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19. Warwick Crescent,

W. July 6. '86,

My dear Mr Wise,

I hardly know what you may be thinking of my negligence and indeed want of common gratitude: but when I tell you how it has happened that your kind present has been so long unacknowledged I feel sure that I shall right myself in your eyes. My sister has been dangerously ill - is only just convalescent: and while her anxiety was at the height, I conjecture by the date of your letter which accompanied the parcel, the parcel itself was laid away, with several others, for subsequent examination, for I supposed it was an ordinary book. Judge of my confusion when I find that

The present was so valuable, and yours beside.  
I can only thank you exceedingly, and assure  
you that, on every account, I trust that no  
communication from you, of whatever the nature  
will be kept waiting thus unworthily a second  
time.

Believe me, with repeated thanks,

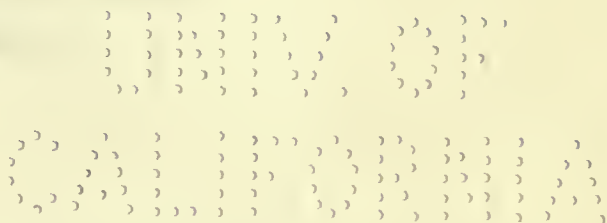
Dear Mr. Wier,

Yours very sincerely

Robert Manning.

LETTERS  
FROM  
ROBERT BROWNING  
TO  
VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS.

Edited by Thomas J. Wise.



VOLUME ONE.

London: Privately Printed.

1895.

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LETTERS.

VOL. I

B



LETTERS OF  
ROBERT BROWNING.



LETTER I.



To MISS SARAH FLOWER.\*

LONDON.

March 9th, [1842.]

MY DEAR MISS FLOWER,

I have this moment received your very kind note. Of course, I understand your objections—how else? But they are somewhat lightened already

\* Sarah Flower, afterwards Mrs. Adams, author of the drama *Vivia Perpetua*, and the hymn *Nearer, my God, to Thee*. She is supposed to have at least partially inspired *Pauline*. She died in 1848.

(confess—nay, “confess” is vile—you will be rejoiced to holla from the house-top)—will go on, or rather go off, lightening, and will be—oh, where *will* they be half a dozen years hence? Meantime praise what you can praise. Do me all the good you can, you and Mr. Fox\* (as if you will not!), for I have a head-full of projects—mean to song-write, play-write forthwith.

And believe me, dear Miss Flower,  
Yours, ever faithfully,

ROBERT BROWNING.

By the way, you speak of *Pippa*. Could we not make some arrangement about it? The Lyrics *want* your music—five or six in all—how say you? When these three plays are out I hope to “build” a huge Ode—but, “all goeth by God’s will!”

\* The Rev. W. Johnson Fox—he wrote appreciative Reviews of *Pauline* in *The Monthly Magazine* (New Series, vol. vii. 1835, pp. 254-262), and of *Paracelsus* in *The Monthly Repository* (No. 107, November, 1835, pp. 716-727). He was M.P. for Oldham for several years.



LETTER II.

---

To JOHN MACREADY.

HANOVER COTTAGE,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

*Monday Morning [circa 1843.]*

MY DEAR MACREADY,

“The luck of the third adventure” is proverbial. I have written a spick and span new Tragedy \* (a sort of compromise between my own notion and yours—as I understand it, at least) and will send it to you if you care to be bothered so far. There is *action* in it, drabbing, stabbing, et autres gentilleses, —who knows but the Gods may make me good even yet? Only, make no

\* *The Blot on the Scutcheon.*

scruple of saying flatly that you cannot spare the time, if engagements of which I know nothing, but fancy a great deal, should claim every couple of hours in the course of this week.

Yours ever truly,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER III.

---

To MR. CHRISTOPHER DOWSON, JR.

NEW CROSS.

*March 10th, [1844.]*

MY DEAR DOWSON,

You may remember I told you my appointment with C. Kean had been for that morning (Monday), and then stood over for the next Saturday (yesterday)—but that, having made an effort and ended work the evening I saw you, I meant to call on Kean the following morning. I did so, but in consequence of my letter, received the day before, his arrangements were made for the week, so that till Saturday the business had to wait. Yesterday I

read my play \* to him, and his charming wife—who is to take the principal part. All went off *au mieux*—but—he wants to keep it till “Easter next year,” and unpublished all the time! His engagement at the Haymarket, next May, is merely for twelve nights, he says. He leaves London for Scotland tomorrow, or next day, and will be occupied for ten hours a day till he returns. My play will take him two months at least to study, he being a special slow-head, and after the Haymarket engagement nothing is to be done till this time next year. Of all which notable pieces of information I was apprised for the first time after the play was read and approved of—for it certainly never entered into my mind that anybody, even an actor, could need a couple of months to study a part, only, in a piece,

\* *Colombe's Birthday*, published in the early summer of 1844 as No. vi. of *Bells and Pomegranates*. The play was first performed at the Haymarket, on Monday April 25th, 1853.

which I could match with such another in less time by a good deal.

But, though I could do such a thing, I have a head—that aches oftener now than of old—to take care of; and, therefore, will do no such thing as let this new work lie stifled for a year and odd, and work double tides to bring out something as likely to be popular this present season. For something I must print, or risk the hold, such as it is, I have at present on my public—and, on consideration of the two other productions I have by me in a state of forwardness, neither seems nearly so proper for the requirements of the moment as this play; and two or three hundred pounds will pay me but indifferently for hazarding the good fortune which appears slowly but not mistakeably setting in upon me, just now. You will not wonder, therefore, that—though I was so far taken by surprise as to promise Kean a copy

for Scotland and a fortnight's grace to come to terms in, before I either published the play or accepted any other party's offer—I say, you will not wonder if I have determined to print it directly. Acting on the best advice, I sent it to press yesterday, and merely put the right of the acting at his disposal—if he will purchase it with such a drawback as Macready would ; for I fear the only other alternative I shall allow—that of his getting up the part for next May—is quite beyond his power. The poorest man of letters (if really of letters) I ever knew is of far higher talent than the best actor I ever expect to know ; nor is there one spangle too many, one rouge-smutch too much on their outside man, for the inward. Can't study a speech in a month ! God help them, and bless you, my dear Dowson, says and prays,

Yours

R. BROWNING.

I will communicate the end of the matter when I have it.

*Christopher Dowson, Jr., Esq.,  
3, Albion Terrace,  
Commercial Road,  
Limehouse.*

## LETTER IV.

To MR. RICHARD HENRY HORNE.\*

LONDON.

January 8th, 1846.

MY DEAR HORNE,

I very sincerely congratulate you on the fine things in this new volume.† *The Swinestead Monk* is admirable, and the Camelott adventure, sylvan "to the height"—perfect! Bedd Gelert is most beautiful too. These I only particularize because the Reviews will be sure to compliment you especially

\* Richard Henry Horne—author of *Orion* (the famous "Farthing Epic"), *The Death of Marlowe*, *Judas Iscariot*, *Cosmo de' Medici*, *The Dreamer and the Worker*, *A New Spirit of the Age*, &c. &c.

† The book referred to here is the *Ballad Romances* (Ollier, 1846), containing some of Horne's best minor work.



on the Bohemian Story,\* though its greatest value to me, by the side of the others, is in the proof it gives to those same Reviews that, as Carlyle has it, Pegasus can furl wing and ride post if it please him, at an approved pace, in an accepted and allowed path. There is good sailor-logic and sailor-language in Ben's adventure † and a funny tingling pelt of ferns, woodruff, lichens, and such like forest-wrack in the Elf legend ‡—and if I rather wish the children away, Grandmamma Grey and all, it is because all good stories, fairy or otherwise, are *meant* for grown-up men, and children only like them in their childish degree. Children should know their place, and look between our knees at such work—not make us look over their heads through the half opened door, as if stealing a fearful joy! Delora remains Delora!

\* *The Noble Heart.*

† *Ben Capstan; a Ballad of the Night-watch.*

‡ *The Elf of the Woodlands; a Child's Story.*

For the whole, thanks and admiration, now and ever, my dear Horne, from

Faithfully yours,

R. B.

Shall I never be satisfied and see reprinted that capital *Merrie Devil of Edmonton*—which first gave me a taste of your quality? It would have gone well between any two in this collection. And remember that the suppression of the notes to *Delora* is only the printers affair.\*

Shall I be so ungrateful as to leave out the famous *Bear History*? † it is furry, warm, and genial.

\* The ballad of *Delora* had first appeared in *The Monthly Repository*, with side-notes in the manner of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*.

