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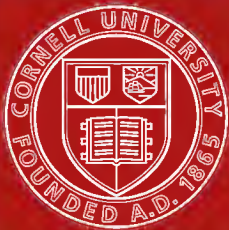
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*Edition de Luxe*

The Life and Works  
of  
Charles Lamb  
=

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME XII

Fc



The Letters  
OF  
Charles Lamb

Newly Arranged, with Additions

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

ALFRED AINGER

VOLUME IV

LONDON  
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

1900

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CHAPTER V—(Continued)

1824—1827

LETTERS TO BERNARD BARTON AND  
OTHERS

To MR. H. C. ROBINSON

*Colebrooke Row, Islington,*

LETTER CCCVIII.]

*Saturday, January 20, 1827.*

Dear Robinson—I called upon you this morning, and found that you were gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for having enjoyed a strong constitution. Whether he knew me or not, I know not; or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed, or about it, were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupified. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him. In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters he knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being amongst books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down and told me that—"in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling"; and seemed to console himself in the reflection! His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended; but they were old trusty perennials, staples that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were

## TO ROBINSON

always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas Day, which we always spent in the Temple. It was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes, and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over ; and when he came to the part—

“We’ll still make ’em run, and we’ll still make ’em sweat,  
In spite of the Devil and *Brussels Gazette*,”

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event. And what is the *Brussels Gazette* now ? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. “How shall we tell them in a stranger’s ear ?” His poor good girls will now have to receive their afflicted mother in an unsuccessful hovel in an obscure village in Herts, where they have been long struggling to make a school without effect ; and poor deaf Richard, and the more helpless for being so, is thrown on the wide world.

My first motive in writing, and indeed in calling on you, was to ask if you were enough acquainted with any of the Benchers to lay a plain statement before them of the circumstances of the family. I almost fear not, for you are of another hall. But if you can oblige me and my poor friend, who is now insensible to any favours, pray exert yourself. You cannot say too much good of poor Norris and his poor wife.

Yours ever,

CHARLES LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

To THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCCIX.]

*January 25, 1827.*

My dear Allsop—I cannot forbear thanking you for your kind interference with Taylor, whom I do not expect to see in haste at Islington.

It is hardly weather to ask a dog up here, but I need hardly say how happy we shall be to see you. I cannot be out of evenings till John Frost be routed. We came home from Newman St. the other night late, and I was cramped all night.

Love to Mrs. Allsop.

Yours truly,

C. L.

To WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCX.]

*January 27, 1827.*

Dear Sir—It is not unknown to you, that about sixteen years since I published “Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakspeare.” For the scarcer plays, I had recourse to the collection bequeathed to the British Museum by Mr. Garrick. But my time was but short; and my subsequent leisure has discovered in it a treasure rich and exhaustless beyond what I then imagined. In it is to be found almost every production, in the shape of a

## TO HONE

play, that has appeared in print since the time of the old mysteries and moralities to the days of Crown and D'Urfey. Imagine the luxury to one like me,—who, above every other form of poetry, have ever preferred the dramatic,—of sitting in the princely apartments, for such they are, of poor, condemned Montagu House,—which, I predict, will not soon be followed by a handsomer,—and culling at will the flowers of some thousand dramas! It is like having the range of a nobleman's library, with the librarian to your friend. Nothing can exceed the courteousness and attentions of the gentleman who has the chief direction of the reading-rooms here; and you have scarce to ask for a volume before it is laid before you. If the occasional extracts which I have been tempted to bring away may find an appropriate place in your "Table Book," some of them are weekly at your service. By those who remember the "Specimens," these must be considered as mere after-gleanings, supplementary to that work, only comprising a longer period. You must be content with sometimes a scene, sometimes a song, a speech, a passage, or a poetical image, as they happen to strike me. I read without order of time; I am a poor hand at dates; and, for any biography of the dramatists, I must refer to writers who are more skilful in such matters. My business is with their poetry only.

Your well-wisher,

C. LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

LETTER CCCXI.]

[February 5, 1827.]

For God's sake be more sparing of your poetry : your this week's Number has an excess of it.

In haste,

C. L.

Mr. Hone,  
22, Belvidere Place,  
near Suffolk Street,  
Borough.

LETTER CCCXII.]

[March 20, 1827.]

Damnable *erratum* (can't you notice it?) in the last line but two of the last *Extract* in *No. 9, Garrick Plays*—

“Blushing forth golden hair and glorious red” :

A sun-bright line spoiled by *Blush* for *Blushing*.

*N.B.*—The general Number was excellent. Also a few lines higher—

“Restrained Liberty attain'd is sweet”

should have a full stop. 'Tis the end of the old man's speech. These little blemishes kill such delicate things : prose feeds on grosser punctualities. You have now 3 Numbers in hand ; one I sent you yesterday. Of course I send no more till Sunday week.

*P.S.*—Omitted above—“Dear Hone.”

C. L.

Mr. Hone,  
No. 22, Belvidere Place,  
Southwark.

## TO HAYDON

To B. R. HAYDON

LETTER CCCXIII.]

*March 1827.*

Dear Raffaele Haydon—Did the maid tell you I came to see your picture, not on Sunday but the day before? I think the face and bearing of the Bucephalus tamer very noble, his flesh too effeminate or painty. The skin of the female's back kneeling is much more carnous. I had small time to pick out praise or blame, for two lord-like Bucks came in, upon whose strictures my presence seemed to impose restraint; I plebeian'd off therefore.

I think I have hit on a subject for you, but can't swear it was never executed—I never heard of its being—"Chaucer beating a Franciscan Friar in Fleet Street." Think of the old dresses, houses, etc. "It seemeth that both these learned men (Gower and Chaucer) were of the Inner Temple; for not many years since Master Buckley did see a record in the same house where Geoffry Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan Friar in Fleet Street."

Yours in haste (salt fish waiting),

C. LAMB.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

To VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCCXIV.]

April 1827.

Dear Sir—I conjure you, in the name of all the Sylvan Deities, and of the Muses, whom you honour, and they reciprocally love and honour you, rescue this old and passionate *Ditty*—the very flower of an old, forgotten *Pastoral*, which, had it been in all parts equal, the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher had been but a second name in this sort of Writing—rescue it from the profane hands of every Common Composer ; and in one of your tranquildest moods, when you have most leisure from those sad thoughts which sometimes unworthily beset you—yet a mood in itself not unallied to the better sort of melancholy—laying by, for once, the lofty Organ, with which you shake the Temples, attune, as to the Pipe of Paris himself, to some milder and love-according instrument, this pretty Courtship between Paris and his (then-not-as-yet-forsaken) CEnone. Oblige me, and all more knowing Judges of Music and of Poesy, by the adaptation of fit musical numbers, which it only wants, to be the rarest Love Dialogue in our Language.

Your Implorer

C. L.



## TO HONE

To WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCXV.]

[*May 1827.*]

Sir—A correspondent in your last number rather hastily asserts that there is no other authority than Davenport's Tragedy for the poisoning of Matilda by King John. It oddly enough happens, that in the same number appears an extract from a play of Heywood's, of an older date, in two parts, in which play the fact of such poisoning, as well as her identity with Maid Marian, are equally established. Michael Drayton, also, hath a legend confirmatory (so far as poetical authority can go) of the violent manner of her death. But neither he nor Davenport confounds her with Robin's mistress. Besides the named authorities, old Fuller, I think, somewhere relates, as matter of chronicle-history, that old Fitzwater (he is called Fitzwater both in Heywood and in Davenport), being banished after his daughter's murder,—some years subsequently, King John, at a tournament in France, being delighted with the valiant bearing of a combatant in the lists, and enquiring his name, was told it was his old servant, the banished Fitzwater, who desired nothing more heartily than to be reconciled to his liege; and an affecting reconciliation followed. In the common collection, called "Robin Hood's Garland" (I have not seen Ritson's), no mention is made, if

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I remember, of the nobility of Marian. Is she not the daughter of old Squire Gamwell, of Gamwell Hall? Sorry that I cannot gratify the curiosity of your "disembodied spirit" (who, as such is, methinks, sufficiently "veiled" from our notice) with more authentic testimonies, I rest,  
Your humble Abstractor, C. L.

To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCXVI.] *Enfield, and for some weeks to come,*  
*June 11, 1827.*

Dear B. B.—One word more of the picture verses, and that for good and all; pray with a neat pen alter one line

"His learning seems to lay small stress on"

to

"His learning lays no mighty stress on"

to avoid the unseemly recurrence (ungrammatical also) of "seems" in the next line, besides the nonsense of "but" there, as it now stands. And I request you, as a personal favour to me, to erase the last line of all, which I should never have written from myself. The fact is, it was a silly joke of Hood's, who gave me the frame (you judged rightly it was not its own) with the remark that you would like it because it was b—d b—d; and I lugged it in: but I shall be

## TO BARTON

quite hurt if it stands, because tho' you and yours have too good sense to object to it, I would not have a sentence of mine seen that to any foolish ear might seem disrespectful to thee. Let it end at "appalling": the joke is coarse and useless, and hurts the tone of the rest. Take your best "ivory-handled" and scrape it forth.

Your specimen of what you might have written is hardly fair. Had it been a present to me, I should have taken a more sentimental tone: but of a trifle from me it was my cue to speak in an underish tone of commendation. Prudent *givers* (what word for such a nothing) disparage their gifts; 'tis an art we have. So you see you wouldn't have been so wrong taking a higher tone. But enough of nothing. By the by, I suspected M. of being the disparager of the frame: hence a *certain line*.

For the frame, 'tis as the room is where it hangs. It hung up fronting my old cobwebby folios and battered furniture (the fruit piece has resumed its place), and was much better than a spick and span one. But if your room be very neat and your *other pictures* bright with gilt, it should be so too. I can't judge, not having seen, but my dingy study it suited.

Martin's "Belshazzar" (the picture) I have seen. Its architectural effect is stupendous; but the human figures, the squalling contorted little antics that are playing at being frightened, like children at a sham ghost, who half know it to

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

be a mask, are detestable. Then the *letters* are nothing more than a transparency lighted up, such as a Lord might order to be lit up on a sudden at a Christmas gambol, to scare the ladies. The *type* is as plain as Baskerville's : they should have been dim, full of mystery, letters to the mind rather than the eye.

Rembrandt has painted only Belshazzar and a courtier or two (taking a part of the banquet for the whole), not fribbled out a mob of fine folks. Then everything is so distinct, to the very necklaces, and that foolish little prophet. What *one* point is there of interest? The ideal of such a subject is, that you the spectator should see nothing but what at the time you would have seen,—the *hand*, and the *King*,—not to be at leisure to make tailor-remarks on the dresses, or, Dr. Kitchener-like, to examine the good things at table.

Just such a confused piece is his "Joshua," frittered into a thousand fragments, little armies here, little armies there—you should see only the *Sun* and *Joshua*. If I remember, he has not left out that luminary entirely ; but for Joshua, I was ten minutes a finding him out. Still he is showy in all that is not the human figure or the preternatural interest : but the first are below a drawing-school girl's attainment, and the last is a phantasmagoric trick,—“ Now you shall see what you shall see, dare is Balshazar and dare is Daniel.”

You have my thoughts of M., and so adieu !

C. LAMB.

## TO HONE—PATMORE

To WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCXVII.]

[*June* 1827.]

Dear Sir—Somebody has fairly play'd a *hoax* on you (I suspect that pleasant rogue *Moxon*) in sending you the sonnet in my name inserted in your last number. True it is that I must own to the verses being mine, but not written on the occasion there pretended; for I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing the lady in the part of Emmeline; and I have understood that the force of her acting in it is rather in the expression of new-born sight, than of the previous want of it. The lines were really written upon her performance in the "Blind Boy," and appeared in the "Morning Chronicle" some years back. I suppose our facetious friend thought they would serve again, like an old coat new-turned.

Yours (and his, nevertheless),

C. LAMB.

To MR. PATMORE

LETTER CCCXVIII.]

*Londres, Julie* 19, 1827.

Dear P.—I am so poorly. I have been to a funeral, where I made a pun, to the consternation of the rest of the mourners. And we had wine. I can't describe to you the howl which the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

widow set up at proper intervals. Dash could, for it was not unlike what he makes.

The letter I sent you was one directed to the care of E. W——, India House, for Mrs. H[azlitt]. *Which* Mrs. H—— I don't yet know; but A—— has taken it to France on speculation. Really it is embarrassing. There is Mrs. present H., Mrs. late H., and Mrs. John H., and to which of the three Mrs. Wigginses it appertains, I know not. I wanted to open it, but 'tis transportation.

I am sorry you are plagued about your book. I would strongly recommend you to take for one story Massinger's "Old Law." It is exquisite. I can think of no other.

Dash is frightful this morning. He whines and stands up on his hind legs. He misses Becky, who is gone to town. I took him to Barnet the other day, and he couldn't eat his vittles after it. Pray God his intellectuals be not slipping.

Mary is gone out for some soles. I suppose 'tis no use to ask you to come and partake of 'em; else there is a steam vessel.

I am doing a tragi-comedy in two acts, and have got on tolerably; but it will be refused, or worse. I never had luck with anything my name was put to.

O, I am so poorly! I *waked* it at my cousin's the bookbinder, who is now with God; or, if he is not, 'tis no fault of mine.

## TO PATMORE

We hope the Frank wines do not disagree with Mrs. P——. By the way, I like her.

Did you ever taste frogs? Get them if you can. They are like little Lilliput rabbits, only a thought nicer.

How sick I am!—not of the world, but of the widow's shrub. She's sworn under £6000, but I think she perjured herself. She howls in *E la*, and I comfort her in *B flat*. You understand music?

If you hav'n't got Massinger, you have nothing to do but go to the first Bibliothèque you can light upon at Boulogne, and ask for it (Gifford's edition); and if they hav'n't got it you can have "Athalie" par Monsieur Racine, and make the best of it. But that "Old Law" is delicious.

"No shrimps!" (that's in answer to Mary's question about how the soles are to be done).

I am uncertain where this wandering letter may reach you. What you mean by *Poste Restante*, God knows. Do you mean I must pay the postage? So I do, to Dover.

We had a merry passage with the widow at the Commons. She was howling—part howling and part giving directions to the proctor—when crash! down went my sister through a crazy chair, and made the clerks grin, and I grinned, and the widow tittered, and then I knew that she was not inconsolable. Mary was more frightened than hurt.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

She'd make a good match for anybody (by she, I mean the widow).

“If he bring but a *relict* away,  
He is happy, nor heard to complain.”

SHENSTONE.

Procter has got a wen growing out at the nape of his neck, which his wife wants him to have cut off; but I think it is rather an agreeable excrescence: like his poetry, redundant. Hone has hanged himself for debt. Godwin was taken up for picking pockets. Moxon has fallen in love with Emma, our nut-brown maid. Becky takes to bad courses. Her father was blown up in a steam machine. The coroner found it “insanity.” I should not like him to sit on my letter.

Do you observe my direction. Is it Gallic—classical? Do try and get some frogs. You must ask for “grenouilles” (green eels). They don't understand “frogs,” though 'tis a common phrase with us.

If you go through Bulloign (Boulogne), inquire if old Godfrey is living, and how he got home from the crusades. He must be a very old man.

If there is anything new in politics or literature in France, keep it till I see you again, for I'm in no hurry. Chatty Briant is well I hope.

I think I have no more news; only give both our loves (all three, says Dash), to Mrs.



## TO MRS. SHELLEY

P——, and bid her get quite well, as I am at present, bating qualms, and the grief incident to losing a valuable relation. C. L.

## TO MRS. SHELLEY

LETTER CCCXIX.]

*Enfield, July 26, 1827.*

Dear Mrs. Shelley—At the risk of throwing away some fine thoughts, I must write to say how pleased we were with your very kind remembering of us (who have unkindly run away from all our friends) before you go. Perhaps you are gone, and then my tropes are wasted. If any piece of better fortune has lighted upon you than you expected, but less than we wish you, we are rejoiced. We are here trying to like solitude, but have scarce enough to justify the experiment. We get some, however. The six days are our Sabbath; the seventh—why, Cockneys will come for a little fresh air, and so—

But by *your month*, or October at furthest, we hope to see Islington; I, like a giant refreshed with the leaving off of wine; and Mary, pining for Mr. Moxon's books and Mr. Moxon's society. Then we shall meet.

I am busy with a farce in two acts; the incidents tragi-comic. I can do the dialogue *commey for*: but the damned plot—I believe I

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

must omit it altogether. The scenes come after one another like geese, not marshalling like cranes or a Hyde Park review. The story is as simple as G[eorge] D[yer], and the language plain as his spouse. The characters are three women to one man ; which is one more than laid hold on him in the "Evangelical." I think that prophecy squinted towards my drama.

I want some Howard Paine to sketch a skeleton of artfully succeeding scenes through a whole play, as the courses are arranged in a cookery book : I to find wit, passion, sentiment, character, and the like trifles : to lay in the dead colours,—I'd Titianesque 'em up : to mark the channel in a cheek (smooth or furrowed, yours or mine), and where tears should course I'd draw the waters down : to say where a joke should come in or a pun be left out : to bring my *personæ* on and off like a Beau Nash ; and I'd Frankenstein them there : to bring three together on the stage at once ; they are so shy with me, that I can get no more than two ; and there they stand till it is the time, without being the season, to withdraw them.

I am teaching Emma Latin to qualify her for a superior governess-ship ; which we see no prospect of her getting. 'Tis like feeding a child with chopped hay from a spoon. Sisyphus his labours were as nothing to it.

Actives and passives jostle in her nonsense, till a deponent enters, like Chaos, more to

## TO STODDART

embroil the fray. Her prepositions are suppositions; her conjunctions copulative have no connection in them; her concords disagree; her interjections are purely English "Ah!" and "Oh!" with a yawn and a gape in the same tongue; and she herself is a lazy, blockheadly supine. As I say to her, ass *in præsentî* rarely makes a wise man *in futuro*.

But I daresay it was so with you when you began Latin, and a good while after.

Good-by! Mary's love.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

## TO SIR JOHN STODDART

LETTER CCCXX.]

[August 9, 1827.]

Dear Knight—Old Acquaintance—"Tis with a violence to the *pure imagination* (*vide* the "Excursion" *passim*) that I can bring myself to believe I am writing to Dr. Stoddart once again, at Malta. But the deductions of severe reason warrant the proceeding. I write from Enfield, where we are seriously weighing the advantages of dulness over the over-excitement of too much company, but have not yet come to a conclusion. What is the news? for we see no paper here; perhaps you can send us an old one from Malta. Only, I heard a butcher in the market-place whisper something about a change of ministry. I don't know who's in or out, or care, only as it

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

might affect *you*. For domestic doings, I have only to tell, with extreme regret, that poor Eliza Fenwick (that was)—Mrs. Rutherford—is dead; and that we have received a most heart-broken letter from her mother—left with four grandchildren, orphans of a living scoundrel lurking about the pothouses of Little Russell Street, London: they and she—God help 'em!—at New York. I have just received Godwin's third volume of the *Republic*, which only reaches to the commencement of the Protectorate. I think he means to spin it out to his life's thread. Have you seen Fearn's *Anti-Tooke*? I am no judge of such things—you are; but I think it very clever indeed. If I knew your bookseller, I'd order it for you at a venture: 'tis two octavos, Longman and Co. Or do you read now? Tell it not in the Admiralty Court, but my head aches *hesterno vino*. I can scarce pump up words, much less ideas, congruous to be sent so far. But your son must have this by to-night's post. . . . Manning is gone to Rome, Naples, etc., probably to touch at Sicily, Malta, Guernsey, etc.; but I don't know the map. Hazlitt is resident at Paris, whence he pours his lampoons in safety at his friends in England. He has his boy with him. I am teaching Emma Latin. By the time you can answer this, she will be qualified to instruct young ladies: she is a capital English reader: and S. T. C. acknowledges that a part of a passage in Milton she

## TO BARTON

read better than he, and part he read best, her part being the shorter. But, seriously, if Lady St—— (oblivious pen, that was about to write *Mrs.*!) could hear of such a young person wanted (she smatters of French, some Italian, music of course), we'd send our loves by her. My congratulations and assurances of old esteem.

C. L.

## To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCXXI.]

*August 10, 1827.*

Dear B. B.—I have not been able to answer you, for we have had and are having (I just snatch a moment) our poor quiet retreat, to which we fled from society, full of company—some staying with us; and this moment, as I write, almost, a heavy importation of two old ladies has come in. Whither can I take wing from the oppression of human faces? Would I were in a wilderness of apes, tossing cocoa-nuts about, grinning and grinned at!

Mitford was hoaxing you, surely, about my engraving; 'tis a little sixpenny thing, too like by half, in which the draughtsman has done his best to avoid flattery. There have been two editions of it, which I think are all gone, as they have vanished from the window where they hung—a print-shop, corner of Great and Little Queen Streets, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

any London friend of yours may inquire for it ; for I am (though you *won't understand it*) at Enfield Chase (Mrs. Leishman's). We have been here near three months, and shall stay two more, if people will let us alone ; but they persecute us from village to village. So, don't direct to *Islington* again, till further notice. I am trying my hand at a drama, in two acts, founded on Crabbe's "Confidant," *mutatis mutandis*. You like the *Odyssey*. Did you ever read my "Adventures of Ulysses," founded on Chapman's old translation of it ? For children or men. Chapman is divine, and my abridgment has not quite emptied him of his divinity. When you come to town I'll show it to you. You have well described your old-fashioned grand paternal hall. Is it not odd that every one's earliest recollections are of some such place ! I had my Blakesware (Blakesmoor in the *London*). Nothing fills a child's mind like a large old mansion ; better if un—or partially—occupied ; peopled with the spirits of deceased members of the county and Justices of the Quorum. Would I were buried in the peopled solitude of one, with my feelings at seven years old ! Those marble busts of the Emperors, they seemed as if they were to stand for ever, as they had stood from the living days of Rome, in that old marble hall, and I to partake of their permanency. Eternity was, while I thought not of Time. But he thought of me, and they

## TO HONE

are toppled down, and corn covers the spot of the noble old dwelling and its princely gardens. I feel like a grasshopper that, chirping about the grounds, escaped his scythe only by my littleness. Even now he is whetting one of his smallest razors to clean wipe me out, perhaps. Well!

### TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCXXII.]

[August 10, 1827.]

My dear Hone—We are both excessively grieved at dear Matilda's illness, whom we have ever regarded with the greatest respect. Pray God, your next news, which we shall expect most anxiously, shall give hopes of her recovery.

Mary keeps her health very well, and joins in kind remembrances and best wishes.

A few more Numbers (about 7) will empty my Extract Book; then we will consult about the "Specimens." By then, I hope you will be able to talk about business. How you continue your book at all, and so well, in trying circumstances, I know not. But don't let it stop. Would to God I could help you!—but we have the house full of company, which we came to avoid.

God bless you.

C. L.

Mr. Hone,  
22, Belvidere Place,  
Southwark.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCXXIII.]

*August 28, 1827.*

Dear B. B.—I am thankful to you for your ready compliance with my wishes. Emma is delighted with your verses, to which I have appended this notice, “The sixth line refers to the child of a dear friend of the author’s, named Emma,” without which it must be obscure, and have sent it with four album poems of my own (your daughter’s with your heading, requesting it a place next mine), to a Mr. Fraser, who is to be editor of a more superb pocket-book than has yet appeared, by far! the property of some wealthy booksellers; but whom, or what its name, I forgot to ask. It is actually to have in it schoolboy exercises by his present Majesty and the late Duke of York. So Lucy will come to Court; how she will be stared at! Wordsworth is named as a contributor. Fraser, whom I have slightly seen, is editor of a forthcoming or coming Review of foreign books, and is intimately connected with Lockhart, etc. So I take it that this is a concern of Murray’s. Walter Scott also contributes mainly. I have stood off a long time from these annuals, which are ostentatious trumpery, but could not withstand the request of Jameson, a particular friend of mine and Coleridge.

I shall hate myself in frippery, strutting along,



## TO BARTON

and vying finery with beaux and belles, with "future Lord Byrons and sweet L. E. L.'s." Your taste, I see, is less simple than mine, which the difference of our persuasions has doubtless effected. In fact, of late you have so Frenchified your style, larding it with *hors de combats*, and *au desespoirs*, that o' my conscience the Foxian blood is quite dried out of you, and the skipping Monsieur spirit has been infused. Doth Lucy go to balls? I must remodel my lines, which I wrote for her. I hope A. K. keeps to her primitives.

If you have anything you'd like to send further, I daresay an honourable place would be given to it; but I have not heard from Fraser since I sent mine, nor shall probably again, and therefore I do not solicit it as from him. Yesterday I sent off my tragi-comedy to Mr. Kemble. Wish it luck. I made it all ('tis blank verse, and I think of the true old dramatic cut) or most of it in the green lanes about Enfield, where I am, and mean to remain, in spite of your peremptory doubts on that head. Your refusal to lend your poetical sanction to my "Icon," and your reasons to Evans, are most sensible. Maybe I may hit on a line or two of my own jocular; maybe not. Do you never Londonise again? I should like to talk over old poetry with you of which I have much, and you, I think, little. Do your Drummonds allow no holidays? I would willingly come and work

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

for you a three weeks or so, to let you loose. Would I could sell or give you some of my leisure! Positively, the best thing a man can have to do is nothing, and next to that perhaps—good works. I am but poorlyish, and feel myself writing a dull letter; poorlyish from company; not generally, for I never was better, nor took more walks, fourteen miles a day on an average, with a sporting dog, Dash. You would not know the plain poet, any more than he doth recognise James Nayler trick'd out *au desperpoy* (how do you spell it?) *En passant, j'aime entendre de mon bon homme sur surveillance de croix, ma pas l'homme figuratif.* Do you understand me?  
C. LAMB.

### TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCXXIV.]      *Sunday, September 2 [1827].*

Dear Hone—By the verses in yesterday's *Table Book*, sign'd\*, I judge you are going on better; but *I want to be resolv'd.* Allsop promised to call on you, and let me know, but has not. Pray attend to this; and send me the number before the present (pages 225 to 256), which my newsman has neglect'd. Your book improves every week. I have written here a thing in 2 acts, and sent it to Cov<sup>t</sup> Gard.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

## TO DIBDIN

To J. B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCCXXV.]

September 5, 1827.

Dear Dib.—Emma Isola, who is with us, has opened an *album*: bring some verses with you for it on Saturday evening. Any *fun* will do. I am teaching her Latin; you may make something of that. Don't be modest. For in it you *shall* appear, if I rummage out some of your old pleasant letters for rhymes. But an original is better.

Has your Pa \* any scrap?

C. L.

We shall be *most* glad to see your sister or *sisters* with you. Can't you contrive it? Write in that case.

\* The infantile word for father.

T. Dibdin, Esq.,  
Messrs. Railtons',  
Old Jewry, London.

LETTER CCCXXVI.]

September 13, 1827.

Dear *John*—Your verses are very pleasant, and have been adopted into the splendid Emmatic constellation, where they are not of the least magnitude. She is delighted with their merit and readiness. They are just the thing. The 14th line is found. We advertised it. "Hell is cooling for want of company." We shall

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

make it up, along with our kitchen fire to roast you into our new House where I hope you will find us in a few Sundays. We have actually taken it, and a compact thing it will be.

Kemble does not return till the month's end.

My heart sometimes is good, sometimes bad about it, as the day turns out wet or walky.

Emma has just died, choked with a Gerund-in-dum. On opening her, we found a Participle-in-rus in the pericardium. The King never dies, which may be the reason that it always *reigns* here.

We join in loves. C. L. his orthograph.

What a pen!

Mr. John B. Dibdin,  
Messrs. Rankings,  
Old Jewry.

### To THOMAS HOOD

LETTER CCCXXVII.] *Tuesday* [September 18, 1827].

Dear Hood—If I have anything in my head, I will send it to Mr. Watts. Strictly speaking, he should have had my album-verses, but a very intimate friend importun'd me for the trifles, and I believe I forgot Mr. Watts, or lost sight at the time of his similar *souvenir*. Jamieson conveyed the farce from me to Mrs. C. Kemble; *he* will not be in town before the 27th. Give

## TO HOOD

our kind loves to all at Highgate, and tell them that we have finally torn ourselves outright away from Colebrooke, where I had *no* health, and are about to domiciliate for good at Enfield, where I have experienced *good*.

“Lord, what good hours do we keep!  
How quietly we sleep!”

See the rest in the *Complete Angler*.

We have got our books into our new house. I am a dray-horse, if I was not asham'd of the undigested, dirty lumber, as I toppled 'em out of the cart, and blest Becky that came with 'em for her having an unstuff'd brain with such rubbish. We shall get in by Michael's Mass. 'Twas with some pain we were evuls'd from Colebrook. You may find some of our flesh sticking to the door-posts. To change habitations is to die to them; and in my time I have died seven deaths. But I don't know whether every such change does not bring with it a rejuvenescence. 'Tis an enterprise; and shoves back the sense of death's approximating, which, tho' not terrible to me, is at all times particularly distasteful. My house-deaths have generally been periodical, recurring after seven years; but this last is premature by half that time. Cut off in the flower of Colebrook! The Middletonian stream, and all its echoes, mourn. Even minnows dwindle. *A parvis fiunt minimi!* I fear to invite Mrs. Hood to our new mansion,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

lest she envy it, and hate us. But when we are fairly in, I hope she will come and try it. I heard she and you were made uncomfortable by some unworthy-to-be-cared-for attacks, and have tried to set up a feeble counter-action thro' the *Table Book* of last Saturday. Has it not reach'd you, that you are silent about it? Our new domicile is no manor-house; but new, and externally not inviting, but furnish'd within with every convenience: capital new locks to every door, capital grates in every room; with nothing to pay for incoming; and the rent £10 less than the Islington one. It was built, a few years since, at £1100 expense, they tell me—and I perfectly believe it. And I get it for £35, exclusive of moderate taxes. We think ourselves most lucky.

It is not our intention to abandon Regent Street, and West-End perambulations (monastic and terrible thought!), but occasionally to breathe the fresher air of the metropolis. We shall put up a bedroom or two (all we want) for occasional ex-rustication, where we shall visit—not be visited. Plays, too, we'll see—perhaps our own; Urbani Sylvani and Sylvan Urbanuses in turn; courtiers for a sport, then philosophers; old, homely tell-truths and learn-truths in the virtuous shades of Enfield, liars again and mocking gibbers in the coffee-houses and resorts of London. What can a mortal desire more for his bi-parted nature?

## TO DIBDIN

O, the curds-and-cream you shall eat with us here !

O, the turtle-soup and lobster-salads we shall devour with you there !

O, the old books we shall peruse here !

O, the new nonsense we shall trifle over there !

O, Sir. T. Browne, here !

O, Mr. Hood and Mr. Jerdan, there !

Thine,

C. (URBANUS) L. (SYLVANUS) — (ELIA  
ambo)——

Inclos'd are verses which Emma sat down to write (her first) on the eve after your departure. Of course, they are only for Mrs. H.'s perusal. They will shew, at least, that one of our party is not willing to cut old friends. What to call 'em I don't know. Blank verse they are not, because of the rhymes ; rhymes they are not, because of the blank verse ; heroics they are not, because they are lyric ; lyric they are not, because of the heroic measure. They must be call'd Emmaics.

The Hoods, 2, Robert Street,  
Adelphi, London.

To J. B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCCXXVIII.]

September 18, 1827.

My dear, and now more so, *John*—How that name smacks ! What an honest, full, English,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

and yet withal holy and apostolic sound it bears, above the methodistical priggish Bishoppy name of Timothy, under which I had obscured your merits!

What I think of the paternal verses you shall read within, which I assure you is not pen praise but heart praise.

It is the gem of the Dibdin Muses. I have got all my books into my new house, and their readers in a fortnight will follow, to whose joint converse nobody shall be more welcome than you, and *any of yours*.

The house is perfection to our use and comfort. Milton is come. I wish Wordsworth were here to meet him. The next importation is of pots and saucepans, window curtains, crockery, and such base ware.

The pleasure of moving, when Becky moves for you. O the moving Becky! I hope you will come and *warm* the house with the first.

From my temporary domicile, Enfield.

Elia, that "is to go."

Mr. John Dibdin,  
Messrs. Rankings,  
Old Jewry.



## TO COLBURN—PATMORE

To HENRY COLBURN

LETTER CCCXXIX.]

*Enfield Chase Side,  
September 25, 1827.*

Dear Sir—I beg leave in the warmest manner to recommend to your notice Mr. Moxon, the bearer of this, if by any chance yourself should want a steady hand in your business, or know of any Publisher that may want such a one. He is at present in the house of Messrs. Longman and Co., where he has been established for more than six years, and has the conduct of one of the four departments of the Country Line. A difference respecting salary, which he expected to be a little raised on his last promotion, makes him wish to try to better himself. I believe him to be a young man of the highest integrity and a thorough man of business, and should not have taken the liberty of recommending him, if I had not thought him capable of being highly useful.

I am, Sir, with great respect, your h'ble servant,  
CHARLES LAMB.

To P. G. PATMORE

LETTER CCCXXX.]

*Mrs. Leishman's, Chase, Enfield,  
September 1827.*

Dear P.—Excuse my anxiety, but how is Dash? I should have asked if Mrs. Patmore

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

kept her rules, and was improving ; but Dash came uppermost. The order of our thoughts should be the order of our writing. Goes he muzzled, or *aperto ore*? Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in *his* conversation? You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to St. Luke's with him! All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers ; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people, to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water : if he won't lick it up it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally, or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time ; but that was in *Hyder-Ally's* time. Do you get paunch for him? Take care the sheep was sane. You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a Bedlamite. It would be rather fun to see his odd ways. It might amuse Mrs. P.— and the children. They'd have more sense than he. He'd be like a fool kept in

## TO PATMORE

a family, to keep the household in good humour with their own understanding. You might teach him the mad dance, set to the mad howl. *Madge Owlet* would be nothing to him. "My! how he capers!" [*In the margin is written, "One of the children speaks this."*] . . . What I scratch out is a German quotation, from Lessing, on the bite of rabid animals; but I remember you don't read German. But Mrs. P—— may, so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—"Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness, as you would avoid fire or a precipice," which I think is a sensible observation. The Germans are certainly pro-founder than we. If the slightest suspicion arises in your breast that all is not right with him, muzzle him and lead him in a string (common pack-thread will do—he don't care for twist) to Mr. Hood's, his quondam master, and he'll take him in at any time. You may mention your suspicion, or not, as you like, or as you think it may wound or not Mr. H.'s feelings. Hood, I know, will wink at a few follies in Dash, in consideration of his former sense. Besides, Hood is deaf, and if you hinted anything, ten to one he would not hear you. Besides, you will have discharged your conscience, and laid the child at the right door, as they say.

