DR. BROWN AND JOHN RUSKIN

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SUMMARY

This thesis is an edition of John Ruskin's letters to Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh (1810-82), the original MSS. of which are in the Bodleian Library and in the National Library of Scotland. Most of the letters have not been published. Embodied in the thesis is a certain amount of material from the John Brown Papers in the NLS, a mass of letters and other biographical documents recently deposited with the library. The letters of Ruskin are preceded by an Introduction in which Dr. Brown's life and his relationship with his more famous friend are discussed. The letters themselves are given in chronological order, and each letter is followed by notes explaining obscure points and identifying names mentioned. There is one Appendix containing the exchanges in a controversy between Dr. Brown and Forster, Dickens's biographer. The thesis aims to give a readable and informative presentation of previously unknown letters by Ruskin; in these letters, since they are written to a close personal friend, Ruskin's character and the motives of his literary work find clear expression. In the Introduction it is indicated that his public dogmatism was, paradoxically, often the product of a deeply bewildered and injured personality; and that he turned so readily to Brown for friendship because there he found much-needed solace and advice in a harsh world. Dr. Brown is a little-known writer nowadays: some account therefore is given, in the Introduction, of his life and personality, and of the reasons why his contemporaries thought so highly of him - as much for his personal qualities as for his writings. It is hoped that in this thesis some of the best traits of Ruskin and Brown are preserved.
I would like to thank the librarians of the National Library of Scotland and the Bodleian for allowing me to use MSS. in their possession, and for their constant patience and helpfulness. Many other libraries and institutions supplied me with copies of MSS. which were useful to me, among them the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York; the Huntington Library, San Marino, California; the New York Public Library; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; the British Museum; the Royal Scottish Academy; the Royal College of Surgeons of Scotland, Edinburgh; and the Ruskin Galleries at Bembridge School, I.O.W. The kindness and courtesy with which the staff of these academic bodies answered my queries and met my requirements was a great encouragement to me. Several individuals helped me enormously, in particular Mrs. Theophila B. Lowe, Dr. Brown's great-grand-daughter; Professor David Cairns, who was instrumental in getting the Brown papers deposited in the NLS; Raleigh Trevelyan, who allowed me to benefit from his work on the Trevelyan MSS. at Wallington; Betty Massingham; and Professor Van Akin Burd.

Finally I would like to make special mention of my gratitude to Professor K.J. Fielding, my supervisor, who gave his hours and energy to this thesis as generously as if he had nothing better to do with them, and whose experience made many things easy which would otherwise have perplexed me. Over the past three years he has given me an instruction in the techniques of scholarship which few could have rivalled.
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Dictionary of National Biography

Fors Clavigera, Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain, published usually monthly from 1871-84.


John Brown papers Dr. Brown's collected papers in the National Library of Scotland, Acc. nos. 6134, 6289.


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The Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. John Brown's unremarkable name is not a familiar name to many readers; but perhaps it deserves, as belonging to a peculiarly interesting and good man, to be better known than it now is. In his day Dr. Brown was famous enough as a minor author, and the volumes of essays which were published by him under the ugly title of *Horae Subsecivae* sold well and gave him an entrance to the society of men of letters. These papers are a curious and entertaining blend of humour, pathos and antiquarianism; one, "Rab and His Friends", has become a minor classic (it was the man's fate never quite to achieve greatness); but it was in his private life, in his letters and in his friendships, that Brown's appealing qualities found fullest expression. It was his personal charm that endeared him to many of his great contemporaries: Jowett, R.H. Hutton of the *Spectator*, Gladstone, Dean Stanley, Mark Twain, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Thackeray; and this present book will show what his friendship meant to John Ruskin. In the letters that Brown and Ruskin exchanged, the intimacy of two gifted and unsatisfied characters, who were both dogged by tragedy and mental instability, is vividly shown. There is a sweetness and sadness in their relationship which recalls and helps us to understand the elements of pathos in the literary works of both men. Their affection for each other was an interlude of warmth in two wintry lives.
Brown's early life, like Ruskin's, was passed under the guardianship of that punctilious and sombre form of religion, Scottish Calvinist Presbyterianism, which Buckle called "the old folly", made up of "repulsive and horrible notions advocated by the Scotch clergy and sanctioned by the Scotch people" (Henry Thomas Buckle, History of Civilization in England, 2 vols. 1857, 1861; 3 vols. 1866; Bk. III, Ch. 4); and which Ruskin in his later life declared to be more horrible than "the bestial idolatry of the Egyptian" (Letter 27). Brown was not so critical. Though his faith in many of its doctrines became confused, and the tenderness of his feelings would not allow him to believe in such horrors as eternal punishment for the damned, he worshipped steadfastly all his life in the presbyterian church, and bore to his grave the marks of its tuition, as did Ruskin. Apostasy in Brown's case would have been extraordinary: he came from a family of renowned presbyterian clergymen. He was "the fifth John Brown of his family in direct succession" (John Taylor Brown, Dr. John Brown, a Biography and Criticism, 1903, p. 1). The first John Brown was a weaver, of whom nothing is known; the second was a shepherd-lad who educated himself beside his flocks (so the legend tells) till he could read the Greek Testament; he survived accusations of witchcraft—which were natural enough, Greek then being an accomplishment rare among shepherds—and became a Secession minister and author
of what must have been a very useful book, *The Self Interpreting Bible*. As Dr. Brown remarked, if his forefather's learning had come from the devil "that shrewd personage would not have employed him on the Greek Testament" (*Horae Subsecivae, Second Series*, 1861, "Letter to John Cairns, D.D."). The next two John Browns, Dr. John's grandfather and father, were also Secession ministers; both men of eminence in their sect, the latter showing a particular talent for controversy, which seems to have been a main concern of Seceding clergymen, and for producing Giantworks of theological demonstration and exegetical lore, "impressive lumbering books", as his son called them (unpublished letter to Coventry Dick, dated 5 Dec 1851, in NLS Acc.6289). Dr. John Brown thus came of the purest Secession lineage, and may have felt rather uncomfortably, when the time came for him to choose his own career, that according to precedent he ought to become a minister as well. The inference must have been hard, at one time, to resist. "He once told me" wrote John Taylor Brown, his biographer, "that he was strongly urged by some of his friends, at the time when it became necessary to choose a profession, to go into the ministry, and that he was thankful to have kept himself from doing so." (*Op.cit.*, p.17.)

The Secession Church that Brown would have entered was a very different institution to that which preferred mild moral advice to its adherents and pleasant social advancement to its ministers in the Established Church of Scotland, a body which took its cue in many respects from the Anglican Church. The Secessionists quarrelled with the ideas of covenant, of patronage, of oaths to the civil authorities, with everything in fact which smacked of Establishment. They carried their defiance of state intrusion even to the length of civil disobedience. Perhaps it
could be said that they took themselves too seriously, and were too inclined to think that their domestic wranglings were of apocalyptic importance, every little squabble over words being approached with elephantine gravity; but the Church had authority in their lives; they believed that true religion should penetrate to every level of life—social, political and artistic, as well as moral. The Secession drew its support from the lower middle classes, artisans and peasants, and gave a powerful voice to a class that otherwise was politically inarticulate.

Its theology was a kind of underworld, painstakingly mined, labyrinthine and dark; but within its tortuous workings, intense, burning men made their names—inspired preachers, hair-splitting exegetes, fulminating debaters; a race of men with its own legends and heroes—James Struthers, the Erskines, Thomas Gillespie, and, not least, the John Browns. To the present day observer, detached from them by many generations, their contentions seem merely grotesque efflorescences of private and political passion, but at the time they believed they were transacting God's business. Schism fathered schism: Old Licht Burghers and New Licht Burghers bred Old Licht Anti-Burghers and New Licht Anti-Burghers; some degree of unity being restored with the formation in 1847 of the United Presbyterian Church. The halls of their synods rang with endless controversy on two crucial points. First: who was eligible for salvation? Second: what was the right relation of Church and State? These issues were debated with fanatical scrupulosity. The general feeling on the first point was that members of the Secession Church were certainly saved, with the possibility that some presbyterians of other persuasions might be also; and on the second,
that interference by the State in Church affairs was blasphemous, but that the State might do well to implement the policies of the Church; everyone would be better off, for example, if Episcopalianism and other misguided creeds were abolished.

In this atmosphere Dr. Brown was brought up, and of course it formed his mind. As he wrote to Lady Trevelyan: "You know I am a vile grovelling 'Voluntary' in religion, in Education, in everything, and therefore you must (in that respect) detest and abhor me, and desire my immediate extinction." (The Letters of Dr. John Brown ed. John Brown and D.W. Forrest, 1907, p.89.) In other words he detested, just as the Secessionists did, all interference by the State in the life of the private individual, even that so passionately advocated by Ruskin. In his view Society, "that great natural, normal institute, as different in nature, in means and in ends from Government as health...differs from disease & food from medicine" (unpublished letter of 13 June 1853 to George Combe, in NLS MS.7331, ff.95-100), should be free to provide for its own needs and to regulate its own business just as the disestablished churches did. His "Notes on Art" (Horae II) condemns the government patronage of art, as for example in the institution of colleges of art and design by government, and offers the alternative: "All this, you see, would be avoided, and society left to provide its own Art, as it provides its own beef and trowsers for itself; if men would hold with John Locke and Coventry Dick, and against, that Government, the State, has simply nothing to do with these things, that they are ultra vires not less than religion, and, I am bold to add, education."

The ambiguous relation Brown had with the church of his
forefathers is beautifully typified by the relationship he had with his own father, in the shadow of whose pulpit he gleaned his first impressions of the world outside his nursery. Till he was aged 11, when the family moved from the wilds of a country parish in Bigger to the relative sophistication of Rose St. Church, Edinburgh (itself not so tame a town then as it is now), John Brown got his entire education from his father. It is not known how he was taught, but his grounding in Evangelical doctrine, and in the Bible, as it appears in his later writings, was as thorough as Ruskin's. The son felt for his father, as for his religion, love mingled with awe; great tenderness, but also more of respect than permits intimacy. The passion of the votaries of Evangelicalism, pressed into strict channels, often emerged into everyday life as a hard and cutting instrument; a tool to do great work in the hands of the sect, but unable to bend in private life to the natural manners of affection. Dr. Brown describes this in his moving and graphic memoir of his father, "Letter to John Cairns, D.D."; how the demonstration of the Reverend John Brown's love to his children became almost painful to him. He told them: "I have a well of love; I know it; but it is a well, and a draw well, to your sorrow and mine, and it seldom overflows, but...you may always come hither to draw." His son adds: "The expression of his affection was more like the shock of a Leyden jar, than the continuous current of a galvanic circle." ("Letter to John Cairns," Horae II.)

The religious root of this inarticulacy of the heart is starkly demonstrated by what Brown describes as "my first recollection of my father":

"On the morning of the 28th May 1816, my eldest sister Janet and I were sleeping in the kitchen-bed with Tibbie Meek,
our only servant. We were all three awakened by a cry of pain—sharp, insufferable, as if one were stung. Years after we two confided to each other, sitting by the burnside, that we thought that 'great cry' which arose at midnight in Egypt must have been like it. We all knew whose voice it was, and, in our night-clothes, we ran into the passage, and into the little parlour to the left hand, in which was a closet-bed. We found my father standing before us, erect, his hands clenched in his black hair, his eyes full of misery and amazement, his face white as that of the dead. He frightened us. He saw this, or else his intense will had mastered his agony, for, taking his hands from his head, he said, slowly and gently, 'let us give thanks,' and turned to a little sofa in the room; there lay our mother, dead." (This quotation and the rest in this section from "Letter to John Cairns".)

Though his grief was terrible, the self-command of the minister was wonderful; after his wife’s burial. "He went home, preached her funeral sermon, every one in the church in tears, himself outwardly unmoved". It was sheer will-power; in fact his life had changed from the moment of bereavement: "His entire nature had got a shock, and his blood was drawn inwards, his surface was chilled; but fuel was heaped all the more on the inner fires, and his zeal [for the ministry] ... burned with a new ardour".

The austerity of Brown’s home became more oppressive: "The manse became silent; we lived and slept and played under the shadow of that death, and we saw, or rather felt, that he was another father than before." "I question if there ever lived a man so much in the midst of men, and in the midst of his own
children, in whom the silences...were so predominant. Every Sabbath he spoke out of the abundance of his heart, his whole mind; he was then communicative and frank enough: all the week, before and after, he would not unwillingly have never opened his mouth." It was not that his wife's death had killed his love for his poor children; but religious duty had replaced love as the reliable pole-star of his life, and he could not be natural with them any more. The son hauntingly describes the delvings into German exegetics, as into a cold sea, which "chilled his surface", and robbed from a child his father's warmth:

"After my mother's death I slept with him; his bed was in his study, a small room, with a very small grate; and I remember well his getting those fat, shapeless, spongy German books, as if one would sink in them, and be bogged in their bibulous, unsized paper; and watching him as he impatiently cut them up, and dived into them in his rapid, eclectic way, tasting them, and dropping for my play such a lot of soft, large, curled bits from the paper-cutter, leaving the edges all shaggy. He never came to bed when I was awake, which was not to be wondered at; but I can remember often waking far on in the night or morning, and seeing that keen, beautiful, intense face bending over these Rosenmüllers, and Ernestis, and Storrs, and Kuinoels—the fire out, and the grey dawn peering through the window; and when he heard me move, he would speak to me in the foolish words of endearment my mother was wont to use, and come to bed, and take me, warm as I was, into his cold bosom."
From this cold bosom the young John Brown had to go eventually
and begin a career for himself in a colder world. He chose the
profession of medicine, and proved well qualified for it by his
disposition, which was naturally gentle and compassionate, calm
and good-humoured. He had a gift for sympathizing with his patients,
and for reassuring them, which made his visits more pleasant than a
doctor's usually are: there is much testimony to this. If, however,
he was an asset to his profession, it is another question whether
his profession was an asset to him. Medicine in the days before
chloroform was a grisly business; at the best of times the physician
has to deal in sickness, decrepitude and death, and Dr. Brown was
too sensitive to the negative side of his practice for his own good.

These misgivings were in the future; he began his studies
of medicine at Edinburgh University in good heart, and was soon
apprenticed as a student of surgery at the Minto House hospital
of James Syme, for which privilege his father paid £100 per annum.
Surgery then, when speed and dexterity of operation on the conscious
patient was at a premium, was an art almost as dashing as swordplay,
and Syme was one of the best practitioners in Britain: it was said
that "he never wasted a word, or a drop of ink, or of blood" (Horae
Subsecivae Series I, 1858, Introduction); and he had a macabre fame
for the originality and skill of his amputations. Operations were
performed in a kind of classroom before an audience of students. The
patient, entering like an actor on a stage, often walked to the
operating table, and from it.
Dr. Brown graduated from this hard school in 1831, and went, with a career to make and exciting prospects of success, for further experience as assistant to a Scottish doctor in Chatham. Here he was employed in making up medicines, "rubbing down patients who come for the vapour bath etc.", "bleeding and drawing teeth" (LJB, 14, 13), accompanying the Doctor on his rounds, and keeping the books. It was the first taste he had had of the world outside the Scottish lowlands, and the luxuriance of the southern landscape was a source of wonder to him:

"It is...even yet most beautiful, the richness of everything that has greenness is quite inconceivable by one who has not seen it—the woods and coppices, the very grass are different—and I sometimes think when I see the wooden houses covered with the vine and loaded with grapes, with the neat picturesque porch, the great trees and scrupulously tidy windows and benches before the door, with a Kentish man with his pure white Smock frock, his half boots, odd hat, and long waggoner's whip, drinking his beer and chatting to the neat and pretty landlady, that surely I am in France or some different climate." (LJB, 12.)

Alas, the resemblance to Arcadia was superficial. In 1832 the epidemic of Cholera which had been ravaging Britain descended on Chatham, wreaking its worst havoc among the convicts who were moored offshore in wretched prison hulks. By this time Brown and his fellow assistant were considered competent enough to be in charge of patients, and the emergency brought them plenty to work on:

"The poor convicts are still dying, and several of the sergeants have dropped down at drill and died in a few hours."
The people here have been very much alarmed, but they have all showed a fulness of confidence in us that is very pleasing. In fact we two are the great Cholera doctors, and ever and anon we are called in as most learned physicians.

We have had for the week past most harassing work, and although still able to hold on, the continual night work and the constant suspense we are kept in...has brought both of us down considerably." (LJF, 26.)

There is independent witness of how Brown acquitted himself at this period:

"Many years later, Charles Dickens was in Edinburgh reading his stories in public, and was dining with some Edinburgh people when Dickens began to speak about the panic which the Cholera had caused in England; how well some people had behaved. As a contrast, he mentioned that, at Chatham, one poor woman had died, deserted by everyone except a young physician. Someone, however, ventured to open the door and found the woman dead, and the young doctor asleep, overcome with the fatigue that had mastered him on his patient's death, but quite untouched by the general panic. 'Why, that was Dr. John Brown,' one of the guests observed." (Andrew Lang, "Rab's Friend", Century Magazine, Dec 1882.)

From such experiences, rather than books, the young doctor got his grounding in medicine, which he ever afterwards regarded as an essentially practical art. In Chatham he was called upon to perform major surgery—amputations and at least one mastectomy. He was then only twenty-two years old. He recalled one of these exploits many years later when writing to a friend: "It is 52
years since I performed the same operation, in Chatham, the poor woman, I was told, screamed all the time, but I was too taken up to hear her. Why was anaesthetics so long kept hid?" (Unpublished letter of 16 Jan 1880 to Mary Brown, in Edinburgh University Library, MS. Dk.7.604.) Such operations must have been almost as harrowing for the surgeon as the patient, and further experience failed to harden Dr. Brown to the use of the knife. When he returned to Edinburgh in 1833 he opted for general practice, despite the esteemed example of Syne—who, in Peddie's grim phrase, had "cut his way to fame" (Alexander Peddie, Recollections of Dr. John Brown, 1893.) According to the Rev. W.C. Smith, Brown was "too sensitive for the surgical branch of the profession" ("Dr. John Brown", Good Words, 1882, 446-51); a judgement confirmed by a close friend and medical colleague: "It was quite evident that he was not fascinated by the excitement of operative practice... his intensely sympathetic and sensitive nature seemed to recoil from the painful scenes of surgery." (Peddie, p.19.)

It was unfortunate for Brown that he was so thin-skinned: as a consequence, even the gentler business of being a family doctor, to which he devoted the rest of his life, tended to depress him, and he gave the sympathy that heartened his patients at the cost of his own comfort. He was too accessible for his own good. His charm, which became a byword—"There was a charm in his manner and conversation which is quite indescribable" (E.T. McLaren, Dr. John Brown and His Sisters, 1902, p.xii)—was founded on his ability to make the slightest of acquaintances feel that he understood and cared for them. Ill people long for such consolation even more than healthy ones do; and in his practice he made little
distinction between patient and friend. "His quick sympathy was personal in each case...it gladdened him to call forth the child's merry laugh...in the same way sorrow saddened him....He discovered with keenerst insight all that lay below the surface, dwelling on the good" (M'Laren, p.15); "Dr. Brown's heart...was drawn strongly out to those who, like himself, possessed a sympathetic and pathetic nature—quickly moved with pity for those in sorrow, while sympathetic with the joys of others" (Peddie, pp.61-2)..."this keen human sympathy indeed was the most powerful magnet in his friendships" (J.T. Brown, p.36).

In this generosity—almost promiscuity—of emotion, he was perhaps fulfilling a desire freely to open his heart, to love and be loved, which his mother's death, and his poor father's reticence, had stifled. It made his an attractive, and at the same time rather tragic figure. One of his eulogisers called him Christ-like: "He was one of those beloved physicians who can help the spirit as well as the body...by taking, in sympathy, 'their infirmities and bearing their sicknesses'. He suffered much because he gave so much of himself." (Andrew Lang, "Rab's Friend"; Lang claims to be quoting from Rev. John Ker D.D.'s _Sermons_, but upon consulting the book I can find no trace of the passage.) There was a cruel irony about his destiny as it unfolded: the quality that gave him his power and reputation as a doctor was chief among the factors which eventually were to destroy his peace of mind and shatter his own health. He had a mental breakdown in 1866; the main reason given for it by the editors of his letters was that 'the beloved physician' (as he was known) "could not bear the responsibility of his profession" (1LB, 135). In his career and in everything else, Dr. Brown
discovered that where he gave most freely of himself he suffered the most. "As a physician frequent contact with suffering humanity unhinged him much, and was indeed one of the greatest burdens of his life." (Peddie, p.150.)

His inability to profit by his labours was at times almost comical. He ought at least to have prospered materially at his vocation, whatever the expense to his spirit; but another of his weaknesses was his reluctance to come to the point about money with his patients after he had been in attendance. The coyness, as a rule, is all on the other side. Dr. Brown's patients were blessed with an excellent physician who was shy about presenting his bill. "I question if he was ever able when asked to name his fee, but left it entirely to the goodwill and ability of his patients." (Peddie, p.84.) Goodwill was always abundant—it is not an expensive article—but money was not; as a means of making an income Brown's practice was hopelessly impractical.

"So many of his patients were also his intimate friends, that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between professional visits and those of friendship. There was no fear of Dr. Brown overcharging; fees had very nearly to be forced upon him. He arranged with his friend Sir George Harvey, that if he left his hat in the hall he came as his medical attendant, if he held it in his hand as a friend. But after this was settled, he so often entered the room hat in hand, that something like a skirmish often took place, Dr. Brown resenting Sir George's efforts to transfer the hat to the hall table." (LJB, 199.)

Once, when he declined to take a fee from a friend, it was smuggled
into the house via the cook, who was ordered to serve it up with the
bird at dinner. Dr. Brown's response illustrates both his peculiar
rapport with his patients, and the eccentric humour of his lighter
moods, which was as characteristic of him, though less frequent, as
the melancholic vein:

"E M M A !—You may tell Ripley, Esqr., and yourself,
that the experiment has succeeded admirably. N I M [Brown's
nephew] is dead—he is quite calm—he swallowed that paper—
I gave it him as a bonne bouche, as the delicious trail. He
made a queer face and subsided—for ever. The funeral is on
Friday—next year. Helen confessed—after it was all over.
She and the Cook are in custody. The body is to be opened—
to slow music—by Professors Lister and Oakeley—and the money
extracted, to cover expenses. I spell it with a c, which is
obsolete. We expect Ripley to the funeral. We all—including
the late N I M—enjoyed the bird; we will carefully treasure
up this in our souls—Yours severely, J. B." (LJ3, p.251.)

It would have been pleasant had all Dr. Brown's fees been
served up with his meals, but not everyone was so conscientious
about paying their bills, and the Doctor's earnings suffered
accordingly. The very advantages of his position worked against
him. "After obtaining the degree of M.D. in 1833, Dr. Brown
commenced the practice of his profession with the brightest
prospects, having, in the first instance, the large congregation
of Broughton Place, to which his father had been transferred,
as a field for patients. Dr. Brown, however, was a man of too
keen sensibility and refined feeling to work at his profession in
anything like a mercantile spirit, and there can be no doubt that
he failed to take advantage of his social position to establish what might be termed a large general practice." (Obituary in Edinburgh Evening Courant, 12 May 1882.) As another obituary stated, he did not make much more than "a very quiet living" (obituary in Scotsman, 12 May 1882) from his medical work, and the living grew quieter to the point of silence as Dr. Brown got older and ill-health was added to his burdens. In 1876 he was rescued from actual penury by an award of £200 p.a. from the Civil List; his friends and patients came to his assistance by collecting a substantial testimonial for him among themselves; and with this security he was enabled to retire, rather ruefully, from full-time practice. He never quite gave up his profession however: "He did not take charge of any anxious cases, but very many of his old friends still eagerly expected visits, and he did not disappoint them." (LJB, p.200.)

So many of Dr. Brown's troubles arose from the stresses of his professional life that it is tempting to conclude he was in the wrong job, after all, and would have been better adjusted to some other calling—to literary work, for example, considering his inclination that way. It is unlikely, though, that the Doctor's disposition, which he himself called "constitutionally desultory" (unpublished letter of 14 July 1852 to George Combe, in NLS MS.7323 ff.26-7) would have allowed him to be happy in any regular and taxing employment. His work, despite the misery it sometimes caused him, was the main lifeline—the bond of sympathy—which linked him to his fellow men. Their gratitude graced his work unexpectedly, rewarding him even when his healing skills had failed or were powerless, for example at the death of Lady Dunfermline: "You would
see" he wrote "my old Lady and friend is at last gone over to the majority, and I feel it very much—a great steady interest taken out of my life. I really liked the curious old nature. The last thing she did was to give me a glorious bouquet of Roses which she had lain in bed holding for me for some hours: roses, and 96, and death!" (LB, p.236.) The incidents of his daily round roused him from the torpor of depression into which sad events and his own illnesses would often have plunged him, and "to the end he loved his profession." (David Masson, Edinburgh Sketches and Memories, 1892, pp.384-416.) His brother, remembering him, was emphatic on the point:

"One thing we must keep in mind, if we are to understand him, is that he was essentially a medical man. Not only was his profession his business and his duty but he really devoted himself to it. His literary work was quite strictly done in Spare Hours—"Horae Subsecivae". Some who knew him only from his writings thought that he was primarily a literary man, and only a doctor by accident. This was not at all the case." (Alexander Crum Brown, "Dr. John Brown", Famous Edinburgh Students, 1914, pp.159-63.)

This indeed can be deduced from many of Brown's writings, particularly the professional papers in Horae Subsecivae, First Series (1858), and his masterpiece, "Rab and His Friends". In his Lay Sermons on health (Health: Five Lay Sermons to Working People; first published in Good Words II, 1861, and then separately in 1862; never included in the Horae in Brown's lifetime) he indicated what satisfaction his work could give him, in a passage which touchingly recalls the idealism of his novice days in Chatham:
"Honey is not sweeter in your mouths, and light is not more pleasant to your eyes, and music to your ears, and a warm cosy bed is not more welcome to your wearied legs and head, than is the honest deep gratitude of the poor to the young Doctor. It is his glory, his reward; he fills himself with it, and wraps himself all round with it as with a cloak, and goes on in his work, happy and hearty; and the gratitude of the poor is worth the having, and worth the keeping, and worth the remembering."

The private life of Dr. John Brown should not occupy too large a place in a work of this kind: personal griefs, even those over a century old, should not be assumed to be everybody’s business, and it was never Brown’s fortune to be happy for long. Yet it may be that a slight sketch of Dr. Brown’s domestic trials, inglorious as they were, will partly serve to clarify traits of other, greater lives (those of Carlyle and of Ruskin for example) and will bring out some of the characteristics of the age and country that bred them.

To Ruskin, Brown’s shadowed existence, from its early days, was the type of Scottish sorrowfulness: "Who shall measure what the loss of his mother was to the child? The fixed melancholy which mingled with all Dr. John Brown’s power of just thought, and gave
the tone of a passing bell to his brightest joys, dated from that hour. Yet this pathetic temper it was which made him more perfectly representative of what is most sacred in his country. It is the sorrow of Scotland which is her real diadem." (Works XXXV, 465.) It is curious of Ruskin to describe sorrow as a diadem. Yet Dr. Brown had a certain resolved dignity in his suffering which justifies the phrase: his melancholy suited him, it seemed a homogeneous part of his nature. Is it too much to say, that in the sort of Scottish upbringing common to Brown, Ruskin, Carlyle and others, there was, not only a predisposition to melancholy, but also, as if in compensation, to a certain way of bearing it? In their deepest depressions these men maintained a decorum, a sense of fit behaviour, which Brown typifies, and which gave a grace to their unhappiest moments. The books and letters which record their troubles display an exceptional breeding; they are, as Brown said himself of Newman's letters, "So sincere & yet so graceful—with that pathetic fragrance, as of dead rose leaves." (Unpublished letter of about Sept 1866 to David Douglas; MS. in NLS, Acc.6134.)

The rose never bloomed for long in Dr. Brown's lifetime, nor did it in the life of his father. The minister's world, like his son's, was jolted when he was a boy of eleven by the shock of his mother's early death. He had loved his mother passionately and never fully recovered from the bereavement; ever afterwards he was prey to the "latent constitutional sadness" (as his biographer called it) which plagued him at intervals throughout his life. Like his son, he was morbidly sensitive: from this came an intense pleasure in literature, excessive religious scrupulosity,
and vulnerability when disaster struck; he veered with every wind between emotional extremes. "His temperament alternated between buoyant gaiety and pensive sadness." (John Cairns D.D., Memoir of John Brown D.D., 1860, p.39.)

A happy marriage and an engrossing ministry was perhaps the best setting for such a nature, and when the Reverend Brown married Jane Nimmo, "his student love" ("Letter to John Cairns"), in 1807, both were within his grasp; but successive bereavements shook his world again and he was left finally with only the ministry to cling to. The death of his wife in 1816, the vehemence of his grief and the iron control he wielded over it have been described above; this was shortly followed by the death of one of his three surviving children, little Maggie. She was

"stricken with sudden illness, malignant sore throat; her mother was gone, and so she was to my father as a flower he had the sole keeping of; and his joy in her wild mirth, his watching her childish moods of sadness, as if a shadow came over her young heaven, were themselves something to watch. Her delicate life made no struggle with disease...His distress, his anguish at this stroke, was not only intense, it was in its essence permanent; he went mourning and looking for her all his days; but after she was dead, that resolved will compacted him in an instant." ("Letter to John Cairns", as are the other quotations in this paragraph.)

She died on Sunday morning; in the afternoon he preached as usual, beginning: "It has pleased the Father of Lights to darken one of the lights of my dwelling—had the child lived I would have remained with her, but now I have thought it right to arise and come into
the house of the Lord to worship." This was almost the reductio ad absurdum of the presbyterian attitude towards mortality. His son commented sorrowfully: "Such violence to one part of his nature by that in it which was supreme, injured him: it was like pulling up on the instant an express train; the whole organisation is minutely, though it may be invisibly hurt....Such things are not right...."

For all his will-power, he had become "another father than before". After these deaths the minister dedicated himself with all his fierce will to his work, avoiding the expression of tenderness as something painful, trusting affection no more and taking to heart instead the lesson preached at his wife's graveside: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever." With this refrain in his ears his son, Doctor John, was brought up; small wonder that he inherited the over-sensitivity and moods of melancholy of his father, and that when disasters overtook him in his turn he too lost his buoyancy and turned to the bleak scriptural faith of his ancestors as his only security. The son had not his father's peremptory will, or his reticence, but in every other respect he bore the stamp of his birth and breeding; unhappiness, and the way that the Christian should bear it, were lessons he was instructed in from the first.

This training however was not so relevant when Brown was a young man, taking exuberant delight in the excitements of Edinburgh culture. In the 1830s his enthusiasm had found the perfect object: he had fallen passionately in love with a young beauty, Catherine M'Kay (Kitty), and courted her, till he knew her feelings for him, with a characteristic blend of ardour and
diffidence. A diary he kept during this eventful time, in 1838 (unpublished; MS. in NLS, Acc.6134), records both his frustrations—"quite worn out with anxiety about Kitty & the future"; "Home with a grievous headache and unhappy"; "loved her more than ever when and how shall all this end"—and his exaltations: rhapsodies about her "long white arm", "her beautiful shoulders", her "inestimable eyes" etc., and her moral and spiritual beauties.

It was a case of old-fashioned romantic love. She loved him too, so all went well. Some time before their marriage she had to go down to Hull by ship to take up a temporary situation as a governess; this was hard on her lover, but Brown, confident by this time that she reciprocated his love, made the best of it: "Saw her again & kissed her & tried all I could to fix the sensation till it was repeated—not unhappy..." After Kitty's departure the diary takes on the form of a letter addressed to her, and Brown described his first restless night after the ship had sailed: "I put down the gas...& laid down in the middle of the bed & kissed you several times it was a poor imitation but better than nothing perhaps I shall get better at it & then I soon fell asleep thinking that the wind prowling about the back of the houses would perhaps soon be roaring among the yards of the Royal William & I awoke often...

All went well, though slowly. Kitty had been reduced to the somewhat menial occupation of governess because her family had got into financial difficulties, and this was an obstacle to the marriage. At last the way was cleared: on 4 June 1840 Catherine M'Kay and John Brown were married. Her dowry was not extensive; a friend recalled: "unless it were her clothes, all that she brought
with her on her marriage was two or three odd volumes of the
Spectator. 'You'll observe' [Dr. Brown] remarked to me, 'that
all good women love the Spectator.' " (J.T. Brown, p.93.) Later
she bore the Doctor three children: John, Helen, and a daughter
who died in infancy, as his father's Maggie had died.

The couple never appear to have faltered in their love for
one another. Dr. Brown always idolised his wife, and she, it seems,
repaid his idolatry in kind. It must be admitted that some
acquaintances found Mrs. Brown difficult to get on with; Ruskin,
for instance, who described the Browns to his father after meeting
them in Edinburgh: "Lady Trevelyan's particular friends, the Doctor
at least—the lady I don't like—nor I think does Lady T. Wary.
Black-eyed. Vicious expression like a biting horse." (Unpublished
letter of 27 Nov. 1853 to John James Ruskin, from Edinburgh; MS.
at the Beinecke Library, Yale.) The first impression may have been
deceptive; quite another side of Kitty's personality was presented
to Brown, one he insisted upon in a letter to his brother: "You are
all wrong in thinking Kitty....is a tragedy queen, or has any heroic,
savage beauties. She is a soft hearted, silly girl, who loves with
her whole soul..." (LJB, p.52.) That someone loved him this much
was, for Brown, manna in the desert.

But "all flesh is grass...the grass withereth, and the flower
thereof falleth away." The delight Dr. Brown got from the "white
arm" and the "beautiful shoulders" and the loving heart of his wife
was cut short in the late fifties and early sixties when she fell
ill with a progressive mental disease. The case was one of "gradual
extinction of the reason through structural disease of the brain"
(unpublished letter from Dr. Brown of about 1860, written to Lady
Dunfermline; MS. in NLS, Minto MSS. no.13171). She suffered intensely and went insane. For her husband her decline towards death was a nightmare. Her health had caused concern throughout the fifties; by 1861 she had become irreversibly mad, and for the next four years the Doctor had the consciousness of her degeneration continually with him as he tried to carry on the ordinary business of life, the care of his children, and the practice of his profession. In January 1861 he wrote to a friend: "My dearest is still with us, but going down more and more into darkness; sweet and good and full of love, but almost beyond the reach of our love. In the story of Rab the words, 'Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and lovable, condemned by God to bear such a burden,' are her own. They occurred in a letter to me about Ailie*; how terribly true they now are of her own beloved self...I go about in a dream, but the stroke will come some day and awake me." (Letter to Mrs. J.T. Fields, published in her A Shelf of Old Books, 1894, pp.88-9.) In another letter he wrote of "the one great fear of my days and nights, that my dear & wise & to me—in a way quite unusual—invaluable wife is lost for this world to me—her mind gone." (Unpublished letter of about early sixties, dated 1 Dec, probably to John Downes; MS. in NLS. Acc6134.) The strain this put on Dr. Brown, injured, like his father, in the very quarter from which he derived most sympathy and strength, can be imagined; and the strain was horribly protracted. It was not until 1864 that Kitty slipped from inaccessible delirium into the calm of death.

* Who, in "Rab and His Friends", had cancer of the breast, from which she died.
The abrupt release of tension, the recoil after years of fear, uncertainty and dogged endurance, was such that at first Dr. Brown was exalted by his wife's death into a weirdly joyous state of mind, a mood of euphoria:

"Yes, my dear friend and hers, we will think of her now as she was: bright and lovely, keen and good and faithful, and full of duty and sense and hidden tenderness. I never knew till she was broken, and her inner nature disclosed by the rifts of the horrible shattering 4 years ago, how simple, how abiding her love was; and my only feeling now is gratitude to God, and to her, and to my friends...of course I know how unworthy, how unkind, how imperfect, how unfulfilling, how unlike her I have been; but in spite of this she loved me, sweet darling, to the end. The children are well; they are terrified at the horribleness of death, of their mother's death, their faithful and best friend, but they are reconciled, and they are young." (UB, pp.167-8.)

The unnatural buoyancy of Dr. Brown's spirits could not last; but at least it kept him, for the time, from utter collapse:

"You say very truly what I am feeling—very strange it is—but I was happier for 4 or 5 days after her death than I ever probably was in all my life. I was so thankful for her relief, her certain blessedness—her escape from the burden—the imprisonment of the flesh—& thankful too for her wonderful delightfulfulness & faithfulness to me all her life,—& for some hope of meeting her again—I was exalted above my own selfish miseries & wants, but the ebb is coming now and the changeless want. The 'no more' of everything is dulling me." (MS. version
of the letter to John Downes published in LJB, p.168; original in NLS, Acc.6134.)

His wife’s death was in fact as bad for Brown as his mother’s death had been for his father; he never recovered from it. His thoughts, no longer dominated by her actual suffering, wistfully returned to what she was before her illness:

"My dear John, think often of your dear mother, try and recollect her, and keep her look and voice in your mind and heart; you will never see any one so good, at any rate no one more true and loving and wise; and try to think of her as existing and thinking of you and your best good, praying to her God and yours to keep you from sin and from harm; and in your prayers thank God for having given you such a mother, and pray to be made like her, so truthful and dutiful and to be trusted to the uttermost."

(LJB, p.172.)

Gradually his natural inclination to melancholy, joined to endless regrets, self-reproach and worries about his work became an almost intolerable burden: "I have no news & I have no ideas save such as it would not be for any one’s comfort to have. I don’t know what it is but I live in miserable regrets of the past & the dreadful anticipations of the future and the present exists only as a passing from the one into the other." (Unpublished letter of 17 July 1867 to Mrs. Blackie; MS. in NLS, 2628 f.174.) Two years after his wife’s death this misery had its inevitable conclusion: "He could not bear the responsibility of his profession, and for a short time he had to leave Edinburgh." (LJB, p.135.) This was in June 1866. Ruskin remarked on it to a friend: "yesterday comes a letter from Edinburgh saying my old friend Dr. John Brown is gone mad—owing to, among
other matters, pecuniary affairs (after a whole life of goodness and usefulness.)." (Markham XXXVI, 512-3.)

To Ruskin, some time later, Brown described what had occurred:

"Five years ago past in June, my mind lost its self-control for a short time and was shattered. It went off like a watch that has lost the restraint on the spring and which runs through a day in 10 minutes, and though outwardly quiet and even torpid, it is within as if a Rupert drop knew the peril that is within it, with outer film of smooth glass. I am thoroughly and forever shattered and done for, cannot think to any purpose, cannot write, have no hope, no relish for anything but sleep and forgetfulness. I work every day at my own proper work, probably as much as ever, but within all things have come to an end. I only feel that I cannot feel. I did not mean to say all this; it is wickedness even to put it into words—forgive me, my dear friend." (LJB, pp.206-7.)

Immediately after the breakdown he was packed off for rest and treatment to an institution near Montrose called, brightly, "The Sunnyside Asylum": and there he remained for about three months, taking cover under the somewhat unlikely pseudonym of Adam Addison. One letter survives from this period, shortly before the Doctor was due to return to Edinburgh. It illustrates, among other things, the awful sense of guilt that pervaded his depressions. His mind was in such a state, he wrote, that he found the prospect of returning home to his friends like the prospect of execution: "You all misunderstand my real character..."
Oh! my dear friend, if I could but feel the past three months to be as an ugly dream—cut out and separate from the rest of my life—but I cannot—rather it is the true ripening of a life of the most entire frivolity, vanity, speciousness and insincerity."

(Unpublished letter of 10 Sept 1866 to Charles Maclaren; MS. in NLS, Acc.6134.)

Dr. Brown had many friends willing to help him, all the same; though his despair probably sprang too deeply to be much affected by kindness. A noble letter from Benjamin Jowett, the translator of Plato, written while Brown was in the Asylum, shows that not all Victorians shrank with horror (as people do often enough now), from mental illness:

"My dear Dr Brown

I have been very sorry to hear of your illness. I thought that I would like to write a few lines to ask how you are. but do not trouble yourself to answer them if it is disagreeable to you.

I hear through Mr Syme & others that there is every prospect of your returning to Edinburgh shortly. What you have gone through (perhaps the greatest trial that any human being can go through) should be regarded by yourself & others as the unavoidable consequence of the suffering life which you have led for some years past.

There seem to me in such mental trials to be only two things that we can do for ourselves: First to have an entire trust in God even when our mind is failing us: there is a mind above our mind which takes the place of it—under which for a time we rest peaceful & helpless—if sins trouble
us, we know that this is not the time for thinking about sins because we cannot see them as they truly are: ("Beloved if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart & knoweth all things") Secondly, I think we should try & be aware that our illusions though they cannot be got rid of at times are only illusions: the illusion has almost departed when we can accomplish this. I hope that you get as much daylight & sunshine into your mind as you can.

I have a great sympathy with the mental trials of others which makes me write to you. If it would give you any pleasure to see me & have a little conversation I would gladly come—(if you could let me know before Saturday when I am leaving these parts.) I remember your coming out to meet me at Minto this time last year." (Unpublished letter of about August 1866; MS. in NLS, Acc.6289.)

This was the best comfort that a generous man could give: it was not Jowett's fault that Brown's malaise was beyond the reach of generosity. Though hardly improved in spirits, Dr. Brown left the asylum for a tour of a few weeks on the continent; by December he was back in Edinburgh, and was soon at work.

The rest of the story is shortly told. Dr. Brown was, in his own words, "thoroughly and forever shattered"; life had lost its savour, and it was as much as he could do to go through the motions of everyday life. The kindness of his friends merely gave him more grounds for self-reproach, as he had not the energy even to be grateful: "I only feel that I cannot feel". His resilience was gone; that dead depression which is felt at times by all became for him almost a permanent state. In a letter of 1880 he
repeated the expression he had used to explain his condition to Ruskin in 1871: "I wish I was one tenth as good and cheery and thankful and diligent in thinking and feeling as you are...My heart is empty and dry as summer dust, no caring for anyone or for anything, but sleep and forgetfulness." (Unpublished letter of 1 Nov 1880, perhaps to Susie Beever or Jean Severn; MS. in NLS, Acc.6289.) If he salvaged anything from the wreck, it was his continued interest in books and art: "I am I feel shattered for life in my nerve and physique & in that part of me that deals with men and the outer world—but I don't think my mind as an instrument of thought and aesthetic (as distinguished from true affective) feeling is much damaged & I may yet write from time to time—a little." (Unpublished letter of about Sept 1866 to David Douglas; MS. in NLS, Acc.6134.)

He had another breakdown in 1876, which caused him to retire, at last, from practice; so far, that is, as his friends would allow him. In the same year, as mentioned earlier, he was awarded a civil list pension of £200 p.a., ostensibly in recognition of his services to literature, but partly no doubt to save him from the embarrassment of financial difficulty. This was a fortunate arrangement from many points of view, but to Brown it was a bitter humiliation: he had even failed, he felt, to make a success of his chosen career. He wrote privately that the pension meant he was "done for", and "in forma pauperis". (Unpublished letter of 1876 to David Douglas; MS. in NLS, Acc.6134.)