† *The Good-Natured Bear; A Story for Children of all Ages*, was published anonymously by Horne (Cundall, 1846) in the same year as the *Ballad Romances*.

LETTER V.

---

To MR. EDWARD MOXON.

PISA, COLLEGIO FERDINANDO.

*February 24th, 1847.*

MY DEAR MOXON,

Many thanks for your note with its good news. I delayed answering it in the expectation of a note from Procter, whom I had asked (as I told you) to lend me his eyes, for I don't trust mine implicitly when they look on home interests through this lazy Italian air. He does not write, however, so I must.

I and my wife think your account a very satisfactory one, and we have commissioned Mr. Kenyon to receive what you promise us; that is to say,

so much of the £75 and odd, as shall remain when you have deducted the proper sum for those advertisements you advise. I suppose £15 will be quite enough for them, so that we take £60 with the best will in the world. All your advertisements are in such good taste, that one needs say nothing about dropping "Esqs." and "Mr's." and "Mrs's." and putting simply R. Bs. and E. B. Bs.

With respect to what you recommend to me in the matter of a new edition, nothing can be more sensible—only, observe, I use the words people put into my mouth when they begin to advise me. They will have it that the form, the cheap way of publication, the double columns, &c., do me harm, keep reviewers from noticing what I write—retard the sale—and so on. For myself, I always liked the packed-up completeness and succinctness, and am not much disposed to care for the criticism that is

refused because my books are not thick as well as heavy. But the point which decided me to wish to get printed over again was the real good I thought I could do to *Paracelsus*, *Pippa*, and some others; good, not obtained by cutting them up and reconstructing them, but by affording just the proper revision they ought to have had before they were printed at all. This, and no more, I fancy, is due to them. But you know infinitely best what our policy is; "ours," for if we keep together, there is not such a thing as your losing while I gain. When you speak of postponing this till my return to England you may be thinking of a speedier return than is probable. I shall certainly stay another year, if not longer, in Italy; but by Christmas, Providence helping, my wife and I want to print a book as well as our betters, after what we think a new and good plan—all which it would be pre-

mature to allude to at present. To return to the matter in hand, therefore, thank you heartily for your kind wishes, and prompt attention to my note. Surely, after all, the account is not unfavourable. If all these "devices" can sell, without a single notice except from the *Examiner*, things will mend some day, we may hope.

I say nothing of my wife's poems and their sale. She is, there as in all else, as high above me as I would have her. She sends her best respects and regards to you—for I must leave off.

And do you, dear Moxon, believe me,

Ever with great sincerity,

Yours,

R. BROWNING.

I look out in the *Times* for your notices, and hope this novel of Knowles' will profit you.

LETTER VI.

---

To DANTE G. ROSSETTI.

102, RUE DE GRENELLE,  
PARIS.

*October 29th, 1855.*

MY DEAR ROSSETTI,

I have taken you at your word—you will receive my portrait forthwith. You must put it in the sun, for I seem to fear it will come but blackly out of its three months' case-hardening. So it fares with Page's pictures for the most part; but they are like Flatman the Poet's famous "Kings" in a great line he wrote—"Kings do not die—they only disappear!" You must tell me your whole mind on its merits—I am anxious to have it—and more, to know

what you think of Bailey's Poem,\* and anybody else's Poem, and other delights—as promised—and as I hungrily expect.

We are in little, inconvenient rooms here, and I have been in continual hot water, the landlady, a "Baronne," profiting by the blunder of an overzealous friend, who took the apartments against my direct orders. But the water is getting tepid now, and we shall do well enough in time, it is to be hoped. I supposed I should find myself in a blessed quietude here after the London worry, but it's much such an improvement as one specified in the case of a Beato my servant was telling me, yesterday, he heard a sermon about, in Naples. The Beato went into a swoon from sheer misery to begin with, and then "Riavutosi un poco il sant' uomo—' Che ho visto tutt'intorno, fra-

\* *The Mystic*, by Philip James Bailey, published in 1855.



telli miei? Figuratevi! Otto cento mild Demoni!"—That's nearly my case. The first comfort came in the shape of a dear, too dear, and good letter from Mr. Ruskin. He spoke befittingly of you in it, too. I have lain perdu and seen nobody.

By the way, let me tell you something. I perceive some blunders in my poems,\* which I shall not, I think, draw attention to, but quietly correct hereafter. But it happens unluckily that the worst of them occur just in a thing I would have you like if it might be—so, please alter the following in your copy, before you begin it, won't you? †

Vol. II.

Page 34, line 3, all their work is—their work is.

7, That a—*dele* That.

35 4, there's its transit—then *sec tran.*

36 3, Change the line to ("Earth here, rebuked by Olympus there)"

\* *Men and Women.*

† These corrections have all been made in the later editions of the poems.

- Page 36, line 4, You grew—And grew.  
 39 6, His face—Man's face.  
 13, the Hopes—new hopes.  
 40 6, Which if on the earth—dele *the*.  
 1, Change the line to: "Give these, I exhort you, their guerdon and glory."  
 44 11, For "Rot or are left to the mercies still," read "Their pictures are left to the mercies still."  
 46 11, For "But a kind of Witanagemot," read "But a kind of sober Witanagemot."  
 13, For "To ponder Freedom restored to Florence," read "Shall ponder, once Freedom restored to Florence."  
 47 12, For "Turning the Bell-tower's altaltissimo," read "And turn the bell-tower's *alt* to *altissimo*."  
 188 18, one called—him called.  
 189 3, one circumcised—and circumcised.  
 231 4, with it—cried too.

I have left myself no room but to wish myself cordially kind remembrances to your Brother.

R. BROWNING.

LETTER VII.

---

TO MR. E. S. DALLAS.\*

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
UPPER WESTBOURNE TERRACE, W.

October 10th, 1868.

MY DEAR MR. DALLAS,

I have only just returned to London after a few weeks' absence abroad, hence, you will have guessed, I hope, the delay in replying to your note. And, upon my word, I could in some sort wish the delay might continue indefinitely, since it has to end with an

\* Eneas Sweetland Dallas, leader writer in *The Times*; author of *The Gay Science*, &c. He was the husband of Miss Glyn, the actress. This letter is probably a reply to a request for a contribution to a short-lived weekly newspaper, *The Mirror*, launched about this time by Mr. Dallas.

unlucky—not “yes”—to everything you ask of me.

The simple fact is, I have not a scrap available for such a purpose as you mention. The business of getting done with some twenty thousand lines\* very effectually suppressed any impulse to whistle between-whiles; and out of the long twenty aforesaid I honestly don't think, and cannot but hope, as an artist, that not a paragraph is extractable as an episode or piece complete in itself. It is gone to press, moreover. Will you please believe that I wish I could do what you want, and ask for so kindly?

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\**The Ring and the Book*, of which volumes i. and ii. were published in 1868, volumes iii. and iv. appearing in the following year.

LETTER VIII.

---

To MR. W. G. KINGSLAND.\*

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*November 27th, 1868.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Will the kindness that induced you to write your very gratifying letter forgive the delay that has taken place in answering it?—an unavoidable delay, for I have been far from well, and oppressed by work.

I am heartily glad I have your sympathy for what I write. Intelligence, by itself, is scarcely the thing with respect to a new book—as

\* Mr. William G. Kingsland, author of *Robert Browning, Chief Poet of the Age*, 8vo, 1887.

Wordsworth says (a little altered), "you must like it before it be worthy of your liking." In spite of your intelligence and sympathy, I can have but little doubt but that my writing has been, in the main, too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with ; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people, as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar, or a game of dominoes, to an idle man. So perhaps, on the whole, I get my desserts and something over,—not a crowd, but a few I value more. Let me remember gratefully that I may class you among these ; while you, in turn, must remember me as

Yours very faithfully,

ROBERT BROWNING.

*Mr. W. G. Kingsland.*

LETTER IX.

---

To RICHARD HENRY HORNE.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*June 25th, 1874.*

DEAR HORNE,

I am indeed glad at your success, tardy as it may be. Nobody can doubt your right to recognition and reward, far beyond what you are likely to get. Gladstone ought not to have let slip this piece of graceful justice, but the Gods are against him just now.\*

Ever truly yours,

R. BROWNING.

\* An unsuccessful application had in 1871 been made to Mr. Gladstone to grant a Civil List pension to Mr. Horne, in recognition partly of his literary claims, and partly of his Government services in Victoria. Among the signatures to the petition were those of Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Wm. Morris, Swinburne, D. G. Rossetti, and Matthew Arnold. In June, 1874, Lord Beaconsfield granted the pension.