We are dawdling our time away very idly and pleasantly at a Mrs. Leishman's, Chase, Enfield, where, if you come a-hunting, we can give you

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

cold meat and a tankard. Her husband is a tailor ; but that, you know, does not make her one. I knew a jailor (which rhymes), but his wife was a fine lady.

Let us hear from you respecting Mrs. P——'s regimen. I send my love in a —— to Dash.

C. LAMB.

[What follows was written on the *outside* of the letter :—]

Seriously, I wish you would call upon Hood when you are that way. He's a capital fellow. I've sent him two poems, one ordered by his wife, and written to order ; and 'tis a week since, and I've not heard from him. I fear something is the matter.

Our kindest remembrance to Mrs. P.

## To H. CRABB ROBINSON

LETTER CCCXXXI.] *Chase Side, October 1, 1827.*

Dear R.—I am settled for life I hope at Enfield. I have taken the prettiest, compactest house I ever saw, near to Antony Robinson's ! but, alas ! at the expense of poor Mary, who was taken ill of her old complaint the night before we got into it. So I must suspend the pleasure I expected in the surprise you would have had in coming down, and finding us house-

## TO DIBDIN—FIELD

holders. Farewell, till we can all meet comfortable. Pray apprise Martin Burney. Him I longed to have seen with you; but our house is too small to meet either of you without *her* knowledge.

God bless you.

To J. B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCCXXXII.]

*October 2, 1827.*

My dear Dibdin—It gives me great pain to have to say that I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you for some time. We are in our house, but Mary has been seized with one of her periodical disorders—a temporary derangement—which commonly lasts for two months. You shall have the first notice of her convalescence. Can you not send your manuscript by the coach? directed to Chase Side, next to Mr. Westwood's Insurance Office. I will take great care of it.

Yours most truly,

C. LAMB.

To BARRON FIELD

LETTER CCCXXXIII.]

*October 4, 1827.*

I am not in humour to return a fit reply to your pleasant letter. We are fairly housed at Enfield, and an angel shall not persuade me to

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

wicked London again. We have now six Sabbath-days in a week for—*none* ! The change has worked on my sister's mind to make her ill ; and I must wait a tedious time before we can hope to enjoy this place in unison. Enjoy it, when she recovers, I know we shall. I see no shadow, but in her illness, for repenting the step ! For Mathews—I know my own utter unfitness for such a task. I am no hand at describing costumes, a great requisite in an account of mannered pictures. I have not the slightest acquaintance with pictorial language even. An imitator of me, or rather pretender to be *me*, in his "Rejected Articles," has made me minutely describe the dresses of the *poissardes* at Calais !—I could as soon resolve Euclid. I have no eye for forms and fashions. I substitute analysis, and get rid of the phenomenon by slurring in for it its impression. I am sure you must have observed this defect, or peculiarity, in my writings ; else the delight would be incalculable in doing such a thing for Mathews—whom I greatly like—and Mrs. Mathews, whom I almost greatly like. What a feast 'twould be to be sitting at the pictures painting 'em into words ; but I could almost as soon make words into pictures. I speak this deliberately, and not out of modesty. I pretty well know what I can't do.

My sister's verses are homely, but just what they should be ; I send them, not for the poetry,

## TO DODWELL

but the good sense and good will of them. I was beginning to transcribe ; but Emma is sadly jealous of its getting into more hands, and I won't spoil it in her eyes by divulging it. Come to Enfield, and *read it*. As my poor cousin, the bookbinder, now with God, told me most sentimentally, 'that having purchased a picture of fish at a dead man's sale, his heart ached to see how the widow grieved to part with it, being her dear husband's favourite ; and he almost apologised for his generosity by saying he could not help telling the widow she was "welcome to come and look at it"—*e.g.* at *his house*—"as often as she pleased." There was the germ of generosity in an uneducated mind. He had just *reading* enough from the backs of books for the "nec sinit esse feros" ; had he read inside, the same impulse would have led him to give back the two-guinea thing—with a request to see it, now and then, at *her* house. We are parroted into delicacy.—Thus you have a tale for <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ Sonnet.

Adieu ! with (imagine both) our loves.

C. L.

## TO H. DODWELL

LETTER CCCXXXIV.]

October 7, 1827.

Let us meet if possible when you hobble to town. *Enfield Chase*, nearly opposite to the 1st

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

chapel ; or better to define it, east side opposite a white House in which *a* Mrs. Vaughan (in ill health) still resides.

My dear Dodwell—Your little pig found his way to Enfield this morning without his feet, or rather his little feet came first, and as I guessed the rest of him soon followed. He is quite a beauty. It was a pity to kill him, or *rather*, as Rice would say, it would have been a pity not to kill him in his state of innocence. He might have lived to be corrupted by the ways of the world, and for all his delicate promise have turned out, like an old Tea Broker you and I remember, a lump of fat rusty Bacon. Bacon was a Beast, my friend at Calne, Marsh, used to say—or was it Bendry? A rasher of the latter still hangs up in Leadenhall. Your kind letter has left a relish upon my taste ; it read warm and short as to-morrow's crackling.

I am not quite so comfortable *at home* yet as I should be else in the neatest compactest house I ever got—a perfect God-send ; but for some weeks I must enjoy it alone. *She* always comes round again. It is a house of a few years' standing, built (for its size with every convenience) by an old humourist for himself, which he tired of as soon as he got warm in it. Grates, locks, a pump, convenience indescribable, and cheap as if it had been old and craved repairs. For me, who always take the first thing that offers, how lucky that the best should



## TO DODWELL

first offer itself! My books, my prints are up, and I seem (so like this room I write in is to a room there) to have come here transported in the night, like Gulliver in his flying house; and to add to the deception, the New River has come down from Islington with me. 'Twas what I wished—to move my *house*, and I have realised it. Only instead of company seven nights in the week, I see my friends on the First Day of it, and enjoy six real Sabbaths. The Museum is a loss, but I am not so far but I can visit it occasionally; and I have exhausted the Plays there.

“Indisputably I shall allow no sage and onion to be cramm'd into the throat of so tender a suckling.

“Bread and milk with some odoriferous mint, and the liveret minced.

“Come and tell me when he cries, that I may catch his little eyes.

“And do it nice and *crips*.” (That's the Cook's word.) You'll excuse me, I have been only speaking to Becky about the dinner to-morrow. After it, a glass of seldom-drunk wine to my friend Dodwell, and, if he will give a stranger leave, to Mrs. Dodwell: then to the memory of the last, and of the last but one, learned Dodwell, of whom, but not whom, I have read so much. The next to the “Outward and Homeward bound ships”—and, if the bottle lasts, to the Chairman, Deputy-Chairman, the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Court of Directors, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and Accomptant-General, of the East India Company, with a blunt bumper at parting to P——. All I can do, I cannot make P—— look like a G——n, yet he is portly, majestic, hath his nods, his condescensions, his variety of behaviour to suit your Director, your Upper Clerk, your Ryles, and your Winfields; he tempers mirth with gravity, gives no affront, and expects to receive none, is honourable, mannered, of good bearing, looks like a man who, accustomed to respect others, silently extorts respect from them, has it as a sort of *in course*; without claiming it, finds it. What do I miss in him, then, of the essentials of gentlemanhood? He is right sterling—but then, somehow, he always has that d——d large Goldsmith's Hall mark staring upon him. Possibly he is too fat for a gentleman—then I think of Charles Fox in the Dropsy; and the burly old Duke of Norfolk, a nobleman, every stun of him!

I am afraid now you and —— are gone, there's scarce an officer in the Civil Service quite comes up to my notion of a gentleman. D—— certainly does *not*, nor his friend B——.

C—— bobs. K—— *curtsies*. W—— bows like the son of a citizen; F—— like a village apothecary; C—— like the Squire's younger Brother; R—— like a crocodile on his hind legs; H—— never bows at all—at least to me.

## TO HONE \*

S—— splutters and stutters. W—— halts and smatters. R—— is a coal-heaver. Wolf wants my clothing. C—— simmers, but never boils over. D—— is a Butterfirkin, salt butter. C——, a pepper-box, cayenne. For A——, E——, and O——, I can answer that they have not the slightest pretensions to anything but rusticity. Marry, the remaining vowels had something of civility about them. Can you make top or tail of this nonsense, or tell where it begins? I will page it. How an error in the outset infects to the end of life, or of a sheet of paper! Cordially adieu. C. LAMB.

H. Dodwell, Esq.  
Maidenhead,  
Berks.

## TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCXXXV.]

[October 1827.]

Dear Hone—I was most sensibly gratified by receiving the T. B. on Friday evening at Enfield!!

Thank you. In haste, C. L.

Don't spare the Extracts. They'll eke out till Christmas.

How is your daughter?

Mr. Hone,  
22, Belvidere Place,  
Southwark.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO BERNARD BARTON

*Chase Side, Enfield,  
November 1827.*

LETTER CCCXXXVI.]

My dear B. B.—You will understand my silence when I tell you that my sister, on the very eve of entering into a new house we have taken at Enfield, was surprised with an attack of one of her sad long illnesses, which deprive me of her society, though not of her domestication, for eight or nine weeks together. I see her, but it does her no good. But for this, we have the snuggest, most comfortable house, with everything most compact and desirable. Colebrook is a wilderness. The books, prints, etc., are come here, and the New River came down with us. The familiar prints, the bust, the Milton, seem scarce to have changed their rooms. One of her last observations was “How frightfully like this room is to our room in Islington!”—our upstairs room, she meant. How I hope you will come some better day, and judge of it! We have tried quiet here for four months, and I will answer for the comfort of it enduring.

On emptying my bookshelves I found an *Ulysses*, which I will send to A. K. when I go to town, for her acceptance—unless the book be out of print. One likes to have one copy of everything one does. I neglected to keep one of “*Poetry for Children*,” the joint production of

## TO BARTON

Mary and me, and it is not to be had for love or money. It had in the title-page "by the Author of Mrs. Lester's School." Know you any one that has it, and would exchange it?

Strolling to Waltham Cross the other day, I hit off these lines. It is one of the crosses which Edward I. caused to be built for his wife at every town where her corpse rested between Northamptonshire and London:—

A stately cross each sad spot doth attest,  
Whereat the corpse of Eleanor did rest,  
From Harby fetch'd—her spouse so honour'd her—  
To sleep with royal dust at Westminster.  
And, if less pompous obsequies were thine,  
Duke Brunswick's daughter, princely Caroline,  
Grudge not, great ghost, nor count thy funeral losses:  
Thou in thy life-time had'st thy share of crosses.

My dear B.—My head aches with this little excursion. Pray accept two sides for three for once, and believe me yours sadly, C. L.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.]

*December 4, 1827.*

My dear B. B.—I have scarce spirits to write, yet am harassed with not writing. Nine weeks are completed, and Mary does not get any better. It is perfectly exhausting. Enfield, and everything, is very gloomy. But for long experience I should fear her ever getting well. I feel most thankful for the spinsterly attentions of your sister. Thank the kind "knitter in the sun!" What nonsense seems verse, when one is seriously

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

out of hope and spirits! I mean, that at this time I have some nonsense to write, under pain of incivility. Would to the fifth heaven no coxcombs had invented Albums!

I have not had a Bijoux, nor the slightest notice from Pickering about omitting four out of five of my things. The best thing is never to hear of such a thing as a bookseller again, or to think there are publishers. Second-hand stationers and old book-stalls for me. Authorship should be an idea of the past. Old kings, old bishops, are venerable; all present is hollow. I cannot make a letter. I have no straw, not a pennyworth of chaff, only this may stop your kind importunity to know about us. Here is a comfortable house, but no tenants. *One* does not make a household. Do not think I am quite in despair; but, in addition to hope protracted, I have a stupifying cold and obstructing headache, and the sun is dead.

I will not fail to apprise you of the revival of a beam. Meantime accept this, rather than think I have forgotten you all. Best remembrances.

Yours and theirs truly,

C. LAMB.

### To LEIGH HUNT

LETTER CCCXXXVIII.]

[December] 1827.

Dear H.—I am here almost in the eleventh week of the longest illness my sister ever had,

## TO ALLSOP

and no symptoms of amendment. Some had begun, but relapsed with a change of nurse. If she ever gets well, you will like my house, and I shall be happy to show you Enfield country.

As to my head, it is perfectly at your or any one's service; either Myers' or Hazlitt's,—which last (done fifteen or twenty years since) White, of the Accountant's Office, India House, has; he lives in Kentish Town—I forget where; but is to be found in Leadenhall daily. Take your choice. I should be proud to hang up as an alehouse-sign even; or, rather, I care not about my head or anything, but how we are to get well again, for I am tired out.

God bless you and yours from the worst calamity.

Yours truly,

C. L.

kindest remembrances to Mrs. Hunt. H.'s is in a queer dress. M.'s would be preferable *ad populum*.

## To THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCCXXXIX.]

December 20, 1827.

My dear Allsop—I have writ to say to you that I hope to have a comfortable X-mas-day with Mary, and I cannot bring myself to go from home at present. Your kind offer, and the kind consent of the young Lady to come, we feel as

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

we should do ; pray accept all of you our kindest thanks : at present I think a Visitor (good and excellent as we remember her to be) might a little put us out of our way. Emma is with us, and our small house just holds us, without obliging Mary to sleep with Becky, etc.

We are going on extremely comfortable, and shall soon be in capacity of seeing our friends. Much weakness is left still. With thanks and old remembrances,

Yours,

C. L.

To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCXL.]

[December] 1827.

My dear B.—We are all pretty well again and comfortable, and I take a first opportunity of sending the “Adventures of Ulysses,” hoping that among us—Homer, Chapman, and Co.—we shall afford you some pleasure. I fear it is out of print ; if not, A. K. will accept it, with wishes it were bigger ; if another copy is not to be had, it reverts to me and my heirs *for ever*. With it I send a trumpery book ; to which, without my knowledge, the editor of the *Bijoux* has contributed Lucy’s verses ; I am ashamed to ask her acceptance of the trash accompanying it. Adieu to Albums—for a great while—I said when I came here, and had not been fixed for two days ; but my landlord’s daughter (not at the Pothouse)



## TO BARTON

requested me to write in her female friends' and in her own. If I go to — thou art there also, O all pervading Album! All over the Leeward Islands, in Newfoundland, and the Back Settlements, I understand there is no other reading. They haunt me. I die of Albophobia!

C. L.

LETTER CCCXLI.]

[December] 1827.

My dear B. B.—A gentleman I never saw before brought me your welcome present. Imagine a scraping, fiddling, fidgiting, petit-mâitre of a dancing school advancing into my plain parlour with a toupée and a sideling bow, and presenting the book as if he had been handing a glass of lemonade to a young miss: imagine this, and contrast it with the serious nature of the book presented! Then task your imagination, reversing this picture, to conceive of quite an opposite messenger, a lean, strait-locked, whey-faced Methodist, for such was he in reality who brought it, the Genius (it seems) of the Wesleyan Magazine. Certes, friend B., thy *Widow's Tale* is too horrible, spite of the lenitives of Religion, to embody in verse; I hold prose to be the appropriate expositor of such atrocities! No offence, but it is a cordial that makes the heart sick. Still thy skill in compounding it I do not deny. I turn to what gave me less mingled pleasure. I find mark'd with pencil these pages

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

in thy pretty book, and fear I have been penurious :—

- Page 52, 53—Capital.  
„ 59—6th stanza, exquisite simile.  
„ 61—11th stanza, equally good.  
„ 108—3rd stanza, I long to see Van Balen.  
„ 111—A downright good sonnet. *Dixi*.  
„ 153—Lines at the bottom.

So you see, I read, hear, and *mark*, if I don't learn. In short, this little volume is no discredit to any of your former, and betrays none of the senility you fear about. *Apropos* of Van Balen, an artist who painted me lately had painted a blackamoor praying, and not filling his canvas, stuffed in his little girl aside of Blackey, gaping at him unmeaningly; and then didn't know what to call it. Now for a picture to be promoted to the Exhibition (Suffolk Street) as *Historical*, a subject is requisite. What does me? I but christened it the "Young Catechist" and furbish'd it with dialogue following, which dubb'd it an Historical Painting. Nothing to a friend at need.

“ While this tawny Ethiop prayeth,  
Painter, who is she that stayeth  
By, with skin of whitest lustre;  
Sunny locks, a shining cluster;  
Saint-like seeming to direct him  
To the Power that must protect him?

## TO BARTON

Is she of the heav'n born Three,  
Meek Hope, strong Faith, sweet Charity?  
Or some Cherub?

“They you mention  
Far transcend my weak invention.  
'Tis a simple Christian child,  
Missionary young and mild,  
From her store of script'ral knowledge  
(Bible-taught without a college),  
Which by reading she could gather,  
Teaches him to say Our Father  
To the common Parent, who  
Colour not respects, nor hue.  
White and black in Him have part,  
Who looks not to the skin, but heart.”

When I'd done it, the artist (who had clapt in Miss merely as a fill-space) swore I exprest his full meaning, and the damosel bridled up into a missionary's vanity. I like verses to explain pictures; seldom pictures to illustrate poems. Your woodcut is a rueful *lignum mortis*. By the by, is the widow likely to marry again?

I am giving the fruit of my old play reading at the Museum to Hone, who sets forth a portion weekly in the *Table Book*. Do you see it? How is Mitford?—I'll just hint that the pitcher, the chord, and the bowl are a little too often repeated (*passim*) in your book, and that in page 17, last line but 4, *him* is put for *he*; but the poor widow I take it had small leisure for grammatical niceties. Don't you see there's *he*, *myself*, and *him*; why not both *him*? likewise *imperviusly* is cruelly spelt *imperiously*. These

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

are trifles, and I honestly like your book, and you for giving it, though I really am ashamed of so many presents. I can think of no news; therefore I will end with mine and Mary's kindest remembrances to you and yours.

C. L.

## CHAPTER VI

1828—1834

LETTERS TO BERNARD BARTON, COWDEN  
CLARKE, PROCTER, MOXON, AND OTHERS

To THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCCXLII.]

*January 2, 1828.*

Dear Allsop—I have been very poorly and nervous lately, but am recovering sleep, etc. I do not write or make engagements for particular days: but I need not say how pleasant your dropping in any Sunday morning would be. Perhaps Jameson would accompany you. Pray beg him to keep an accurate record of the warning I sent him to old Pau., for I dread lest he should at the 12 months' end deny the warning. The house is his daughter's, but we took it through him, and have paid the rent to his receipts for his daughter's. Consult J. if he thinks the warning sufficient. I am very nervous, or have been, about the house; lost my sleep, and expected to be ill; but slumbered

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

gloriously last night, golden slumbers. I shall not relapse ; you fright me with your inserted slips in the most welcome Atlas. They begin to charge double for it, and call it two sheets. How can I confute them by opening it, when a note of yours might slip out, and we get in a hobble ? When you write, write real letters. Mary's best love and mine to Mrs. A.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

### TO C. COWDEN CLARKE

LETTER CCCXLIII.] *Enfield, February 25 [1828].*

My dear Clarke—You have been accumulating on me such a heap of pleasant obligations, that I feel uneasy in writing as to a Benefactor. Your smaller contributions, the little weekly rills, are refreshments in the Desert ; but your large books were feasts. I hope Mrs. Hazlitt, to whom I encharged it, has taken Hunt's *Lord B.* to the Novellos. His picture of Literary Lordship is as pleasant as a disagreeable subject can be made ; his own poor man's Education at dear Christ's is as good and hearty as the subject. Hazlitt's speculative episodes are capital ; I skip the Battles. But how did I deserve to have the book ? The "Companion" has too much of Madame Pasta. Theatricals have ceased to be popular attractions. His walk home after

## TO CLARKE

the play is as good as the best of the old "Indicators." The watchmen are emboxed in a niche of fame, save the skating one that must be still fugitive. I wish I could send a scrap for goodwill. But I have been most seriously unwell and nervous a long, long time. I have scarce mustered courage to begin this short note, but conscience duns me.

I had a pleasant letter from your sister, greatly over-acknowledging my poor sonnet. I think I should have replied to it, but tell her I think so. Alas! for sonneting, 'tis as the nerves are; all the summer I was dawdling among green lanes, and verses came as thick as fancies. I am sunk winterly below prose and zero.

But I trust the vital principle is only as under snow. That I shall yet laugh again.

I suppose the great change of place affects me; but I could not have lived in Town; I could not bear company.

I see Novello flourishes in the Del Capo line, and dedications are not forgotten. I read the *Atlas*. When I pitched on the Dedication, I looked for the Broom of "*Cowden* knows" to be harmonised, but 'twas summat of Rossini's.

I want to hear about Hone. Does he stand above water? how is his son? I have delay'd writing to him till it seems impossible. Break the ice for me.

The wet ground here is intolerable, the sky above clear and delusive; but under foot quag-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

mires from night showers, and I am cold-footed and moisture-abhorring as a cat ; nevertheless I yesterday tramped to Waltham Cross ; perhaps the poor bit of exertion necessary to scribble this was owing to that unusual bracing.

If I get out, I shall get stout, and then something will out—I mean for the “ Companion ”—you see I rhyme insensibly.

Traditions are rife here of one Clarke a schoolmaster and a runaway pickle named Holmes ; but much obscurity hangs over it. Is it possible they can be any relations ?

'Tis worth the research, when you can find a sunny day, with ground firm, etc. Master Sexton is intelligent, and for half-a-crown he'll pick you up a Father.

In truth, we shall be glad to see any of the Novellian circle, middle of the week such as can come, or Sunday, as can't. But Spring will burgeon out quickly, and then we'll talk more.

You'd like to see the improvements on the Chase, the new cross in the market-place, the Chandler's shop from whence the rods were fetch'd. They are raised a farthing since the spread of Education. But perhaps you don't care to be reminded of the Holofernes' days, and nothing remains of the old laudable profession but the clear, firm impossible-to-be-mistaken schoolmaster text hand with which is subscribed the ever-welcome name of Chas. Cowden C. Let me crowd in both our loves to all. C. L.



## TO MOXON

[*Added on the fold-down of the letter :*] Let me never be forgotten to include in my rememb<sup>ces</sup> my good friend and whilom correspondent, Master Stephen.

How, especially, is Victoria ?

I try to remember all I used to meet at Shacklewell. The little household, cake-producing, wine-bringing out, Emma—the old servant, that didn't stay, and ought to have stayed, and was always very dirty and friendly ; and Miss H., the counter-tenor with a fine voice, whose sister married Thurtell. They all live in my mind's eye, and Mr. N.'s and Holmes's walks with us half back after supper. Troja fuit !

### TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCXLIV.]

*March 19, 1828.*

My dear M.—It is my firm determination to have nothing to do with “Forget-me-Nots” ; pray excuse me as civilly as you can to Mr. Hurst. I will take care to refuse any other applications. The things which Pickering has, if to be had again, I have promised absolutely, you know, to poor Hood, from whom I had a melancholy epistle yesterday ; besides that Emma has decided objections to her own and her friend's album verses being published ; but if she gets over that, they are decidedly Hood's.

Till we meet, farewell. Loves to Dash.

C. L.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO REV. E. IRVING

LETTER CCCXLV.] *Enfield Chase, April 3, 1828.*

Dear Sir—I take advantage from the kindness which I have experienced from you in a slight acquaintance to introduce to you my very respected friend Mr. Hone, who is of opinion that your interference in a point which he will mention to you may prove of essential benefit to him in some present difficulties. I should not take this liberty if I did not feel that you are a person not to be prejudiced by an obnoxious name. All that I know of him obliges me to respect him, and to request your kindness for him, if you can serve him.

With feelings of kindest respect, I am, dear Sir, yours truly,  
CHAS. LAMB.

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCXLVI.] *April 21, 1828.*

Dear B. B.—You must excuse my silence. I have been in very poor health and spirits, and cannot write letters. I only write to assure you, as you wish'd, of my existence. All that which Mitford tells you of H.'s book is rhodomontade; only H. has written unguardedly about me, and nothing makes a man more foolish than his own

## TO HONE

foolish panegyric. But I am pretty well cased to flattery, and its contrary. Neither affect me a turnip's worth. Do you see the author of "May you like it"? Do you write to him? Will you give my present plea to him of ill health for not acknowledging a pretty book with a pretty frontispiece he sent me. He is most esteemed by me. As for subscribing to books, in plain truth I am a man of reduced income, and don't allow myself 12 shillings a-year to buy old books with; which must be my excuse. I am truly sorry for Murray's demur; but I wash my hands of all booksellers, and hope to know them no more. I am sick and poorly, and must leave off with our joint kind remembrances to your daughter and friend A. K. C. L.

## To WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCXLVII.]

*Enfield, Wednesday,  
May 2, 1828.*

Dear H.—Valter Vilson dines with us to-morrow. Vell! How I should like to see Hone!  
C. LAMB.

Mr. Hone,  
22, Belvidere Place,  
near the Obelisk, Southwark.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCXLVIII.]

*Enfield, May 3, 1828.*

Dear M.—My friend Patmore, author of the *Months*, a very pretty publication,—of sundry Essays in the *London, New Monthly*, etc., wants to dispose of a volume or two of “Tales.” Perhaps they might chance to suit Hurst; but be that as it may, he will call upon you *under favour of my recommendation*; and as he is returning to France, where he lives, if you can do anything for him in the Treaty line, to save him dancing over the Channel every week, I am sure you will. I said I’d never trouble you again; but how vain are the resolves of mortal man! P. is a very hearty, friendly fellow, and was poor John Scott’s Second, as I will be yours when you want one. May you never be mine!

Yours truly,

C. L.

Mr. Moxon,  
Messrs. Hurst and Co.,  
Booksellers,  
St. Paul’s Churchyard.

TO REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCCXLIX.]

*June 10, 1828.*

Dear Sir—I long to see Wordsworth once more before he goes hence, but it would be at the

## TO CARY

expense of health and comfort my infirmities cannot afford. Once only I have been at a dinner party, to meet him, for a whole year past, and I do not know that I am not the worse for it now. There is a necessity for my drinking too much (don't show this to the Bishop of —, your friend) at and after dinner ; then I require spirits at night to allay the crudity of the weaker Bacchus ; and in the morning I cool my parched stomach with a fiery libation. Then I am aground in town, and call upon my London friends, and get new wets of ale, porter, etc. ; then ride home, drinking where the coach stops, as duly as Edward set up his Waltham Crosses. This, or near it, was the process of my experiment of dining at Talfourd's to meet Wordsworth, and I am not well now. Now let me beg that we may meet here with assured safety to both sides. Darley and Procter come here on Sunday morning ; pray arrange to come along with them. Here I can be tolerably moderate. In town, the very air of town turns my head and is intoxication enough, if intoxication knew a limit. I am a poor country mouse, and your cates disturb me. Tell me you will come. We have a bed, and a half or three quarters bed, at all your services ; and the adjoining inn has many. If engaged on Sunday, tell me when you will come ; a Saturday will suit as well. I would that Wordsworth would come too. Pray believe that 'tis my health only,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

which brought me here, that frightens me from the wicked town. Mary joins in kind remembrances to Mrs. Cary and yourself.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

### TO MRS. BASIL MONTAGU

LETTER CCCL.]

[Summer 1828.]

Dear Madam—I return your list with my name. I should be sorry that any respect should be going on towards Clarkson, and I be left out of the conspiracy. Otherwise I frankly own that to pillarise a man's good feelings in his lifetime is not to my taste. Monuments to goodness, even after death, are equivocal. I turn away from Howard's, I scarce know why. Goodness blows no trumpet, nor desires to have it blown. *We should be modest for a modest man*—as he is for himself. The vanities of life—art, poetry, skill military—are subjects for trophies; not the silent thoughts arising in a good man's mind in lonely places. Was I Clarkson, I should never be able to walk or ride near the spot again. Instead of bread, we are giving him a stone. Instead of the locality recalling the noblest moment of his existence, it is a place at which his friends (that is, himself) blow to the world, "What a good man is he!" I sat down upon a hillock at

## TO MRS. MONTAGU

Forty Hill yesternight,—a fine contemplative evening,—with a thousand good speculations about mankind. How I yearned with cheap benevolence! I shall go and inquire of the stone-cutter, that cuts the tombstones here, what a stone with a short inscription will cost; just to say, “Here C. Lamb loved his brethren of mankind.” Everybody will come there to love. As I can’t well put my own name, I shall put about a subscription :

Mrs. ——— .	. £	0	5	0	
Procter .	.	0	2	6	
G. Dyer .	.	0	1	0	
Mr. Godwin .	.	0	0	0	
Mrs. Godwin .	.	0	0	0	
Mr. Irving .	.				a watch-chain.
Mr. ——— .	.				} the proceeds of ——— first edition.
<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/>					
£				0	8
<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/>					
£				0	8
<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/>					
£				0	8
<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/>					
£				0	8

I scribble in haste from here, where we shall be some time. Pray request Mr. Montagu to advance the guinea for me, which shall faithfully be forthcoming, and pardon me that I don’t see the proposal in quite the light that he may. The kindness of his motives, and his power of appreciating the noble passage, I thoroughly agree in.

With most kind regards to him, I conclude,  
 dear Madam, yours truly, C. LAMB.

*From Mrs. Leishman’s, Chase, Enfield.*

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO B. R. HAYDON

LETTER CCCLI.]

*August 1828.*

Dear Haydon—I have been tardy in telling you that your Chairing the Member gave me great pleasure—'tis true broad Hogarthian fun, the High Sheriff capital. Considering, too, that you had the materials imposed upon you, and that you did not select them from the rude world as H. did, I hope to see many more such from your hand. If the former picture went beyond this I have had a loss, and the King a bargain. I longed to rub the back of my hand across the hearty canvas that two senses might be gratified. Perhaps the subject is a little discordantly placed opposite to another act of Chairing, where the huzzas were Hosannahs! but I was pleased to see so many of my old acquaintances brought together notwithstanding.

Believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCLII.]

*October 11, 1828.*

A splendid edition of "Bunyan's Pilgrim"! Why, the thought is enough to turn one's moral stomach. His cockle-hat and staff transformed to a smart cock'd beaver and a jemmy cane;



## TO BARTON

his amice gray, to the last Regent Street cut ;  
and his painful palmer's pace to the modern  
swagger. Stop thy friend's sacrilegious hand.  
Nothing can be done for B. but to reprint the  
old cuts in as homely but good a style as possible.  
The Vanity Fair, and the Pilgrims there—the  
silly-soothness in his setting-out countenance—  
the Christian Idiocy (in a good sense) of his  
admiration of the shepherds on the Delectable  
Mountains ; the lions, so truly allegorical, and  
remote from any similitude to Pidcock's ; the  
great head (the author's), capacious of dreams  
and similitudes, dreaming in the dungeon. Per-  
haps you don't know my edition, what I had  
when a child. If you do, can you bear new  
designs from Martin, enamelled into copper or  
silver plate by Heath, accompanied with verses  
from Mrs. Hemans's pen, O how unlike his own !

“Wouldst thou divert thyself from melancholy ?  
Wouldst thou be pleasant, yet be far from folly ?  
Wouldst thou read riddles, and their explanation ?  
Or else be drownèd in thy contemplation ?  
Dost thou love picking meat ? or wouldst thou see  
A man in the clouds, and hear him speak to thee ?  
Wouldst thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep ?  
Or wouldst thou in a moment laugh and weep ?  
Or wouldst thou lose thyself, and catch no harm,  
And find thyself again without a charm ?  
Wouldst read *thyself*, and read thou knowest not what,  
And yet know whether thou art blest or not  
By reading the same lines ? O then come hither,  
And lay my book, thy head, and heart together.

“JOHN BUNYAN.”

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Show me such poetry in any of the fifteen forthcoming combinations of show and emptiness, yclept "Annuals." So there's verses for thy verses; and now let me tell you, that the sight of your hand gladdened me. I have been daily trying to write to you, but paralysed. You have spurred me on this tiny effort, and at intervals I hope to hear from and talk to you. But my spirits have been in an opprest way for a long long time, and they are things which must be to you of faith, for who can explain depression? Yes, I am hooked into the "Gem," but only for some lines written on a dead infant of the Editor's, which being, as it were, his property, I could not refuse their appearing; but I hate the paper, the type, the gloss, the dandy plates, the names of contributors poked up into your eyes in first page, and whistled through all the covers of magazines, the barefaced sort of emulation, the immodest candidateship, brought into so little space—in those old "Londons" a signature was lost in the wood of matter, the paper coarse (till latterly, which spoiled them); in short, I detest to appear in an Annual. What a fertile genius (and a quiet good soul withal) is Hood! He has fifty things in hand: farces to supply the Adelphi for the season; a comedy for one of the great theatres, just ready; a whole entertainment, by himself, for Mathews and Yates to figure in; a meditated Comic Annual for next year, to

## TO BARTON

be nearly done by himself. You'd like him very much.

Wordsworth, I see, has a good many pieces announced in one of 'em, not our *Gem*. W. Scott has distributed himself like a bribe haunch among 'em. Of all the poets, Cary has had the good sense to keep quite clear of 'em, with clergy-gentlemanly right notions. Don't think I set up for being proud on this point; I like a bit of flattery, tickling my vanity, as well as any one. But these pompous masquerades without masks (naked names or faces) I hate. So there's a bit of my mind. Besides, they infallibly cheat you; I mean the booksellers. If I get but a copy, I only expect it from Hood's being my friend. Coleridge has lately been here. He too is deep among the prophets, the year-servers,—the mob of gentlemen annuals. But they'll cheat him, I know. And now, dear B. B., the sun shining out merrily, and the dirty clouds we had yesterday having washed their own faces clean with their own rain, tempts me to wander up Winchmore Hill, or into some of the delightful vicinages of Enfield, which I hope to show you at some time when you can get a few days up to the great town. Believe me, it would give both of us great pleasure to show you all three (we can lodge you) our pleasant farms and villages.

We both join in kindest loves to you and yours.

C. LAMB, *redivivus*.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

To THOMAS HOOD

LETTER CCCLIII.]

*Enfield [October 1828].*

Dear Lamb—You are an impudent varlet ; but I will keep your secret. We dine at Ayrton's on Thursday, and shall try to find Sarah and her two spare beds for that night only. Miss M. and her tragedy may be dished : so may *not* you and your rib. Health attend you.

Yours,

T. HOOD, Esq.

Miss Bridget Hood sends love.

To C. COWDEN CLARKE

LETTER CCCLIV.]

