and Hessey; the transcriber, Woodhouse himself, who was a young barrister of literary tastes in the confidence of those gentlemen; John Hamilton Reynolds, solicitor, poet,

humourist, and critic (born 1796, died 1852); Jane and Mariane Reynolds, sisters of the last-named, the former afterwards Mrs. Tom Hood; James Rice, the bosom friend of Reynolds, and like him a young solicitor; Benjamin Bailey, undergraduate of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, afterwards Archdeacon of Colombo (1794?-1852), and one or two more.

(2) The imperfect copies of the poet's letters to his brother and sister-in-law in America, which were made by the sister-in-law's second husband, Mr. Jeffrey of Louisville, and sent by him to Lord Houghton, who published them with further omissions and alterations of his own.

(3) Somewhat later, after the publication of my book, the autograph originals of some of these same letters to America were put into my hands, including almost the entire text of Nos. lxiii. lxxiii. lxxx. and xcii. in the present edition. The three last are the long and famous journal-letters written in the autumn of 1818 and spring of 1819, and between them occupy nearly a quarter of the whole volume. I have shown elsewhere[1] how much of their value and interest was sacrificed by Mr. Jeffrey's omissions.

Besides these manuscript sources, I have drawn largely on Mr. Buxton Forman's elaborate edition of Keats's works in four volumes (1883),[2] and to a much less extent on the edition published by the poet's American grand nephew, Mr. Speed (1884)[3]. Even thus, the correspondence is still probably not quite complete. In some of the voluminous journal-letters there may still be gaps, where a sheet of the autograph has gone astray; and since the following pages have been in print, I have heard of the existence in private collections of one or two letters which I have not been able

to include. But it is not a case in which absolute completeness is of much importance.

In matters of the date and sequence of the letters, I have taken pains to be more exact than previous editors, especially in tracing the daily progress and different halting-places of the poet on his Scotch tour (which it takes some knowledge of the ground to do), and in dating the successive parts, written at intervals sometimes during two or three months, of the long journal-letters to America. On these particulars Keats himself is very vague, and his manuscript sometimes runs on without a break at points where the sense shows that he has dropped and taken it up again after a pause of days or weeks.[4] Again, I have in all cases given in full the verse and other quotations contained in the correspondence, where other editors have only indicated them by their first lines. It is indeed from these that the letters derive a great part of their character. Writing to his nearest relatives or most intimate friends, he is always quoting for their pleasure poems of his own now classical, then warm from his brain, sent forth uncertain whether to live or die, or snatches of doggrel nonsense as the humour of the moment takes him. The former, familiar as we may be with them, gain a new interest and freshness from the context: the latter are nothing apart from it, and to print them gravely, as has been done, among the Poetical Works, is to punish the levities of genius too hard.

As to the text, I have followed the autograph wherever it was possible, and in other cases the manuscript or printed version which I judged nearest the autograph; with this exception, that I have not thought it worth while to preserve

mere slips of the pen or tricks of spelling. The curious in such matters will find them religiously reproduced by Mr. Buxton Forman wherever he has had the opportunity. The poet's punctuation, on the other hand, and his use of capitals, which is odd and full of character, I have preserved. As is well known, his handwriting is as a rule clear and beautiful, quite free from unsteadiness or sign of fatigue; and as mere specimens for the collector, few autographs can compare with these close-written quarto (or sometimes extra folio) sheets, in which the young poet has poured out to those he loved his whole self indiscriminately, generosity and fretfulness, ardour and despondency, boyish petulance side by side with manful good sense, the tattle of suburban parlours with the speculations of a spirit unsurpassed for native poetic gift and insight.