It is pleasant to be able to record some lightening of the gloom in the last few months of Dr. Brown's life. In late 1881, for no clear reason, he recovered some of his old spirits
and enjoyment of society, and was even emboldened to begin the collection of a new volume of his writings, *Horae Subsecivae Series Three*. He had indeed shown some signs of rekindling vitality the previous winter, as is clear from the inimitably odd nonsense of such letters as the following, to his niece:

"23 Rutland Street, Edinburgh

18 December 1880

My dear M A C G I E---We are going to be very happy to have you for a day; the bed is being lengthened and (by your Mother's advice) strengthened. Charlie will meet you at the train with a cab and the B A N D of the 196th Regiment, and you will go in triumph, the cab being open and warm bottles for your feet, along Princes Street. There will (not) be a triumphal Arch at Rutland Street, but there will be a warm bowl of B E E F T E A presented to you on the threshold of No. 23, and John will play a March from Beethoven on the J E W S harp through the lobby, and you know you must be kind and merciful to us, and not frighten me; so good-bye; my love to yourself and to G U*.---Your affectionate and QUEER Uncle,

J E Y E B E E.

23 Rutland Street, Edinburgh,

5 minutes after the first letter.

My dear Maggie---I have stupidly addressed my letter to you

* Mary Guthrie Tait, daughter of Professor Tait.
as Miss Maggie Brown. You know you are a Brown, so you will claim it. Do you prefer beef-tea to potato soup made with good stock? If so, write to—Yours affectionately and stupidly,

J. Brown." (LJ, p.269.)

David Douglas, his publisher, attributed his new enthusiasm for life to an encouraging letter which Dean Hole of Rochester had written to him; but it seems probable that the causes lay deeper in his subconscious. Whatever the reason for the change, it was short-lived, the brief sparkle of a falling star. In the spring of 1882 death came to release Dr. Brown in his turn from "the imprisonment of the flesh"; perhaps it was not unwelcome. Douglas wrote to inform Dean Hole of the event:

"May 12 1882

Dear Sir,

I have to tell you the sad news of Dr. John Brown's death. It took place yesterday morning. His mind clear until the final separation and he was able to take an affectionate farewell of his friends on Wednesday night...

He was out on Friday as usual but somewhat depressed...on Saturday Morning...he thought himself ill and requested that an old favourite nurse might be sent for. She came on Monday and he said when he saw her, 'Come away, Mrs Scott, you know you 'trysted' to be with me at my death.' On Wednesday afternoon all hope was given up...

Now I tell you this knowing the regard you had for him and to thank you on the part of his Edinburgh friends for being the means of raising him from his apathy by writing
to him so cordially in October last regarding "John Leech". I look upon your writing to him as the turning point from great depression to a state of mental vigour such as he had not shown for 20 years. After getting your encouragement he entered heartily into the correction of his papers and quite enjoyed the praises of a new generation of critics. He has been very happy since Xmas last in various ways." (Letter published in Betty Massingham, Turn on the Fountains, 1974, pp.163-4.)

Despite all the miseries that beset him, this sorrowful and vulnerable man maintained the sincerity of his nature to the grave. Sorrow did not spoil him. Like his father, he was almost naive about suffering; again and again when the blow fell he innocently looked for the hand of God at work, though the plan was at times obscure: "What a world of pain and mystery and misgivings of all sorts. Why did the great Father send out his children at all? I mean such wicked, useless children?" (Unpublished letter of 5 Dec 1857 to Coventry Dick; MS. in NLS, Acc. 6134.) If things were wrong, he thought, then the fault must be in himself; for surely behind the baffling cruelties of creation a benevolent purpose was hidden, and a God who wanted to make men happy in the end. "What a dying, strange, darkened world it is!—and how much darker and insufferable would it be—but for the sure and certain hope." (Unpublished letter probably of 1874, dated 10 April, to Lady Minto; MS. in NLS, Minto MSS. no.12364.) Dr. Brown would accuse himself of malice, but never Fate; and thus he denied himself even the relief of cynicism, and the excuse of selfishness. Whatever the defects of this philosophy, it shed
a clear light over his character that made him "the Beloved Physician", and one of the most attractive of men. For all that he was a "wreck", "no one knew him but loved him" (W.C. Smith's article in Good Words; see above). Mark Twain commemorated his friend in a graceful tribute: "He was the most extensive slaveholder of his time, and the kindest: and yet he died without setting one of his bondsmen free." (LJ3, p.361.)

The poignant feature of Brown's life, and of the lives of other great Victorians, Ruskin's for example, was this sweetness and gentleness of nature, and refinement of demeanour, which they preserved unsoured amid the banal perversity of events. It gives them, to the sympathetic eye, almost an epic stature: like the foredoomed Hector and Achilles they had only the prospect of misery before them, "all flesh was grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass"; but for all that they behaved as they thought men should. To do their duty and to care for their fellow creatures was more to them than the pursuit of happiness. The over-sensitivity to the evils of the world which crushed Brown was shared by the best of his contemporaries, Ruskin and Carlyle for instance; and in them it was a spur to do battle, in anger and despair. The bravery of their struggle for human values, in a world fast becoming chaotic, seems to me an integral, and noble, part of the Victorian temper. In their lonely fight they were prepared—their upbringing had prepared them—to forgo happiness.
It was to art and literature that Dr. Brown turned from the troubles of his profession and his personal life. All his life he read the important new books of prose and poetry as they appeared, and ingested enormous amounts of older literature, both classic and curious, indulging himself, as Ruskin said, "like a cormorant" (Letter 72); and the arts too were a paradisial orchard where he satisfied his appetite for what he called "fine confused feeling". It was all recreation for him; which perhaps helps to explain why he never took himself seriously as an author, and why his writing was always the work and pleasure of "Idle Hours". Literature and art were for him a turning away from everyday life. "I am not an Artist but a Doctor," he wrote to one of his favourite authors, "but Art has been to me a blessing all my life & every year more & more. My profession leads me to see much of disorder, & misery & pain & ugliness & sin & I am the better of something that keeps alive in me the relish & the perception of the opposites of all these—in this way your book is & will for ever be to me a truly useful book." (Unpublished letter of 2 June 1846 to John Ruskin; MS. in Ruskin Galleries, Bembridge School, I.O.W.)

That this passion for the arts should have its root in the stony soil of a Secession manse is mildly incongruous. The Presbyterian church in Scotland had inherited, in modified form, nearly all the attributes we associate with Puritanism; among them a tendency, especially in earlier days, to think of the fruits of
culture—art, literature and music—as worldly toys just this side of sinfulness; barely permissible, and if permitted, always very liable to abuse. As late as the middle of the eighteenth century, for example, the theatre was abominated by most Edinburgh presbyterians as being "the actual temple of the Devil where he frequently appeared clothed in a corporeal substance and possessed the spectators whom he held as his worshippers." (T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People, 1969, p.220.) The first permanent theatre to be built in Glasgow was burnt down by a mob on its opening night. Dr. Brown's father, as it happens, fell foul when young of his church's intolerance of reckless aesthetic proclivities:

"Undoubtedly, there were at this time uneasy impressions in some quarters, that these symptoms [of a love for secular literature] augured ill for the adherence of this rising student to the old paths of the Secession. There is no evidence, however, that Mr Brown was at this period shaken in his attachment to any doctrine of the gospel, or that his personal religion was compromised by his extreme addiction to philosophical and poetical literature. He seems to have felt a somewhat violent recoil from the popular style of evangelical preaching, and to have expected more from a different method than the wisdom of this world can ever yield. This gradually corrected itself, and ere long the matter of his discourses ran with sufficient clearness into the old moulds to lull all suspicion to rest... the lights of philosophy and literature became henceforth satellites of that ancient gospel, which for one moment they had threatened to obscure if not displace." (John Cairns D.D., Memoir of John Brown D.D., 1860, pp.47-8.)
The enthusiasm submerged, but remained. "In the highest kind of poetry he enjoyed the sweet pain of tears; and he all his life had a steady liking, even a hunger, for a good novel...he used always to say that Sir Walter and Goldsmith, and even Fielding, Miss Piggeworth, Miss Austen, and Miss Ferrier, were true benefactors to the race, by giving such secure and innocent pleasure." ("Letter to John Cairns"). It is striking in this passage how the minister felt obliged, even to his family, to vindicate his favourite authors—"even Fielding"—from the charge of being not innocent, and not secure. Such Scottish scrupulousness can be traced behind the thrill of naughtiness which in Ruskin's household attended the reading of such an indubitably profane writer as Byron (see Proserpina, Works XXXV, 141-2); reading for the evangelical was very much a matter of edification or corruption as well as enjoyment or boredom. At any rate, it was probably from his father's somewhat stealthy delight in poetry and novels that Dr. Brown got his own exuberant enthusiasm; which in consequence seems at times to be a reaction into gormandising from a harmfully austere regime.

Edinburgh was just the place for a young man, fresh from the backwoods of Biggar, to discover and gratify a taste for the fine things of literature. The golden age of Scottish culture was passing, but still cast departing gleams over Brown's youth: Cockburn, Jeffrey, Wilson, Hogg, Sydney Smith, Brougham and Scott were all living when the Doctor was in his twenties, they could be seen still about the streets of the capital, or met socially; they were heroes, but they trod on earth like ordinary men, and were putting the finishing touches to their legends. "To say what should be said concerning Dr. John Brown, a man...should remember
much of that old generation of Scotchmen to which the author of 
*Rab and His Friends* belonged," that generation of "wits and 
scholars of the North, those epigoni, who were not, indeed, of 
the heroes, but who had seen and remembered Scott and Wilson..."
(Lang, *op.cit.*)

"The young doctor made the most of the opportunities 
offered; he read voraciously, involved himself with the pioneering 
exploits of the Scottish Academy (founded in 1826 by some young 
Scottish artists; later the Royal Scottish Academy), haunted 
exhibitions, and cultivated the friendship of as many literary men 
as he could contrive to meet or correspond with. The time shortly 
after his return from Chatham must have been one of the happiest 
eras of his life. New art and new books dominate his letters, as 
they must have dominated his conversation. Something of the 
flavour of the time survives in a reminiscence by his lifelong 
friend, John Taylor Brown, of an evening in 1835 spent strolling 
in the country discussing Wordsworth's *Yarrow Revisited*, which 
had appeared shortly before:

I soon found that we were quite at one in our admiration, 
and I think the most of our talk that evening was about the 
great poet. We walked out by the Ferry Road, and I remember 
that we sat a long time on an old crumbling dyke (now, alas! 
improved away) near Craigcrook Castle, reading the book 
together and comparing notes about its finest passages...I 
remember that summer evening how animated he became....How 
delightful it was I need not say, to have one's own aridours, 
hitherto perhaps kept to oneself, or if divulged disregarded 
or perhaps laughed at, thus reciprocated with usury. To me
it was a new experience, and one of the happiest which this
world had to give." (J.T. Brown, pp.28-33.)

It was Brown's ingenuous custom, when anything he had read
had especially pleased him, to write to the author concerned a
letter of praise and gratitude which must have been very delightful
to receive. His first written words to Ruskin were: "It is the
duty of every man, who has received any good thing & above all if
it be signal, spiritual, everlasting, to give thanks to the Father
of Lights from whom it has come down. It is not so generally
regarded as a duty, to return our thanks to the human instrument
of this divine goodness, but it seems to me quite as truly though
not so deeply obligatory as the other. This is my reason & my
excuse for thus addressing you." (Letter to Ruskin of 2 June 1846;
MS. at Bembridge.) This pious policy gained Brown many gracious
replies, and in this way he struck up acquaintance with many men
of genius and talent; Thackeray and Ruskin, Sir John D. Coleridge,
George Combe and R.H. Hutton of the Spectator were certainly
befriended in this manner, and so doubtless were others. The
friendships thus made, in the instances mentioned, lasted for life.

Brown evidently relished contact with celebrities, and the
naivety of his enjoyment, like the extravagance of the nouveau
riche, earned him the contempt of more urbane personalities. When
Adam Bede came out in 1859 Dr. Brown was carried away in admiration
of the book and left no-one in any doubt as to his approval. John
Blackwood indicated this at the time in a letter to G.H. Lewes:
"Let G.E. [George Eliot] know that I am told there is to be a
most enthusiastic Review of Adam in the North British I should not
wonder if it were by our friend Dr. John Brown "the worshipper of
"Genius" as we call him." (Unpublished letter of 6 April 1859; MS. in NLS, Blackwood Papers Acc.5634, D3.) In this surmise Blackwood was mistaken: but Brown was so pleased by the novel that he wrote George Eliot one of his ardent letters, which Blackwood passed on with the comment, "I enclose a communication from a 'worshipper of genius' here who has been raving to me about Adam and raving sensibly, which is not always the case in the worthy Doctor's enthusiastic fits." (The George Eliot Letters ed. G.S. Haight, 7 vols, 1954-5, III, 11.) Despite Blackwood's sneer the Doctor got a gushing reply from George Eliot for his pains; she noted in her diary "received the first agreeable token." (Haight, III, 11 n.)

If we are to judge from Blackwood's letters, Brown had gained himself a reputation for the facile and almost servile veneration of literary lions. His habit of eulogising those he admired was, admittedly, almost a foible; he was, as David Masson called him, "a propagandist of his admirations" (op.cit.), and where he admired, he admired without reservation. In Horae Subsecivae, and still more in his private correspondence, he multiplied expressions of reverence for the great men of the past and praise of the great (and not so great) men and women of the day as though they were divinities ranged in a Pantheon. This was particularly bad for his literary criticism, which often lacks bite because it has no negative element: the over-appreciativeness cloyes. To quote Masson again, "some of his papers are little more than patches of quotations connected by admiring comments." The Victorians, it is true, did not always think this a fault; "Pet Marjorie", which is written exactly to Masson's formula, became a best-seller; but the modern reader is inclined to find the style sugary and unwholesome.
Several things can be said in Brown's defence. First, for example, that if he enthused, at least he chose worthy objects of enthusiasm. He was confident of the genius of Tennyson, George Eliot, Thackeray and Ruskin long before most contemporary critics had made up their minds in favour; he was one of the first readers of modern times to recognise the importance of Henry Vaughan as a poet and to draw the public's attention to the fact; and he was from his youth "a believer in Turner" (letter to Ruskin of 2 June 1846) with something of Ruskin's fervour. Secondly, if he flattered writers in his letters, at least it was sincere flattery, that is to say he flattered them behind their backs, as well as to their faces; if his praise was extravagant, it arose from genuine regard. He did not cut his cloth to suit the customer but believed in the virtues of those he complimented and was loyal, usually, to the opinions he had formed of them. He was lavish with his compliments because it made him feel better; it certainly made them feel better, and warm sentiments were generated all round. Thirdly, the fact is that most authors like, and some even need, to be flattered. Effie Gray, when she was Ruskin's wife-to-be, evidently felt that Brown was a sycophant, and warned her fiancé: but Ruskin refused to be perturbed. "I am sorry you are so much offended with Dr. Brown—but you know as Dr. Johnson says—flattery always is pleasant in some degree because it at any rate shows that the flatterer thinks you worth flattering—worth his pains...This is not so with flattery for a mere and palpable gain...Dr. Brown has no object in flattering me—except the mere desire of making himself agreeable." (Admiral Sir William James, The Order of Release, 1947, p.89.) This was always Brown's desire. The weakness that Dr. Johnson
extenuated and Blackwood poked fun at had nothing bad in it; at worst it was a lingering provincialism, like the awe of a man from the country at the splendours of city life. Brown was never as blasé as the coarser-grained Blackwood; for him art and literature had always something rich and strange and sacred about them.

— 5 —

These acquaintances made on the pretext of admiration showed surprising durability. Typical among them was the friendship with Thackeray, which began in 1848 and lasted until the death of the novelist in 1863, an event which Brown commemorated touchingly in his paper "Thackeray's Death" (Horae Subsecivae, Third Series, 1882). Brown had admired Thackeray's work since its first appearance in Fraser's Magazine and Punch, and in 1848 he took an unusual way of showing his appreciation:

"There happened to be placed in the window of an Edinburgh jeweller a silver statuette of Mr. Punch, with his dress en rigueur, his comfortable and tidy paunch, with all its buttons; his hunch; his knee-breeches, with their tie....In his hand was his weapon, a pen; his skull was an inkhorn, and his cap its lid. A passer-by—who had long been grateful to our author, as to a dear unknown and enriching friend, for his writings in Fraser and in Punch, and had longed for some way of reaching him, and telling him how his work was relished and valued—bethought
himself of sending this ink-stand to Mr. Thackeray. He went in, and asked its price. 'Ten guineas, Sir.' He said to himself, 'There are many who feel as I do; why shouldn't we send him up to him? I'll get eighty several half-crowns, and that will do it!'....the half-crowns were soon forthcoming, and it is pleasant to remember that in the 'octogint' are the names of Lord Jeffrey and Sir William Hamilton, who gave their half-crowns with the heartiest good-will. A short note was written telling the story. The little man in silver was duly packed, and sent with the following inscription round the base:—

GULIELMO MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
ARMA VIRUMQUE
GRATI NECHON GRATAR EDINENSES
LIXX.
D. D. D."

(Dr. John Brown, "Thackeray's Death", North British Review XL, 1864, pp.222-3.)

Naturally this present delighted Thackeray, and he wrote back immediately with his thanks:

"Such tokens of regard and sympathy are very precious to a writer like myself who have some difficulty still in making people understand what you have been good enough to find out in Edinburgh, that under the mask satirical there walks about a sentimental gentleman who means not unkindly to any mortal person....I hope I may be able to tell the truth always, and to see it aright, according to the eyes which God Almighty gives me. And if, in the exercise of my calling, I get friends, and find encouragement and sympathy, I need not tell you how
very much I feel and am thankful for this kind of support.
Indeed I can't reply lightly upon this subject or feel otherwise
than very grave when people praise me as you do." (LJB, pp.314-5.)

Some time later, when Thackeray was giving his lectures on
"The English Humorists" in 1851, and was due to bring them to
Edinburgh, he determined to make use of his previous connection
with the town and wrote to Dr. Brown accordingly:

"My Dear Sir, You have heard of my projected invasion
of your town, where I propose to mount my tub and send round
my hat in November or December next, if the good folk of
Edinburgh will hear me. I told J. Blackwood how kind you had
been on a former occasion, and he said that as an adviser and
backer, guide, philosopher, and friend in the coming venture
I could have no better person than yourself if you would
kindly act for me. Will you be so good as to think and say
what I had best do, what public room I can take, what prices
I should charge, whether Glasgow could be also favoured with
a visit, etc..." (Letter of 21 Sept. 1851, LJB, p.315.)

Brown accepted the commission eagerly; and though he was a little
provoked before the event at Thackeray's "mismanagement" of some
of the arrangements (LJB, p.95) the arrival of the novelist himself
dispelled all reservations. Brown liked the author even better
than his books. "The great man has come, and is a great man, as
well as writer. He is, in fact, greater as a man than as a writer,
and he is big as well as great, six feet two and built largely,
with a big, happy, shrewd head, and as natural in all his ways as
you yourself..." (LJB, p.95.) The lectures were a success; Brown
"lionised his author about the town" (The Letters and Private Papers
of W.M. Thackeray ed. C.N. Ray, 4 vols, 1945-6, II, 817) and the two men got on together famously. After Thackeray had gone on to lecture in Glasgow, Dr. Brown wrote to a friend:

"I wish you had been here for the last fortnight to have seen, heard and known Thackeray,—a fellow after your own heart,—a strong-headed, sound-hearted, judicious fellow, who knew the things that differ, and prefers Pope to Longfellow or Mrs. Barrett Browning, and Milton to Mr. Festus, and Sir Roger de Coverley to Pickwick...I have seen a great deal of him and talked with him on all sorts of things, and next to yourself I know no man so much to my mind. He is much better and greater than his works. His lectures have been very well attended, and I hope he will carry off £300....He is 6 feet 3 in height, with a broad kindly face and an immense skull. Do you remember Dr. Henderson of Galashiels? He is ludicrously like him,—the same big head and broad face, and his voice is very like, and the same nicety in expression and in the cadences of the voice. He makes no figure in company, except as very good humoured, and by saying now and then a quietly strong thing...He is as much bigger than Dickens as a three-decker of 120 guns is bigger than a small steamer with one long-range swivel-gun. He has set everybody here a-reading Stella's Journal, Gulliver, The Tatler, Joseph Andrews, and Humphry Clinker. He has a great turn for politics, right notions, and keen desires, and from his kind of head would make a good public man. He has much in him which cannot find issue in mere authorship." (Peddie, pp.50-1.)

It is characteristic of Dr. Brown's enthusiasm that his hero grows taller by an inch in successive letters. From this time onward,
he thought more highly of Thackeray perhaps than any other living writer, and as the years passed the friendship of the two men became steadily more affectionate. During his lecture tours, or in moments of respite from the toils of his editorial and literary work, or in pauses of the giddy round of social life, Thackeray would write to Brown with the air of a man seeking sanctuary from Vanity Fair. He was rather like a busy Roman poet longing, in the press of res publica, for the plain contentment of his rustic villa: "I have no earthly news to send you—only the most stupid good wishes, but I wish instead of waiting up in my room here for dinner and 3 courses and silver and champagne, I was looking forward to 23 [Rutland St., Dr. Brown's home], and that dear old Small beer." (Letter of 5 Jan 1852, LJB, p.317.)

The wry disparagement of the world's finery and folly, so natural to Thackeray's temperament, is a frequent theme of his letters to Brown, whose own world-weariness was profound:

"I send no condolences about the departure of your good old Father. He was ready I suppose, and had his passport made out for his Journey. Next comes our little turn to pack up and depart. To stay is well enough, but shall we be very sorry to go? What more is there in life that we haven't tried? What that we have tried is so very much worth repetition or endurance? I have just come from a beefsteak and potatoes 1 f., a bottle of Claret 5 f., both excellent of their kind, but we can part from them without a very severe pang, and note that we shall get no greater pleasures than these from this time to the end of our days. What is a greater pleasure? Gratified ambition? accumulation of money? What?
Fruition of some sort of desire perhaps; when one is twenty, yes, but at 47 Venus may rise from the sea, and I for one should hardly put on my spectacles to have a look. Here I am snarling away on the old poco curante theme. How good-natured you are not to be tired of me." (Letter of 4 Nov 1858, LJB, p.329.)

Thackeray's chagrin was always so wittily expressed that it would hardly have tired a much less good-natured individual than Brown. The comic undertone of the self-mockery made it in fact one of his most appealing traits. An unpublished letter from him among the NLS Brown papers shows the self-mockery, but also the strain of worldly prudence which mingled with his boyishness and his scorn for the world's fortune-hunters and snobs:

"Palace Green. Kensington W.

My dear J.B.

Look at the address, and henceforth write to me as above. It is a delightful house, comfortable and cheerful beyond measure, and o such a rent! But I have paid 5000£ in the 2 years of Cornhill out of savings, and hope to knock off the remaining score before very long. All house property rises in value hereabouts; and when I die, here's a comfortable income for one of the girls Laus Domino. I daresay I have told you this a hundred times afore. You know that my brain is softening and that I dont remember yesterday or yesterday's work business &c. N'importe. If you come to London we can give you a garret now. And this moving and my resignation at Cornhill will account to you for my not answering about Mr Lancaster & Dr Brown. I have told Smith that both of
you may send papers; and I hope you will. We part perfectly
good friends. He is most generous about money matters. I
know I was a bad Editor and o what a comfort it is to be
Editor no more but

Yours as before

W M T."

(Letter of about March 1862; MS in NLS, Acc.6134.)

Thackeray's sudden death came at the end of 1863 (24 Dec) and
Brown was "much shaken" by it (LJB, p.167). He wrote to Thackeray's
close friend Mrs. Brookfield, "We shall never see such a man &
such a friend again,—never." (Unpublished letter of 29 Dec 1863;
MS. in Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York.) He had no leisure to
meditate on the blow however, because it was soon followed by a more
shattering one: in January 1864 Mrs. Brown died. It was much later,
probably, that the loss of his dear friend really came home to
Dr. Brown. He had lost not simply a friend but a great example,
a conspicuous contemporary, who represented the values and style
that the Edinburgh doctor cherished in private. These were more
important to Dr. Brown than the relative merits of literary works,
and this was why he cared more for Thackeray the man than Thackeray
the writer. As Gordon Ray observes, the characters of Brown and
Thackeray were to some extent complementary:

"In his bitter-sweet outlook, as in many other things, he
was very like Thackeray, a fact that goes far to explain the
close sympathy between the two men. Each saw in the other
what he might himself have been: Brown was a Thackeray of
modest talent playing out his destiny in the retirement
of a provincial city, Thackeray a Brown whose genius had
given him a splendid role in the great world." (The Letters-
If Brown was prepared to be extravagant in his praise of writers whom he thought represented hallowed and enduring truths, he was equally free in his condemnation of whatever he felt was false and unwholesome. His early admiration of George Eliot's books soon gave way to revulsion; he discovered that George was a woman, and thought her too clever by half. "I don't like her (Miss Evans') style of mind and feeling. There are too many big words and hints of superknowledge, and there is that taint of sensuality, or rather of sexuality, which was so offensive in The Mill on the Floss, and which strangely infects even Miss Bronte and Mrs Gaskell—a sort of coarse George Sandism, without her amazing genius and beauty of word." (LJ, p.208.) It is evident that Brown disliked George Eliot's books largely because he disliked intellectual women, but his remarks about the "laborious" nature of her talent have some force:

"I dislike much more than I like Middlemarch; it is steeped in discomfort, discontent, despair, as she herself is, and she is full of nasty, unwomanly knowledge, which she is always hinting at; she is not wholesome. She has great power, wit, and prodigious but laborious cleverness and cuttingness; but she has more intellect than genius, more knowledge of ideas than realities, or than insight; she is the Maker not the Mother of her characters." (LJ, p.215.)

The Doctor's pen really dipped into vitriol however when he got onto the subject of Dickens. Dickens was the object of one of the few marked antipathies of Brown's life, and the more he learnt to admire Thackeray, the more he abominated his more
eminent fellow-novelist. "I hardly ever thought the good Doctor unjust" wrote J.R. Findlay (in an appendix to Peddie's Recollections, p.177), "except in his estimate of Thackeray's great rival; he could not abide the brother so near the throne." He was aware of Thackeray's faults, but saw Dickens's more distinctly: "I wearied of Thackeray's winking (as somebody else said) constantly to the reader and telling you what to think about his peoples. But what a quantity of good matter in that book [The Newcomes], and what a thoroughly good style. Have you read Little Dorrit No. 1? Nothing more Dickensish could be, in good and bad. Dickens is a child of genius, but only a child; he never progresses, never improves, never studies, never restrains." (Letter of 6 Dec 1855, LJB, p.107.) Dickens's genius was admitted, and Thackeray's shortcomings were admitted; but in conceding these points the Doctor made genius seem a rather undesirable quality in a novelist, whereas Thackeray's flaws were what recommended him: "I am afraid I don't like Forster's Life of Dickens. I dislike the personal essence of both men, while I admire the unique genius of the one, and the strong though grandiose talent of the other. Dickens was at the core hard and egocistic, intensely. How different from poor soft-hearted, great-natured Thackeray. I read his books more than ever. Dickens I cannot re-read, and yet he was infinitely the greater genius in the true sense, in which he is what never was before or will be again." (Letter of 31 Dec 1871; LJB, p.209.) It is implied that Dickens's success was the result of an aberrant outcropping of natural genius, and that these natural gifts had not been added to by breeding or education. He may have been a genius, but he was an uncultivated one; he was
not, what Thackeray so evidently was, "a gentleman in heart and speech" ("Thackeray's Death" in North British Review; see above). That this was Brown's impression as early as 1847 is clear from the following letter:

"She [Catherine, Brown's wife] was better yesterday & was tempted to go to Sir Wm. Allan's to see "Boz". "Boz" is doing no good—bodily & mentally he is going wrong—getting rotten. & yet a fine, genial wonderful creature—but after all there is a want of reflectiveness of depth—of seriousness. he is a true Cockney—an inspired Cockney. A very different man from the one who made the best—the cleverest—the most telling speech at the Glasgow meeting." (Unpublished letter to George Combe of 28 Dec 1847; MS. in NLS, 7289, ff.112-3.)

A few years later we find Brown writing more forthrightly to Thackeray, calling Dickens "a miscreant...mad about his domestic affairs, and tother f mad with arrogance and vanity." (Letter of 4 Dec 1858 in The Letters...of W.M.T., IV, 122. Thackeray and Dickens were quarrelling at this time about the Yates affair at the Garrick Club.)

At times Brown's disgust with Dickens seemed almost irrational; it was as intense as if he had been personally insulted by the novelist, though in fact such meetings as they had, at civic receptions and so on, were of a formal and remote kind. Whatever his motive, Brown even went to the length of telling his friends scandalous (and baseless) tales of Dickens's villainy in private life:

"& then Dickens & his life!—don't be angry at me, but I couldn't finish the 2nd Vol. I was so angry at both men—
D. & F. Dickens so hard & exacting in his egoism so self centred—his falsetto pathos—his caricature run mad—and above all his conduct to his wife—turning her out of doors & keeping her sister—and his saying as one of his reasons (I know this as a fact) for turning the mother of his children out of his house & never seeing her again—that she had a cutaneous eruption! & then his leaving her less than she had during his life—and the bumptious, flatulent conceited—Magnifico John Forster. I cannot resist sending you a letter of the Great Binney, Aunt's friend—which puts Dickens in a poor position as to truth & goodfeeling & his two friends Fields & Forster in the same." (Letter of 11 Jan. 1873 to Margaret Class; MS. in NLS, Acc.6134. The letter is published, but with most of this passage omitted, in LJB, pp.215-6. Binney wrote to Forster about an incident in his Life of Dickens, claiming that the novelist had invented it: see vol.III of the 1st. edition of the Life, pp.520-1.)

Brown himself tried to discountenance Dickens and Forster by attacking Forster's life of the novelist in a letter to the Scotsman (see Appendix). He took exception to a passage from a letter by Dickens in which his old master, Syme, was mildly caricatured and his Scottish accent exaggerated. He also wrote several times to Forster's publishers about the matter, a storm in a teacup if ever there was one, and after his letter was published in the Scotsman (in Feb 1874) he finally wrote to Forster, apparently in blistering terms. For his trouble he got an unpleasant reply which displays Forster's schoolmasterish "bumptiousness" in full fig (see Appendix). Forster made a token concession to Brown's objections in future editions.
of the Life, but we may imagine the incident did nothing to diminish Brown's animosity towards him or Dickens. In the correspondence with Ruskin in this present volume we have further evidence of Brown's ill-will, for example when he calls Dickens "one of the hardest hearted of men" (see Letters 15 and 44).

It is possible that the passage of time moderated Brown's rancour, however, if we are to judge from a letter to Mr. James T. Fields, his American publisher (no date, but probably about 1880),

The old arguments are re-iterated, but the edge of malice is blunted:

"I wish I could like him [Dickens] as much as you did & as I did & do Thackeray. I fear I was not just to him—but that wife-business was miserable & in a sense—bad. I feel his genius & his personal worth more now—he was a greater genius—but not so great a nature or man or writer as Thackeray & Thackeray always wrote & became better—he grew, Dickens didn't grow, he (D) was more a child of nature than of grace."

(Unpublished letter; MS. in Huntington Library, San Marino, California.)

Perhaps Brown's distrust of unhallowed nature arose from his presbyterian upbringing; and it is surely a puritan habit of mind to base literary criticism on a judgement of the personal virtue of the writer concerned. It is no coincidence that this habit of mind was shared by Ruskin. Whatever the reasons, and whatever one's opinions of Dickens and of his private life, Brown's attitude to him is one of his least agreeable traits. It does not tally with the gentleness and generosity otherwise so characteristic of him.

Fortunately Dr. Brown had many more literary friends than enemies. Though his communication with writers from outside Scotland
was necessarily limited, he met them assiduously whenever they visited Edinburgh, and was a diligent correspondent. The Railways and the Postal System, two institutions which the Victorian age brought to perfection, were invaluable to Dr. Brown; the one made it possible for great men of literature and the arts from all over the Western world to visit Edinburgh regularly, and the other perpetuated acquaintance when they were absent. Correspondence brought Brown the friendship of R.H. Hutton, editor of the Spectator from 1861 to 1897, who was as keenly interested in literature and theology as he was. Hutton did not know the Doctor personally, but wrote to him about his religious doubts, books, and his private opinions of the new writers of the day:

"I hate Swinburne as profoundly as you can. He seems to me in his last poem [Chastelard, the first of three romantic dramas on Mary, Queen of Scots, published in 1865] full of impurity, though Atalanta in Calidon was different, & full only of impiety which for an ancient Greek subject is more excusable. But surely it is poetry, in its way wonderful poetry, & one can do far more to counteract its evil effect by admitting this to the full and pointing out the artistic blunder of impurity so gross, than by merely raising the cry which Swinburne and his friends look to the puritanic party to raise & the injustice of which, if it does not admit fully his great poetic powers, would be its weakness. I earnestly repudiate 'encouraging' the man in his sins. I dislike him personally, as well as as a poet. But I think his poetry in its way very wonderful. Mary Stuart might have been drawn as the harlot she was and the poem been as noble
as it seems to me ignoble." (Unpublished letter of 31 Jan 1866; MS. in NLS, Acc.6134.)

The miracles of nineteenth century transport now brought eminent Americans to Scotland quite frequently, and it seems to have been customary for them to include Dr. Brown in their list of people and places to be seen in the Old World. The Doctor's books were very popular in America, where they appeared with the less forbidding title of Spare Hours, and they gained him the esteem of such men as Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Longfellow. He in turn was well-read in new American literature, and his judgements of American authors show his usual good taste—he was an admirer of Hawthorne and Whittier; he knew Lowell and towards the end of his life held that he was the greatest living poet, greater even than Tennyson; and in 1879 we find him singling out the up-and-coming Henry James Jr. for favourable comment (LJB, p.262). One of the most enterprising of his friendships was that with Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain, which was begun during Clemens's visit to Britain in 1873. It is startling to see the American author's neatly typewritten letters among the crabbled and faded handwritings of Brown's other correspondents; it brings home the divergence between the brave new world of American culture, and the old and conservative ethos of the community to which Dr. Brown belonged. However different their modes of life, the ex-riverboat pilot and the Scottish Doctor found a common chord, much later, writing to Brown's son, Clemens recalled "the scenes and associations of thirty-three years ago, when Mrs Clemens and our small Susy and I were comrades of your father in Edinburgh daily, during six weeks, without a break." (Unpublished letter of 26 March 1906
to John Brown jr., MS. in NLS, Acc. 6134.) The reminiscence of this time merited a chapter in Clemens's *Autobiography*, in which there are tantalising glimpses of the Doctor's usual manner:

"In 1873, when Susy [Clemens's daughter, whose death in 1896 was one of the great sorrows of her father's life] was fourteen months old, we arrived in Edinburgh from London, fleeing thither for rest and refuge after experiencing what had been to us an entirely new kind of life—six weeks of daily lunches, teas and dinners away from home. We carried no letters of introduction; we hid ourselves away in Veitch's family hotel in George Street and prepared to have a comfortable season all to ourselves. But by good fortune this did not happen. Straightway Mrs. Clemens needed a physician and I stepped around to 23 Rutland Street to see if the author of *Rab and His Friends* was still a practising physician. He was. He came, and for six weeks thereafter we were together every day, either in his house or in our hotel.

His was a sweet and winning face—as beautiful a face as I have ever known. Reposeful, gentle, benignant—the face of a saint at peace with all the world and placidly beaming on it the sunshine of love that filled his heart. Doctor John was beloved by everybody in Scotland; and I think that on its downward sweep southward it found no frontier. I think so because when, a few years later, infirmities compelled Doctor John to give up his practice, and Mr. Douglas, the publisher, and other friends set themselves the task of raising a fund of a few thousand dollars, whose income was to be devoted to the support of himself and his maiden sister (who was in age), the fund was not only promptly made up but so very promptly that the books
were closed before friends a hundred miles south of the line
had had an opportunity to contribute. This sort of complaint
is so new to the world—so strikingly unusual—that I think it
worth while to mention it....

He had two names for Susy—'Wee wifie' and 'Megalopis.'
This formidable Greek title was conferred in honor of her big,
big dark eyes. Susy and the Doctor had a good deal of romping
together. Daily he unbent his dignity and played 'bear' with
the child. I do not now remember which of them was the bear
but I think it was the child. There was a sofa across a corner
of the parlor with a door behind it opening into Susy's quarters
and she used to lie in wait for the Doctor behind the sofa—not
lie in wait but stand in wait; for you could only get just a
glimpse of the top of her yellow head when she stood upright.
According to the rules of the game she was invisible and this
glimpse did not count. I think she must have been the bear, for
I can remember two or three occasions when she sprang out from
behind the sofa and surprised the Doctor into frenzies of fright,
which were not in the least modified by the fact that he knew
that the 'bear' was there and was coming....

He was the loveliest creature in the world—except his
aged sister who was just like him. We made the round of his
professional visits with him in his carriage every day for six
weeks. He always brought a basket of grapes and we brought books.
The scheme which we began with on the first round of visits was
the one which was maintained until the end—and was based upon
this remark, which he made when he was disembarking from the
carriage at his first stopping place to visit a patient, 'Entertain
yourselves while I go in here and reduce the population.*" 
(The Autobiography of Mark Twain, ed. Charles Neider, 1950, pp.194-7.)

The curious friendship became an enduring one, and affectionate letters continued to pass over the Atlantic between the Clemenses and the Doctor. The Americans urged their friend to make the long voyage to their country and sample Southern hospitality—to take the cure, as it were, for his chronic Celtic melancholia, by subjecting himself to the exuberant vitality of the New World.

Mrs. Clemens, whose spelling faltered but whose good nature did not, was particularly moved by a letter of doubts and self-reproach from Dr. Brown, and wrote back it had made them "inexpressibly sad". She urged him to come to America:

"Would not the change do you good? Could you not trust yourself with us?...Oh Doctor Brown how can you speak of your life as a waisted [sic] one! What you have written has alone done an immense amount of good, and I know for I speak from experience that one must get good every time they meet and chat with you—
I recieve [sic] good every time I even think of you. Can a life that produces such an effect on others be a wasted life?

I feel that while you live the world is sweeter and better."

To this invitation Samuel Clemens added his own, with a cheerful belittling of all possible objections:

"Dear Doctor, if you and your son Jock only would run over here! What a welcome we would give you!—and besides, you would forget cares & the troubles that come of them. To forget pain is to be painless; to forget care is to be rid of it; to go abroad is to accomplish both. Do try the prescription!" (Unpublished letter
of about 1379 from Livy and Samuel Clemens; MS. in NLS, Acc. 6289.)

Alas, the Doctor's troubles were not so easily dismissed; he was getting too old and too weary to go travelling, and the friends never saw each other again. The peculiar attractiveness of his character is well illustrated by this unlikely friendship; the affection Clemens felt for him—for a man of another world, almost of another age—after only six weeks of intimacy, endured till he himself was an old man. Over twenty years after Brown's death Clemens wrote to his son: "I remember 23 Rutland St exceedingly well. Those were good times there." (Unpublished letter of 26 March 1906 to John Brown jr., MS. in NLS, Acc. 6289.)
What Brown's friendship meant to Ruskin is made clear in Praeterita, when Ruskin describes some happy days they spent together with little Connie Hilliard, on the moors at Wallington:

"The dearness of Wallington was founded, as years went on, more deeply in its having made known to me the best and truest friend of all my life; best for me, because he was of my father's race and native town; truest, because he knew always how to help us both, and never made any mistakes in doing so—Dr. John Brown." (Works XXXV, 458.)

It was in 1846 that the friendship began. The second volume of Modern Painters, "by a Graduate of Oxford", had appeared in April that year; Dr. Brown, ever a glutton for new literature, read it, and was utterly overwhelmed by it. In a typical burst of enthusiasm he at once wrote to express his delight and gratitude to the author:

"I have just risen from your Second Vol. Your First I have never seen. & I cannot keep from telling you how much of knowledge, of truth, of highest delight, of lasting benefit you have furnished me with. I have no words to express my astonishment, my perfect satisfaction, my personal gratitude at its contents. Your views on Beauty—the Theoretic & Imaginative Powers & the true end of Painting & all other Ideal Arts, the Glory of God, I coincide in, with a minuteness
& completeness I never before hoped for in regard to any other
man—& as far as perhaps any two independent thinkers can ever
expect or wish to do. I often felt as if my own secrets had
been told as I read. I gave the book to my father, a clergyman & a
man of true godliness & he has been moved by it to tears, &
was reading it all Sabbath day. He was above all delighted
with its "reverence & Godly fear". (Letter of 2 June 1846;
MS. at the Ruskin Galleries, Bembridge School, I.O.Wight.)
Ruskin must surely have been elated by such unstinting praise, and
Brown supplied pages more of it. Not only did he share his zeal
for the Christian faith, he said, but also his faith in Turner:
"I am a believer in Turner. I never knew what Landscape was
capable of & what in that direction the human mind was capable
of till I saw his Palestrina." Gratified, Ruskin replied at great
length; rather stiffly and pompously, one might think, for a young
man not yet thirty, but cordially, and with sufficient indication
that he found Brown's "assurances of sympathy" very agreeable. He
chided him, it is true, for excess of kindness: "You appear to feel
at present a little too enthusiastically" (Letter 1); but the
reproof was administered so mildly that it seems to have had the
effect of redoubling Brown's enthusiasm. It got to such a pitch
that, as described above, Effie Gray declared to Ruskin that the
Doctor was flattering him. Ruskin, as we saw, was not inclined
to share his future wife's severity on this point, and kept up the
correspondence; but he was driven to protest once more against
excessive adulation: "I am ashamed to answer your letters, they are
too full of terms of praise. Pray do not do so any more, or you may
do me no little harm. Thank you not the less for your kind feeling."
The kind feeling persisted on both sides, and led, as the letters show, to Ruskin briefly meeting Brown for the first time in Edinburgh in 1848. Their relations were still polite rather than familiar, and as time passed Dr. Brown's veneration for Ruskin's work became less complete. In 1851 he expressed some of his reservations to a friend who also knew Ruskin, Lady Pauline Trevelyan:

"I read The Stones carefully last week; it is a great work—in some respects his greatest—but his arrogance is more offensive than ever, and his savage jokes more savage than ever, and than is seemly or edifying, and his nonsense (and his father's) about Catholic Emancipation most abundantly ridiculous and tiresome. I once thought him very nearly a god; I find we must cross the River before we get to our gods. He is surely wrong, or at least not right, about the Cockney Perugino-ites." (LJR, p.39.)