*[Enfield, October 1828.]*

Dear Clarke—We did expect to see you with Victoria and the Novellos before this, and do not quite understand why we have not. Mrs. N. and V. [Vincent] promised us after the York expedition ; a day being named before, which fail'd. 'Tis not too late. The autumn leaves drop gold, and Enfield is beautifuller—to a common eye—than when you lurked at the Greyhound. Benedicks are close ; but how I so totally missed you at that time, going for my morning cup of ale duly, is a mystery. 'Twas

## TO CLARKE

stealing a match before one's face in earnest. But certainly we had not a dream of your appropinquity. I instantly prepared an Epithalamium, in the form of a Sonata—which I was sending to Novello to compose; but Mary forbid it me as too light for the occasion—as if the subject required anything heavy: so in a tiff with her I sent no congratulation at all. Tho' I promise you the wedding was very pleasant news to me indeed. Let your reply name a day this next week, when you will come as many as a coach will hold; such a day as we had at Dulwich. My very kindest love and Mary's to Victoria and the Novellos. The enclosed is from a friend nameless, but highish in office, and a man whose accuracy of statement may be relied on with implicit confidence. He wants the *exposé* to appear in a newspaper as the "greatest piece of legal and Parliamentary villainy he ever remember"<sup>d</sup>," and he had experience of both; and thinks it would answer afterwards in a cheap pamphlet printed at Lambeth in 8<sup>vo</sup> sheet, as 16,000 families in that parish are interested. I know not whether the present "Examiner" keeps up the character of exposing abuses, for I scarce see a paper now. If so, you may ascertain Mr. Hunt of the strictest truth of the statement, at the peril of my head. But if this won't do, transmit it me back, I beg, per coach—or better, bring it with you.

Yours unaltered,

C. LAMB.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

To VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCCLV.]

[*Enfield, November 6, 1828.*]

My dear Novello—I am afraid I shall appear rather tardy in offering my congratulations, however sincere, upon your daughter's marriage. The truth is I had put together a little Serenata upon the occasion, but was prevented from sending it by my sister, to whose judgment I am apt to defer too much in these kind of things; so that, now I have her consent, the offering, I am afraid, will have lost the grace of seasonableness. Such as it is, I send it. She thinks it a little too old-fashioned in the manner, too much like what they wrote a century back. But I cannot write in the modern style, if I try ever so hard. I have attended to the proper divisions for the music, and you will have little difficulty in composing it. If I may advise, make Pepusch your model, or Blow. It will be necessary to have a good second voice, as the stress of the melody lies there:—

SERENATA, FOR TWO VOICES,

*On the Marriage of Charles Cowden Clarke, Esqre., to Victoria,  
eldest daughter of Vincent Novello, Esqre.*

DUETTO

Wake th' harmonious voice and string,  
Love and Hymen's triumph sing,

## TO NOVELLO

Sounds with secret charms combining,  
In melodious union joining,  
Best the wondrous joys can tell,  
That in hearts united dwell.

### RECITATIVE

#### *First Voice*

To young Victoria's happy fame  
Well may the Arts a trophy raise,  
Music grows sweeter in her praise,  
And, own'd by her, with rapture speaks her name.  
To touch the brave Cowdenio's heart,  
The Graces all in her conspire ;  
Love arms her with his surest dart,  
Apollo with his lyre.

### AIR

The list'ning Muses all around her,  
Think 'tis Phœbus' strain they hear ;  
And Cupid, drawing near to wound her,  
Drops his bow, and stands to hear.

### RECITATIVE

#### *Second Voice*

While crowds of rivals with despair  
Silent admire, or vainly court the Fair,  
Behold the happy conquest of her eyes,  
A Hero is the glorious prize !  
In courts, in camps, thro' distant realms renown'd,  
Cowdenio comes !—Victoria, see,  
He comes with British honour crown'd.  
Love leads his eager steps to thee.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

## AIR

In tender sighs he silence breaks,  
The Fair his flame approves,  
Consenting blushes warm her cheeks,  
She smiles, she yields, she loves.

## RECITATIVE

### *First Voice*

Now Hymen at the altar stands,  
And while he joins their faithful hands,  
Behold ! by ardent vows brought down,  
Immortal Concord, heavenly bright,  
Array'd in robes of purest light,  
Descends, th' auspicious rites to crown.  
Her golden harp the goddess brings ;  
Its magic sound  
Commands a sudden silence all around,  
And strains prophetic thus attune the strings.

## DUETTO

### *First Voice*

The Swain his Nymph possessing,

### *Second Voice*

The Nymph her Swain caressing,

### *First and Second*

Shall still improve the blessing,  
For ever kind and true.



## TO NOVELLO

*Both*

While rolling years are flying,  
Love, Hymen's lamp supplying,  
With fuel never dying,  
Shall still the flame renew.

To so great a master as yourself I have no need to suggest that the peculiar tone of the composition requires sprightliness, occasionally checked by tenderness, as in the second air,—

She smiles,—she yields,—she loves.

Again, you need not be told that each fifth line of the two first recitatives requires a crescendo.

And your exquisite taste will prevent your falling into the error of Purcell, who at a passage similar to *that* in my first air,

Drops his bow, and stands to hear,

directed the first violin thus :—

Here the first violin must drop his *bow*.

But, besides the absurdity of disarming his principal performer of so necessary an adjunct to his instrument, in such an emphatic part of the composition too, which must have had a droll effect at the time, all such minutix of adaptation are at this time of day very properly exploded, and Jackson of Exeter very fairly ranks them under the head of puns.

Should you succeed in the setting of it, we

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

propose having it performed (we have one very tolerable second voice here, and Mr. Holmes, I dare say, would supply the minor parts) at the Greyhound. But it must be a secret to the young couple till we can get the band in readiness.

Believe me, dear Novello, yours truly,  
C. LAMB.

### To LAMAN BLANCHARD

LETTER CCCLVI.]

*Enfield, November 9, 1828.*

Sir—I beg to return my acknowledgments for the present of your elegant volume, which I should have esteemed, without the bribe of the name prefixed to it. I have been much pleased with it throughout, but am most taken with the peculiar delicacy of some of the sonnets. I shall put them up among my poetical treasures.

Your obliged Servant,  
C. LAMB.

### To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCLVII.]

*December 5, 1828.*

Dear B. B.—I am ashamed to receive so many nice books from you, and to have none to

## TO BARTON

send you in return. You are always sending me some fruits or wholesome potherbs, and mine is the garden of the Sluggard, nothing but weeds, or scarce they. Nevertheless, if I knew how to transmit it, I would send you Blackwood's of this month, which contains a little drama, to have your opinion of it, and how far I have improved, or otherwise, upon its prototype. Thank you for your kind sonnet. It does me good to see the Dedication to a Christian Bishop. I am for a comprehension, as divines call it; but so as that the Church shall go a good deal more than half way over to the silent Meeting-house. I have ever said that the Quakers are the only *professors* of Christianity as I read it in the *Evangiles*. I say *professors*: marry, as to practice, with their gaudy hot types and poetical vanities, they are much at one with the sinful. Martin's Frontispiece is a very fine thing, let *C. L.* say what he pleases to the contrary. Of the Poems, I like them as a volume, better than any one of the preceding; particularly, "Power and Gentleness"—"The Present"—"Lady Russell"; with the exception that I do not like the noble act of Curtius, true or false—one of the grand foundations of old Roman patriotism—to be sacrificed to Lady R.'s taking notes on her husband's trial. If a thing is good, why invidiously bring it into light with something better? There are too few heroic things in this world, to admit of our marshalling them in anxious

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

etiquettes of precedence. Would you make a poem on the story of Ruth (pretty story !), and then say—Ay, but how much better is the story of Joseph and his brethren ! To go on, the stanzas to “Chalon” want the *name* of Clarkson in the body of them ; it is left to inference. The “Battle of Gibeon” is spirited, again ; but you sacrifice it in the last stanza to the song at Bethlehem. Is it quite orthodox to do so ? The first was good, you suppose, for that dispensation. Why set the Word against the Word ? It puzzles a weak Christian. So Watts’s Psalms are an implied censure on David’s. But as long as the Bible is supposed to be an equally divine emanation with the Testament, so long it will stagger weaklings to have them set in opposition. “Godiva” is delicately touched. I have always thought it a beautiful story, characteristic of the old English times. But I could not help amusing myself with the thought—if Martin had chosen this subject for a frontispiece—there would have been in some dark corner a white lady, white as the walker on the waves, riding upon some mystical quadruped ; and high above would have risen “tower above tower a massy structure high”—the Tenterden steeples of Coventry, till the poor cross would scarce have known itself among the clouds ; and far above them all the distant Clint Hills peering over chimney-pots, piled up, Ossa-on-Olympus fashion, till the admiring spectator (admirer of a

## TO BARTON

noble deed) might have gone look for the lady, as you must hunt for the other in the lobster. But M[artin] should be made royal architect. What palaces he would pile! But then, what parliamentary grants to make them good! Nevertheless, I like the frontispiece. "The Elephant" is pleasant; and I am glad you are getting into a wider scope of subjects. There may be too much, not religion, but too many *good words* in a book, till it becomes, as Sh— says of Religion, a rhapsody of words. I will just name, that you have brought in the "Song to the Shepherds" in four or five, if not six places. Now this is not good economy. The "Enoch" is fine; and here I can sacrifice "Elijah" to it, because 'tis illustrative only, and not disparaging of the latter prophet's departure. I like this best in the book. Lastly, I much like the "Heron"; 'tis exquisite. Know you Lord Thurlow's Sonnet to a bird of that sort on Lacken water? If not, 'tis indispensable I send it you, with my Blackwood, if you tell me how best to send them. "Fludyer" is pleasant,—you are getting gay and Hoodish. What is the enigma? Money? If not, I fairly confess I am foiled, and sphynx must . . . *eat me*. Four times I've tried to write "eat me," and the blotting pen turns it into *cat me*. And now I will take my leave with saying, I esteem thy verses, like thy present, honour thy frontispiecer, and right

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

reverence thy patron and dedicatee, and am,  
dear B. B.,

Yours heartily,

C. LAMB.

Our joint kindest loves to A. K. and your  
daughter.

To LOUISA HOLCROFT

LETTER CCCLVIII.]

*December 5, 1828.*

Dear Miss H.—Mary, who never writes, bids me thank you for the handkerchief. I do not understand such work, but if I apprehend her rightly, she would have preferred blonde to white sarcenet for the trimming; but she did not wish me to tell you so. I only hint it for the next. We are sorry for the mess of illness you are involved in. Are you stout enough to be the general nurse? Who told you we should not be glad to see you on Sundays and all? Tho' we devote that day to its proper duties, as you know, yet you are come of a religious stock, and to you it is not irksome to join in our simple forms, where the heart is all. Your little protégée is well, and as yet honest, but she has no one to give her caps now.

Thus far I had written last night. You will see by my altered scrawl that I am not so well this morning. I got up with a fevered skin, and

## TO LOUISA HOLCROFT

spots are come out all over me. Pray God it is not the measles. You did not let any of the children touch the seal with their little measly hands, did you? You should be careful when contagion is in the house. Pray God, your letter may not have conveyed the disorder. Our poor Postman looks flushed since. What a thing it would be to introduce a disease into a whole village! Yet so simple a thing as a letter has been known to convey a malady. I look at your note. I see it is wafered, not sealed. That makes it more likely. Wafers are flour, and I've known a serious illness to be communicated in a piece of plumb cake. I never had the measles. How my head throbs! You cannot be too cautious, dear Louisa, what you do under such circum——

I am a little better than when I broke off at the last word. Your good sense will point out to you that the deficient syllables should be “stances.” Circumstances. If I am incoherent, impute it to alarm. I will walk in the air——

I am not much refreshed. The air seemed hot and muggy. Somehow I feel quite irritable—there is no word in English—à la variole—we have no phrase to answer it—smallpoxical comes the nearest. Maybe 'twas worse than the measles what Charles has. I will send for Mr. Asbury.

I have seen the apothecary. He pronounces my complaint to be, as I feared, of the variola kind, but gives me hopes I shall not be much

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

marked. I hope we shall get well together. But at my time of life it is attended with more hazards. Whatever becomes of me, I shall leave the world without a harsh thought of you. It was only a girlish imprudence. I am quite faint. Two pimples more come out within this last minute. Mary is crying. She looks red. So does Becky. I must go to bed.

Yours in constant Pain,

C. L.

You will see by my Will, if it comes to that—I bear you no ill w——. Oh!

Miss Holcroft,  
Mr. Kenny's,  
12 Brunswick Square.

### To C. COWDEN CLARKE

LETTER CCCLIX.]

[December 1828.]

My dear three C.'s—The way from Southgate to Colney Hatch thro' the unfrequentedest Black-berry paths that ever concealed their coy bunches from a truant Citizen, we have accidentally fallen upon—the giant Tree by Cheshunt we have missed, but keep your chart to go by, unless you will be our conduct. At present I am disabled from further flights than just to skirt round Clay Hill, with a peep at the fine backwoods, by strained tendons, got by skipping a skipping rope at 53—*hei mihi non sum qualis*; but do you know,



## TO CLARKE

now you come to talk of walks, a ramble of four hours or so—there and back—to the willow and lavender plantations at the south corner of Northaw Church by a well dedicated to Saint Claridge, with the clumps of finest moss rising hillock fashion, which I counted to the number of two hundred and sixty, and are called “Claridge’s covers,” the tradition being that that saint entertained so many angels or hermits there, upon occasion of blessing the waters? The legends have set down the fruits spread upon that occasion, and in the “Black Book of St. Albans,” some are named which are not supposed to have been introduced into this island until a century later. But waiving the miracle, a sweeter spot is not in ten counties round; you are knee-deep in clover, that is to say, if you are not above a middling man’s height; from this paradise, making a day of it, you go to see the ruins of an old convent at March Hall, where some of the painted glass is yet whole and fresh.

If you do not know this, you do not know the capabilities of this country; you may be said to be a stranger to Enfield. I found it out one morning in October, and so delighted was I that I did not get home before dark, well a-paid.

I shall long to show you the Clump Meadows, as they are called—we might do that without reaching March Hall; when the days are longer we might take both, and come home by Forest

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Cross, so skirt over Pennington and the cheerful little village of Churchley to Forty Hill.

But these are dreams till summer ; meanwhile we should be most glad to see you for a lesser excursion—say Sunday next, you and *another*, or if more, best on a week-day with a notice, but o' Sundays, as far as a leg of mutton goes, most welcome.

We can squeeze out a bed. Edmonton coaches run every hour, and my pen has run out its quarter. Heartily farewell.

To B. W. PROCTER

LETTER CCCLX.]

*January 19, 1829.*

My dear Procter—I am ashamed not to have taken the drift of your pleasant letter, which I find to have been pure invention ; but jokes are not suspected in Bæotian Enfield. We are plain people, and our talk is of corn and cattle and Waltham markets. Besides, I was a little out of sorts when I received it. The fact is, I am involved in a case which has fretted me to death, and I have no reliance except on you to extricate me. I am sure you will give me your best legal advice, having no professional friend besides but Robinson and Talfourd, with neither of whom, at present, I am on the best of terms. My brother's widow left a will, made during the

## TO PROCTER

lifetime of my brother, in which I am named sole executor, by which she bequeaths forty acres of arable property, which it seems she held under covert baron, unknown to my brother, to the heirs of the body of Elizabeth Dowden, her married daughter by a first husband, in fee simple, recoverable by fine; invested property, mind, for there is the difficulty; subject to leet and quit-rent; in short, worded in the most guarded terms, to shut out the property from Isaac Dowden, the husband. Intelligence has just come of the death of this person in India, where he made a will, entailing this property (which seemed entangled enough already) to the heirs of his body that should not be born of his wife; for it seems by the law in India, natural children can recover. They have put the cause into Exchequer process here, removed by *certiorari* from the native courts; and the question is, whether I should, as executor, try the cause here, or again re-remove it to the Supreme Sessions at Bangalore, which I understand I can, or plead a hearing before the Privy Council here. As it involves all the little property of Elizabeth Dowden, I am anxious to take the fittest steps, and what may be least expensive. For God's sake assist me, for the case is so embarrassed that it deprives me of sleep and appetite. M. Burney thinks there is a case like it in chap. 170, sec. 5, in "Fearn's Contingent Remainders." Pray read it over with him dis-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

passionately, and let me have the result. The complexity lies in the questionable power of the husband to alienate *in usum* enfeoffments whereof he was only collaterally seized, etc.

I had another favour to beg, which is the beggarliest of beggings : a few lines of verse for a young friend's album (six will be enough). M. Burney will tell you who she is I want 'em for. A girl of gold. Six lines—make 'em eight—signed Barry C——. They need not be very good, as I chiefly want 'em as a foil to mine. But I shall be seriously obliged by any refuse scrap. We are in the last ages of the world, when St. Paul prophesied that women should be “headstrong, lovers of their own wills, having albums.” I fled hither to escape the albumean persecution, and had not been in my new house twenty-four hours when the daughter of the next house came in with a friend's album to beg a contribution, and the following day intimated she had one of her own. Two more have sprung up since. “If I take the wings of the morning” and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, there will albums be. New Holland has albums. But the age is to be complied with. M. B. will tell you the sort of girl I request the ten lines for. Somewhat of a pensive cast, what you admire. The lines may come before the law question, as that cannot be determined before Hilary Term, and I wish your deliberate judgment on that. The other

## TO PROCTER

may be flimsy and superficial. And if you have not burnt your returned letter, pray resend it me, as a monumental token of my stupidity. 'Twas a little unthinking of you to touch upon a sore subject. Why, by dabbling in those accursed Annuals I have become a byword of infamy all over the kingdom. I have sicken'd decent women for asking me to write in albums. There be dark "jests" abroad, Master Cornwall, and some riddles may live to be cleared up. And 'tisn't every saddle is put on the right steed. And forgeries and false Gospels are not peculiar to the age following the Apostles. And some tubs don't stand on their right bottom, which is all I wish to say in these ticklish times ; and so  
your servant, CH. LAMB.

LETTER CCCLXI.]

*January 22, 1829.*

Don't trouble yourself about the verses. Take 'em coolly as they come. Any day between this and Midsummer will do. Ten lines the extreme. There is no mystery in my incognita. She has often seen you, though you may not have observed a silent brown girl, who for the last twelve years has rambled about our house in her Christmas holidays. She is Italian by name and extraction. Ten lines about the blue sky of her country will do, as 'tis her foible to be proud of it.—Item : I have made her a tolerable Latinist. She is called Emma Isola. I approve

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

heartily of your turning your four vols. into a lesser compass. 'Twill Sybillise the gold left. I shall, I think, be in town in a few weeks, when I will assuredly see you. I will put in here Loves to Mrs. Procter and the anti-Capulets, because Mary tells me I omitted them in my last. I like to see my friends here. I have put my lawsuit into the hands of an Enfield practitioner, a plain man, who seems perfectly to understand it, and gives me hopes of a favourable result.

Rumour tells us that Miss Holcroft is married. Who is Badman, or Bed'em? Have I seen him at Montacute's? I hear he is a great chymist. I am sometimes chymical myself. A thought strikes me with horror. Pray heaven he may not have done it for the sake of trying chymical experiments upon her,—young female subjects are so scarce. Louisa would make a capital shot. Aren't you glad about Burke's case? We may set off the Scotch murders against the Scotch novels: Hare, the Great Un-hanged!

M. B. is richly worth your knowing. He is on the top scale of my friendship ladder, on which an angel or two is still climbing, and some, alas! descending. I am out of the literary world at present. Pray, is there anything new from the admired pen of the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*? Has Mrs. He-mans (double masculine) done anything pretty lately? Why sleeps the lyre of Hervey, and of Alaric Watts? Is the muse of L. E. L. silent? Did

## TO PROCTER

you see a sonnet of mine in Blackwood's last? Curious construction! *Elaborata facilitas!* And now I'll tell. 'Twas written for the *Gem*, but the editors declined it, on the plea that it would *shock all mothers*; so they published the "Widow," instead. I am born out of time. I have no conjecture about what the present world calls delicacy. I thought *Rosamund Gray* was a pretty modest thing. Hessey assures me that the world would not bear it. I have lived to grow into an indecent character. When my sonnet was rejected, I exclaimed, "Damn the age! I will write for Antiquity."

*Erratum* in Sonnet:—Last line but something, for "tender," read *tend*. The Scotch do not know our law terms; but I find some remains of honest, plain, old writing lurking there still. They were not so mealy-mouthed to refuse my verses. Maybe 'tis their oatmeal.

Blackwood sent me £20 for the drama. Somebody cheated me out of it next day; and my new pair of breeches, just sent home, cracking at first putting on, I exclaimed, in my wrath, "All tailors are cheats, and all men are tailors." Then I was better. C. L.

LETTER CCCLXII.]

January 29, 1829.

When Miss Ouldcroft (who is now Mrs. Beddome, and Bed—dom'd to her) was at Enfield, which she was in Summer time, and

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

owed her health to its suns and genial influences, she visited (with young ladylike impertinence) a poor man's cottage that had a pretty baby (O the yearning!) gave it fine caps and sweetmeats. On a day, broke into the parlour our two maids uproarious. "O ma'am, who do you think Miss Ouldcroft (they pronounce it Holcroft) has been working a cap for?" "A child," answered Mary, in true Shandean female simplicity. "'Tis the man's child as was taken up for sheep-stealing." Miss Ouldcroft was staggered, and would have cut the connexion, but by main force I made her go and take her leave of her protégée. I thought, if she went no more, the Abactor or the Abactor's wife (vide Ainsworth) would suppose she had heard something, and I have delicacy for a sheep-stealer. The overseers actually overhauled a mutton pie at the Baker's (his first, last, and only hope of mutton pie), which he never came to eat, and thence inferred his guilt. Per occasionem cujus, I framed the sonnet; observe its elaborate construction. I was four days about it.

### THE GYPSY'S MALISON

"Suck, baby, suck! mother's love grows by giving,  
Drain the sweet founts that only thrive by wasting;  
Black manhood comes, when riotous guilty living  
Hands thee the cup that shall be death in tasting.  
Kiss, baby, kiss! Mother's lips shine by kisses,  
Choke the warm breath that else would fall in blessings;



## TO PROCTER

Black Manhood comes, when turbulent guilty blisses  
Tend thee the kiss that poisons 'mid caressings.  
Hang, baby, hang ! mother's love loves such forces,  
Strain the fond neck that bends still to thy clinging ;  
Black manhood comes, when violent lawless courses  
Leave thee a spectacle in rude air swinging."  
So sang a wither'd Sybil energetical,  
And bann'd the ungiving door with lips prophetical.

Barry, study that sonnet. It is curiously and perversely elaborate. 'Tis a choking subject, and therefore the reader is directed to the structure of it. See you ? and was this a four-teenner to be rejected by a trumpery annual ? Forsooth, 'twould shock all mothers ; and may all mothers, who would so be shocked, bed-domd ! as if mothers were such sort of logicians as to infer the future hanging of *their* child from the theoretical hangibility (or capacity of being hanged, if the judge pleases) of every infant born with a neck on. Oh B. C. ! my whole heart is faint, and my whole head is sick (how is it ?) at this damn'd canting unmasculine age !

LETTER CCCLXIII.]

[1829.]

The comings in of an incipient conveyancer are not adequate to the receipt of three two-penny post nonpays in a week. Therefore, after this, I condemn my stub to long and deep silence, or shall awaken it to write to Lords. Lest those raptures in this honeymoon of my correspondence, which you avow for the gentle person of my Nuncio, after passing through certain natural

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

grades, as Love, Love and Water, Love with the chill off, then subsiding to that point which the Heroic Suitor of his wedded dame, the noble-spirited Lord Randolph in the Play, declares to be the ambition of his passion, a reciproca-tion of "complacent kindness,"—should suddenly plump down (scarce staying to bait at the mid point of indifference, so hungry it is for distaste) to a loathing and blank aversion, to the render-ing probable such counter expressions as this,—"Damn that infernal twopenny postman" (words which make the not yet glutted inamo-rato "lift up his hands and wonder who can use them"). While, then, you are not ruined, let me assure thee, O thou above the Painter, and next only under Giraldus Cambrensis, the most immortal and worthy to be immortal Barry, thy most ingenious and golden cadences do take my fancy mightily. They are at this identical moment under the snip and the paste of the fairest hands (bating chilblains) in Cambridge, soon to be transplanted to Suffolk, to the envy of half of the young ladies in Bury. But tell me, and tell me truly, gentle Swain, is that Isola Bella a true spot in geographical denomination, or a floating Delos in thy brain? Lurks that fair island in verity in the bosom of Lake Maggiore, or some other with less poetic name, which thou hast Cornwallised for the occasion? And what if Maggiore itself be but a coinage of adapta-tion? Of this, pray resolve me immediately,

## TO PROCTER

for my Albumess will be catechised on this subject ; and how can I prompt her ? Lake Leman, I know, and Lemon Lake (in a Punch Bowl) I have swum in, though those Lymphs be long since dry. But Maggiore may be in the moon. Un sphinx this riddle for me, for my shelves have no Gazetteer. And mayest thou never murder thy father-in-law in the Trivia of Lincoln's Inn New Square Passage, nor afterwards make absurd proposals to the Widow M[ontagu]. But I know you abhor any such notions. Nevertheless so did O - Edipus (as Admiral Burney used to call him, splitting the diphthong in spite or ignorance) for that matter.

C. L.

LETTER CCCLXIV.]

*February 2, 1829.*

Facundissime Poeta ! quanquam istiusmodi epitheta oratoribus potiùs quam poetis attinere facillè scio—tamen, facundissime !

Commoratur nobiscum jamdiu, in agro Enfeldiense, scilicet, leguleius futurus, illustrissimus Martinus Burnei otium agens, negotia nominalia, et officinam clientum vacuum, paululum fugiens. Orat, implorat te—nempe, Martinus—ut si (quòd Dii faciant) fortè fortunâ, absente ipso, advenerit tardus cliens, eum certiozem feceris per literas hùc missas. Intelligisne ? an me Anglicè et barbarice ad te hominem perdoctum scribere oportet ?

C. Agnus.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Si status de franco tenemento datur avo, et in eodem facto si mediate vel immediate datur hæredibus vel hæredibus corporis dicti avi, postrema hæc verba sunt Limitationis non Perquisitionis.

Dixi.

CARLIGNULUS.

### TO COWDEN CLARKE

LETTER CCCLXV.] *Edmonton, February 2, 1829.*

Dear Cowden—Your books are as the gushing of streams in a desert. By the way, you have sent no autobiographies. Your letter seems to imply you had. Nor do I want any. Cowden, they are of the books which I give away. What damn'd Unitarian skewer-soul'd things the general biographies turn out! "Rank and Talent" you shall have when Mrs. May has done with 'em. Mary likes Mrs. Bedinfield much. For me, I read nothing but *Astrea*—it has turn'd my brain—I go about with a switch turn'd up at the end for a crook; and Lambs being too old, the butcher tells me, my cat follows me in a green ribband. Becky and her cousin are getting pastoral dresses, and then we shall all four go about Arcadising. O cruel Shepherdess! Inconstant, yet fair, and more inconstant for being fair! Her gold ringlets fell in a disorder superior to order! Come and join us.

## TO ROBINSON

I am called the Black Shepherd—you shall be Cowden with the Tuft.

Prosaically, we shall be glad to have you both—or any two of you—drop in by surprise some Saturday night.

This must go off.

Loves to Vittoria.

C. L.

## To H. C. ROBINSON

LETTER CCCLXVI.]

Enfield, February 27, 1829.

Dear R.—Expectation was alert on the receipt of your strange-shaped present, while yet undisclosed from its fusc envelope. Some said, 'tis a *viol da Gamba*, others pronounced it a fiddle; I, myself, hoped it a liqueur case, pregnant with *eau-de-vie* and such odd nectar. When midwifed into daylight, the gossips were at a loss to pronounce upon its species. Most took it for a marrow spoon, an apple scoop, a banker's guinea shovel; at length its true scope appeared, its drift, to save the back-bone of my sister stooping to scuttles: a philanthropic intent; borrowed, no doubt, from some of the Colliers. You save people's backs one way, and break 'em again by loads of obligation. The spectacles are delicate and Vulcanian. No lighter texture than their steel did the cuckoldy blacksmith frame to catch Mrs. Vulcan and the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Captain in. For ungalled forehead, as for back unbursten, you have Mary's thanks. Marry, for my own peculium of obligation, 'twas supererogatory. A second part of Pamela was enough in conscience. Two Pamelas in a house are too much, without two Mr. B.'s to reward 'em.

Mary, who is handselling her new aerial perspectives upon a pair of old worsted stockings trod out in Cheshunt lanes, sends her love: I, great good-liking. Bid us a personal farewell before you see the Vatican.

CHARLES LAMB.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCLXVII.]

March 25, 1829.

Dear B. B.—I send you by desire Darley's very poetical poem. You will like, I think, the novel headings of each scene. Scenical directions in verse are novelties. With it I send a few *duplicates*, which are *therefore* of no value to me; and may amuse an idle hour. Read "Christmas": 'tis the production of a young author, who reads all your writings. A good word from you about his little book would be as balm to him. It has no pretensions, and makes none. But parts are pretty. In Field's Appendix turn to a poem called the Kangaroo. It is in the best way of our old poets, if I

## TO BARTON

mistake not. I have just come from town, where I have been to get my bit of quarterly pension; and have brought home, from stalls in Barbican, the old "Pilgrim's Progress" with the prints—Vanity Fair, etc.—now scarce. Four shillings. Cheap. And also one of whom I have oft heard and had dreams, but never saw in the flesh—that is in sheepskin—"The whole theologic works of

THOMAS AQUINAS."

My arms ached with lugging it a mile to the stage; but the burden was a pleasure, such as old Anchises was to the shoulders of Æneas, or the Lady to the Lover in old romance, who having to carry her to the top of a high mountain (the price of obtaining her), clambered with her to the top, and fell dead with fatigue.

"Oh the glorious old Schoolmen!"

There must be something in him. Such great names imply greatness. Who hath seen Michael Angelo's things—of us that never pilgrimaged to Rome—and yet which of us disbelieves his greatness? How I will revel in his cobwebs and subtleties, till my brain spins!

*N.B.* I have writ in the old Hamlet: offer it to Mitford in my name, if he have not seen it. 'Tis woefully below our editions of it. But keep it, if you like. (What is M. to me?)

I do not mean this to go for a letter, only

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

to apprise you that the parcel is booked for you this 25th March, 1829, from the Four Swans, Bishopsgate. With both our loves to Lucy and A. K. Yours ever,  
C. L.

TO H. C. ROBINSON

LETTER CCCLXVIII.]

*April 10, 1829.*

Dear Robinson—We are afraid you will slip from us from England without again seeing us. It would be charity to come and see me. I have these three days been laid up with strong rheumatic pains, in loins, back, shoulders. I shriek sometimes from the violence of them. I get scarce any sleep, and the consequence is, I am restless, and want to change sides as I lie, and I cannot turn without resting on my hands, and so turning all my body all at once, like a log with a lever. While this rainy weather lasts, I have no hope of alleviation. I have tried flannels and embrocation in vain. Just at the hip joint the pangs sometimes are so excruciating, that I cry out. It is as violent as the cramp, and far more continuous. I am ashamed to whine about these complaints to you, who can ill enter into them; but indeed they are sharp. You go about, in rain or fine, at all hours, without discommodity. I envy you your immunity at a time of life not much



## TO ROBINSON

removed from my own. But you owe your exemption to temperance, which it is too late for me to pursue. I, in my lifetime, have had my good things. Hence my frame is brittle—yours strong as brass. I never knew any ailment you had. You can go out at night in all weathers, sit up all hours. Well, I don't want to moralise; I only wish to say that if you are inclined to a game at double-dummy, I would try and bolster myself in a chair for a rubber or so. My days are tedious, but less so, and less painful than my nights. May you never know the pain and difficulty I have in writing so much! Mary, who is most kind, joins in the wish.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCCLXIX.]

*April 17, 1829.*

I do confess to mischief. It was the subtlest diabolical piece of malice heart of man has contrived. I have no more rheumatism than that poker. Never was freer from all pains and aches. Every joint sound, to the tip of the ear from the extremity of the lesser toe. The report of thy torments was blown circuitously here from Bury. I could not resist the jeer. I conceived you writhing when you should just receive my congratulations. How mad you'd be! Well, it is not in my method to inflict pangs. I leave that to Heaven: but in the existing pangs of a friend I have a share.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

His disquietude crowns my exemption. I imagine you howling, and pace across the room, shooting out my free arms, legs, etc., this way and that way, with an assurance of not kindling a spark of pain from them. I deny that Nature meant us to sympathise with agonies. Those face-contortions, retortions, distortions have the merriness of antics. Nature meant them for farce—not so pleasant to the actor, indeed; but Grimaldi cries when we laugh, and 'tis but one that suffers to make thousands rejoice.

You say that shampooing is ineffectual; but, *per se*, it is good, to show the introvolutions, extravolutions, of which the animal frame is capable—to show what the creature is receptive of, short of dissolution.

You are worst of nights, an't you? You never was rack'd, was you? I should like an authentic map of those feelings.

You seem to have the flying gout. You can scarcely screw a smile out of your face, can you? I sit at immunity and sneer *ad libitum*. 'Tis now the time for you to make good resolutions. I may go on breaking 'em for anything the worse I find myself. Your doctor seems to keep you on the long cure. Precipitate healings are never good. Don't come while you are so bad; I shan't be able to attend to your throes and the dummy at once. I should like to know how slowly the pain goes off. But don't write, unless

## TO DYER

the motion will be likely to make your sensibility more exquisite.

Your affectionate and truly healthy friend,  
C. LAMB.

Mary thought a letter from me might amuse you in your torment.

## To GEORGE DYER

LETTER CCCLXX.]

*Enfield, April 29, 1829.*

Dear Dyer—As well as a bad pen can do it, I must thank you for your friendly attention to the wishes of our young friend Emma, who was packing up for Bury when your sonnet arrived, and was too hurried to express her sense of its merits. I know she will treasure up that and your second communication among her choicest rarities, as from her *grandfather's* friend, whom not having seen, she loves to hear talked of. The second letter shall be sent after her, with our first parcel to Suffolk, where she is, to us, alas dead and Bury'd; we sorely miss her. Should you at any hour think of four or six lines, to send her, addressed to herself simply, naming her grandsire, and to wish she may pass through life as much respected, with your own G. Dyer at the end, she would feel rich indeed, for the nature of an Album asks for verses that have not been in print before; but this quite at

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

your convenience : and to be less trouble to yourself, four lines would be sufficient. Enfield has come out in summer beauty. Come when you will and we will give you a bed. Emma has left hers, you know. I remain, my dear Dyer, your affectionate friend,

CHARLES LAMB.

### TO WALTER WILSON

LETTER CCCLXXI.]

May 28, 1829.

Dear W.—Introduce this, or omit it, as you like. I think I wrote better about it in a letter to you from India H. If you have that, perhaps out of the two I could patch up a better thing, if you'd return both. But I am very poorly, and have been harassed with an illness of my sister's.

The Ode was printed in the *New Times* nearly the end of 1825, and I have only omitted some silly lines, call it a corrected copy.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

Put my name to either, or both, as you like.

Walter Wilson, Esq.,  
Burnett House,  
Near Bath, Somersetshire.

## TO ALLSOP—BARTON

To THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCCLXXII.]

[Summer 1829.]