The editor of familiar correspondence has at all times a difficult task before him in the choice what to give and what to withhold. In the case of Keats the difficulty is greater than in most, from the ferment of opposing elements and impulses in his nature, and from the extreme unreserve with which he lays himself open alike in his weakness and his strength. The other great letter-writers in English are men to some degree on their guard: men, if not of the world, at least of some worldly training and experience, and of characters in some degree formed and set. The phase of unlimited youthful expansiveness, of enthusiastic or fretful outcry, they have either escaped or left behind, and never give themselves away completely. Gray is of course an extreme case in point. With a masterly breadth of mind he unites an even finicking degree of academic fastidiousness

and personal reserve, and his correspondence charms, not by impulse or openness, but by urbanity and irony, by ripeness of judgment and knowledge, by his playful kindliness towards the few intimates he has, and the sober wistfulness with which he looks out, from his Pisgah-height of universal culture, over regions of imaginative delight into which it was not given to him nor his contemporaries to enter fully. To take others differing most widely both as men and poets: Cowper, whether affectionately “chatting and chirping” to his cousin Lady Hesketh, or confiding his spiritual terrors to the Rev. John Newton, that unwise monitor who would not let them sleep,—Cowper is a letter-writer the most unaffected and sincere, but has nevertheless the degree of reticence natural to his breeding, as well as a touch of staidness and formality proper to his age. Byron offers an extreme contrast; unrestrained he is, but far indeed from being unaffected; the greatest attitudinist in literature as in life, and the most brilliant of all letter-writers after his fashion, with his wit, his wilfulness, his flash, his extraordinary unscrupulousness and resource, his vulgar pride of caste, his everlasting restlessness and egotism, his occasional true irradiations of the divine fire. Shelley, again—but he, as has been justly said, must have his singing robes about him to be quite truly Shelley, and in his correspondence is little more than any other amiable and enthusiastic gentleman and scholar on his travels. To the case of Keats, at any rate, none of these other distinguished letter-writers affords any close parallel. That admirable genius was from the social point of view an unformed lad in the flush and rawness of youth. His passion

for beauty, his instinctive insight into the vital sources of imaginative delight in nature, in romance, and in antiquity, went along with perceptions painfully acute in matters of daily life, and nerves high-strung in the extreme. He was moreover almost incapable of artifice or disguise. Writing to his brothers and sister or to friends as dear, he is secret with them on one thing only, and that is his unlucky love-passion after he became a prey to it: for the rest he is open as the day, and keeps back nothing of what crosses his mind, nothing that vexes or jars on him or tries his patience. His character, as thus laid bare, contains elements of rare nobility and attraction—modesty, humour, sweetness, courage, impulsive disinterestedness, strong and tender family affection, the gift of righteous indignation, the gift of sober and strict self-knowledge. But it is only a character in the making. A strain of hereditary disease, lurking in his constitution from the first, was developed by over-exertion and aggravated by mischance, so that he never lived to be himself; and from about his twenty-fourth birthday his utterances are those of one struggling in vain against a hopeless distemper both of body and mind.

If a selection could be made from those parts only of Keats’s correspondence which show him at his best, we should have an anthology full of intuitions of beauty, even of wisdom, and breathing the very spirit of generous youth; one unrivalled for zest, whim, fancy, and amiability, and written in an English which by its peculiar alert and varied movement sometimes recalls, perhaps more closely than that of any other writer (for the young Cockney has Shakspeare in his blood), the prose passages of *Hamlet* and

Much Ado about Nothing. Had the correspondence never been printed before, were it there to be dealt with for the first time, this method of selection would no doubt be the tempting one to apply to it. But such a treatment is now hardly possible, and in any case would hardly be quite fair; since the object, or at all events the effect, of publishing a man's correspondence is not merely to give literary pleasure —it is to make the man himself known; and the revelation, though it need not be wholly without reserve, is bound to be just and proportionate as far as it goes. Even as an artist, in the work which he himself published to the world, Keats was not one of those of whom it could be said, "his worst he kept, his best he gave." Rather he gave promiscuously, in the just confidence that among the failures and half-successes of his inexperienced youth would be found enough of the best to establish his place among the poets after his death. Considering all things, the nature of the man, the difficulty of separating the exquisite from the common, the healthful from the diseased, in his mind and work, considering also the use that has already been made of the materials, I have decided in this edition to give the correspondence almost unpruned; omitting a few passages of mere crudity, hardly more than two pages in all, but not attempting to suppress those which betray the weak places in the writer's nature, his flaws of taste and training, his movements of waywardness, irritability, and morbid suspicion. Only the biographer without tact, the critic without balance, will insist on these. A truer as well as more charitable judgment will recognise that what was best in Keats was also what was most real, and will be fortified by

remembering that to those who knew him his faults were almost unapparent, and that no man was ever held by his friends in more devoted or more unanimous affection while he lived and afterwards.