## LETTER X.\*

TO THE REV. ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*February 24th, 1875.*

DEAR MR. GROSART,

I have been asked the question you now address me with, and as duly answered it, I can't remember how many times : there is no sort of objection to one more assurance, or rather confession, on my part that I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerable personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model ; one from which this or the other particular

\* Previously printed in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, edited by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, London, 1876, Vol. I., p. xxxvii.



feature may be selected and turned to account : had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about "handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon." These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet ; whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. But just as in the tapestry on my wall I can recognise figures which have *struck out* a fancy, on occasion, that though truly enough thus derived, yet would be preposterous as a copy, so, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem,\* I altogether refuse to have it considered as the "very effigies" of such a moral and intellectual superiority.

Faithfully yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* *The Lost Leader.*

## LETTER XI.

---

To MR. JOHN H. INGRAM.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*February 10th, 1876.*

DEAR SIR,

I hope I need not assure you that the letter you mention having written two years ago never reached me—an answer would certainly have acknowledged it.

I am quite unable to give you the least information on the various points you specify. I never heard anything whatever from my wife on the subject of Poe, or her contributions (if any there were) to his Magazine.

I remember however Mr. Buchanan

Read,\* who was well acquainted with Poe, telling me as characteristic of the latter that he had described to him—Mr. Read—the whole process of the construction of his poem of *The Raven*, and declared that the suggestion of it lay wholly in a line from *Geraldine's Courtship*—“with a murmurous stir uncertain, in the air the purple curtain,” &c. I am bound to add what he added “And yet, long afterward, just to answer another purpose, he printed an elaborate account of his selecting a long word, then looking out for another—with much more of the kind—and all a lie.” The consequence has been that a charge of imitation, if not plagiarism, has been brought against the wrong person.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours obediently,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* Thomas Buchanan Read, a prolific, but now forgotten, American poet (1822-1872).

## LETTER XII.

---

To MR. JOHN H. INGRAM.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*February 11th, 1876.*

DEAR SIR,

I am quite sure that all is exactly as you say. I hope I told you distinctly that I was ignorant altogether on those points you mentioned. I do not remember the Mr. Thompson you quote from, but am quite sure that the "strong desire to see Poe's memory vindicated from moral aspersion" must have been simply an echo of a desire of his own. We neither of us had heard, at that time, any aspersion at all; and my wife could have known nothing one way or the other so as to

do more than express a naturally "strong desire" that if a man of genius had been "aspersed," the aspersion should be removed by all means.

Mr. Bayard Taylor was, and is, my friend.\* As to our great admiration for Poe's power, that anybody who cared to question my wife or myself on the subject would be certain to hear. The notion that *The Raven* was derived from *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* is truly absurd; and I considered the statement of Poe himself, that he had really so derived any particle of it (except perhaps the measure, which belongs to whoever can manage it) as equally absurd. I believe he *did* make such a statement to Read, whose veracity I see no reason to doubt; and certainly my impression is that in Poe's *Philosophy of Composition* he undertook to show, not merely "how a poem might be written," but,

\* He died in 1878.

by way of example, how *The Raven* actually *was* written.

There is no need to tell me how greedily the little men will catch up and carry about a little lie in the shape of a charge of plagiarism. Last year I wrote, and published, a poem about Aristophanes, and somebody, wholly a stranger to me, reviewing it in *The Athenæum*, observed (for fun's sake, I suppose) that it was "probably written after one of Mr. Browning's Oxford Symposia with Jowett." Whereupon half a dozen other critics reported the poem to be "the transcript of the talk of the Master of Balliol"—whom I have not set eyes on these four years, and with whom I never had a conversation about Aristophanes in my life. Such a love of a lie have the verminous tribe!

Pray believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BROWNING.

## LETTER XIII.

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TO A CORRESPONDENT.\*

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

May 11th, 1876.

DEAR FRIEND,

It would ill become me to waste a word on my own feelings except inasmuch as they can be common to us both, in such a situation as you describe yours to be, and which, by sympathy, I can make mine by the

\* This letter has been previously printed in *The Non-conformist*, and also in *Robert Browning: Chief Poet of the Age*, by W. G. Kingsland. It was written by Mr. Browning to a lady who, believing herself to be dying, wrote to thank him for the help she had derived from his poems, mentioning particularly *Rabbi Ben Ezra* and *Abt Vogler*.

anticipation of a few years at most. It is a great thing, the greatest, that a human being should have passed the probation of life, and sum up its experience in a witness to the power and love of God. I dare congratulate you. All the help I can offer, in my poor degree, is the assurance that I see ever *more* reason to hold by the same hope—and that by no means in ignorance of what has been advanced to the contrary; and for your sake I would wish it to be true that I had so much of ‘genius’ as to permit the testimony of an especially privileged insight to come in aid of the ordinary argument. For I know I, myself, have been aware of the communication of something more subtle than a ratiocinative process, when the convictions of ‘genius’ have thrilled my soul to its depths, as when Napoleon, shutting up the New Testament, said of Christ:



“Do you know that I am an understander of men? Well, He was no man!” (“*Savez-vous que je me connais en hommes? Eh bien, celui-là ne fut pas un homme.*”) Or as when Charles Lamb, in a gay fancy with some friends as to how he and they would feel if the greatest of the dead were to appear suddenly in flesh and blood once more, on the final suggestion, “And if Christ entered this room?” changed his manner at once, and stuttered out, as his manner was when moved, “You see, if Shakespeare entered, we should all rise; if *He* appeared we must kneel.”\* Or, not to multiply instances, as when Dante wrote what I will transcribe from my wife’s Testament, wherein I recorded it fourteen years ago, “Thus I believe,

\* When writing this letter Browning no doubt had in his mind a passage in Hazlitt’s *Essay Persons one would wish to have seen*. There is no evidence that the story is other than apochryphal.

thus I affirm, thus I am certain it is, that from this life I shall pass to another better, there, where that lady lives of whom my soul was enamoured."\* Dear friend, I may have wearied you in spite of your good will. God bless you, sustain, and receive you! Reciprocate this blessing with

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* Two years after the date of this letter, appeared Mr. Browning's *La Saisiaz*, in which the following lines occur:—

*"I take upon my lips  
Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned, and declare  
the soul's eclipse  
Not the soul's extinction. Take his—'I believe and  
I declare—  
Certain am I—from this life I pass into a better,  
there  
Where this lady lives of whom enamoured was my  
soul.'"*

LETTER XIV.

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To MR. EDMUND GOSSE.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT, W.

*July 25th, 1876.*

DEAR MR. GOSSE,

Your goodness confuses me indeed. I am sure you have "looked to like, if looking liking move," and succeeded by virtue of your own generosity. Thank you very much.

I am on the point of leaving town; when I return, let me hope that I may turn our neighbourhood to better account than was possible in the few last weeks of social toil and trouble.

Ever truly yours,

ROBT. BROWNING.

P.S.—Let me tell you there are some odd pieces of oversight in the book\*—attributable to my own carelessness, I believe. Especially, in a poem † written while the earlier sheets were passing through the press, read (page 194), for “aloft”—“from bier” ‡ : (213) for “crowns”—“crowned” § : and (214) for “disbursed”—“unpursed.”\*\* There is also (page 164) in the 8<sup>th</sup> line a “who” for “how.” †† The punctuation—as is the way with printed verse—has been suffered to slip out of the endings, and confuse the sense

\* *Pacchiarotto and How he worked in Distemper*, 1876.

† *Filippo Baldinucci on the Privilege of Burial. A Reminiscence of A.D. 1676.*

‡ Stanza 16, line 2 :

*In just a lady borne aloft [from bier].*

§ Stanza 45, line 2 :

*Resolve me ! Can it be, the crowns,—[crowned,—].*

\*\* Stanza 45, line 7 :

*Only for Mary's sake, disbursed [unpursed].*

†† *Cenciaja*. Page 164, line 8 :

*Relating who [how] the penalty was paid.*

in many instances. In *Numpholeptos* (p. 97) the 8th line should run :  
"So grant me—love—whole, sole,"  
*etc.\**

\* As printed the line reads :

*Love, the love whole and sole without alloy!*

## LETTER XV.

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To MR. H. BUXTON FORMAN.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

October 25th, 1876.