At midsummer, or soon after (I will let you know the previous day), I will take a day with you in the purlieus of my old haunts. No offence has been taken, any more than meant. My house is full at present, but empty of its chief pride. She is dead to me for many months. But when I see you, then I will say, Come and see me. With undiminished friendship to you both.

Your faithful, but queer,

C. L.

How you frightened me! Never write again, "Coleridge is dead," at the end of a line, and tamely come in with, "to his friends" at the beginning of another. Love is quicker, and fear from love, than the transition ocular from line to line.

To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCLXXIII.]

July 3, 1829.

Dear B. B.—I am very much grieved indeed for the indisposition of poor Lucy. Your letter found me in domestic troubles. My sister is again taken ill, and I am obliged to remove her out of the house for many weeks, I fear, before

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I can hope to have her again. I have been very desolate indeed. My loneliness is a little abated by our young friend Emma having just come here for her holidays, and a schoolfellow of hers that was, with her. Still the house is not the same, though she is the same. Mary had been pleasing herself with the prospect of seeing her at this time; and with all their company, the house feels at times a frightful solitude. May you and I in no very long time have a more cheerful theme to write about, and congratulate upon a daughter's and a sister's perfect recovery. Do not be long without telling me how Lucy goes on. I have a right to call her by her quaker-name, you know. Emma knows that I am writing to you, and begs to be remembered to you with thankfulness for your ready contribution. Her album is filling apace. But of her contributors, one, almost the flower of it, a most amiable young man and late acquaintance of mine, has been carried off by consumption, on return from one of the Azores islands, to which he went with hopes of mastering the disease, came back improved, went back to a most close and confined counting-house, and relapsed. His name was Dibdin, grandson of the songster.

To get out of home themes, have you seen Southey's Dialogues? His lake descriptions, and the account of his library at Keswick, are very fine. But he needed not have called up the ghost of More to hold the conversations

## TO BARTON

with ; which might as well have passed between A and B, or Caius and Lucius. It is making too free with a defunct Chancellor and Martyr.

I feel as if I had nothing farther to write about. O I forget the prettiest letter I ever read, that I have received from "Pleasures of Memory" Rogers, in acknowledgment of a sonnet I sent him on the loss of his brother.

It is too long to transcribe, but I hope to show it you some day, as I hope some time again to see you, when all of us are well. Only it ends thus: "We were nearly of an age ; he was the elder. He was the only person in the world in whose eyes I always appeared young." I will now take my leave with assuring you that I am most interested in hoping to hear favourable accounts from you. With kindest regards to A. K. and you, yours truly,

C. L.

*Enfield Chase Side, Saturday,*  
LETTER CCCLXXIV.] *25th of July, A.D. 1829, 11 A.M.*

There !—a fuller, plumper, juicier date never dropt from Idumean palm. Am I in the *date*-ive case now? If not, a fig for dates, which is more than a date is worth. I never stood much affected to these limitary specialities ; least of all, since the date of my superannuation.

"What have I with time to do?  
Slaves of desks, 'twas meant for you."

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Dear B. B.—Your handwriting has conveyed much pleasure to me in report of Lucy's restoration. Would I could send you as good news of my poor Lucy. But some wearisome weeks I must remain lonely yet. I have had the loneliest time, near ten weeks, broken by a short apparition of Emma for her holidays, whose departure only deepened the returning solitude, and by ten days I have passed in town. But town, with all my native hankering after it, is not what it was. The streets, the shops are left; but all old friends are gone! And in London I was frightfully convinced of this as I passed houses and places, empty caskets now. I have ceased to care almost about anybody. The bodies I cared for are in graves, or dispersed. My old clubs, that lived so long and flourished so steadily, are crumbled away. When I took leave of our adopted young friend at Charing Cross, 'twas heavy unfeeling rain, and I had nowhere to go. Home have I none, and not a sympathising house to turn to in the great city. Never did the waters of heaven pour down on a forlorn head. Yet I tried ten days at a sort of friend's house, but it was large and straggling,—one of the individuals of my old long knot of friends, card-players, pleasant companions, that have tumbled to pieces, into dust and other things; and I got home on Thursday, convinced that I was better to get home to my hole at Enfield, and hide like a sick cat in my corner. Less than a month I hope



## TO BARTON

will bring home Mary. She is at Fulham, looking better in her health than ever, but sadly rambling, and scarce showing any pleasure in seeing me, or curiosity when I should come again. But the old feelings will come back again, and we shall drown old sorrows over a game of picquet again. But 'tis a tedious cut out of a life of 64, to lose 12 or 13 weeks every year or two. And to make me more alone, our ill-tempered maid is gone, who, with all her airs, was yet a home-piece of furniture, a record of better days. The young thing that has succeeded her is good and attentive, but she is nothing. And I have no one here to talk over old matters with. Scolding and quarrelling have something of familiarity, and a community of interest; they imply acquaintance; they are of resentment, which is of the family of dearness.

I can neither scold nor quarrel at this insignificant implement of household services: she is less than a cat, and just better than a deal dresser. What I can do, and do over-do, is to walk; but deadly long are the days, these Summer all-day days, with but a half-hour's candle-light, and no fire-light. I do not write, tell your kind inquisitive Eliza, and can hardly read. In the ensuing *Blackwood* will be an old rejected farce of mine, which may be new to you, if you see that same medley. What things are all the magazines now! I contrive studiously not to

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

see them. The popular *New Monthly* is perfect trash. Poor Hessey, I suppose you see, has failed; Hunt and Clarke too. Your "Vulgar Truths" will be a good name; and I think your prose must please—me at least. But 'tis useless to write poetry with no purchasers. 'Tis cold work authorship, without something to puff one into fashion. Could you not write something on Quakerism, for Quakers to read, but nominally addressed to Non-Quakers, explaining your dogmas—waiting on the Spirit—by the analogy of human calmness and patient waiting on the judgment? I scarcely know what I mean, but to make Non-Quakers reconciled to your doctrines, by showing something like them in mere human operations; but I hardly understand myself; so let it pass for nothing. I pity you for over-work; but I assure you, no work is worse. The mind preys on itself, the most unwholesome food. I bragged formerly that I could not have too much time. I have a surfeit. With few years to come, the days are wearisome. But weariness is not eternal. Something will shine out to take the load off that flags me, which is at present intolerable. I have killed an hour or two in this poor scrawl. I am a sanguinary murderer of time, and would kill him inch-meal just now. But the snake is vital. Well: I shall write merrier anon. 'Tis the present copy of my countenance I send, and to complain is a little to alleviate. May you enjoy

## TO COLERIDGE

yourself as far as the wicked wood will let you, and think that you are not quite alone as I am! Health to Lucia, and to Anna, and kind remembrances.

Your forlorn,

C. L.

## TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCCLXXV.]

*Tuesday, 1829.*

My dear Coleridge—With pain and grief, I must entreat you to excuse us on Thursday. My head, though externally correct, has had a severe concussion in my long illness, and the very idea of an engagement hanging over for a day or two, forbids my rest, and I get up miserable. I am not well enough for company. I do assure you, no other thing prevents my coming. I expect Field and his brothers this or to-morrow evening, and it worries me to death that I am not ostensibly ill enough to put 'em off. I will get better, when I shall hope to see your nephew. He will come again. Mary joins in best love to the Gillmans. Do, I earnestly entreat you, excuse me. I assure you, again, that I am not fit to go out yet.

Yours (though shattered),

C. LAMB.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

To C. A. ELTON

*India House*  
(to which place all letters addressed  
to C. L. commonly come),  
August 12, 1829.

LETTER CCCLXXVI.]

My dear Sir—You have overwhelmed me with your favours. I have received positively a little library from Baldwyn's. I do not know how I have deserved such a bounty.

We have been up to the ear in classics ever since it came. I have been greatly pleased, but most, I think, with the Hesiod,—the Titan battle quite amazed me. Gad, it was no child's play—and then the homely aphorisms at the end of the works—how adroitly you have turned them! Can he be the same Hesiod who did the Titans? the latter is—

“— wine  
Which to madness does incline.”

But to read the *Days and Weeks* is like eating nice brown bread, homely sweet and nutritive. Apollonius was new to me: I had confounded him with the conjuror of that name. Medea is glorious; but I must give up Dido. She positively is the only Fine Lady of Antiquity: her courtesy to the Trojans is altogether queen-like. Eneas is a most disagreeable person: Ascanius a pretty young master. Mezentius for my money—his dying speech shames Turpin

## TO ELTON

—not the Archbishop, but the roadster of that name, I mean.

I have been ashamed to find how many names of classics (and more than their names) you have introduced me to, that before I was ignorant of.

Your commendation of Master Chapman arrideth me. Can any one read the pert, modern, Frenchified notes, etc., in Pope's translation, and contrast them with solemn weighty prefaces of Chapman, writing in full faith, as he evidently does, of the plenary inspiration of his author—worshipping his meanest scraps and relics as divine — without one sceptical misgiving of their authenticity, and doubt which was the properest to expound Homer to his countrymen? Reverend Chapman! you have read his hymn to Pan (the Homeric)—why, it is Milton's blank verse clothed with rhyme! *Paradise Lost* could scarce lose, could it be so accoutred.

I shall die in the belief that he has improved upon Homer, in the *Odyssey* in particular—the disclosure of Ulysses of himself to Alcinous—his previous behaviour at the song of the stern strife arising between Achilles and himself (how it raises him above the *Iliad* Ulysses!)—but you know all these things quite as well as I do. But what a deaf ear old C. would have turned to the doubters in Homer's real personality! He apparently believed all the fables of Homer's birth, etc. etc.

Those notes of Bryant have caused the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

greatest disorder in my brain-pan. Well, I will not flatter when I say that we have had two or three long evenings' *good reading* out of your kind present.

I will say nothing of the tenderest parts in your own little volume, at the end of such slatternly scribble as this, but indeed they cost us some tears. I scrawl on because of interruptions every moment. You guess how it is in a busy office—papers thrust into your hand when your hand is busiest—and every anti-classical disavocation.

C. A. Elton, Esq.,  
Clifton, Bristol.

### TO MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD

LETTER CCCLXXVII.]

[1829.]

Dear Talfourd—You could not have told me of a more friendly thing than you have been doing. I am proud of my namesake. I shall take care never to do any dirty action, pick pockets, or anyhow get myself hanged, for fear of reflecting ignominy upon your young Chrisom. I have now a motive to be good. I shall not *omnis moriar*;—my name borne down the black gulf of oblivion.

I shall survive in eleven letters, five more than Cæsar. Possibly I shall come to be knighted, or more! Sir C. L. Talfourd, Bart.!

## TO GILLMAN

Yet hath it an authorish twang with it, which will wear out my name for poetry. Give him a smile from me till I see him. If you do not drop down before, some day in the *week after next* I will come and take one night's lodging with you, if convenient, before you go hence. You shall name it. We are in town to-morrow *speciali gratiâ*, but by no arrangement can get up near you.

Believe us both, with greatest regards, yours  
and Mrs. Talfourd's

CHARLES LAMB-PHILO-TALFOURD.

I come as near it as I can.

## TO MR. GILLMAN

LETTER CCCLXXVIII.]

*Chase Side, Enfield,  
October 26, 1829.*

Dear Gillman—Allsop brought me your kind message yesterday. How can I account for having not visited Highgate this long time? Change of place seemed to have changed me. How grieved I was to hear in what indifferent health Coleridge has been, and I not to know of it! A little school divinity, well applied, may be healing. I send him honest Tom of Aquin; that was always an obscure great idea to me: I never thought or dreamed to see him in the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

flesh, but t'other day I rescued him from a stall in Barbican and brought him off in triumph. He comes to greet Coleridge's acceptance, for his shoe-latchets I am unworthy to unloose. Yet there are pretty pro's and con's, and such unsatisfactory learning in him. Commend me to the question of etiquette—" *utrum annunciatio debuerit fieri per angelum*"—*Quæst. 30, Articulus 2.* I protest, till now I had thought Gabriel a fellow of some mark and livelihood, not a simple esquire, as I find him. Well, do not break your lay brains, nor I neither, with these curious nothings. They are nuts to our dear friend, whom hoping to see at your first friendly hint that it will be convenient, I end with begging our very kindest loves to Mrs. Gillman. We have had a sorry house of it here. Our spirits have been reduced till we were at hope's end what to do. Obliged to quit this house, and afraid to engage another, till in extremity, I took the desperate resolve of kicking house and all down, like Bunyan's pack; and here we are in a new life at board and lodging with an honest couple, our neighbours. We have ridded ourselves of the cares of dirty acres; and the change, though of less than a week, has had the most beneficial effects on Mary already. She looks two years and a half younger for it. But we have had sore trials.

God send us one happy meeting!—Yours  
faithfully,

C. LAMB.



## TO NOVELLO—WILSON

To VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCCLXXIX.]

[*October 1829.*]

Dear Fugueist,  
or hear'st thou rather  
Contrapuntist?—

We expect you four (as many as the table will hold without squeezing) at Mrs. Westwood's Table d'Hôte on Thursday. You will find the White House shut up, and us moved under the wing of the Phœnix, which gives us friendly refuge. Beds for guests, marry, we have none, but cleanly accomodings at the Crown and Horse-Shoe.

Yours harmonically,

C. L.

Vincenzio (what, ho!) Novello, a Squire,  
66, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

To WALTER WILSON

LETTER CCCLXXX.]

*Enfield, November 15, 1829.*

My dear Wilson—I have not opened a packet of unknown contents for many years that gave me so much pleasure as when I disclosed your three volumes. I have given them a careful perusal, and they have taken their degree of classical books upon my shelves. De Foe was always my darling; but what darkness was I in as to far the larger part of his writings! I

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

have now an epitome of them all. I think the way in which you have done the "Life" the most judicious you could have pitched upon. You have made him tell his own story, and your comments are in keeping with the tale. Why, I never heard of such a work as the *Review*. Strange that in my stall-hunting days I never so much as lit upon an odd volume of it. This circumstance looks as if they were never of any great circulation. But I may have met with 'em, and not knowing the prize, overpast 'em. I was almost a stranger to the whole history of Dissenters in those reigns, and picked my way through that strange book the "Consolidator" at random. How affecting are some of his personal appeals! What a machine of projects he set on foot! and following writers have picked his pocket of the patents. I do not understand whereabouts in "Roxana" he himself left off. I always thought the complete-tourist-sort of description of the town she passes through on her last embarkation miserably unseasonable and out of place. I knew not they were spurious. Enlighten me as to where the apocryphal matter commences. I, by accident, can correct one A. D., "Family Instructor," vol. ii. 1718; you say his first volume had then reached the fourth edition; now I have a fifth, printed for Eman Matthews, 1717. So have I plucked one rotten date, or rather picked it up where it had inadvertently fallen, from your

## TO WILSON

flourishing date tree, the Palm of Engaddi. I may take it for my pains. I think yours a book which every public library must have, and every English scholar should have. I am sure it has enriched my meagre stock of the author's works. I seem to be twice as opulent. Mary is by my side, just finishing the second volume. It must have interest to divert her away so long from her modern novels. Colburn will be quite jealous. I was a little disappointed at my "Ode to the Treadmill" not finding a place, but it came out of time. The two papers of mine will puzzle the reader, being so akin. Odd, that never keeping a scrap of my own letters, with some fifteen years' interval I should nearly have said the same things. But I shall always feel happy in having my name go down anyhow with De Foe's, and that of his historiographer. I promise myself, if not immortality, yet diuturnity of being read in consequence. We have both had much illness this year ; and feeling infirmities and fretfulness grow upon us, we have cast off the cares of housekeeping, sold off our goods, and commenced boarding and lodging with a very comfortable old couple next door to where you found us. We use a sort of common table. Nevertheless, we have reserved a private one for an old friend ; and when Mrs. Wilson and you revisit Babylon, we shall pray you to make it yours for a season. Our very kindest remembrances to you both.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

From your old friend and *fellow-journalist*,  
now in *two instances*. C. LAMB.

Hazlitt is going to make your book a basis for a review of De Foe's Novels in the "Edinbro'." I wish I had health and spirits to do it. Hone I have not seen, but I doubt not he will be much pleased with your performance. I very much hope you will give us an account of Dunton, etc. But what I should more like to see would be a Life and Times of Bunyan. Wishing health to you, and long life to your healthy book, again I subscribe me,

Yours in verity,

C. L.

TO MR. GILLMAN

LETTER CCCLXXXI.]

November 30, 1829.

Dear G.—The excursionists reached home, and the good town of Enfield, a little after four, without slip or dislocation. Little has transpired concerning the events of the back-journey, save that on passing the house of 'Squire Mellish, situate a stone-bow's cast from the hamlet, Father Westwood, with a good-natured wonderment, exclaimed, "I cannot think what is gone of Mr. Mellish's rooks. I fancy they have taken flight somewhere, but I have missed them two

## TO GILLMAN

or three years past." All this while, according to his fellow-traveller's report, the rookery was darkening the air above with undiminished population, and deafening all ears but his with their cawings. But Nature has been gently withdrawing such phenomena from the notice of two of Thomas Westwood's senses, from the time he began to miss the rooks. T. Westwood has passed a retired life in this hamlet, of thirty or forty years, living upon the minimum which is consistent with gentility, yet a star among the minor gentry, receiving the bows of the tradespeople, and courtesies of the alms-women, daily. Children venerate him not less for his external show of gentry, than they wonder at him for a gentle rising endorsation of the person, not amounting to a hump, or if a hump, innocuous as the hump of the buffalo, and coronative of as mild qualities. 'Tis a throne on which patience seems to sit,—the proud perch of a self-respecting humility, stooping with condescension. Thereupon the cares of life have sate, and rid him easily. For he has thrid the *angustiae domûs* with dexterity. Life opened upon him with comparative brilliancy. He set out as a rider or traveller for a wholesale house, in which capacity he tells of many hair-breadth escapes that befell him ; one especially, how he rode a mad horse into the town of Devizes ; how horse and rider arrived in a foam, to the utter consternation of the expostulating

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

hostlers, inn-keepers, etc. It seems it was sultry weather, piping hot; the steed tormented into frenzy with gad-flies, long past being road-worthy; but safety and the interest of the house he rode for were incompatible things; a fall in serge cloth was expected, and a mad entrance they made of it. Whether the exploit was purely voluntary, or partially; or whether a certain personal defiguration in the man part of this extraordinary centaur (non-assistive to partition of natures) might not enforce the conjunction, I stand not to inquire. I look not with 'skew eyes into the deeds of heroes. The hosier that was burnt with his shop, in Field Lane, on Tuesday night, shall have passed to heaven for me like a Marian Martyr, provided always that he consecrated the fortuitous incremation with a short ejaculation in the exit, as much as if he had taken his state degrees of martyrdom *in formâ* in the market vicinage. There is adoptive as well as acquisitive sacrifice. Be the animus what it might, the fact is indisputable, that this composition was seen flying all abroad, and mine host of Daintry may yet remember its passing through his town, if his scores are not more faithful than his memory. After this exploit (enough for one man), Thomas Westwood seems to have subsided into a less hazardous occupation: and in the twenty-fifth year of his age we find him a haberdasher in Bow Lane: yet still retentive of his early riding (though

## TO GILLMAN

leaving it to rarer stomachs), and Christmasly at night sithence to this last, and shall to his latest Christmas, hath he, doth he, and shall he, tell after supper the story of the insane steed and the desperate rider. Save for Bedlam or Luke's no eye could have guessed that melting day what house he rid for. But he reposes on his bridles, and after the ups and downs (metaphoric only) of a life behind the counter—hard riding sometimes, I fear, for poor T. W.—with the scrapings together of the shop, and *one anecdote*, he hath finally settled at Enfield; by hard economising, gardening, building for himself, hath reared a mansion; married a daughter; qualified a son for a counting-house; gotten the respect of high and low; served for self or substitute the greater parish offices; hath a special voice at vestries; and, domiciliating us, hath reflected a portion of his house-keeping respectability upon your humble servants. We are greater, being his lodgers, than when we were substantial renters. His name is a passport to take off the sneers of the native Enfielders against obnoxious foreigners. We are endenized. Thus much of T. Westwood have I thought fit to acquaint you, that you may see the exemplary reliance upon Providence with which I entrusted so dear a charge as my own sister to the guidance of a man that rode the mad horse into Devizes. To come from his heroic character, all the amiable qualities of

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

domestic life centre in this tamed Bellerophon. He is excellent over a glass of grog; just as pleasant without it; laughs when he hears a joke, and when (which is much oftener) he hears it not; sings glorious old sea-songs on festival nights; and but upon a slight acquaintance of two years, Coleridge, is as dear a deaf old man to us as old Norris (rest his soul!) was after fifty. To him and his scanty literature (what there is of it, *sound*) have we flown from the metropolis and its damn'd annualists, reviewers, authors, and the whole muddy ink press of that stagnant pool.

Now, Gillman again, you do not know the treasure of the Fullers. I calculate on having massy reading till Christmas. All I want here is books of the true sort, not those things in boards that moderns mistake for books, what they club for at book-clubs.

I did not mean to cheat you with a blank side, but my eye smarts, for which I am taking medicine, and abstain, this day at least, from any aliments but milk-porridge, the innocent taste of which I am anxious to renew after a half-century's disacquaintance. If a blot fall here like a tear, it is not pathos, but an angry eye.

Farewell, while my *specilla* are sound.

Yours and yours,

C. LAMB.



## TO GILLMAN

LETTER CCCLXXXII.]

[December] 1829.

Pray trust me with the "Church History," as well as the "Worthies." A moon shall restore both. Also give me back "Him of Aquinum." In return you have the *light of my countenance*. Adieu.

*P.S.*—A sister also of mine comes with it. A son of Nimshi drives her. Their driving will have been furious, impassioned. Pray God they have not toppled over the tunnel! I promise you I fear their steed, bred out of the wind without father, semi-Melchisedecish, hot, phaetonic. From my country lodgings at Enfield.  
C. L.

LETTER CCCLXXXIII.]

[December] 1829.

Dear Gillman—Pray do you, or S. T. C., immediately write to say you have received back the golden works of the dear, fine, silly old angel, which I part from, bleeding, and to say how the Winter has used you all.

It is our intention soon, weather permitting, to come over for a day at Highgate; for beds we will trust to the Gate-House, should you be full; tell me if we may come casually, for in this change of climate there is no naming a day for walking. With best loves to Mrs. Gillman, etc.

Yours, mopish, but in health, C. LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I shall be uneasy till I hear of Fuller's safe arrival.

To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCLXXXIV.]

*December 8, 1829.*

My dear B. B.—You are very good to have been uneasy about us, and I have the satisfaction to tell you that we are both in better health and spirits than we have been for a year or two past; I may say than we have been since we have been at Enfield. The cause may not appear quite adequate, when I tell you that a course of ill-health and spirits brought us to the determination of giving up our house here, and we are boarding and lodging with a worthy old couple, long inhabitants of Enfield, where everything is done for us without our trouble, further than a reasonable weekly payment. We should have done so before, but it is not easy to flesh and blood to give up an ancient establishment, to discard old Penates, and from house keepers to turn house sharers. (*N.B.* We are not in the workhouse.) Diocletian, in his garden, found more repose than on the imperial seat of Rome; and the nob of Charles the Fifth ached seldomer under a monk's cowl than under the diadem. With such shadows of assimilation we countenance our degradation. With such a load of dignified cares just removed from our

## TO BARTON

shoulders, we can the more understand and pity the accession to yours, by the advancement to an assigneeship. I will tell you honestly, B. B., that it has been long my deliberate judgment that all bankrupts, of whatsoever denomination, civil or religious, ought to be hanged. The pity of mankind has for ages run in a wrong channel, and has been diverted from poor creditors—(how many I have known sufferers! Hazlitt has just been defrauded of £100 by his bookseller-friends breaking)—to scoundrel debtors. I know all the topics—that distress may come upon an honest man without his fault; that the failure of one that he trusted was his calamity, etc. Then let *both* be hanged. O how careful it would make traders! These are my deliberate thoughts, after many years' experience in matters of trade. What a world of trouble it would have saved you, if Friend \* \* \* \* had been immediately hanged, without benefit of clergy, which (being a Quaker I presume) he could not reasonably insist upon. Why, after slaving twelve months in your assign-business, you will be enabled to declare 7d. in the pound in all human probability. B. B., he should be *hanged*. Trade will never re-flourish in this land till such a law is established. I write big, not to save ink but eyes, mine having been troubled with reading through three folios of old Fuller in almost as few days, and I went to bed last night in agony, and am writing

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

with a vial of eye-water before me, alternately dipping in vial and inkstand. This may inflame my zeal against bankrupts, but it was my speculation when I could see better. Half the world's misery (Eden else) is owing to want of money, and all that want is owing to bankrupts. I declare I would, if the state wanted practitioners, turn hangman myself, and should have great pleasure in hanging the first bankrupt after my salutary law should be established. I have seen no Annuals, and wish to see none. I like your fun upon them, and was quite pleased with Bowles's sonnet. Hood is, or was, at Brighton; but a note (prose or rhyme) to him, Robert Street, Adelphi, I am sure, would extract a copy of *his*, which also I have not seen. Wishing you and yours all health, I conclude while these frail glasses are to me—eyes.

C. L.

## TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCCLXXXV.]

January 22, 1830.

And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum*

## TO WORDSWORTH

*stans.* The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor Winter heightens our gloom ; Autumn hath foregone its moralities,—they are “hey-pass repass,” as in a show-box. Yet, as far as last year occurs back,—for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore,—’twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it, that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins ; have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle, called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them ; with the garden but to see it grow ; with the tax-gatherer but to hear him knock ; with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us, save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how ; quietists—confiding ravens. We have *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite killed, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health ? Intolerable dulness.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. O never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teasing image of a town about one; country folks that do not look like country folks; shops two yards square, half-a-dozen apples, and two penn'orth of overlooked ginger-bread, for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street; and, for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travelled,—(marry, they just begin to be conscious of the *Redgauntlet* :)—to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate; the topping gentry, stockbrokers; the passengers too many to insure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping, too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet Street. Confining, room-keeping, thickest Winter, is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. O let no native Londoner

## TO WORDSWORTH

imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet, and recreative study, can make the country anything better than altogether odious and detestable ! A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns,—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight ; not for anything there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to ; anything high may, nay must, be read out ; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor ; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye ; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here ; it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it, read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O for the collyrium of Tobias inclosed in a whiting's liver, to send you with no apocryphal good wishes ! The last long time I heard from you, you had knocked your head against something. Do not do so ; for your head (I do

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

not flatter) is not a knob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a nine-pin,—unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a “Recluse” out of it; then would I bid the smirched god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. Mary must squeeze out a line *propria manu*, but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter writing for a long interval. ’Twill please you all to hear, that though I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past. She is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

Our providers are an honest pair, Dame W[estwood] and her husband. He, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher, within Bow bells, retired since with something under a competence; writes himself parcel gentleman; hath borne parish offices; sings fine old sea songs at three-score and ten; sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands, about fifteen, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, “I have married my daughter, however”; takes the weather as it comes; outsides it to town in severest season; and o’ winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature (how comfortable to author-rid



## TO WORDSWORTH

folks !), and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a rider in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to balk his employer's bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a mad horse, to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of innkeepers, ostlers, etc., who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Derby. Understand, the creature galled to death and desperation by gad-flies, cormorant-winged, worse than beset Inachus's daughter. This he tells, this he bristles and burnishes on a Winter's eve ; 'tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence, to descant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant*) to look a gift story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggered all Dunstable, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity ; that the horse-part carried the reasoning, willy nilly ; that needs must when such a devil drove ; that certain spiral configurations in the frame of T[homas] W[estwood] unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. But in case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a con-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

stant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let accident and him share the glory. You would all like Thomas Westwood. How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure, which, like the sceptre of Agamemnon, shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea; nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favoured in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses—still you have not the man. Knew you old Norris of the Temple? sixty years ours and our father's friend? He was not more natural to us than this old W., the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambition tells me I might yet be a Londoner! Well, if we ever do move, we have encumbrances the less to impede us; all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing, like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London, shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb is at Rome; advices to that effect have reached Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeathed at parting (whether he should live or die) a turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Christmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine

## TO BARTON

old bachelor's action ! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Harz forest ; his soul is be-Goethed. Miss Kelly we never see ; Talfourd not this half-year : the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children (God forgive me !) I have utterly forgotten. We single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two ? We see scarce anybody. Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O ? Excuse particularising.

C. L.

## To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCLXXXVI.]

February 25, 1830.

Dear B. B.—To reply to you by return of post, I must gobble up my dinner and despatch this *in propria persona* to the office, to be in time. So take it from me hastily, that you are perfectly welcome to furnish A. C. with the scrap, which I had almost forgotten writing. The more my character comes to be known, the less my veracity will come to be suspected. Time every day clears up some suspected narrative of Herodotus, Bruce, and others of us great travellers. Why, that Joseph Paice was as real a person as Joseph Hume, and a great deal pleasanter. A careful observer of life, Bernard, has no need to invent. Nature romances it for him. Dinner plates rattle, and I positively shall

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

incur indigestion by carrying it half concocted to the post-house. Let me congratulate you on the Spring coming in, and do you in return condole with me on the Winter going out. When the old one goes, seldom comes a better. I dread the prospect of Summer, with his all-day-long days. No need of his assistance to make country places dull. With fire and candle-light I can dream myself in Holborn. With lightsome skies shining in to bed-time I can not. This Mesech, and these tents of Kedar—I would dwell in the skirts of Jericho rather, and think every blast of the coming-in mail a ram's horn. Give me old London at fire and plague times rather than these tepid gales, healthy country air, and purposeless exercise.

Leg of mutton absolutely on the table.

Take our hasty loves and short farewell.

C. L.

TO MRS. HAZLITT

LETTER CCCLXXXVII.]

*March 4, 1830.*

Dear Sarah—I was meditating to come and see you, but I am unable for the walk. We are both very unwell, and under affliction for poor Emma, who has had a very dangerous brain fever, and is lying very ill at Bury, from whence I expect a summons to fetch her. We are very sorry for your confinement. Any books I have are at your service. I am almost, I may

## TO MRS. HAZLITT

say *quite* sure, that letters to India pay no postage, and may go by the regular Post Office, now in St. Martin's le Grand. I think any receiving house would take them. I wish I could confirm your hopes about Dick Norris. But it is quite a dream. Some old Bencher of his surname is made *Treasurer* for the year, I suppose, which is an annual office. Norris was Sub-Treasurer, quite a different thing. They were pretty well in the Summer; since when we have heard nothing of them.

Mrs. Reynolds is better than she has been for years. She is with a disagreeable woman that she has taken a mighty fancy to, out of spite to a rival woman she used to live and quarrel with. She grows quite *fat*, they tell me, and may live as long as I do, to be a tormenting rent-charge to my diminished income. We go on pretty comfortably in our new place. I will come and have a talk with you when poor Emma's affair is settled, and will bring books. At present I am weak, and could hardly bring my legs home yesterday after a much shorter stroll than to Northaw. Mary has got her bonnet on for a short expedition. May you get better, as the Spring comes on. She sends her best love

With mine.

C. L.

Mrs. Hazlitt,  
Mrs. Tomlinson's,  
Northaw, near Potter's Bar, Herts.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO REV. JAMES GILLMAN

LETTER CCCLXXXVIII.]

March 8, 1830.

My dear G.—Your friend Battin (for I knew him immediately by the smooth satinity of his style) must excuse me for advocating the cause of his friends in Spitalfields. The fact is, I am retained by the Norwich people, and have already appeared in their paper under the signatures of “Lucius Sergius,” “Bluff,” “Broad - Cloth,” “No - trade - to - the - Woollen - Trade,” “Anti - plush,” etc., in defence of druggets and long camblets. And without this pre-engagement, I feel I should naturally have chosen a side opposite to —, for in the silken seemingness of his nature there is that which offends me. My flesh tingles at such caterpillars. He shall not crawl me over. Let him and his workmen sing the old burthen,

“Heigh ho, ye weavers !”

for any aid I shall offer them in this emergency. I was over St. Luke's the other day with my friend Tuthill, and mightily pleased with one of his contrivances for the comfort and amelioration of the students. They have double cells, in which a pair may lie feet to feet horizontally, and chat the time away as rationally as they can. It must certainly be more sociable for them these warm raving nights. The right-hand truckle

## TO GILLMAN

in one of these friendly recesses, at present vacant, was preparing, I understood, for Mr. Irving. Poor fellow ! it is time he removed from Pentonville. I followed him as far as to Highbury the other day, with a mob at his heels, calling out upon Ermigiddon, who I suppose is some Scotch moderator. He squinted out his favourite eye last Friday, in the fury of possession, upon a poor woman's shoulders that was crying matches, and has not missed it. The companion truck, as far as I could measure it with my eye, would conveniently fit a person about the length of Coleridge, allowing for a reasonable drawing up of the feet, not at all painful. Does he talk of moving this quarter ? You and I have too much sense to trouble ourselves with revelations ; marry, to the same in Greek you may have something professionally to say. Tell C. that he was to come and see us some fine day. Let it be before he moves, for in his new quarters he will necessarily be confined in his conversation to his brother prophet. Conceive the two Rabbis foot to foot, for there are no Gamaliels there to affect an humbler posture ! All are masters in that Patmos, where the law is perfect equality ; Latmos I should rather say, for they will be Luna's twin darlings ; her affection will be ever at the full. Well ; keep *your* brains moist with gooseberry this mad March, for the devil of exposition seeketh dry places. C. L.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO WILLIAM AYRTON

LETTER CCCLXXXIX.] *Mr. Westwood's, Chase Side, Enfield,*  
March 14, 1830.

My dear Ayrton—Your letter, which was only not so pleasant as your appearance would have been, has revived some old images,—Phillips (not the Colonel), with his few hairs bristling up at the charge of a revoke, which he declares impossible; the old Captain's significant nod over the right shoulder (was it not?); Mrs. Burney's determined questioning of the score, after the game was absolutely gone to the d—l; the plain but hospitable cold boiled-beef suppers at sideboard: all which fancies, redolent of middle age and strengthful spirits, come across us ever and anon in this vale of deliberate senectitude, ycleped Enfield.

You imagine a deep gulf between you and us; and there is a pitiable hiatus in *kind* between St. James's Park and this extremity of Middlesex. But the mere distance in turnpike roads is a trifle. The roof of a coach swings you down in an hour or two. We have a sure hot joint on a Sunday; and when had we better? I suppose you know that ill health has obliged us to give up house-keeping; but we have an asylum at the very next door (only twenty-four inches further from town, which is not material in a country expedition), where a *table d'hôte* is kept for us, without



## TO AYRTON

trouble on our parts, and we adjourn after dinner, when one of the old world (old friends) drops casually down among us. Come and find us out; and seal our judicious change with your approbation, whenever the whim bites, or the sun prompts. No need of announcement, for we are sure to be at home.