There is one thing, however, which I have not chosen to do, and that is to include in this collection the poet's love-letters to Fanny Brawne. As it is, the intimate nature of the correspondence must sometimes give the reader a sense of eavesdropping, of being admitted into petty private matters with which he has no concern. If this is to some extent inevitable, it is by no means inevitable that the public should be farther asked to look over the shoulder of the sick and presently dying youth while he declares the impatience and torment of his passion to the object, careless and unresponsive as she seems to have been, who inspired it. These letters too have been printed. As a matter of feeling I cannot put myself in the place of the reader who desires to possess them; while as a matter of literature they are in a different key from the rest,—not lacking passages of beauty, but constrained and painful in the main, and quite without the genial ease and play of mind which make the letters to his family and friends so attractive. Therefore in this, which I hope may become the standard edition of his correspondence, they shall find no place.

As to the persons, other than those already mentioned, to whom the letters here given are addressed:—Shelley of course needs no words; nor should any be needed for the painter Haydon (1786-1846), or the poet and critic Leigh Hunt (1784-1859). Theirs were the chief inspiring influences which determined the young medical student, about his

twentieth year, at the time when this correspondence opens, to give up his intended profession for poetry. Both were men of remarkable gifts and strong intellectual enthusiasm, hampered in either case by foibles of character which their young friend and follower, who has left so far more illustrious a name, was only too quick to detect. Charles Cowden Clarke (1787-1877), the son of Keats's schoolmaster at Enfield, had exercised a still earlier influence on the lad's opening mind, and was himself afterwards long and justly distinguished as a Shakspearean student and lecturer and essayist on English literature. Charles Wentworth Dilke (1789-1864), having begun life in the Civil Service, early abandoned that calling for letters, and lived to be one of the most influential of English critics and journalists; he is chiefly known from his connection with the *Athenæum*, and through the memoir published by his grandson. Charles Brown, afterwards styling himself Charles Armitage Brown (1786-1842), who became known to Keats through Dilke in the summer of 1817, and was his most intimate companion during the two years June 1818 to June 1820, had begun life as a merchant in St. Petersburg, and failing, came home, and took, he also, to literature, chiefly as a contributor to the various periodicals edited by Leigh Hunt. He lived mostly in Italy from 1822 to 1834, then for six years at Plymouth, and in 1841 emigrated to New Zealand, where he died the following year. Joseph Severn (1793-1879) was the son of a musician, himself beginning to practise as a painter when Keats knew him. His devoted tendance of the poet during the last sad months in Italy was the determining event of Severn's career, earning him the

permanent regard and gratitude of all lovers of genius. He established himself for good in Rome, where he continued to practise his art, and was for many years English consul, and one of the most familiar figures in the society of the city.

Lastly, of the poet's own relations, George Keats (1799-1842) after his brother's death continued to live at Louisville in America, where he made and lost a fortune in business before he died. His widow (born Georgiana Augusta Wylie), so often and affectionately addressed in these letters, by and by took a second husband, a Mr. Jeffrey, already mentioned as the correspondent of Lord Houghton. Frances Mary Keats (1803-1889), always called Fanny in the delightful series of letters which her brother addressed to her as a young girl,[5] in course of time married a Spanish gentleman, Señor Llanos, and lived in Madrid to a great old age. Several other members of the poet's circle enjoyed unusual length of days—Mr. William Dilke, for instance, dying a few years ago at ninety, and Mr. Gleig, long Chaplain-General of the Forces, at ninety-two. But with the death of his sister a year and a half ago, passed away probably the last survivor of those who could bear in memory the voice and features of Adonais.

S. C.
May 1891.

LETTERS OF JOHN KEATS
TO
HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS

I.—TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

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[London, October 31, 1816.]