DEAR MR. BUXTON FORMAN,

I find your note, and the kind gift of the book,\* on returning home after a little absence, during the last weeks of which no letters were sent me—which will explain the delay in replying to this of yours. I have no objection whatever to your making what use of

\* The book of which the receipt is here acknowledged was not Mr. Forman's *Robert Browning and the Epic of Psychology*, or *Our Living Poets*, but the first volume of his Library Edition of Shelley.

my poem \* you please, if you really prefer "my own words" to a paraphrase. I got the facts from a contemporaneous account I found in a MS. volume containing the "Relation" of the Cenci affair—with other memorials of Italian crime—lent me by Sir J. Simeon, who published the Cenci Narrative, with notes, in the series of the Philobiblon Society. It was a better copy of the "Relation" than that used by Shelley, differing at least in a few particulars. You may refer to it at the Museum. I believe I have seen somewhere that the translation was made by Mrs. Shelley—the note appended to an omitted passage seems a womanly performance.

There is no allusion to the Cenci case in my *Book*,† except that which I

\* *Cenciája*, which there was some thought of reprinting in the second volume of Shelley's Works, as an illustration of *The Cenci*.

† Not Mr. Browning's poem *The Ring and the Book*, but the "old square yellow book," giving the actual details of the "Roman Murder case" upon

furnished you with. I will give it in full, you can prune away the extraneous matter. Et in rei veritate adduximus in alia quamplurimas Supremorum Senatum Decisiones, quibus liquet fuisse minoratam pœnam Maritis qui etiam mediante Assassinio occidi fecerunt Conjuges, et vice versa nulla affertur Decisio Fisco favorabilis. Qualis sententia eò libentiùs amplectanda est quia à majori numero Doctorum canonizatur. Et licet Farinaccius, et Dominus meus Raynaldus contrariam sectari videantur, nihilominùs Farinaccius in suis "Quæstionibus" nimis se dubium reddidit, ut in alia ostendi: et in "Consiliis." 141. nimis inconstantem se præbuit, dum in "Consiliis." 66. num. 5. contrarium probavit. Quamobrem de hujusmodi inconstantia admonitus se

which the poem is founded. See vol. ii, pp. 419-420 of Mr. Forman's edition of Shelley, where another interesting letter from Mr. Browning to Mr. Forman, bearing upon the same subject, is printed.



excusando asseruit in dictis "Consiliis."  
 141. *sub num.* 16. Beatricem, pro qua scripserat in Cons. 66. fuisse capite obtruncatam quasi quod hujusmodi rigorosa sententia in practica servetur : sed, parcat mihi tam eximius Doctor, nimis incongruè respondit oblitus quæ in fine dicti Consilii. 66. scripta reliquerat, hoc est fuisse punitam Beatricem pœna ultimi supplicii non quia ex intervallo occidi mandavit insidiantem suo honori, sed quia ejus exceptionem non probavit ibi—"Prout, et idem fermitèr sperabatur de sorore Beatrice si propositam excusationem probasset, prout non probavit." (Il. de Archangelis *pro Dom. Guidone Francischino*, marked in the "Book," page 49.)

You may, by the help of the works of Farinacci referred to in the above, hear more on the subject. They are in the Museum, where I consulted them. The Defence of Beatrice exists, as you probably know ; indeed it was

reprinted here some forty years ago by  
Sir George Bowyer.\*

Believe me, dear Mr. Buxton Forman,

Yours very truly,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* The Defence is to be found in a scarce little volume with the title of: *A Dissertation on the Statutes of the Cities of Italy; and a Translation of the Pleading of Prospero Farinacio in Defence of Beatrice Cenci and her relatives: with Notes.* By George Bowyer, Esq. of the Middle Temple, London: 8vo, 1838.

LETTER XVI.

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To MR. H. BUXTON FORMAN.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*March 27th, 1877.*

DEAR MR. FORMAN,

I beg you to forgive a little delay in replying to your letter of last week. I saw and copied certain variations in Shelley's poem when it was in the possession of Mrs. Stisted, of the Bagni di Lucca. She is long since dead, and I suppose her curiosities—for she collected such—were dispersed at the time. The letter in Leigh Hunt's Biography was printed without leave, as was afterwards explained by the writer's supposing I was not in England—though I had been applied to by him for a letter from his father

which I could not lay hands on at the moment. I remember that the printing was "queer," as you say, but I had no copy of the book.

Leigh Hunt told me that the *Lamia* was the only copy procurable in Italy. That he lent it to Shelley with due injunctions to be careful of the loan on that account, and that Shelley replied emphatically: "I will return it you with my own hands." He told me also of the consolation there was to him in the circumstance that the book had been found in Shelley's bosom, together with the right hand—evidently thrust there, as his custom was, when, having been struck by any passage in whatever book he might be reading with a friend, he paused to enjoy and pronounce upon it. This circumstance Leigh Hunt considered decisive as to the suddenness and comparative painlessness of the death. It is altogether incompatible with the truth of the silly

story put into circulation recently. On my asking Leigh Hunt if the book still existed, he replied: "No, I threw it into the burning pile; Shelley said he would return it with his own hands into mine, and so he *shall* return it!" I confess to having felt the grotesqueness of a spirit of a duodecimo as well as that of a man. I remember Leigh Hunt was standing by a piano when he told me this. He had been singing to his own accompaniment the old *Stanco di pascolar le pecorelle*. I observed: "Do you know Shelley has mentioned that air?"\* He did not, though he said it had been a great favourite with Shelley. The mention, you know, is in a note to *The Triumph of Life*. Of course you may make what use you please of these nothings.

Yours truly ever,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* Shelley *alludes* to the air in the poem. The *note* explaining the allusion is by Mary Shelley.

## LETTER XVII.

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To MR. GEORGE BARNETT SMITH.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*April 7th, 1877.*

MY DEAR MR. SMITH,

I have just seen your biographical notice of Tennyson, which is very good. You will be sure to do mine well enough without any help, but, if you send me either the MS. or a Proof, I will correct any mistake I may see, and add whatever occurs to me as necessary. Such of the notices of me and my works as I have seen were faulty enough.

You are quite at liberty to print nine

of the poems you mention—the tenth, *Hervé Riel*, is properly not mine, but Smith's, who gave me a hundred pounds for the use of it—money I sent to the French, when a famine was apprehended in Paris.\* I only included it in the volume published last year at his particular request, and, greatly as I should like to be of the least service to you (as I hope you understand without such assurance) I dare not encroach upon what seem to me his rights. I already have refused a person who applied for the poem a month or two ago. To be sure, he was quite a stranger to me. Indeed, I very well

\* *Hervé Riel* was written in 1867, though not published until 1871. "This spirited poem" (writes Dr. Furnivall, *Browning Society's Papers*, vol. i. p. 65), "was sent to *The Cornhill*, because Browning was asked for a subscription to the Fund for sending food to Paris after the siege by the Germans in 1870-1. Though he condemned Louis Napoleon's war, he wished to help the French in their distress, and he sent to the Fund the £100 that Mr. George Smith gave him for *Hervé Riel*. The subject of the poem, and its generous treatment, surely manyfolded the good-will of the gift. An English poet restored to France its 'Forgotten Worthy.' An Englishman sang the praise of a French sailor's balking the English fleet."

know that if he, Mr. Smith, chose to exercise his voice in the matter, he would lay an embargo on the rest of what we must smuggle out of harbour; but, for your sake, I will risk this much.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.



LETTER XVIII.

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To MR. H. BUXTON FORMAN.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

July 2nd, 1877.

DEAR MR. FORMAN,

I was sorry to be absent on Saturday when you called. Thank you greatly for the new volume, into which I have only had time to dip. I notice what seems an error, page 316: the rainbow-bridge was surely "pieced by the masonry of heaven" \*—just as

\* Shelley's *Charles the First*, Scene ii. (vol. iii. p. 316 of Library Edition): "*The rainbow hung over the city . . . like a bridge of congregated lightning pierced by the masonry of heaven.*" In the re-issue (1882) of the Library Edition Mr. Forman adopted Mr. Browning's suggested emendation—*pieced* for *pierced*.

presently the word occurs : "our minds piece the vacant intervals," page 318.

I prefer, in the *Stanzas at Naples*, "the noon's transparent light," to "might"—which isles and mountains hardly "wear." The line was first restored in a strange edition of Shelley published by Benbow in 1826; and Leigh Hunt, in 1828, quotes the poem without it, remarking on its loss: and it was myself who told him of its existence, to his surprise and pleasure. The notion of light as a *veil* and *transparent* is familiar with Shelley, and the Italian practice of making words rhyme which have the same sound but a different sense, not infrequent. Even in this stanza there is "delight" for "light"'s fellow.