I keep putting off the subject of my answer. In truth I am not in spirits at present to see Mr. Murray on such a business; but pray offer him my acknowledgments, and an assurance that I should like at least one of his propositions, as I have so much additional matter for the SPECIMENS as might make two volumes in all; or ONE (new edition), omitting such better-known authors as Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson, etc.

But we are both in trouble at present. A very dear young friend of ours, who passed her Christmas holidays here, has been taken dangerously ill with a fever, from which she is very precariously recovering, and I expect a summons to fetch her when she is well enough to bear the journey from Bury. It is Emma Isola, with whom we got acquainted at our first visit to your sister at Cambridge, and she has been an occasional inmate with us (and of late years much more frequently) ever since. While she is in this danger, and till she is out of it, and here in a probable way to recovery, I feel that I have no spirits for an engagement of any kind. It has been a terrible shock to us; therefore I beg that

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

you will make my handsomest excuses to Mr. Murray.

Our very kindest loves to Mrs. A. and the younger A.'s.

Your unforgotten,

C. LAMB.

TO MRS. WILLIAMS

LETTER CCCXC.]

*Enfield, April 2, 1830.*

Dear Madam—I have great pleasure in letting you know Miss Isola has suffered very little from fatigue on her long journey. I am ashamed to say that I came home rather the more tired of the two ; but I am a very unpractised traveller. We found my sister very well in health, only a little impatient to see her ; and after a few hysterical tears for gladness, all was comfortable again. We arrived here from Epping between five and six.

The incidents of our journey were trifling, but you bade us tell them. We had then in the coach a rather talkative gentleman, but very civil all the way ; and took up a servant maid at Stortford going to a sick mistress. To the latter a participation in the hospitalities of your nice rusks and sandwiches proved agreeable, as it did to my companion, who took merely a sip of the weakest wine and water with them. The former engaged me in a discourse for full twenty miles,

## TO MRS. WILLIAMS

on the probable advantages of steam carriages, which, being merely problematical, I bore my part in with some credit, in spite of my totally un-engineer-like faculties. But when, somewhere about Stanstead, he put an unfortunate question to me, as to "the probability of its turning out a good turnip season," and when I, who am still less of an agriculturist than a steam philosopher, not knowing a turnip from a potato ground, innocently made answer, "I believe it depends very much upon boiled legs of mutton," my unlucky reply set Miss Isola a laughing to a degree that disturbed her tranquillity for the only moment in our journey. I am afraid my credit sank very low with my other fellow-traveller, who had thought he had met with a *well-informed passenger*, which is an accident so desirable in a stage coach. We were rather less communicative, but still friendly, the rest of the way.

How I employed myself between Epping and Enfield, the poor verses in the front of my paper may inform you, which you may please to christen an "Acrostic in a Cross Road," and which I wish were worthier of the lady they refer to ; but I trust you will plead my pardon to her on a subject so delicate as a lady's good *name*. Your candour must acknowledge that they are written straight. And now, dear Madam, I have left myself hardly space to express my sense of the friendly reception I

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

found at Fornham. Mr. Williams will tell you that we had the pleasure of a slight meeting with him on the road, where I could almost have told him, but that it seemed ungracious, that such had been your hospitality, that I scarcely missed the good master of the family at Fornham, though heartily I should have rejoiced to have made a little longer acquaintance with him. I will say nothing of our deeper obligations to both of you, because I think we agreed at Fornham that gratitude may be over-exacted on the part of the obliging, and over-expressed on the part of the obliged person.

My sister and Miss Isola join in respects to Mr. Williams and yourself. Miss Isola will have the pleasure of writing to you next week, and we shall hope at your leisure to hear of your own health, etc.

I am, dear Madam, with great respect, your obliged  
CHARLES LAMB.

LETTER CCCXCI.]

*Enfield, Good Friday, 1830.*

Dear Madam—I do assure you that your verses gratified me very much, and my sister is quite *proud* of them. For the first time in my life I congratulated myself upon the shortness and meanness of my name. Had it been Schwartzenberg or Esterhazy, it would have put you to some puzzle. I am afraid I shall sicken you of acrostics, but this last was written *to order*.

## TO MRS. WILLIAMS

I beg you to have inserted in your county paper something like this advertisement: "To the nobility, gentry, and others, about Bury.—C. Lamb respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he is leaving off business in the acrostic line, as he is going into an entirely new line. Rebuses and Charades done as usual, and upon the old terms. Also, Epitaphs to suit the memory of any person deceased."

I thought I had adroitly escaped the rather unpliable name of "Williams," curtailing your poor daughters to their proper surnames; but it seems you would not let me off so easily. If these trifles amuse you, I am paid. Though really 'tis an operation too much like—"A, apple-pie; B, bit it." To make amends, I request leave to lend you the "Excursion," and to recommend, in particular, the "Churchyard Stories,"—in the seventh book, I think. They will strengthen the tone of your mind after its weak diet on acrostics.

Miss Isola is writing, and will tell you that we are going on very comfortably. Her sister is just come. She blames my last verses, as being more written on Mr. Williams than on yourself; but how should I have parted whom a Superior Power has brought together? I beg you will jointly accept of our best respects, and pardon your obsequious if not troublesome correspondent,

C. L.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

*P.S.*—I am the worst folder-up of a letter in the world, except certain Hottentots, in the land of Caffre, who never fold up their letters at all, writing very badly upon skins, etc.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

LETTER CCCXCII.]

May 10, 1830.

Dear Southey—My friend Hone, whom you would like *for a friend*, I found deeply impressed with your generous notice of him in your beautiful *Life of Bunyan*, which I am just now full of. He has written to you for leave to publish a certain good-natured letter. I write not this to enforce his request, for we are fully aware that the refusal of such publication would be quite consistent with all that is good in your character. Neither he nor I expect it from you, nor exact it; but if you would consent to it, you would oblige me by it, as well as him. He is just now in a critical situation: kind friends have opened a coffee-house for him in the City, but their means have not extended to the purchase of coffee-pots, credit for Reviews, newspapers, and other paraphernalia. So I am sitting in the skeleton of a possible divan. What right I have to interfere, you best know. Look on me as a dog who went once temporarily insane, and bit you, and now begs for a crust. Will you set your wits to a dog?

## TO SOUTHEY

Our object is to open a subscription, which my friends of the *Times* are most willing to forward for him, but think that a leave from you to publish would aid it.

But not an atom of respect or kindness will or shall it abate in either of us if you decline it. Have this strongly in your mind.

Those *Every-Day* and *Table* Books will be a treasure a hundred years hence, but they have failed to make Hone's fortune.

Here his wife and all his children are about me, gaping for coffee customers; but how should they come in, seeing no pot boiling!

Enough of Hone. I saw Coleridge a day or two since. He has had some severe attack, not paralytic; but if I had not heard of it I should not have found it out. He looks, and especially speaks, strong. How are all the Wordsworths and all the Southneys? whom I am obliged to you if you have not brought up haters of the name of

C. LAMB.

*P.S.*—I have gone lately into the acrostic line. I find genius (such as I had) declines with me, but I get clever. Do you know anybody that wants charades, or such things, for Albums? I do 'em at so much a sheet. Perhaps an epigram (not a very happy-gram) I did for a school-boy yesterday may amuse. I pray Jove he may not get a flogging for any false quantity; but 'tis, with one exception, the only

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Latin verses I have made for forty years ; and I did it “ to order.”

### CUIQUE SUUM

Adsciscit sibi divitias et opes alienas  
Fur, rapiens, spolians quod mihi, quodque tibi,  
Proprium erat, temnens haec verba, meumque tuumque ;  
Omne suum est : tandem cuique suum tribuit :  
Dat resti collum ; vestes, vah ! carnifici dat ;  
Sese Diabolo : sic bene, Cuique suum.

I write from Hone's ; therefore Mary cannot send her love to Mrs. Southey, but I do.

Yours ever,

C. L.

### To MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCXCIII.]

May 12, 1830.

Dear M.—I dined with your and my Rogers, at Mr. Cary's, yesterday. Cary consulted me on the proper bookseller to offer a lady's MS. novel to. I said I would write to *you*. But I wish you would call on the translator of Dante, at the British Museum, and talk with him. He is the pleasantest of clergymen. I told him of all Rogers's handsome behaviour to you, and you are already no stranger. Go ! I made Rogers laugh about your Nightingale Sonnet, not having heard one. 'Tis a good sonnet, notwithstanding. You shall have the books shortly. C: L.



## TO ASBURY

TO DR. ASBURY

LETTER CCCXCIV.]

[May 1830.]

Dear Sir—Some draughts and boluses have been brought here which we conjecture were meant for the young lady whom you saw this morning, though they are labelled for

MISS ISOLA LAMB.

No such person is known on the Chase Side, and she is fearful of taking medicines which may have been made up for another patient. She begs me to say that she was born an *Isola* and christened *Emma*. Moreover that she is Italian by birth, and that her ancestors were from Isola Bella (Fair Island) in the kingdom of Naples. She has never changed her name and rather mournfully adds that she has no prospect at present of doing so. She is literally I. SOLA, or single, at present. Therefore she begs that the obnoxious monosyllable may be omitted on future Phials,—an innocent syllable enough, you'll say, but she has no claim to it. It is the bitterest pill of the seven you have sent her. When a lady loses her good *name*, what is to become of her? Well she must swallow it as well as she can, but begs the dose may not be repeated.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES LAMB (not Isola).

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCCXCV.]

Friday, May 14, 1830.

Dear Novello—Mary hopes you have not forgot you are to spend a day with us on Wednesday. That it may be a long one, cannot you secure places now for Mrs. Novello, yourself, and the Clarkes? We have just table-room for four. Five make my good landlady fidgety; six, to begin to fret; seven, to approximate to fever-point. But, seriously, we shall prefer four to two or three. We shall have from half-past ten to six, when the coach goes off, to scent the country. And pray write *now*, to say you do so come, for dear Mrs. Westwood else will be on the tenters of incertitude. C. L.

Vincent Novello, Esq.,

66, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

TO MR. HONE

LETTER CCCXCVI.]

May 21, 1830.

Dear Hone—I thought you would be pleased to see this letter. Pray, if you have time, to call on Novello, No. 66, Great Queen St. I am anxious to learn whether he received his Album I sent on Friday by our nine o'clock morning stage. If not, beg him inquire at the *Old Bell*, Holborn.

CHARLES LAMB.

TO NOVELLO—MRS. HAZLITT

Southey will see in the *Times* all we proposed omitting is omitted.

To VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCCXCVII.]

May 1830.

Dear N.—Pray write immediately to say “The book has come safe.” I am anxious, not so much for the autographs, as for that bit of the hair-brush. I enclose a cinder which belonged to Shield, when he was poor, and lit his own fires. Any memorial of a great musical genius, I know, is acceptable; and Shield has his merits, though Clementi, in my opinion, is far above him in the *Sostenuto*. Mr. Westwood desires his compliments, and begs to present you with a nail that came out of Jomelli’s coffin, who is buried at Naples.

C. LAMB.

To MRS. HAZLITT

LETTER CCCXCVIII.]

May 24, 1830.

Mary’s love? Yes. Mary Lamb is quite well.

*Enfield, Saturday.*

Dear Sarah—I found my way to Northaw on Thursday, and saw a very good woman behind a

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

counter, who says also that you are a very good lady. I did not accept her offered glass of wine (home-made, I take it), but craved a cup of ale, with which I seasoned a slice of cold lamb, from a sandwich box, which I ate in her back parlour, and proceeded for Berkhamstead, etc.; lost myself over a heath, and had a day's pleasure. I wish you could walk as I do, and as you used to do. I am sorry to find you are so poorly; and, now I have found my way, I wish you back at Goody Tomlinson's. What a pretty village 'tis! I should have come sooner, but was waiting a summons to Bury. Well, it came; and I found the good parson's lady (he was from home) exceedingly hospitable.

Poor Emma, the first moment we were alone, took me into a corner, and said, "Now, pray, don't *drink*; do check yourself after dinner, for my sake, and when we get home to Enfield you shall drink as much as ever you please, and I won't say a word about it." How I behaved, you may guess, when I tell you that Mrs. Williams and I have written acrostics on each other, and she hoped that she should have "no reason to regret Miss Isola's recovery, by its depriving *her* of our begun correspondence." Emma stayed a month with us, and has gone back (in tolerable health) to her long home, for *she* comes not again for a twelvemonth. I amused Mrs. Williams with an occurrence on our road to Enfield. We travelled with one of those

## TO MRS. HAZLITT

troublesome fellow-passengers in a stage coach, that is called a well-inform'd man. For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriage by ditto, till all my science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: "What sort of a crop of turnips do you think we shall have this year?" Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have to say; and she burst into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied, that "it depends, I believe, upon boiled legs of mutton." This clenched our conversation; and my gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of our journey. Ayrton was here yesterday, and as *learned* to the full as my fellow-traveller. What a pity that he will spoil a wit and a devilish pleasant fellow (as he is) by wisdom. He talked on music, and by having read Hawkins and Burney recently, I was enabled to talk of names, and show more knowledge than he had suspected I possessed; and in the end he begged me to shape my thoughts upon paper, which I did after he was gone, and sent him.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

## FREE THOUGHTS ON SOME EMINENT COMPOSERS

Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,  
Just as the whim bites. For my part,  
I do not care a farthing candle  
For either of them, or for Handel, etc.

Martin Burney is as good and as odd as ever. We had a dispute about the word "heir," which I contended was pronounced like "air." He said that might be in common parlance; or that we might so use it, speaking of the "Heir at Law," a comedy; but that in the law courts it was necessary to give it a full aspiration, and to say *Hayer*; he thought it might even vitiate a cause, if a counsel pronounced it otherwise. In conclusion, he "would consult Serjeant Wilde"; who gave it against him. Sometimes he falleth into the water; sometimes into the fire. He came down here, and insisted on reading Virgil's "Eneid" all through with me (which he did), because a Counsel must know Latin. Another time he read out all the Gospel of St. John, because Biblical quotations are very emphatic in a Court of Justice. A third time he would carve a fowl, which he did very ill-favouredly, because "we did not know how indispensable it was for a barrister to do all those things well—those little things were of more consequence than we supposed." So he goes on, harassing about the way to prosperity, and losing it; with a long

## TO MRS. HAZLITT

head, but somewhat a wrong one—harum-scarum. Why does not his guardian angel look to him? He deserves one : may be, he has tired him out.

I am tired with this long scrawl, but I thought in your exile you might like a letter. Commend me to all the wonders in Derbyshire ; and tell the devil I humbly kiss my—hand to him.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

London, May 24, 1830.

Mrs. Hazlitt,

Mr. Broomhead's,

St. Anne's Square, Buxton.

LETTER CCCXCIX.]

June 3, 1830.

Dear Sarah—I named your thought about William to his father, who expressed such horror and aversion to the idea of his singing in public, that I cannot meddle in it directly or indirectly. Ayrton is a kind fellow ; and if you chuse to consult him by letter, or otherwise, he will give you the best advice, I am sure, very readily. *I have no doubt that M. Burney's objection to interfering was the same with mine.* With thanks for your pleasant long letter, which is not that of an invalid, and sympathy for your sad sufferings,

I remain, in haste, Yours truly.

[No SIGNATURE.]

Mary's kindest love.

Mrs. Hazlitt, at Mr. Broomhead's,  
St. Anne's Square, Buxton.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCC.]

*Enfield, June 17, 1830.*

I hereby empower Matilda Hone to superintend daily the putting into the twopenny post the *Times* newspaper of the day before, directed "Mr. Lamb, Enfield," which shall be held a *full and sufficient direction*; the said insertion to commence on Monday morning next. And I do engage to pay to William Hone, Coffee and Hotel Man, the quarterly sum of £1, to be paid at the ordinary Quarter days, or thereabout, for the reversion of the said paper, commencing with the 24th inst., or Feast of John the Baptist; the intervening days to be held and considered as nothing.

C. LAMB.

Vivant Coffee, Coffee-potque !

Mr. Hone,  
Coffee-house and Hotel,  
13, Gracechurch Street, London.

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCCI.]

*June 28, 1830.*

Dear B. B.—Could you dream of my publishing without sending a copy to you? You will find something new to you in the volume, particularly the translations. Moxon will send



## TO BARTON

to you the moment it is out. He is the young poet of *Christmas*, whom the Author of the "Pleasures of Memory" has set up in the book-vending business with a volunteer'd loan of £500. Such munificence is rare to an almost stranger ; but Rogers, I am told, has done many good-natured things of this kind.

I need not say how glad to see A. K. and Lucy we should have been,—and still shall be, if it be practicable. Our direction is Mr. Westwood's, Chase Side, Enfield ; but alas I know not theirs. We can give them a bed. Coaches come daily from the Bell, Holborn.

You will see that I am worn to the poetical dregs, condescending to acrostics, which are nine fathom beneath album verses ; but they were written at the request of the lady where our Emma is, to whom I paid a visit in April to bring home Emma for a change of air after a severe illness, in which she had been treated like a daughter by the good Parson and his whole family. She has since returned to her occupation. I thought on you in Suffolk, but was forty miles from Woodbridge. I heard of you the other day from Mr. Pulham of the India House.

Long live King William the IVth !

S. T. C. says we have had wicked kings, foolish kings, wise kings, good kings (but few), but never till now have we had a blackguard king.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Charles the Second was profligate, but a gentleman.

I have nineteen letters to dispatch this leisure Sabbath for Moxon to send with copies ; so you will forgive me short measure, and believe me,

Yours ever, C. L.

Pray do let us see your Quakeresses if possible.

### To WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCCII.]

*July 1, 1830.*

Pray let Matilda keep my newspapers till you hear from me, as we are meditating a town residence.

C. LAMB.

Let her keep them as the apple of her eye.

Mr. Hone,  
13, Gracechurch Street.

### To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCCIII.]

*August 30, 1830.*

Dear B. B.—My address is 34, Southampton Buildings, Holborn. For God's sake do not let me be pester'd with Annuals. They are all rogues who edit them, and something else who

## TO BARTON

write in them. I am still alone, and very much out of sorts, and cannot spur up my mind to writing. The sight of one of those year books makes me sick. I get nothing by any of 'em, not even a copy.

Thank you for your warm interest about my little volume, for the critics on which I care the five hundred thousandth part of the tythe of a half-farthing. I am too old a Militant for that. How noble, tho', in Robert Southey to come forward for an old friend, who had treated him so unworthily!

Moxon has a shop without customers, I a book without readers. But what a clamour against a poor collection of Album verses, as if we had put forth an Epic! I cannot scribble a long letter: I am, when not on foot, very desolate, and take no interest in anything, scarce hate anything but Annuals. I am in an interregnum of thought and feeling. What a beautiful Autumn morning this is, if it was but with me as in times past when the candle of the Lord shined round me! I cannot even muster enthusiasm to admire the French heroism. In better times I hope we may some day meet, and discuss an old poem or two. But if you'd have me not sick, no more of Annuals.

C. L., Ex-Elia.

Love to Lucy and A. K. always.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCCCIV.]

*November 8, 1830.*

Tears are for lighter griefs. Man weeps the  
doom

That seals a single victim to the tomb.

But when Death riots, when with whelming  
sway

Destruction sweeps a family away ;

When Infancy and Youth, a huddled mass,

All in an instant to oblivion pass,

And Parent hopes are crush'd: what lamentation  
Can reach the depth of such a desolation ?

Look upward, Feeble Ones ! look up, and trust,

That He, who lays this mortal frame in dust,

Still hath the immortal Spirit in His keeping.

In Jesus' sight they are not dead, but sleeping.

Dear N., will these lines do ? I despair of  
better. Poor Mary is in a deplorable state here  
at Enfield.

Love to all,

C. LAMB.

TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCCIV.]

*November 12, 1830.*

Dear Moxon—I have brought my sister to  
Enfield, being sure that she had no hope of  
recovery in London. Her state of mind is

## TO DYER

deplorable beyond any example. I almost fear whether she has strength at her time of life ever to get out of it. Here she must be nursed, and neither see nor hear of anything in the world out of her sick chamber. The mere hearing that Southey had called at our lodgings totally upset her. Pray see him, or hear of him at Mr. Rickman's, and excuse my not writing to him. I dare not write or receive a letter in her presence; every little talk so agitates her. Westwood will receive any letter for me, and give it me privately.

Pray assure Southey of my kindest feelings towards him; and if you do not see him, send this to him.

Kindest remembrances to your sister, and believe me ever yours,  
C. LAMB.

Remember me kindly to the Allsops.

## To GEORGE DYER

LETTER CCCCVI.]

*December 20, 1830.*

Dear Dyer—I should have written before to thank you for your kind letter, written with your own hand. It glads us to see your writing. It will give you pleasure to hear that after so much illness we are in tolerable health and spirits once more. Poor Enfield, that has been

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

so peaceable hitherto, has caught the inflammatory fever; the tokens are upon her; and a great fire was blazing last night in the barns and haystacks of a farmer, about half a mile from us. Where will these things end? There is no doubt of its being the work of some ill-disposed rustic; but how is he to be discovered? They go to work in the dark with strange chemical preparations, unknown to our forefathers. There is not even a dark lantern, to have a chance of detecting these Guy Fauxes. We are past the iron age, and are got into the fiery age, undreamed of by Ovid. You are lucky in Clifford's Inn, where I think you have few ricks or stacks worth the burning. Pray, keep as little corn by you as you can for fear of the worst. It was never good times in England since the poor began to speculate upon their condition. Formerly they jogged on with as little reflection as horses. The whistling ploughman went cheek by jowl with his brother that neighed. Now the biped carries a box of phosphorus in his leather breeches, and in the dead of night the half-illuminated beast steals his magic potion into a cleft in a barn, and half the country is grinning with new fires. Farmer Graystock said something to the touchy rustic, that he did not relish, and he writes his distaste in flames. What a power to intoxicate his crude brains, just muddlingly awake to perceive that something is wrong in the social system,—

## TO DYER

what a hellish faculty above gunpowder ! Now the rich and poor are fairly pitted. We shall see who can hang or burn fastest. It is not always revenge that stimulates these kindlings. There is a love of exerting mischief. Think of a disrespected clod that was trod into earth, that was nothing, on a sudden by damned arts refined into an exterminating angel, devouring the fruits of the earth and their growers in a mass of fire ; what a new existence ! What a temptation above Lucifer's ! Would Clod be anything but a clod if he could resist it ? Why, here was a spectacle last night for a whole country, a bonfire visible to London, alarming her guilty towers, and shaking the Monument with an ague fit, all done by a little vial of phosphor in a clown's fob. How he must grin, and shake his empty noddle in clouds ! The Vulcanian epicure ! Alas ! can we ring the bells backward ? Can we unlearn the arts that pretend to civilise, and then burn the world ? There is a march of science ; but who shall beat the drums for its retreat ? Who shall persuade the boor that phosphor will not ignite ? Seven goodly stacks of hay, with corn-barns proportionable, lie smoking ashes and chaff, which man and beast would sputter out and reject like those apples of asphaltes and bitumen. The food for the inhabitants of earth will quickly disappear. Hot rolls may say, " *Fuimus panes, fuit quartern-loaf, et ingens gloria apple-pasty-*

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

orum." That the good old munching system  
may last thy time and mine, good un-incendiary  
George, is the devout prayer of thine,

To the last crust,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCCCVII.]

February 22, 1831.

Dear Dyer—Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Rogers's friends, are perfectly assured that you never intended any harm by an innocent couplet, and that in the revivification of it by blundering Barker you had no hand whatever. To imagine that at this time of day Rogers broods over a fantastic expression of more than thirty years' standing, would be to suppose him indulging his "Pleasures of Memory" with a vengeance. You never penned a line which for its own sake you need, dying, wish to blot. You mistake your heart if you think you *can* write a lampoon. Your whips are rods of roses. Your spleen has ever had for its object vices, not the vicious; abstract offences, not the concrete sinner. But you are sensitive, and wince as much at the consciousness of having committed a compliment, as another man would at the perpetration of an affront. But do not lug me into the same soreness of conscience with yourself. I maintain, and will to the last hour, that I never writ of you but *con amore*; that if any allusion was made to your near-sightedness, it was not for the purpose of mocking an infirmity, but of connecting it with



## TO DYER

scholar-like habits : for is it not erudite and scholarly to be somewhat near of sight before age naturally brings on the malady? You could not then plead the *obrepens senectus*. Did I not moreover make it an apology for a certain *absence*, which some of our friends may have experienced, when you have not on a sudden made recognition of them in a casual street-meeting? And did I not strengthen your excuse for this slowness of recognition, by further accounting morally for the present engagement of your mind in worthy objects? Did I not, in your person, make the handsomest apology for absent-of-mind people that was ever made? If these things be not so, I never knew what I wrote, or meant by my writing, and have been penning libels all my life without being aware of it. Does it follow that I should have exprest myself exactly in the same way of those dear old eyes of yours *now*, now that Father Time has conspired with a hard task-master to put a last extinguisher upon them? I should as soon have insulted the Answerer of Salmasius when he awoke up from his ended task and saw no more with mortal vision. But you are many films removed yet from Milton's calamity. You write perfectly intelligibly. Marry, the letters are not all of the same size or tallness ; but that only shows your proficiency in the *hands*, text, german-hand, court-hand, sometimes law-hand, and affords variety. You pen better than you did a twelvemonth ago ;

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

and if you continue to improve, you bid fair to win the golden pen which is the prize at your young gentlemen's academy. But you must beware of Valpy, and his printing-house, that hazy cave of Trophonius, out of which it was a mercy that you escaped with a glimmer. Beware of MSS. and Variæ Lectiones. Settle the text for once in your mind, and stick to it. You have some years' good sight in you yet, if you do not tamper with it. It is not for you (for *us* I should say) to go poring into Greek contractions, and star-gazing upon slim Hebrew points. We have yet the sight

Of sun, and moon, and star, throughout the year,  
And man and woman.

You have vision enough to discern Mrs. Dyer from the other comely gentlewoman who lives up at staircase No. 5 ; or, if you should make a blunder in the twilight, Mrs. Dyer has too much good sense to be jealous for a mere effect of imperfect optics. But don't try to write the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments in the compass of a half-penny ; nor run after a midge, or a mote, to catch it ; and leave off hunting for needles in bundles of hay, for all these things strain the eyes. The snow is six feet deep in some parts here. I must put on jack-boots to get at the Post-Office with this. It is not good for weak eyes to pore upon snow too much. It lies in drifts. I wonder what its drift is ; only that it makes good pancakes,

## TO DYER

remind Mrs. Dyer. It turns a pretty green world into a white one. It glares too much for an innocent colour methinks. I wonder why you think I dislike gilt edges. They set off a letter marvellously. Yours, for instance, looks for all the world like a tablet of curious *hieroglyphics* in a gold frame. But don't go and lay this to your eyes. You always wrote hieroglyphically, yet not to come up to the mystical notations and conjuring characters of Dr. Parr. You never wrote what I call a schoolmaster's hand, like Mrs. Clarke; nor a woman's hand, like Southey; nor a missal hand, like Porson; nor an all-of-the-wrong-side sloping hand, like Miss Hayes; nor a dogmatic, Mede-and-Persian, peremptory hand, like Rickman; but you ever wrote what I call a Grecian's hand; what the Grecians write (or used) at Christ's Hospital; such as Whalley would have admired, and Boyer have applauded, but Smith or Atwood (writing-masters) would have horsed you for. Your boy-of-genius hand and your mercantile hand are various. By your flourishes, I should think you never learned to make eagles or corkscrews, or flourish the governors' names in the writing-school; and by the tenour and cut of your letters, I suspect you were never in it at all. By the length of this scrawl you will think I have a design upon your optics; but I have writ as large as I could, out of respect to them; too large, indeed, for beauty. Mine is a

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

sort of deputy Grecian's hand ; a little better, and more of a worldly hand, than a Grecian's, but still remote from the mercantile. I don't know how it is, but I keep my rank in fancy still since school-days. I can never forget I was a deputy Grecian ! And writing to you, or to Coleridge, besides affection, I feel a reverential deference as to Grecians still. I keep my soaring way above the Great Erasmians, yet far beneath the other. Alas ! what am I now ? What is a Leadenhall clerk, or India pensioner, to a deputy Grecian ? How art thou fallen, O Lucifer ! Just room for our loves to Mrs. D., etc.

C. LAMB.

TO REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCCCVIII.]

April 13, 1831.

Dear C.—I am *daily* for this week expecting Wordsworth, who will not name a day. I have been expecting him by months and by weeks ; but he has reduced the hope within the seven fractions hebdomadal of this hebdoma. Therefore I am sorry I cannot see you on Thursday. I think within a week or two I shall be able to invite myself some day for a day, but we hermits with difficulty poke out of our shells. Within that ostraceous retirement I meditate not unfrequently on you. My sister's kindest remembrances to you both.

C. L.

## TO BARTON

To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCCIX.]

*April 30, 1831.*

Vir Bone!—Recepi literas tuas amicissimas, et in mentem venit responsuro mihi, vel raro, vel nunquam, inter nos intercedisse Latinam linguam, organum rescribendi, loquendive. Epistolæ tuæ, Plinianis elegantiss (supra quod TREMULO deceat) refertæ, tam a verbis Plinianis adeo abhorrent, ut ne vocem quamquam (Romanam scilicet) habere videaris, quam “ad canem,” ut aiunt, “rejectare possis.” Forsan desuetudo Latinissandi ad vernaculam linguam usitandam, plusquam opus sit, coegit. Per adagia quædam nota, et in ore omnium pervulgata, ad Latinitatis perditæ recuperationem revocare te institui.

Felis in abaco est, et ægrè videt.

Omne quod splendet nequaquam aurum putes.

Imponas equo mendicum, equitabit idem ad diabolum.

Fur commodè a fure prenditur.

O MARIA, MARIA, valdé CONTRARIA, quomodo crescit hortulus tuus?

Nunc majora canamus.

Thomas, Thomas, de Islington, uxorem duxit die nuperâ Dominicâ. Reduxit domum posterâ. Succedenti baculum emit. Postridie ferit illam. Ægrescit illa subsequenti. Proximâ (nempe Veneris) est mortua. Plurimum gestiit

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Thomas, quòd appropinquanti Sabbato efferenda sit.

Horner quidam Johannulus in angulo sedebat, artocreas quasdam deglutiens. Inseruit pollices, pruna nana evellens, et magnâ voce exclamavit “Dii boni, quàm bonus puer fio!”

Diddle-diddle-dumkins! meus unicus filius Johannes cubitum ivit, integris braccis, caligâ unâ tantum, indutus. Diddle-diddle, etc.  
DA CAPO.

Hic adsum saltans Joannula. Cum nemo adsit mihi, semper resto sola.

Ænigma mihi hoc solvas, et Ædipus fies.

Quâ ratione assimilandus sit equus TREMULO?

Quippe cui tota communicatio sit per HAY et NEIGH, juxta consilium illud Dominicum, “Fiat omnis communicatio vestra YEA et NAY.”

In his nugis caram diem consumo, dum invigilo valetudini carioris nostræ Emmæ, quæ apud nos jamdudum ægrotat. Salvere vos jubet mecum Maria mea, ipsa integrâ valetudine.

ELIA.

Ab agro Enfeldiense datum, Aprilis nescio quibus Calendis—Davus sum, non Calendarius.

P.S.—Perdita in toto est Billa Reformatura.

## TO CARY

TO REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCCCX.]

*Datum ab agro Enfeldiensi,  
Maii die sextâ, 1831.*

Assidens est mihi bona soror, Euripiden evolvens, donum vestrum, carissime Cary, pro quo gratias agimus, lecturi atque iterum lecturi idem. Pergratus est liber ambobus, nempe "Sacerdotis Commiserationis," sacrum opus a te ipso Humanissimæ Religionis Sacerdote dono datum. Lachrymantes gavisuri sumus; est ubi dolor fiat voluptas; nec semper dulce mihi est ridere; aliquando commutandum est he! he! he! cum heu! heu! heu!

A Musis Tragicis me non penitus abhorruisse testis sit Carmen Calamitosum, nescio quo autore linguâ prius vernaculâ scriptum, et nuperrimè a me ipso Latine versum, scilicet, "Tom Tom of Islington." Tenuistine?

"Thomas Thomas de Islington,  
Uxorem duxit Die quâdam Solis,  
Abduxit domum sequenti die,  
Emit baculum subsequenti,  
Vapulat illa postera,  
Ægrotat succedenti, Mortua fit crastinâ."

Et miro gaudio afficitur Thomas luce postera quod subsequenti (nempe, Dominicâ) uxor sit efferenda.

"En Iliades Domesticas!  
En circulum calamitatum!  
Planè hebdomadalem tragediam."

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I nunc et confer Euripiden vestrum his luctibus, hâc morte uxoriâ ; confer Alcesten ! Hecuben ! quas non antiquas Heroinas Dolorosas.

Suffundor genas lachrymis tantas strages revolvens. Quid restat nisi quod Tecum Tuam Caram salutemus ambosque valere jubeamus, nosmet ipsi bene valentes. ELIA.

To JOHN TAYLOR

LETTER CCCCXI.]

June 8, 1831.

Dear Sir—I am extremely sorry to be obliged to decline the article proposed, particularly as I should have been flattered with a Plate accompanying it. In the first place, Midsummer Day is not a topic I could make anything of, I am so pure a Cockney, and little read besides in May games and antiquities ; and in the second, I am here at Margate, spoiling my holydays with a Review I have undertaken for a friend, which I shall barely get through before my return, for that sort of work is a hard task to me. If you will excuse the shortness of my first contribution (and I *know* I can promise nothing more for July) I will endeavour a longer article for *our next*. Will you permit me to say that I think Leigh Hunt would do the Article you propose in a masterly manner, if he has not out-writ himself already upon the subject. I do not



## TO MOXON

return the proof—to save postage—because it is correct, with *one exception*. In the stanza from Wordsworth you have changed *day* into *air* for rhyme's sake. *Day* is the right reading, and I implore you to restore it.

The other passage, which you have queried, is to my ear correct. Pray let it stand.

Dear Sir, yours truly, C. LAMB.

*Margate.*

J. Taylor, Esq.

On second consideration I do enclose the proof.

## TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXII.]

August 1831.

Dear M.—The *R.A.* here memorised was George Dawe, whom I knew well, and heard many anecdotes of, from DANIELS and WESTALL, at H. Rogers's; *to each of them* it will be well to send a magazine in my name. It will fly like wildfire among the Royal Academicians and artists. Could you get hold of Procter?—his chambers are in Lincoln's Inn, at Montagu's; or of Janus Weathercock?—both of their *prose* is capital. Don't encourage poetry. The "Peter's Net" does not intend funny things only. All is fish. And leave out the sickening "Elia" at the end. Then it may comprise

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

letters and characters addressed to Peter ; but a signature forces it to be all characteristic of the one man Elia, or the one man, Peter, which cramped me formerly. I have agreed *not* for my sister to know the subjects I choose till the magazine comes out ; so beware of speaking of 'em, or writing about 'em, save generally. Be particular about this warning. Can't you drop in some afternoon, and take a bed ? The *Athenæum* has been hoaxed with some exquisite poetry, that was, two or three months ago, in "Hone's Book." I like your first Number capitally. But is it not small ? Come and see us, week-day if possible.