My daintie Davie—I will be as punctual as the Bee to the Clover. Very glad am I at the thoughts of seeing so soon this glorious Haydon and all his creation. I pray thee let me know when you go to Ollier's and where he resides—this I forgot to ask you—and tell me also when you will help me waste a sullen day—God 'ield you[6]—

J. K.

II.—TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

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[London,] November 20, 1816.

My dear Sir—Last evening wrought me up, and I cannot forbear sending you the following—

Yours unfeignedly,

John Keats.

Removed to 76 Cheapside.

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning;
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake:
And lo!—whose stedfastness would never take

A meaner sound than Raphael’s whispering.
And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come;
These, these will give the world another heart,
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings in the human mart?
Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.[7]

III.—TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

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[London,] Thursday afternoon, November 20, 1816.

My dear Sir—Your letter has filled me with a proud pleasure, and shall be kept by me as a stimulus to exertion—I begin to fix my eye upon one horizon. My feelings entirely fall in with yours in regard to the Ellipsis, and I glory in it. The Idea of your sending it to Wordsworth put me out of breath—you know with what Reverence I would send my Well-wishes to him.

Yours sincerely
JOHN KEATS.

IV.—TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

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[London,] Tuesday [December 17, 1816].

My dear Charles—You may now look at Minerva’s Ægis with impunity, seeing that my awful Visage[8] did not turn

you into a John Doree. You have accordingly a legitimate title to a Copy—I will use my interest to procure it for you. I'll tell you what—I met Reynolds at Haydon's a few mornings since—he promised to be with me this Evening and Yesterday I had the same promise from Severn and I must put you in mind that on last All hallowmas' day you gave me your word that you would spend this Evening with me—so no putting off. I have done little to Endymion lately[9]—I hope to finish it in one more attack. I believe you I went to Richards's—it was so whoreson a Night that I stopped there all the next day. His Remembrances to you. (Ext. from the common place Book of my Mind—Mem.—Wednesday—Hampstead—call in Warner Street—a sketch of Mr. Hunt.)—I will ever consider you my sincere and affectionate friend—you will not doubt that I am yours.

God bless you—

JOHN KEATS.

V.—TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

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[London,] Sunday Evening [March 2, 1817?].[10]

My dear Reynolds—Your kindness affects me so sensibly that I can merely put down a few mono-sentences. Your Criticism only makes me extremely anxious that I should not deceive you.

It's the finest thing by God as Hazlitt would say. However I hope I may not deceive you. There are some acquaintances of mine who will scratch their Beards and

although I have, I hope, some Charity, I wish their Nails may be long. I will be ready at the time you mention in all Happiness.

There is a report that a young Lady of 16 has written the new Tragedy, God bless her—I will know her by Hook or by Crook in less than a week. My Brothers' and my Remembrances to your kind Sisters.

Yours most sincerely

JOHN KEATS.

VI.—TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

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[London, March 17, 1817.]

My dear Reynolds—My Brothers are anxious that I should go by myself into the country—they have always been extremely fond of me, and now that Haydon has pointed out how necessary it is that I should be alone to improve myself, they give up the temporary pleasure of living with me continually for a great good which I hope will follow. So I shall soon be out of Town. You must soon bring all your present troubles to a close, and so must I, but we must, like the Fox, prepare for a fresh swarm of flies. Banish money—Banish sofas—Banish Wine—Banish Music; but right Jack Health, honest Jack Health, true Jack Health—Banish health and banish all the world. I must ... if I come this evening, I shall horribly commit myself elsewhere. So I will send my excuses to them and Mrs. Dilke by my brothers.

Your sincere friend
JOHN KEATS.

VII.—TO GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

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[Southampton,] Tuesday Morn [April 15, 1817].