During the fifties Brown and Ruskin met several more times, at Edinburgh and perhaps at Wallington in Northumberland, the home of Lord and Lady Trevelyan; and their friendship was gradually transformed from a matter of goodwill and politeness into a warm and permanent friendship. Better knowledge of Ruskin did not displace Brown's reservations about his work, but the author's personal qualities impressed him much more favourably, and he was happy at this time, and in the years of intimacy which followed, to make all

* The Pre-Raphaelites; Ruskin's famous letter on them appeared in the Times of 13 May, 1851.
possible allowance for his idiosyncrasies. He wrote to a friend in 1857 (no doubt with the Effie Gray fiasco in mind): "Never believe one word against him; he is odd and wilful, and not to be gainseyed, but he is pure and good, and an amazing genius." (LJp. p.118.) Ruskin was captivated in turn by the Doctor's charm, to which unfortunately his wife Effie was immune:

"I wanted very much to have asked both him [Brown] and his wife to stay here, but I cannot do everything I want to do or perhaps everything I should do. Effie has an unfortunate prejudice against Dr. Brown, owing to some (she calls it) concealment, about the behaviour of a young man—a Mr. Harvey—left in his charge—years ago. She infected me with the same feeling for some time; but I find it is better to trust to one's own eyes and thoughts than to anyone else's. But I could not ask him here." (Unpublished letter from Ruskin of April 1854 to Lady Trevelyon; MS. with the Trevelyan MSS. in Newcastle University Library.)

Ruskin's impatience with Effie and her ideas is rather obvious in this letter, which was written during the last days of their life together; current events may have inclined him to like Brown all the better because his "commonplace Scotch wife" (Letter 55) had a bad opinion of him.

The pleasant times at Wellington with Dr. Brown and Constance Hilliard which Ruskin fondly recalls in Praeterita probably took place in 1863. This is the date given by Raleigh Trevelyon, who has been working on the Wellington MSS., and it is confirmed by LJp. pp.162-4. The point is confused, however: the date is given as 1861 in Helen G. Viljoen, The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin,
(1971), p.588; and LJB, p.207 lends some support to this. There is also a possibility that the two men met there in 1853, when Ruskin was going north with his wife and Millais, first to Edinburgh to lecture, and thence to Glenfinlas. This point is even more confused. Both Works and LJB declare that Ruskin and Brown met for the first time at Wellington in 1853. Mr. Trevelyan does not think they met at Wellington in this year, though they certainly met in Edinburgh when Ruskin went on to lecture there, and had met earlier, as the letters in this volume show. Works and LJB are probably relying on Ruskin's statement in Praeteritam that Brown was at Wellington when he stayed there on his way to give his Edinburgh lectures, and that this was when he got to know Brown and Constance Hilliard. Connie was certainly not at Wellington in 1853; she was then barely a year old. It may be though that Ruskin did meet Brown at Wellington on some occasion prior to the 1863 visit. At any rate, it was inevitable that they should meet at Wellington sooner or later; the Trevelyans entertained frequently, both men were attached to the place, and both were especially welcome visitors.

The great attraction of Wellington was Lady Pauline Trevelyan, an outstandingly cultivated woman; a talented painter and keen student of the arts, she admired Turner in particular, and regarded Ruskin as her "master" in all artistic matters. She also wrote poetry, some of which, through Dr. Brown's good offices, was published in the Scotsman. It was to her, rather than Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan, her husband, that Ruskin and Brown were chiefly drawn, though Sir Walter was good company too; he was an ardent naturalist, and shared Ruskin's passions for botany and geology. While Lady Pauline was alive, Sir Walter became (perhaps rather to his surprise)
a patron of the arts, and Wellington a place where artists and writers could meet and enjoy congenial company. Among the friends of the Trevelyans were Henry Acland, David Octavius Hill, the Carlyles and Swinburne; as well as Dr. Brown and Ruskin, who each stayed at the house several times.

The visit of 1863 when they coincided seems to have been an entirely happy occasion. Wellington was enlivened by the presence there of Lady Trevelyan's niece, Constance Hilliard, who was then 11 years old, and who "glittered about the place in an extremely quaint and witty way" (Works XXXV, 458). She won the hearts of Ruskin and Brown, who both loved the company of children, with her "sly, prim, droll, quaint, queer, dear, funny, sunny look all over" (LJ3, p.163.), charming them one day by the solemn manner with which she invited them out to tea on the lawn in the flower garden. References to the happiness of this time are scattered throughout the letters of Ruskin and Brown, and Connie was a favourite with them ever afterwards. Confusing this visit with the visit of 1853, Ruskin spoke of it in Praeterita as the one in which he began to regard Dr. Brown as more than just an acquaintance. "He was staying at Wallington when I stopped there on my way to give my Edinburgh lectures; and we walked together, with little Connie, on the moors: it dawned on me, so, gradually, what manner of man he was." (Works XXXV, 458.)

Not long after this, in 1866, Lady Trevelyan died unexpectedly while on a tour of the continent with her husband, Connie and Ruskin; and there were no more delightful days at Wallington. The memories of her kindness and the house she made pleasant remained precious to her friends. Ruskin always counted her death as one of the most
grievous losses of his life, and remarks to this effect will be found in his letters to Brown. The Doctor felt the loss as sharply: "My very dear and faithful and beloved friend she always was. There are very few—if any—left for whom I have anything like the same regard." (Unpublished letter from Brown to Sir W.C. Trevelyan, written shortly after Pauline's death in 1866; MS. among the Trevelyan papers at Newcastle.)

Brown and Ruskin could no longer meet at Wallington, and there is not much evidence of their often meeting anywhere else. Ruskin was rarely in Scotland (1857 and 1878, apart from occasions already mentioned, were the only times he was there for longer than a day or so), and Brown was rarely out of it; during all the time Ruskin was at Brantwood it is possible they saw each other only once, and that briefly. (See Viljoen, The Brantwood Diary of J.R., p. 24, entry for 19 July 1876: "Wednesday. To Hawick. 20th Thursday to shepherds on Cheviot with Dr Brown and in afternoon up Rubislaw in the divinest crystal clearness of sky and far folded hills, and silver quiet cloud I ever saw.") At best, they met infrequently, which leaves us with the strange conclusion that the friendship by which Ruskin set so much store, and which can be seen in the letters, over the years, to be growing ever more affectionate, was chiefly, almost entirely, a friendship of letters. When Ruskin called Brown his "best and truest friend", he was not speaking of the sort of relationship that Carlyle had with Froude, or Dickens with Forster, because the friendship in his case was with a man whom he hardly ever saw.

Perhaps, as will later be indicated, Brown did not assign the same importance to the relation that Ruskin did. It is remarkable too that Ruskin's other great masculine friendship, with Charles Eliot
Norton—"my second friend, after Dr. John Brown" (Works XXXV, 520)—was also largely a matter of letters written to a man whom he hardly ever saw.

This is one of the anomalies of Ruskin's in many ways anomalous personality: but the reasons for it become fairly clear when the progress of his other personal relationships is examined. The plain fact is that despite his abundant charm, sincerity and kindness, Ruskin was difficult, in normal daily intimacy, to get on with. The dreadful failures of his marriage, and of his courtships of Adele Domecq and Rose Le Touche, are notorious. The insecurity of his other close relationships is just as striking. He fell out with Rossetti, after a long association with him, when the painter lost his first awe of the critic's opinions; he fell out with Octavia Hill, one of the most whole-hearted admirers and exponents of his social theories, because she had mentioned to a third party her doubt of his competence in practical affairs; and he even fell out with the most patient and devoted of all his friends, the Severns, so seriously that they had to leave Brantwood for a time. (See S.C. Cockerell, Friends of a Lifetime ed. V. Meynell, 1940, p.36.)

One great cause of such upsets was his inflexible dogmatism. What he had deduced to be true he believed to be true for all men and all time, so that he was doing his duty by his friends and promoting their best interests when he forced his opinions on them. Few personal traits are more irritating. For example, while his friendship with Rossetti continued, he repeatedly told him how to make his paintings better, even what colours to use, and summed up: "You must really alter your way of working, and mind what you are about." Elsewhere he rebuked him like a fatherly schoolteacher: "You are a conceited little
monkey, thinking your pictures right when I tell you positively they are wrong. What do you know about the matter, I should like to know?" (Both quotations from D. Leon, Ruskin, The Great Victorian, 1949, p.223.) A similar approach upset the extremely tender relationship between himself and the Burne-Joneses. "He quarrels with my pictures" wrote Edward Burne-Jones sadly, "and I with his writings, and there is no peace between us." (Leon, p.542.) When quarrels arose Ruskin would not acquiesce in a compromise to end them. " 'It's no use' said Dr. John Brown once 'arguing with Ruskin when he says wild things—I tried once and had to give it up. I had begun saying, 'Now, Ruskin, you surely do not believe that?' 'Believe it! Sir, I KNOW it!' " (Works XXXIV, 723.)

The leisureliness and discretion of the epistolary medium acted as a brake on quarrelsome tendencies. In letters opinions could be expressed more deliberately; between posts tempers, if roused, had time to cool, and when they were cooled, there was plenty of opportunity for accommodations to be devised, or pretexts for dropping the subject altogether. This seems to me a plausible explanation for the success, unusual in his more intimate relationships, of Ruskin's friendships through letters, to which the several published volumes of his correspondence bear testimony. In the present case, given the diverging political and religious beliefs of Brown and Ruskin, a regular personal familiarity might have put such strains on their forbearance that their friendship would have been hard pressed to survive.

As it was, Brown's patience was stretched at times to the limit, and the correspondence faltered. In the early sixties the ferocity of Ruskin's views on economics, and his scorn for
established and evangelical forms of religion, reached an extreme; Brown, as will emerge more fully later, held opposite views; and it seems the resulting tension caused a lull in the friendship. There does not appear to have been a decisive quarrel, but no letters from either men survive from between 1864 and 1871, and the first 1871 letters show that there had been no correspondence for some time. Even if we take into account the fact that some of the letters may have been destroyed because they concerned the Rose La Touche affair, there was clearly a break in relations.

It was Brown, characteristically, who ended the estrangement by sending Ruskin a gift of books, and in 1871 the friendship resumed the course which was never again interrupted. They had learnt to avoid controversy. Ruskin no longer sought to exact compliance with his economic theories, and Brown steered discussion to safer topics. He wrote to a friend in 1873: "He [Ruskin] is writing, after his own gloriously inconsecutive fashion, a life of Sir Walter Scott, in which I have been helping and encouraging him—I can agree with him here, not in some of his social notions." (Unpublished letter of 7 Dec 1873 to Miss J. Marianne Fox; MS. in NLS. Acc.6134.)

In the following years Brown did the service for which he had a special gift: encouraged Ruskin with his books, flattered him, and supported him with his sympathy when he felt, as he did frequently, that chagrin at the world's wrongs, and the accumulated sadness of life, were too much to bear. It was not a demanding relationship, more a clinging together for comfort, and as such became more and more precious to Ruskin. During the seventies Ruskin's beloved went mad, as Brown's wife had done. Ruskin himself was disabled by madness, just as Brown had been. Both men were plagued with depression. As
they grew older they became old-fashioned, an obsolete generation, representatives of a breeding and a system of values that seemed to have no place in the contemporary world. These sorrows and the consolations suggested by them were the main burden of the letters from Brantwood, written in the last decade of the friendship. They are not, as a whole, depressing letters; the feeling of desperation and malaise conveyed in the letters of the early sixties is absent. The sense of sadness, ever-present, is muted, even at the death of Rose Le Touche. Even madness is taken calmly: "but indeed, the illnesses themselves taught me lots about early Xilian legends that I could have had no notion of, without them, and I'm very thankful I had them—but I don't want more. In each of them—I dreamed at the end that I was dead—and it isn't pleasant." (Letter 102). The prospect of death was the last of the anxieties that the old friends made easier by sharing; their affection for each other relieves the letters' pathos. "I'm getting round now, if only the days would, and if you will be idle so will I, and we'll cheer each other up.

Ever your loving,

J.R.

J.B——————————J.R.

There isn't such another pair going in harness, that I know of."

(Letter 101.)

At Brantwood Ruskin had another intimate friend, Susan Beever, an old but sprightly spinster who lived just across the lake from him. In the last sane years of his life he wrote to her incessantly, finding in her regard for him the same uncritical affection he got from Dr. Brown. She is mentioned frequently in Ruskin's letters to
Brown, and in due course Brown made her acquaintance himself, through letters: "Since you left, I have come to know your "Susie". She writes to me and we are friends, though unseen; there is something very loving and truthful about her, surely, and she prattles away like a girl, and yet with the sad knowledge of years." (LJB, p.229.) She and Ruskin used to share Brown's letters; the pleasantness of which was no doubt enhanced by the fact that when the Doctor wrote to Ruskin, he often praised Miss Beever; and when he wrote to Miss Beever, he generally complimented "Our Genius", as he playfully called Ruskin. This cordiality had to dissipate itself on paper, since Brown, though he got on first name terms with Miss Beever, probably never met her (there is a letter of Ruskin's to this effect: see Works XXXVII, 555). Ruskin himself, though he lived close enough to visit her when he liked, seems almost to have preferred writing to her, to meeting her; in 1877 a selection of their correspondence, published as Hortus Inclusus, was made from "nearly 2,000 letters". The intercourse of the three old friends, warm as it was, was more a matter of pen and ink than personal contact; it comprised three remote points.

Pen and ink served Ruskin better than any other medium. In closer personal relationships he was repeatedly injured, from his childhood onwards. He found that his friendships by letters survived longer and gave more reliable pleasure. In letters he could maintain better the ideal his romantic nature desired—purity of affection, dignity of expression, concern with high and noble ideas, the decorum of classic friendships. In day to day familiarity such perfections are swamped by trivialities and distractions. Because in letters less was required in terms of mutual involvement, the
symmetry of the relationship was more perfect, and pleased better the aesthetic sense. Here the rule applied that Ruskin formulated in The Nature of Gothic, that the less you demand, the more nearly you secure perfection in what you demand—the achievement however being smaller in proportion. Between the old man living by the lake and the old man living in the city there were always, to the end, certain unspoken divisions. Brown was Ruskin's "best and truest friend". But in 1880 we find Brown, annoyed at some lack of consideration on Ruskin's part, writing bitterly to a friend of his unkindness, and calling him "that strange man"; as though a correspondence of over thirty years had left an odd vacuum in their understanding of each other. (LJE, p.264; and see Letter 53, n.6.)

Whatever the deficiencies of the friendship, which were passed over in silence, it was a stable element in Ruskin's life on which he placed increasing reliance. One of its most important functions was that it provided him with a kind of captive audience for his works. More than most writers, he depended on a reaction to everything he wrote from his readership; the assertive tone of his work was designed to provoke an emphatic response. It was as though he needed the sensation which greeted his opinions as positive proof of his own substance and validity as an independent
being; as if his self-confidence was so insecure that any overthrow of his ideas was a threat to his own reality. He needed continually to be reassured of the palpable effect of his words as uttered through his books, and thus even opposition was gratifying, and stimulated him. He was not content merely to hope that his thoughts were taking some root in people's hearts; he liked to see them carried to their logical outcome in practical schemes, like the St. George's Company; the majority of which he had unfortunately to finance himself.

The causes of this insecurity can no doubt be traced to his parents' crushing refusal to him, in early life, of any form of independence. So that as it may, Dr. Brown did Ruskin a priceless service by his continual assurances to him that his work would last, and was doing good, and had absolute value. Ruskin thrived on such assurances. It was not so much a matter of flattery as of therapy. "I assure you," he wrote to Brown, "I write anything with twice the spirit, when I think you are going to read it—that I do when you are tired and ill." (Letter 66.) Elsewhere he added: "I really hope it may please you a little to know how the idea of your liking anything I may do helps me in the languid times when one says to oneself—or feels, without coming to the point of utterance—that it is of no use to do or say anything more." (Letter 82.) Brown was willing to put himself at the disposition of Ruskin's genius, and his encouragement, founded on the best of natures, and a good education, was well worth having. "You know" wrote Ruskin, "there was no one whose praise I wanted so much as yours,—or whose
pleasure I had more worked for." (Letter 92.) When Brown took
exception to the work, as to the economics, Ruskin felt betrayed
and threatened; when, as usually, he approved, Ruskin was secure.

The biographical details already given of Brown show in
what ways he was fitted to help Ruskin. His passionate love of
art, for example, which brought them together, meant that he was
able to appreciate Ruskin's remarks on the subject and to enthuse
about them with conviction. He knew all the Edinburgh artists—he
knew everyone of note in Edinburgh, but especially the artists—and
through him Ruskin could keep up his friendly contacts with such men
as Hill, Paton and Harvey; and could keep in touch with the Scottish
reaction to his artistic pronouncements. Brown himself never lost
his faith in Ruskin as the supreme critic of art:

"There is one man amongst us who has done more to breathe
the breath of life into the literature and the philosophy of Art,
who has 'encouraged' it ten thousand times more effectually than
all our industrious Coles and anxious Art-Unions, and that is
the author of Modern Painters. I do not know that there is anything
in our literature, or in any literature, to compare with the
effect of this one man's writings. He has by his sheer force of
mind, and fervour of nature, the depth and exactness of his
knowledge, and his amazing beauty and power of language, raised
the subject of Art from being subordinate and technical, to the
same level with Poetry and Philosophy." ("Notes on Art", Horae II.)

As an adjunct to his respect for Ruskin's art criticism, Brown was
also a great admirer and eulogiser of Ruskin's own artistic talent.
This delighted Ruskin, for though he modestly belittled his skill,
his drawing was very important to him, being only subordinate, in
terms of the time and energy he devoted to it, to his literary labours. Brown spoke of it in glowing terms. "I gave myself up on Sunday Evening for some hours to going over the plates of Modern Painters. I would say more easily to any one than yourself what was the feeling that grew upon me as I scrutinised their old and ever new lines of feeling and power. You should be thankful to God every night you lay down your head for having done them." (LJB, p.257.) In another place he expressed what perhaps (with some justice) was Ruskin's own conviction: "What we all felt was, that if you had not been born with a silver spoon in your mouth, and had had to make your own living, you would have been a great Painter, and we might have lost Modern Painters and much else." (LJB, p.258.)

When Ruskin turned to what he called his scientific work Brown was equally encouraging. In his researches into geology, ornithology, botany etc. Ruskin's concern was not with objective observation of phenomena and dispassionate reasoning; his interest was rather in the teaching of morality and social ethics which he wanted to buttress with the evidence of natural science. He called this "bringing to bear the elements of various sciences on my own apparently unscientific subject" (Letter 29). The fruits of this labour were not intended for the elite of the scientific world, who in any case usually rejected them with stolidly misdirected sarcasm, but for just such men and women as Dr. Brown, who had their moral welfare at heart and had sufficient knowledge of scientific subjects to be impressed by the analogies Ruskin drew between the natural world and the moral state of men. Ruskin's appeal was to the intelligent amateur who had no business with pure science except as a source of amusement and instruction. As a doctor Brown had a general, and essentially practical, knowledge
of basic scientific principles. In addition he was a keen amateur botanist ("he knew every wild plant in the country": A.C. Brown in Famous Edinburgh Students, see above) and had the same peculiarly passive sensibility which gave Ruskin's work its true scientific authenticity: "Everything he was interested in he watched and observed with minute care...the most perfect accuracy." (Masson, op.cit.) Through his brother, Alexander Crum Brown, Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh University, he was in touch with scientific circles. However, as David Masson remarks, "the latest drifts of speculative thought in his own day made him uncomfortable" (ibid.). This was just the man for whom Ruskin could unveil his new classifications of botany and his refutations of current theories of glaciation, the sort of man who would see clearly the issues involved without having the information to make carping objections on points of detail. Ruskin loathed the scientific objectivity that would strain at a gnat. Brown as usual was the perfect audience, and remained loyal to whatever side Ruskin took, for example in the great and acrimonious dispute about whether glaciers moved like broken glass or like treacle. Poor Tyndall was the one in this quarrel to feel the lash of Ruskin's eloquence. "Ruskin has scourged Tyndall in the most delightful manner", wrote Brown to his sister (LJBR, p.225.) Brown probably knew no more about glaciation than about ballooning, but he appreciated good writing. He was not, and could never be from the nature of his temperament, a specialist, and this pleased Ruskin, who abhorred specialists.

In many ways Brown was for Ruskin a link with the past and with tradition. The history of his family and his upbringing qualified him as "a good Scotchman of the old classic breed" (Prateritia, Works XXXV, 458); he had known the heroes of Edinburgh's golden age; he was
"best friend" for Ruskin "because he was of my father's race and native town" (ibid.). Ruskin's search throughout all his work was for traditions and myths which would sustain and save the modern world from barbarism and anarchy; his delvings into past cultures and his establishment of the St. George's Company were attempts to restore values to his time which he felt were being ignored. "Deep yearning took hold of me for a kind of 'Restoration', which I began slowly to feel that Charles II had not altogether effected, though I always wore a gilded oak apple very piously in my button-hole on the 29th May...and as I grew older, the desire of sweet pippins instead of bitter ones, and Living Kings instead of dead ones, appeared to me rational as well as romantic; and gradually it has become the main purpose of my life to grow Pippins, and its chief hope, to see Kings." (Praeterita I, i, sect.7.) Ruskin had been unlucky in respect of his own dynasty. Had his parents stayed at home in Scotland, he would probably have grown up in the knowledge of a strong oral and written tradition about his family and its origins, as Brown had; but as it was he was nurtured in Herne Hill, among the sprawling suburbs of London, where the only common inheritance is anonymity. Brown was Somebody in Edinburgh (this perhaps inhibited his development); Ruskin, in London and at Oxford, was Nobody, except so far as he made his own reputation. In Praeterita he tells of his embarrassment at Oxford, as a "Gentleman-commoner", "among the first of middle-class sons of rich fathers to sport a silken robe and a gold tassel to his cap" (Leon, p.41); of the sense, which must have been poignant at the time, that he had no right by birth to the finery of noblemen's sons: "From first to last I had the clownish feeling of having no business there...at the gentleman-commoners' table, in
Cardinal Wolsey's dining room, I was, in all sorts of ways at once, out of my place." (Works XXXV, p.194.) It was in an attempt to find his place that Ruskin made so much of his Scottish connections. In Praeterita he devoted long passages to describing his antecedents in Scotland, and the éclat of his mother in Edinburgh, passages which Helen Viljoen has demonstrated (in Ruskin's Scottish Heritage, 1956) to be largely fiction, but which all the same show the reality of his need for authentication. Dr. Brown in some sense stood for the Edinburgh culture his parents had left behind. "How delicious it is" he wrote to Brown, "to have you in Edinburgh still binding me to the auld town." (Letter 93.)

It was convenient, too. A typically Scottish trait which Ruskin did inherit was a passion for Sir Walter Scott and his works that fell little short of religious fervour. As he always embodied anything which interested him in his books, the enthusiasm crops up everywhere, particularly in Fiction, Fair and Foul and Fors Clavigera. His comments on the novels are a characteristic mixture of brilliant insight and inconsequence, and to make them plausible he required a certain amount of background knowledge, several details of which he got from Dr. Brown. Brown in Edinburgh was perfectly placed to gather information about Scott; there was a whole fund of oral tradition about the author still extant in the town, accounts being then available from those who had known him personally; and of course there was plenty of documentary evidence. Several parts of the Horae testify to Brown's own fascination with Scott, and nothing pleased him more than to be appealed to as an authority on the novelist. Ruskin's methods of investigation in any subject being eclectic rather than systematic, Brown's hints about Scott, in
response to a stream of enquiries, were very useful to him.

The Doctor's concurrence with Ruskin's views and sympathies was so much the usual thing that when he broke the habit at a crucial moment it jarred his friend through and through. When Ruskin began to publish Unto this Last in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860, Brown was as prompt to condemn the political economy as he had been to praise the art criticism. He wrote to Ruskin's father, as soon as the first paper appeared, deploiring it, and demonstrating that Ruskin's position was untenable from the fact that his arguments had been crushed in the *Scotsman*. Ruskin was appalled to see Brown joining the chorus of bigots and ill-informed scoffers at his economic work; he felt it was a personal betrayal at a time when his enemies were hounding him; and the appeal to the authority of the *Scotsman* was unpardonable.

"That—after all the work I had done—and the kind of quiet labour with which I had brought to bear the elements of various sciences on my own apparently unscientific subject, you should think I did not know the look of a science when I saw one—or that I would blurt out an assertion on a matter affecting the interests of every living creature in the world—which could be overthrown by an article in the *Scotsman*. Nothing perhaps has ever shown me how futile my work has really been hitherto, and how necessary it was to set about it in another way." (Letter 29)

At least Brown's objection to Ruskin's economics was founded on a coherent theory of his own, which could hardly be said of all Ruskin's detractors. He was, as he had told Lady Trevelyan, "a vile grovelling Voluntary in religion, in Education, in everything", and abomination of the intrusions of Government was the creed of his
forefathers. He was never more the child of his Secessionist ancestors than when he declared:

"In my views as to the office of the State I hold with John Locke and Coventry Dick, that its primary, and probably its only function is to protect us from our enemies and from ourselves: that to it is intrusted by the people 'the regulation of physical force;' and that it is indeed little more than a transcendental policeman. This is its true sphere, and here lies its true honour and glory. When it intermeddles with other things,—from your Religion, Education, and Art, down to the number, and size, and metal of your buttons, it goes out of its line and fails." ("Notes on Art", Horse II.)

The form of Government proposed in Unto this Last, under which the people were to be treated very much like the children of strong-minded parents—like the child of Ruskin's parents, for example—could not have been less to Brown's taste. When he saw how offended Ruskin was by his recalcitrance, the best he could do, as I have described, was to avoid the subject; and the result of that was that the friendship almost collapsed.

Another source of friction was Ruskin's unorthodoxy in religion, and again the reason was that Brown, generally speaking, held to the principles he had imbied in childhood, whereas Ruskin rejected them. Both men in their early years were schooled in the inflexible doctrines of Evangelical Calvinism, according to which the most reliable aid to Salvation was the Bible; enlightenment came from close study of its text, and those who did not believe what they read therein were to be damned. Ruskin, notoriously, learnt whole passages by rote at his mother's knee; Brown was no
less thoroughly indoctrinated by the biblical exegete, his father. Ruskin of course never lost the imprint of his early training; his prose resonates always with the sonorousness of the Authorised Version, which he quotes frequently and often unexpectedly to clinch arguments about economics, geology or art. What he did lose, however, during the late fifties and early sixties, was belief in Christianity itself. In particular, he found himself repelled by the narrow spitefulness and pride, as he saw it, of Evangelicalism. Later experiences somewhat restored his sympathy with the broad teachings of Christianity, but the loathing of Evangelicalism became if anything more marked with the passage of time. One of the things that most galled him in the subsequent years of his life was the way in which Rose La Touche used Evangelicalism to cut herself off from him.

Brown too took a more latitudinarian view of religion as he got older, favouring a less mercilessly exclusive interpretation of the Gospels than prevailed in his parents' generation. His beliefs none the less had the air of gloom about them one associates with Scottish theology:

"I am a 'Calvinist' in as far as I believe in the abnormal condition of myself & my fellow-men, or, in old-fashioned words, I believe in Original Sin & the fall of Adam, & I think in dealing with questions relating of men as moral beings, we must have respect to their Pathology as well as their Physiology—& must consider the depravity (or rather liability to become depraved), of human nature, as we now find it, to be a fact, without any regard to its theoretical origin or results..."

Dark as this conviction was, it was an unexceptionable part of Calvinist
doctrine, and despite the doubts prompted in him by the wretched
c Condition of the world, Brown never wavered in his essential orthodoxy.

"...I am an "evangelical" in the sense of believing in...a Gospel
which Jesus Christ introduced, & enforced by his life & sealed
by his death, & I believe in the necessity & efficacy of his
atonement, as a substitution for my own sins." (Both quotations
from an unpublished letter of 4 Nov 1847 to George Combe; MS. in
NLS, 7283, ff.74-82.)

Even so much indulgence towards Evangelicalism irritated Ruskin. It
seemed to irk him that Brown, who had had such a similar upbringing
to himself in respect of religion, and who was as oppressed by the
darkness of the world as himself, and as over-powered by its
vicissitudes, should stick so stubbornly by a creed for which he
could see no justification. It seemed to strike him as a paradox
that Brown should be so miserable and yet, religiously speaking, so
optimistic:

"For—all depends surely upon the one question—if there is a
future or not, for man. You, as far as I can understand you,
have at least good and calm hope of it. I, on the contrary live
every day as absolutely my last...and the moment I'm idle or ill,
I've nothing to say for myself. But you—who hope to see the
Gods—and the dead—why are you sad." (Letter 55.)

What was even more annoying was that Dr. Brown would write works in
which the extreme forms of Evangelicalism were, if not approved, at
least countenanced. Ruskin reproved him on several occasions for
this, most amusingly after Brown had published "Marjorie Fleming",
a sentimental account of the doings and writings of a short-lived
Scottish child, of Presbyterian principles, whose story everyone else
had greeted with raptures and moistened pocket-handkerchiefs. Ruskin was quite brutal. "I have been much pained", he wrote, "by the pleasure you seem to take in the memory of that unhappy child—Scott's pet:—a great pet of my own has just been killed, or next thing to it—by those accursed religious hot-mushroom-sauces of her poor little head, and the speeches of that Scotch child are to my mind simply loathsome." (Letter 35) The hidden resentment Ruskin felt about Brown's adhesion to the old faith boiled over in the ferocious reply he made when Brown sent him some "religious condolences" on the death of his father. Piety at funerals was one of the hypocrisies Ruskin most despised. He rounded tigerishly on some innocent phrase of the Doctor's about the death being a "dreadful" event:

"No, my dear Dr. Brown, this is not dreadful...but I will tell you what is dreadful the death of noble children; the best blood of human flesh, & spirit...sacrificed to the Moloch-Christ of modern imagination—by forcing their poor little raw brains into religious excitement...and that accomplished physicians" (of whom Brown was, in the circumstances, the most conspicuous example) "should write lovely books to make all the world give their best children the deadliest poison in the Pharmacopoeia—

That's dreadful." (Letter 36.)

Brown came in for such a drubbing precisely because his views were so much akin to what Ruskin's had lately been; Ruskin was forced into extreme postures because Brown represented so strongly an attitude of faith that he had only just left behind. In religion and economics,

* Rose La Touche
Brown was representative of the old order, to which Ruskin's parents belonged, against which Ruskin was rebelling. Perhaps in the long run it was some relief to Ruskin's feelings to have a figure of opposed views on whom he could discharge his mind. By independent thought he had controverted the economic convictions held by his father, and the religious convictions held by his mother, yet the conditions of his home life were such that the revolt had to be deprecated, masked with deference and treated as a young man's caprice. Ruskin's impetuosity could not be forever repressed: he had to vent his frustrations somehow, and Brown was a convenient Aunt Sally; he was older than Ruskin, he came from the same background as his parents, his views on economics were something like Ruskin's father's, and his views on religion were something like Ruskin's mother's. So Ruskin launched at him the outrageous thoughts which had to go dumb at home; he flouted him as perhaps he longed to flout his parents. Brown's patience was admirable, he never took umbrage; even in these quarrels he put himself, in a way, at Ruskin's disposal.

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A convenience of Brown's friendship was that Ruskin could get free medical advice, and he wrote to him for an opinion when he suffered uncomfortable symptoms of breathlessness, insomnia and irregular heart-beat. Dr. Brown's prescription was, in general, "Don't over cerebrate"; "Do try to be as stupid as is your nature to" ([LJE], pp. 230, 253).
This was good advice, but Ruskin never followed it. The danger foreseen by Brown, and courted by his patient, was described in sombre words in one of the Horae; if Ruskin read them he read, unconsciously, an account of his own fate:

"As assuredly as there is a certain weight which a bar of iron will bear and no more, so is there a certain weight of work which the organ by which we act, by which we think, and feel, and will—cannot sustain, blazing up into brief and ruinous madness, or sinking into idiocy." ("Notes on Art", Horae II.)

After all it was not to be expected that Ruskin would heed Brown's medical advice; he had other physicians, and ignored what they said too. He did not need a bodily doctor, so much as a Spiritual Doctor, and in this role Doctor Brown was unsurpassed. Psychotherapy had not then been invented, and it is questionable how society would have fared without the assistance of this boon to mankind, had not the family doctor included among his usual lancings and dosings some of its techniques: the listening to people's troubles and the giving of counsel. The notions of "family doctor", and "friend of the family" were in those days significantly intertwined. In their troubles, as Brown described, people wanted "the old feeling of a family doctor...the familiar, kindly, welcome face, which has presided through generations at births and deaths; the friend who bears about, and keeps sacred, deadly secrets which must be laid silent in the grave." (Horae, Introduction to the first edition, 1858.) When Ruskin wanted such a friend, he turned to Dr. Brown. "I have not been able to write to you," he remarked to Susan Beever, "or any one lately, whom I
don't want to tease, except Dr. Brown, whom I write to for counsel." (Works XXXVII, 163.)

Poor Ruskin had many injuries to confide, from the bitter miseries of his attachment to his parents to the anguish of his love for Rose La Touche. His life was a casebook of abnormal psychology: every relationship he entered into had some unusual defect in it. The manner in which he courted his first love, the unresponsive Adèle, was maimed, comical and tragic in the extreme. The remainder of his affairs took on a similar character, with the element of comedy more and more left out. A typical example was the episode at Rome in 1840 when he became enamoured of a statuesque beauty he caught sight of in church, Miss Tollemache. "I don't think I ever succeeded in getting nearer than within fifty yards of her; but she was the light and solace of all the Roman winter to me, in the mere chance glimpses of her far away, and the hope of them." (Praeterita II, ii. sect.39.) His subsequent love entanglements with Effie Gray and Rose La Touche were only variations on this style of remote passion. In the first instance the love was abruptly curtailed by the horrible effect, quite uncalculated for in the rosy dreams of courtship, of nuptial proximity; in the second, the love object got remoter and remoter, and the passion more and more fantastic, till the lover, like Don Quixote, went mad. All these abnormalities, and the final madness, can be traced back to the bizarre oppressions of his parental home, where he was kept, a prisoner in spirit, till past middle age. His parents had no malign intention, as Ruskin himself saw only too clearly; they erred out of sheer excess of love, and were led into reinforcing the family tie till it became a bondage. He purchased
his independence from them at the cost of their pain, he had eventually to wrench himself free without considering their feelings, and it was not true freedom; guilt for what he had done dogged him. He could not look back at the past without seeing his "father's face of grief" choking with "the perception he had of all that I had lost and left,—in him and in my mother, and in what they would have me be." (Letter 55.)

Poor Ruskin! Small wonder he turned to Brown as to a father-confessor, and that he needed all the comforting he could get. It has already appeared often enough how he liked to be flattered; but this arose, not from the mere tickling of the vanity, but from frustrations that threatened to crush him. There was nothing hard or vicious about his relish for reassurance and praise; on the contrary it was a vulnerability which reigned amid all his other strengths, and revealed the tragic flaw which vitiated all his confidence and demeaned all his achievement. There will never be an end of those, like Wilenski, who take an unholy joy in showing that the root of all his imperiousness was fear, and sexual inadequacy. Brown did not look so deeply; he only sought, as anyone would, to cheer Ruskin up by humouring him in this foible—and he succeeded: "he knew always how to help us both" [Ruskin and his father] "and never made any mistakes in doing so." (Works XXXV, 458.) Ruskin could talk and talk, in letters or books, and Brown never got tired of listening. Thus it somehow came about, in this long intercourse, that the superior partner, in terms of genius, fame, and social experience, leaned on the humility of the inferior one, and depended on his kindness for solace. The weary lion lay down with the lamb. John Brown became to me, is partly shown in the continual

"What Dr.
reference to his sympathy in *Hortus Inclusus*; but nothing could

tell the loss to me in his death, nor the grief to how many greater
souls than mine, that had been possessed in patience through his
love." (Fraterita II.xii.sect.232.)

There is an aspect of golden light, as of sunset, on the

last years of their friendship. They had been through the worst
rigours life had to offer: they had tasted madness, bereavement and
failure, and had attained a noble resignation which was beyond the
reach of sadness. Men of the classic breed, they still had a few
morsels of sweetness and light to share at the end of the day:

"You will not at all believe the joy it is to me to have

a letter from you; and to see that you also are—as you used to
be;—my own sweet Doctor that had perpetual sympathy with all
good effort—and all kindly animated creatures. And I trust
we shall both go on yet—in spite of sorrow—speaking to each
other through the sweetbriar and the vine, for many an hour of
twilight as well as morning." (Letter 102.)
WORKS FREQUENTLY CONSULTED.

The presence of a "Works Frequently Consulted" here, in place of a proper bibliography, is owing to the unusual composition of this thesis, which yokes together two dissimilar figures—one very famous writer, and one rather obscure one. To the obscure writer, Dr. John Brown, very little attention has been previously given: there are only four published books of which he is the main subject, and only one of these, *The Letters of Dr. John Brown*, is a substantial work. Other information about him has to be gleaned from short passages in myriad other books, usually biographies of other men or reminiscences of the period, in which mention of him is purely incidental. To list all such passages would be to make an absurd display of scraps, and there would be no hope of ever making the list complete.

With regard to Ruskin, the situation is reversed. A worthwhile bibliography of books dealing with him would be a marathon task deserving a thesis to itself; and it would be almost entirely irrelevant to the study which I have in hand in this thesis, of his relations with Dr. Brown.

Therefore I have contented myself with citing only those works which have been most useful to me, and which are likely to be of service to anyone else interested in the subject. References to many other books of lesser importance to my research will be found scattered throughout the Introduction and the notes to the letters.

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Brown, John Taylor. Dr. John Brown, a Biography and Criticism. 1903.


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Fields, Mrs. J.T. A Shelf of Old Books. 1894.


McLaren, E.T. Dr. John Brown and His Sisters. 1902.


Masson, David. Edinburgh Sketches and Memories. 1892.


Viljoen, Helen G. *Ruskin’s Scottish Heritage*. 1956.


Wilenski, R.H. *John Ruskin*. 1933.
NOTE ON THE TEXT.

All the letters that follow have been copied from the original MSS. The majority of the letters are in the Bodleian Library, several are in the NLS, and two are in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The location of the MS. of each letter is given in the headnote.

In Yale University Library and in the NLS (Acc. 6289) there are moreover volumes of typescript in which most of the surviving Ruskin/Brown letters are transcribed. These were made from the original MSS. by John Brown, Dr. Brown's son, for use in the preparation of LJ3; the first typescript, at Yale, is a rather inaccurate copy; the one in the NLS is a later, corrected version. Brown jr. sent the first typescript to Mrs. Severn, marking the letters he wanted to publish in LJ3, subject to her approval. She got in touch with Wedderburn, who at the time was involved in preparing the Library Edition of Ruskin's works. When he replied she sent a copy of his letter (now in the NLS, Acc. 6134; dated 17 Aug 1904) to John Brown. Wedderburn wrote: "We are bound by our prospectus to give all Ruskin published up to date, including letters in other peoples' memoirs etc. (there is to be a volume of such "Letters to Friends"), & as the bulk of these is already considerable, I am anxious not greatly to increase it, & thus incline, as a rule, to postpone publication of new material. But in this case I should like to make an exception." He added that many of the letters in Brown's typescript (the originals of which
were still in Brown's possession) were misdated, but offered to help him in dating them correctly: "I can date a good many, when I am back among my books & papers by reference to other letters etc. Failing that, one can date them sometimes by the handwriting, or even by the notepaper. I shall be glad to help Mr Brown in doing this." He noted that the typing was "full of errors", and advised that a more "accurate & complete" copy of the letters be made. This copy was made, and is the one now in the NLS.

Wedderburn evidently carried out his intention of dating the Ruskin/Brown letters: a conjectural date, almost certainly in Wedderburn's hand, is pencilled on the original MS. of every letter which Ruskin omitted to date himself. Any such notations are recorded in the headnotes. As will be seen, these conjectural dates are sometimes wrong, and wherever possible I have based the dating of the letters on other, solider information. In some cases, however, for want of any other evidence, I have had to rely solely on these Wedderburn datings, in the hope that he had evidence for them which I have overlooked or which no longer survives.

Clearly Ruskin wrote many more letters to Brown than those assembled here. There are many distinct breaks in the sequence, obviously caused by loss of letters, several years being very poorly represented; and we may surmise that originally the correspondence comprised several hundred letters—not a great number when we consider that Ruskin wrote nearly 2,000 to Susan Beever. Brown probably did not keep all his letters from Ruskin. Some no doubt went to autograph hunters: in a letter to an unknown correspondent in the NLS (MS.8387 f.124; n.d.) the Doctor writes: "I fear I have few letters for your friend. Would you care for one from Ruskin? Or Thackeray?" This
heartless squandering of valuable research material was carried
further by Brown jr. and Forrest; when they prepared LJB they
winnowed Ruskin's letters mercilessly. Brown jr.'s grand-daughter,
Mrs. Theophila Lowe, wrote to me: "I am afraid I will have to
disappoint you over the possibility of there being further letters
from Ruskin. When Dr. Forrest and my grandfather went through Dr.
John's letters they selected those that they felt should be read
by others and destroyed others which, in their wisdom, they felt were
not for the eyes of the curious." This explains the absence of any
letters dealing directly with Effie Gray or Rose La Touche except
for three stray ones in the NLS. It is possible that in this volume
we have all Ruskin's letters to Brown which escaped the flames.

In transcription I have tried to follow the manuscript exactly
in spelling, punctuation and layout of the text. In the case of
punctuation this was not always easy, as Ruskin's practice is
notoriously erratic (cf. The Winnington Letters of John Ruskin, ed.
Van Akin Burd, 1971, pp.84-7). At times, for example, he misses out
punctuation marks, particularly full-stops. His frequent use of the
dash, which is eloquent in manuscript, is difficult to render in
type. Often the dash, occurring at the end of a sentence, evidently
represents a hasty full-stop, and in most of these cases I have simply
transcribed a full-stop; though it is difficult, when Ruskin is in
full flow, to determine for sure where one sentence ends and another
begins, especially as he is not always painstaking about beginning
a new sentence with a capital letter. Here I have used my discretion.
All other dashes are transcribed as dashes (some earlier editors
translate them freely into commas, colons etc.). The length and
flourish of Ruskin's dashes often indicate mood or emphasis, but there
is no satisfactory way of transcribing this. Then there is his use of what Van Burd calls the "half-comma"—a light point placed where a comma would usually be, or where Ruskin has paused for emphasis or cogitation. These I have rendered throughout as commas. Letters raised above the line have been brought down, but not underlined. Otherwise I have followed Ruskin faithfully, even in his irregular use of capitals, his use of the ampersand, and his omission of apostrophes.