Send or bring me Hone's Number for August. The anecdotes of E. and of G. D. are substantially true ; what does Elia (or Peter) care for dates ?

The poem I mean is in "Hone's Book," as far back as April. I do not know who wrote it ; but 'tis a poem I envy—*that* and Montgomery's "Last Man" : I envy the writers, because I feel I could have done something like them.

C. L.

LETTER CCCCXIII.]

September 5, 1831.

Dear M.—Your letter's contents pleased me. I am only afraid of taxing you. Yet I want a stimulus, or I think I should drag sadly. I shall keep the moneys in trust, till I see you fairly

## TO MOXON

over the next 1st January: then I shall look upon them as earned. No part of your letter gave me more pleasure (no, not the £10, tho' you may grin) than that you will revisit old Enfield, which I hope will be always a pleasant idea to you.

Yours, very faithfully,

C. L.

LETTER CCCCXIV.]

*October 24, 1831.*

To address an abdicated monarch is a nice point of breeding. To give him his lost titles is to mock him; to withhold 'em is to wound him. But his minister, who falls with him, may be gracefully sympathetic. I do honestly feel for your diminution of honours, and regret even the pleasing cares which are part and parcel of greatness. Your magnanimous submission, and the cheerful tone of your renunciation, in a letter which, without flattery, would have made an "ARTICLE," and which, rarely as I keep letters, shall be preserved, comfort me a little. Will it please, or plague you, to say that when your parcel came I damn'd it? for my pen was warming in my hand at a ludicrous description of a Landscape of an R.A., which I calculated upon sending you to-morrow, the last day you gave me. Now any one calling in, or a letter coming, puts an end to my writing for the day. Little did I think that the mandate had gone out, so destructive to my occupation, so relieving

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

to the apprehensions of the whole body of R.A.'s; so you see I had not quitted the ship while a plank was remaining.

To drop metaphors, I am sure you have done wisely. The very spirit of your epistle speaks that you have a weight off your mind. I have one on mine; the cash in hand, which, as — less truly says, burns in my pocket. I feel queer at returning it (who does not?), you feel awkward at retaking it (who ought not). Is there no middle way of adjusting this fine embarrassment? I think I have hit upon a medium to skin the sore place over, if not quite to heal it. You hinted that there might be something under £10, by and by, accruing to me—*Devil's Money* (you are sanguine, say £7:10s.); that I entirely renounce, and abjure all future interest in: I insist upon it; and “by him I will not name,” I won't touch a penny of it. That will split your loss, one half, and leave me conscientious possessor of what I hold. Less than your assent to this, no proposal will I accept of.

The Rev. Mr. —, whose name you have left illegible (is it *Seagull*?) never sent me any book on Christ's Hospital, by which I could dream that I was indebted to him for a dedication. Did G. D. send his penny tract to me to convert me to Unitarianism? Dear, blundering soul! why I am as old a one-Goddite as himself. Or did he think his cheap publication

## TO MOXON

would bring over the Methodists over the way here? However, I'll give it to the pew-opener, in whom I have a little interest, to hand over to the clerk, whose wife she sometimes drinks tea with, for him to lay before the deacon, who exchanges the civility of the hat with him, for to transmit to the minister, who shakes hands with him out of chapel, and he, in all odds, will — with it.

I wish very much to see you. I leave it to you to come how you will; we shall be very glad (we need not repeat) to see your sister, or sisters, with you; but for you, individually, I will just hint that a dropping in to tea, unlooked for, about five, stopping bread-and-cheese and gin-and-water, is worth a thousand Sundays. I am naturally miserable on a Sunday; but a week-day evening and supper is like old times. Set out *now*, and give no time to deliberation.

*P.S.* — The second volume of “Elia” is delightful (ly bound, I mean), and quite cheap. Why, man, 'tis a unique!

If I write much more I shall expand into an article, which I cannot afford to let you have so cheap. By the by, to show the perverseness of human will, while I thought I *must* furnish one of those accursed things monthly, it seemed a labour above Hercules's “Twelve” in a year, which were evidently monthly contributions. Now I am emancipated, I feel as if I had a thou-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

sand Essays swelling within me. False feelings both !

Your ex-Lampoonist, or Lamb-punnist, from Enfield, October 24, or "last day but one for receiving articles that can be inserted."

LETTER CCCCXV.]

*February 1832.*

Dear Moxon—The snows are ankle-deep, slush, and mire, that 'tis hard to get to the post-office, and cruel to send the maid out. 'Tis a slough of despair, or I should sooner have thanked you for your offer of the "*Life*," which we shall very much like to have, and will return duly. I do not know when I shall be in town, but in a week or two, at farthest, when I will come as far as you, if I can. We are moped to death with confinement within doors. I send you a curiosity of G. Dyer's tender conscience. Between thirty and forty years since, G. published the "*Poet's Fate*," in which were two very harmless lines about Mr. Rogers; but Mr. R. not quite approving of them, they were left out in a subsequent edition, 1801. But G. has been worrying about them ever since; if I have heard him once, I have heard him a hundred times, express a remorse proportioned to a consciousness of having been guilty of an atrocious libel. As the devil would have it, a fool they call Barker, in his "*Parriana*," has quoted the identical two lines, as they stood

## TO MOXON

in some obscure edition anterior to 1801, and the withers of poor G. are again wrung. His letter is a gem; with his poor blind eyes it has been laboured out at six sittings. The history of the couplet is in page 3 of this irregular production, in which every variety of shape and size that letters can be twisted into is to be found. Do show *his* part of it to Mr. R. some day. If he has bowels, they must melt at the contrition so queerly charactered of a contrite sinner. G. was born, I verily think, without original sin, but chooses to have a conscience, as every Christian gentleman should have; his dear old face is insusceptible of the twist they call a sneer, yet he is apprehensive of being suspected of that ugly appearance. When he makes a compliment, he thinks he has given an affront,—a name is personality. But show (no hurry) this unique recantation to Mr. R.,—'tis like a dirty pocket-handkerchief, mucked with tears of some indigent Magdalen. There is the impress of sincerity in every pot-hook and hanger; and then the gilt frame to such a pauper picture! It should go into the Museum. I am heartily sorry my Devil does not answer. We must try it a little longer; and, after all, I think I must insist on taking a portion of its loss upon myself. It is too much you should lose by two adventures. You do not say how your general business goes on, and I should very much like to talk over it with you here.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Come when the weather will possibly let you ; I want to see the Wordsworths, but I do not much like to be all night away. It is dull enough to be here together, but it is duller to leave Mary ; in short, it is painful, and in a flying visit I should hardly catch them. I have no beds for them if they came down, and but a sort of a house to receive them in ; yet I shall regret their departure unseen ; I feel cramped and straitened every way. Where are they ?

We have heard from Emma but once, and that a month ago, and are very anxious for another letter.

You say we have forgot your powers of being serviceable to us. *That* we never shall : I do not know what I should do without you when I want a little commission. Now then : there are left at Miss Buffam's, the "Tales of the Castle," and certain volumes of the "Retrospective Review." The first should be conveyed to Novello's, and the Reviews should be taken to Talfourd's office, ground-floor, East side, Elm Court, Middle Temple, to whom I should have written, but my spirits are wretched ; it is quite an effort to write this. So, with the "*Life*," I have cut you out three pieces of service. What can I do for you here, but hope to see you very soon, and think of you with most kindness ? I fear to-morrow, between rains and snows, it would be impossible to expect you, but do not



## TO LANDOR

let a practicable Sunday pass. We are always at home.

Mary joins in remembrances to your sister, whom we hope to see in any fine-ish weather, when she'll venture.

Remember us to Allsop, and all the dead people; to whom, and to London, we seem dead.

### To W. S. LANDOR

LETTER CCCCXVI.]

*April 9, 1832.*

Dear Sir—Pray accept a little volume. 'Tis a legacy from Elia, you'll see. Silver and gold had he none, but such as he had left he you. I do not know how to thank you for attending to my request about the Album. I thought you would never remember it. Are not you proud and thankful, Emma? *Yes; very, both.*

[Signed] EMMA ISOLA.

Many things I had to say to you, which there was not time for. One, why should I forget? 'tis for Rose Aylmer, which has a charm I cannot explain. I lived upon it for weeks. Next, I forgot to tell you I knew all your Welsh annoyances, the measureless B.'s. I knew a quarter of a mile of them. Seventeen brothers and sixteen sisters, as they appear to me in memory. There was one of them that used

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

to fix his long legs on my fender, and tell a tale of a shark every night, endless, immortal. How have I grudged the salt-sea ravener not having had his gorge of him ! The shortest of the daughters measured five foot eleven without her shoes. Well, some day we may confer about them. But they were tall. Truly, I have discover'd the longitude. Sir, if you can spare a moment, I should be happy to hear from you. That rogue Robinson detained your verses till I call'd for them. Don't entrust a bit of prose to the rogue ; but believe me,

Your obliged,

C. L.

W. S. Landor, Esq.

## TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCCCXVII.]

*April 14, 1832.*

My dear Coleridge—Not an unkind thought has passed in my brain about you ; but I have been woefully neglectful of you ; so that I do not deserve to announce to you, that if I do not hear from you before then, I will set out on Wednesday morning to take you by the hand. I would do it this moment, but an unexpected visit might flurry you. I shall take silence for acquiescence, and come. I am glad you could write so long a letter. Old loves to, and hope of kind looks from, the Gillmans when I come.

Yours, *semper idem*,

C. L.

## TO MOXON

If you ever thought an offence, much more wrote it, against me, it must have been in the times of Noah, and the great waters swept it away. Mary's most kind love, and maybe a wrong prophet of your bodings!—here she is crying for mere love over your letter. I wring out less, but not sincerer showers.

My direction is simply, Enfield.

### TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXVIII.]

[1832.]

Thank you for the books. I am ashamed to take tithe thus of your press. I am worse to a publisher than the two Universities and the British Museum. A. C. I will forthwith read. B. C. (I can't get out of the A, B, C) I have more than read. Taken altogether, 'tis too Lovey; but what delicacies! I like most "King Death"; glorious 'bove all, "The Lady with the Hundred Rings"; "The Owl"; "Epistle to What's his Name" (here, may be, I'm partial); "Sit down, Sad Soul"; "The Pauper's Jubilee" (but that's old, and yet 'tis never old); "The Falcon"; "Felon's Wife"; damn "Madame Pasty" (but that is borrowed);

Apple-pie is very good,  
And so is apple-pasty;  
But ——  
O Lord! 'tis very nasty:

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

but chiefly the dramatic fragments,—scarce three of which should have escaped my specimens, had an antique name been prefixed. They exceed his first. So much for the nonsense of poetry ; now to the serious business of life. Up a court (Blandford Court) in Pall Mall (exactly at the back of Marlborough House), with iron gate in front, and containing two houses, at No. 2, did lately live Leishman, my tailor. He is moved somewhere in the neighbourhood ; devil knows where. Pray find him out, and give him the opposite. I am so much better, though my head shakes in writing it, that, after next Sunday, I can well see Forster and you. Can you throw B. C. in? Why tarry the wheels of my “Hogarth”?

CHARLES LAMB.

### To LOUISA BADAMS

LETTER CCCCXIX.]

December 31, 1832.

Dear Mrs. B.—Mary has not enterprise enough to venture on a *journey* at this dreary time of the year, and 'tis too uncomfortable for us to leave her, for a night even, to the discourteous hospitalities of old frosty Westwood and his thin spouse : types of Christmas turned sour, or the 1st of January born with teeth and

## TO LOUISA BADAMS

wrinkles. Cordial Illcomes, Not Welcomes—  
“wretched New Years to you”: Discompliments of the Season. Spring, and we, will lure her out some fine April day. Instead pray accept of our kindest congratulations.

Besides, I have been not a little disconcerted.

On the night of our murder (an hour or two before it), the maid being busy, I went out to order an additional pint of porter for Moxon who had surprised us with a late visit. Now I never go out quite disinterested upon such occasions. And I begged a half-pint of ale at the bar which our sweet-faced landlady good-humouredly complied with, asking me into the parlour, but a side door was just open that disclosed a more cheerful blaze, and I entered where four people were engaged over Dominoes. One of them, Fare, invited me to join in it, partly out of impudence, I believe; however, not to balk a Christmas frolic, I complied, and played with Danby, but soon gave over, having forgot the game. I was surprised with D. challenging me as having known me in the Temple. He must have been a child then. I did not recognise him, but perfectly remembered his father, who was a hairdresser in the Temple. This was all that passed, as I went away with my beer. Judge my surprise when the next morning I was summoned before Dr. Creswell to say what I knew of the transaction. My examination was conducted with all delicacy, and of course I was soon dis-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

missed. I was afraid of getting into the papers, but I was pleased to find myself only noticed as a "gentleman whose name we could not gather." Poor D. ! the few words I spoke to him were to remind him of a trick Jem White played upon his father. The boy was too young to know anything about it. In the *Morning Post* appeared this paragraph: "Yesterday morning, Mr. Danby, the respectable Hairdresser in Pump Court in the Temple, in a fit of delirium threw himself out of a 2 pair stairs window, looking into the passage that leads to Fig-tree Court, and his head was literally smashed to atoms." White went to D.'s to see how it operated, and found D. quietly weaving wigs, and the shop full of lawyers that had come to enquire particulars. D. was a man much respected. Indeed hairdressers in the Inns of Court are a superior race of tradesmen. They generally leave off rich, as D. did. Well, poor D. had never heard the story or probably forgotten it—and his company looking on me a little suspiciously, as they do at alehouses when a rather better drest person than themselves attempts to join 'em—(it never answers,—at least it seemed so to me when I heard of the murder)—I went away. One often fancies things afterwards that did not perhaps strike one at the time. However, after all, I have felt queer ever since. It has almost sickened me of the Crown and Horseshoe, and I sha'n't hastily go into the taproom again.

## TO TALFOURD

I have made a long letter and can just say  
good-bye,

C. LAMB.

Mrs. Badams,  
11 Old Church Street,  
Paddington.

## TO MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD

LETTER CCCCXX.]

February 1833.

My dear T.—Now cannot I call him *Serjeant* ; what is there in a coif? Those canvas sleeves protective from ink, when he was a law-chit—a *Chitty-ling* (let the leathern apron be apocryphal), do more 'specially plead to the Jury Court, of old memory. The costume (will he agnise it?) was as of a desk-fellow, or *Socius Plutei*. Methought I spied a brother!

That familiarity is extinct for ever. Curse me if I can call him Mr. Serjeant—except, mark me, in *company*. Honour where honour is due ; but should he ever visit us (do you think he ever will, Mary?), what a distinction should I keep up between him and our less fortunate friend, H. C. R. ! Decent respect shall always be the Crabb's—but, somehow, short of reverence.

Well, of my old friends, I have lived to see two knighted, one made a judge, another in a fair way to it. Why am I restive? why stands my sun upon Gibeon?

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Variouſly, my dear Mrs. Talfourd (I can be more familiar with her !), Mrs. *Serjeant* Talfourd, —my ſiſter prompts me—(theſe ladies ſtand upon ceremonies)—has the congratulable news affected the members of our ſmall community. Mary comprehended it at once, and entered into it heartily. Mrs. Westwood was, as uſual, perverſe ; wouldn't, or couldn't, underſtand it. A Serjeant ? She thought Mr. T. was in the law. Didn't know that he ever 'liſted.

Emma alone truly ſympathiſed. *She* had a ſilk gown come home that very day, and has precedence before her learned ſiſters accordingly.

We are going to drink the health of Mr. and Mrs. Serjeant, with all the young ſerjeantry ; and that is all that I can ſee that I ſhall get by the promotion.

Valete, et mementote amici quondam veſtri humillimi. C. L.

TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXXI.]

February 10, 1833.

I wiſh you would omit “by the Author of *Elia*” now, in advertising that damn'd “Devil's Wedding.” I had ſneaking hopes you would have dropt in to-day, 'tis my poor birthday. Don't ſtay away ſo. Give Forſter a hint. You are to bring your brother ſome day—*ſiſters* in better weather. Pray give me one line to ſay if



## TO LOUISA BADAMS

you receiv'd and forwarded Emma's pacquet to Miss Adams—and how Dover Street looks. Adieu. Is there no Blackwood this month? What separation will there be between the Friend's preface and THE ESSAYS? Should not "Last Essays," etc. etc., head them? If 'tis too late, don't mind. I don't care a farthing about it.

Mr. Moxon.

## To LOUISA BADAMS

LETTER CCCCXXII.]

February 15, 1833.

Dear Mrs. B.—Thanks for your remembrance of your old fellow-prisoners at murderous Enfield. By the way, Cooper, who turned King's evidence, is come back again whitewash'd, has resumed his seat at chapel, and took his sister (a fact!) up the Holt White's lane to shew her the topography of the deed. I intend asking him to supper. They say he is pleasant in conversation. Will you come and meet him?

I don't know how we shall see you. Mary has objections to travelling, and I never stay out the night when I come up. Couldn't Badams and you make a 24 hours' day here? The room is vacant at the Horseshoe where Fare slept last, unless you prefer Johnson's last bed.

Mary, Emma, and I have got thro' the *Inferno*

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

with the help of Cary—and Mary is in for it. She is commencing Tasso. When the Spring is riper, we will spare Emma for a few days, if you'll be kind to her.

Triple loves and kind memory to you both.  
C. L.

### TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCCXXIII.]

March 6, 1833.

Dear Friend—Thee hast sent a Christian epistle to me, and I should not feel dear if I neglected to reply to it, which would have been sooner if that vain young man, to whom thou didst intrust it, had not kept it back. We should rejoice to see thy outward man here, especially on a day which should not be a first day, being liable to worldly callers—in on that day. Our little book is delayed by a heathenish injunction, threatened by the man Taylor. Canst thou copy and send, or bring with thee, a vanity in verse which in my younger days I wrote on friend Aders's pictures? Thou wilt find it in the book called the *Table Book*.

Tryphena and Tryphosa, whom the world calleth Mary and Emma, greet you with me.

CH. LAMB.

6th of 3rd month, 4th day.

W. Hone, Esq.,  
Grasshopper Hotel,  
Gracechurch Street.

## TO MOXON

TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXXIV.]

March 19, 1833.

I shall expect Forster and two Moxons on Sunday, and hope for Procter. I am obliged to be in town next Monday. Could we contrive to make a party (paying or not is immaterial) for Miss Kelly's that night; and can you shelter us after the play—I mean Emma and me. I fear I cannot persuade Mary to join us.

*N.B.*—*I can sleep at a public house.* Send an Elia (mind I *insist* on buying it), to T. Manning, Esq., at Sir G. Tuthill's, Cavendish Square. Do write.

E. Moxon.

LETTER CCCCXXV.]

April 27, 1833.

Dear M.—Mary and I are very poorly. We have had a sick child, who, sleeping or not sleeping, next me, with a pasteboard partition between, killed my sleep. The little bastard is gone. My bedfellows are cough and cramp; we sleep three in a bed. Domestic arrangements (baker, butcher, and all) devolve on Mary. Don't come yet to this house of pest and age! We propose, when you and E. agree on the time, to come up and meet you at the B——'s, say a week hence, but do you make the appointment.

LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Mind, our spirits are good, and we are happy  
in your happinesses. C. L.

Our old and ever loves to dear Emma.

TO MRS. HAZLITT

LETTER CCCCXXVI.] *Mr. Walden's, Church Street,  
Edmonton, May 31, 1833.*

Dear Mrs. Hazlitt—I will assuredly come and find you out when I am better. I am driven from house to house by Mary's illness. I took a sudden resolution to take my sister to Edmonton, where she was under medical treatment last time, and have arranged to board and lodge with the people. Thank God, I have repudiated Enfield. I have got out of hell, despair of heaven, and must sit down contented in a half-way purgatory. Thus ends this strange eventful history. But I am nearer town, and will get up to you somehow before long.

I repent not of my resolution. 'Tis late, and my hand is unsteady ; so good-bye till we meet,  
Your old C. L.

Mrs. Hazlitt,  
No. 4, Palace Street, Pimlico.

## TO WORDSWORTH

### TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCCCXXVII.] [End of May nearly] 1833.

Dear Wordsworth—Your letter, save in what respects your dear sister's health, cheered me in my new solitude. Mary is ill again. Her illnesses encroach yearly. The last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing: nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration,—shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life she is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears and lookings forward to the next shock. With such prospects, it seemed to me necessary that she should no longer live with me, and be fluttered with continued removals; so I am come to live with her, at a Mr. Walden's and his wife, who take in patients, and have arranged to lodge and board us only. They have had the care of her before. I see little of her: alas! I too often hear her. *Sunt lacrymæ rerum!* and you and I must bear it.

To lay a little more load on it, a circumstance has happened, *cujus pars magna fui*, and which, at another crisis, I should have more rejoiced in. I am about to lose my old and only walk-companion, whose mirthful spirits were the “youth of our house,” Emma Isola. I have her

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

here now for a little while, but she is too nervous, properly to be under such a roof, so she will make short visits,—be no more an inmate. With my perfect approval, and more than concurrence, she is to be wedded to Moxon, at the end of August—so “perish the roses and the flowers”—how is it?

Now to the brighter side. I am emancipated from the Westwoods, and I am with attentive people, and younger. I am three or four miles nearer the great city; coaches half-price less, and going always, of which I will avail myself. I have few friends left there, one or two though, most beloved. But London streets and faces cheer me inexpressibly, though not one known of the latter were remaining.

Thank you for your cordial reception of “Elia.” *Inter nos*, the *Ariadne* is not a darling with me; several incongruous things are in it, but in the composition it served me as illustrative.

I want you in the “Popular Fallacies” to like the “Home that is no home,” and “Rising with the lark.”

I am feeble, but cheerful in this my genial hot weather. Walked sixteen miles yesterday. I can’t read much in summer time.

With my kindest love to all, and prayers for dear Dorothy,

I remain most affectionately yours,

C. LAMB.

## TO MOXON

At Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton, Middlesex.

Moxon has introduced Emma to Rogers, and he smiles upon the project. I have given E. my MILTON (will you pardon me) in part of a *portion*. It hangs famously in his Murray-like shop.

## TO MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXXVIII.]

May 1833.

Dear M.—A thousand thanks for your punctualities. What a cheap book is the last Hogarth you sent me! I am pleased now that Hunt *diddled* me out of the old one. Speaking of this, only think of the new farmer with his thirty acres. There is a portion of land in Lambeth Parish, called Knave's Acre. I wonder he overlook'd it. Don't show this to the firm of D—— and Co. I next want one copy of *Leicester's School*, and wish you to pay Leishman, Taylor, 2, Blandford Place, Pall Mall, opposite the British Institution, £6:10s., for coat and waistcoat, etc. etc., and I vehemently thirst for the fourth No. of Nichols's Hogarth, to bind one up (the two books) as Hogarth and Supplement. But as you know the price, don't stay for its appearance; but come as soon as ever you can with your bill of all demands in full, and as I have none but £5 notes, bring with

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

you sufficient change. Weather is beautiful. I grieve sadly for Miss Wordsworth. We are all well again. Emma is with us, and we all shall be glad of a sight of you. Come on Sunday if you *can*, better if you come before.

Perhaps Rogers would smile at this. A pert, half chemist, half apothecary in our town who smatters of literature, and is immeasurably unlettered, said to me, "Pray, sir, may not Hood be reckon'd the Prince of Wits in the present day?" To which I assenting, he adds, "I had always thought that Rogers had been reckon'd the Prince of Wits, but I suppose that now Mr. Hood has the better title to that appellation." To which I replied, that Mr. R. had wit with much better qualities, but did not aspire to the principality. He had taken all the puns manufactured in John Bull for our friend, in sad and stupid earnest. One more *Album Verses*, please. Adieu. C. L.

### To THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCCCXXIX.]

July 1833.

My dear Allsop—I think it will be impossible for us to come to Highgate in the time you propose. We have friends coming to-morrow, who may stay the week; and we are in a bustle about Emma's leaving us—so we will put off



## TO MOXON

the hope of seeing Mrs. Allsop till we come to Town, after Emma's going, which is in a fortnight and a half, when we mean to spend a time in Town, but shall be happy to see you on Sunday, or any day.

In haste. Hope our little Porter does.

Yours ever,

C. L.

## To MR. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXXX.]

July 24, 1833.

For God's sake give Emma no more watches ; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment-hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, "Pray, sir, can you tell us what's o'clock?" and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see "what the time is." I overheard her whispering, "Just so many hours, minutes, etc., to Tuesday; I think St. George's goes too slow." This little present of Time!—why,—'tis Eternity to her!

What can make her so fond of a gingerbread watch?

She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away "half-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

past twelve," which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square.

Well, if "love me, love my watch" answers, she will keep time to you.

It goes right by the Horse Guards.

Dearest M.—Never mind opposite nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th July, as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously.

Yours ever,

ELIA.

We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch.

LETTER CCCCXXXI.]

[1833.]

Dear M.—Many thanks for the books; but most thanks for one immortal sentence: "If I do not *cheat* him, never *trust* me again." I do not know whether to admire most, the wit or justness of the sentiment. It has my cordial approbation. My sense of *meum* and *tuum* applauds it. I maintain it, the eighth commandment hath a secret special reservation, by which the reptile is exempt from any protection from it. As a dog, or a nigger, he is not a holder of property. Not a ninth of what he detains from the world is his own. "Keep your hands from picking

## TO LOUISA BADAMS

and stealing," is no ways referable to his acquists. I doubt whether bearing false witness against thy neighbour at all contemplated this possible scrub. Could Moses have seen the speck in vision? An *ex post facto* law alone could relieve him; and we are taught to expect no eleventh commandment. The outlaw to the Mosaic dispensation!—unworthy to have seen Moses behind!—to lay his desecrating hands upon Elia! Has the irreverent ark-toucher been struck blind, I wonder? The more I think of him, the less I think of him. His meanness is invisible with aid of solar microscope. My moral eye smarts at him. The less flea that bites little fleas! The great BEAST! The beggarly NIT!

More when we meet; mind, you'll come, two of you; and couldn't you go off in the morning, that we may have a day-long curse at him, if curses are not dis-hallowed by descending so low! Amen. Maledicatur in extremis!

C. L.

## To LOUISA BADAMS

LETTER CCCXXXII.]

August 20, 1833.

Dear Mrs. Badams—I was at church as the grave Father, and behaved tolerably well, except at first entrance when Emma in a whisper repressed a nascent giggle. I am not fit for

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

weddings or burials. Both incite a chuckle. Emma looked as pretty as Pamela, and made her responses delicately and firmly. I tripped a little at the altar, was engaged in admiring the altar-piece, but, recalled seasonably by a Parsonic rebuke, "Who gives this woman?" was in time resolutely to reply "I do." Upon the whole the thing went off decently and devoutly. Your dodging post is excellent; I take it, it was at Wilsdon. We shall this week or next dine at Islington. I am writing to know the day, and in that case see you the next day and talk of beds. *My* lodging may be on the cold floor. I long for a *hard fought game* with Badams. With haste and thanks for your *unusually* entertaining letter, yours truly,

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB.

TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXXXIII.]

*August 1833.*

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Moxon—Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. "I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes," she says; but you shall see it.

Dear Moxon—I take your writing most

## TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON

kindly, and shall, most kindly, your writing from Paris.

I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little time after dinner, before post time. So with twenty thousand congratulations,

Yours,

C. L.

I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by Evans, *half as sober as a judge*. I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now.

[*The turn of the leaf presented the following from Miss Lamb:*]

My dear Emma and Edward Moxon—Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain was cleared up on the wedding-day by Mrs. W. taking a glass of wine, and, with a total change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's health. It restored me from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart.

MARY LAMB.

[*At the foot of this letter is the following by Charles:*]

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

*Wednesday.*

Dears, again—Your letter interrupted a seventh game at picquet which *we* were having, after walking to Wright's and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon. C. L.

Never was such a calm, or such a recovery.  
'Tis her own words undictated.

TO REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCCXXXIV.]

*September 9, 1833.*

Dear Sir—Your packet I have only just received, owing, I suppose, to the absence of Moxon, who is flaunting it about *à la Parisienne*, with his new bride, our Emma, much to his satisfaction, and not a little to our dulness. We shall be quite well by the time you return from Worcestershire, and most, most (observe the repetition) glad to see you here, or anywhere.

I will take my time with Darley's act. I wish poets would write a little plainer; he begins some of his words with a letter which is unknown to the English typography.

Yours, most truly,

C. LAMB.

*P.S.*—Pray let me know when you return. We are at Mr. Walden's, Church Street,

TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON

Edmonton ; no longer at Enfield. You will be amused to hear that my sister and I have, with the aid of Emma, scrambled through the "Inferno," by the blessed furtherance of your polar-star translation. I think we scarce left anything unmade-out. But our partner has left us, and we have not yet resumed. Mary's chief pride in it was that she should some day brag of it to you. Your *Dante* and Sandys' *Ovid* are the only helpmates of translations. Neither of you shirk a word.

Fairfax's *Tasso* is no translation at all. 'Tis better in some places, but it merely observes the number of stanzas ; as for images, similes, etc., he finds 'em himself, and never troubles Peter for the matter.

In haste, dear Cary, yours ever,

C. LAMB.

Has M. sent you "Elia," second volume ? If not he shall. Taylor and we are at law about it.

TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON

LETTER CCCCXXXV.]

November 29, 1833.

Mary is of opinion with me, that two of these sonnets are of a higher grade than any poetry you have done yet. The one to Emma is so pretty ! I have only allowed myself to

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

transpose a word in the third line. Sacred shall it be for any intermeddling of mine. But we jointly beg that you will make four lines in the room of the four last. Read "Darby and Joan," in Mrs. Moxon's first album. There you'll see how beautiful in age the looking back to youthful years in an old couple is. But it is a violence to the feelings to anticipate that time in youth. I hope you and Emma will have many a quarrel and many a make-up (and she is beautiful in reconciliation!) before the dark days shall come, in which ye shall say "there is small comfort in them." You have begun a sort of character of Emma in them, very sweetly: carry it on, if you can, through the last lines.

I love the sonnet to my heart, and you *shall* finish it, and I'll be damn'd if I furnish a line towards it. So much for that. The next best is to the Ocean.

"Ye gallant winds, if e'er your LUSTY CHEEKS  
Blew longing lover to his mistress' side,  
O, puff your loudest, spread the canvas wide,"

is spirited. The last line I altered, and have re-altered it as it stood. It is closer. These two are your best. But take a good deal of time in finishing the first. How proud should Emma be of her poets!

Perhaps "O Ocean" (though I like it) is too much of the open vowels which Pope objects to. "Great Ocean!" is obvious. To



## TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON

save sad thoughts I think is better (though not good) than for the mind to save herself. But 'tis a noble sonnet. "St. Cloud" I have no fault to find with.

If I return the sonnets, think it no disrespect, for I look for a printed copy. You have done better than ever. And now for a reason I did not notice 'em earlier. On Wednesday they came, and on Wednesday I was a-gadding. Mary gave me a holiday, and I set off to Snow Hill. From Snow Hill I deliberately was marching down, with noble Holborn before me, framing in mental cogitation a map of the dear London in prospect, thinking to traverse Wardour Street, etc., when diabolically, I was interrupted by

Heigh-ho !

Little Barrow !—

(Emma knows him,) and prevailed on by him to spend the day (infinite loss !) at his sister's, a pawnbroker's in Gray's Inn Lane, where was an album, and (O march of intellect !) plenty of literary conversation, and more acquaintance with the state of modern poetry than I could keep up with. I was positively distanced. Knowles's play, which, epilogued by me, lay on the piano, alone made me hold up my head. When I came home I read your letter, and glimpsed at your beautiful sonnet,

"Fair art thou as the morning, my young bride,"

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

and dwelt upon it in a confused brain, but determined not to open them till next day, being in a state not to be told of at Chatteris. Tell it not in Gath, Emma, lest the daughters triumph! I am at the end of my tether. I wish you would come on Tuesday with your fair bride. Why can't you? Do. We are thankful to your sister for being of the party. Come, and *bring* a sonnet on Mary's birthday. Love to the whole Moxonry, and tell E. I every day love her more, and miss her less. Tell her so, from her loving uncle, as she has let me call myself. I bought a fine embossed card yesterday, and wrote for the Pawnbrokeress's album. She is a Miss Brown, engaged to a Mr. White. One of the lines was (I forget the rest; but she had them at twenty-four hours' notice; she is going out to India with her husband)—

May your fame  
And fortune, Frances, WHITEN with your name!

Not bad as a pun. I *will* expect you before two on Tuesday. I am well and happy, tell E.

To MR. ROGERS

LETTER CCCCXXXVI.]

December 1833.

My dear Sir—Your book, by the unremitting punctuality of your publisher, has reached me

## TO ROGERS

thus early. I have not opened it, nor will till to-morrow, when I promise myself a thorough reading of it. The "Pleasures of Memory" was the first school present I made to Mrs. Moxon; it has those nice woodcuts, and I believe she keeps it still. Believe me, that all the kindness you have shown to the husband of that excellent person seems done unto myself. I have tried my hand at a sonnet in the *Times*; but the turn I gave it, though I hoped it would not displease you, I thought might not be equally agreeable to your artist. I met that dear old man at poor Henry's, with you, and again at Cary's, and it was sublime to see him sit, deaf, and enjoy all that was going on in mirth with the company. He reposed upon the many graceful, many fantastic images he had created; with them he dined, and took wine. I have ventured at an antagonist copy of verses, in the *Athenæum*, to *him*, in which he is as everything, and you as nothing. He is no lawyer who cannot take two sides. But I am jealous of the combination of the sister arts. Let them sparkle apart. What injury (short of the theatres) did not Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery do me with Shakspeare? to have Opie's Shakspeare, Northcote's Shakspeare, light-headed Fuseli's Shakspeare, heavy-headed Romney's Shakspeare, wooden-headed West's Shakspeare (though he did the best in *Lear*), deaf-headed Reynolds's Shakspeare, instead of my and every-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

body's Shakspeare; to be tied down to an authentic face of Juliet! to have Imogen's portrait; to confine the illimitable! I like you and Stothard (you best), but "out upon this half-faced fellowship!" Sir, when I have read the book, I may trouble you, through Moxon, with some faint criticisms. It is not the flatteringest compliment, in a letter to an author, to say you have not read his book yet. But the devil of a reader he must be who prances through it in five minutes; and no longer have I received the parcel. It was a little tantalising to me to receive a letter from Landor, *Gebir* Landor, from Florence, to say he was just sitting down to read my "Elia," just received; but the letter was to go out before the reading. There are calamities in authorship which only authors know. I am going to call on Moxon on Monday, if the throng of carriages in Dover Street, on the morn of publication, do not barricade me out.