My dear Brothers—I am safe at Southampton—after having ridden three stages outside and the rest in for it began to be very cold. I did not know the Names of any of the Towns I passed through—all I can tell you is that sometimes I saw dusty Hedges—sometimes Ponds—then nothing—then a little Wood with trees look you like Launce's Sister "as white as a Lily and as small as a Wand"—then came houses which died away into a few straggling Barns—then came hedge trees aforesaid again. As the Lamplight crept along the following things were discovered—"long heath broom furze"—Hurdles here and there half a Mile—Park palings when the Windows of a House were always discovered by reflection—One Nymph of Fountain—*N.B. Stone*—lopped Trees—Cow ruminating—ditto Donkey—Man and Woman going gingerly along—William seeing his Sisters over the Heath—John waiting with a Lanthorn for his Mistress—Barber's Pole—Doctor's Shop—However after having had my fill of these I popped my Head out just as it began to Dawn—*N.B. this Tuesday Morn saw the Sun rise*—of which I shall say nothing at present. I felt rather lonely this Morning at Breakfast so I went and unbox'd a

Shakspeare—“There’s my Comfort.”[11] I went immediately after Breakfast to Southampton Water where I enquired for the Boat to the Isle of Wight as I intend seeing that place before I settle—it will go at 3, so shall I after having taken a Chop. I know nothing of this place but that it is long—tolerably broad—has bye streets—two or three Churches—a very respectable old Gate with two Lions to guard it. The Men and Women do not materially differ from those I have been in the Habit of seeing. I forgot to say that from dawn till half-past six I went through a most delightful Country—some open Down but for the most part thickly wooded. What surprised me most was an immense quantity of blooming Furze on each side the road cutting a most rural dash. The Southampton water when I saw it just now was no better than a low Water Water which did no more than answer my expectations—it will have mended its Manners by 3. From the Wharf are seen the shores on each side stretching to the Isle of Wight. You, Haydon, Reynolds, etc. have been pushing each other out of my Brain by turns. I have conned over every Head in Haydon’s Picture—you must warn them not to be afraid should my Ghost visit them on Wednesday—tell Haydon to Kiss his Hand at Betty over the Way for me yea and to spy at her for me. I hope one of you will be competent to take part in a Trio while I am away—you need only aggravate your voices a little and mind not to speak Cues and all—when you have said Rum-ti-ti—you must not be rum any more or else another will take up the ti-ti alone and then he might be taken God shield us for little better than a Titmouse. By the by talking of Titmouse Remember me particularly to all my Friends—give my Love

to the Miss Reynoldses and to Fanny who I hope you will soon see. Write to me soon about them all—and you George particularly how you get on with Wilkinson's plan. What could I have done without my Plaid? I don't feel inclined to write any more at present for I feel rather muzzy—you must be content with this fac simile of the rough plan of Aunt Dinah's Counterpane.

Your most affectionate Brother

JOHN KEATS.

Reynolds shall hear from me soon.

VIII.—TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

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Carisbrooke, April 17th [1817].

My dear Reynolds—Ever since I wrote to my Brothers from Southampton I have been in a taking—and at this moment I am about to become settled—for I have unpacked my books, put them into a snug corner, pinned up Haydon, Mary Queen of Scots, and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a head of Shakspeare which I had not before seen. It is most likely the same that George spoke so well of, for I like it extremely. Well—this head I have hung over my Books, just above the three in a row, having first discarded a French Ambassador—now this alone is a good morning's work. Yesterday I went to Shanklin, which occasioned a great debate in my mind whether I should live there or at Carisbrooke. Shanklin is a most beautiful place—Sloping wood and meadow ground reach round the Chine,

which is a cleft between the Cliffs of the depth of nearly 300 feet at least. This cleft is filled with trees and bushes in the narrow part, and as it widens becomes bare, if it were not for primroses on one side, which spread to the very verge of the Sea, and some fishermen's huts on the other, perched midway in the Balustrades of beautiful green Hedges along their steps down to the sands. But the sea, Jack, the sea—the little waterfall—then the white cliff—then St. Catherine's Hill—"the sheep in the meadows, the cows in the corn." Then, why are you at Carisbrooke? say you. Because, in the first place, I should be at twice the Expense, and three times the inconvenience—next that from here I can see your continent—from a little hill close by the whole north Angle of the Isle of Wight, with the water between us. In the 3rd place, I see Carisbrooke Castle from my window, and have found several delightful wood-alleys, and copses, and quick freshes.[12] As for primroses—the Island ought to be called Primrose Island—that is, if the nation of Cowslips agree thereto, of which there are divers Clans just beginning to lift up their heads. Another reason of my fixing is, that I am more in reach of the places around me. I intend to walk over the Island east—West—North—South. I have not seen many specimens of Ruins—I don't think however I shall ever see one to surpass Carisbrooke Castle. The trench is overgrown with the smoothest turf, and the Walls with ivy. The Keep within side is one Bower of ivy—a colony of Jackdaws have been there for many years. I dare say I have seen many a descendant of some old cawer who peeped through the Bars at Charles the first, when he was there in Confinement. On the road from Cowes to Newport I saw some extensive