Several of the letters are defaced by unknown autograph hunters who have cut out Ruskin's signature and generally some portion of the text on the other side of the leaf. These cuts are mentioned in the headnote and are indicated in the text by groups of three full-stops roughly corresponding in shape to the hole in the text, as here:

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... ... ... ... ... ... ...
[SIGNATURE CUT OUT]
... ... ... ... ... ... ...
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Other peculiarities of the individual letters, such as leaves missing, notations on the letter, publication history etc. are listed in the headnotes. Square brackets enclose editorial insertions in the text itself.
When the correspondence between Brown and Ruskin began in 1846, Ruskin's reputation was by no means established. *Modern Painters I*, in defence of Turner, had appeared in 1843; *Modern Painters II*, which first provoked Brown to write to Ruskin, came out in 1846. Despite the authoritative tone of these two books, Ruskin was not so entirely at ease in his public role as he later became, and the carefully formal and constrained air of his first letters to Brown betrays this; he adopts the manner of a much older and more established figure. When he became older and more established he relaxed and wrote with delightful informality. Dr. Brown's article on *Modern Painters I and II* in the *North British Review* (Feb 1847—see Letter 2, n.1) was one of the first to hail Ruskin as a great writer.

1847 was a troubled year for Ruskin; he was foiled in his courtship of Charlotte Lockhart, and in the winter he began to pay his attentions to Effie Gray, though at first unsure of the suitability of the match. He married her at Perth on April 14, 1848. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* was published in 1849; the first volume of *The Stones of Venice* appeared in 1851 and the second and third in 1853. These books steadily enhanced Ruskin's prestige as a writer and art critic, and they began to have considerable influence on contemporary art and architecture. They were not uniformly enjoyed by other critics, however. There is a gap in the letters to Brown
between 1849 and 1855 (or 1853—the dating of the 1855 letter is very uncertain), though there is nothing to indicate that the correspondence broke down, only that no letters survive: on his Scottish tour of 1853 Ruskin certainly saw the Doctor and was on cordial terms with him. In April 1854 Effie Gray left Ruskin and their marriage was annulled, because not consummated, on 3 July the same year.

Modern Painters III and IV were published in 1856.

Throughout the fifties Ruskin's interest was turning increasingly from art to political economy; at first he was unsure of his ground and inhibited by his father's wish that he would let the subject alone, but eventually he had to speak.

1858 saw the publication of the first series of Dr. Brown's Horae Subsecivae.

Letter 1
Pisa, 27 June, 1846

Pisa. June 27th. 1846.

My Dear Sir

I should have answered your very kind letter (1) before,—had I not unfortunately been for a week or two out of the way of receiving letters at all, so that the time between your writing & my receiving was longer than it should have been. I need not say that I am grateful to
you for expressing your feelings to me, and that the support of such assurances of sympathy is in every way precious. You appear to feel at present perhaps a little too enthusiastically; as I suppose is generally the case with our first reception of that for which we are prepared by previous tendencies of feeling in the same direction—I much regret that the papers(2) which accompanied your letter were not forwarded with it, I having left directions that only letters should be sent; but I have sent for them, and I doubt not shall find in them subjects of communication between us more distinct & interesting. I have to thank you for your invitation to Edinburgh:(3) it is not impossible I may have the pleasure of seeing you there; at no very far off day but it will be admiration & not curiosity that brings me there, for many of my very earliest memories are connected with the old city—though more of them with the country north of the Forth, I having been half bred at Perth, and having some impressions of the Grampians & the Tay in consequence which even your friend Mr Hill(4) in his pretty vignettes to Scott's Fair Maid—has very sufficiently failed of realising: It is not his fault, I suppose, he could not paint all the stones that I used to build piers with in the clear water.

One thing I was glad to see, or rather to conjecture, from your note—that your Father,(5) whom I suppose a Presbyterian clergyman, had not been alarmed by the frequent expressions of admiration for Romanist works of art. These might have given rise to some dangerous surmises—considering the late melancholy schisms(6) in the quarter from which they come, and I fear may in some respects diminish, with certain classes of readers, the usefulness of the book. I am the more anxious on this head, because I have not yet been able to come to any steady opinion respecting the real operation of art as directed to religious subjects,
on the minds of the common people; in landscape I have no doubt whatsoever—and it was therefore to landscape that I chiefly referred the close of the 15th Chapter(7)—neither have I any doubt of the effect of religious art—even of that which is much infected with Romanism upon the minds of thoughtful & charitable persons who will receive the good of it as it was meant—but whether it had not been better for Italy on the whole that none had ever existed, or how far we may hope for good from a revival of a purified form of it—I dare not say; it is a subject requiring attentive examination before writing anything further respecting such art; and unfortunately it is almost impossible to carry on an investigation of the kind—without spending more time abroad than I can spare. Respecting church decoration I have spoken more boldly(8)—my mind being more made up.—I do not think it of much importance, in itself; nay, I think that if much importance were ever attached to it by us, so as to leave it to be at all inferred that a church was less a church without it than with it, instant & great evil would follow; but I think the feeling in us is of importance, which, of the two, would rather decorate and delight in decorating the church than our own houses, and would endeavour to manifest in buildings dedicated to God's service, the highest qualities of intelligence & feeling with which He has gifted us; I shall probably find some topic for a longer letter in your papers, when they arrive—meantime, I wish you would let me know why, of all things in the world—you should differ with me upon railroads(9) I am quite at a loss to conjecture what can be said in their defence—granting that their effect on natural scenery is trivial—that their interference with the rest & character of rural life is of no moment, and that sometimes the power of rapid locomotion may be of much service to us or save us from some bitter pain or
accident which our absence at the moment must have involved—yet the
general effect of them is to render all the time that we pass in
locomotion the same—except in feverishness, as that passed at home,
and to enable us to get over ground which formerly conveyed to us a
thousand various ideas, & the examination of which was fertile in
lessons of the most interesting kind—while we read a page of the
morning paper. One traveller is now the same as another—it matters
not whether you have eyes or are asleep; or blind; intelligent—or
dull; all that you can know—at best—of the country you pass is its
geological structure and general clothing. your study of humanity is
limited to stokers & policemen at the stations—and of animal life
to the various arrangements of black & brown dots on chessboard
looking fields. I can safely say that my only profitable travelling
has been on foot, and that I think it admits of much doubt whether
not only railroads, but even carriages & horses, except for rich
people or conveyance of letters & merchandise—be not inventions of
the Evil one. How much of the indolence—ill health—discomfort—
thoughtlessness, selfishness, sin, & misery—of this life—do you
suppose, may be ultimately referable altogether to the invention of
those two articles alone—the carriage, & the bridle. I am not
jesting. Think of it, & tell me, believing me always very gratefully
Yours

the author of Modern Painters

You ask me if single impressions of the Liber Studiorum(10) are
to be had. I fear very few—and those not of the best subjects—which
are usually picked up as soon as they come into the market. I have had
great difficulty in getting even an imperfect set of proofs—. The whole
work is to be had—but it is a recent issuing of impressions after the copper plates have lain by these—(some of them) thirty years, and of course they are all very bad.

1. Dr. Brown had written his first letter to Ruskin on 2 June, 1846. The letter is too long to quote fully, but its tone may be judged from the following extracts:

"My dear "Oxford Graduate"

It is the duty of every man, who has received any good thing & above all if it be signal, spiritual, everlasting, to give thanks to the Father of Lights from whom it has come down. It is not so generally regarded as a duty, to return our thanks to the human instrument of this Divine goodness, but it seems to me quite as truly though not so deeply obligatory as the other. This is my reason & my excuse for thus addressing you. I have just risen from your Second Vol. Your First I have never seen. I cannot keep from telling you how much of knowledge, of truth, of highest delight, of lasting benefit you have furnished me with.

I have no words to express my astonishment, my perfect satisfaction, my personal gratitude at its contents. Your views...I coincide in, with a minuteness & completeness I never
before hoped for in regard to any other man...I often felt as if my own secrets were being told as I read. I gave the book to my father, a clergyman & a man of true godliness & he has been moved by it to tears, & was reading it all Sabbath day. He was above all delighted with its "reverence & godly fear" ...I disagree with you I believe entirely upon only one thing—and that is Railways...I am a believer in Turner...I am not an Artist but a Doctor. but Art has been to me a blessing all my life & every year more & more. My profession leads me to see much of disorder, & misery & pain & ugliness & sin & I am the better of something that keeps alive in me the relish & the perception of the opposites of all these."

(MS, Ruskin Galleries, Bembridge School, Isle of Wight.)

2. Some examples of Brown's writing, of which he said in his letter: "I send you with some fear & shame a few scraps of my own writing rather to indicate my tendencies than anything else. They are very ill written and imperfectly thought out."

3. Brown did not invite Ruskin to Edinburgh formally, but wrote that the "phantastical" picturesqueness of the place was worth seeing, and that he would be happy and grateful to meet Ruskin if he did come.

are two vignette wood-engravings by Hill of the Tay and its surroundings, on pp. 14 and 244.

5. John Brown D.D. (1784-1858) of Edinburgh, exegete and writer on theological subjects. He was one of the leading presbyterians of his day.

6. Modern Painters was published as the work of "a Graduate of Oxford", and with this nom-de-plume Ruskin was liable to be associated with Puseyism and the Oxford Movement, which were flourishing at this time. Newman had been received into the Roman Catholic Church in Oct 1845, and the many young protestants who looked to him as a leader were wavering in their sympathies.

7. Of the second volume of Modern Painters (1846), part III, section i (Works IV, 203-13).


9. Ruskin had written scathingly of railroads in Modern Painters II, part III, section i, chapter I; see also the footnote at the end of the chapter. He speaks of "iron roads tearing up the surface of Europe, as grapeshot do the sea". (Works IV, 31; see also 37.)

10. This was a collection of plates devised and carried out by Turner from 1807 to 1819. It was published in parts, five plates to each part, and was intended to display the range of the artist's powers; it was educational in that it "classified the various styles
of landscape painting”. See W.C. Rawlinson, Turner's Liber Studiorum (1906).

Letter 2
Denmark Hill, 11 February 1847

Denmark Hill. Thursday. 11th Feb.

My Dear Sir,

I was much grieved this evening by receiving your letter written under circumstances of illness & fatigue, and expressing feelings so unnecessarily—unwarrantably painful—and more that my delay in thanking you for your paper (1) in the North British had left you so long in this state of anxiety. I hope you will not give the subject one thought more—except so far as it may be a source of pleasure to you to know that you have infinitely delighted an old and tenderhearted friend of mine—who could never forget the critique in Blackwood’s and who certainly would have shrunk like a sea anemone at shadow—had any part of the present one been unkind or unjust. I do not think there is one whit more faultfinding than is fully & fairly warrantable—certainly no more than is expedient—for I fear that if your kind spirit of praise had thoroughly pervaded the article—there had been much chance of all being set down as the work of my friends & private abettors—and much of the credit it will now carry, refused in consequence. Nevertheless—for my own part—I was glad to hear you
had not written the passages in question (3) for—though preparing to
counter them and benefit by them as I best might—I was a little aghast
at the request that I would never be eloquent any more;—for I do think
that some things cannot be said except passionately & figuratively
—and my own tendencies at present are so entirely prosaic—& such
delight as I once had in, or power over, the fancy—so fast evaporating
—or freezing,—or sinking as Wordsworth has it—from the fountain
into the "comfortless & hidden well", (4) that it pains me to be thrust
away from the last hold that I had—or thought I had—upon the altar
—& ordered into the icehouse of mere philosophy—there to be kept
cool—& dry—yet I am not sure but your friend is right, altogether
right—and I am sure that your feelings of pleasure—not to say your
expressions—are overcharged—I mean in your letters to me—expressions
which could be warranted only by the elaborate work of an aged man.
—There is nothing in the book which is not less than I ought to have
done—considering the singular advantages I have had—and I am either
a very stupid—or at least a very slow—person—or else the multiplication
of opportunity has a tendency to deaden both energy & imagination—for
I am always busy—& yet with no effect proportioned to the time—or
coequal with the results which I see obtained in every direction around
me by my inferiors in age—leisure—education—& opportunity. Alas
—it will be long before you have any third volume, (5)

I hope Mr Hill would give you my reasons for not sending the
Slover, (6) and that you thought them just. I do not know what pictures
you have got—but I have often found that as clergymen can never tell
what will be the effect of their sermons, and often find that most
good has been done by passages in discourses to which they had given
the least measure of time & pains—so the more I see of public judgement,
the less I can calculate of the effects of this picture or that—the less able to advise a popular selection. Many that I should have thought incomprehensible or violent I find are admired—some, whose quietness I should have thought popular, I find despised. Nor have I any hope of much effect from a single exhibition—it is only through continual teaching, or home examination of engravings, that real good is done. Your article will be in both ways useful, & I much thank you for it—always with protest against its overpraise.

I am very sorry to hear you have been so seriously ill—please write & tell me when you are thoroughly better.

Yours ever truly,

J Ruskin.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Address on envelope: John Brown, Esq.

M.D./ 57 Albany St./ Edinburgh. Postmarks: Feb 13 1847; Camberwell

Gn. Pbd: Works XIX, 66-8; LJB 290.

1. Brown had written most of a notice in the North British Review, 6 (February 1847), 401-30, of the first two volumes of Ruskin's Modern Painters which were published as a single book in 1846. The article praised the work highly; it began: "This is a very extraordinary and a very delightful book, full of truth and goodness, of power and beauty."

2. A violent attack on volume 1 of Modern Painters, which appeared
in Blackwood's (October 1843), 485–503; the author was John Eagles. See Works III, xliii.

3. There is a "faultfinding" passage towards the end of the review, which was perhaps interpolated by the editor or another writer in order to give Brown's eulogy the aspect of objective comment. Ruskin is criticised for his too colloquial and passionate manner of argument, a manner, says the reviewer, more suited to the debating hall than the writing desk; the critic, in this case clearly not Dr. Brown, ends his strictures by observing: "We wish that, in his third and, in some respects, most important volume, the author would determine at once and for good not to be eloquent any more."


5. The third volume of Modern Painters did not appear until 1856.

6. Dr. Brown wanted Ruskin to send one of his Turners to the Royal Scottish Academy Exhibition in Edinburgh. The picture referred to is the famous "The Slave Ship—Slavers throwing overboard the dead and dying—Typhoon coming on (1840)." It was bought for Ruskin by his father in 1844; in 1872 he sold it and it is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The picture is discussed in Modern Painters I, Works III, 571–3.
Letter 3

Probably Leamington, July, 1847(1)

My dear Sir,

Various troublesome occupations have prevented my answering your last kind note. I had hoped to have been able to write a long letter, but I must send such an one as I can now. I am much obliged by the catalogue of your exhibition(2) which appears to have been very interesting. Turner’s Jupiter(3) I know would disappoint you. I would not when I first saw it believe it was his; the other I have no doubt is a noble picture. Mine(4) I should have sent on your principle of seeing all willingly, and in perfect confidence of its knocking the Temple of Jupiter into ruins, but to be pointed at as the Best he ever did,—I was afraid. Lauder’s(5) picture you may remember I only noticed for its sky, which I really believe to be a sketch from nature; the figure was rascally. Do you happen to know if Bonington’s Venice(6) came from Mr. Munro in park Street, if so, it is a fine thing, but coarse, dashy, dependent on violent patches of colour. I wish I could see the drawing of Kilchurn on Loch Awe.(7) I do not even know any engraving of it ... ... ... kind offer to procure me the ... ... ... them—in fair condition and with small eng ... ... ... of proofs—there is hardly any difference ... ... copper. I never buy at all ... ... ... lost about twenty guineas by buying at first and getting tired in a month. The England and Yorkshire series(8) I got proofs of, as they are good for nothing except in
first impressions. But one of the Liber Studiorum is worth all the
plates put together.

I ran down to Cumberland\(^{(9)}\) for a little quiet a fortnight ago,
but was utterly taken aback by the pettiness of everything. I have
unjustly blamed our English painters for not drawing what they never
saw, Hills and atmosphere. Nothing but boggy ground with stones in
it for one, fog, mist, wet, exhalation for the other. Nature actually
does not seem the same lady there, no power in her hand, no fire in
her heart—every thing done weakly, small—beerishly,—meanly, miserably,
no sensation of space, size, exertion, and as for distance,\(^{(10)}\) I see
I have been talking always under my term "extreme distance" of what
English painters never saw. Their extreme is my middle distance, or
near hill. However I am going down again to get used to it, if I can,
and see what good is in it, but it mustn't be called hill scenery, or
lake scenery. I call it bog and gutter scenery, and taking it on those
terms, I daresay I shall find out a fair side of it.

I must send you this scrawl or nothing.

Believe me, my dear sir

\[\text{SIGNATURE CUT OUT}\]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

Text: Copy, John Brown Papers, NLS. Dated [Leamington, July, 1847.]

1. This is the date and place attributed to the letter by the
original editors; it is confirmed by the references to the R.S.A. Exhibition of 1847, and to Ruskin's June visit to Cumberland.

2. The R.S.A. Exhibition of 1847. Dr. Brown had many friends at the R.S.A. including the secretary, D.O. Hill, and he exerted himself to get good pictures sent into the exhibitions; in 1850 he persuaded Lady Trevelyan to submit some of hers, which were accepted.

3. Described in the exhibition catalogue as: "The Temple of Jupiter at Athens painted in 1818". There is no mention of this picture in present day catalogues of Turner's work.

4. Probably Turner's Slave-ship; see previous letter.

5. Probably either James E. Lauder (1811-61) or Robert S. Lauder (1803-69), brothers in an Edinburgh family and both artists who exhibited frequently in the Royal Academy and the R.S.A. during this period. Both showed several paintings in the 1847 exhibition.

6. In the catalogue this picture is described as "View on the Grand Canal, Venice", by "the late J.P. Bonnington", a painter so obscure that he is mentioned in no reference book. It is possible, though it seems unlikely that the cataloguer could have made such a mistake, that the far more famous R.P. Bonington (1802-28) is referred to. His name is spelt as Ruskin spells it. The painting in fact was "the property of H.A.J. Munro of Novar", a well-known patron of the arts with whom Ruskin was acquainted. He was a friend of Turner and owned a large collection of his pictures.
7. This drawing, presumably of Kilchurn Castle at the NE end of Loch Awe, Argyllshire, does not appear in the 1847 catalogue. More than likely one of Turner's drawings is referred to; he drew the subject several times. An 1801 version is reproduced in Gerald Wilkinson, *Turner's Early Sketchbooks*, (1972), p.139.

8. Two groups of landscape pictures by Turner. The England series was a set of engravings, described as "Picturesque views in England and Wales. From Drawings by J.M.W. Turner, R.A. Engraved under the superintendence of Charles Heath, With descriptive and historic illustrations, by H.B. Lloyd. In two Vols. 1838." The Yorkshire series was a group of drawings of the county, of high quality, which first appeared in T.D. Whitaker, *History of Richmondshire* (1823).

9. Ruskin stayed at Ambleside for some time in June, 1847.


Letter 4

Leamington, 30 July, probably 1847

5, Dormer Place

Leamington. July 30th

My dear Sir,
I am ashamed to answer your letters, they are too full of terms of praise. Pray do not do so any more, or you may do me no little harm. Thank you not the less for your kind feeling. I hope certainly to see you this summer—but not as I pass northwards. I have been made thoroughly ill by late hours & various irregularities & vexations during the London season—never having an hour to myself, and it is absolutely necessary for me now to live in perfect quiet, and in pure hill air for some time to come. I am moreover perfectly sick of looking at pictures and saying the same things over and over again, and I cannot be happy until I have got on a little again with my own work, and done something again from nature.

There is a farther reason than all these. I have not been in Perthshire for 19 years. But there I spent the happiest summers of my life, when a child—with companions now all dead. My going there is a kind of pilgrimage—and you may easily suppose it one during which I should not be able fitly to receive the kindness of new friends.—I hope to bring some little drawing with me when I do come—which your enthusiasm will perhaps think worth accepting.

Believe me

Yours ever very truly

J Ruskin.

Forgive this scrawl—all about myself. Indeed I cannot talk of pictures just now.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1847.
1. So dated because Ruskin was in Leamington at this time in 1847; the Scottish tour referred to in the letter took place in August and September of this year.

2. In the event Ruskin was only briefly in Edinburgh, from 23 to 25 August; and he failed to see Brown who was away on a visit to Melrose (see Letters 5 and 6).

3. Ruskin had stayed as a child at the house of his paternal aunt, Jessie Ruskin, who had married Peter Richardson of Bridgend, Perth. Ruskin's particular playmates were her children. See his family tree, Works XXXV, 602; and "The Banks of the Tay", Praeterita I iii; Works XXXV, 51-69.

Letter 5
Folkestone, 18 November, probably 1847(1)

Folkestone, 13th Nov.

My dear Sir,

My regret at missing you was not less than that you so kindly express at not having been in Edinburgh when I passed through—I was hardly able even to take advantage of the kindness of Mr Harvey, Mr Horn, Mr Macculloch and others—being—at the time—unwell and anxious about things entirely unconnected with art—as well as hurried in my return owing to an overlong stay in the Highlands. I
hope indeed that I may be able to revisit Scotland soon under better auspices. I was indeed delighted with Mr Harveys Highland study—as well as with all his pictures & with himself. I saw however no other works of much mark. Mr Hill's large view of Edinburgh is very sweet and very faithful. The Windsor perhaps over-strained & too brown—but I saw some interesting and admirable architectural drawings by an Artist whose name I at this moment forget—I should have a memorandum of it at home.

I was much delighted by the Highland river beds and heather. Mountains the heavy sweeps of moorland can hardly be called—nor—as far as I saw—is the sensation of Swiss mountain character to be in any wise obtained—even in the lowest degree of intensity. Schahallien is without exception the most insipid hill I ever saw in my life. But Killiecrankie is pretty in the arrangement of its hill lines—and in its birch wooding. Dunkeld also very sweet.—I never saw so lovely a stream as the Tay.

I know the Turner you mention very well. I think it a very good example of his early manner—though uninteresting in subject. Sky full of beauty. I have not seen him since my return to town. I much fear he is far from well.

In the hope of seeing you soon, believe me, my dear Sir

Yours ever faithfully

J Ruskin.
1. So dated because Ruskin was at Folkestone at this time in 1847, and the brief visit to Edinburgh was probably the one of 23 to 25 August of this year.

2. Probably Sir George Harvey (1806-76), Scottish painter. He was a resident of Edinburgh and contributed to many R.S.A. exhibitions; in 1857 he painted the portrait of Dr. Brown, who was a close friend of his.

3. According to a letter from Dr. Brown to Lady Dunfermline, written about 1860, Horn or another man of the same name was an advocate; nothing else is known about him. (NE in NLS, Minto Papers no.13171.)

4. Probably Horatio Macculloch (1805-67), Scottish landscape painter. He was born in Glasgow but lived in Edinburgh, where he became "the most popular landscape painter of his day in Scotland" (BNS). Brown mentions him in a letter of 18 March 1846 (LJR, 65).

5. Possibly about his unsuccessful courtship of Charlotte Lockhart, or his forthcoming courtship of Effie Gray.

6. David Octavius Hill. The picture of Edinburgh here mentioned is possibly "Comin' frae the Town", which was exhibited at the R.S.A. by Hill in 1847, or "Edinburgh from the Castle, 1847", which he exhibited at the R.S.A. in 1848. "The Windsor" is possibly "Windsor Castle—summer evening", an undated work mentioned in Bryan's Dictionary.

7. In the typescript version of these letters there is a footnote
here: "Mr Irvine Smith's note—Houston, probably." In Letter 6 Ruskin thanks Brown for sending him Houston's name. John Adam Houston (1813-84) was a historical and genre painter, born in Wales of Scottish parentage. He lived in Edinburgh from 1840 to 1858, and became an Academician at the R.S.A. in 1845.

8. Or, as more usually spelt, Schiehallion, is in Perthshire (3547 ft).


10. A market town on the Tay, also in Perthshire, not far from Perth.

11. Unidentified. Turner himself was now old, his sight was failing and ill-health had brought his active career as a painter almost to an end; in this year he showed only a single picture at the Academy, and to a friend who remarked on this he said "You will have less next year". (A.J. Finberg, The Life of J.M.W. Turner R.A., 1961, p.417.)

Letter 6
Folkestone, 8 December, probably 1847(1)

Pavilion Hotel Folkestone
8th Dec.

My Dear Dr Brown,

What a dear, warm hearted man you are!—I cannot leave such a
letter unanswered a day, though I do not write much at present. Pray do not regret your visit to Melrose. I could not have enjoyed your kindness in Edinburgh then—things had occurred to cross me very much and I was in a bad humour and ill. I hope—if no worse in health than at present, that God willing I shall certainly be in Scotland again early in the spring, and I will then give you fair warning. Thank you for giving me Mr. Houston's name. I hope to see all his sketches, quietly, in the spring—perhaps even to have a little sketching with him—and I assure you—that you shall have a sketch as soon as I get to work again. I could hardly do anything in Scotland last year. I do not know what is the matter with me—not chest—but nervous excitement—rendering me sleepless and unfit for anything. I am down at the seaside to escape influenza if I can, doing everything that I ought & nothing else. That is, neither writing nor drawing—but reading a little Plato, and chemistry and things that do not take me into my own beat—and sailing cockleshells in the pools on the shore. I am learning boat-building too—very interesting.

I was glad to hear of Miss Crum in your note. I hope she is well—does she reside in Edinburgh now? She is a very amiable and clever girl. I will not fail to do your kind message to my Father & Mother—on condition of your remembering me also to Mrs Dr Brown.

[Signature cut out]

... ... ... ... ...

Kind regards to Mr Harvey and Mr Houston.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Pavilion Hotel/ Folkestone.
1. So dated from the fact that Ruskin was at Folkestone at this time in 1847; from the references to his Scottish visit; and from several other references, as for example to his wish to escape influenza.

2. Ruskin refers to his brief visit to Edinburgh on 23—25 August, 1847. (See Letter 10, note 1.)

3. This would stem from the fact that his courtship of Effie Gray was at an impasse; his father would not consent to their engagement and on 25 August he had to go through Perth without seeing her.

4. Probably John Adam Houston; see the note to previous letter.

5. Either Mary Gray Crum, Jessie Crum, or Margaret Crum; the two last were sisters. They were related to Dr. Brown in some way which is not clear through his stepmother, who was also a Crum.

6. See previous letter.

Letter 7

Perhaps Denmark Hill, probably late December 1847 or January 1848(1)
My Dear Dr Brown,

It is not through neglect that I have delayed answering your letter. My Father & I would both have been glad if it had been in our power to contribute, if not a painting at least a drawing, to your February exhibition—but I am particularly afraid of annoying Turner just now—he is, I believe—at work on some important subjects and, unless you knew him, you can hardly conceive how little will vex him—and interrupt—or diminish the success of his labour—he has been in the habit of looking to our house as a sanctuary from which no picture once entered, was ever thrust. I ventured to write him a note—asking permission to send a drawing to Edinburgh—but I have no answer, and I cannot venture either to trouble him farther, or under the circumstances, to send the drawing.

I was reading a note of yours over, just now, wherein you speak of the glory of Plato. Fragmentarily—he is delightful, but surely there are many passages of most extraordinarily palpable nonsense.—In the Phaedo—for instance—all the proofs of the immortality of the soul from memory—and the final punning argument from the word 

\[ \text{I have never seen "guesses at truth".} \]

(4) I will enquire for it. How has Mr Harveys Highland study turned out. Remember me to him when you see him, & believe me my dear Sir, ever faithfully Yours

J Ruskin.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: certainly before 1851/
I think early in 1848

*
1. So dated from Ruskin's mention of Harvey's "Highland Study", which he refers to also in Letter 5; and the possibility that Dr. Brown's "note on Plato" came in his reply to Letter 6, in which Ruskin said he was reading Plato. Obviously this present letter must precede the R.S.A. exhibition of February, 1848.

2. At the Royal Scottish Academy. Ruskin seems to have had some qualms about sending his Turners to Scotland, perhaps partly because of the hostility to him and Turner of Blackwood's Magazine—cf. Letters 2 and 30.

3. Athenatos = Immortal, deathless. The punning argument occurs in Phaedo section 105 ff.; the argument from memory at section 72 ff.

4. A.W. Hare and J.C. Hare, Guesses at Truth, First Series (1827; third ed. Nov 1847) or Second Series (1847).

Letter 8
Denmark Hill, 9 February, 1848 (1)

Denmark Hill
— 9th February.

My Dear Dr Brown,

I owe you my best thanks for your most interesting review; (2)—it
is delightful as a memoir of such a man—and equally so as a piece of very beautiful thought & very perfect writing—I do not recollect anything that has given me greater pleasure than the account of the Doctor's Sisyphean\(^3\) labours and ratiocinations on the Pentlands—or than the very beautiful comparison of Genius—talent and information, with the three several streams—but it is all valuable—The worst of it was that after all that we hear of your noble old friends Thunder & Lightning—one is—at least I was, a little disappointed by the quietness and sobriety of the Extracts from the Scripture readings. —Is it at all possible to get a Calotype\(^4\) of him?—I suppose it must be—now.—there is certainly nothing like them for rendering of Intellect—nor—to my taste—for everything else—except beauty—

I liked the passage very much about self-forgetfulness—but how is this virtue to be gained—Happy those whose sympathies stretch them out like gold leaf—until their very substance is lost—but there are others—not unprincipled men—who yet cannot make themselves transparent nor imponderable.—They overbalance —& block out every thing with their own near selves.

—I see in a late letter of yours you said you had something to ask me about Chemistry—but would not?—pray do—provided it require no knowledge to answer.

[CUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]

... ... ... ... ... ... ...

**ME:** The Bodleian Library.  **Notation on letter:** 1848

The signature has been cut out.  **Publication history:** Works
XXXVI, 85; LJB, 291. Both omit the last paragraph.

1. So dated from the date of the Chalmers review, and from the connection between this and Ruskin's next letter, which is almost certainly from 1848.

2. This was an article by Brown on the late Thomas Chalmers, which appeared in the North British Review, February 1848. Chalmers (1700–1847) was a leader of the Free Church at the time of the Disruption of the Scottish Church in 1843, when a large proportion of Scottish ministers seceded from the National Established Church. Brown's article is reprinted in Horae II.

3. In his article, to illustrate Chalmers' "childlike simplicity", Dr. Brown told a story of how the churchman got a crowd of children to help him carry stones to the top of one of the Pentland Hills. On reaching the top of the hill he took the stones and rolled them down to the bottom again, one by one.

4. The name given by Fox-Talbot to a photographic Process invented by him in 1841 in which the image is produced by the action of light on paper coated with silver iodide. The name derives from the Greek word for beauty. Several Calotypes of Chalmers had been made by David Octavius Hill; Chalmers was a prominent figure in Hill's well-known picture of the Disruption, "The First General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland", the portraits in which were painted with the aid of photographs. The most frequently reproduced Calotype of Chalmers
can be seen in David Bruce, Sun Pictures: the Hill Adamson Calotypes (1973), p. 36. Dr. Brown evidently sent Ruskin one; see next letter.

Letter 9
Denmark Hill, 6 March, probably 1848

Denmark Hill,

6th March.

My Dear Dr Brown,

I really do not know how to thank you and Mr Hill for your kindness about the Calotypes. I hope however to see you both some day soon, & to have the pleasure of doing so personally. I shall call for them

[Cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

cause to be grateful to God for his guidance in this matter—and for the precious hopes that are opening to me. I cannot write a letter today—but I would not delay the expression of my thanks.

I shall bring a little sketch with me, which perhaps your indulgence will accept as hostage for a better. I cannot draw just now—I am anxious and restless.

Believe me ever

[Signature cut out]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
1. So dated from Ruskin's reference to his coming marriage and the visit to Edinburgh which preceded it.

2. These were probably pictures of Dr. Chalmers, which Ruskin had enquired after in his last letter; see the preceding letter, note 4.

3. His coming marriage with Effie Gray on 10 April, 1848.

4. Ruskin would bring the sketch to Edinburgh within a few days; he arrived there just prior to his marriage, on 17 March. The letter written during his honeymoon on 17 April is evidence that he did visit the Browns on this occasion.

Letter 10

Edinburgh, probably late March, 1848

Sunday Morning

My dear Dr Brown

I found the books yesterday afternoon—but the kind note—having
taken it for a mark only—not till late last night. I have to see my friends to the railroad tomorrow morning, but will certainly wait upon Mrs Brown either that day or the following.—I believe I am to have the pleasure of meeting you at Mr. Hills(2) in the forenoon am not I. Eleven o'clock was named I think, but I must write to Mr Hill that I cannot come till twelve—as I have much to do in the early part.

[cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

I am so very glad that you were pleased with Miss Gray; indeed I have every cause to bless & thank God for his Goodness to me.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1847. The signature is cut out, which damages text on both sides of the leaf.

1. Wedderburn has tentatively dated the MS. 1847. This is probably incorrect for several reasons. Though Ruskin did visit Scotland in 1847, he was in Edinburgh only briefly. He probably did not see Brown on his way north to the Highlands, as in Letter 4, 30 July 1847, he warned Brown that he would not. On his return he stayed in Edinburgh from 23–5 August but again failed to see Brown, who was visiting Melrose: see Letters 5 and 6. The reference to Miss Gray is also out of keeping with the attributed date, as Ruskin's courtship of her had barely begun: see M. Lutyens The Ruskins and The Grays (1972), pp. 42–3 and 60.

We may much more conveniently assign this letter to 1848, just
before Ruskin's marriage, when enthusiastic remarks about Miss Gray are to be expected. Miss Gray and Ruskin met in Edinburgh just before their marriage, Miss Gray arriving on 1 March and Ruskin on 17 March; by 29 March they were at Bowerewell, Perth, where they were married on 10 April (Lutyens, pp. 92-105). In Letter 9, 6 March 1848, Ruskin speaks of his marriage and coming visit to Edinburgh and promises to see Brown there when he arrives. The evidence therefore converges to suggest that this letter was written in late March, 1848.

2. Probably David Octavius Hill.

Letter 11
Edinburgh, perhaps March 1848(1)

Monday Afternoon.

Dear Mrs Brown,

I have literally not had a minute to write a note all day, or to run in as I has hoped and tell you how happy I should be to go tomorrow to Mr Miller's(2) with Dr. Brown. I shall be ready at eleven. I will come to see you on Thursday evening, only, please, by yourselves, with sincerest regard to the Doctor and remembrance to the young Architect,(3) believe me, most faithfully yours

J. Ruskin.
1. The only evidence for the date, apart from the fact that Miller died in 1856, is the "1848 w" pencilled on the letter probably by Wedderburn. If from 1848 this letter must have been written between 17 March, when Ruskin arrived in Edinburgh to join his bride-to-be, and 29 March, when they left Edinburgh. Ruskin did not visit the town at any other time in 1848.

2. Probably Hugh Miller (1802-56). He began his career as a journeyman mason, became a geologist and finally a literary man. He was an ardent Christian, and in 1840 took over the editorship of the Secessionist bi-weekly paper *The Witness*, which Dr. Brown occasionally wrote for. He and Brown were good friends.

3. On the typescript of these letters, in NLS Acc.6289, the architect is identified as R. Wilson; but I have been unable to trace any further information about him.

Letter 12

Edinburgh, perhaps March 1848(1)

Dear Mrs Brown,
I will come on Monday evening, if you will allow me—shall I say at about eight o'clock? I am truly glad that Dr Brown is not going to run any risk of over fatigue that can be by prudence avoided, and I most sincerely assure you I shall be much happier with you by yourselves than if you were to invite me with a party.

With sincere regards to Dr Brown
Believe me, dear Mrs Brown
Most faithfully Yours,
J Ruskin.

*MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1848 w

1. See note 1, previous letter.

Letter 13
Keswick, 17 April, 1848

Keswick 17th April.

My Dear Dr Brown

I have had so much cause for gratitude lately—and so few means of showing or expressing it to my friends—that I have been obliged to
give up the effort despairingly,—you, however—whose most valuable gift\(^\text{1}\) I put into my bride's hand not more than half an hour before I had the right to inscribe her new name in it—are the first to whom I would fain—not discharge, but acknowledge my debt, and my wife bids me return her most sincere thanks for your kind thoughts of her—as well as for the selection of the gift. It is my own favourite book. I could not have wished to put any other into her hands as a remembrance of so kind a friend as Dr. Brown—it has been lying beside us—(not unopened) during the happy days of a pilgrimage beside Loch Tay & Loch Lomond, and on my own part, I must thank you especially for acquainting me with this edition, which contains much more material respecting his life—and more letters, &c. than any I had previously seen.

We arrived here on Saturday, after a four days ramble in the Highlands—the weather delightful, but the season unfortunate. Taymouth is very lovely; but my impression of there being no such thing as mountain scenery in the central Highlands has been woefully confirmed by the formless and pitiful elevations of Ben Lawers, Ben More and Ben Lomond—while the whole extent of Loch Tay, and the lifeless moors between Killin and the head of Loch Lomond—suggested but too frequently the exclamation—which I could not utter aloud for fear of identifying myself too closely with the goodly Justice Barren all—Sir John Barren all\(^\text{2}\)—Narry, Good Air.—Still—much must be allowed for the want of heather and foliage—as well as of green of every kind. Cumberland is more various & picturesque in form of Hill, but has received us unkindly with rain.

—We are going southward soon—but as we shall not get entangled among the vines this year—it is not without the hope of seeing our kind friends again in Edinburgh. If you see Mr Hill, pray present my kind
regards to him, and express to him his wishes

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... be carried

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... Architect

I am no ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... law or precedent

in architectural matters—generally; and it is the glory of middle age architecture that it admits of continual modification and new invention. But the very glory & essence of Greek architecture is its law—not of proportion—but of parts—and if its usual and simple models be inapplicable to our present purposes it most assuredly should not be employed at all. If you erect the building as at present designed—you will have in Princes St. two as remarkable examples (3) of vulgar Gothic and ungrammatical Greek as modern times, bad as they are, have yet devised.

If you should happen to see Sir Wm Allan (4) or Mr W. Gordon (5) pray give them my kind & respectful regards, and with sincere regards to Mrs Brown believe me, my Dear Dr Brown

[Signature cut out]

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NS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1848

The signature is cut out, interfering with the text on the other side of the leaf.
1. An edition of one of Scott's works, perhaps? The Abbotsford edition of the Waverley Novels had just been completed, though it does not contain much biographical material.

2. Unidentified.

3. Doubtless the 'vulgar Gothic' was the Scott Monument, which was completed in 1846; and the 'ungrammatical Greek' was the proposed National Gallery of Scotland. Plans for the National Gallery were begun in 1847; William Playfair designed the building in the classical style and it was duly erected.

4. Sir William Allan (1782-1850) was a painter specialising in historical scenes and pictures of Russian life. He travelled in Russia for several years before eventually settling in Edinburgh. He was a friend of Brown, who said after his death that he was "a rare bit of true spirit and humour, gentleness, fortitude and generosity." ([LJE 78.])

5. Perhaps Sir John Watson Gordon (1790-1864), who was knighted in 1850. He was a prominent portrait painter resident in Edinburgh, and a founder member of the Royal Scottish academy.

Letter 14

London, 15 April, 1849(1)
Sunday Evening,

April 15th.

Dear Dr Brown,

It gave me most sincere pleasure to hear from you again, and to be reminded of all the happiness I had at Edinburgh with you, now—wae worth the day—more than a year ago. (2) I have indeed been most happy—as you suppose of me—yet what has been on the one hand a source of joy—has on the other been attended with many of distress—my poor wifie having had much to bear since she was mine—friend after friend, and at last her little brother, (3) being taken away: It is as if many of the ties which bound her to her home had been dissolved that she might become more entirely mine—as I am therefore—if possible—more entirely hers. And yet I have to part with her just now for a long long time—for her health has been injured (4) by these repeated shocks, and I am afraid to take her with me where I am going—(leaving town as I trust—next Wednesday—the 18th for Chamonix and Zermatt) (5) where living in chalets and walking in snow would be her only means of wifely companionship with me. I trust that she is now gaining strength—and that when she is restored to me—or as I feel almost inclined to say—when we are married next time, I hope to take better care of her.

I have much to say to you, & cannot say it—as it is about myself it is as well not)—for after all—writing letters on Sundays is a kind of doing one's "pleasure on the Holy day"—and tomorrow, I have two steel plates to finish & bite—and

[cut out for signature]

the day after there will be packing, & the host of things to be done which ought to have been done at Christmas;—So I can but thank you
for the extract of Critique on Turner—it is very nice, & I wish we had more such men—whatever their mode of usual life. I have also to ask your indulgence for the coarse etchings of the bye book, which I hope will soon be out. I cannot write your name in your copy—till I have the pleasure of seeing you again—for I shall be on the Mer-

[CUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]

... ... ... ... ... ...

MS: The Bodleian Library.  Notation on letter: 1854

The signature has been cut out, which damages the text on both sides of the leaf.

*  

1. 1854 was the date written on the MS of this letter, probably by Wedderburn, but it is certainly incorrect. Cook and Wedderburn believed, and established the idea in the Works, that Brown and Ruskin first met personally at Wellington in 1853. Since Ruskin speaks in this letter of meeting Brown in Edinburgh a year ago, Wedderburn naturally assumed that he was writing in 1854. As we have seen, Ruskin and Brown met in Edinburgh at least as early as March 1848 (as Ruskin's letters of 1848 show); and, as the notes make clear, the date of this letter must be 1849.

2. That is, in March, 1848, just before Ruskin's marriage.

4. Effie was ill in 1849 and Ruskin left her for a long time to travel on the continent, sending her ostensibly for her health's sake to live with her mother at Perth. This caused a little coolness between the Ruskins and the Grays, because Ruskin seemed rather relieved than otherwise about the separation.

5. Ruskin did in fact leave for Switzerland as planned on Wednesday, 18 April.

6. Unidentified.

7. This was probably an advance copy of Seven Lamps of Architecture, which was almost ready for publication in April 1849. In the preface to it Ruskin apologised for "the hasty and imperfect execution" of the plates (Works VIII, 14.)

Letter 15
Denmark Hill, 6 January, perhaps 1855(1)

Denmark Hill,
6th January.

My Dear Dr Brown

Best thanks for your valuable letter—I should like to answer at length but thought it best to tell you of the "Guildford",(2) at once. I was offered it by Hogarth(3) for 70 guineas not long ago. I would
willingly have given that sum if I had had the money—which I had 'nt—it is not worth much more—though a very interesting drawing in many respects and very noble in its greys.

Thank you for notice of health. I do all that you bid me—except ride—and go out in heavy rain. I seldom miss a day however—my bedtime is 10—retiring time nine. I get up when I wake—unless in the dark mornings—when I can't use my eyes with safety by candlelight; in summer about 6 past 5 or 6. Severe work against time—and continual bitter chagrin at everything that is doing in the world—have upset me. I am taking things quietly now—in both respects & am better. I never thought of that application of Samson's words(4)—very beautiful. Thank you for it.

Yours ever faithfully

J Ruskin.

—Many happy returns of the season to you & Mrs Brown.