Certainly, by the way, Leigh Hunt is alluded to in the 35th stanza of *Adonais*; I heard so from John Forster, an earlier friend of his. The "dark mantle thrown athwart the brow" is

a characteristic touch. Hunt is seen cloaked, somewhat theatrically, in the portrait by Hayter engraved for the Byron Book.\*

So, you bought my Manuscript the other day.† I made it for the use of Charles Kean and his wife, to whom I read it.§ They would have acted the play—but in perhaps two or three years to come, and in the meantime I was to keep it unprinted—an arrangement which did not suit me—whereupon I withdrew it, and included it in my *Bells and Pomegranates*. It was never in the prompter's hands, I think. The excisions were my own, also the pencil-marks, which emphasize any word in a passage. When it came back from the printer, my father caused the MS. to be bound, and I have no notion how it

\* *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, by Leigh Hunt. The portrait in question was engraved by H. Meyer from a drawing by J. Hayter.

† The Manuscript of *Colombe's Birthday*, fully described in *The Athenæum* for 1st and 15th September, 1894.

§ See *ante*, Letter iii, to Mr. Christopher Dowson, jr.

passed out of his or my possession. It is the single poem in the series that I copied with my own hand, my sister being my amanuensis in those days. I think this bit of comment your due, as the purchaser.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XIX.

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To MR. JOHN H. INGRAM.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*March 12th, 1879.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I have most sincerely to beg your pardon for a seemingly unaccountable piece of negligence in failing to reply at once to your letter of some twelve days ago ; I have only this moment found it misplaced amid a number of papers supposed to be done with. I make haste to say that whatever I mentioned to you about the statement (by no means "remark" merely) of Mr. Buchanan Read as to what Poe alleged to be the cause of his writing *The*

*Raven* being true, and the responsibility for its truth resting wholly with Mr. Read himself, I can have no objection to being cited as your authority for such a statement having been made. Mr. Read did not appear so much convinced that there was any truth in it, as that—to quote his very words—the subsequent elaborate account of the matter was “every word a lie.”

I, also, was in ignorance that my interlocutor at Mr. Rossetti's was a gentleman with whom I had already become acquainted through correspondence, and by other means. I should have been very glad to have acknowledged your kindness.

Pray believe me, My dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XX.

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To MR. EDMUND GOSSE.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT, W.

*June 4th, 1879.*

DEAR MR. GOSSE,

“Mansoor” was one of the names of the third Vatemite Caliph, Biamvallah,—but the word “Hierophant” was used inadvertently. I changed the title to “The Return of the Druses,” and the name to “Djabal.” It is very good of you to care about the circumstance.

May I say how much I was delighted yesterday at the Grosvenor by the two jewel-like pictures\* which I had somehow failed to observe before?

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* Two landscapes by Mrs. Edmund Gosse.

## LETTER XXI.

To MR. JOHN H. INGRAM.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*March 21st, 1880.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am much indebted to the kindness and considerateness of your letter; I hope you will see nothing to the prejudice of those qualities in myself when I assure you that, for reasons of insuperable force to me, I am compelled to refuse any assistance whatever to the writer of the biography which your publisher projects\*—a thing impossible under existing circumstances, to be

\* A suggested biography of Mrs. E. B. Browning, by J. H. Ingram, ultimately published by Messrs. W. H. Allen and Co. in 1888.



done properly, and in many respects improper to be done were it possible.

Had Miss Zimmern decided to attempt it, I would have so far strained a point in favour of a person for whom I have the very highest esteem as to correct any material error in her manuscript. Beyond this, even in her case, I could not go. I must decline this in the case of a stranger, poor assistance as it would probably amount to. I hope you will understand why I think it right to state what I am forced to do as explicitly as I can, and that you will believe with what regret I appear to deny a request you please to make.

Believe me, My dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

ROBERT BROWNING.

## LETTER XXII.

To MR. EDMUND GOSSE.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT, W.

*January 15th, 1881.*

MR DEAR GOSSE,

I fear I shall somewhat disappoint you—I know I am myself disappointed at finding I cannot comply with any request of yours—but here is the case. Robert\* looked at the portrait from the heights of his six or seven months' experience since he painted it, and felt sure he could make certain improvements here and there; but he began these with a bad cold and cough beginning also, and the business of blotting

\* Mr. Robert Barrett Browning.

out was done effectually before anything like substitution could follow, and the result is that the picture is quite useless for your purpose for some time to come—since, after keeping at home for a week under the doctor's hands, he started on Thursday evening, mummy-fashion as to wrappages, in the persuasion that he would only get well when away from London. He was very sorry on all accounts to leave his work in this state, but really was blameless in the matter. If on his return in April you still care to have a photograph for the purpose you mentioned, there shall be no delay in procuring one.

I have had no opportunity of wishing, or rather expressing, a very sincere wish appropriate to the season for Mrs. Gosse and yourself. It is hardly too late now, I hope.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT BROWNING.

## LETTER XXIII.

To MR. EDMUND GOSSE.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT, W.

March 21st, 1881.

MY DEAR GOSSE,

It must be a slip of Horne's memory—no such performance ever took place.\* I fancy he was thinking about a Play, with a "Duchess" in the title, written by Henry Chorley for Miss Cushman, and which she brought out—very likely at the Haymarket—while I was in Italy. I cannot in the least remember how I came to make those

\* Performance, that is, of *Colombe's Birthday* which Horne reported had been given at the Haymarket in 1844, under the title of *The Duchess of Cleves*. *Colombe's Birthday* was first produced—by Miss Faucit—in 1852.—See *Robert Browning Personalia*, by Edmund Gosse, 1890, p. 73.

stage-directions—possibly for some projected performance by Helen Faucit,\* to whom I read the play once. Other matters at that time put such as these quite out of my head.

Yours truly ever,  
R. BROWNING.

I have just heard from America that the author of the parodies on Swinburne and myself is “a young girl named Jones.”

\* Helen Faucit—Lady Theodore Martin.

## LETTER XXIV.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

HÔTEL VIRARD,  
ST. PIERRE DE CHARTREUSE,  
ISÈRE, FRANCE.

*August 29th, 1881.*

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I received your letter, and at the same time the proof-sheets of your *Bibliography*, in a parcel from home yesterday. What am I to say? This hamlet is close by, and a dependence on, the famous convent founded by St. Bruno as a necessary effect of his hearing a dead man declare "Justo judicio Dei condemnatus sum." Ought I not to set up a pillar, at least, on finding myself—quite as startlingly—

called noteworthy; and brought into prominence after this fashion by the—never mind how partial—judgment of an extraordinarily generous friend? I can only repeat—you startle me. Other feelings that are inevitable must continue unexpressed, though they are not easily kept down.

Were I in town, I could perhaps supplement your list of notices of the criticisms on my works by an instance or two you might like to preserve. I only remember the good natured ones however. The pencil notes of John Mill which he meant to construct an article upon—till he found he had been forestalled by a flippant line in the Review\* which he was accustomed at that time to write for—are at the end of the copy of *Pauline* in Forster's Library at Kensington.† He had never

\* *Tait's Magazine*.

† Unfortunately this most interesting copy of the original edition of *Pauline* is not to be found in the Forster Library, at South Kensington—see the following Letter, No. xxv.

seen me. *Paracelsus* was first reviewed by Forster, in the *Examiner*. He also wrote a paper on it in the *New Monthly Magazine*—in the same month that another by J. Heraud appeared in *Fraser*. The most curious notice I ever had was from Cardinal Wiseman on *Blougram*—i.e. himself. It was in the *Rambler*, a Catholic Journal of those days, and certified to be his by Father Prout, who said nobody else would have dared put it in. My friend Milsand reviewed me in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, and in another French review. But I have a huge shelf-full of reviews of my Father's collecting, which probably contain articles more or less to the point. Many I never read even at the time, and not one since. I only mention the few that rise in my mind as I read your list to shew that when you please to say "you shall be grateful" for such an exercise of memory, I am not so ungrateful as



to keep silence altogether. Well, you have not had much experience of any "steel"-like quality that may be in me, but let me say once for all, that whenever you have occasion to test it, you are entitled to look for "the ice brook's temper."

Ever yours truly,  
ROBERT BROWNING.

Come, I ought to say something "sine ullâ solemnitate." Well bestowed as you are in Wales, you would be struck at the extraordinary picturesqueness and beauty of this wild little clump of cottages on a mountain amid loftier mountains. The "Hotel" is the roughest inn, and its arrangements the most primitive, I have yet chanced upon—but my sister bears them bravely. We stay two or three weeks longer, weather permitting, then go to Venice. Early in November you must come and see us, and we will

compare our gains in travel. My sister desires me to give my best regards to you and to Mrs. Furnivall, my own accompanying them.