Barracks, which disgusted me extremely with the Government for placing such a Nest of Debauchery in so beautiful a place. I asked a man on the Coach about this—and he said that the people had been spoiled. In the room where I slept at Newport, I found this on the Window—“O Isle spoilt by the mil*a*tary!...”

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

ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often ’tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be mov’d for days from where it sometime fell,
When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.
O ye! who have your eye-balls vex’d and tir’d,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
O ye! whose Ears are dinn’d with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody—
Sit ye near some old Cavern’s Mouth, and brood
Until ye start as if the sea Nymphs quired—[13]

April 18th.

Will you have the goodness to do this? Borrow a Botanical Dictionary—turn to the words Laurel and Prunus, show the explanations to your sisters and Mrs. Dilke and without more ado let them send me the Cups Basket and Books they trifled and put off and off while I was in town. Ask them what they can say for themselves—ask Mrs. Dilke wherefore she does so distress me—let me know how Jane has her health—the Weather is unfavourable for her. Tell George and Tom to write. I'll tell you what—on the 23d was Shakspeare born. Now if I should receive a letter from you and another from my Brothers on that day 'twould be a parlous good thing. Whenever you write say a word or two on some Passage in Shakspeare that may have come rather new to you, which must be continually happening, notwithstanding that we read the same Play forty times—for instance, the following from the Tempest never struck me so forcibly as at present,

"Urchins
Shall, for the vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee—"

How can I help bringing to your mind the line—

In the dark backward and abysm of time—

I find I cannot exist without Poetry—without eternal Poetry—half the day will not do—the whole of it—I began with a little, but habit has made me a Leviathan. I had

become all in a Tremble from not having written anything of late—the Sonnet overleaf did me good. I slept the better last night for it—this Morning, however, I am nearly as bad again. Just now I opened Spenser, and the first Lines I saw were these—

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

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

Your sincere Friend

JOHN KEATS.

Direct J. Keats, Mrs. Cook’s, New Village, Carisbrooke.

IX.—TO LEIGH HUNT.

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Margate, May 10, 1817.

My dear Hunt—The little gentleman that sometimes lurks in a gossip’s bowl, ought to have come in the very likeness of a *roasted* crab, and choaked me outright for not

answering your letter ere this: however, you must not suppose that I was in town to receive it: no, it followed me to the Isle of Wight, and I got it just as I was going to pack up for Margate, for reasons which you anon shall hear. On arriving at this treeless affair, I wrote to my brother George to request C. C. C.[14] to do the thing you wot of respecting Rimini; and George tells me he has undertaken it with great pleasure; so I hope there has been an understanding between you for many proofs: C. C. C. is well acquainted with Bensley. Now why did you not send the key of your cupboard, which, I know, was full of papers? We would have locked them all in a trunk, together with those you told me to destroy, which indeed I did not do, for fear of demolishing receipts, there not being a more unpleasant thing in the world (saving a thousand and one others) than to pay a bill twice. Mind you, old Wood's a "very varmint," shrouded in covetousness:—and now I am upon a horrid subject—what a horrid one you were upon last Sunday, and well you handled it. The last Examiner[15] was a battering-ram against Christianity, blasphemy, Tertullian, Erasmus, Sir Philip Sidney; and then the dreadful Petzelians and their expiation by blood; and do Christians shudder at the same thing in a newspaper which they attribute to their God in its most aggravated form? What is to be the end of this? I must mention Hazlitt's Southey.[16] O that he had left out the grey hairs; or that they had been in any other paper not concluding with such a thunderclap! That sentence about making a page of the feeling of a whole life, appears to me like a whale's back in the sea of prose. I ought to have said a word on Shakspeare's Christianity. There are two which I