With many thanks, and most respectful remembrances to your sister,

Yours,

C. LAMB.

Have you seen Coleridge's happy exemplification in English of the Ovidian Elegiac metre?

In the Hexameter rises the fountain's silvery current,  
In the Pentameter aye falling in melody down.

## TO MARY BETHAM

My sister is papering up the book,—careful soul!

## TO MARY BETHAM

LETTER CCCCXXXVII.] *January 24, 1834,  
Church Street, Edmonton.*

Dear Mary Betham—I received the Bill, and when it is payable, some ten or twelve days hence, will punctually do with the overplus as you direct: I thought you would like to know it came to hand, so I have not waited for the uncertainty of when your nephew sets out. I suppose my receipt will serve, for poor Mary is not in a capacity to sign it. After being well from the end of July to the end of December, she was taken ill almost on the first day of the New Year, and is as bad as poor creature can be. I expect her fever to last 14 or 15 weeks—if she gets well at all, which every successive illness puts me in fear of. She has less and less strength to throw it off, and they leave a dreadful depression after them. She was quite comfortable a few weeks since, when Matilda came down here to see us.

You shall excuse a short letter, for my hand is unsteady. Indeed, the situation I am in with her shakes me sadly. She was quite able to appreciate the kind legacy while she was well. Imagine her kindest love to you, which is but

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

buried awhile, and believe all the good wishes  
for your restoration to health from

C. LAMB.

Miss Mary Betham,  
to the care of Sir Wm. Betham,  
Record Tower, Dublin.

To MISS FRYER

LETTER CCCCXXXVIII.]

*February 14, 1834.*

Dear Miss Fryer—Your letter found me just returned from keeping my birthday (pretty innocent!) at Dover Street. I see them pretty often. I have since had letters of business to write, or should have replied earlier. In one word, be less uneasy about me; I bear my privations very well; I am not in the depths of desolation, as heretofore. Your admonitions are not lost upon me. Your kindness has sunk into my heart. Have faith in me! It is no new thing for me to be left to my sister. When she is not violent, her rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. I could be nowhere happier than under the same roof with her. Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we may so call the earliest records of our poor life, she fetches

## TO MISS FRYER

thousands of names and things that never would have dawned upon me again, and thousands from the ten years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age principally lives again (every important thing, and every trifle) in her brain, with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she will pour out without intermission all her past life, forgetting nothing, pouring out name after name to the Waldens, as a dream; sense and nonsense; truths and errors huddled together; a medley between inspiration and possession. What things we are! I know you will bear with me, talking of these things. It seems to ease me, for I have nobody to tell these things to now. Emma, I see, has got a harp! and is learning to play. She has framed her three Walton pictures, and pretty they look. That is a book you should read; such sweet religion in it, next to Woolman's, though the subject be baits, and hooks, and worms, and fishes. She has my copy at present, to do two more from.

Very, very tired! I began this epistle, having been epistolising all the morning, and very kindly would I end it, could I find adequate expressions to your kindness. We did set our minds on seeing you in Spring. One of us will indubitably. But I am not skilled in almanack learning to know when Spring precisely begins and ends. Pardon my blots; I am glad you like your book. I wish it had been half as worthy

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

of your acceptance as John Woolman. But 'tis a good-natured book.

TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCCCXXXIX.]

*Church Street, Edmonton,  
February 22, 1834.*

Dear Wordsworth—I write from a house of mourning. The oldest and best friends I have left are in trouble. A branch of them (and they of the best stock of God's creatures, I believe) is establishing a school at Carlisle; Her name is Louisa Martin; her address, 75, Castle Street, Carlisle; her qualities (and her motives for this exertion) are the most amiable, most upright. For thirty years she has been tried by me, and on her behaviour I would stake my soul. O, if you can recommend her, how would I love you—if I could love you better! Pray, pray, recommend her. She is as good a human creature,—next to my sister, perhaps, the most exemplary female I ever knew. Moxon tells me you would like a letter from me; you shall have one. *This* I cannot mingle up with any nonsense which you usually tolerate from C. Lamb. Need he add loves to wife, sister, and all? Poor Mary is ill again, after a short lucid interval of four or five months. In short, I may call her half dead to me. Good you are to me. Yours with fervour of friendship, for ever.

C. L.



## TO MANNING

If you want references, the Bishop of Carlisle may be one. Louisa's sister (as good as she, she cannot be better, though she tries) educated the daughters of the late Earl of Carnarvon, and he settled a handsome annuity on her for life. In short, all the family are a sound rock.

### To THOMAS MANNING

LETTER CCCCXL.]

*May 10, 1834.*

You made me feel so funny, so happy-like ; it was as if I was reading one of your old letters taken out at hazard any time between the last twenty years, 'twas so the same. The unity of place, a garden ! The old *Dramatis Personæ*, a landlady and Daughter. The puns the same in mould. Will nothing change you ? 'Tis but a short week since honest Ryal and I were lamenting the gone-by days of Manning and Whist. How savourily did he remember them ! Might some great year but bring them back again ! This was my exclaim, and R. did not ask for an explanation. I have had a scurvy nine years of it, and am now in the sorry fifth act. Twenty weeks nigh has she been now violent, with but a few sound months before, and these in such dejection that her fever might seem a relief to it. I tried to bring her to town in the winter once or twice, but it failed. Tuthill led me to expect

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

that this illness would lengthen with her years, and it has cruelly—with that new feature of despondency after. I am with her alone now in a proper house. She is, I hope, recovering. We play Picquet, and it is like the old times awhile, then goes off. I struggle to town rarely, and then to see London, with little other motive—for what is left there hardly? The streets and shops entertaining ever, else I feel as in a desert, and get me home to my cave. Save that once a month I pass a day, a gleam in my life, with Cary at the Museum (He is the flower of clergymen) and breakfast next morning with Robinson. I look to this as a treat. It sustains me. C. is a dear fellow, with but two vices, which in any less good than himself would be crimes past redemption. He has no relish for Parson Adams—hints that he might not be a very great Greek scholar after all (does Fielding hint that he was a Porson?)—and prefers “Ye shepherds so cheerful and gay,” and “My banks they are furnished with bees,” to “The Schoolmistress.” I have not seen Wright’s, but the faithfulness of C., Mary and I can attest. For last year, in a good interval, I giving some lessons to Emma, now Mrs. Moxon, in the *sense* part of her Italian (I knew no words), Mary pertinaciously undertook, being 69, to read the *Inferno* all thro’ with the help of his Translation, and we got thro’ it with Dictionaries and Grammars, of course to our satisfaction. Her perseverance was gigantic,

## TO MANNING

almost painful. Her head was over her task, like a sucking bee, morn to night. We were beginning the *Purgatory*, but got on less rapidly, our great authority for grammar, Emma, being fled, but should have proceeded but for this misfortune. Do not come to town without apprising me. We must all three meet somehow and "drink a cup."

Yours,

C. L.

Mary strives and struggles to be content when she *is* well. Last year when we talked of being dull (we had just lost our seven-years-nearly inmate), and Cary's invitation came, she said, "Did not I say something or other would turn up?" In her first walk *out* of the house, she would read every Auction advertisement along the road, and when I would stop her she said, "These are *my* Play-bills." She felt glad to get into the world again, but then follows lowness. She is getting about tho', I very much hope. She is rising, and will claim her morning Picquet. I go to put this in the Post first. I walk 9 or 10 miles a day, alway up the road, dear Londonwards. Fields, flowers, birds, and green lanes, I have no heart for. The bare road is cheerful, and almost as good as a street. I saunter to the Red Lion duly, as you used to the Peacock.

T. Manning, Esq.,  
Puckeridge, Herts.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO REV. JAMES GILLMAN

LETTER CCCCXLI.] *Mr. Walden's, Church Street,  
Edmonton, August 5, 1834.*

My dear Sir—The sad week being over, I must write to you to say that I was glad of being spared from attending; I have no words to express my feeling with you all. I can only say that when you think a short visit from me would be acceptable, when your father and mother shall be able to see me *with comfort*, I will come to the bereaved house. Express to them my tenderest regards and hopes that they will continue our friends still. We both love and respect them as much as a human being can, and finally thank them with our hearts for what they have been to the poor departed.

God bless you all,

C. LAMB.

TO REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCCCXLII.] *September 12, 1834.*

“By Cot’s plessing we will not be absence at the grace.”

Dear C.—We long to see you, and hear account of your peregrinations, of the Tun at Heidelberg, the Clock at Strasburg, the statue at Rotterdam, the dainty Rhenish, and poignant

## TO CHILDS

Moselle wines, Westphalian hams, and Botargoes of Altona. But perhaps you have seen, not tasted any of these things.

Yours, very glad to chain you back again to your proper centre, books and Bibliothecæ,

C. AND M. LAMB.

I have only got your note just now *per negligentiam periniqui Moxoni*.

## TO MR. CHILDS

*Monday. Church Street, Edmonton (not Enfield, as you erroneously direct yours.) [September 15, 1834.]*

LETTER CCCCXLIII.]

Dear Sir—The volume which you seem to want is not to be had for love or money. I with difficulty procured a copy for myself. Yours is gone to enlighten the tawny Hindoos. What a supreme felicity to the author (only he is no traveller) on the Ganges or Hydaspes (Indian streams) to meet a smutty Gentoo ready to burst with laughing at the tale of Bo-Bo ! for doubtless it hath been translated into all the dialects of the East. I grieve the less, that Europe should want it. I cannot gather from your letter whether you are aware that a second series of the Essays is published by Moxon, in Dover Street, Piccadilly, called “The Last Essays of Elia,” and, I am told, is not inferior to the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

former. Shall I order a copy for you? and will you accept it? Shall I *lend* you, at the same time, my sole copy of the former volume (Oh! return it) for a month or two? In return, you shall favour me with the loan of one of those Norfolk-bred grunters that you laud so highly; I promise not to keep it above a day. What a funny name Bungay is! I never dreamt of a correspondent thence. I used to think of it as some Utopian town, or borough in Gotham land. I now believe in its existence, as part of Merry England!

[*Here are some lines scratched out.*]

The part I have scratched out is the best of the letter. Let me have your commands.

CH. LAMB, *alias* ELIA.

TO REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCCCXLIV.]

[*October 1834.*]

I protest I know not in what words to invest my sense of the shameful violation of hospitality which I was guilty of on that fatal Wednesday. Let it be blotted from the calendar. Had it been committed at a layman's house, say a merchant's or manufacturer's, a cheesemonger's or greengrocer's, or, to go higher, a barrister's, a member of Parliament's, a rich banker's, I should have felt alleviation, a drop of self-pity.

## TO CARY

But to be seen deliberately to go out of the house of a clergyman drunk! a clergyman of the Church of England too! not that alone, but of an expounder of that dark Italian Hierophant, an exposition little short of *his* who dared unfold the Apocalypse: divine riddles both; and, without supernal grace vouchsafed, Arks not to be fingered without present blasting to the touchers. And then, from what house! Not a common glebe or vicarage (which yet had been shameful), but from a kingly repository of sciences, human and divine, with the primate of England for its guardian, arrayed in public majesty, from which the profane vulgar are bid fly. Could all those volumes have taught me nothing better! With feverish eyes on the succeeding dawn I opened upon the faint light, enough to distinguish, in a strange chamber, not immediately to be recognised, garters, hose, waistcoat, neckerchief, arranged in dreadful order and proportion, which I knew was not mine own. 'Tis the common symptom on awaking, I judge my last night's condition from. A tolerable scattering on the floor I hail as being too probably my own, and if the candlestick be not removed I assoil myself. But this finical arrangement, this finding everything in the morning in exact diametrical rectitude, torments me. By whom was I divested? Burning blushes! not by the fair hands of nymphs, the Buffam Graces? Remote whispers suggested

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

that I *coached* it home in triumph. Far be that from working pride in me, for I was unconscious of the locomotion ; that a young Mentor accompanied a reprobate old Telemachus ; that, the Trojan-like, he bore his charge upon his shoulders, while the wretched incubus, in glimmering sense, hiccuped drunken snatches of flying on the bats' wings after sunset. An aged servitor was also hinted at, to make disgrace more complete, one, to whom my ignominy may offer further occasions of revolt (to which he was before too fondly inclining) from the true faith ; for, at the sight of my helplessness, what more was needed to drive him to the advocacy of Independency ? Occasion led me through Great Russell Street yesterday. I gazed at the great knocker. My feeble hands in vain essayed to lift it. I dreaded that Argus Portitor, who doubtless lanterned me out on that prodigious night. I called the Elginian marbles. They were cold to my suit. I shall never again, I said, on the wide gates unfolding, say, without fear of thrusting back, in a light but peremptory air, "I am going to Mr. Cary's." I passed by the walls of Balclutha. I had imaged to myself a zodiac of third Wednesdays irradiating by glimpses the Edmonton dulness. I dreamed of Highmore ! I am de-vited to come on Wednesdays. Villanous old age, that, with second childhood, brings linked hand in hand her inseparable twin, new inexperience, which knows



## TO CARY

not effects of liquor. Where I was to have sate for a sober, middle-aged-and-a-half gentleman, literary too, the neat fingered artist can educe no notions but of a dissolute Silenus, lecturing natural philosophy to a jeering Chromius, or a Mnasilus. Pudet. From the context gather the lost name of —.

LETTER CCCCXLV.]

[October 18, 1834.]

Dear Sir—The unbounded range of munificence presented to my choice, staggers me. What can twenty votes do for one hundred and two widows! I cast my eyes hopeless among the viduage. *N.B.*—Southey might be ashamed of himself to let his aged mother stand at the top of the list, with his £100 a year and butt of sack. Sometimes I sigh over No. 12, Mrs. Carve-ill, some poor relation of mine, no doubt. No 15 has my wishes, but then she is a Welsh one. I have Ruth upon No. 21. I'd tug hard for No. 24. No. 25 is an anomaly; there can be no Mrs. Hogg. No. 34 ensnares me. No. 73 should not have met so foolish a person. No. 92 may bob it as she likes, but she catches no cherry of me. So I have even fixed at haphazard, as you'll see.

Yours, every third Wednesday, C. L.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO MRS. DYER

LETTER CCCCXLVI.]

*December 22, 1834.*

Dear Mrs. Dyer—I am very uneasy about a *Book*, which I either have lost or left at your house on Thursday. It was the book I went out to fetch from Miss Buffam's while the tripe was frying. It is called "Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum*," but it is an English book. I think I left it in the parlour. It is Mr. Cary's book, and I would not lose it for the world. Pray, if you find it, book it at the Swan, Snow Hill, by an Edmonton stage immediately, directed to Mr. Lamb, Church Street, Edmonton, or write to say you cannot find it. I am quite anxious about it. If it is lost, I shall never like tripe again.

With kindest love to Mr. Dyer and all, yours  
truly,

C. LAMB.

# NOTES

## CHAPTER V—(Continued)

1827

LETTER CCCVIII (p. 1).—Talfourd misdated this letter by a year, placing it in 1826. "Poor Norris" was Randal Norris, Sub-Treasurer of the Inner Temple, and one of the earliest and most loyal friends of Lamb and his parents. He died this month, and was buried in the Temple churchyard. Norris was connected through his wife with the Hertfordshire village of Widford, which Lamb knew so well. It adjoined Blakesware. It is worth noting that in the Second Series of *Elia*, published in Lamb's lifetime, in 1833, this letter to Talfourd, with a few variations and the substitution of changed initials for the real names, was included as an essay, under the title of "A Death Bed. In a Letter to R. H., Esq., of B——." In the essay, Norris appears as "N. R.": poor deaf Richard as "deaf Robert"; and Charley (Lamb himself) as "Jimmie." In the concluding sentences, a more explicit account is given of the family's necessities. "They are left almost provisionless. Some life assurance there is; but I fear not exceeding ——. Their hopes must be from your Corporation, which their father has served for fifty years."

The essay was withdrawn after the first edition of the Second Series. Probably the wife and daughters of Randal Norris objected (and not without reason) to have their family circumstances disclosed, under so very slender a disguise.

*We'll still make 'em run.* The old song referred to is the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

original version of *Hearts of Oak*. It was published in the *Universal Magazine* for March 1760, entitled "A new Song, sung by Mr. Champness in *Harlequin's Invasion*."

"They swear they'll invade us, those terrible foes,  
They frighten our women, our children, and beaus ;  
But should their flat-bottoms in darkness get o'er,  
Still Britons they'll find to receive them on shore."

The song was written under the inspiration of the year (1759) of Pitt's greatest triumphs—the year of Minden and Quebec. See *Notes and Queries*, 7th series, vii. 18.

LETTER CCCX (p. 4).—This letter was clearly written for publication and appeared in Hone's *Table Book* (i. 3). It served as preface to the selections which thenceforth were given weekly.

LETTER CCCXII (p. 6).—*The last Extract*. See *Table Book*, i. 357. In the passage from Porter's "Two angry Women of Abingdon" the printer had given the line referred to—

"Blush forth golden hair and glorious red,"

ruining at once sense and metre.

LETTER CCCXIII (p. 7).—*Your picture*. Haydon's "Alexander," exhibited in the Royal Academy this year. See Haydon's *Diary*, ii. 149.

The *two lordlike Bucks* were, according to Haydon, who first printed this note of Lamb's, the Duke of Devonshire and Agar Ellis.

LETTER CCCXIV (p. 8).—This letter was addressed to Novello in the pages of Hone's *Table Book* (i. 514). It followed the publication (in the "Garrick" Series) of the beautiful lyric from George Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, beginning—

"Fair and fair and twice so fair,  
As fair as any may be."

Lamb headed his letter "To my esteemed friend and excellent musician, V. N., Esq."

## NOTES

LETTER CCCXV (p. 9).—*A correspondent in your last number.* See *Table Book*, i. 803. This letter was signed "The Veiled Spirit." Lamb's reply appeared in the next number (ii. 10).

LETTER CCCXVI (p. 10).—This letter was first printed by me in its entirety from the original manuscript. The first paragraph, hitherto omitted, tells an amusing and characteristic story of Lamb and Thomas Hood.

*The picture verses* were some lines written by Lamb to accompany the gift to Barton of a coloured print, in a frame. The lines were afterwards published in his *Album Verses*, 1830, and will be found in my edition (*Poems, Plays, and Essays*).

Bernard Barton delighted to cover his walls with such pictures as he could afford, respecting which a pleasant passage will be found in Edward FitzGerald's *Memoir*. Lamb had somewhere picked up a coloured print representing a little boy learning to read at his mother's knee, and showing many obvious signs of childish obstinacy. For this picture Lamb had borrowed from Thomas Hood an old frame, considerably too large for it; but by carefully coating the superfluous margin of glass with cobbler's-wax, he and his friend Hood had succeeded in giving the whole a reputable appearance. It was on suggesting the use of this frame that Hood observed that Barton would be "sure to like it, because it was *broad-brimmed*." In writing his verses Lamb, remembering the jest, ended as follows:—

For the Frame—

'Tis not ill-suited to the same;  
Oak-carved, not gilt, for fear of falling;  
Old-fashioned, plain, yet not appalling;  
And broad-brimmed, as the Owner's Calling.

The last line, Lamb here requests Bernard Barton to expunge. When he printed the poem three years afterwards in *Album Verses*, he retained the line, but with a modification—

And *sober*, as the Owner's Calling.

The print, in its ill-fitting frame, hung over the mantelpiece in the late Mrs. FitzGerald's (Lucy Barton's) drawing-room.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

The original manuscript, with the last line carefully erased with Barton's "best ivory-handled," is, by her generous kindness, in the possession of the editor. The picture has yet one more poetic association. It forms the subject of some pretty verses by Barton, in his *New Year's Eve, and other Poems*, 1828, entitled "Fireside Quatrains to Charles Lamb."

LETTER CCCXVII (p. 13).—In Hone's *Table Book* (ii. 55) appeared a sonnet of Lamb's addressed to Miss Kelly, "on her excellent Performance of Blindness in the revived opera of *Arthur and Emmeline*." Hence this letter.

LETTER CCCXVIII (p. 13).—First printed by Mr. P. G. Patmore in *My Friends and Acquaintance* (1854).

*Dash* was a dog that had been given to Lamb by Thomas Hood. Mr. Patmore has much to tell of this roving animal, who ultimately was transferred to Mr. Patmore's keeping. See *My Friends and Acquaintance*, vol. i. p. 29.

"If he bring but a relict away,  
He is happy, nor heard to complain."

See Shenstone's Pastoral Ballad, "Absence"—

"The pilgrim that journeys all day  
To visit some far-distant shrine,  
If he bear but a relique away  
Is happy, nor heard to repine."

LETTER CCCXIX (p. 17).—*I am busy with a farce in two acts. The Intruding Widow*, a dramatic poem founded on Mr. Crabbe's tale of *The Confidant*. See *Poems, Plays, and Essays*. Ultimately published in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

LETTER CCCXX (p. 19).—Sir John Stoddart, Chief-Justice at Malta. See Letter LXXXIX. in vol. x., and note. *Fearn's "Anti-Tooke." Anti-Tooke: or, an Analysis of Language*. (London, 1824.)

LETTER CCCXXI (p. 21).—*My engraving*. The etching on copper by Brook Pulham.

*I had my Blakesware*. See Elia Essay, "Blakesmoor in

## NOTES

Hertfordshire," and notes upon it, in this edition. The essay was first published in the *London Magazine*.

LETTER CCCXXII (p. 23).—The reference here is to Lamb's contributions to the *Table Book* of extracts from the Garrick plays. Hone felt deeply the kindness of Lamb and his sister during his struggling career. In dedicating to them his *Every-Day Book*, he says :—"How can I forget your and Miss Lamb's sympathy and kindness when glooms overmastered me, and that your pen sparkled in the book when my mind was in clouds and darkness. These 'trifles,' as each of you would call them, are benefits scored upon my heart."

LETTER CCCXXIII (p. 24).—Barton had been sending verses for Emma Isola's album. Respecting Mr. Fraser's projected album, see note to Letter CCCXXVII.

"*Future Lord Byrons and sweet L. E. L.'s.*" This is a line from some verses on albums, which have been attributed, I think on insufficient grounds, to Lamb himself.

*My tragi-comedy. The Intruding Widow.*

*Your Drummonds.* Lamb uses the name of one famous firm of bankers to indicate Barton's employers, the Alexanders.

*En passant.* I despair of interpreting Lamb's attempts at the French language. Talfourd, equally hopeless, omitted the last sentence, but I restore it from the original manuscript.

LETTER CCCXXIV (p. 26).—See *Table Book*, ii. 287, "Past, Present, and Future. Extemporaneous Lines, written to oblige a young Friend who suggested the Topic." Hone signed his own contributions with a \*. In the poem occur these lines, to which Lamb specially refers :—

"Time, that faithful tutor,  
Were I but teachable, might show the Future  
As the Present is ; and yet I paint it  
Teeming with joy."

LETTER CCCXXVII (p. 28).—*Mr. Watts.* Alaric A. Watts, the editor of various albums and keepsakes.

"*Lord, what good hours do we keep!*"

—From a poem by Charles Cotton, quoted in the *Complete Angler*.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

*A feeble counter-action thro' the Table Book of last Saturday.* We must suppose there had been some critical attacks upon Hood's "Plea of the Midsummer Fairies" (1827), for Lamb contributed to the *Table Book* a prose version of a portion of that poem, under the title, "The Defeat of Time: or a Tale of the Fairies" (*Table Book*, ii. 335). After paraphrasing the earlier part of the poem, Lamb breaks off with the following postscript:—"What particular endearments passed between the Fairies and their Poet passes my pencil to delineate; but if you are curious to be informed, I must refer you, gentle reader, to the 'Plea of the Fairies,' a most agreeable poem lately put forth by my friend Thomas Hood; of the first half of which the above is nothing but a meagre and a harsh prose abstract. Farewell. (Elia.) *The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo.*"

LETTER CCCXXIX (p. 33).—*Mr. Moxon.* The earliest mention, save in a letter of the June preceding, of one afterwards to be Lamb's friend and publisher, and the husband of Emma Isola. He was then a young man of six-and-twenty.

LETTER CCCXXX (p. 33).—Dash had been made over to the care of the Patmores, having been found by the Lambs "intractable and wild."

*I've sent him two poems.* One of these was the poem, "On an infant dying as soon as born," written at the request of Mrs. Hood on the death of her first child. See *Poems, Plays, and Essays*.

LETTER CCCXXXIII (p. 37).—This letter was first printed in Mrs. Mathews's Memoirs of her husband (iii. 596). It was there given *à propos* of the suggestion that had been made to Lamb, through Barron Field, that he should write an elaborate description of the pictures in Mathews's famous Theatrical Portrait Gallery.

*An imitator of me.* *Rejected Articles* was a collection of parodies of various prose writers, by Mr. P. G. Patmore (1826), one of the many *jeux d'esprit* suggested by the success of the more famous *Rejected Addresses*. The first article in the volume was a paper purporting to be by Elia, entitled



## NOTES

“An Un-Sentimental Journey.” It was no more successful than many other attempts to imitate a style essentially inimitable.

LETTER CCCXXXIV (p. 39).—This letter is now for the first time printed as a whole. The original is in the possession of the family of my friend, Mr. George Loveday of Wardington, Banbury. Mr. Dodwell (it will be remembered) was a fellow-clerk of Lamb’s in the India House. The names indicated by initials were other colleagues of Lamb and his correspondent.

LETTER CCCXXXVII (p. 45).—*The kind “knitter in the sun!”* Lamb is thinking of the line in *Twelfth Night*—

“The spinsters and the knitters in the sun.”

*A Bijoux.* So Lamb wrote, and French was not his strong point. The *Bijou* for 1828, published by Pickering, was edited by W. Fraser, afterwards editor of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*. Besides the Royal contributions referred to in Lamb’s letter to Barton of 28th August 1827, the *Bijou* contained one of Lamb’s (“Fresh clad from Heaven, an angel bright”); three poems of Coleridge’s—“Youth and Age,” “Work without Hope,” “The Two Founts”; and here, moreover, was first printed Blanco White’s immortal sonnet, beginning “Mysterious Night!”

LETTER CCCXXXVIII (p. 46).—Leigh Hunt would appear to have desired a portrait of Lamb, as one of certain projected illustrations for the work he had in preparation, *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries: with Recollections of the Author’s Life and of his Visit to Italy.* 1828. The book ultimately appeared, however, without the portraits. Both the likenesses of Lamb, here mentioned, have been since engraved. The one by Hazlitt “in a queer dress” represents Lamb in a nondescript costume, with a ruff.

LETTER CCCXLI (p. 49).—*Your welcome present. The Widow’s Tale, and Other Poems,* by Bernard Barton, 1827. The author prefixes a note to the “Widow’s Tale,” stating that the incidents are taken from the painful but interesting

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

“Account of the loss of five Wesleyan missionaries and others in the *Maria* mail-boat off the Island of Antigua, by Mrs. Jones, the only survivor on that mournful occasion.” A woodcut on the title-page, representing three shipwrecked travellers *in extremis* on a raft at sea, is, as Lamb remarks, “a rueful *lignum mortis*.” All the poems or passages indicated by Lamb with approval are given in the memorial volume on Barton already referred to. The “third stanza, at p. 108,” that made Lamb long to see Van Balen, was from a poem describing a picture by that artist, representing some angel children leading up a lamb to the infant Saviour in His mother’s lap. The stanza, containing a simile that Lamb thought exquisite, may well be quoted here. It is from the “Grandsire’s Tale,” in which the old man relates the early death of his grandchild:—

“Though some might deem her pensive, if not sad,  
Yet those that knew her better, best could tell  
How calmly happy, and how meekly glad  
Her quiet heart in its own depths did dwell :  
Like to the waters of some crystal well,  
In which the stars of heaven at noon are seen,  
Fancy might deem on her young spirit fell  
Glimpses of light more glorious and serene  
Than that of life’s brief day, so heavenly was her mien.”

*An artist who painted me lately.* Henry Meyer, referred to in the letter to Leigh Hunt of November 1827.

## CHAPTER VI

1828—1834

LETTER CCCXLIII (p. 54).—*Hunt’s Lord B.* Leigh Hunt’s *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, etc. etc. 1828.

*Hazlitt’s speculative episodes.* In his *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, four volumes. 1828.

*The “Companion.”* One of Leigh Hunt’s numerous ventures

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of the periodical sort. It began on January 9, and was discontinued on July 23, of this year 1828. A glance at the list of contents in Mr. Alexander Ireland's valuable Bibliography supports Lamb's complaint that there was too much in it of Madame Pasta. One article in the *Companion* was "Walks home by night in bad weather—Watchmen."

*One Clarke a schoolmaster.* The father of Cowden Clarke, the Rev. John Clarke, was a schoolmaster at Enfield. Keats, it will be remembered, was one of his pupils.

*Holmes.* Edward Holmes, author of the *Life of Mozart* and other musical works, was also at Mr. Clarke's school. He contributed at this time articles on musical subjects to the *Atlas* newspaper.

*Victoria.* Mary Victoria Novello, afterwards Mrs. Cowden Clarke. The Novellos lived for a while at Shacklewell Green, near Dalston. Cowden Clarke, it should be added, was in early life a teacher in his father's school, which explains Lamb's allusion to the "schoolmaster text hand."

*Thurtell.* Not the murderer, but his brother Thomas, who kept the Cock Tavern in the Haymarket.

LETTER CCCXLIV (p. 57).—*The things which Pickering has.* Certain verses of Lamb's offered to Mr. Pickering for his *Bijou*, if not used, were promised to Thomas Hood, who was editing another annual called the *Gem*.

LETTER CCCXLVI (p. 58).—*Mitford tells you of H.'s book.* Lamb apparently refers to William Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age; or, Contemporary Portraits*, published in 1825, in which his own was one of the Portraits sketched. See Letter to Bernard Barton of February 10, 1825.

*The author of "May you like it?"* The Rev. C. B. Tayler, the vicar of Hadleigh, Suffolk, Barton's neighbour and friend.

LETTER CCCXLVIII (p. 60).—Moxon was at this time with Mr. Hurst, the publisher, in St. Paul's Churchyard.

*Poor John Scott's Second,* on occasion of the duel with Christie in 1821, in which Scott was killed.

LETTER CCCL (p. 62).—In 1828 a project was formed for erecting a monument to Thomas Clarkson, on the hill

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above Wade's Mill on the Buntingford Road, in Hertfordshire, this being the spot where the resolution of devoting his life to the abolition of the Slave Trade first took possession of him. This was in Clarkson's lifetime, for he survived till 1846. The scheme was abandoned for the time, but has been revived and carried out within the last few years.

*Upon a hillock at Forty Hill.* Forty Hill is a district of Enfield.

LETTER CCCLI (p. 64).—*Your Chairing the Member.* One of two pictures that Haydon had just painted, the subjects taken from certain frolics that he had witnessed when in the King's Bench Prison. The other was "The Mock Election," purchased for five hundred guineas by King George IV. "Chairing the Member" was exhibited by Haydon, with other of his pictures, in August of this year, at the Western Bazaar in Bond Street. "Besides the new picture, the Exhibition included 'Solomon,' 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem,' and the drawings for the two prison pictures. 'The Mock Election' was not there, as it had before this been removed to Windsor." (*Tom Taylor's Life of B. R. Haydon.*)

LETTER CCCLII (p. 64).—The *Edition de Luxe* here spoken of as in preparation was published in 1830, with a Prefatory Memoir of Bunyan by Southey. It was illustrated by Martin, and published by Barton's friend, John Major. Macaulay's review of this edition will be remembered. His observations on Martin's unfitness for this kind of illustration bear a strong resemblance to Lamb's.

*The Gem.* The *Gem* for 1829 was edited by Thomas Hood. In the volume for that year appeared Lamb's verses "On an infant dying as soon as born," written at the request of Mrs. Hood, on the death of her infant child.

LETTER CCCLIII (p. 68).—The note which Lamb wrote to Hood, on discovering in the *Gem* the practical joke referred to in a letter to Procter of January 22, 1829. He indicates the temporary exchange of names by the opening and concluding words of his communication. Bridget, it will be remembered, is the name by which his sister is always described in the *Essays of Elia*.

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LETTER CCCLIV (p. 68).—*When you lurked at the Greyhound.* Cowden Clarke and his bride spent their quiet honeymoon at the Inn at Enfield, as Mrs. Cowden Clarke tells us. They were married on the 5th of July of this year.

LETTER CCCLV (p. 70).—The “Epithalamium” referred to in the former letter was, on second thoughts, despatched to Vincent Novello. Mrs. Cowden Clarke, who first printed this parody upon the school of Dryden in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for December 1873, dwells with just appreciation upon the admirable fooling of the entire letter.

LETTER CCCLVI (p. 74).—Laman Blanchard published this year a little volume of Poems, *Lyric Offerings*, dedicated to Lamb.

LETTER CCCLVII (p. 74).—Barton had sent Lamb his latest volume, *A New Year’s Eve, and other Poems*. (London, 1828.) It was dedicated “to Charles Richard Sumner, Bishop of Winchester, in memorial of his courtesy and kindness” and had for frontispiece an engraving of a drawing by Martin, of Christ walking on the sea. Lamb, in applauding the picture, refers to certain strictures upon Martin contained in a previous letter to Barton. “Power and Gentleness, or the Cataract and the Streamlet,” is perhaps as charming a lyric as Barton ever wrote. It contains the stanza about the streamlet, which was a favourite with that admirable judge, Edward Fitzgerald:—

“More gaily now it sweeps  
By the small schoolhouse, in the sunshine bright;  
And o’er the pebbles leaps  
Like happy hearts by holiday made light.”

The full title of the “Lady Russell” poem was, “Lady Rachel Russell: or, a Roman Hero and an English Heroine compared.” The “stanzas to ‘Chalon’” were “On a Portrait by A. E. Chalon, R.A.”—the portrait being one of Clarkson, the Abolitionist.

*As Sh*—says of Religion. It is hardly necessary to point out that the allusion is to Hamlet’s—

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“And fair Religion make  
A rhapsody of words.”

*I much like the “Heron.”* “Syr Heron. Inscribed to my ingenious friend, John Major, on receiving from him a seal bearing the impress of that bird.”

“*Fludyer.*” “To Sir Samuel Fludyer, on the devastation effected on his Marine Villa at Felixstowe by the encroachments of the Sea.” The answer to the enigma is clearly, as Mrs. FitzGerald has pointed out to me, *an auctioneer’s hammer.*

LETTER CCCLX (p. 82).—As Procter had tried a practical joke upon Lamb, the latter seems to have thought it a good opportunity to return the compliment. In the details that follow, concerning the case that “fretted him to death,” the element of truth was that John Lamb had, shortly before his death, married a widow, who had a married daughter, Elizabeth Dowden. This, I have ascertained, was a fact. Lamb, as his brother’s executor, had some trouble in administering the estate; but the elaborate and impossible farrago of details here built upon the simple foundation is, of course, the wildest nonsense. The serious reference to the 170th chapter of “Fearne’s Contingent Remainders” (a classic work, divided, I believe, into some dozen or fifteen chapters) is delightfully conceived. Talfourd adds that the alleged coolness between Lamb and his legal friends was part of the fiction.