Thank you for the pleasant note which I return : "here are in all three worthy voices gained."

LETTER XXV.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

HÔTEL VIRARD,  
ST. PIERRE DE CHARTREUSE,  
ISÈRE, FRANCE.

*September 15th, 1881.*

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Many thanks for your kind and pleasant letter. I am sure I ought to be "helpful" to you in such little matters when it is in my power. First to its questions: the replies are—*Karshish* is the proper word, referring as it does to him of the "Epistle." *Karshook* (*Heb.*: a Thistle) just belongs to the snarling verses I remember to have written, but forget for whom; the other was the only one of the "Fifty."

I wrote the Venice stanza \* to illustrate Maclise's picture, † for which he was anxious to get some line or two. I had not seen it, but, from Forster's description, gave it to him, in his room, *impromptu*. Maclise (a friend of my own) painted the whole thing, not the sky merely. When I did see it I thought the serenader too jolly, somewhat, for the notion I got from Forster, and I took up the subject in my own way.

Metre : *Hervé Riel* goes mainly in anapæsts and tribrachs, I fancy, but the *Toccata* is purely Trochaic. What you tell me about the copy of *Pauline* interests me much. If the entry was "struck out of the catalogue," I suppose that means—the request I made to the executor, Mr. Chitty, that the book might be returned to me, which he promised to attend to,

\* "I send my heart up to thee, all my heart, In this my singing!" This stanza was the first thought for *In a Gondola*.

† *The Serenade*.

but of which I heard no more, was really complied with. I shall try if I can recover the copy. The odd thing is, that it was prefaced by some such notice as that given in the *Bibliography*, page 16 ; I may have possibly repeated it for some friend. The "Poems on a leaf in the museum" \* are merely autographic copies of printed pieces. Looking hastily through the new proofs, I only see to observe upon Page 18, there might be a reference to Lady Martin's account of the circumstances under which the *Blot on the Scutcheon* was produced by Macready—the last of her papers in Blackwood † on "Shakespearean Characters" during the current year. Pages 19, 23 : years ago I wrote in this and other instances with no copy at hand. Page 21 : Alfred Domett, besides being the author of the work mentioned, was Prime Minister in New

\* Some of Mr. Browning's poems, in their author's handwriting, preserved in the British Museum.

† *Blackwood's Magazine*, for March 1881, p. 326.

Zealand. Page 28 : *Shelley Letters* :  
 When I get home, and have a copy  
 before me, I will give you in a few  
 words the true account of the whole  
 transaction—and *perhaps* some remarks  
 on the Essay by a very distinguished  
 personage indeed.\* *Don't speak of this  
 however.* Also, if on consideration I  
 properly am able, I will give a list of  
 the true names of men, things, and

\* This refers to the volume of [25 spurious] Shelley Letters, published (with a prefatory *Essay* by Robert Browning) by Moxon in 1852. These letters, together with a number of spurious Byron manuscripts, were in all probability produced by an individual who styled himself the natural son of Lord Byron. They were in the first instance bought by William White, a bookseller of Pall Mall, who consigned them to Messrs. Sotheby's rooms for sale by public auction. They were there purchased by Mr. Edward Moxon, who at once proceeded to publish them, and at whose suggestion Mr. Browning undertook to supply a suitable introduction. Mr. Browning (who was then—December 1851—in Paris) told me that he never saw the original holographs, having been provided either with manuscript copies of the letters, or printed proofs of the book, he was uncertain which. Upon ascertaining that that the documents were forgeries, Moxon withdrew the volume from circulation. The whole of the facts were commented upon by the *Athenæum*, and White replied in a pamphlet (which ran to two editions, both of which have now become of considerable scarcity) entitled *The Calumnies of the "Athenæum" Exposed*, &c. The original letters were presented by Moxon to the Manuscript Department of the British Museum.

places in *Red Cotton Night Cap Country*; it is only just that I should do the little I can to shew I am sensible of the favours done me—sensible I *am*.

And now, my dear Furnivall, you may hear of me again from Venice. This rough delightful country we leave on the 18th,—the day when, by my calculation, this letter reaches you. Remember the address—“Albergo dell’ Universo, Venezia”—for about a month. I hope you have had weather like ours. To-day ends our five-weeks’ stay, during which only one rainy day confined us to the house. All congratulations to Mrs. Furnivall for her climbing feat. What am I to say to Miss Lewis? \* I hope to do more toward justifying all this sympathy before I leave off.

My sister’s cordial greeting to you and Mrs. Furnivall.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* Miss Mary Lewis, authoress of *Two Pretty Girls*.

## LETTER XXVI.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL,

ALBERGO DELL' UNIVERSO,  
VENEZIA, ITALIA.

*October 1st, 1881.*

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Just as I was leaving St. Pierre, in a wild mountain pass, the postman recognized me, and gave me your letter—and here I found another—“proofs” down to page 58—for all of which my best thanks.

Yes, the autograph was a mere quotation. The “W. M. the younger” was poor William Macready’s eldest boy—dead, a few years ago. He had a talent for drawing, and asked me to give him some little thing to illustrate ;



so, I made a bit of a poem out of an old account of the death of the Pope's legate at the Council of Trent—which he made such clever drawings for, that I tried at a more picturesque subject, the Piper. I still possess the half dozen of the designs he gave me. If you cared to have the Legend of the Legate I am sure you are welcome to it, when I can transcribe it from the page of the old book it remains upon, unprinted hitherto—which I mention to show how equally welcome you are to reprint the other “unconsidered trifles” you speak of. I am bound to let any similar insignificances be of what use they may in giving a touch of, at least novelty, to a labour of love like yours.

*A King lived long ago* was given to the *M. Repository*.\* You will find a

\* *The Monthly Repository*, 1835, pp. 707-708. The poem was reprinted (with considerable variations) in *Bells and Pomegranates*, No. 1, 1841, p. 12, where it forms one of Pippa's songs in *Pippa Passes*.

strophe of a chorus out of Euripides in the book he gives name to, published lately by Mahaffy\* ; I translated it at his desire. Nothing else occurs to me at this moment. We are still in the disturbance of arrival here, and I must be brief : I shall not let your suggestions drop to the ground, depend upon it !

My sister repeats her kind regards, and all wishes that your Welsh excursion may have done good service to Mrs. Furnivall and yourself. We count on remaining here for a week or two. I did not know you had the glory of a "boy" : I congratulate you, and am

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

\* *Oh Love, Love, thou that from the eyes diffuseth.* Printed in *Euripides*, by J. P. Mahaffy. (Macmillan's *Classical Writers*) London, 1879, p. 116.

LETTER XXVII.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

ALBERGO DELL' UNIVERSO,  
VENEZIA.

October 3rd, 1881.

Ah, *no*—my dear Furnivall! Your proposal, kind and ingenious as it is, would give the notion of sending out a “sample,” as is the wont of dealers in stuffs and Printed cottons. Your agency already does all that fair human endeavour can do: better be content with *that*.

I wrote two days ago. The notion of such a selection as you describe is well worth considering, and consideration it shall have when Smith and I can talk it over on my return.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

## LETTER XXVIII.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

ALBERGO DELL' UNIVERSO,  
VENEZIA.

October 11th, 1881.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Your last letter, of the 6th, seemed in the main to have been answered by anticipation the day before—so I waited till we could regain the proper pace, my foot after yours.

You will let the "sample" alone, I know,—never mind how foolish I may be in my apprehensions, and I can go at once to the few *corrigenda* in the "proofs" which arrived this morning.

Maclise's picture \* undoubtedly *was* in the Academy Exhibition, together with my verse in the Catalogue, and you have missed it for the funny reason that it was printed as *prose*! I remember beseeching the secretary, Mr. Knight, at the Academy dinner, to get the lines into good order again, but to no purpose: or—*wait!* I am confounding—it strikes me all at once—the verse I wrote for Leighton's work, when this accident befell, with the verse in question for Maclise's picture, which was exhibited in some more or less private adventure in the way of a Gallery—*what* Gallery might be found by referring to the periodical which Mr. S. C. Hall edited in those days, for there was a notice both of picture and verse therein. The

\* “The picture—*The Serenade*—is not mentioned in O'Driscoll's *Memoir of Daniel Maclise, R.A.*, 1871, and cannot have been in the Academy. Browning wrote the stanza impromptu on Forster's report of Maclise's subject, and without seeing the picture. When he saw it, he thought it deserved fuller treatment, and accordingly added the rest of *In a Gondola* to his impromptu stanza.”—F. J. Furnivall, in *The Browning Society's Papers*, vol. i., p. 24. Hall edited *The Art Journal*.

mist cleared off from my memory on the circumstance starting up vividly in it that Mr. Knight excused his oversight by observing that Leighton was so very poetical a painter that there was no knowing whether the same quality might not have got the better of his prose!