Too true—all that you say of Dickens(5) He is in a bad set. But it is not only now—his theory of human nature—but his statement of it which is false—it is as absurd as it is impious—not only wrong in divinity—but in physics.—Yet he is I believe a good man (—in the common parlance) & means well—I trust his books do no harm except in the morbid excitement they engender & pamper—if he writes much more in his present strain, they will soon be incapable of doing either harm or good.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1855
1. There is no evidence for the 1855 date beyond the fact that Wedderburn has written it in pencil on the MS.

2. Turner painted a water-colour of Guildford which was engraved and published in The Pocket Magazine of October, 1795; this may be the same picture.

3. This was probably T. Hogarth, an engraver and picture-dealer mentioned in Works XXXVI, 32-3; he sold Ruskin some drawings by Blake in 1843.

4. Samson's riddle springs to mind: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." (Judges XIV, 14.) But without other evidence the reference remains obscure.

5. It is not known what disparagement Brown had made of Dickens on this occasion, but he disliked the novelist intensely and often criticised him. Dickens had finished Hard Times (which Ruskin was later to praise magnificently) in July 1854. Towards the end of 1854 he was extremely concerned about social questions, and in the 7 Oct issue of Household Words he wrote on poverty in England, telling working men that if they wished, it was within their power to throw the present incompetent administration out of Downing St.—talk which in some quarters was thought to smack unpalatably of revolution. In private life at this time Dickens was engaged busily in amateur theatricals; Mark Lemon, Wilkie Collins and John Forster were prominent in his "set". For more about Dickens, Ruskin and Brown, see the Introduction and Letters 42 and 43.
Letter 16
London, probably December 1858

Dear Dr Brown,

I have been reading of you and thinking of you often during all your late sorrow; I will not say more respecting it than this; it would be mere impertinence in me to endeavour to do so.

I have been—lately, reading your book with much pleasure—and entire sympathy in all its aim and all its teaching. It will do great good. In fact, I think a time is coming when good is really going to be done to an extent hitherto inconceivable. You good people set about it in so much wiser ways than you used to do.

—The object of this note is however primarily to wish you and yours whatever is best for you in the opening year. Secondly to warn you that I have given a letter of introduction to you to a very Odd fellow—a Mad fellow for what I know,—in a rough coat and a long beard. He is a Canada back-woodsman—who has taken to reading the Apocalypse and has delighted me intensely by a new Interpretation of certain parts thereof—which I think will be Savoury and profitable to Presbyterians in general—Namely that Popery being the Beast—Protestantism is the "Image of the beast"—& other little analogies equally enjoyable. The rest I must leave him to tell you himself—if you can get any of your servants—or Mrs Brown's permission, to let him in—when they see him. I've endeavoured to persuade him to shave, and perform other operations more apocalyptic of Himself—but he won't. I think however you'll like him if you can forgive his "you know's". Mr Henry Wentworth Monk is his name.
I should have written to you from Switzerland this year—if I wrote to anyone—but I have given up letter writing entirely—not finding that I can draw half as much as I ought unless I do.

With sincere regards to Mrs Brown and Helen and Jock.

Ever affectionately Yours

J Ruskin

My father & mother beg their regards and best wishes.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: Octr. 1858

* *

1. This and the next letter are evidently consecutive and Wedderburn has dated them October and November respectively, from the fact that Dr. Brown's father, whose death is probably referred to, died in October, 1858. However Horae I, which is mentioned, did not come out until November 1858; and there are remarks in both letters which are inappropriate to October or November. Ruskin wishes Brown "whatever is best for you in the opening year"; and in the next letter says he will send him a picture "this spring". Most likely this letter was written in the late December of 1858: Ruskin says he should have written from Switzerland "this year" (perhaps he replies to a Christmas note from Brown)—and the next letter is from early January of 1859. The allusions to recent death and to Horae make plausible 1858-59 as the conjectured date for the letters.
2. Dr. Brown's father, John Brown D.D. (see note to Letter 1),
died on 13 October, 1858.

3. *Horae Subsecivae* series one, "Locke and Sydenham with other
occasional papers", published at Edinburgh in November 1858. In his
preface to the work Brown explained his objects in collecting his
papers, which were intended especially for physicians. Among his
motives was a desire "to give my vote for going back to the old manly
intellectual and literary culture of the days of Sydenham, Arbuthnot,
and Gregory"; he wished a physician to cultivate first hand knowledge
of life rather than learn his trade from books; he stressed that
medicine was essentially a practical art, not a theoretical one.

4. "Monk (1826-98) was a Canadian fruit farmer who believed that
he had the gift of prophecy. He wanted to restore Palestine to the
Jews." (The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin ed. Helen Viljoen, 1971,
p.598.) Ruskin encouraged him as early as 1856, but later he called
him "an interesting and somewhat pathetic example of religious madness".
(Works XXVIII, 312.)

5. Ruskin was on the continent from 13 May to early September of 1858.

6. Brown's daughter and son, Helen (later Mrs. Law) and John.
This was a stormy period for Ruskin, and for his friendship with Dr. Brown. In 1860 he was distracted from the political economy work he wanted to do by the writing of *Modern Painters V*, which brought that work to completion. Because his heart was not in it (he did it to please his father) it cost him infinite pains. As soon as it was out of the way he launched his onslaught on "The Science of Political Economy...as hitherto taught" with his papers on the subject in the *Cornhill Magazine* of Aug, Sept and Oct 1860, eventually published as *Unto this Last*. They got a rougher reception than Ruskin had anticipated, and because of the furor they caused Thackeray, *Cornhill*'s editor, discontinued the series. Among those who opposed the new economics was Dr. Brown; it can be seen in the following letters how much this hurt Ruskin. He was bitterly discouraged; but the evil state of things in the world oppressed him constantly and goaded him to write more on social questions. In 1863 his papers in *Fraser's Magazine* (eventually *Munera Pulveris*), on the same theme as the *Cornhill* papers, met the same fate; the series was terminated because of its controversial nature.

These were difficult years for Dr. Brown also: his wife's lingering mental disease kept her at death's door throughout the early sixties and she died in 1864. A second series of *Horae Subsecivae* appeared in 1861.

On 3 March 1864 Ruskin's father died. Among other circumstances unsettling him at the time was his rapidly growing love for Rose La
Touche, then a child. His disorientation in the sixties is reflected in his letters to Brown; they are very frank and vehement, sometimes almost offensively so. The social and religious views of the two men were at odds and this caused strain: Ruskin could not comprehend how his ideas could be disputed by any right-thinking man. In the middle sixties the correspondence appears to have ceased, no doubt partly because of this tension, and perhaps partly because Dr. Brown's nervous breakdown in 1866, consequent on his wife's death, left him unable to cope with letters so demanding as Ruskin's.

Letter 17
Probably January 1859(1)

Dear Dr Brown

My wise Apocalyptic friend(2) sends me no address with a letter requiring instant answer. Do you know where he is, & could you kindly give him the enclosed?

—Sincere thanks for your kind letter. Perhaps Hayne(3) might like to see the bearded man,—would you ask him if you meet him, & you and he may do as you like about exhibiting the peach bud.(4) I must send you one too this Spring—as you like it so—but the public won't care a peachstone for it. I'm very glad Jock & Helen care for my remembering them my love to them, & I am always affectionately yours and Mrs Browns.

J Ruskin
1. See preceding letter.


3. Peter Bayne (1830–96), journalist and author; born at Foddarty in Scotland and educated at Aberdeen. He wrote for Edinburgh periodicals, and edited successively The Dial and the Weekly Review of London. He combined broad liberalism with fervent evangelicalism. Apart from journalism he wrote books of history and essays of literary criticism. He was a friend of Dr. Brown.

4. Peaches also turn up in the next two letters, which perhaps led Wedderburn to group these letters together. There is no mention in the Index or the Catalogue of Drawings in Works of a painting or drawing by Ruskin of a peach bud. A drawing of peach-blossom is mentioned in Ruskin's next letter but one; in the next letter the "peach" is spoken of as "a piece of painting". The peach picture referred to in each case may therefore be a different one. A drawing by Ruskin of peach-blossom is mentioned in the Catalogue of Drawings: no. (1283), no date. This is the one referred to in the next letter but one; it may be the one referred to in this letter.
Dear Dr Brown,

It did my heart no good but much harm, to have you writing to me "my dear Sir". I am very glad people like the peach:—for I think it may make them like some things in Nature better,—but they much overrate it—if they speak highly of it as a piece of painting. It is not bad work & that is the best that can be said;—

You are hard upon the Fireman(2)—It is full of faults—but has the greatest qualities too.—Effects of light are always more or less failures—even when attempted by the greatest masters. Titian's St. Lawrence(3) is a failure. I have been "intending" to write to you—ever so long—to say that my mother would be only too happy to send Jock & Helen that milk & water face of mine(4)—but the little sentence referring to it was in a letter of yours which I could not show—because it referred to Prophetic Matters(5) also.

Would you just send me word what Paton(6) is doing in Sculpture—& at the bottom of the letter—put that sentence over again—& the head will come with Mama's signature directly—but please do it by return of post as I leave town for a few days on Friday next.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin

Sincere regards to Mrs Brown, love to Jock & Helen Lady T & Sir W. (7) gone north again I believe.
1. The reference to the peach, if to the same peach as the previous letter, favours this date, as does the mention of Ruskin's portrait by Richmond which was published in 1858.

2. Probably J.F. Millais' The Rescue. This was exhibited at the R.A. in 1855 and Ruskin praised it highly in his Academy Notes for that year, though he thought it imperfect in some respects (Works XIV, 22-3). It is now in the National Gallery of Australia, Melbourne.

3. Titian painted the Martyrdom of St. Lawrence twice: one version is in the Gesuiti, Venice, the other is in the Monastery of St. Lawrence, El Escorial. The pictures are of similar design and show the saint being burnt on a griddle; it is night and the scene is illuminated by the moon and flaring torches. See Hans Tietze, Titian Paintings and Drawings (1937), figures 264, 265, 216, 218.

4. A portrait by Richmond, drawn in 1857, and engraved and published by Smith, Elder and Co. in 1858. (It is the frontispiece to Works XVI.) Brown mentioned the picture in a letter to Ruskin of 21 November, 1871, adding that Mrs Ruskin had written kind words "on your portrait by Richmond, which she gave to my children, how long ago..." (From a letter in the NLS, Acc.6134, box 2.)

5. Brown may have been discussing Ruskin's religious doubts, a matter
in which he did not have his mother's sympathy.

6. Probably Sir Joseph Noel Paton (1821–1901), a good friend of Dr. Brown. (His brother, Walter Hugh, was a landscape painter and the less prominent of the two; he was not noted for sculpture as his brother was.) As well as painting extremely popular pictures he did “graceful” sculpture and wrote poetry. He was brother-in-law to D.C. Hill.

7. Sir Walter and Lady Pauline Trevelyan, close friends of Ruskin and Brown. Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan (1797–1879), naturalist, was educated at Harrow, University College Oxford, and later studied in Edinburgh. He was a fellow of the Geological Society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh and others; he was particularly interested in botany and geology and had a fine collection of books and specimens at Wallington, his house in Northumberland. Pauline, christened Paulina, was born in 1816; her father was George Bitton Jermyn, a curate at Hawkedon, near Bury St Edmunds. She married Sir Walter in 1835. Her death came unexpectedly while she was on a tour of the Continent with Sir Walter, Ruskin and others, in 1866, at Neuchatel. Sir Walter later married again, to Miss Laura Capel Lofft.

Letter 19
Perhaps 1859(1)

Dear Dr Brown,
Keep the drawings please till I find out whose they are. I was doubly sure they were Miss Brown's, for you know you told me she had done a dead bird, and the apple blossom in the book was I thought founded on my peach blossom. It was very nice. But as you say, whoever it is, has to pass from imitation to representation.

Lord & Lady Ashburton\(^{(2)}\) came out here. I'm so glad you like him. So do I.

Scotsman not yet arrived. Thank you also for that delightful account of Thackeray.\(^{(3)}\)

—Always with best regards to Mrs Brown & the children

Yours affectionately

J Ruskin

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MS: The Bodleian Library.  Notation on letter: 1858

1. So dated by the reference to peach blossom which associates it with the two previous letters. As is pointed out in the note to Letter 17, this association is tenuous.

2. William Bingham Baring, second Baron Ashburton (1799-1864) and his wife. He was an M.P.—originally a whig, then a conservative—and an important figure in Peel's administration. His first wife, Lady Harriet Mary Montagu, made their home a centre of cultural life, frequented by such literary and political personalities as Bulwer,
Thackeray and Carlyle (see Carlyle's Reminiscences). The first Lady Ashburton died at Paris on 4 May, 1857, and the Baron married again 17 November 1858; if the date attributed to this letter is correct, then Ruskin must refer to the second Lady Ashburton, Louisa Caroline Mackenzie.

3. The Ashburtons are mentioned in a long letter which Thackeray wrote to Brown from Paris, on 4 November 1858 (LJB 327-30). Perhaps Brown's account of Thackeray was taken from this letter or from one written not long after.

Letter 20
Thun, 18 August, 1859(1)

Thun(2) 18th Aug.

Dear Dr Brown

I hope you won't get this letter at least for a long while, and that you are gone to the Rhine(3) or some nicer place but I forget in my last hurried line to say what I ought to have said first in it that if Miss Brown gets into any difficulties in drawing with that book and you or she will tell me of them, I will do my best to quit her of them.

Also that you excellently & entirely describe the German mode of error:—"Intended humility—&c.—And that you can't possibly be
too fond of Paul Veronese. (4) I once thought he was "only" a great painter—but I've seen since, that a great painter must be a great everything and Paul has fifty times more real depth of thought than Raphael. And I once—nor long ago—called him thoughtless! great as I always held him—I took his quiet—low—hidden satire for carelessness. —Never lose an opportunity of seeing & thinking over anything of Titian—Tintoret—or Veronese. I hope to be home (5) now in about six weeks—but if this reaches you before you go abroad and you are going —just send me a line from wherever you go to saying if there would be any chance of our meeting you anywhere Strasbourg or Basle way.—direct poste restante Geneva.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin

MS: NLS. Address on envelope: Dr John Brown/ 23, Rutland St/ Edinburgh.

1. This was the only year Ruskin was at Thun at this time, and the reference to Dr. Brown's German tour confirms it.

2. Ruskin was here from 9 Aug till at least 18 Aug 1859: see Works XXXVI, 315.

3. In fact Dr. Brown and his wife had set off for their German tour on 9 Aug; they arrived back in Edinburgh early in October. On 18 Aug
they were at Frankfurt (LJB, 131).

4. On his 1859 tour of the Continent Ruskin was especially pleased by Veronese's Family Group which he saw and drew in the Dresden Gallery in June. Ruskin had accused the painter of "thoughtlessness" (see below) in Modern Painters III, Works V, 53, and withdrew the accusation in Modern Painters V (published in 1860), Works VII, 290.

5. He arrived home at the beginning of Oct, 1859.

Letter 21

Perhaps 1859(1)

Dear Dr Brown,

I return the book(2) so quickly that at first you may think I hav'nt read it—but I have—though not to my mother. Both she and I are somewhat melancholy people—never in the common sense of the word "low" or "out of spirits"—but never "high"—and not easily recovering spring after depression. You—with wife—& children—& friends—can easily witness—not without noble compassion—but without more than passing sorrow—what I, having no such sources of happiness springing beside me day by day, cannot even read of without a dead loss of energy & health from which I don't recover for a week—I never read sad stories—"not if I know it"—and you have written this one much too well & forcibly to admit of my reading...
it twice. But touching the illustration there can be no doubt I think—
line engraving or woodcut. Nothing that ends in "Graph", of any sort
whichever. The best woodcutting of the day is better than line engraving
in general;—to be good, line engraving must be very costly. I should
like costly line-engraving best, but I doubt the courage of any publisher
to pay boldly enough, & cheap line engraving is the worst of all things
—worse even than the graphs.

—The tale is beautifully written & will do good. But to me
it has only done this much of harm—given me one more melancholy
association—like a real one, with the Pentland

[OUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]

... ... ... ... ...

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1861
The signature is cut out. Pbd: Works XXXVI, 365; LJB 294.

1. So dated because Rab and His Friends was first published separately
in 1859. It is odd though that Ruskin had not already read the story,
as in a letter of late December, 1858, he mentions reading Horae series
one, in which Rab first appeared. The previous editors of this letter
date it 1861, probably because the illustrated edition of Rab came out
in 1862; one guess is as good as another.

2. Rab and His Friends, Brown’s most popular work, is the story of
a Howgate carter and his wife, and their dog Rab, each of whom dies in
the course of the narrative. It was first published in *Horne I*, 1858; later separate editions are mentioned above.

3. Such as chromo- or chalk-lithography, or photography.

4. The Pentland Hills, near Edinburgh. Rab's master comes from a village in these hills, and when he returns home from Edinburgh after the death of his wife Ailie, it is to the sight of "the morning light touching the Pentlands, and making them like on-look ing ghosts".

Letter 22
Perhaps late 1859(1)

Dear Dr Brown

Thank you for your letter, and for the warning about the castle(2) and for the pamphlet on Dr Burt &c(3) which is delightfully written and most interesting, though I don't know enough of the subject to judge of it rightly. I couldn't write more about the castle without enquiring into all that was doing and to be done, and that was simply impossible to me at present. I write now only to ask you to let me know how Mrs Brown is—for Lady Trevelyan tells me she has been seriously unwell.(4) I'm very glad to hear of Rab's(5) going on well, and of some "hugae"(6)—in promise. Sincere remembrance to Mrs Brown and Helen—and Jock—and many happy years to them.
Ever affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin

MS: The Bodleian Library.  Notation on letter: 1858

1. The date of this letter must fall between 1859, when _Rab_ was first issued as a separate work, and 1861, when _Horae_ series two was published. As early as December 1859 Brown wrote of his plans for a new volume of _Horae_, and Mrs Brown's health was very bad about this time (see notes below): this coincidence might just incline one to date the letter late 1859.

2. Dr. Brown took an active interest in the conservation of Edinburgh Castle; on 21 October 1860 he wrote a letter to the _Scotsman_ on the subject, under his customary nom-de-plume (when writing letters to the _Scotsman_) of Randolph. Ruskin also was a defender of the Castle; on 16 and 30 September, 1857, letters from him appeared in the Edinburgh _Mirror_ against the folly of an architect who wanted to re-shape the Castle Rock in order to fit more buildings on it (Works _XXXIV_, 434-8). Brown no doubt had these letters in mind when asking Ruskin to write "more about the castle".

3. In 1857 Brown wrote a review of Professor Syme's and Dr. Burt's _Letters to Lord Palmerstone, on Medical Reform_, in the Edinburgh
Medical Journal, III (Dec), 543-51. Part of this was included in Horae I (1856) with the title "Free Competition in Medicine. Ruskin may have been sent the original review, or a copy of Dr. Burt's Letter (which was in pamphlet form), or some quite different pamphlet.

4. Mrs Brown's health was poor for years; from 1852 onwards she was never fully fit (LJB 128), and in 1859 the long mental illness had begun which ended in insanity; she died in 1864. In December 1859 Brown wrote: "all is darkened and embittered by Kitty's state of health, weaker, thinner than ever, and her nervous system shattered with long pain" (LJB 134).

5. Rab and His Friends, first issued separately in 1859; in December of this year Brown wrote to a friend that 12,000 copies had been sold (LJB 134).

6. Latin for jokes, trifles, trumpery, nonsense, and probably a word which Brown used to describe his own works. The second series of Horae in fact appeared in 1861, but was planned much earlier. Writing yet again in December 1859, Brown declared: "I am going to put together another volume of Horae. I don't know if I am right, but the publishers are urgent." (LJB 135).

Letter 23

Denmark Hill, 5 April, 1860(1)
Thursday, April 5.

Dear Dr Brown,

Being today at Colnaghis(2) I heard from Mr Scott(3) that you were unwell. Every one has been; and you must not be at all anxious about yourself even if you feel much weaker than usual, for indeed I never knew a season like it, and the various forms of feverish depression seem quite inevitable—I expect my turn daily; my father and mother and every one else in the house, having had theirs. Up to this time however, I have escaped tolerably, though I can't do as much—by a third at least as I used to be able for. However my book(4) is drawing now near its close, and if I can get it through satisfactorily, I hope to have a thorough rest. Nothing shall make me promise to do any thing any more.

I have been tormented in this volume by having to work out many subjects on which the more evidence I collected the less it agreed. I've got something of all kinds—Botany—Meteorology—Mythology & what not—and I think you will be interested in some of the things I have found out in the way of Idea in Turners pictures. I didn't know half that was in them till lately.

—I shall have no notes on Academy(5) this year. I shall be too tired when I have done my own work—besides, I find my friends can't understand being found fault with—which is unpleasant. I was very sorry that Noel Paton(6) was so much hurt. I have never had a word from him since—and though I can stand any quantity of abuse, I don't like losing friends.

Would you find it too fatiguing to write me the merest line just to say how you are.

—I see Bayne now and then—but am too busy at present to see
any body much.

Ever dear Dr Brown,

affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin.

Love to the children.

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MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1860

1. So dated from the reference to Modern Painters V and Academy Notes.

2. Paul and Dominic Colnaghi were London print-sellers with whom Ruskin sometimes dealt; they supplied some prints for the St. George's Company. During the London season their shop in Pall Mall was a meeting place for men of letters, artists and politicians.

3. Ruskin knew many Scots: but possibly this is William Bell Scott (1811–90), poet, painter and miscellaneous writer, whom Ruskin met at Wellington. Brown may also have known him as he had strong ties with Edinburgh.

4. The fifth and final volume of Modern Painters was being finished in April, 1860, and was published that same year. The promise that Ruskin mentions was made to his father, who feared that he would die before his son's great work was complete. "He said to me one day,
'John, if you don't finish that book now, I shall never see it.' So I said I would do it for him forthwith; and did it, as I could." (Works XXII, 512.)

5. Since May 1855, Ruskin had written notes on the principal paintings in the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy, which were extremely influential on popular opinion. These Academy Notes were suspended in 1859 until a brief resumption in 1875. (Works XIV.)

6. In his Academy Notes for 1858 Ruskin, writing of one of Paton's pictures, had declared: "I regret the prevailing gloom which at present characterises this artist's work"; he objected to the subject matter of the picture and advised Paton to paint nothing for some time to come but "apricots and peaches": he must "practise colour from simple objects". (Works XIV, 155-7.) Later the breach seems to have been healed: in his letter of 11 November, 1860, Ruskin wrote "Remember me affectionately to Noel Paton."

Letter 24

Lausanne, 6 August, 1860

Lausanne, 6th August

60.

Dear Mr Brown,
Many and many a time have I been thinking of you and wishing
to write to you—but pens drop from my fingers when I take them up,
now—however I must just send this line to thank you first for
your note about fifth volume (1) and then for your enclosure of
Manchester merchant (2) to my father, which is very touching and
interesting, and also for all your good interest & care for me—
even though it alarm you sharply at some of my vagaries. You will
perhaps like the Political Economy (3) better as it goes on—
meantime, you must remember that having passed all my life in
pretty close connection with the mercantile world, & hearing these
subjects often discussed by men of business at my father's table—
I am likely to know pretty well what I am about, even in this out
of the way subject as it seems; so you must just wait patiently to
see the end of it. I find it rather refreshing to do a little bit
of hard thinking sometimes—even here among the hills it is very dull
work to be quite idle, and I don't know what would become of me if I
had to amuse myself all day long—I am forced to try to do so, being
more tired out than the bulk of that last volume would apparently
justify, but not half the work I did is in it. I cut away half
of what I had written as I threw it into final form—thinking the
book would be too big—and half—or nearly half—of the drawings
were left unpublished—the engravers not having time to do them.
There are only three etchings of mine in the book—but I did seven
—of which one was spoiled in bitten—three in mezzotinting. —So
that I was very fairly knocked up when I got the last sheet corrected.
I have since been chiefly in the valley of Chamouni, drawing Alpine
Roses, or rather Alpine Rose-leaves, with little result but mortifica-
tion. Chamouni itself—and all the rest of Switzerland are completely
spoiled by railroads,—huge hotels—and architects out of employ—who
persuade the town council to let them knock down the old town walls for the sake of the job.

My old disgust, of the three letters \(^{(1)}\) of last year—stays by me just as strongly as ever, & plagues me with indignation whenever I have got nothing else to do, but it has got to a point now at which I don't care about writing letters or anything else.

The annexation \(^{(5)}\) of Savoy to France will be an immense benefit to Savoy,—already some stir is being made in the cretinous torpor of the country, and French engineers are surveying the Arve-banks; the river has flowed just where it chose, these thousand years—on one side of the valley today, on the other tomorrow—a few millions of francs judiciously spent will gain to Savoy as many millions of acres of fruitfullest land—and healthy air instead of miasma.

Among the things which have given me chiefest pleasure in my news from home, was the late account of decided improvement in Mrs Brown's health.

Accept my heartfelt wishes, for her, and for you. Love to Helen & Jock.

Believe me ever affectionately Yours

J Ruskin

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**MS:** The Bodleian Library. **Ibd:** Works XXXVI, 340; **LJB,** 291

1. The fifth and final volume of *Modern Painters* was published in 1860 (see previous letter). Ruskin perhaps found it harder to write than any of the previous volumes; his difficulties with the book are mentioned later in this letter. (Cf. Works VIII, iii and viii)
2. Unidentified.

3. The first of Ruskin's Cornhill articles on Political Economy, "The Roots of Honour", had just been published (Cornhill Magazine XXI, Aug 1860) and was met immediately with a general cry of horror and condemnation; the series had later to be discontinued, by popular demand. Ruskin eventually republished the articles as Unto This Last (1862). Dr Brown was among the first critics of Ruskin's political economy, as Ruskin's father recounted: "Immediately on seeing them in print, Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, a good writer and able reviewer, wrote to me, wondering I had published the article, and saying the Scotsman had fallen on this unlucky paper. I replied I meant to publish any more that might come..." (letter of 25 Oct 1860; Works XVII, xxvii).

4. In 1859 Ruskin sent three letters, in which he expressed himself forcefully on the Italian Question, to Edinburgh newspapers. He sent them first to the Witness, then edited by Bayne who refused to publish them. Finally two were published in the Scotsman—the third letter was rejected by the editor, as it "would lose him a hundred subscribers next morning". The two letters which were published are in Works XVIII, 537-44. It is not unlikely that Ruskin consulted Brown about the letters in the course of trying to get them published.

5. The annexation of Savoy to France was a consequence of the Villafranca agreement which ended the war between Austrian and Franco-Italian forces over the issue of the liberation of Italy. Napoleon III of France made terms with Austria by which the Austrians got some territories, and France got Nice and Savoy. Nice and Savoy voted for the annexation in April of 1860.
Dear Dr Brown

I did not answer a question in your last letter but one
"what sort of man is he"—(Holman Hunt)

Large built—a little
loose and rattling—like a sailor; a good boxer I believe—at all
events able to knock down refractory Arabs; roundish faced—more
rather small; general look of features a little rugged; eye steady;
manner the same; but not slow; very sufficiently pugnacious;
wholly unconvinceable on any subject he cares about, teachable only
by time; sternly honourable—fearless—presumably affectionate
under favourable circumstances—religious in his own way. More of
a thinker than

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... ...

--I am sorry to hear of the various causes that have forced you to
give up the critique—but I am glad it is given up; for I do not
care—nor do other people, for my friends' praise, in public: and I
care too much for their blame to like them to write about me. A
complete list of what I have committed is given in a thick red
volume, called "Men of the Time" accessible I doubt not to your
friend in any public library.

Thank you for remarks on my Mother's accident. She is
going on well; but suffers a good deal of rheumatic or otherwise
aching pain about the weak joint.

[OUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]
1. So dated from the reference to Mrs. Ruskin's accident, and the possibility that Brown's critique of Ruskin is mentioned in a letter from Brown in 1859 (see below). 1870 is the date pencilled on the MS., probably by Wedderburn; it may have been based on some stronger external evidence, but this, if any, no longer survives.

2. William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), painter. He was a friend of Millais and later of Rossetti, both of whom he met at the Academy Art School; he helped to found the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with them in 1848. In 1851 Ruskin defended one of Hunt's pictures and became a prominent champion of the painter and his school as well as a personal friend. Hunt first visited Palestine, in search of authentic subject-matter, in 1854.

3. Evidently a proposed critique by Brown of Ruskin's work. No other distinct mention of it survives, but writing in 1859 Brown says that he hopes to include in the second series of Horae (1861) "bits of Ruskin" (LJB, 133), which may have been some sort of critique; in the event nothing on Ruskin was published in Horae II.


5. Not identified.
6. In the early winter of 1860 Ruskin's mother fell downstairs and broke her thighbone.

Letter 26
London, 11 November 1860

11th Nov. 60

Dear Dr Brown

I have your kind letter and am thankful at least to hear that Mrs Brown's health (1) is no worse: and most happy to hear of the new book (2) which now that I have for the most part done my own troublous businesses—I shall have time to read & enjoy. I am glad you like the last paper (3) better; and shall be gladder still when you perceive this main fact concerning me and my work, that all those descriptions and sentimentalisms are of an entirely secondrate & vulgar kind—quite, and for ever inferior to either Tennyson—Browning—Lowell—or any other even of our

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... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

only law of fact by which any judgement of art can be achieved:—And the value of these papers on economy is in their having for the first time since money was set up for the English Dagon, declared that there never was nor will be, any vitality nor Godship in him; and that the Value of your ship of the line is by no means according to the price you have given for your guns, but to the price you have given for your Captain.—For the first time I say—this is declared in purely accurate scientific terms; Carlyle (4) having led the way,
as he does in all noble insight in this generation, in having

[Signature cut out]

Remember me affectionately to Noel Paton. (5)

MS: The Bodleian Library. The signature is cut out, which damages text on both sides of the leaf. Pbd: Works XXXVI, 349, LJB, 293.

1. Mrs. Brown was very ill in 1859, but during 1860 there was a marked improvement in her health; unfortunately this improvement did not last.

2. Doubtless a new book by Dr. Brown, and probably his Letter to John Cairns D.D. about the life of his father, which was published separately towards the end of November, 1860 (see LJB 11:9), and later collected in Horae II (1861). Ruskin complimented the Letter to John Cairns in his next letter. "With Brains, Sir" from Horae I (1858) also came out separately in 1860 but was only a pamphlet.

3. The last of Ruskin's papers in the Cornhill Magazine (republished in Unto This Last, 1862), called "Ad Valorem", appeared in the issue of November, 1860. It was not intended to be the last paper but Ruskin was informed that no more would be accepted, since the series had caused such controversy.

4. Ruskin of course regarded Thomas Carlyle as his master in his social teaching, and had the greatest reverence and affection for him. Carlyle in turn thought highly of his disciple, and was
delighted with his political economy, encouraging him at a time when almost everyone else was poking fun or drawing back in horror: see *Works* XVII, lxix. In 1867 the two men had a quarrel, but this was soon mended, and towards the end of Carlyle’s life the relationship grew even closer; by Dec 1873 Ruskin was addressing him in letters as “Dearest Papa”. In Letter 48 Ruskin writes that only Carlyle and Dr. Brown are in sympathy with his teaching; the death of Carlyle in 1881 was a crushing blow, and two weeks after it Ruskin had one of his bouts of madness “partly brought on me by Carlyle’s death” (Works XXXVII, 361). Till his final madness he continued to regard himself as carrying on Carlyle’s work.

5. Ruskin had upset Paton by some remarks in *Academy Notes* (see Letter 23); perhaps Brown had affected a reconciliation, since the men seem once more on good terms.

Letter 27

Probably 1860

Dear Dr Brown

I am so much obliged to you for that beautiful book about your father. I like it better than anything I ever read about religious people. The story about the old woman’s—He’ll lose more than I’ll do—is the most exquisite instance of the way strength & pathos, & humour may join I ever heard of human creature.

The Rabbit story is delicious.

Ever affectionately Yours

J R.

The story about the whisky is very instructive—as to the
horrible and inconceivable way in which the evangelical religion shuts up the hearts of its miserable votaries—when even a man like that could have lived to be old—and not known what the human heart was. No bestial idolatry of the Egyptian was ever so horrible as that evangelicalism in the essence of it.

Fbd: Works XXXVI, 392; LJB, 293.

1. The previous editors date this letter November, 1861, perhaps because Horae II, which includes the Letter to John Cairns, was published then. Ruskin however speaks of the Letter as a separate book; and as it was published separately in 1860, this year, in the absence of other evidence, seems a more likely date.

2. This was Letter to John Cairns D.D., a supplement to Cairns' biography of Dr. Brown's father, which was published in detached form in 1860 and collected in Horae II (1861).

3. Told in the Letter. An old woman makes the reply quoted in answer to the question, put to her on her deathbed: "Janet, what would you say if, after all he has done for you, God should let you drop into Hell?"

4. Brown tells in the Letter that his grandfather, seeing him when a child kissing his pet rabbits, kissed—first his grandson—and then the two rabbits.
5. John Brown's uncle, Ebenezer, had fallen into a snowdrift, from which he was rescued by some uncouth carters. On being offered some whisky as a restorative, he asked a blessing on it, as he stood in the freezing snow, and drank. He had up till then held that "real kindness belongs only to true Christians"; but later announced that after the kindness shown him by the heathen carters, he meant never again "to be so positive in speaking on this matter".

Letter 28
London, probably late 1860

Dear Dr Brown,

Yes, indeed I shall always regard you as one of the truest—fondest—faithfullest friends I have. It was precisely because I did, & do so, that your letters made me so despondent. "If Dr Brown thinks this of me—if he supposes that my strong—earnest words on a subject of this mighty import—are worth no more than the Editor of the Scotsman's or—who is it?—Mr Heugh's—and that they can be seen to the bottom of in a days reading, what must others think of me?"—You say I have effected more revolution than other writers—My dear Doctor—I have been useful in various accidental minor ways, by pretty language and pleasant hints—chiefly to girls—(I don't despise girls. I love them & they help me—and understand me often better than grown women)—but of my intended work I have done nothing: I have not yet made people understand so much as my first principle that in art there is a Right & Wrong.

--At this instant nineteen thousand Turner sketches are
packed in tin cases without one human being's in Europe caring
what happens to them;--
--Why--again--should you suppose that I would be unjust--in any
such serious work as this--if I could help it. Those expressions
of mine may do me harm--or do me good--what is that to me? They
are the only true--right or possible expressions. The Science of
Political Economy is a Lie; Wholly and to the very root. (as
hitherto taught). It is also the Damnedest. That is to say the
most Utterly and to the Lowest Pit Condemned of God & His Angles,
that the Devil, or Betrayer of Men, has yet invented--: except
his--(the Devils) theory of Sanctification. To this "science" and
to this alone--the Professed and organised pursuit of Money) is
owing ALL the Evil of modern days. I say All--The Monastic
Theory is at an end. It is now the Money theory which corrupts
the church--corrupts the household life--destroys--honour--beauty
& life throughout the universe--It is the Death incarnate of
Modernism--and the so called science of its pursuit is the most
cretinous--speechless--paralysing plague that has yet touched the
brains of Mankind.

There is no "state of mind" indicated in my saying this.
I write it as the cool, resolute result of ten years(6) thought &
sight--I write it as coolly as I should a statement respecting the
square of the hypothenuse--if my hand shakes it is from mere
general nervousness--vexation about my mother--who however is going
on quite well as far as the accident (7) admits--& so on--the matter
of this letter is as deliberate as if I were stating an equation to
you--or a chemical analysis. You say I should "go & be cheerful". I
don't know what your Edinburgh streets afford of recreative sight
--Our London ones afford not much. My only way of being cheerful
is precisely the way I said;--to shut myself up--and look at weeds
and stones;—for, as soon as I see or hear what human creatures are suffering of pain,—& saying of absurdity—I get about as cheerful as I should be in a sheep-fold strewed hurdle-deep with bloody carcases, with a herd of wolves and monkeys howling & gibbering on the top of them. I am resting now from all real work & reading minerology & such things amusing myself as I can—and hope to get rid of nervousness & so on, in good time—& then have it well out with these economical fellows

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... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

It puzzles me—not a little—that you should not yet see the drift of my first statement in those Cornhill papers.

I say there is no science of Political Economy yet. Because no one has defined Wealth. They don't know what they are talking about.—They don't even know what Money is:—but tacitly assume that Money is desirable—as a sign of wealth:—without defining Wealth itself. Try to define Wealth yourself—and you will soon begin to feel where the bottom fails.

[cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1862

The signature is cut out, which interferes with text on both sides of the leaf. Fbd: LJB, 296.

1. Dated 1862 by previous editors, but probably written after the appearance of Ruskin's economic papers in the Cornhill Magazine,
in 1860; the reference to Mrs. Ruskin's accident also supports the earlier date.

2. In Ruskin's articles on political economy in the Cornhill Magazine. The last one was published in November, 1860; the collected edition of the articles, Unto This Last, came out in 1862.

3. Dr. Brown had supported his objection to the first Cornhill essay by saying that "the Scotsman had fallen on this unlucky paper" (see the note to Ruskin's letter of 6 August, 1860). This injudicious remark was a sore point with Ruskin; he refers to it again in his next letter. On 2 August 1860, the Scotsman had devoted an editorial to the condemnation of Ruskin's first article in the Cornhill; it began with the observation "That the shoemaker should stick to his last" and continued in the vein that Ruskin was only capable of writing nonsense about political economy, since he was an art critic. His ideas were called "delirious visions...inanities and insanities...were pre-Adamite dreams". There followed a garbled account of Ruskin's theories, with refutations; and the article concluded: "in truth, if he had ever observed or thought about the matter, instead of only writing about it, he would never have given a moment's credence to the doctrines he so furiously preaches--doctrines which cannot be called exceedingly dangerous only because they are too nonsensical to be floated even at the lowest level by an eloquence and a reputation even greater than his."

4. Unidentified.

5. Turner left all the paintings and sketches that he had, a
prodigious collection, to the nation. In 1856 and 1857 Ruskin carried out the job of cataloguing the sketches and mounting some, about 400, for public exhibition. Turner made his bequest conditional on a gallery being built for the display of his works, but this was not done. Most of his sketches have never been seen by the public.

6. Ruskin's economic ideas had a long gestation. Some of the most characteristic were introduced in "The Nature of Gothic" chapter of *The Stones of Venice* (1853); as early as 1849, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, an interest in economic questions was evident. In the last chapter of this work Ruskin pointed out that what we buy determines the quality of life of the operatives who produce: "It is not enough to find men absolute subsistence; we should think of the manner of life which our demands necessitate; and endeavour, as far as may be, to make all our needs such as may, in the supply of them, raise, as well as feed, the poor." After exploring this train of thought he adds: "I could pursue this subject willingly, but I have some strange notions about it which it is perhaps wiser not loosely to set down."

7. In early winter, 1860, Mrs. Ruskin fell downstairs and broke her thigh bone.

Letter 29
Perhaps late 1860

Monday morning.

Sunshine at last--looking as it would stay--puts me into
some little heart again. Among many subjects of discouragement lately, I am not sure that any told upon me, among personal matters more, than my amazement at finding out how little you knew of me. That—after all the work I had done—and the kind of quiet labour with which I had brought to bear the elements of various sciences on my own apparently unscientific subject, you should think I did not know the look of a science when I saw one—or that I would blurt out an assertion on a matter affecting the interests of every living creature in the world—which could be overthrown by an article in the Scotsman. Nothing perhaps has ever shown me how futile my work has really been hitherto, and how necessary it was to set about it in another way.

For this "science" of political economy, it is perhaps not quite the damnedest lie the Devil has yet invented, because it does not wear so smooth a face as his monasticisms and sanctifications did—but it is at all events the broadest & most effective lie and the most stupifying. Nothing in literature or in human work of any sort, is so contemptible considering the kind of person—(well educated—well meaning, & so on—from whom it proceeds)—as the writings of political economists. In no other imaginary science did its disciples ever start without knowing what they were going to talk about—that is to say, to talk about "necessaries & conveniences" (vide first sentences of Adam Smith) without having defined what was Necessary or Convenient. Ricardo's chapter on Rent, and Adam Smiths 8th chapter on the wages of labour, stand, to my mind, quite Sky High among the monuments of Human Brutification: that is to say—of the paralysis of human intellect fed habitually on Grass, instead of Bread of God. They are two of quite the most wonderful Phenomena in the world—and
the tone of mind which produces such, together with Cretinism
Cholera—& other inexplicabilities of human disease—will furnish
people—one day—with notable results for real scientific analysis.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1862
Ftd: LJE, 297.

1. So dated by association with the previous letter, to which
it is linked by several phrases and ideas. For example, in each
letter Ruskin refers to the Scotsman editorial; in the previous
letter he says that the so-called science of political economy is
the "Damnedest" lie "that the Devil...has yet invented—except his
...theory of sanctification": in this letter he writes that
political economy "is perhaps not quite the damnedest lie the Devil
has yet invented, because it does not wear so smooth a face as his
.... sanctifications did"; in each letter he expresses his
amazement that Brown had so promptly dismissed his economic
assertions. It seems probable that the two letters are in direct
sequence.

2. See previous letter.

3. Adam Smith (1723-90), Scottish economist, was the author of
The Wealth of Nations (1776), the foundation of classical economics
and a standard textbook. Ruskin quotes from the Introduction to
this work, which begins: "The annual labour of every nation is the
fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and
conveniences of life which it annually consumes, and which consist
always either in the immediate produce of that labour, or in what
is purchased with that produce from other nations."
4. David Ricardo (1772-1823) was an English economist; his chief and very influential work was *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817): it is to Chapter Two of this book, "On Rent", that Ruskin refers.


Letter 30

Perhaps between 1860 and 1862

Dear Dr Brown,

Your little note is not much of a scold, still less of an argument.

What have I to do with the people whom Blackwood employs?—Perhaps, also his types are English—or his paper made in English mills. The broad fact is that whatever you Edinburgh people think—or thought—you did let this poisonous stink come out from among you—that you were and are answerable for it to the death—to Turner & to me. You say you (people) esteem me—What help have you ever given me—or what protection have you ever given me—Has Aytoun been asked to one dinner less, since he let the lawyer (Paget) insult me with the last insolence of a coward—in the last effort Blackwood made to crush me?—I have past on into other elements and other labours—but I have sworn never to set foot in Edinburgh more—and just because my whole life has been passed in efforts to be kind, I am as implacable as a lava stream, to those who have so far as in them lay blasted my best efforts and made all my kindness to be in vain. There are plenty places where Turners are wanted as well as Edinburgh—and where they have not spit in their painters face,
... ... ... ... ... ... he died

mountain... ... ... ... ... ... ...