*A few lines of verse for a young friend’s album.* It was for Emma Isola’s album that the verses were asked.

*Barry C*— is Barry Cornwall, Mr. Procter’s poetical “Alias.”

LETTER CCCLXI (p. 85).—I have revised previous texts of this letter from the original in Mrs. Procter’s possession, and restored one or two characteristic sentences hitherto omitted.

*The anti-Capulets.* The Montagus (Basil Montagu and his wife).

*Miss Holcroft.* Louisa Holcroft, daughter of the dramatist, married Mr. Badams, Carlyle’s friend. See Carlyle’s *Reminiscences.*

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*Burke's case.* Burke and Hare, the Edinburgh resurrection men. Burke was hanged on the 28th of this January. "A shot" was explained in evidence to be a slang word used by the gang for a "subject to be murdered."

*A sonnet of mine.* "The Gipsy's Malison." See the next letter to Procter, in which the sonnet is given.

'*Twas written for the "Gem."* Edited this year by Hood.

*They published the "Widow" instead.* The "Widow" was a short essay, accompanying a steel engraving of a sentimental picture by Leslie, of a kind common in annuals and keepsakes, bearing the same title. Hood wrote this paper in imitation of Lamb's style, and boldly appended to it the signature, "C. Lamb." The imitation is only tolerably successful. It opens thus:—

### A WIDOW

hath always been a mark for mockery—a standing butt for wit to level at. Jest after jest hath been huddled upon her close cap, and stuck, like burrs, upon her weeds. Her sables are a perpetual "Black Joke."

Satirists—prose and verse—have made merry with her bereavements. She is a stock character on the stage. Farce bottleth up her crocodile tears, or labelleth her empty lachrymatories. Comedy mocketh her precocious flirtations, and twitteth her with "the funeral baked meats coldly furnishing forth the marriage tables."

I confess, when I called the other day on my kinswoman G.—then in the second week of her widowhood—and saw her sitting, her young boy by her side, in her recent sables, I felt unable to reconcile her estate with any risible associations. The lady with a skeleton moiety—in the old print in Bowles's old shop-window—seemed but a type of her condition, etc. etc.

LETTER CCCLXII (p. 87).—See preceding letter to Procter, of 22nd January.

*Abactor*, we may conclude, is the Latin equivalent for sheep-stealer given in Ainsworth's *Dictionary*.

LETTER CCCLXIII (p. 89).—Mr. Procter was a solicitor, "incipient," but not precisely a "conveyancer."

*O thou above the Painter.* James Barry, the historical painter.

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*Giraldus Cambrensis*, the historian, otherwise known as Giraldus de Barri.

*Thy most ingenious and golden cadences.* The verses that Procter had sent for Emma Isola's album, in reply to Lamb's invitation. They turned upon the coincidence of the young lady's name with that of the lovely island in the Lago Maggiore, so well known to all sojourners at Baveno. The lines ended—

“Isola Bella, whom all poets love !”

The “fairest hands in Cambridge” were Emma Isola's, who had many friends in the University town. She was then preparing to accept a situation as governess in the family of Mr. Williams, Rector of Fornham, near Bury St. Edmunds.

*Un sphinx this riddle for me.* It is perhaps impertinent to point out that the flippant allusions that follow are to the disastrous family history of one who had dealings with a notable propounder of riddles.

LETTER CCCLXIV (p. 91).—I append a translation :—

“Most eloquent Poet ! although epithets of that sort, I am well aware, apply to orators rather than poets—for all that, most eloquent !

“There has been now for some time staying with us in the Enfield country a future attorney, the most illustrious Martin Burney, who is taking his holiday—escaped, for a while, from business so called, and an office without clients. He begs and implores you (Martin does, I mean), if by blessed fortune a tardy client should turn up in his absence, that you will let him know by letter addressed here. Do you understand ? or ought I to write in a tongue so barbarous as English to you, prince of scholars ?

C. LAMB.

“If an estate in freehold is granted to a grandfather, and if in the same deed it is granted mediately or immediately to the heir or heirs of the body of the said grandfather, these last are words of Limitation, not Perquisition. This is my ruling.”

The postscript to this letter is supplementary to the legal fiction elaborated in the previous letter of 19th January.

LETTER CCCLXV (p. 92).—*Astrea*. D'Urfé's famous Pastoral Romance.



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*Inconstant, yet fair.* This sentence and the following sum up, with exquisite skill, the euphuistic style of Sidney's *Arcadia*.

*Cowden with the Tuft.* A description formed from analogy with the hero of the fairy tale, *Riquet with the Tuft*. Mr. Clarke, as his wife informs us, had a bald head fringed with rather demonstrative tufts of hair.

LETTER CCCLXVI (p. 93).—Talfourd tells us that Crabb Robinson sent Lamb a copy of *Pamela*, under a mistaken belief that he had borrowed a previous copy and not returned it.

LETTER CCCLXVII (p. 94).—*Darley's very poetical poem. Sylvia: or, the May Queen.* 1827.

“*Christmas.*” By Edward Moxon.

*Field's Appendix.* “Geographical Memoirs on New South Wales, by various hands,” etc. etc. Edited by Barron Field, Esq., F.L.S., 1825. In the Appendix is printed “First Fruits of Australian Poetry,” originally printed privately in New South Wales. See Lamb's notice of these poems, *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc.

*I have writ in the old Hamlet.* A reprint of the first quarto (1603) of *Hamlet*, then lately discovered.

The copy thus sent was retained by Barton, in accordance with the permission given in this letter, and is now, through the kindness of Mrs. Edward FitzGerald, in the Editor's collection. On the fly-leaf, in Lamb's handwriting, is the inscription:—“Present this to Mr. Mitford in my name, if he has not got it.—C. L.”

By being “woefully below our editions of it,” Lamb means, of course, that the quarto of 1603 is but a first sketch, unless it be an unauthorised and garbled version of the play as we know it.

LETTER CCCLXIX (p. 97).—*The report of thy torments.* Crabb Robinson, in his *Diary*, quotes a letter of his own to Wordsworth of 22nd April, describing this attack:—“Went to bed at two, and in the morning found my left knee as crooked as the politics of the Ministry are, by the anti-Catholics, represented to be. After using leeches, poultices, etc., for three weeks, I went down to Brighton, and again, in a most

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unchristian spirit, put myself under the hands of the Mahomedan Mahomet—was stewed in his vapour-baths, and shampooed under his pagan paws.”

LETTER CCCLXXI (p. 100).—This, and a subsequent letter of 15th November, are on the subject of Mr. Walter Wilson's *Life and Times of De Foe*, then in preparation. The ode here referred to is Lamb's "Ode to the Treadmill," written in imitation of De Foe's "Ode to the Pillory." See *Poems, Plays, and Essays*.

LETTER CCCLXXIII (p. 101).—*Our young friend Emma*. Emma Isola, who was at this time governess to the Williamses at Fornham.

*His name was Dibdin*. The young man, Lamb's letters to whom I have now first printed. He returned from Madeira, as Lamb relates, and died of his "long disease" on May 11, 1828.

*Southey's Dialogues. Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*. 1829.

*In acknowledgment of a sonnet I sent him*. See the sonnet, "To Samuel Rogers, Esq.," *Poems, Plays, and Essays*.

LETTER CCCLXXIV (p. 103).—*Your kind inquisitive Eliza*. Eliza Barton, Bernard Barton's sister.

*An old rejected farce of mine. The Pawnbroker's Daughter*.

LETTER CCCLXXVI (p. 108). This letter is now printed for the first time, by the kind permission of Sir Edmund Elton of Clevedon Court. It was written to his grandfather, Sir Charles A. Elton, who succeeded to the baronetcy in 1842. Sir Charles (at the date of this letter, Mr. C. A. Elton) was a classical scholar and poet, who contributed largely to the *London Magazine*, a circumstance which first brought him and Lamb together. It will be remembered that he there wrote the lines signed "Olen," which had greatly pleased and touched Lamb. In the present instance he had evidently sent Lamb a present of several of his published volumes, including his "Specimens of the Classical Poets translated into English verse" (1814), and his "Remains of Hesiod," similarly translated (1815). Lamb's criticisms apply mainly to these two

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volumes. The reference to the "tenderest parts in your own little volume," is certainly to the pathetic poem "The Brothers, a Monody," written by Elton on the death of his two sons by drowning in 1819, and published in the following year.

LETTER CCCLXXVII (p. 110).—Talfourd had christened his latest child, Charles Lamb Talfourd. The father adds this note: "The child who bore the name so honoured by his parents survived his godfather only a year, dying at Brighton, whither he had been taken in the vain hope of restoration, on the 3rd of December 1835."

LETTER CCCLXXVIII (p. 111).—*An honest couple our neighbours.* A Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Westwood. Mr. Westwood was a retired tradesman, and agent to the *Phoenix Assurance Office.*

LETTER CCCLXXX (p. 113).—Wilson's work on De Foe was just published. Lamb had contributed to it his "Estimate of De Foe's Secondary Novels." See *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc. Lamb had written a letter to Wilson seven years (not fifteen) before, containing some remarks upon these novels, which Wilson also makes use of in his work on De Foe. Much of what he wrote in the friendly letter naturally re-appeared in the more formal essay. Hence Lamb's allusion to the "two papers" puzzling the reader, "being so akin." Hazlitt reviewed Wilson's *Life and Times of De Foe* in the *Edinburgh* of January 1830.

LETTER CCCLXXXI (p. 116).—*The excursionists.* Mr. Westwood, Lamb's landlord, had driven Mary Lamb over to Highgate to see the Gillmans and Coleridge. The note that follows this would appear to refer to a later excursion, conducted by the same "Son of Nimshi." But Lamb's habit of not dating letters confuses matters sadly.

LETTER CCCLXXXIV (p. 122).—*Hazlitt has just been defrauded.* By the failure of the publishers of his *Life of Napoleon.*

LETTER CCCLXXXV (p. 124).—Wordsworth's letter to

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Lamb, to which this is the reply, is given in Bishop Wordsworth's *Memoirs of the Poet* (ii. 223). It bears date 10th January of this year, and begins: "A whole twelvemonth have I been a letter in your debt, for which fault I have been sufficiently punished by self-reproach." The letter tells of the dangerous illness of Dorothy Wordsworth, and of Wordsworth's own weakened eyesight.

*Henry Crabb* is Henry Crabb Robinson.

*Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O?* Those who know their Shakspeare will take the allusion to a line in the Chorus to *Henry V.*

LETTER CCCLXXXVI (p. 131).—*To furnish A. C. with the scrap.* A. C. is Allan Cunningham, who was preparing his *Lives of the Painters*, and wanted that portion of Lamb's letter to Barton of May 15, 1824, which referred to William Blake. The letter was sent to Cunningham, in accordance with the permission here given, but the "scrap" was apparently crowded out, for it did not appear in the first edition of Cunningham's work in the Family Library. It was, however, preserved among the Cunningham papers, and is given in the latest edition of the work in Bohn's Series.

*That Joseph Paice.* See Lamb's *Elia* Essay, "Modern Gallantry." In the *Athenæum* for the year 1841 (pp. 366 and 387), will be found some interesting particulars of Mr. Paice, by the late Miss Anne Manning.

LETTER CCCLXXXVII (p. 132).—*Your hopes about Dick Norris.* Richard Norris, the son of Lamb's old friend, Randal Norris, Sub-Treasurer of the Inner Temple. Mrs. Hazlitt had noticed that a Mr. Norris was Treasurer of the Inn this year, and had too hastily inferred that young Norris had succeeded to his late father's post.

LETTER CCCLXXXVIII (p. 134).—The Rev. James Gillman was the son of Mr. Gillman of Highgate. Lamb's information concerning the Norwich people is, of course, what would in his day have been called "raillery," and in our day "chaff." Who Mr. Battin was, I know not. Talfourd assumes that this letter was to the elder Gillman, but the allusion to his correspondent having something "professionally" to say to the

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Revelations in Greek, seems to point to his being in holy orders. The friends in Spitalfields are, I presume, the weavers.

LETTER CCCLXXXIX (p. 136).—*Phillips (not the Colonel)*. “Edward Phillips, Esq., Secretary to the Right Hon. Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons. The ‘Colonel’ alluded to was the Lieutenant of Marines who accompanied Captain Cook on his last voyage, and on shore with that great man when he fell a victim to his humanity” (Talfourd).

*Mrs. B——’s*. Obviously Mrs. Burney. An ingenious editor of Lamb’s Letters has filled up the blank with Mrs. *Battle’s* name! John Murray had proposed to Lamb to publish a supplementary volume of specimens from the old dramatists.

LETTER CCCXC (p. 138).—This letter was written after Lamb’s return to London from a visit to the Williamses at Fornham. He had taken Miss Isola, now convalescent after a severe attack of brain fever, back with him to Enfield. Two of the acrostics that Lamb wrote for the amusement of Mrs. Williams and her family were afterwards included by Lamb in his *Album Verses*, published this year. They will be found in *Poems, Plays, and Essays*. One is an acrostic epitaph on Mrs. Williams, her name being Grace Joanna Williams; the other on her youngest daughter, Louisa Clare.

LETTER CCCXCI (p. 140).—Mrs. Williams seems also to have been fond of writing acrostics, and had composed one on Mary Lamb.

*She blames my last verses*. This acrostic I now print for the first time. Lamb did not include it in his next volume of *Album Verses*:—

“Go little Poem, and present  
Respectful terms of compliment;  
A gentle lady bids thee speak!  
Courteous is *she*, tho’ thou be weak—  
Evoke from Heaven as thick as manna

Joy after joy on Grace Joanna:  
On Fornham’s Glebe and Pasture land  
A blessing pray. Long, long may stand,

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Not touched by Time, the Rectory blithe ;  
No grudging churl dispute his Tithe ;  
At Easter be the offerings due

With cheerful spirit paid ; each pew  
In decent order filled ; no noise  
Loud intervene to drown the voice,  
Learning, or wisdom of the Teacher ;  
Impressive be the Sacred Preacher,  
And strict his notes on holy page ;  
May young and old from age to age  
Salute, and still point out, "The good man's Parsonage!"

LETTER CCCXCII (p. 142).—*My friend Hone.* Hone was at this time established by the help of friends in the *Grass-hopper* Coffee House in Gracechurch Street.

*An epigram I did for a schoolboy.* This schoolboy was the late Archdeacon Hessey, who published in the *Taylorian* (a periodical supported by the Merchant Taylors' boys) an account of his father taking him to see Lamb at Colebrook Cottage in 1825. See note in *Poems, Plays, and Essays*. Archdeacon Hessey informs us that the subject of the epigram was suggested by "the grim satisfaction which had recently been expressed by the public at the capture and execution of several notorious highwaymen."

LETTER CCCXCIII (p. 144).—*Rogers's handsome behaviour to you.* The poet had advanced Moxon £500 wherewith to set up in business as publisher. Moxon had published more than one volume of verse, including a book of sonnets of his own.

LETTER CCCXCIV (p. 145).—This delightful letter was first printed in the *Athenæum* a few years since, and is here given by the kind permission of the editor. Lamb adopts Procter's conceit of the island in Maggiore.

LETTER CCCXCVIII (p. 147).—*Ayrton was here yesterday.* Lamb elsewhere gives a quite different account of the origin of his verses on the Eminent Composers. In a letter to Ayrton, quoted in my note on the verses (*Poems, Plays, and Essays*), Lamb represents them as having been written at the

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request of Novello, who had desired Lamb "to give him my real opinion respecting the distinct grades of excellence in all the eminent composers of the Italian, German, and English schools." I am afraid we cannot absolve Lamb from the charge of fibbing in one or other of these statements. Martin Burney, who was originally a solicitor, had been lately called to the Bar. The step did not prove a success.

LETTER CCCXCIX (p. 151).—There had been a suggestion that William's Hazlitt's son, who was endowed with a fine voice, should adopt music as a profession. Ayrton, as a well-known authority on music, and impresario, would be naturally resorted to for counsel.

LETTER CCCC (p. 152).—The scheme for establishing Hone in a coffee-house business had been carried into effect, and Lamb, with characteristic helpfulness, arranges to have his newspaper at second-hand from the establishment in Gracechurch Street.

LETTER CCCC I (p. 153).—Lamb had just published, with Moxon, his *Album Verses*. The translations referred to are those from the Latin of Vincent Bourne.

LETTER CCCC III (p. 154).—The little volume of *Album Verses* was rather rudely handled by the reviewers, notably by the *Literary Gazette*. This review, Talfourd tells us, provoked some verses from Southey, which were inserted in the *Times*, and of which the following, as evincing his unchanged friendship, may not unfitly be inserted here:—

“ Charles Lamb ! to those who know thee justly dear  
For rarest genius, and for sterling worth,  
Unchanging friendship, warmth of heart sincere,  
And wit that never gave an ill thought birth,  
Nor ever in its sport infix'd a sting ;  
To us who have admired and loved thee long,  
It is a proud as well as pleasant thing  
To hear thy good report, now borne along  
Upon the honest breath of public praise :  
We know that with the elder sons of song,  
In honouring whom thou hast delighted still,  
Thy name shall keep its course to after days.”

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There were some further lines, very severe upon Lamb's recent critics.

LETTER CCCCIV (p. 156).—These lines were written, Mrs. Cowden Clarke tells us, “at the request of Vincent Novello, in memory of four sons and two daughters of John and Ann Rigg, of York. All six, respectively aged 19, 18, 17, 16, 7, and 6, were drowned at once by their boat being run down on the river Ouse, near York, August 19, 1830.”

LETTER CCCCIV (p. 156).—This note had been hitherto placed out of its order. After their two months' stay in London, Lamb had to take his sister back to Enfield. Southey came to London on a visit to John Rickman, at the House of Commons, on the 1st of November.

LETTER CCCCVII (p. 160).—From a later letter to Moxon we gain further particulars of George Dyer and his sensitive conscience. As far back as the end of the preceding century Dyer had written a couplet in his poem “The Poet's Fate” in which occurred some slighting mention of Rogers. A Mr. Barker, in his *Parriana*, had recently quoted and so revived the unfortunate couplet—hence Dyer's apprehensions.

*Great Erasmians.* Two forms at Christ's Hospital were nicknamed “Great Erasmus” and “Little Erasmus,” probably from the fact that the *Colloquies* and other works of Erasmus were read in these forms. Grecian and Deputy-Grecian are also well-known grades of distinction in the nomenclature of Christ's Hospital.

LETTER CCCCIX (p. 165).—“Good man!—I have received your most friendly letter, and it occurred to me as I was about to answer it that the Latin Tongue has seldom or never been exchanged by us, as a medium for corresponding or speaking. Your letters, replete with Plinian elegancies (rather more than is seemly in a Quaker), are so remote from the language of Pliny that you do not appear to have a single word (a Roman word, of course, I mean) to ‘throw to a dog,’ as the saying is. Possibly a long disuse of writing Latin has



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driven you to the use of your vernacular tongue unnecessarily. I have resolved, therefore, to recall you to the recovery of your lost Latinity by means of certain familiar and generally well-known proverbs:—

“The cat’s in the cupboard, and she can’t see.’

“All that glitters is not gold.’

“Put a beggar on horseback and he will ride to the Devil.’

“Set a thief to catch a thief.’

“Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?’

“Now let us sing of weightier themes!—

“Tom, Tom, of Islington, married a wife on Sunday. He brought her home on Monday; Bought a stick on Tuesday; Beat her well on Wednesday; Sick was she on Thursday; Dead was she on Friday; Glad was Tom on Saturday night, to bury his wife on Sunday.’

“‘Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,’ etc. etc. etc.

“‘Diddle, diddle, dumkins! my son John

Went to bed with his breeches on;

One shoe off and the other shoe on,

Diddle, diddle,’ etc. (Da Capo.)

“‘Here am I, jumping Joan;

When no one is by, I’m here alone.’

“Solve me this Riddle, and you will be an *Œdipus*. Why is a horse like a Quaker? Because his whole communication is by ‘Hay and Neigh,’ in accordance with the Scriptural injunction (‘Yea and Nay’).

“With these trifles I get through the precious day, while watching by the sick-bed of our more precious Emma, who has been at home with us ill, now for a long time. Mary joins me in best greetings; she is quite well. ELIA.’

“Given at Enfield on one or other of the Calends of April. ‘I am Davus, not’—almanack maker!

“P.S.—The Reform Bill is thrown out for good.”

LETTER CCCCX (p. 167).—I append a free translation of the letter:—

“*Enfield, May 6, 1831.*

“My good sister is sitting by me, turning the leaves of the *Euripides*, your present, dearest Cary, for which we thank you,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

and mean to read it again and again. The book is doubly acceptable to us both, as the sacred work of the 'Priest of Compassion,' and as the gift of one, himself a Priest of the most humane Religion in the world.

"When in tears, we are on the eve of joy: there are times when sorrow becomes gladness; laughter is not always sweet; we must sometimes exchange He! He! He! for Heu! Heu! Heu! That the Tragic Muse is not wholly repugnant to me, witness this Song of Disaster, originally written by some unknown author in the vernacular, but lately turned by me into Latin—I mean, 'Tom of Islington.' Do you take? . . . And finally Tom is filled with joy that on the following day (Sunday, to wit) his spouse must be carried out to burial. Lo! a domestic Iliad! A cycle of calamity! A seven-days' Tragedy!

"Go now and compare your vaunted *Euripides* with griefs like these! Such a death of wives as this! Where is your Alcestis now? your Hecuba? your other Dolorous Heroines of antiquity?

"My cheeks are bathed in tears as I muse upon these tragedies! What remains but to greet you and your own dear spouse, and to wish you as good health as we ourselves are enjoying.

ELIA."

LETTER CCCCXI (p. 168).—Although the date of this letter has been hitherto given 1831, I believe that it should be 1821. The letter is evidently written to Mr. Taylor, the publisher of the *London*, at the time Lamb was contributing to that magazine his *Essays of Elia*. In the number for July 1821, appeared the essay "Mackery End in Hertfordshire," and it is in this essay that the stanza from Wordsworth occurs to which reference is obviously made:—

"But thou, that didst appear so fair  
To fond Imagination,  
Dost rival in the light of *day*  
Her delicate creation!"

Taylor's proposed improvement of the stanza by the substitution of "air" for "day" is sufficiently amusing.

LETTER CCCCXII (p. 169).—Lamb contributed to the *Englishman's Magazine* of September 1831 a paper entitled

## NOTES

“Recollections of a late Royal Academician” (see *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc., and notes). This was Lamb's first contribution to the magazine after Moxon became its publisher. It was arranged that Lamb should furnish miscellaneous papers under the general heading of *Peter's Net*.

*Janus Weathercock*. The afterwards notorious Wainwright, the forger and poisoner.

*The Athenæum has been hoaxed*. The poem in question had appeared in Hone's *Year Book* (1831) under the date 30th April. It was entitled “The Meadows in Spring,” and was thus prefaced by its author, who signed himself “Epsilon” :—“These verses are in the old style ; rather homely in expression ; but I honestly profess to stick more to the simplicity of the old poets than the moderns, and to love the philosophical good-humour of our old writers more than the sickly melancholy of the Byronian wits. If my verses be not good, they are good-humoured, and that is something.” The verses, as Lamb points out, were again published, as a novelty, in the *Athenæum* of a few months later. The editor of the *Athenæum* (July 9, 1831) appended to them the following note :—“We have a suspicion that we could name the writer ; if so, we are sure his name would grace our pages as much as his verses.” It is Lamb that is here pointed to, and accordingly he now disowns the authorship. I am glad to be able, on the authority of my friend Mr. W. Aldis Wright, to clear up the mystery. The verses were certainly by the late Edward FitzGerald, then a young man of only one-and-twenty. Mr. Aldis Wright thus tells the story :—“In the year 1873 Edward FitzGerald told a correspondent of mine that when he was a lad, or rather more than a lad, he sent some verses to Hone, which were afterwards copied into the *Athenæum* of the time. These were ascribed to Charles Lamb, who wrote to say *he* did not write them—he wished he had.” It is obvious that these are the verses referred to, signed with the first letter (Epsilon) of FitzGerald's favourite signature, E. F. G. The lines, which open thus—

“'Tis a dull sight  
To see the year dying,  
When autumn's last wind  
Sets the yellow wood sighing,  
Sighing, oh sighing.”—

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

are very beautiful, in the style of the seventeenth-century poets, and we cannot wonder at Lamb envying the unknown author.

*The Anecdotes of E. and of G. D.* E. is Elliston, anecdotes of whom Lamb had contributed to the *Englishman's Magazine* in the August number, under the heading *Ellistoniana*. G. D. is, of course, the George Dawe just before named.

*Montgomery's "Last Man."* Was Lamb confusing Montgomery and Campbell, or was he thinking of Montgomery's "Common Lot," which we know to have been a favourite with him?

LETTER CCCCXIV (p. 171). — Moxon had just resolved to abandon his unsuccessful venture, the *Englishman's Magazine*.

*Devil's Money.* The sum paid by Moxon for Lamb's poetical squib, *Satan in Search of a Wife*, published this year in a thin volume, with illustrations (see *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc.).

*Any book on Christ's Hospital.* J. I. Wilson's *History of Christ's Hospital* (1821). Several editions of this book contained quotations from Lamb and tributes to his genius. Mr. "Seagull" was perhaps Rev. John Seager.

LETTER CCCCXVI (p. 177).—Lamb sends Landor one of his volumes, probably the unfortunate *Satan in Search of a Wife*. Landor had sent some verses for Emma Isola's album.

*Rose Aylmer.* I may be pardoned for quoting once more Landor's lovely poem. The charm that Lamb could not explain lies partly perhaps in the singular beauty of the lady's name, and its repetition in the second stanza:—

"Ah! what avails the sceptred Race  
And what the form divine?  
What every virtue, every grace?  
Rose Aylmer, all were thine!

"Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes  
May weep, but never see,  
A night of memories and of sighs  
I consecrate to thee."

Separate fragments of this letter are given in Forster's *Life of Landor*. There we also learn that the "measureless B.'s"

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were the family of Mr. Charles Betham, a tenant of Landor's at Llanthony. He was the brother of Miss Matilda Betham, whose name has occurred more than once in Lamb's correspondence. See Forster's *Walter Savage Landor, a Biography*, i. 382-386.

LETTER CCCCXVIII (p. 179).—Mr. Moxon had sent Lamb his last two poetical publications. A. C. (Allan Cunningham) had brought out his *Maid of Elvar*, and B. C. (Barry Cornwall) a volume of songs and ballads. The poems whose titles follow are from the latter volume. "Epistle to What's his Name" is Procter's "Epistle to Charles Lamb on his Retirement from the India House," a tender and discriminating tribute.

LETTER CCCCXIX (p. 180). Another of Lamb's elaborate fictions, though in this instance a fiction founded upon fact. A singularly brutal murder had been committed in Enfield on the night of December 19th in this year. The victim, a man of the name of Danby, then recently returned from India and supposed to have money about him, was drinking that evening in the parlour of the Crown and Horseshoe, in company with three men of the names of Johnson, Fare, and Cooper. Johnson and Cooper, when the hour for closing arrived, took Danby up a lane called Holt White's Hill, and there the murder was committed. All three men were arrested on the following morning. They were tried at the Old Bailey in January following. Fare was acquitted, Cooper turned king's evidence, but Johnson was convicted, and was hanged four days later.

The whole story of Lamb's accidental association with the accused men in the public-house parlour is, of course, a joke. Probably there may have been a wig-maker of the name of Danby in the Temple when Lamb was a child, which gave him the opportunity for an additional experiment on his correspondent's credulity. A full account of the murder will be found in the *Annual Register* for 1833.

LETTER CCCCXX (p. 183).—Talfourd had just been made a serjeant. Lamb remembered him, fifteen years back, when he was a "Chitty-ling," or pupil of Joseph Chitty.

H. C. R. Henry Crabb Robinson, who never proceeded to the higher ranks of the advocate's profession.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

LETTER CCCCXXI (p. 184).—Moxon was just about to publish the *Last Essays of Elia* in a volume. The "Friend's Preface" is the well-known preface written by Lamb himself, but purporting to be by "a friend of the late Elia."

LETTER CCCCXXIII (p. 186).—William Hone, in his latter years, reverted to the religious and dissenting associations of his youth, and became an occasional and very earnest preacher. Lamb playfully adapts his style to his friend's new vocation. The verses of Lamb's, which he inquires for, will be found in Hone's *Year Book* (not his *Table Book*), March 19, 1831. They are headed "To C. Aders, Esq., on his Collection of Paintings by the old German Masters." The lines are, to say the truth, not very good.

LETTER CCCCXXVI (p. 188).—Charles and Mary had just made what was destined to be their last change of residence, from Enfield to the neighbouring village of Edmonton. They now arranged to board and lodge with a Mr. and Mrs. Walden at Bay Cottage, in Church Street. The name has been of late years changed, in honour of its distinguished occupants, to *Lamb's Cottage*. It is within a stone's throw of the parish church and of Lamb's grave.

LETTER CCCCXXVII (p. 189).—The *Last Essays of Elia* were just published in a volume by Moxon. They included one on the "Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art." The "Ariadne" of Titian in the National Gallery is there described and criticised, and it is to this that Lamb refers in the present letter. The "Popular Fallacies" were also reprinted in this volume from the *New Monthly Magazine*.

LETTER CCCCXXXI (p. 194).—This very fierce letter appears to refer to the lawsuit between Moxon and Taylor respecting the copyright in the essays forming the second series of *Elia*.

LETTER CCCCXXXII (p. 195). This charming little note is here printed, I believe, for the first time. It pleasantly completes the story of Emma Isola's courtship by Edward

## NOTES

Moxon. Mrs. Moxon died at Brighton on the 2nd of February 1891, at the age of eighty-two. She was accordingly twenty-four at the time of her marriage.

LETTER CCCCXXXV (p. 199).—Edward Moxon was preparing a new collection of sonnets, afterwards published in a slender octavo, dedicated to Wordsworth, in 1835. It included several inspired by his “young Bride.” Moxon accepted one at least of Lamb’s corrections; for the fifth sonnet, when printed, opened thus—

“Four days, wild Ocean, on thy troubled breast  
A wanderer I have been!”

*Knowles’s play, epilogued by me.*—“The Wife.”

LETTER CCCCXXXVI (p. 202).—An early copy of Rogers’s volume of poems, with illustrations by Turner and Stothard, published in 1834, had been sent to Lamb.

*A sonnet in the “Times.”* I have not been able to discover whether this poem ever appeared in the journal named.

*Your artist.* Thomas Stothard. He died within a few months of this mention of him, in April 1834, at the age of seventy-nine. The verses, published in the *Athenæum*, beginning—

“Consummate artist, whose undying name  
With classic Rogers shall go down to fame,”

will be found in *Mrs. Leicester’s School*, etc.

*Poor Henry’s.* Henry Rogers, brother of the poet.

*Coleridge’s happy exemplification.* Lamb, after his custom, does not quote the lines correctly, nor does he appear to have been aware that they were translated from Schiller—

“In the Hexameter rises the fountain’s silvery column;  
In the Pentameter aye, falling in melody back.”

Coleridge’s version was first printed in *Friendship’s Offering*, 1834.

LETTER CCCCXXXVII (p. 205).—This letter was first printed by me from the original in the possession of B. MacGeorge, Esq., of Glasgow. It is worthy of preservation, if only for the beautiful thought in the last sentence.

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*The kind legacy* refers to a legacy of £30 from Anne Betham to Mary Lamb.

LETTER CCCCXXXVIII (p. 206).—Miss Fryer, of Chatteris in Cambridgeshire, was an old schoolfellow of Emma Isola. Dover Street was now the home of the Edward Moxons, and was to achieve a deservedly high name in association with poets and poetry.

LETTER CCCCXXXIX (p. 208).—Louisa Martin was an old friend of Lamb and his sister. She bore the nickname of "Monkey," and some verses addressed to her will be found in *Poems, Plays, and Miscellaneous Essays*.

LETTER CCCCXL (p. 209).—This interesting and touching letter was first printed by me from the original in Rev. C. R. Manning's possession.

*Wright's* is, of course, meant for Wright's translation of Dante, and the *faithfulness of C.* for Cary's.

LETTER CCCCXLI (p. 212).—Samuel Taylor Coleridge died at Mr. Gillman's, Highgate, on the 25th of July 1834. "Shortly after," Talfourd tells us, "assured that his presence would be welcome, Lamb went to Highgate. There he asked leave to see the nurse who had attended upon Coleridge; and being struck and affected by the feeling she manifested towards his friend, insisted on her receiving five guineas from him."

LETTER CCCCXLII (p. 212).—Mr. Cary had just returned from a tour through Normandy and the South of France. It was in the previous year that he had visited Holland and Germany. This note is in answer to an invitation to the resumed monthly dinners at the Museum.

LETTER CCCCXLIII (p. 213).—"In December 1834 Mr. Lamb received a letter from a gentleman, a stranger to him—Mr. Childs of Bungay, whose copy of *Elia* had been sent on an Oriental voyage, and who, in order to replace it, applied to Mr. Lamb." (Talfourd.)

LETTER CCCCXLIV (p. 214).—Mr. Cary's son, in his



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Memoir of his father, does not print this letter, though he gives other letters of Lamb's. Talfourd gives it without any date. It has been hitherto assumed to belong to the preceding year, but there are reasons why I think this unlikely.

LETTER CCCCXLV (p. 217).—"The following notelet is in answer to a letter inclosing a list of candidates for a Widow's Fund Society, for which he was entitled to vote. A Mrs. Southey headed the inclosed list." (Talfourd.)

LETTER CCCCXLVI (p. 218).—The Rev. Henry Cary, in the Memoir of his father, after quoting Lamb's short note of 12th September, adds:—"Not many weeks after, Lamb died. He had borrowed of my father Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum*, which was returned by Lamb's friend, Mr. Moxon, with the leaf folded down at the account of Sir Philip Sydney."

Mr. Cary acknowledged the receipt of the book by the following

### LINES TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES LAMB.

"So should it be, my gentle friend ;  
Thy leaf last closed at Sydney's end.  
Thou, too, like Sydney, wouldst have given  
The water, thirsting and near heaven ;  
Nay, were it wine, filled to the brim,  
Thou hadst look'd hard, but given, like him.

"And art thou mingled then among  
Those famous sons of ancient song ?  
And do they gather round, and praise  
Thy relish of their nobler lays ?  
Waxing in mirth to hear thee tell  
With what strange mortals thou didst dwell !  
At thy quaint sallies more delighted,  
Than any's long among them lighted !

"'Tis done : and thou hast joined a crew  
To whom thy soul was justly due ;  
And yet, I think, where'er thou be,  
They'll scarcely love thee more than we."



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