Next. How have I overlooked hitherto that my school was at Peckham—not Dulwich—that of the Rev. Thomas Ready.

Last, about my being “strongly against Darwin, rejecting the truths of science and regretting its advance”—you only do as I should hope and expect in disbelieving *that*. It came, I suppose, of Hohenstiel-Schwangau’s expressing the notion which was the popular one at the appearance of Darwin’s book—and you might as well charge Shakespeare with holding that there were men whose heads grew beneath their shoulders, because

Othello told Desdemona that he had seen such. In reality, all that seems *proved* in Darwin's scheme was a conception familiar to me from the beginning: see in *Paracelsus* the progressive development from senseless matter to organized, until man's appearance (*Part v.*). Also in *Cleon*, see the order of "life's mechanics,"—and I daresay in many passages of my poetry: for how can one look at Nature as a whole and doubt that, wherever there is a gap, a "link" must be "missing"—through the limited power and opportunity of the looker? But go back and back, as you please, *at* the back, as Mr. Sludge is made to insist, you find (*my* faith is as constant) creative intelligence, acting as matter but not resulting from it. Once set the balls rolling, and ball may hit ball and send any number in any direction over the table; but I believe in the cue pushed by a hand. When one is

taunted (as I notice is often fancied an easy method with the un-Darwinized) —taunted with thinking successive acts of creation credible, metaphysics have been stopped short at, however physics may fare : time and space being purely conceptions of our own, wholly inapplicable to intelligence of another kind—with whom, as I made Luria say, there is an “everlasting moment of creation,” if one at all,—past, present, and future, one and the same state. This consideration does not affect Darwinism proper in any degree. But I do not consider that his case as to the changes in organization, brought about by desire and will in the creature, proved. Tortoises never saw their own shells, top or bottom, nor those of their females, and are diversely variegated all over, each species after its own pattern. And the insects ; this one is coloured to escape notice, this other to attract it, a third to frighten the foe—all out



of one brood of caterpillars hatched in one day? No—I am incredulous—and *you*, dear patron and friend, are abundantly tired; so, thus much shall serve, scribbled as it has come to pass.

Our weather is mending somewhat, but continues a month behind hand, and very little characteristic of Venice. I walk, even in wind and rain, for a couple of hours on Lido, and enjoy the break of sea on the strip of sand as much as Shelley did in those old days. Good bye; all good wishes to you and yours, from

Yours truly ever,  
ROBERT BROWNING.

## LETTER XXIX.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

ALBERGO DELL' UNIVERSO,  
VENEZIA.

*October 21st, 1881.*

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

You very well know I can say nothing about this extraordinary halo of rainbow-hues with which your wonder-working hand has suddenly surrounded my dark orb. As with the performances of the mosaicists I see at work here—all sorts of shining stones, greater and smaller, which hardly took the eye by their single selves—suddenly coalesce and make a brilliant show when put ingeniously together—as my dazzled eyes acknowledge, pray believe! I will correct any mistake as to fact I may observe on going hastily through the

proofs. Two thirds of the reviews and other notices I never saw till now, while many that stay in my memory are absent here, by the way.

Page 109: I am astounded at the notion, as to how it could possibly arise, that there was ever the slightest "falling out" between Carlyle and myself. Nothing of the kind ever happened during our long acquaintance.

Page 110: *Mrs. Ritchie*: her husband was not present. This minute incident took place not at *Freshwater*, where (for all Tennyson's repeated invitations of the kindest sort) I never yet have been, but at Twickenham, on the day of the christening of Hallam, whom his father trusted me with, straight out of the baby's bed.

I do not stop for misprints. Page 92: "Shirley" \* is not Charles Lever, but a living writer whose name escapes

\* "Shirley"—the pseudonym of John Skelton, C.B., Vice-President of the Scottish Local Government Board.

me at the moment : he sent me his book with a letter some time ago. Page 109 : Miss Blagden : she was devoted to, but never in any way “nursed the poetess in her final illness.” Page 106 : All about the vernacular of the epitaph on *Pietro di Albano* is pure fun of Father Prout’s. I told him of the thing at Florence, and did it *impromptu* into this doggerel :—

*Studying my cyphers with the compass,  
I gather I soon shall be below ground,  
Because of my lore men make great rumpus,  
And war on myself makes each dull rogue  
round.*

He must have thought it worth remembering. In the text—*con* should be *col*,—*sotterra*, not *sotto terra*, *saper*, for *ir*, gran, *without d*, m’ hanno, for *nei h*.

And now, the stay here is hardly likely to last much longer. The weather is again abominable and *un-Venetian*. I suppose we may count on being back in London by the end of the first week

in November—when we will talk by the fireside, I hope. Meanwhile and always, with truest regards to Mrs Furnivall and yourself from us two stay-aways, believe me, ever gratefully yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

The pin-pointed iron pen, the table whereon my chin rests, and the seat from the depths of which I strain upwards must account for and excuse the scrawly scribble. The paper seems damp too.

## LETTER XXX.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*December 8th, 1881.*

DEAR FURNIVALL,

I assure you I shirked no labour, but took down and piled up scores of dead and gone reviews as stale as the dust on them. "Read" them I could not pretend to attempt, so did the sight of their very outsides sadden me—the word is not too strong. So much misconception at best, ignorance at middling, and malice at worst, in those old slaps on my face in order apparently to keep some fellow's critical hands warm!

Yourself, and those like you, are the best suffumigators after this old smell; why keep a whiff of it to show how

nastily I lived for a long while, sustained, abundantly, however, by many a kindlier breathing from various quarters—only, the “sweet south” “creeps” or “steals” silently, while the unpleasantness is, as Donne phrases it, “a loud perfume.” No, let us bid good-bye to it all; not to real conscientious criticism by any means, but to mere mopping and mowing and such monkey-tricks. So, I only send you three characteristic samples, French, Italian, and American. Whether the writers praise or blame (which, on my honour, I absolutely forget), they at least have not taken up a book to get done with it on the easiest terms, laughing at what is worth no more serious notice. What a world of width between such people and Mr. Kirkman, whose paper I return! The only *pain* I ever felt is the profitable one caused by such eulogy; I know *painfully* my own shortcomings and inadequate de-

serts. All I engage is, that in what of life may be left me, I will try harder than ever to deserve what my best efforts have hitherto failed to do. Enough!

As to the one volume edition of E. B. B.'s works, and Story's preface to the same, I never knew of the existence of either. Do not bring me in as if *parenthetically*, illustrative of her and her poems. These, I rejoice with all my heart to know and say, are in no need of any assistance; their popularity keeps ever far in advance of mine, as any bookseller will inform you; and, as Beethoven said of his music, "nothing but good can come to them."

Will you understand, and benignantly comply with, all this? Yes; and assure yourself I shall be more than ever

Gratefully as affectionately yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.



LETTER XXXI.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.  
December 16th, 1881.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I return the proofs. Where do you find that the holiday of *Hervé Riel* was for more than a day—his whole life time? If it is to be found I have strangely overlooked it.

Yes, Landor was the friend, and his praise was prompt, both private and public—in his *Satire on Satirists*. “Eyebright”—*i.e.* “Euphrasia,” an early sympathizer still, happily, alive.\* I do not remember the “Eclectic.” Of

\* “Euphrasia”—Miss Fanny Howarth, since dead.

course I shall be delighted to see Miss Lewis, on any day she may please to appoint.

Once again all thanks from,

Yours truly ever,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXXII.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*December 20th, 1881.*

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

You are undoubtedly right, and I have mistaken the meaning of the phrase—I suppose through thinking that, if the “coasting-pilot’s” business ended with reaching land, he might claim as a right to be let go: otherwise, an absolute discharge seems to approach in importance a substantial reward. Still, truth above all things—so treat the matter as you please—believing me ever,\*

Yours,

R. BROWNING.

\* The allusion in the above letter is to Hervé Riel.

## LETTER XXXIII.

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To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,  
LONDON, W.