—all Alpine Rose & Rock, where God's light has no smoke mixed with it, and I hope to get another piece (6) a great rock-precipice

between 1000 and 1200 feet high—its base 5000 above the sea—with a piece of green meadow & pine below—whence I can see the sunset over the mountain ranges of outer Savoy—and far into France.—Some day perhaps I'll let you come & see it—which is much to say (considering where you come from—) as

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1860

The signature is cut out, which injures text on both sides of leaf.

1. The date is uncertain. The reference to Paget suggests a date in 1860 or 1861; the talk of buying land is more typical of late 1862 or early 1863. Perhaps Ruskin cherished his grudge against Blackwood's for a number of years, but the heated tone of this letter suggests a recent insult. Blackwood's had featured articles which abused Turner, and Ruskin indirectly, in 1862, which may have enraged Ruskin; of the possible dates of this letter, late 1862 seems marginally the most plausible.

2. Since it castigated the first volumes of Modern Painters Blackwood's Magazine had been too strong-minded to back down, and it was editorial policy to vilify Ruskin at every opportunity.
3. William Edmonstone Aytoun (1813-65), poet and man of letters; Regius Professor of Literature at Edinburgh University. He became a member of *Blackwood's* staff in 1854 and was a lifelong contributor.

4. John Paget (1811-98), police magistrate and author. He contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* between 1860 and 1868, and was the author of two offensive articles about Ruskin which appeared in January 1860 and September 1861. In both articles coarse personal abuse is mingled with attacks on Ruskin's social and artistic theories. Jokes are made about his unhappy marriage; he is accused of dishonesty, and said to sneer at religion; his qualifications as an art teacher are scoffed at, and he is called a fool: "does Mr. Ruskin write from a cell in Bedlam, or is he to be considered still amenable to the treatment and arguments applicable to sane men?" (*Blackwood's Magazine*, LXXXVII, Jan 1860). Paget was English, which may have led Dr. Brown to argue that *Blackwood's* bias against Ruskin was of personal, not national origin.

5. If this letter was written in 1862, Ruskin's irritation was excusable. In January 1862 *Blackwood's* reviewed a new biography of Turner, using the occasion to make a savage personal attack on the artist. His talent was admitted but his private life deplored as being "squalid and miserable"; he was no gentleman, and full of "Cockneyism"; had a secret life of vice—illegitimate children—"heirs neither of his name, nor his fame, nor his dreary hoards"; the sum of his existence was "a polluted life and a contracted soul". ("J.M.W. Turner", *Blackwood's Magazine*, XCI, Jan 1862). Ruskin was ridiculed as a matter of course for trying to make believe that there was anything fine in the spirit of such a man. The anonymous
reviewer was Mrs. Oliphant, who seems to have been able to turn her hand to anything required by her editor. Later the same year Ruskin was the butt of more sarcasm in article by J.B. Atkinson, "Classic or Gothic: the Battle of the Styles"; in Blackwood’s view the Gothic architecture favoured by Ruskin had little to recommend it. (Blackwood’s, XCI, March 1862).

6. This talk of acquiring Alpine property is typical of the period from August 1862 to 1863, when Ruskin was staying at Mornex in a rented house and was trying to buy land for a permanent home. He wanted to buy part of the mountain of Brecon, above Bonneville, till he was persuaded that the scheme was impractical. In May 1863 he bought some land at Chamouni but never built on it.

Letter 31
Lucerne, 3 December, 1861

Lucerne, 3rd December 1861

My dear Dr Brown

I have been this last year, somewhat seriously ill(1) though no one knows it but myself: I am now better, but nothing else than illness could have prevented my telling you of the great admiration, and what, if pleasure had been possible to me, would have been pleasure, in & with which I looked over your Horae.(2) It is very noble writing, and feeling, and thinking, and will help, and heal, and cheer, in all ways, among all people.—To me, at the time, the most available part was that dedicated to poor dear old Sulky Peter monumentum aere,(3) &c. but I will read all carefully
when I get home.

It was, actually, pleasure to me to see, in your note to my father, that you were busy in your profession. I have been reading today the account of the successful trial of the metal plates of the Warrior.\(^{(5)}\) Has progress as definite yet been made in human Defences against Death: or—worse than death, decrepitude? I cannot fancy any study or work, in this age—so noble as that of a physician.

I don't know to whom I wrote— but it was not to you— some word of an impression made on me by part of the Horae.\(^{(6)}\) Did it never strike you what a marvellous; what a frightful— fact it was, that the tenets of a sect should prevent a great—good— and loving man from knowing that there was Humanity out of and apart from that sect, until he was lifted by strangers from a snowdrift into which he had sunk in his old age?

You say you have heard of me from Lady Trevelyan that I am busy and well. I suppose she knows. But I have been busier, and better—and hope to be so again.

—I am seriously annoyed by my Father's sending you those effete and vile verses of mine\(^{(7)}\) in which the good they do me by humiliation is neutralized by the unhealthiness of the discouragement and disgust which seize me whenever I see or hear of them.

\[\text{CUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE}\]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

\textbf{MS:} The Bodleian Library. \textbf{Address on envelope:} John Brown Esq./23 Rutland Ave./Edinburgh/\textit{Angleterre.} \textbf{Postmarks:} 4 Dec 61.

The signature is cut out. \textbf{Pbd:} Works \textit{XXXVI, 395; LJB, 293.}
1. Ruskin suffered much from depression this year, and complained frequently of ill-health. His illness was perhaps largely psychological.

2. *Horae Subsecivae* series 2, which was first published this year.

3. Ruskin refers to the paper "Our Dogs" which carries a dedication to "Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan's glum and faithful 'FETER', with much regard". This dog seems to have been a great favourite with both Ruskin and Brown.

4. From Horace: "Exegi monumentum aere perennius": "My work is done, the memorial more enduring than brass" (Odes iii, 30, I). Ruskin presumably means that the dog has been immortalised by Brown's essay.

5. The *Warrior* was one of the first six of the Royal Navy's iron-clad frigates. The *Times* of Friday 29 November 1861, carried a report on trials made at Shoeburyness on the Warrior's plate armour; it achieved "astounding success", being "practically invulnerable to the fire of artillery, no matter how concentrated."

6. It was to Brown that Ruskin had written—see Letter 27. The anecdote referred to comes in *Letter to John Cairns, D.D., Horae II*.

7. John James Ruskin had some of his son's juvenile poetry privately published in 1850, to his son's subsequent chagrin. Only fifty copies, with the title *Poems*, were printed, and Ruskin himself later destroyed as many as he could lay hands on.
Letter 32
Denmark Hill, 16 January, 1862

Denmark H.
16th January --62

Dear Dr Brown

There's no use in telling you these lay sermons (1) are delicious for everybody will be telling you as much--but you may be glad to know, at least, that I'm getting the good of them. And partly the Bad of them, for all such wise and good sayings make me very selfishly sorrowful because I had them not said to me thirty years ago. All good and knowledge seems to come to me now. As unto dying eyes, the casement slowly grows a glimmering square. (2) But you yourself, I remember, were despondent about yourself when you went (to Spain, was it not?) and now you're able to write these jolly things--& preach them too! --

Am I not in a curiously unnatural state of mind in this way?--that at 43, instead of being able to settle to my middle aged life like a middle aged creature I have more instincts of youth about me than when I was young and am miserable because I cannot climb--run, or wrestle--sing--or flirt--as I was when a youngster because I couldn't sit writing metaphysics all day long--Wrong at both ends of life.--

I'm a little better than when

[REMAINDER OF LETTER LOST]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
MS: The Bodleian Library. The end of the letter is lost.
Fbd: Works XXXVI, l03; LJB, 295. Both omit last fragmentary sentence.

1. These were articles, with the title "Health: Five Lay Sermons to Working People", which were originally published in the periodical Good Words during 1861; they appeared as a separate volume in 1862, but were never included in any of the series of Horae during Brown's lifetime. The Sermons give commonsense advice about health in a direct and simple way; a footnote to the first one that was printed said they had been "Delivered many years ago at the Broughton Mission Schoolhouse in the Old High School Close, Canongate, Edinburgh" (Good Words II, 1861, pp.30, 309, l931, 651, 861.)

2. From The Princess, part IV, by Tennyson:

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more."

The Poems of Tennyson ed. Christopher Ricks (1969), 31-5, p.785.

Letter 33
Milan, probably June 21, 1862

Saturday Evening
21st.
Dear Dr Brown

I was heartily glad to see your hand again, having been anxious about you, or about you, through Mrs Brown, and chiefly about Mrs Brown herself, since I had your last letter. I did not care however to disturb your Highland sojourn by throwing pebbles of enquiry into its Reflections. I rejoice to hear it has been so happy and trust that the ebb has indeed reached its limits. I wish I had had the children with me on Lake Lucerne a little: the fishing perhaps would not have been so good; but the boating is very grand; it is like a strange form

\[
\text{[CUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]}
\]

row under... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

the oar-blade clear of the rock—and see the brow of the cliff—not knowing whether it is, or is not, over your head, at 1100 feet above.—The actual rise of the cliff will be usually under these circumstances 70° or 75°, but 75° clear, with a projecting ledge of perhaps twenty or thirty feet over at top, is very sufficiently appalling.—the sweet green fields between cliffs were greener than usual this year--& I had two out of the only three fine days I had on the journey to see the sun upon them. The journey generally did me not much good, I being tired & despondent--& not--for the time caring about mountains.

You will change your mind about those political econ. papers as they go on. I do not give three years thought deliberately--and ten years thought at intervals, to a subject which I have at heart, without knowing what I am about in it. These papers are only the first touchings and sweepings away of dust
before I begin my real work—work far greater than any I have set
hand to yet;—but also, more possible to me; if my life is spared.
I cannot give people eyes for colour, who have them not; but I
can perfectly well show them that two and two certainly never make
five; (and don't always make four.)

You are quite right in what you say of Laing. He is
terrible good—his fatal fault is ambition.—But I am grieved at what
you tell me of his looks. I will write to him, though I can do no
one much good by writing to them just now, being so utterly sick at
heart and so inclined to give up every thing and hire a good cook—
and a room with a three inch oaken door to it—to keep out all
possible utterance of human beings—that I might nearly as well let
him alone.—Ever since Villafranca I've been in this state, and
it is not likely

\[\text{CUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE}\]

\[
\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \]

**MS:** The Bodleian Library. **Notation on letter:** 1862
**Signature cut out, which injures text on both sides of leaf.**

*1. The description of boating on Lake Lucerne helps to date
this letter: Ruskin mentioned it again in a letter to his father
written on 15 June 1862: "I had two or three good rows at Lucerne"
(The Winnington Letters of John Ruskin, ed. Van Akin Burd, 1969,
p.366). The 21st of June 1862 was a Saturday, but the 21st of
July, August and September of this year were not. The remarks
about Mrs. Brown's health and the Munera Pulveris further confirm
the month and year of this letter. If the conjectural date is*
correct, this letter must have been written from Milan, where
Ruskin went after visiting Lucerne.

2. Mrs. Brown's health was deteriorating at this time. See
\textit{LJB}, 154, 155, 156.

3. I can find no mention of this elsewhere.

4. Ruskin was here for a few days on his way to Milan in June, 1862, and returned briefly in August.

5. In \textit{Fraser's Magazine}; they were later collected as \textit{Munera Pulveris} (1872). Ruskin may also be referring to his \textit{Cornhill} papers, which in this year were being prepared for publication in book form as \textit{Unto This Last} (1862). The \textit{Fraser's} essays appeared in June, September and December 1862, and April 1863, when they were discontinued because of the storm of indignation that greeted them. At the beginning of these essays, as here, Ruskin insisted that his present work was only preparing the ground, by supplying definitions as a basis for more ambitious writings.

6. See Letter 28, n.6, where we see that his interest in economic matters can be traced back at least as far as 1849; the "three years deliberate thought" on the subject would begin in 1859, though no doubt Ruskin is not being rigidly precise about dates.

7. J.J. Laing, born 1830, was a young Scottish architect and gifted draughtsman who came up from Glasgow to London to put himself under Ruskin's tutelage. Ruskin employed him as a copyist, praising his skill but warning him against his "overweening ambition".
His ambition caused him to leave Ruskin in 1857, but he soon came back. Ruskin sent him abroad to sketch but in 1862 he had returned, and in this year died at Glasgow "worn out by agony of vain effort."

This letter must have been written just before his death: no wonder his looks were grim. (See Works XXXVI, lxiv; XXVII, 150-1).

8. The Peace of Villafranca ended hostilities in the war between Franco-Italian forces and the Austrians over the liberation of Italian territory from Austrian rule. Ruskin was for the French cause and tended to idealise the French leader, Napoleon III.

The popular feeling in England was, as always, anti-French, though many wanted Italy to be free; an illogicality which Ruskin attacked in his letters on the Italian Question (see Letter 24, n.4). By the Villafranca agreement in July, 1859, Napoleon secured the annexation of Savoy and Nice to France as the price of his intervention on the Italian side: an apparently cynical move which alienated many of his sympathisers and exacerbated the anti-French feeling in England. Napoleon's peace ceded several territories to the Austrians, dismaying the Italians to whom he had promised complete liberation.

Letter 34

Mornex, 10 January, 1863

Mornex. Haute Savoie.

10th January. 1863

Dear Dr Brown

I was heartily glad to see your hand again, though hereaway

I don't know what came with the letter, (of patterns &c.)

never answered your last, through various worry and illness, which came on me soon afterwards, & ended in my coming away here out of the London noise, and "taking up my rest". I have only for the present a hired domicile, but it does till I can buy or build an inalienable den. I've a spring in my garden,—a ravine 200 ft deep dropped into behind its wall— a limestone hill 2500 ft above me behind, and all the Alps of Savoy—12 miles off—, warm in sunset & purple against dawn. I am better than I was a little—Lady Trevelyan can tell you anything you care to hear about me.

I am thankful that you are busy in your profession and able to be so continuously, else the tenor of your letter would have made me very anxious for you.

Post Restante; Geneva, will always find me when you care to write.

Yours always affectionately

[signature cut out]

*Mc: The Bodleian Library. The signature is cut out.

1. Not identified.

2. Occasioned partly by the further howls of disapproval and derision which had greeted his papers on Political Economy in *Fraser's Magazine* (see previous letter); Ruskin at this time was obsessively depressed about the miserable state of the world and "the folly and horror of humanity" (*Works* XVII, xl.)
3. Momex, where Ruskin lived from 1862 to 1863, is described in Works XVII, liii-lx. His plans to buy Alpine property are mentioned in Letter 30, n.6.

Letter 35
Winnington Hall, 6 December, probably 1863

Winnington Hall, Northwich, Cheshire. Monday, 6th Dec

Dear Dr Brown

There is a long account of the Moses striking the rock in the Stones of Venice at the end of 3rd Volume, under head of San Rocco, Scuola, in the "local index". I have never seen an engraving of the picture. (2)

I have been much pained by the pleasure you seem to take in the memory of that unhappy child—Scott's pet (3) a great pet of my own (4) has just been killed, or next thing to it—by those accursed religious hot-mushroom-sauces of her poor little head, and the speeches of that Scotch child are to my mind simply loathsome. I wish Buckle (5) had seen them in time to quote a few in his article on the Scotch church. (Yet I wish that Buckle article had been done less oratorically—there is too much of the trickery of Macaulay (6) in it, in spite of its great leading truth & value.)—I am a little better, I fancy—which is at all events better than fancying myself worse

[Cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

Here till next week.
Wedderburn dates this letter 1861, and there is a note on the letter "Marjorie Fleming" published 1863. In fact Marjorie Fleming came out in 1863 and the reference to Rose's illness of the same year makes 1863 seem more plausible as a date; especially as on 6 December 1861, a Tuesday, Ruskin was in Manchester, where he made a speech (The Winnington Letters of John Ruskin ed. Van Akin Burd, 1969, p.529). On 6 December 1861, he was at Winnington Hall: but the 6th was a Sunday. It is possible that Ruskin made a mistake with the date, as 1863 seems likely on the other evidence to be the year when this letter was written.

2. Moses Striking the Rock, by Tintoretto, is described in The Stones of Venice as indicated: see Works II, p19.

3. Brown's Marjorie Fleming: a sketch first came out in 1863, and was collected in Horae III (1882); it describes a child of great precocious talent and charm, who died young. While she lived she endeared herself to Sir Walter Scott; and through Dr. Brown's sketch she wrenched at the heart-strings of countless others, despite her presbyterian prejudices: "if only that fragment of your writings were saved from the wreck of English literature," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes to Dr. Brown, "men and women would cry over it as they cry to-day over the Lament of Danaé, and your name would be remembered with that of Simonides. Yes, cry and smile and laugh too. It is told, the story, without any affectation, but so lovingly that the blessed little creature becomes our own child,
our 'ownty-downty' " (LJB, 358-9).

4. Probably Rose La Touche, whose religious enthusiasm was the bane of Ruskin's courtship of her. Ruskin had by now quite lost his evangelical beliefs and Rose would not consider him as a lover while he remained heretical. She suffered a severe brain attack in October 1863, no doubt the one referred to if this letter is to be dated December 1863.

5. Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-62), historian. He had an eccentric upbringing and was largely self-educated. He spent fourteen years writing his masterpiece, the History of Civilization in England (two vols. 1857, 1861; three vols, 1866). Book III, Ch.II, describing the state of the Scottish intellect in the eighteenth century, deals at length with the harmful effect of the "religious illiberality" of Scottish Presbyterianism on the national development. The religious beliefs of Scotland were called "the old folly ... repulsive and horrible notions advocated by the Scotch clergy and sanctioned by the Scotch people." The last chapter of the work also inveighs against the superstition and bigotry of the Scottish church.

6. Thomas Babington, Baron Macaulay (1800-59): see DNB. Ruskin speaks elsewhere of his "precise pomposity" (Works XXVIII, 76).
Letter 36

Denmark Hill, 10 March, 1861

10th March

No, my dear Dr Brown, this is not dreadful; not by any means or in any light—or in any darkness dreadful. The death of the noble old Father (whom I have to give up to those accursed upholsterers to play their play over this morning,) in the very height—but accomplished & satisfied measure—of his power—death at seventy nine, with his work on the whole fairly done, & by natural—inevitable—therefore Divine, cause, is not dreadful. But I will tell you what is dreadful the death of noble children; the best material of human flesh, & spirit, in the very dawn and first bloom of them, sacrificed to the Moloch—Christ of modern imagination—by forcing their poor little raw brains into religious excitement—(I've lost two precious ones—so—and hear of more—daily)—and that accomplished physicians should write lovely books to make all the world give their best children the deadliest poison in the Pharmacopoeia—That's dreadful.

We are both of us on the whole well. I'll write again soon.

Ever affectionately Yours

J. Ruskin

MS: The Bodleian Library. Stationery: Mourning.

Notation on letter: 1864

*
1. John James Ruskin, Ruskin’s father, died on 3 March 1861, and was buried on 10 March. Dr. Brown had evidently sent Ruskin some pious—undoubtedly sincere—condolences (see next letter), provoking this ferocious retort. Cf. the letter to Acland on 9 March (Works XXXVI, 470-1).

2. In the May or July of 1862 some altercation between Ruskin and the La Touches had taken place, which was a great sorrow to Ruskin; he wrote in his diary on 21 December 1865 that he had not seen Rose for three years (The Diaries of John Ruskin ed. Joan Evans and J.H. Whitehouse, 3 vols. 1956, 1958, 1959, II, 585). Rose’s religious mania was the greatest bone of contention between them, so Rose is probably one of the "precious ones" lost; the other is perhaps her sister, Emily La Touche, who was also loved by Ruskin.

3. This is a rather pointed remark, since Dr. Brown was a physician, and his books embodied much conventional piety. Ruskin just previously had objected vehemently to an essay by Brown which idealised a presbyterian child, Marjorie Fleming (1863; see last letter).

Letter 37
Denmark Hill, 28 March, 1864

Easter Monday

My dear Dr Brown,

I am afraid you were hurt by my former scrawled letter, which was odd enough certainly, but I had been tormented & provoked
by some religious condolences before, and you came in for your part
in the ill-temper,—though—even when I'm in the worst temper I
never say a word more than I mean—or am ready to stand to after¬
wards. But I should like to hear from you again now—& to know
at least how you are yourself My mother & I go on fairly well—
and she has borne it very wonderfully considering that she had
concentrated her entire self in worship of my father for fifty
years.

I don't understand this institution of death at all—I am
thinking of writing a book to show how everything is intended for
evil; and that, although we absurdly think some things pleasant or
good—for moments, we may be sure, on observing the general system
of creation that everything will turn to evil at last in a conclusive
and eternal manner.

[cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

I have been at the Brit. Museum today, and saw the earliest piece
of art as far as I know yet known on earth—or under it—namely a
drawing of the head of an ante-diluvian (extinct) reindeer, on the
bone of an antediluvian hawk by an ante-diluvian artist.* Owen(3)
has nearly lost his life in a journey of two days & nights in the
early spring frosts, to get this and some skulls—and flint instruments
—safe from the South of France.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... bid £1100 against

[cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

Would you kindly send enclosed to Mr. Smith's—I have not
his address by me.

* and not a bad one, neither! some archaic Greek work
is far inferior.
MS: The Bodleian Library. Stationery: Mourning.
Notation on letter: 28th March 1861 Signature cut out, damaging text on both sides of leaf.

1. This was the date of Easter Monday in 1861 (the year Ruskin's father died).

2. See previous letter. Dr. Brown undoubtedly was hurt; his own wife had died in January this year, a shattering blow from which he never ultimately recovered and which was a chief cause of his nervous breakdown in 1866. From 1861 onward he was abnormally sensitive and liable to long fits of depression.

3. Sir Richard Owen (1804-92), naturalist. His special interest was in anatomy, and he taught at the Royal College of Surgeons; later he was appointed superintendent of the Natural History Department of the British Museum. Towards the end of January, 1861, he visited Salette in the South of France to report on a collection of bones and flint instruments found in the caverns of the district. He returned again to France in February to superintend the packing of the specimens for the British Museum, and was taken ill, though not so seriously that he was indisposed for long. (R.S. Owen, The Life of Richard Owen, two vols. 1891, II, 118-9). He and Ruskin were on friendly terms.
In this last period the friendship of Ruskin and Brown grew more and more intimate and serene till Brown's death, on 11 May 1882, brought it to a close. Ruskin wrote to Brown more frequently, without reserve, for comfort and counsel. The decade saw the final breakdown of Ruskin's courtship of Rose La Touche in September 1872, her decline into madness, and her death in May 1875. Ruskin himself suffered fits of madness in 1871, 1878 and 1881. Despite these afflictions, one senses in the letters that Ruskin, though still subject to depressions, was in general more contented and resigned to providence than he was in the sixties. In 1872 he moved to Brantwood, away from the world and its obtrusive troubles.

His chief literary work of the seventies was the rambling, frequently inspired, *Fors Clavigera*; various other books were begun on a great range of subjects--geology, botany, art, architecture, literary criticism--but hardly anything was brought to a conclusion. *Deucalion* (1875-83), *Proserpina* (1875-86) and *Fiction, Fair and Foul* (1880) are fairly representative of these works which came out in parts and were left incomplete; they figure frequently in the letters. In 1881 Ruskin remarked, of his writing, that "much of it is now repetition" (Letter 95); he had become reconciled to the fact that his important labour, whether successful or not, was in the past; and that he was free to turn to the work or pastimes which he most enjoyed.
He and Dr. Brown were getting old, and assumed the patience and dignity of age. Their letters became more easy-going and affectionate; they knew each other well enough to avoid possible sources of discord. Before his death, Dr. Brown experienced a brief return of vigour, and produced the third series of *Horae Subsecivae*, in 1882. The decade which followed his death was for Ruskin an early decline into dotage.

Letter 38
Perhaps July, 1871

[BEGINNING OF THIS LETTER LOST]

these drawings—He might have had the whole England series and all the Scott series, and most of the other engraved ones—for £10,000—worth, now 150,000—and irremediably scattered—spoiled—and forever irrecoverable. It made me give up my Turner work & go into architecture—politics—&c.—but—worse than that—destroyed all my respect for my father's judgement—utterly destroyed his influence with me when I most needed his help and authority—and ended the happiness of our relations for ever, leaving me—endless remorse—and shortening his life by many & many a year—through that unhappy marriage. Had he given me my bent at the right time—he might have wound me round his finger with a silken thread for ever afterwards.

The morality of these things is so strange—as one looks back. My father and mother were so proud of my obedience—but never saw that it was given at the cost of love, and that a disobedient boy would have loved them twenty times better. Turner's
The noblest Alpine drawing (6) was offered me once when he was travelling. Another boy would have had it—and taken his scolding, & all would have been right. I—wrote to ask leave—my father insisted on seeing the drawing first. It was sold before he came home; and I never saw it or thought of it, without a grudge at him—, thenceforward, to the day of his death.

—On the other hand, it is impossible to say what effect the steady submission to my parents had on my general perceptions of right and wrong, and assuredly—had I done in all things as my father wished, joyfully and in a true heart—and not snarlingly and sullenly,—my life would have been one of unclouded happiness and honour,—though neither devoted to Turner nor to Politics.

[Signature cut out]

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: July 1871

The beginning of the letter is lost; the signature is cut out.

1. The only evidence for this date is that Wedderburn has written on the leaf "July 1871".

2. Ruskin's father, John James Ruskin.


4. Turner was commissioned to illustrate some of Scott's poems, and visited Scotland in 1831 for this purpose. Engravings from his water-colours, along with others to the poetry of Byron and Rogers, were published in 1834.
5. Ruskin's father had unique opportunities of buying Turner's work. The kind of chance he missed, and which forever rankled with his son, was described by Ruskin to George Allen: "One day, Turner came to me with a bundle in a dirty piece of brown paper under his arm. It contained the whole of his drawings for the Rivers of France. 'You shall have the whole series, John,' said he, unbroken, for twenty-five guineas apiece.' My father actually thought I was mad to want them!" (Works XII, 11.)

6. The Splügen. See Praeterita II, Ch.4, sections 71-3 for a similar account of this incident.

Letter 39

Denmark Hill, November, 1871(1)

Denmark Hill. S.E.

Dear Dr Brown

I have put off writing to you(2) from day to day—wanting to thank you with my own hand for those delightful books upon flying(2)—a most true and lovely example of what can be and is done by modern science—when set to work in right directions. It is a most useful present to me just now that you could possibly have found—and as I say—I wanted to write my own thanks for it—but I have four different books in the press just now(1)—and I really must not bend my head over paper a moment more than I can help—but please be assured how glad I am to have this little token of your memory of me. Our poor Lady Trevelyan's niece(5)—(was it not when you were at Wallington with me that the little thing asked us all to tea on the lawn) has just left me to go home—having been lent me by her Mother—to be some help and comfort in a sorrowful time for
my own Mother is now gradually and finally—within the last few days swiftly drawing to her rest(6) and this year has been a dark and difficult one to me—though far from a useless one.

Please send me a line to say how you are yourself—for the book does not tell me that—and with renewed thanks for it,

believe me

Ever your affectionate

John Ruskin

P.s. Science is all very fine—but I do object to being told of a ganet—instead of that it comes down hard enough to splash the water up fifteen feet—that it descends with a velocity sufficient to displace the water fifteen feet in a vertical direction.

MC: The Bodleian Library.       Letterhead: Denmark Hill, / E.E.

Notation on letter:  Novr. 1871

*  

1. So dated because there is a letter in typescript in the NLS (Acc. no. 6134; box 2), dated 21 Nov 1871, which for several reasons is evidently Brown's reply to this letter; Ruskin must have written sometime in November, probably about the middle of the month.

2. After this phrase another handwriting takes over from Ruskin's; except for "believe me/Ever your affectionate/ John Ruskin", the rest of the letter is in the secretary's hand.

3. Books by Dr. James Bell Pettigrew (1834-1908): Brown wrote, in the letter mentioned above, that Ruskin's compliments
"have given great delight to the worthy Pettigrew". Pettigrew was a Scottish anatomist; he lived in Edinburgh and worked with Syme at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, and in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, so Brown and he must have met often. He wrote a number of books on flight and animal locomotion, two of which had been published before the date of this letter: On the Mechanical Appliances by which Flight is Attained in the Animal Kingdom (1868), and On the Physiology of Wings (1871); these perhaps were the books which Brown had sent. They were especially useful to Ruskin at this time because he was studying birds himself. Part of his bird research was used in Love's Meinie (1873), and in his chapter on the Swallow in this work he mentioned Pettigrew's On the Physiology of Wings—praising the book highly, but disagreeing with it on specific points, and deploining the rancorous tone adopted by the author towards his scientific rivals (Works XXV, 59-60).

4. In a letter of 3 Nov 1871 to C.F. Norton (in which he mentioned, as here, his mother's approaching death), Ruskin listed the books on which he was presently engaged: "a complete volume of Fors, a volume of lectures on Sculpture, a volume of revised Political Economy, and a begun Natural History and Mythology of Birds" (Works XXXVII, l1). The Sculpture lectures were Aratra Pentelici, which was prepared for the press in autumn 1871 and issued in January 1872; the History of birds saw light in The Eagle's Nest (1872) and Love's Meinie (1873); the Political Economy was the collection of Fraser's papers, Munera Pulveris, which was published on 1 Jan, 1872.

5. Many Constance Hilliard (1852-1915), usually called 'Connie', a common friend of Ruskin and Brown. She endeared
herself to them at Wallington in 1863 while she was still a child, and became one of Ruskin's 'pets', visiting him often and being mentioned frequently in his later correspondence. In 1866 she went with Joan Agnew, the Trevelyans and Ruskin on a tour of the continent, but the party was abruptly broken up when Lady Trevelyan became ill and died. In the autumn of 1880 she married a Reigate schoolmaster, Reverend William Churchill, and after this the friendship waned; Churchill disapproved of all the pet names and 'flirting', and in later years had a low opinion of Ruskin.

Partly through Connie, Ruskin got to know her mother, the sister of Lady Trevelyan, Mary St. Alban Tollermache (1827-82). They exchanged affectionate letters, Ruskin addressing her as 'Mamie', until her death. He came to depend on her, and she on him, for sympathy.

6. Ruskin's mother died 5 Dec 1871

Letter 40

Denmark Hill, probably late November, 1871 (1)

Denmark Hill. S.E.

My dear Dr Brown,

I am so very grateful for your letter, though I still can't write with my own hand, (2) and indeed I believe am nearly as ill as you, except only that your illness came suddenly and you felt the difference between the bright spirit and the dark at once—
while I get tired every day just to the point that forces me to stop short of danger.

I look back to those days at Wallington with more and more thankfulness for them but how is it that when you are in Town—you never see anything of Lady Trevelyan's sister—little Connie's mother. I could not say that she was less than Lady Trevelyan in anything—certainly not in kindness, for she is now my chief comfort—and helps me in all sorts of ways—and is getting my house in order for me on Coniston Water—and scolds me when I do wrong—and laughs at me when I am foolish—and is still her sister to me—though no one can ever be her sister to her. But you must go down to Cowley and see them.

How is it possible that any scientific man can be pleased by an outsider like me—caring for his work. After doing such a thorough piece of business as that analysis of wings—I should think one must feel altogether independent of any body's thought of it—it is especially pleasant to me however—because I'm in a state of chronic rage at the splittings of species with which men of science fill their books without ever telling me what I want to know about any species. Finally I am very glad to hear that your son is set upon such useful work—and that he has the business faculty. I often wished I had helped my father to sell sherry—but if I had—I know I should have wished I hadn't. Which discontent would have been wisest I can't say—but I suppose no discontent is wise—only I've just been turning out a cartload of scrawls—which my father used to call rubbish—and I find he was entirely right. He would have found that I was right also in one or two things if he had lived. There's one o'clock striking and my Amanuensis must go to lunch—which is fortunate for you—my dear old friend, for
I'm not saying things likely to cheer you, only believe me

Ever your affectionate

John Ruskin.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Denmark Hill./S.E.

Notation on letter: before 29th March 1872

1. This letter was probably written shortly after Brown's letter of 21 Nov 1871 (the transcript of which is in NLS, Acc. No. 6134, box 2), that is in late November or early December 1871. It is evidently the reply to Brown's letter. Ruskin's mother died on 5 Dec of this year and Ruskin would hardly have failed to mention her death if it had occurred since Brown's last letter to him; this present letter must have been written before 5 Dec, and late November is a more likely time of writing.

2. Ruskin felt too exhausted to write his own letters at this time (cf. previous letter): the secretary's hand-writing takes over with the phrase "though I still"; Ruskin's hand resumes briefly with the words "...which is fortunate" etc.

3. The home of Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan, near Cambo in Northumberland, where Ruskin and Brown met in 1863, and possibly earlier.

4. Mrs. Hilliard: see previous letter.

5. Brantwood, which Ruskin viewed for the first time on
11 Sept, 1871; he first stayed there on 2 Sept, 1872, and later took up permanent residence.

6. James Bell Pettigrew: see previous letter.

7. Ruskin may have had occasion to read scientific books to gather material for the work on ornithology he was doing at this time (see previous letter); his approach to this subject was hardly that of the pure scientist—the provisional title for his research being *The Natural History and Mythology of Birds*.

8. In his letter, to which this is the reply, Brown had mentioned that his only son (also called John Brown) had become "a partner in a mill for making crape & lint--seed oils and cakes --& is steady and able--with a true business faculty." (This sentence and others were cut out of the version of this letter printed in *LJ*, 206.)

Letter 41
Oxford, 16 March, 1873

Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

16th March '73

Dear Dr Brown

I was greatly delighted with your word to me about the pretty Turner story. It is one of the pleasantest memories I have--that Wallington time (1) one of the few--somehow--which I remember without bitterness.

--I should be so glad of a longer word from you sometimes.
Ever your loving

John Ruskin

John Brown Esq. M.D.


1. Ruskin and Brown often stayed at Wallington, and may have coincided there more than once; but a time to which both looked back with particular nostalgia was in 1863, when Constance Hilliard, then a young girl, was also a visitor. See Letter 39, n.5.

Letter 42

Brantwood, 3 July, 1873

Brantwood,

Coniston. Lancashire

3rd July 73

My darling Dr Brown,

I am so thankful for your precious letter,—and so very glad to be able to give you the pleasure which I hope what more I have to say of Sir Walter will give you—as well as that which I have pride in thinking this piece of first broken ground will give.

Might I print your letter(1) as it stands,—omitting only the words about Dickens,(2)"one of the hardest hearted of men".

In a certain sense I accept them—but do not know in what sense you use them, and in any sense, would not at present like to use them. The rest of the contents of the letter are invaluable as they stand and please tell me what you mean about Dickens.
Minchmoor and Enterkin\(^{(3)}\) just come, delightful.

I have never seen Charles Turners engraving.\(^{(4)}\) The picture is the one done small in 1st vol of Lockhart, is it not?

Ever your affectionate,

J. Ruskin

Can you find me a contemporary reading of Sour plums in Galashiels?\(^{(5)}\)

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**MS:** The Bodleian Library.  **Letterhead:** Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire.

*  

1. Ruskin did print Brown's letter, in *Fors Clavigera* 32 (August 1873), among the appended "Notes and Correspondence" (Works XXVII, 602). Brown's letter must have arrived before 2 July, though there is no date given. It corrected two mistakes made by Ruskin in the previous *Fors*: his confusion of George St., Edinburgh, with George Sq., and his statement about Scott that nobody read him any more; Brown compared Scott's sales to those of Dickens, to Dickens's disadvantage. There is no transcript or manuscript of Brown's letter, but possibly only the words which Ruskin quotes were cut from the printed text. Ruskin had begun a diffuse study of Scott's life in *Fors* 31 (July 1873, Works XXVII, 562-83), which he continued in desultory fashion in several later *Fortes*, often consulting Brown on matters of detail.

2. In his next letter to Ruskin, Brown gave several reasons for his dislike of Dickens: see Letter 44, n.3.
3. Two essays by Brown about Scottish hill scenery. Minchmoor came out, printed separately, in 1864, and was collected in Horae III, 1882. The Enterkin was first published separately in 1865; it appeared in Odds and Ends, a periodical, in 1866; and was collected in Horae III.

4. Turner (1775-1857) was an engraver from Oxfordshire, who engraved the early plates of J.M.W. Turner's Liber Studiorum. In all he produced over 600 plates, of which two-thirds are portraits; notable among them is an engraving of Sir Walter Scott, after a picture by Raeburn. Raeburn's picture of Scott, engraved this time by Horassall, appears in the first volume of early editions of J.C. Lockhart's Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. (1837-8, and subsequent editions). Brown in his next letter to Ruskin confirmed that it was to Turner's engraving of this portrait that he referred, and in fact sent Ruskin a copy of it. (See LJE, 222).

5. This is mentioned by Ruskin in Fors Clavigera 32 (August 1873, Works XXVII, 602), and elsewhere in Fors 31 (Works XXVII, 566 and 582), and Fors 33 (Works XXVII, 613). These references explain that Sour Plums in Galashiels, which is the nickname of some Scottish border raiders, the text for a song and tune and the motto of Galashiels, arises from an incident on the borders when English soldiers were massacred by Scottish outlaws while they lingered to eat plums, the fruit turning out to be a very sour delicacy. Brown got this anecdote for Ruskin and also sent him the music of the tune connected with it.
Letter 43
Probably July, 1873

Dear Dr Brown

    I've never thanked you for the lovely engraving I wanted to say something of it—but can't do more than very deeply thank you for it--& book all--today. Lost letter just come about Sour Plums.

Ever your loving

John Ruskin.

NG: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 5th. July 1873

1. Ruskin seems to have written this in a hurry not long after receiving Brown's letter of 4 July 1873 (LJR, 222), in which Brown had sent an engraving and a book. Ruskin's next letter seems to be a more considered reply to Brown, written a little later.


4. Sour Plums) Brown had evidently sent a letter from one of his friends to Ruskin explaining the history of "Sour Plums in Galashiels". Ruskin quoted from the letter in Fors Clavigera 33 (September 1873, Works XXVII, 613); probably it was this letter that was mislaid. See the previous letter about "Sour Plums".
Letter 11;

Brantwood, probably July, 1873

Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire

Dear Dr Brown

I never was so puzzled by a dip into a book in my life—as my these Mystifications but that's their nature—I suppose. I'm so very glad to have your experience of Dickens. Yet—practically—surely the man was always kind to people who didn't trouble him?

I'm afraid I'm the least bit like him myself.—I shouldn't have liked the eruption in the face. Still—I wouldn't have turned people out for it.

also—a very dear friend Charles Norton is as furious when I attack Dickens as when I attack America.

I shall send your letter on to Connie. She would always be writing to you—I'm sure, if she knew you cared

—Here are two letters with "portraits in them" which may amuse you.

The Minchmoor is invaluable to me—(query—Mungo Park rather a nuisance—everywhere—Bother missionaries and poking people, generally, say I.)

—Also you Scotch people are a little too apt to think everything's poetry that says awa, for away—and gowan for daiy. But there is some good in those Traquhair verses.

Ever your loving

J R
1. So dated because this is a reply to Dr. Brown's letter of 4 July 1973 (published in LJB, 222); it was probably written in early July.

2. Mystifications was a little book of reminiscences written by Miss Stirling Graham (1782-1877), an old Scottish gentlewoman, and published privately at Dr. Brown's instigation in 1859. Brown wrote a short preface to the work and later published the whole thing in his Horae II (1861). Miss Graham used to personate individuals of a bygone class of old-fashioned Scottish gentlewomen, as for example Mrs. Ramsay Spelden or Lady Pitlyal, fooling with her imposture such men as Scott and Jeffrey. The humour of this and the characters portrayed have a peculiarly Scottish appeal which seems to have escaped Ruskin.

3. Brown, in his letter of 4 July, had given three reasons for his dislike of Dickens. The full text of this letter is not given in the version published in LJB, 222; but a transcript of it is in the NLS, Acc. 6289, box 2. One of the passages cut deplores Dickens's character as shown in Forster's Life and repeats gossip about Dickens's "anger, obviously cherished through life at his struggling, starving mother. 3d, and most, from my knowledge that he said one of his reasons for putting his pretty and perhaps silly, and perhaps ebriose wife out of doors, was that she had 'a disagreeable eruption of her skin'. There is no evidence that
Dickens said anything of the sort, but Brown would have found such an allegation especially damning because his own wife had suffered from a much more disagreeable ailment and he had borne it gallantly.

1. Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1906), professor of the History of Fine Art at Harvard 1873-98, contributor to many periodicals, co-editor of The North American Review and The Nation, translator and editor of many literary works. In Praeterita Ruskin mentioned that Norton and John Brown were his greatest friends (Works XXXV, 520 and 521-l). Some of his most pointed criticism of Dickens was made in letters to Norton: see Works XXXVII, 7 and 9-10.

5. Constance Hilliard.

6. Ruskin's reference is to a passage in Brown's Minchmoor in which is described a parting between Mungo Park and Sir Walter Scott in the hills near Edinburgh. Park (1771-1806) was a Scottish pioneer of African exploration and a friend of Scott from about 1803. (See J.G. Lockhart, Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart., 7 vols, 1837-8, vol II, ch.1.)

7. "The Bush aboon Traquair", appended by Brown to his Minchmoor. The poem was by John Campbell Shairp (1819-1885); it was first printed with Brown's essay, and then in Shairp's Kilmahoe: a Highland Pastoral and Other Poems (1864). Shairp was born in Scotland and studied at Glasgow and Oxford, where he won the Newdigate Prize in 1842. He taught at Rugby and the United College at St. Andrews; in 1877 he was appointed to the chair of Poetry at Oxford.
Letter 45

About July, 1873

My dearest Doctor

I have the music—but there must surely be some older printed record of it—I have'nt tried it yet.

—So many thanks for your letter—but I think Scott's purity lay far deeper—and was like a flower; not to be increased by accident.—Nor can I understand how even the wildest youths should judge women by their harlots, instead of by their sisters, mothers—or wives—for the wildest often get the best)—But the whole notion of women is lowered at present—not by the sensual, but the scientifically moral school—the Stuart Mill\(^3\) set. One of them—meaning attack on Swinburne,\(^4\) wrote lately the sentence underlined in the enclosed letter—which as you like young ladies—you will like to glance through—you see what she\(^5\) thinks of it. (She's one of my never-seen pets—of which I've too many, having no time to go & see them—(This one says she's not worth seeing however.)

Connie seems greatly pleased with your letter to her.

Ever your affects.

J.R

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\(\text{MS}:\) The Bodleian Library. \(\text{Notation on letter:}\) July 1873

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1. So dated, not conclusively, from the probable reference to "Sour Plums" and the talk about Scott.
2. Probably the music was the tune of *Pour Plums* in Galashiels; Ruskin mentioned that Brown had sent him this in "Notes and Correspondence" of *Fors Clavigera* 32 (Aug 1873), Works XXVII, 602.

3. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), economist and philosopher, disciple of Bentham and a leader of the Utilitarian School of philosophy. He was an enthusiastic supporter of women's rights; his last book was the *Subjection of Women*, 1869. Ruskin differed sharply with him on women as he did on most points; particularly with Mill's statement that many women were restricted in their freedom and development by the burdens of household and children. See *Fors*, passim.

4. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909), Poet. In 1857 he got to know the Trevelyans, and at their house he made Ruskin's acquaintance. He was frequently attacked by critics for the sensuality of his work. Ruskin admired his poetry and defended it from attack; in Sept 1866 he wrote to friends that "Swinburne .... is simply one of the mightiest scholars of his age in Europe...", and that "in power of imagination and understanding [he] simply sweeps me away before him as a torrent does a pebble." (Works XXXVI. xlix). Brown disliked Swinburne and his poetry, though ironically enough the poet wrote a sonnet on Brown's death which Brown jr. and Forrest printed in *LJB*. The tenor of the Doctor's opinions can be judged from the fact that in an unpublished letter (n.d.) to Mr. James T. Fields (MS. in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California), Swinburne is called "an emasculated sayer of tuneful impurities, which he can only say". See also Hutton's letter to Brown in the Introduction.
5. Unidentified.

Letter 16
Brantwood, 15 August, 1873(1)

Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire.

15th August

My dearest Doctor

Can you get any body to send me the rudest sketch of the arms of Barbara Haliburton(2) from any authentic building; I want the shape of the buckle in the upper quarter—it should be a standard bearers—but I can't give it on that speculation.

Also—oughtn't Diel of Little Dean to be De'il in p 18. autobiography(3) and can you refer me to any account of him?


1. So dated from Ruskin's reference to passages in Fors.

2. Barbara Haliburton, scion of ancient Douglas stock, married Robert of Sandy Knowe, Sir Walter Scott’s grandfather, as described in Fors 31 (July 1873). She was mentioned again in Fors 33 (Sep 1873, Works XXVII, 612-16) and her coat of arms was described; Ruskin said he "meant to have engraved it", but had not the time.
3. The "Autobiography" is a fragment describing his early life which Scott wrote on 26 April, 1808; the first volume of J.G. Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott Bart.* (7 vols. 1837-8) begins with it. A passage on p.18 of this volume (first edition) clarifies Ruskin's obscure sentence. Scott was describing the tales his grandmother, Barbara Haliburton, used to tell him about outlaws and Border raiders: "A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated *Diel of Little-dean,* whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother's sister." Nothing more is added about this hero. The MS. of the "Autobiography" is now in the NLS.

Letter 17
Denmark Hill, 25 December, 1873

Christmas. 1873

Dear Dr Brown

I came home this even from the fireside of a happy and gentle English family—and happier myself than of late it has often chanced me to be: and read quietly in the evening alone, for the twentieth time or so your story of the last halfcrown and the tale of the shepherd's dog—the "wee fell ane" And I am very grateful to you,—for these gleams of the Spirit world.—Write me a little line, soon, please— I want to know that you are well. It is long now—since I've had a word.

I keep fairly up to my work—but I can't write to my old friends as I want to. I should have so much to say—for there are no days now without repentance for me, of some neglect of
what I possessed of best—in days of old
Ever your affectionate
J. Ruskin


c: The Bodleian Library  Pbd: Works XXXVII, 77; LJE, 299

1. The family of Alfred Tylor F.G.S. (1824-84), a geologist and an authority on glacier motion. In the Cook and Wedderburn transcripts in the Bodleian (ms.Eng.Lett. C39, p.335) there is an account of the events of 22-25 Dec 1873 written by Miss Juliet Tylor (later Mrs. Sydney Morse) describing a visit she made with her family to the Severns; and Ruskin’s visit to the Tylors on Christmas Day.


Letter 486
Herne Hill, about the end of December, 1873(1)

(2)Heaven keep you, this coming year—and for many yet—in your most noble and loving life. See the last page of this letter first.(2)

Arthur Severn's
Herne Hill
S.E. London
Dearest Dr Brown

Your letters are so helpful to me—you can't think—
For I am more alone now in the gist of me than ever,—only
Carlyle and you with me in sympathy, and all the help a man
ought to have from his household—lost—or at least only poor
little Joanie left, who is getting very properly absorbed in
husband & baby,—and isn't and can't be what she was—and all that
I had of preciousest, utterly gone—mother—nurse—and just after¬
wards—in a very terrible way—what I thought I should never have
lost.

Then this battle with the dragon is far more close and
fearful than I conceived. Turner only knew quite what it was. I
am going to etch the Python as well as the Hesperid dragon,—Godwilling
—but I'm afraid about my heart a little—it beats quicker and
irregularly—the chronic state of rage & grief tells on me slowly—
and the never getting any peace out of sky—or leaf—or anything
and—with a disposition to live just such a "methodic" life as
Raeburns, the perpetual disturbance, hurry, and trying to do what I
can't.

This Raeburn memoir is most precious. You are entirely
right in almost all—except that about drawing "in love". One must
paint or write truthfully, from a loving heart. But one must not
lie in love—nor even conceal truth that can be told. Some truth
cannot—there are things one must not say because they would not be
understood. But Richmond is a Flatterer—and has lost all his
own best powers, and all influence for good on the art of his day,—
or morale of it—by this False habit. I don't think Raeburn ever
flattered. Drew the Essence of the man, whether he liked it or not.
Who could tell, from Richmond's amiable portrait of the author of
Modern Painters—that he was capable of sweeping Regent Street with
grape, if he saw need—and sleeping sound the night afterwards—
or that he was continually liable under ordinary circumstances—to overeat himself with peasoup? and felt the burden of peasoup always on his conscience?

I really don't know how to manage myself at all, just now, I'm so fond of peasoup, and of Connie's and Lily's, and everything that isn't fit for me.—Among the several excellent reasons, by the way, for Connie's not being married yet—she really is a little sorry to leave me without the refreshment of flirting, which she knows to be Essential to me, and is a little jealous of letting anybody else replace her in. But she never shows her best qualities in general society,—always brilliant, there is nothing visible but the lustre—and I think no one really deserving her has yet tried for her.

—I'm so very glad you like those etchings(10) by the way, (--If only Connie could learn to draw slowly,—wouldn't we have etchings!!)---and that the bit of text is liked in general(2) The four last lectures on engraving ought to have been out, long ago—but press correction plagues me more than anything I have to do --PLEASE write as often as you can. Ever your loving J R

After finishing this, I re-read yours. I had pounced, in a selfish way, on my own part of it. I now read, with the most positive power and will of contradiction! your saying that the Raeburn life is the product of a shattered brain—You are still in full possession of the most sweet and splendid faculties, and if you don't overstrain them in kindness, will keep them to the end.

Don't write a word that tires you—to me, or anybody

(2) Hunt's picture is entirely bad; and I can't say so--
lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph;\(^{(13)}\) -- Also, all who
like it will get good of it; so I needn't stop them.\(^{(2)}\)

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: End of Decr. 1873
Pbd: Works XXXVII, 77-8; LJB, 300. Both omit several passages
as indicated

1. So dated because Brown's letter to which this is the reply
is dated 27 Dec 1873; and Ruskin offers Brown his best wishes in
"this coming year". Possibly he was writing in early January.

2---2 Words omitted in the published versions.

3. Mrs. Arthur Severn (1846-1924) nee Joan Agnew. When John
James Ruskin died in 1861, Joan Agnew, grand-daughter of Ruskin's
paternal grandmother, came to visit the bereaved Mrs. Ruskin. She
stayed on to look after Mrs. Ruskin and her son for seven years in
all, until her marriage to Arthur Severn, which took place in
1871. The Severns remained nearby at the Ruskins' old house at
Harms Hill; and when in 1873 Ruskin finally moved to Brantwood
(which he had bought in 1871) Joan and her family moved in to keep
house for him. Her company and that of her family grew more
precious to Ruskin as time went by. The Severns nursed him during
his illnesses and on his deathbed.

4. Ruskin's mother died on 5 Dec 1871; his nurse, Anne Strachan,
on 31 March 1872. The loss finally referred to was that of his
intimacy with Rose La Touche. After a tormenting series of break¬
ups and reconciliations he received quite unexpectedly, on 5 Sep
1872, a letter from Rose in which she violently turned against him,
and which plunged him into a state of shock and depression. There was a brief reunion in late 1874, before Rose's death on 26 May 1875; but by this time Rose was insane.

5. Ruskin's remarks on the dragon are occasioned by some comments of Brown on Modern Painters V, which in 1873 had just been reissued; it had first appeared in 1860. Brown wondered why Ruskin didn't "etch more, after . . . doing such things as Turner's 'Dragon' (letter dated 27 Dec 1873; the etching is in Works VII, plate 76, facing p.402). The dragon as an image of the spiritual enemies of mankind appeared often in Ruskin's work; it is an interesting counterpart of the snakes which plagued his dreams and his insane fits. St. George's Company existed to destroy the dragon. The Hesperid dragon was the beast which guarded the golden apples of the Hesperides, killed finally by Hercules when he came to pluck the fruit; it is the subject of a long discussion in which Ruskin analysed it as "the demon of all evil passions connected with covetousness; that is to say, essentially of fraud, rage, and gloom." Turner had "the main clue of" the dragon, in its essential significance: he "knew who the dragon was" (Works VII, 392-403). Ruskin implies an identification between this dragon and the religion of money that he attacked in his economical writings. The python, according to Ruskin, was analogous in classical myth to the dragon in Christian myth: "the representation of all his spiritual enemies under the form of the dragon was simply the natural habit of the Greek mind", for example in "the stories of Apollo delivering Latone from the Python" (Works XXVII, 293 and 475-88). Ruskin attempted to sketch Turner's "Python" in the National Gallery in 1882, but was discouraged by people importuning him there, and left the drawing unfinished.
6. Sir Henry Raeburn and his Works, privately printed in 1876 and included in Horae III, 1882. It had originally been published as an introductory essay to Portraits by Sir Henry Raeburn, Photographed by Thomas Annan, with Biographical Sketches (Andrew Elliot, Edinburgh; no date, but Brown's introductory "notice of the artist" is dated 6 Dec 1873). The book is a large luxurious volume, costing 63s., so Brown must have sent only his notice, not the whole work.

Sir Henry Raeburn (1756-1823), portrait-painter, was born and bred in Edinburgh. After leaving school he was apprenticed to a goldsmith, but soon was drawn to painting. His subsequent career was one of unbroken success; he knew and painted everybody of importance in Scotland. His regular habits were often the cause of comment; in his paper Brown quoted Allan Cunningham's remark that "the motions of the artist were as regular as those of a clock."

In the same article Brown gave an anecdote about Richmond which caused Ruskin's criticisms of the artist in this letter: he described how Richmond had painted Syme's portrait; on seeing it, Syme exclaimed "'Yes, it is like; but then—it is good-looking!' 'Ah! you see,' said the artist, 'we do it lovingly'". Dr. Brown applied this to Raeburn: "he never fails in giving a likeness at once vivid, unmistakeable, and pleasing. He paints the truth, and he paints it in love."

7. George Richmond (1809-96), painter. He was introduced into Blake's circle by Fuseli. He copied some of Blake's mannerisms but did not take after the master and became a fashionable portrait painter "with the monotonous charm which attends a facile success". (Oxford Companion to Art, 1970).
8. This portrait of Ruskin was engraved and Brown had a copy of it: see Letter 18, n.4.

9. Ruskin probably means Constance Hilliard, Lily Armstrong or possibly Lily Severn, the daughter of Joanie Severn. Lily Armstrong (1852-1931) was a 'pet' of Ruskin's from Winnington School (he portrayed her in *Ethics of the Dust*), and a friend of Mrs. Severn. Her father was Captain Armstrong of Dublin, and as she lived in Ireland she was a link with Rose La Touche. In 1875 she married William Kevill Davies.

10. By Ernest George (1839-1922), architect and etcher. A letter from Ruskin on his etchings appeared in the *Architect* on 27 Dec 1873, calling them "the most precious pieces of work I have seen for many a day" (the whole letter was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, and in *Works XIV*, 335-6). Brown, in his letter of the same date, to which the present letter is the reply, mentioned liking them, and that Ruskin's letter had wide influence; he had "seen several men who had read it and felt its power" (*LJE*, 225).

11. Lectures given at Oxford from Nov. to Dec. 1872; published first in seven separate parts, of which the last was an appendix, the first two being issued in 1873 and the rest in 1874-6. In 1976 they appeared together with the title *Ariadne Florentina* (*Works XXII*).

12. William Homan Hunt did not exhibit at the Royal Academy in 1873, since he was away in Palestine for much of the year. Early in 1873, before his own return, he sent back to England the
picture he had been working on since 1870, The Shadow of Death. Though the picture was not declared complete until 1871, Ruskin probably had the chance of seeing it in Hunt's studio before then, in an almost finished state. It depicts Christ as a youth in his father's workshop: his arms are stretched out and his shadow on the wall assumes the attitude of crucifixion. Ruskin never gave his opinion of the work in print, but in answer to questions about it in a discussion held at Walkley Museum in 1876, he said that Hunt "had made a great mistake in going away from England into Syria... by doing so his fine artistic perception became blunted"; of the work itself, he added: "the picture was wrong in conception; there were many faults in it; and he could not help thinking it was a bad picture." (Works XXX, 308.)

13. ".... How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath... lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph": 2.Sam.1: 19-20.

Letter 419
Perhaps January 1874(1)

Dearest Dr Brown

I am very glad of your letter.(2) It is time I should take some advice, for the symptoms I don't like have been more distinct, lately.

--Bowels all right--if I don't eat what I shouldn't, but appetite failing a little. Sleep sound, but not long enough--
11 - 5; sometimes becoming 11 - 2 morning, and little sleep afterwards. Afternoons always languid, now, evenings totally useless for work.

--Heart quickening on little provocation, with more or less breathlessness, like that which one has when one expects anything very much; increased by thinking of it--sometimes into nervous drawing of long breaths, for an hour or two. Ive always had this--but I notice the beat of heart and pulse now \( \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \), and that fluttered. I don't think the double short beat comes except in mere confusion after running or climbing. I never do either to any violent strain. I can't ride--I am absent awkward--and always want to go where a horse can't. I have hitherto had my health much in my own power and could always recover by resting--but of late I can't rest for sadness. This is I hope being conquered,—but since my poor Rose\(^3\) left me the last time, I've had no moment free from the fear of hearing she was dead, or the hope of getting a letter from her--this has been since 1872--and my bad illness in 71\(^h\) has not quite left me the same; so I think its only a wonder I'm no worse. I find my head giddy and heavy too--often, but I know it's mostly stomach with troublesome thoughts--reacting like partners at whist and trumping all my good cards

I will take the whisky instead of sherry when I can get it--I can't in Italy--but Cognac will do I suppose

I send you three pages of scrawl of lectures, &c. which will show you my way of work. All my writing costs me great pains--it is often done three or four times over,--and changed at last. I should think few men wrote with more difficulty.\(^5\)--It's afternoon now and Im stupid,—but ever your grateful

J. Ruskin
The pulse gets nearly tranquil and right after two or three hours morning rest—or after sound sleep,—but is easily put wrong

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1874

1. Ruskin's description of his health connects this with the previous letter of late Dec 1873; if it is his next letter to Brown it was probably written in January, 1874. The references to Rose show that Ruskin must have written this between 1873 and 1874.

2. In which Brown evidently invited Ruskin to discuss his physical ailments. It no longer survives, but it may have been the reply to the previous letter in which Ruskin broached the subject of his health, writing "I'm afraid about my heart a little—it beats quicker and irregularly—".

3. Rose La Touche: see previous letter, n.4.

4. In August 1871 at Matlock Ruskin was dangerously ill, and there were fears for his life. His collapse was mental as well as physical.

5. When younger Ruskin wrote with much more ease. In Praeterita he describes the writing of his early books as an "entirely painless occupation", comparable in its steady industry and calm patience to embroidery. (Works XXXV, 367-8.)
Letter 50
Perhaps early 1874

My dearest Dr Brown

Wickedness at work—I should think so! What else? The mother became an absolute fiend—the story of the Bride of Lammermuir is nothing to it—the strength of the girl and the rage of the mother being double—on both sides. Only the mother didn't want to free her to marry anybody else—but only to break off with me.—She went to Perth—to London (1) got every kind of evil tongue and foul heart she could gather together, to afflict the child with.

Now—she is at her wit's end and does not know what to do, nor I neither—nor any one. For indulgence only makes things worse—and they dare not restrain the child now—but her liberty is of no use to her. She seemed happy, altogether—while she was with me; but absolutely refused to marry me, to every bodys utter consternation—who was near her at the time. She sate playing the strangest wild music to me one whole afternoon-ordering me not to look at her—meanwhile. It is not because I love her—but indeed you never heard such lovely music—or saw, I believe—so strangely pure and severe a face.

I have not told you above half the story. You would think I was mad, too, if I told you the whole.

Yes,—gather those pieces (5) and put that dedication—it is entirely beautiful.
1. This must have been written before the letter from Ruskin of 3 Feb 1871 because of the reference to *The Bride of Lammermuir*, and after Oct 1870 (see note 4). The Scott reference and the similarity of tone and content associate it with the letter of 3 Feb, and it may have been written shortly before, perhaps in January 1871.

2. Rose La Touche's mother, Maria.

3. In this story by Sir Walter Scott there is an ancestral feud between two families, but Lucy Ashton from one of the families and the Master of Ravenswood from the other fall in love. The affair is doomed. Lucy's mother, a lady of iron will, keeps Lucy virtually a prisoner, intercepts the letters of the lovers, and builds a web of deception about her daughter, who eventually goes mad. Ravenswood drowns in a marsh.

4. Mrs. La Touche wrote to Effie Gray's family at Perth, and then to Effie (then Mrs. Millais) herself, in October 1870. For the text of Effie's reply, which minces no words (Ruskin is called impure, unnatural, wicked, inhuman etc.), see Admiral Sir William James, *The Order of Release* (1947).

5. There were no *Horae* between 1861 and 1882. Brown spoke in 1864 of republishing *Horae I* with a pretty dedication to his wife, see L&J, 1864; but this seems a different project, which came to nothing.
Letter 51

Brantwood, probably 3 February, 1874

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

My dearest Dr Brown,

Yes, to my sorrow, she has a father—and a mother too—It is as nearly as possible, as I told you did not I the story of the Bride of Lammermuir. This place ought to be called Ravenswood. It is Owls wood—they hoot all night whenever there’s a moon.

She broke away from both Father & Mother, in the autumn of 1872—gave me a week of perfect life,—but wouldn’t marry me—wants to be a Saint—Then she went away again—ate nothing but marmalade, I believe—and joined Stomachic to Religious complaints. Now she would be very good to me again—and her father won't let her.—And so it goes on—and I'm so horribly selfish—I like her better to be ill than to go away & marry anybody else. If only the monkey would promise not to do that,—and to let me go on loving her without seeing her, I could manage. I'm not much afraid—however, of anything but her dying. It doesn't look much like that however just now by Joan's note of today, enclosed.

Have you got my Bewicks Venus & Fig. I'm just getting my begun fragment of Botany—before I go abroad. I do hope you'll like it.

Ever your loving

JR.

I go to Oxford tomorrow. Write to C.C.C.

I don't understand about the 10,000 years to be allowed to Morley.
1. The mention of the B«wick plate eliminates any date before February 1874, and the date is further limited by the references to going to Oxford and subsequently abroad. He was at Oxford in Oct-Nov 1874, but did not go to the continent then, or at all in 1875. This letter must have been written the day before his February stay at Oxford, i.e. on 3 Feb, 1874.

2. See previous letter.

3. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that when Ruskin went mad in Feb 1881 a vivid part of his 'visions' was when he imagined Rose "coming with her mother, and the interruption by the Owl's cry"--The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin ed. H.G. Viljoen (1971), p.297. Viljoen notes "to him the owl's cry signified impending evil", and gives the example that an owl hooted when he became engaged to Effie.

4. In this year Rose came from Ireland to stay with the Macdonalds, and during July George Macdonald exchanged letters with Ruskin, who was in Venice, urging him to come and see her. After initial reluctance Ruskin hurried home and between the end of July and the middle of August he saw much of her at the London house of the Macdonalds and the country seat of the Cowper-Temples, Broadlands, despite the insistence of her parents that she return to Ireland immediately. This was the happiest time Ruskin and Rose had together.
5. In autumn 1874 Rose wrote to Ruskin "the loveliest letters" (The Letters of JR to Lord and Lady Mount-Temple ed J.L. Bradley, 1964, p.305)—the first late thaw on her part since her violent reaction against him on 5 Sept, 1872; but she was becoming mentally ill and died insane 26 May 1875. There is no record of Rose "wanting to be good" in Feb 1874, but perhaps "Joan's note" (see below) contained something to this effect.

6. Probably a proof sheet of a plate in part III of Ariadne Florentina, Ruskin's work on wood and metal engraving. This plate shows three examples of Bewick's work—a Venus, a pig and a frog, to illustrate Ruskin's view that Bewick "could draw a pig, but not an Aphrodite" and to show his "utmost strength and utmost rudeness" (Works XXII, 362 and 363). The part of Ariadne with which the plate was issued came out in February 1874. Another mention of the "Venus and pig" is made in a letter of 6 March, 1874; see Works XXXVII, 86.

7. This must be Proserpina, which however did not begin to appear till 1875; but Ruskin worked on this book frequently from 1866 onwards, especially in 1874.

8. Ruskin was at Oxford from 1-23 Feb 1874, and left for the continent on 30 March.

9. Christ Church College.

10. Probably Henry Morley (1822-1894), author. He trained as a doctor, became a schoolteacher, contributed to periodicals, was on the editorial staff of Household Words and All the Year Round.
He lectured and wrote on English Literature. Possibly Samuel Morley (1609-1886), politician and philanthropist. See DNB.

Letter 52
Brantwood, perhaps early 1874

That end of your letter—about the Snow. If you knew! all, that has happened to me, last year!

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

Darling Dr Brown

Such a delicious letter of what authors like and nothing else!

Connie says—"Send him my adoration, and ask him to come and get the kiss I've been waiting to give him these eleven years"

--Theres a room here looking out on the lake—and peace—and Connie, & indeed if you could & would come, it would greatly delight me. Please do—and come quickly I'm not to be here much more than ten days, now

Ever your loving JR.

MS: NLSm Acc.6134
Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire.
Notation on letter: among letters dated 1874

* * *

1. This must have been written before June 1874, when Connie
first visited Dr. Brown (see Letter 54, n.1); she was a frequent visitor at Brantwood. Brown met her at Wallington in 1863, and as she had been waiting to kiss him "eleven years" a date in early 1874 seems probable.

2 No longer extant.

Letter 53
Rome, 23 May, 1874

Dearest Dr Brown

I have your kind note—with that quite exquisite description of Susie (2) in it; never was anything so softly true—-a Holbein portrait—with Carpaccio's tenderness. I am so very very glad you had a photograph of that picture (3) I am getting Botticelli's Zipporah (1) well enough to give you some idea of her, too. She's as pure as the other; but altogether a different sort of girl—and has fallen quite irrecoverably in love with Moses at first sight. It is curious that the hem of her robe is an embroidery of golden letters on a blue ground;--the letters being all a lovely writing peculiar to Botticelli & Mantegna.--(so at least says my good and shrewd assistant, Mr. Murray.) (5) and we can't hear of any body who can read them.--I fancy they have usually been thought merely grotesque ornament
—but I have no doubt they are letters —Fancy having to work one's shawl border all round like that—after all the face and main work is done, and one's just thinking all the rest is to come easy.

--I wonder what Dora Wordsworth's journal (6) is! that it is to set me on fire. I am very nearly burnt out—and scarcely show a flash—even on extreme delight of provocation.

You know, the chief point in all that story of my broken flower (7) is its connection with forms of religious lesson—or warning to me—which—if there be any truth in one's old thoughts at all—must have had some better purpose than to be lost in despair. My belief is that if I could take my duty fully upon me, as I feel it—in self denial and resignation—for the work hinted only hitherto in Fors, that this child would be healed and brought back to me. It seems to me only my irresolution—cowardice—and self indulgence, for which we both have suffered.

I get more and more doubtful every day, now, what to do—or hope, or surrender, but I shall know—before long.

[OUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 1874
The signature is cut out. Fbd: LJB, 301. This omits the sentence between "they are letters" and "--I wonder what", and everything after "provocation".
1. So dated because it is the reply to a letter from Brown of 20 May 1874 (LJB, 230), and from various other information in the letter.

2. Miss Susan Beever (1806-93): see Introduction. She and her sister lived just across Coniston Water from Brantwood, and she became one of Ruskin's closest friends. Among her interests were natural history and the sketching of birds and flowers, and she was the author of _A Book of Reference to Remarkable Passages in Shakespeare_ (1870). In 1874 Ruskin helped her to make the selection of passages from _Modern Painters_ published in 1875 as _Frondes Agrestes_. _Hortus Inclusus_, a selection from their extensive correspondence, was published in 1887. Brown wrote to her, though he never saw her. Ruskin was buried next to her. In his letter of 20 May, 1874, Brown had described her as having "the young lamb's heart in 60(?) years, playful, fresh, blithe, and less selfish than your real lamb is." (LJB, 230).

3. In his letter Brown mentioned having got a photograph of Carpaccio's _St. Ursula_, probably _St. Ursula's Dream_, one of a series in the Academy at Venice. These pictures had profoundly impressed Ruskin and about two years later they became an obsession; he spent four months copying _St. Ursula's Dream_, which he had placed in a private room (Works XXXVII, 209 and 216); and _St. Ursula_ herself appears frequently in _Fors Clavigera_ as the type of feminine excellence. Eventually she became identified with the dead Rose La Touche, and this intense delusion contributed to Ruskin's mental breakdown in 1878; he wrote afterwards to Norton.
that he "went crazy about St. Ursula and the other saints--chiefly young lady saints--" (Works XXXVII, 252).

4. According to Cook's chronology Ruskin began copying this at Rome on 6th May: his copy is the frontispiece to Works XXIII. He mentions Murray's theory about the lovely writing in Ariadne Florentina, Works XXII, 427.

5. Charles Fairfax Murray (1819-1919) was one of the most skilful of Ruskin's artist-assistants in Italy and helped him in the work of copying pictures and drawing buildings in danger of restoration. Some of Ruskin's letters to him appear in Works.

6. Brown had written in his last letter: "we are publishing Dora Wordsworth's Journal in 1803 entire. It is delightful, and will set you on fire and awriting." (LJE, 230) This in fact was the first publication of Dorothy's journal; it came out in Edinburgh in 1871 as Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland, A.D. 1803 ed. J.C. Shairp. No mention of Brown is made in the work, and it is hard to know what part he had in the publication. Shairp was a close friend of his. Perhaps Brown had some reason for not wishing to be named as co-editor, or he may have dropped out of the project at an early stage. Oddly enough we get Ruskin's verdict on the journal in a fragment of a letter Brown wrote to Sir Henry Taylor (n.d., but evidently written in 1874; MS. in the Bodleian, MS. Eng. Lett. d.12, f.327). Brown writes: "In a letter from that strange being John Ruskin--from Perugia--he says--"Dora has been breakfasting with me these 3 days & she's a darling--but a little too aesthetic ("!") for prosy old me now--she has such a brilliant sense of the
outside presence of everything—& I have such a dreary sense of the inside absence of anything—her birch tree is the best I ever saw done"—do you know this gifted, most strange & as I may say as an old friend, truly good man (in spite of much outside & in)?" Ruskin was at Perugia during July 1874 (see Letters 59 and 60), and the letter Brown quotes from was probably written then; unfortunately it no longer survives.

7. Rose La Touche. Brown had asked in his last letter: "How is that heart-broken and bewildered child?" (this sentence is cut out of the printed version, LJB 230, but appears in a transcript of the original MS. in NLS, Acc.6289). The religious tone of this paragraph, after Ruskin had been resigned for about fourteen years to doubt and rationalism, and making the best of the "religion of humanity", is interesting in the light of the fact that during his work on the Giotto frescoes at Assisi in the next and subsequent months he found for himself new grounds for religious conviction and hope (see Works XXIX, 86 seq.)

Letter 54
Assisi, 14 June, 1874

Assisi. 14th June

74

Dearest Dr Brown

So you've let Connie (1) away again!—Oh dear— I had so set
my heart on her reading her second letter in your very presence—and your insisting on seeing what was in it to make her so angry—Do please write to her you want to see the letter I wrote about Edinburgh.

—I'm writing most of my work here in the Sacristan's cell, and yesterday morning was reading the honey & butter bit in Isaiah. Now—is it not a perfectly monstrous and unbelievable thing that in all Tyndalls talk and the rest of them's—(even our James not out of the mess in this,) not one of these scientific gentlemen ever distinguish between a 'plastic' thing, (butter) and a 'viscous' thing, (honey)—nor even distinguish between 'malleable' and 'ductile'.

—I couldn't give my Glacier lectures at Oxford because I'm not satisfied with Forbes' explanation of the riband structure—and am going to look at it again myself—meantime, I've got into an awful lot of questions about the mechanical results of mere abduction—(as your lump of sugar melts—how will it subside?)—out of the body of the whole mass of snow from top to bottom—and ever so many about pure squeezing—(how much snow goes out at the side from under a given breadth and weight of cart wheel)—and the like.

—and I've got to find out here how much is Giotto's work and how much restorers and pupils—restoration is easily caught out—but the pupils are the deuce and all—He sketches a bit for them—lets them do all they can—then mends a little—& puts in a head of his own—and its enough to drive one crazy—and then he's so confoundedly personal to me—One of the things I want to do myself is his Lady Poverty, and she has her head in a thicket of pale red and deep red roses; and just on the wall next her there's 'penitence' driving away Love—and Death,—at least AMOR and MORS. Giotto always puts KARITAS for real Love.  She stands beside
Poverty as she is being married, and gives her (the antiquaries say)—'an apple'. It is a heart; but I believe I'm the first person except the plasterers who has ever been up to look at it. St. Francis disappoints me dreadfully in his face,—but puts the ring on like a lover.

Susie (10) says she thinks you are sad—please don't be—That's what my friends say to me—too, and I sometimes snarl, in return. But there is a certain power in us, isn't there—of 'please don't be'?

Ever your loving

J R.

See 4th page

I've read such a lot of French novels, since I came abroad—I feel as if I'd been living in Paris—I've got a curious and very useful result—the enormous importance of Revenge in the modern French mind as an element of pleasure, and heroism,—and I'm going to take this up to compare with Scott's feudal ancestors and then show how exquisitely he has refused it as an element of interest in story;—(except in one comparatively weak story—Peveril;) and changed the feudal law into 'Vengeance is Mine'. (11)

Ever—(and of course twice over in one letter)
your loving J R.

Connie was so happy with you. It seems, you didn't pay her any extraordinary compliments however.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Pbd: Works XXXVII, 108; LJB, 301.
Both omit first paragraph; the passage between "in the monastery" and "I've got to find"; and the final postscript.
1. Constance Hilliard. There is a letter to her in the Cook and Wedderburn transcripts in the Bodleian (MS.Eng. Lett. c39, p.523) which coincides in many respects with this one, though it does not reveal what made her angry. Connie had been to stay with Dr. Brown.

2. Ruskin worked in the monastery for several weeks, copying Giotto's frescoes of the Life of St. Francis and going backwards and forwards to Rome. He often wrote in the Sacristan's cell--parts of Fors and Ariadne Florentina were written there. The work he was doing and his warm relations with the Sacristan and the monks of the monastery had a lasting effect on him and gave him new religious faith; the spirit of St. Francis took a strong hold on his mind; in Deucalion he called himself a Brother of the Third Order of St. Francis (Works XXVI, 225).

3. Isaiah vii. 15. 22.

h. John Tyndall (1820-93), natural philosopher. He did much scientific research in various fields, particularly geology and glaciers, and became superintendent of the Royal Institution. He was the leading figure among those who accused Forbes of plagiarism in the Agassiz controversy (see below), and he opposed a theory of his own to Forbes's explanation of glacier motion. This did not endear him to Ruskin, who was an ardent champion of Forbes and his ideas, and who on top of this conceived an intense personal dislike of Tyndall. Curiously enough the two men were once on good terms--a friendly letter from Ruskin to the scientist (written 1 Nov 1869) appears in A.S. Eve and C.H. Creasey, The Life and Work of John Tyndall (1945), p.138. When Ruskin launched his onslaught against
Tyndall's "Regelation Theory" of glacier motion in *Fors Clavigera* during 1873, Tyndall resented it as an unprovoked attack, and several of his friends sympathised with this feeling; Lady Lubbock, Huxley and Carlyle among others (Eve and Creasey, p.174). Ruskin was unrepentant: Tyndall, he said "has set back the Glacier Theory twenty years and more!...that is why I always attack him, and shall continue to do so until I die." (Ruskin speaking to M.H. Spielmann, as published in the * Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 April 1884: *Works* XXVI, xxxix-xl). More personal feelings against Tyndall are expressed elsewhere among these letters.

5. James David Forbes (1809-68), a Scottish scientist and Principal of St. Andrew's United College from 1859. He was especially well-known for his glacier theory, a summary of which is the statement that "a glacier is an imperfect fluid or viscous body which is urged down slopes of a certain inclination by the mutual pressure of its parts." This theory was controverted by Tyndall, whose own explanation "the Regelation Theory" stated that a glacier moves by the alternate melting and freezing of its parts. The scientists clashed still more violently over Forbes's claim to have been the first to notice the "veined" or "riband" structure of glaciers. He was certainly the first scientist to give the idea prominence and to publish it; but allegations were made before and after his death that he owed his insight into the phenomenon to Agassiz. Forbes's first observations of the structure were made at Agassiz' hut on the lower Aar glacier in 1841. Tyndall claimed that Agassiz had noticed the riband structure before Forbes, and had pointed it out, though without attaching the importance to it that Forbes did; Forbes's publication was said to have been
founded on Agassiz' observations. After Forbes's death a furious controversy broke out on this subtle point; J.C. Shairp and P.G. Tait, his biographers, defended his honour as a scientist and Tyndall impugned it. The vehemence of Ruskin's partisanship was by no means unusual.

6. Cf. the passage in "Notes and Correspondence", Fors 43 (July 1874), Works XXVIII, 123; also Works XXVI, 124.

7. Ruskin had begun his defence of Forbes in the glacier controversy in the Fors for October 1873, and intended to pursue it. Then he decided the subject would be more suitably dealt with in his Oxford lectures (Works XXVIII, 123); these were first announced in March 1874, but then were postponed till the autumn term and Ruskin went abroad for a few months. The lectures were considered a success and were partly incorporated into Deucalion (1875-1883).

8. In the Upper and Lower Church of St. Francesco at Assisi there is a fresco cycle of the Life of St. Francis, traditionally said to be by Giotto, though twentieth century criticism has cast some doubt on this attribution.

9. Cf. the very similar account of this picture, The Marriage of St. Francis and Lady Poverty, given in Fors 45 (Sept 1874), Works XXVIII, 164ff. The companion picture, in which Penitence drives away Amor, is called Chastity.

10. Susan Beever.
ll. Romans xii.19. The idea was apparently not followed up by Ruskin.

Letter 55
Assisi, 24 June, 1874

Here still, D.V. for a month.

Assisi—St. John’s day

My dearest Dr Brown

It was intensely sweet of you writing that second letter, though the first was also entirely good & tender. I have heard of reasons why you should be sad of many more, why you should be happy. My friends say the same to me—and though uselessly—I do not think unwisely—For—(1) all depends surely upon the one question—if there is a future or not, for man. You, as far as I can understand you, have at least good and calm hope of it. I, on the contrary live every day as absolutely my last—and only try to make it strong by reading with a horrible monkish false quantity—'natalem' for 'supremum', in Horace's noble line, (2) and beginning every morning, while I end at every sunset. This however supports me only in work, and the moment I'm idle or ill, I've nothing to say for myself. But you—who hope to see the Gods—and the dead—why are you sad.

Among the curious aspects of one's life as it recedes—the notablistest to me is the washing away of the hillsides and the coming out of the trapdykes. (3) Things that one thought nothing of—becoming all—an enduring skeleton.
One of the terriest of these rocks to me is the memory of my father's face of grief, as he turned away at the London Bridge Station, when exultant, I left for Venice (1) and very happy in a vulgar sense—(I've known real happiness since—for a day—but that did well enough for me then,) with my commonplace Scotch wife. The intense affection that was in it—and desolation—and magnificent self restraint—though he was choking—and I know now the perception he had of all that I had lost, and left—in him and in my mother—and in what they would have had me be.

Now—if I could meet him in Heaven—what would this matter?—Or if he could understand me, now. But to me—the grasshopper—& poor dog Camille (5) who lay without food while Connie & Edward (6) came to you—and I myself—and Rosie (7) who leaves me, like a dog—and St Elizabeth of Hungary—who was just Rosie better trained, & happier—and St George—and his dragon alike, whom I'm painting here—are all—what the roses are in the thickets—God's work: and His undoing. That is sadness—but you—with all your infinite powers of sympathy—with your material powers of healing—with your infinite friends—and a Future!

Well—the main thing that I can do to make you happier is that Scott work.—It will begin again next year, (8) D.V.—Could'nt be done here and should'nt. I've just got the MSS (9) of Woodstock, Peveril and the Black Dwarf—besides Nigel, before. Woodstock will be profoundly interesting to me—owing to the time of its writing (10) and Alice is I think his greatest heroine, after Jeanie. My own special love is Catherine Seyton (11)—but that's my weakness—for mischief. There's a bit of Scott in August Fors, (12) which I'll soon send you a proof of.
Also this glacier Plate (13) may interest you—

a. First winters snow (after the deluge or anything else--) on a conical mountain—level of perpetual snow at X.

b. Remnant in October on do.

c. Next winters snow

d. Remnant in October—(wind not considered)

e. Remnant in October (wind considered.)

f. Remnant—third year—(wind considered)

—Question—What next. Carry on the process, and examine the mathematical laws of weight on snow.—Here—I'm floored—-and give in. Begin again another way

g. Actual form of eternal snow in a basin of rock—whose watershed is X.

h. Theoretical form of annual masses composing it—

(seven for forty)

i. Suppose it level—filled in one year. Will autumn remnant be within dotted line

k. Actual disposition in continuous line of the bulk within dotted one

l. result.

Now suppose the basin cut in half—-at m. What form will the snow take—This is the primary question of glacier descent, in the simplest possible terms—and I'm floored again—because I'm bothered between actual weight, and the forms resulting from abstraction of mass. But the great fact that Alpine ice is a form of treacle which can't stand more than 200 feet deep is the root of Alpine picturesque aspect. This is what I have to explain at Oxford (14) in October.
Meantime, here, I've got to draw a Mater Dolorosa by Cimabue (15) and—if she don't melt some worse than Alpine ice—it will be my fault, not hers. (I've written a curious bit of autobiography (16) in the Sacristan's room this morning—which I'll send you soon.)

I wanted to dress Connie in a beautiful striped Musselburgh (17) jacket or whatever you call it—with extremest tuck up of petticoats—She could always carry sprats, you know.

—Ever your lovingest

J R.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Notation on letter: 24th June

1. He had heard from Susie Beever, for example, in her letter to him of 18 May 1874. She wrote: "Oh, that dear Dr John Brown my friend tells me that she called at his house the other day and saw his only grandchild a perfect Idiot! Imagine if it is possible to do so, what that must be!" (The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin, ed. Helen Viljoen, 1971, p.393). On 23 May 1874 Ruskin replied: "I have your last most lovely line...giving me that most touching fact about poor Dr. John Brown, which I am grieved and yet thankful to know, that I may better still reverence his unfailing kindness and quick sympathy." (Works XXXVII, 101.)

2. "Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum/ Grata superveniet quae non sperabitur hora." "Hold for yourself the belief that each day that dawns is your last: the hour to which you do not look forward will be a pleasant surprise." Epistles iv. 13.
Ruskin, in substituting 'natalem' for 'supremum' holds that each day is his birthday, the very first day of his life. Remarks of his on these lines, written in March 1879, appear in Works XXXIV, 604. Ruskin's belief was that a man who had no hope of future life could still do good work, and he wrote on this theme in the Introduction to The Crown of Wild Olive, 1866 (Works XVIII, 392-9). He felt however that religious men could have no excuse for despondency and apathy: cf. Works XXXVI, 469.


4. The trip to Venice referred to is probably the second one Ruskin and his wife made, in August 1851. They stayed there for six months, Ruskin studying architecture for volumes II and III of The Stones of Venice and Effie immersing herself in Venetian high society. Ruskin's parents were very distressed at his leaving them for so long; he knew this but for once followed his own inclination (he was 32). He wrote to his father from Boulogne: "I was very sorry to leave my mother & you: and would not have done so for any pleasure of mine: nor of Effie's, which is the same thing. But I think I ought to finish my book & I cannot finish it properly but at Venice." (Effie in Venice, ed. Mary Lutyens, 1965, pp. 175-6.)

5. A Saint Bernard dog given to Ruskin in June 1871 by Algernon L. Oldham, which stayed with him at Abingdon near Oxford. Ruskin named it after Fr. Camille of the Hospice of the Pass of the Great St. Bernard who had been kind to some of his friends. Eventually he gave the dog to an Oxford family.
6. Connie is Constance Hilliard, who visited Brown earlier in the month, but Edward is a mystery, though he evidently accompanied her.

7. Rose La Touche.

8. The Scott work did not begin again for years. Like many of Ruskin's projects the Scott "critical biography" in *Fors* was begun ambitiously and then laid aside. He wrote some studies of Scott in 1879 which were included partly in *Fiction, Fair and Foul* (1880-1), but otherwise the work lapsed.

9. Ruskin acquired more Scott MSS. as time went on: see Letter 97.

10. *Woodstock* (1826) was written in three months; it was begun before the collapse of Scott's finances with the failure of Constable's publishing house, and finished in a very different state of mind shortly after it. In that time it had become one of Scott's few precious financial assets.

11. Alice is Alice Lee, the heroine of *Woodstock*; Jeanie is Jeanie Deans, from *The Heart of Midlothian*; Catherine Seyton appears in *The Abbot*.

12. In *Fors* 44 (August 1874) there is a passage about Scott's excursions into Liddesdale (*Works* XXVIII, 129-31).

13. The plate was published in *Deucalion* vol. I, ch. 3, "Of Ice-Cream" (*Works* XXVI, 124, 236; the plate is no. XII, facing p. 128).
This passage in the letter is, naturally enough, best read in conjunction with the plate, and the chapter it illustrates develops the ideas here indicated.

14. From 27 Oct to 6 Nov 1874 Ruskin gave a course, "Alps", on glacier motion. The lectures went down well and were partly incorporated into Deucalion (see Works XXVI, 89).

15. This picture is in the Lower Church of S. Francesco at Assisi; for Ruskin's copy of it see the frontispiece of Works XXXIII.

16. Unidentified.

17. "Musselburgh stuff" is "a cheap woven material of narrow width" (Scottish National Dictionary).

Letter 56

Assisi, 25 June, 1874(1)

Assisi—25th June.