*January 12th, 1882.*

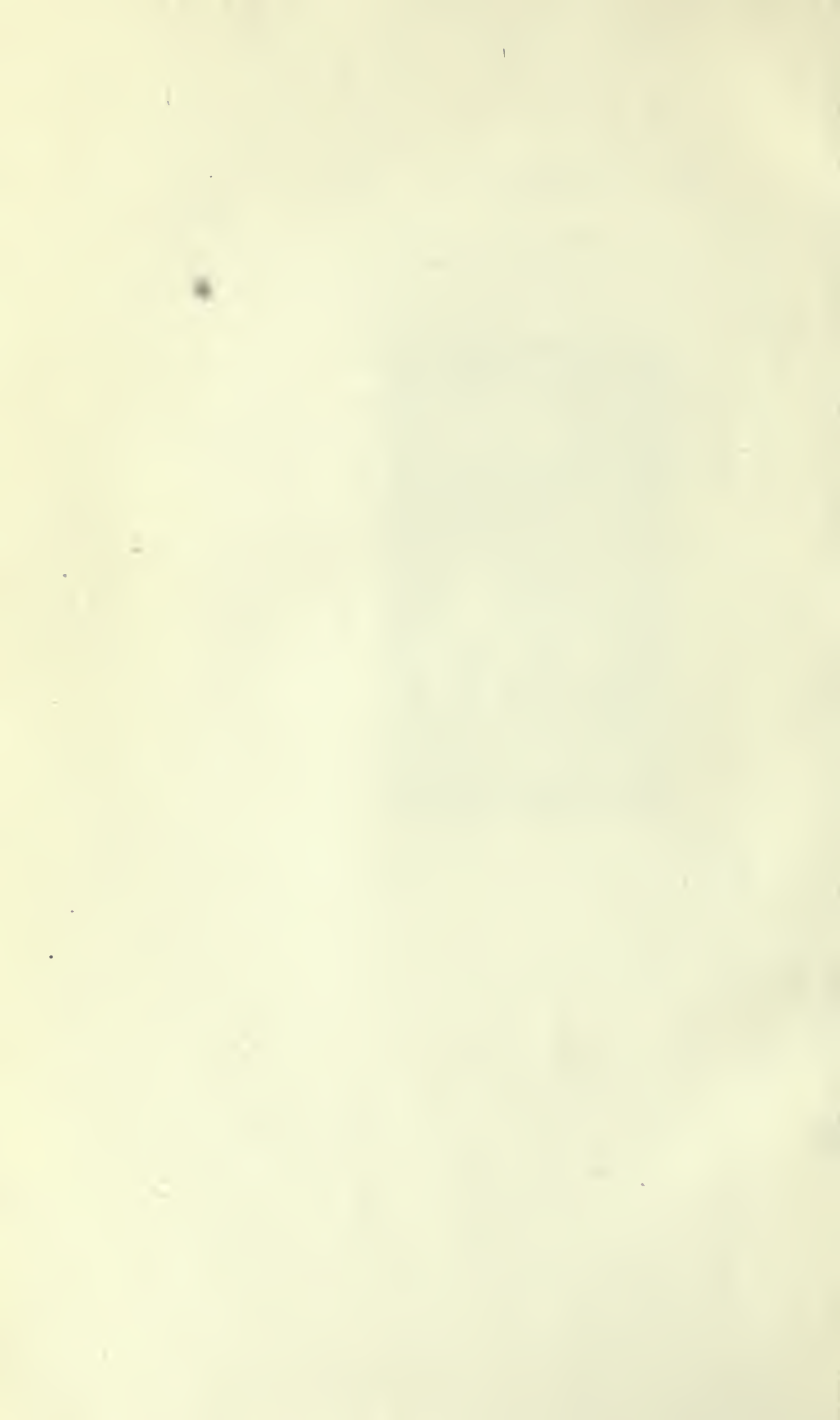
MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I am beginning to enjoy the results of the institution of the "Society" (quite over and above the sympathy and kindness of its promoter and adherents) in the evident annoyance it is giving my dear old critics who have gone on gibing and gibbering at me time out of mind. If these worthies could point to a single performance in which they had themselves "read and studied" anything of mine, far less induced others

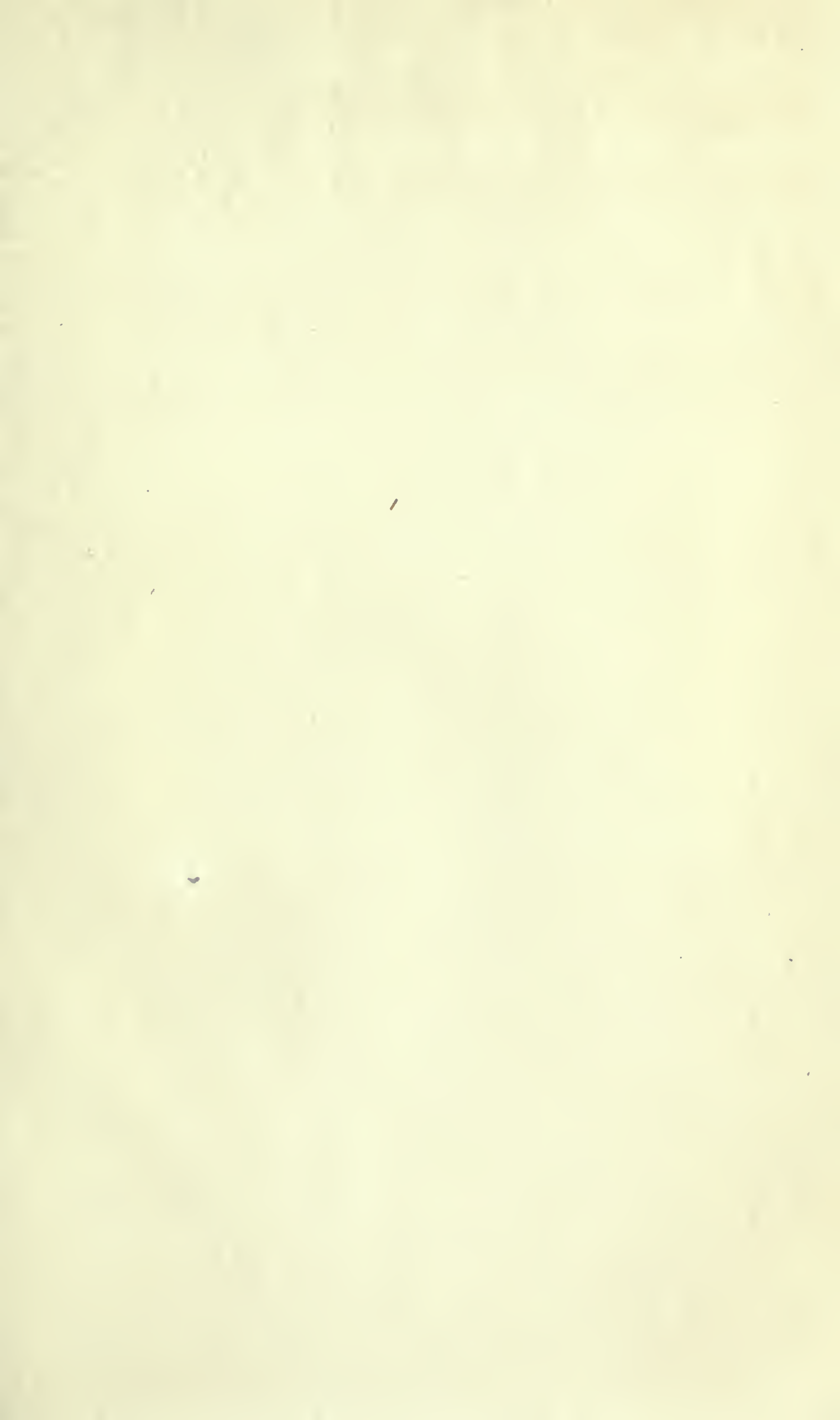
to do so, there might be a reason for their wrath; but there has never been one such article in the *Saturday Review* since its existence. As for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the late Proprietor's rule excluded any article upon any work published by Smith and Elder—on what principle I fail to see, inasmuch as he might fairly say: "since I publish nothing I do not believe to be of worth in its way, why should not the Editor of my Journal have the same opinion and express it?" But at any rate the mouth so reticent before needs not grow loquacious all at once on the other side of the question. I suppose these critics have their pets, and think loyalty to these demands irritation at any fancied intruder on the hero's little plot of ground, his *τέμενος* as the Greeks call it. All which amounts to—Pray don't imagine I can't understand the mock compliments to myself pretended to be involved in the censure of those who











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