My dearest Dr Brown

I wish indeed I could have the advantage of being with your brother(2) and with your scientific friends sometimes—but it would merely lead me into another life—not help me in mine—until the discoveries are clear and practically developed—discussion is half terminology.—I look for much light on the peculiar passion of all mankind for spiral lines in your brother's discovery(3)
But I cannot call it a discovery of a new sense. Rotation is merely one of the methods of motion. We may be able to discern it instantly by a particular organ—as we may have a particular organ in the brain for perceiving the smell of roses, as distinct from others.—But that is not a new sense of smell.

—So—respecting fluids and solids I should call carbonate of lime a weak solid, and diamond a strong one, but neither of them in the slightest degree plastic. Q. the diamond might be—if either—under enormous force. So also—gold is perfectly plastic—lead imperfectly—but gold much the stronger. The definition of plasticity is that the particles can have their places changed by external force, without separating and, when their positions are thus altered, will retain them, while a viscous body is a liquid whose particles are more or less retarded in their motion by special methods of coherence. All liquids being in some degree viscous, and the measure of relative viscosity being the time taken to move through a given space under the action of given force,—gravity or other. There may be much more subtle qualities afterwards detectible by science—but these primary definitions are necessary for all real work, and though they used to be clearly enough stated, I think—in one's old books, the new ones are all rabid with new terms and notions—and as far as I have seen—useless to all serious human purposes.

—Please—I want to know this—In bending a sword blade of find temper,—there must be great approximation of the particles on one side and separation on the other. In a solid cube of the same steel, will an equal relative force compress or expand it in the same proportion?
I have been made, for life—somewhat uncharitable towards scientific men, by a wretched oculist (5) who made all London believe that Turner's last style was only the result of a form of jaundice—Boo-hoo—said London—and the Royal Institution—Here we have it at last.—We always said there was nothing in Turner—now you see—!!

Another quite conclusive thing to me, was Faraday's attitude (6) about Spiritualism.

First—that a man professing Christianity (7) should deny spiritual power—and necromancy as one ghastly form of it—

—secondly, that a man professing philosophy should be unable to distinguish the evidence of nervous persons from that of healthy ones:—lastly, that any man of feeling or education should be able to cast aside the entire faith & tradition of the previous world—, and never so much as wonder what was to come next.

—I wish you had seen Sir Cristan's eyes flashing with joy and faith, today as he was describing—as fast as his tongue could move—the way in which good Christians used to be able to fly,—or stand in the air—like Dr What's his name's birds—& kites—with no string.
1. From several references, e.g. to the Sacristan, it is clear that this is from the 1871 sequence of letters from Assisi.

2. Dr. Brown's half-brother, Professor Alexander Crum Brown (1838-1922), Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh University.

3. Unidentified.

4. Dr. Brown pencilled the reply to this question on Ruskin's letter, as follows: "In all portions of the same steel the amount of compression or distortion is always in the same proportion to the compressing or distorting force, always provided it is not laminated or fibrous, in which case the compressibility may be different in different directions."

5. Dr. Liebreich, who delivered a lecture on Friday, 8 March 1872, at the Royal Institution called "Turner and Mulready—On the Effect of certain Faults of Vision on Painting, with especial Reference to their Works." He argued that Turner's change of style in his later years was due to a change in his eyes. Ruskin thought the Doctor's obtuseness was almost certifiable; an equally scandalised reference to him is made in Letter 99.

6. Michael Faraday (1791-1867), natural philosopher and scientist. In 1853 and 1854 a craze for "table-turning" swept through London, and Faraday protested against the abandonment, then (as now) fashionable, of the standards and checks by which science evaluates phenomena. Table-moving, in his opinion, was a subject for experiment; he does not appear to have denied spiritual
power, as Ruskin asserts, but to have asked that spiritual manifestations be examined in the light of the "laws of nature". What he disliked about spiritualism was the "unwillingness of its advocates to investigate; their boldness to assert; the credulity of the lookers-on; their desire that the reserved and cautious objector should be in error..." (L. Pearce Williams, Michael Faraday 1965, pp.336-7). Ruskin's reaction is characteristic: he loathed scientific objectivity.

7. Faraday had the reputation all his life of being a deeply religious man; he belonged to an obscure Calvinist sect, the Sandemanians.

8. Dr. Pettigrew's, probably. See Letters 39 and 40.

Letter 57
Assisi, 27 June, 1874

Assisi, 27th June, 74

Dearest Dr Brown

I forgot to answer you about Giotto. It is Karitas who is Poverty's bridesmaid; and she wears, herself, a crown of white roses which burn up into fire in the outer leaves.--The 'Amor' is not Lust; but the Greek Eros. How Giotto, with all his commonsense, gave in at all to the monkish confusion of love with lust, I can't quite make out,--but the distinction runs dreadfully fine near the edge. I suspect Giotto had seen a good
deal of mischief come of even the most romantic love. God knows, some other people have, too.—But I think you may take his Amor, as that of Francesca da Rimini in Dante's view of it.

Ever your loving, in the Charitate Dei,

J Ruskin.

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**MS:** The Bodleian Library. **Fbd:** Works XXVIII, 163, in illustration of a passage in Fors #5.

1. See Letter #54, n.8 and 9.

2. Francesca da Rimini, shortly after her marriage to Gianciotto Rimini, fell in love with his brother Paolo, and was found with him by her husband, who killed the illicit lovers on the spot. In the *Divine Comedy* they are placed in the second circle of Hell, among the lustful. They told a sympathetic Dante that they had been led unwittingly into sin by reading the Tale of Lancelot and Guinevere together (*Inferno* V. 82-138).

**Letter #58**

Assisi, 28 June, 1874

Sacristan's cell, Assisi

28th June. 7h.

Dearest Dr Brown

I never in my life yet, heard so good a sermon as the sacristan has just preached to me, on the text—"la donna--e facsimile del Diavolo" (1) Stating that for a first principle he
branched off into a discourse on devils in general—on St Michael, on baptism, and the calling of Matthew—as fast as his tongue could fly; and entirely splendid and beautiful,—in its way—his eyes flashing with eager passion of faith—John Knox never more earnest.

Yesterday I was looking at the piece of hillside, whence St Francis went up in the chariot of fire. I'm horribly tormented with Giotto's picture of it because Giotto used Venetian red with a vegetable blue, for his grey monks dresses;—wherever the damp has got through the wall, it eats away the blue, and leaves a brilliant red; so that every now and then his Franciscans look the scarlet whore of Babylon—and his chariot of fire, which is Venetian red also, I had like to have taken for an effect of damp.

Your scientific people—(I beg your pardon—and your brother's) are to my mind—merely damp in the wall—making one look with suspicion on all chariots of fire. (—If only they would be content to make me a vegetable blue that would stand—and a Red that there could be no mistake about!)

--I've told Joanie—(who was a Miss Agnew—and is married to Keats's friends son whose father, Keats' own friend I saw in Rome—the other day, painting the Marriage in Cana—and thinking himself great because he made the water turn into wine as it was being poured out, half red and half white—not much troubling himself about his Christ—he made the Madonna—for the rest, a sweet goodnatured loquacious old darling—to send you a letter dictated by Carlyle to me,—(written by his niece)—it will interest you,—and I write now to ask forgiveness for the bit about the 'long eared race.'
But—for one final example of the way I feel about Scientific men.—Will you please pick up the next pebble you see, round, on Arthurs Seat—or the first bit of rubbish out of a lapidary's shop,—like this

—pshaw—it looks like a bird's nest—
one can't draw an agate in a hurry—
See the difference between order and disorder

—that isn't much better, but I haven't time—Well I mean any trap agate with its bit of quartz and hollow in the middle. Ask the wisest geologist you know—(not a bone-ologist)—how it was made.

He'll tell you—'in an amygadaloidal trap.'

Yes—very good—but how?—When did the stuff it is made of get in? In what state? What makes it banded? When does it begin to crystallize? What throws the quartz inside?—He'll stand with his mouth open! He knows nothing whatever about it.

--Try him next with a bit of variegated marble--and you'll produce exactly the same effect.

--And give him my compliments and tell him the scientific men had infinitely better hold their tongues at present on all subjects—(and above all—on detonating compounds,) and work, and think.

Ever your affectionate J R

--Please however note the respect with which I always speak of science applied to use—(as yours of medicine)—or to beauty.—I forgot another of the things that fired my mind—There's a great French physiologists book with gloriously laboured plates—
I forget his damned name—He can't draw a horse—a dove—or a woman—but draws lice or frogs or monkeys, the most horribly true to the lousiest parts of their nature. This is French Science--Compare it with French Art--in Chartres cathedral!

* The book must be in Edinburgh Library Folio--type of human race a Hottentot woman.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Fbd: Works XXXVII, 119; LJB, 303.
Both omit the passage between "no mistake about!"
and "Ever your affectionate"; the words "I forget his damned name";
and the foot-note on the last page.

1. "Woman is the facsimile of the Devil".

2. A fresco in the Upper Church of S. Francesco at Assisi,
"Apparition of St. Francis in a chariot of fire".

3. Joseph Arthur Palliser Severn (1842-1931), whom Joan married in 1871. He was a painter like his father and helped Ruskin in some of his work.

4. Joseph Severn (1793-1879), painter. He was a member of Keats's circle of friends and in 1820 accompanied the poet, then an invalid, to Italy. He attended Keats very devotedly during his final illness. Later he lived a good deal in Italy, where reputation as Keats's friend made him an institution on the social scene, and his good nature made him popular. He continued to paint, but he was not a great artist. (See Praeterita, Works XXXV, 561.)
5. After 1870 Thomas Carlyle's right hand was often too shaky to write, and from about May that year he frequently dictated letters to his niece, Mary Aitken Carlyle.

6. Trap is a kind of igneous rock; "amygdaloidal trap" is volcanic rock of this sort in which there are cavities filled with mineral of another type, such as agate, chalcedony, or spar.

7. This may be a reference to the science of explosives, though Ruskin did not show much interest in the subject anywhere else; the only other mention of it I can find is in a letter of 1885 (Works XXXVII, 526). According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica 9th edn. (1878), "the rationale of detonation is not yet understood" (VIII, 810: "Explosives").

8. The book is by Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Frederic Cuvier: Histoire Naturelle des Mammifères (1824), and is referred to again in The Eagle's Nest (1872), Works XXII, 231. The plates of the Hottentot woman—see Ruskin's footnote—are the first and second in vol. I, and were drawn by De Wailly.

Letter 59
Perugia, 12 July, probably 1874

Perugia
July 12th

Dearest Dr Brown,

I'm so glad you have got the England and Wales. (1)

The Barnard Castle--Flint Castle--Laugharne Castle--
Worcester—Coventry—Ashby de la Zouche Bolton—Falls of Tees,—
Cwes—Alnwick, Kenilworth—are all beautiful plates—and many
others are interesting. The absolutely best plate in the book is
the chain bridge over Tees, the thicket on the right is almost
the only instance of a piece of tree engraving which does Turner
justice, as far as steel can

[LEAF MISSING]

& with perhaps—twenty only missing—they had all been collected by
Windus. (2)

MS: The Pierpoint Morgan Library. Notation on letter: From
John Ruskin (in Dr. Brown's hand); (1874). A leaf appears to
be missing.

* *


2. B.G. Windus had a large collection of Turner's drawings
and several oils, and was a friend of Turner for many years. He
was a retired coachmaker. He gave Ruskin the run of his house,
which much helped him during the writing of Modern Painters.
Ruskin later wrote (in Praeterita): "Nobody, in all England, at
that time,—and Turner was already sixty,—cared, in the true sense
of the word, for Turner, but the retired coachmaker of Tottenham,
and I." (Works XXXV, 253.) Windus was also one of the first
buyers of the Pre-Raphaelites' work.
Letter 60
Perugia, 24 July, 1874

Write—till end of month to Genoa—afterwards to poste restante,
Village du Simplon.

Perugia. 24th July 74.

Dearest Dr Brown

I did not answer your question about the value of the
Farnley collection (1) the other day. In money—it is of course
impossible in the present fantastic state of the market to say
what—but certainly at least half a million, money down in any
auction room—(probably a million and a half). In essential and
intrinsic value—Infinity. There is no measure for it. There
is no such painting in the world—no anything in art so educationally
precious to England—were it understood.

I've sent to printer today the first sheets of new book,
'Monte Rosa'. (2) I will mention Tyndall in it of course in the
character of the "Puce des Glaces". (3) I don't think I ever quite
recovered the impression made on me by the first sight of that
little creature.

The Divine Universality of Vermin

Ever your affect.

J R

MS: The Bodleian Library.

*  
1. Farnley Hall in the West Riding of Yorkshire was the home
of Mr. William Fawkes, one of Turner's oldest friends and the
purchaser of several of his works. Turner was a constant visitor
there between 1803 and 1820. Many paintings and a fine collection of drawings by Turner were preserved at the Hall, and after Fawkes's death in 1826 they were looked after by his son, Francis Hawksworth Fawkes. Ruskin, who got to know the younger Fawkes and visited the Hall to see the Turners, is recorded as saying, in 1884, "Farnley is a perfectly unique place. There is nothing like it anywhere; a place where a great genius had been loved and appreciated, who did all his best work for that place, where it is treasured up like a monument in a shrine." (Works XII, liii-lvii.)

2. It appears that Ruskin originally intended to call his book Deucalion by the name Monte Rosa. The first part of the work, a miscellaneous collection of lectures on geology, mineralogy, glaciers and snakes, came out in Oct 1875; the last in May 1883.

3. "Flea of the Ice". In Deucalion Ruskin took every opportunity of castigating Tyndall and his ideas, and in fact did use this extraordinarily offensive phrase to describe that scientist and his fellow workers. (Works XXVI, 227).

Letter 61
Florence, probably September, 1874 (1)

I was trying for—Miss Lockhart! (2) who refused me in a way which made me feel I had no chance of getting a girl of the upper classes. Not cruelly—but so visibly unassailable! Then after these two
breaking defeats (3) came this very pretty girl (1) of my own rank
who made violent love to me— What would you have—I assure you,
at that time, she had marvellous powers of fascination—The best
Austrian soldier and most perfect gentleman I knew in Venice, (5)
died (of wounds received in siege—months before) holding her
picture to his breast—the whole Bunsen family (6) went crazy about
her—All London who knew her went with her; against me—Rogers (7)
the poet most of all!—And I never was off my balance with her—I
married her thinking that kindness would make a good wife—and I
was always kind to her— but—It was possibly because I did feel
her inferiority—and she knew it—that she got to hate me—because
she could do anything she liked with other men—not with me.—

I had some hard times between 17 and 20—and some troublesome
times after my marriage.

But I never knew what happiness—& pain—meant—till two
years ago. (8)

—Ever your lovingest

J R.

I’m at work here on the mythology of St. Dominic (9)—the real
Pilgrims progress.—He converts first the scholars and workmen,
—who converted—fall into two groups—one of clergy—the other of
painters and poets (—It is in this group we have portraits of
Cimabue—Petrarch—and many more invaluable) Then next he converts
the men of the world There are four people at table—a lady playing
violin—a knight—with falcon a lady with a pet monkey—and a
Statesman. Children dancing in front of them. St. Dominic starts
them all on pilgrimage. They are baptised & change into little
children—then St. Peter receives them at the gate of heaven.—
Behind the gate—all the patriarchs & prophets wait. It is so
full of thought everywhere it will take me a fortnight merely to read it.

MS: NLS, Acc.6289 Notation on letter: 1874 The beginning of the letter is missing.

1. So dated from the mention of work on the "Visible Church" fresco: see below.

2. Charlotte, the daughter of J.G. Lockhart and grand-daughter of Sir Walter Scott. Ruskin may have proposed to her about the beginning of 1847 (though he says in Praeterita that he "never could contrive to come to any serious speech with her", Works XXXV, l.22); but her affections were engaged elsewhere: she married James Hope on 19 Aug 1847.

3. Ruskin's first love was Adele Domecq; he fell passionately in love with her in 1836, and was thrown into the blackest despair when he learned in 1839 that she was to marry a Frenchman, Baron Duquesne.

4. Effie Gray. Their affair developed during the spring and summer of 1847, and they became engaged in the autumn. They were married on 10 April 1848. Effie left Ruskin on 25 April 1851, and the marriage was annulled on 15 July 1852. Ruskin's claim that he was never "off his balance" with Effie is open to question: cf. the letters he wrote to her before marriage in Admiral Sir William James, The Order of Release (1947).
5. Probably Lt. Paulizza, an officer in the Austrian forces which besieged and bombarded Venice during July and August, 1819. He was devoted to Effie, and was extremely distressed when she and Ruskin, who were both fond of him, left Venice in July 1850. He died, probably of an old head-wound, in July 1851. See Mary Lutyens, Effie in Venice (1965), passim.

6. The family of Baron Christian Bunsen (1791-1860), German Ambassador in London 1841-52. He was eminent in "the polite circles of London" to which Ruskin had entrée after Modern Painters I was published. In Praeterita Ruskin describes, rather sardonically, some Christmas festivities he attended at the Bunsens' house in 1851: Works XXXV, 502.

7. Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), poet and connoisseur of art. His best known poem is Italy, published in several parts, 1822-8. He was very sociable and held fashionable 'breakfasts', which were attended by celebrated writers, artists and aristocrats. In the early fifties Ruskin and his wife were frequently of the company, and were on friendly terms with the poet.

8. Reference to the Rose La Touche affair, and events of 1872: see Letter 63, n.1.

9. Ruskin here describes a large fresco, "The Visible Church" reproduced Works XXIII, plate xxxix, and described ib., l.i36-53), in the Spanish Chapel, S. Maria Novella, at Florence. It is attributed by him in Mornings in Florence (Works XXIII, 37h) to Simon Memmi. He worked intensively on the frescoes in the Spanish Chapel from early Sept till about the 30th. Cf. letters for this month in Works XXXVII.
Letter 62

Geneva, 19 October, 1874

Hôtel des Bergues, Geneve.

19th Oct

Dearest Dr Brown

—I am so glad you like the photographs—they cost only tenpence each now—at Goodban's, English Bookseller—Florence,—though I didn't send you quite so easily obtainable a gift—for I had much trouble to get them rightly taken.

Yes, I was happy in writing that letter to you—in an unusual way. Delivered for the time from the sight of horror and sin—occupied successfully and in peace on the loveliest things in nature—and—with a letter from R in my breast pocket. Else, Mont Blanc had been only black to me. (She cannot make black things white to me however, now—she could, once.)—All other things only live to me when she lays her hand on them. This is a great mystery to me—but very beautiful and right whatever suffering chances from the betrayed or crushed glory of it.

Her mind is much unhinged, but I trust by peace and time, redeemable. It seems to me as if it was appointed for me to take the task. It will only be if she has still strength of will enough to join me in all Fors plans, and Monte Rosa plans, beyond it. Have you noticed the incidental passages about Monte Rosa? Strange coincidences—slight—but constant—of this sort—continually happen respecting her. I chose Monte Rosa as the central mass of Alpine snow—not for its name.

Home, I trust—the day after tomorrow—I write this, fearing utter press of disordered work as soon as I get to London—else I would not tease you so soon.
Ever your affectionately,

J. R.


Notation on letter: 1874.

1. So dated because Ruskin was at Geneva on 19 October 1874; he arrived back in London on 25 Oct.

2. According to a note made by the transcriber of these letters the photographs were of the panels on Giotto's Campanile. Giotto, in 1334, was made overseer of works for the cathedral and fortifications of Florence. He erected a campanile which still bears his name. Goodban's was a well-known English library and bookseller's at Florence; it was still in business when Works was published.

3. Rose La Touche.

1. Ruskin at one time was going to call Deucalion by the name Monte Rosa, and perhaps he refers here to some plan of social reform he intended to develop in that work, which was never completed. It is more likely though that he refers to an idea he mentioned in Fors of having within his St. George's Company another elite company named Monte Rosa, holding to the St. George's Company in general the relation that Monte Rosa (a Swiss mountain) holds to the Alps in general, that of being "the central mountain of the range" (Fors 17, May 1872, Works XXVII, 296; see also 354, 365, 371, 416).

Ruskin probably asks Brown if he noticed the "incidental passages" about the projected Monte Rosa Company because the Company was not
formally announced; Ruskin merely made a few remarks about it in
the middle of other matters. Evidently he is claiming here not
to have had Rose La Touche in mind when naming it; but his
biographers draw the opposite conclusion, e.g. R.H. Wilenski,

Letter 63
Brantwood, perhaps 1874 (1)

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

Dear Doctor,

I don't know those lines about return from Ulster (2) I
remember in Lockhart some account of an early love, (3) but not as
if it had gone deep. Surely love need not be hopeless to keep the
heart clear? Mine never has been clear, but in a few days of hope (4)
I had.

--Swinburne is only one of the many men of power who have
been driven mad (5) in this generation by its doctrines of license--
mixing with true indignation at its cruelties. There is much
more good than evil in him, but the evil is of a mean and loathsome
kind. Jowett (6) knows what he is, better than anybody. Lady
Trevelyan (7) was asking me about him at 3 past one of the day on
which she died in the twilight.

It is the curse of modernism to have all its best men
blighted and worm-eaten--Herods in soul.
You'll have a charming answer from Connie(8) I'm sure.

Ever your Loving

J R.

Ms: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire. Notation on letter: 187k

1. The only indication of the date is the "187k" written on the MS by Wedderburn. This date is rendered slightly more plausible by the statement about "men of power being driven mad"; it was also made in one of the Fors of 187k.

2. The Return to Ulster is a poem by Sir Walter Scott, written in 1816; it deals with the poet's disillusionment with fame and his yearning for the love of his youth instead. (Scott's Poetical Works ed. F.T. Palgrave, 1906, p.486.)

3. In 1790 Scott met Williamina Belsches and gradually found that he was in love with her, a love that deepened as time went by; but circumstances parted them: she became engaged to William Forbes, and married him on 19 Jan 1797. This was a bitter blow for Scott that left its mark till his dying day (Edgar Johnson, Sir Walter Scott, 2 vols. 1970, I, pp.108-214). J.G. Lockhart in his Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. (7 vols, 1837-8) dealt summarily with the affair (vol I, ch.7). Dr. Brown in his last letter may well have remarked that The Return to Ulster was about Scott's love for Williamina.
Ruskin probably refers to the days in August 1872, when, at George MacDonald's urging, he came from the Continent to meet Rose La Touche, and spent idyllic hours with her at the MacDonalds' London house, and the Cowper Temples' country seat "Broadlands". Soon after this intimacy Rose turned sharply against him.

Cf. the passage in Fors 48, Dec 1872, about the way "men who know the truth are like to go mad" in the present generation. (Works XXVIII, 206-7).

Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893). Master of Balliol College, Professor of Greek at Oxford, translator of Greek literature, he was a friend of both Brown and Ruskin. He early recognised Swinburne's talents and became a friend and protector of the poet.

She died at Neuchatel in 1866, while on a tour of the Continent with Ruskin, Miss Hilliard and others.

Constance Hilliard.

Letter 64
Oxford, perhaps late 1874(1)

Corpus Christi College
Oxford
Friday

Dearest Dr Brown

I'm so glad you like the new Fors.

To day Tyndall had his razor sharp

Your loving JR.
1. The only indication of the date is the reference to Tyndall.
Ruskin delivered lectures at Oxford of which Tyndall's incompetence
was the main theme on 27-30 Oct and 3-6 Nov, 1871: perhaps this
letter was written then.

Letter 65
Oxford, 17 April, probably 1875(1)

Send me enclosed proof back please

Corpus Christi College Oxford
17th April

My dearest Doctor

This proof(2) may perhaps amuse you. It does great injustice
to Forbes' lovely map,—but will be more refined in finishing.

I've been obliged to see to all the rivets in my own armour
very carefully, because I'm hitting as hard as I can, this time.(3)
The quantity of things that people don't know, when I ask them—and
that I thought I could find out in ten minutes and find it would
take ten months!

--E.G. the mere lines of a river(4) of any given depth equal
all across going round a corner, from level water at a b to level
water at c d, with a fall of

---whatever one likes to say
between a b and c d, keeping
the bottom section horizontal between the sides all round. Therefore
the incline of curve a d. will be ever so much less than that of 
b c.--and the water can't flow so fast on it. But to get round 
the corner--it must flow ever so much faster. What will it do! 
One would have to think for a year--one must make everything, &
look. And either way--takes time.

I don't even know the maximum depth to which a given 
column of water can cut a pool, from a given height & slope!

Ever your loving

J R.

Very poorly just now--weak, & sad & weary.

1. Ruskin was at Oxford at this time in 1875, which the 
probable references to Deucalion support as the most likely year 
when this letter was written.

2. Possibly this is a proof of the plate in Works XXVI facing 
p.160; this contrasts a fine map done by James Forbes in 1845 with 
an ugly one of the same place by Tyndall in 1860, and has the 
ironic title "The Progress of Modern Science in Glacier Survey". 
This was first issued in the Deucalion series in October 1875; 
on 21 Mar 1875 Ruskin wrote to Allen asking him to engrave the plate 
(Cook and Wedderburn transcripts in the Bodleian, MS.Eng.Lett. cl40,
Speaking of it in Deucalion Ruskin drew attention, as here, to the fact that his engraving was "grievously inferior to Forbes' work" (Works XXVI, 161 footnote).

3. If the surmise in the note above is right, then Ruskin was hitting hard in the second part of Deucalion (Oct 1875), in which as usual he gave Tyndall no quarter. See for example the chapter accompanying the above-mentioned plate: Ch.VI, "Of Butter and Honey", Works XXVI, 156-64.

1. Ruskin's interest in the flowing of rivers may have had something to do with a study of Rendu's theories; Rendu had likened the motion of glaciers to that of rivers, noting that in both the velocity of the centre was greater than that of the sides and making other analogies (see Works XXVI, xxxiv-v.)

Letter 66
Oxford, probably May, 1875

Corpus Christi College Oxford

Dearest Dr Brown

I can't possibly do you half the good you do me; I assure you, I write anything with twice the spirit, when I think you are going to read it—that I do when you are tired and ill. What you say of my poor little brains is true,—but I am resting a good deal just now—it is more good humour that I want, and love rather than rest. When R (2) was

[cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
mentally. They say, bodily yes. Not dying, by any means, her mother says. But all that was most herself is dead already, I say. Don't be worried about it—I should have been made a saint of—if she had been good to me and written only piety instead of Proserpine (I always spell it without P and R Ros -epine.)

[**CUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE**]

... ... ... ... ... ... ...

**MS:** The Bodleian Library. **Letterhead:** Corpus Christi College/Oxford. The signature is cut out, damaging text on both sides of the leaf.

1. The evidence for the date is not conclusive. However the references to Proserpina and to Rose's illness suggest a date in May, 1875. One may surmise that the excised sentence ending in the word "mentally" went something like: "The doctors offer little hope of her recovery mentally. They say..." If this was the gist of it, and Rose was in extremis, then this letter would have to have been written in May, since this is the only month during Rose's final illness that Ruskin was at Oxford. She died 26 May 1875. The first part of Proserpina had just appeared, in April. Since Ruskin is alleged to have made his pun on the book's title as early as 1869, the mention of it is not irrefutable proof of this letter's date; but May 1875 seems probable.

2. Rose La Touche.
3. **Proserpina: Studies of Wayside Flowers** came out in parts beginning in April 1875 and ending in 1886: it was never completed. See *Works* XXV.


**Letter 67**

Oxford, 16 June, 1875

Corpus Christi College Oxford

16th June

Dearest Dr Brown

I am very thankful for your kind letter.—Chiefly in that it shows me I've got you still. I was afraid you would be overworking yourself again.

That death (1) is very bad for me, -- seal of a great fountain of sorrow which can never now ebb away. A dark lake in the fields of life as one looks back—Coruisk (2) with Sarcophagus Mountains (3) round.

Meantime— I live in the outside of me—and can still work Glaciers going on well (4) They have become four first chapters of "Deucalion"—which is to be the Philosophy of Stones in General—after Venice! Soon—really, now, out with first chapter.

The death numbed me for some days so that I couldn't work—but am none the worse, as far as I know—only there's no blood in my hands or feet.
Please take care of yourself—for me as Mr Winkle asked Mr Pickwick, for him.

Ever your loving

J R

1. Rose La Touche died on 26 May, 1875.

2. A freshwater lake in the S.E. of the Isle of Skye. Sombre and still, it lies in the cup of the Cuchullin Mountains, in the shadow of peaks which rise 3,000 feet and more.

3. Ruskin's metaphor recalls Scott's description of the Coruisk crags: "These mighty cliffs...May they not mark a Monarch's fate?" (Lord of the Isles, Canto 3, stanzas xvi-ii.)

4. Ruskin had been busy with glacier work for some time; in October 1874 he gave a course on glaciers at Oxford, and lectured on them in March 1875 at the Royal Institution. These lectures were partly incorporated into Deucalion which he was preparing for the press at this time; the first part appeared in October.

5. Winkle says this to Mr. Pickwick as he embarks on the ice, in Ch.29 of The Pickwick Papers.
Letter 68
Brantwood, about 1 August, 1875(1)

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire

Dearest Dr Brown

It has just occurred to me that you can't come to me
because like a stupid beast as I am, I didn't ask your sister
too. (2)

--This was pure inadvertence and stupidity. My life has
been ruined by stupidity—I am a dolt, a cretin—a log—a dead
mole—a stuffed hedgehog—a fossil echinus,(3) not to have thought
of it. Come both, directly—I am convinced by your own last note,
Brantwood is the only place for you.

Ever your loving J R.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire. Pbd: LJB, 303.

1. So dated from Dr. Brown's reply to this letter, which is
dated 3 Aug (LJB, 235). In LJB Brown's letter is dated (1874);
but it is clear from a reference in it to Fors that it was written
in 1875.

2. In his letter Dr. Brown explained that his not coming had
nothing to do with his sister, Isabella Brown, but rather with the
fact that he was unwell, "with a painful affection of the absorbents
of the leg, with general illness and sleeplessness" and felt unable
"for being even with you". On the letter Ruskin wrote: "Keep this for me. I trust he may write often yet, but he may not." (LJE, 235).

3. A spiny sea-urchin; commonly found in a fossil state.

Letter 69
Simplon, 2 September, 1876

Simplon Inn--
(2nd Sept) My Mother's Birthday

Dearest Doctor

You would have a longer note than this, but that I am finishing with great care a little bit for 4th Deucalion, (1) which must be written in this room, giving account of the evening spent in the next one to it, (whence at this moment the voices of the diligence people at breakfast clatter loudly with their knives & forks through the ill closed door.)—thirty two years ago, by my father and mother and me, with James Forbes, (2) such account prefacing a needful critique of Master Violet-le-Duc (3) on Le Massif du Mont Blanc!!!

At last, "my enemy has written a book!" (4)

--Well, about your friend's drawings (5) I'm too busy, & shall be, at Venice to look at them till I get home, but I give orders for care of them. Next--of Sybil (6) Do you know, I've not sent her the promised Ariadne because in the unaccountablest way--'by Jupiter, forgot'--I've forgotten her name in Sybil--and have been waiting and waiting thinking that with Nellie's (7) it must come back to me, but
it hasn't; and I must be told, for Ariadne's\(^{(8)}\) just finished.
(Oh dear, I hope nobody will be shocked at a little naughty bit at
the end, about how Botticelli learned to draw the prettiest things!)

Well, next about myself. I'm a good deal shocked at
finding how my old limbs fail me, on the rocks they used to love;--
and I'm greatly vexed to find the high Alpine air more directly
provoking bilious headache than ever, so that even where I can
climb to, I've no comfort. But I had a wonderful study yesterday
of the moraines of the Simplon glaciers, and of stomachic as
distinguished from real despondency. It is very curious that the
stomachic despondency is often intensely sublime; giving a wild,
lurid, fever struck grandeur to grand things which—thank God,
today I shall see none of, for I put myself on chicken & dry toast;
and am all right again for the ravine of Gondo, which I'm just
starting to walk down.

I shall be at Venice, D V. in less than a week when please
send me the Sybil's name—and with true love, (in such height as
three days of pleasant presences can sprout it to, out of human
Earth)—to my good hosts\(^{(9)}\) and their children

Ever your (long & much) loving

J R.

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MS: The Bodleian Library. Provenance: Works XXXVII, 206-7; LJB, 30h.
Both omit third and final paragraphs.

1. The fourth part of Deucalion was issued in December 1876,
containing chapters 8 (cont), 9, 10 and part of 11.
2. The Ruskin family first met Forbes by chance in 1841. Ruskin's account of the evening they spent in his company is given in Deucalion ch.10, Works XXVI, 219-21.

3. Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79), architect and scientist, whose book Le Massif du Mont Blanc (1876) is discussed in Deucalion after the passage about the Ruskin's first meeting with Forbes (Works XXVI, 221 seq.) Ruskin first compliments Viollet-le-Duc's powers of observation but then proceeds to call his conclusions, especially in so far as they support Tyndall's doctrines, "monuments of scientific folly", and promises the author "immortality in the Paradise of Fools".

4. "Behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book." Job xxxi, 35.

5. Unidentified.

6. Possibly Isabella Cranston Brown, Dr. Brown's sister, who kept house for him after the death of his wife. Dr. Brown and "Sybil" are associated again in a cancelled passage of Ruskin's Notes on His Drawings by Turner, 1878 (Works XIII, 400): "And now, dearest Dr. John Brown (and Sybil), I've done my main work today, and end with my perfect love to you, and Rab, and all his friends and your friends, and Faber of the Alps..." (Cook and Wedderburn suggest that Faber is a misprint for Forbes, the Scottish scientist.) Ruskin also called Lady Jane Simon (wife of Sir John Simon, 1816-1904, who looked after Ruskin in his 1878 illness and was a longstanding friend) by this name: but there is no reason why she should have been linked with Brown here, or in the quoted passage which seems to be addressed to Ruskin's Scottish friends--she was not Scottish, nor did she live in Scotland at any time. It is odd that Ruskin
should forget the name of either Lady Simon or Isabella: but Miss Brown's middle name may have eluded him. He often sent his regards to Miss Brown, once calling her "Isabel" (in Letter 99).

7. Perhaps Brown's daughter, Helen Brown, though the reference is obscure. A letter dated 1877 from Ruskin to an unidentified "Nellie" is quoted in Works XXXVII, 737.

8. Ariadne Florentina: see Letter 48, II1. It came out in parts and was published as a whole in 1876. The "naughty bit" is a footnote to the Appendix in which Mr. Trywhitt is quoted to the effect that the model for many of Botticelli's pictures, including the Zipporah of which Ruskin was extremely fond, was Simonetta Vespucci, who on occasion must have posed nude. Trywhitt speculates somewhat gratuitously that though Botticelli must have suffered "occasional accesses of passion" for his undraped model, his innate decency prevented the occurrence of anything improper. This demonstration of the painter's adherence to the Victorian moral code seems unnecessary, and it seems rather a matter of faith than of history: but see Works XXII, 483-5.

9. On 19 July 1876 Ruskin went to Hawick, where he stayed for two or three days and met Dr. Brown (The Brantwood Diary of J.R. ed. H.G. Viljoen, 1871, p.24), and here he may be referring to his hosts during this visit, acquaintances of Brown no doubt, whom I have been unable to identify.
Letter 70

The Alps, between 2 and 12 September, 1876(1)

Dearest Dr Brown

Tyndall's(2) getting it hot--and cold now. To day I'm going to explain how he has shed down upon all matters "the glacier of his own ignorance--dirtier than any other glacier I ever saw".

I send you a proof(3) of other things which may interest you. I can't get my press corrected--there's fire for pure I believe in p.132, three lines from bottom

Your loving JR


1. So dated because the proof which Ruskin sends is of Ariadne Florentina, and as he had been ready to send it on 2 Sept 1876 (see previous letter), this letter must have been written between 2 Sept and December, when the book was published. The coincidental mention of Tyndall helps us to date this letter more closely. Ruskin had been brought back to the subject of glaciers by his stay of a few days among the Alps, in autumn 1876, on his way to Venice; it was during this stay, as his previous letter confirms, that he wrote chapter 10 of Deucalion in which glacier theory and Tyndall are dealt with. He does not seem to have written more on glaciers at Venice, where he had arrived by 12 Sept, so it seems that this present letter must have been written during his stay in the Alps, between 2 and 12 Sept 1876.
2. The part of Deucalion that Ruskin was writing does not contain the phrase he quotes, nor does it appear elsewhere in his works. It was not omitted out of kindness, however: in chapter 10 of Deucalion the unfortunate scientist and his fellows are called "fleas of the ice" (Works XXVI, 227) and insults of this kind are scattered throughout the book.

3. Ariadne Florentina, which was published in December with the misprint mentioned here.

Letter 71
Brantwood, 12 October, 1877

Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire. 12th Oct 77

Dearest Dr Brown

It is so very good of you to write me such a nice long letter, though I grieve to see that you are tired and heartless. I will at least do a little bit more of Scott in the Nov Fors (1) in the hope of giving you a little pleasure.

Susie talks of you so often!

We have just got past a woful time here; my poor little Joanie got a fright two months ago and a miscarriage (2) came on last week. I am thankful, beyond common thankfulness, that the time passed quickly and without I trust permanent mischief. She is looking quite bright again; but I shudder whenever I think.

I've been doing some good geology (3) with layers of paste alternately pink & white, under lateral pressure getting this to me
amazing result that the lower bed throws itself into peaks, and the higher round more and more to the top, the exact reverse of geologists common sections

Ever your lovingest
J R.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire.

*[*]

1. The "bit of Scott" in the Fors for November, No.83, was some discussion of *The Fortunes of Nigel* and *The Heart of Midlothian*. See *Works* XXIX, 263-69.

2. Mrs. Severn's miscarriage came on 5 Oct. Brown mentioned the still birth in his reply to this letter; his remarks were cut out in the published version, LJB 254, but can be seen in the NLS transcript, Acc. 6289, box 2.

3. Ruskin describes his experiments with paste in *Deucalion* vol. I, xii (*Works* XXVI, 257-60), and includes diagrams (facing p.257) similar to the one in this letter.
Letter 72

Brantwood, about the end of October 1877

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

My darling Dr Brown

Your letter is such a delight to me. You are evidently so well and so strong—reading novels at that rate! but what a cormorant.

There's some more Scott in next Fors, and I must get it soon in print as I want to touch up well for Christmas. It has come well into my head; and will be the out of the wayest Fors there has been—but I hope—liked. It's still on music, but brings in Poetry—& Marmion—then on the Lydian measures—Sardis—Croesus—and the II Apocalypse as addressed to the great group of the Lydian churches. I've got to draw a map of them with Tmolus and Pactolus! and if I don't go in at the Nicolaitanes.

Then it's so lovely working out the correspondence in each case, of the Attribute with the Threat, and Promise. The— "that shutteth and no man openeth—with the—thou shalt go out no more &c."

Joan goes on quite well—and is getting skittish—and sends you her dear love.

--So does the Genia.
So do I.

Ever your lovingest

J R

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire. Pbd: Works XXXVII, 228; LJB, 304.

1. So dated because the letter from Brown, to which this is a reply, is dated 25 Oct 1877; and Fors 8h, much altered from the plan indicated here, is dated 29 Oct.

2. Brown had written: "I have within ten days read The Monastery, The Abbot, and Waverley, and am now deep in Peveril of the Peak, and am lost in wonder and love." (LJB 25h.)

3. The next Fors, no. 8h, was the one for Dec 1877; but it is not on music, nor is there anything on Scott, or the Lydian measures, or Croesus, or much on poetry. The detailed exegesis of II Apocalypse is kept.

4. I.e. "if I don't attack the Nicolaitanes"—who were adherents of a heretical sect in the Christian church at Pergamum. The sin of this schismatic church, according to Ruskin, consisted in its "using its grace and inspiration to forward its worldly interest, and grieved at heart because it has the Holy Ghost;—the darkest of blasphemies." (Works XXIX, 301.) Ruskin would relish the implied comparison with the Church of England.

5. Rev. iii. 7, 12.
6. After her miscarriage.

7. Susan Beever? Writing to her Dr. Brown often called Ruskin "our Genius" (e.g. LJB 236, 242) and Ruskin may have playfully transferred the title.

Letter 73
Brantwood, 12 September, 1878

Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire. 12th Sept. 78

My darling Dr Brown

I've never thanked you for the lovely letter which told me the meaning of Charlie's-Hope,\(^1\) I've delighted, first myself--and then two nice girlies--(oh me--somebody will be very hopeless I'm afraid--about both--some day or other)--one, whose name is Hope, that I used to know at Winnington,\(^2\) and another, that was here when your letter came, whom I gave it to, to send to her friend.--It's the prettiest word I've ever heard about hills,--and I don't recollect any note about it in the Waverleys.\(^3\)

You were not diabolus\(^4\) to put me in heart about Scott again. I've been returning to that piece of work--& found it good for me--and it's so dear of you to be interested in those feathers\(^5\) too. But the next two numbers of Proserpina\(^6\) please me best of anything I've done lately. I shall just touch them with a little Highland colour at Dunira.\(^7\) Only I do hope--(What shall Johnnie's hope be--?)--what it was,--I needn't say but it must be, what it ought to be, that you will not think for
an instant of leaving Aberdeen, if you are at present resting happily there.--It would only give me pain to see you for the

some day when you are again within reach of us,--we'll make a dash at you--and perhaps bring Connie Hilliard who is really pathetically earnest to see you again. What a moment it seems since she was trotting beside us like a little lamb, at Wellington!  

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire. The signature is cut, injuring the text on both sides of the leaf.

1. "Charlieshope" in Scott's novel *Guy Mannering* is the home of the character Dandie Dinmont; the original it was drawn from is said to be the farm of Millburnholm, now called Milburn, in Liddesdale. Brown's letter explaining the name is not extant.

2. Winnington Hall, a school at Northwich to which Ruskin was a privileged visitor between 1859 and 1866. Over this period his friendship with the headmistress, Margaret A. Bell, flourished, and during his many visits he got to know the girl pupils and played with them by the hour. See *The Winnington Letters of John Ruskin*, ed. Van Akin Burd (1971). I cannot identify "Hope".

4. "the devil": does Ruskin perhaps have in mind *advocatus diaboli*—the devil's advocate?

5. There is nothing on feathers in any recent work by Ruskin. He dealt with them in *Love's Meinie*, his book about birds, the first two parts of which came out in 1873, and the third and final part in 1881. He also mentioned them in his books *The Elements of Drawing* (1856) and *The Elements of Perspective* (1859).

6. Four parts of *Proserpina* had already been published and the next two were issued in Jan and April 1879 respectively. See *Works* XXV, xxxii seq.

7. The home in Perthshire of Mr. William Graham, where Ruskin went to stay in Sept 1878, though still not very well after his serious attack of brain-fever in February.

8. There is no other record of Brown's holiday here.

9. It was in fact fifteen years before, in 1863, that Connie and Ruskin and Dr. Brown were at Wallington together.

Letter 7b

Brantwood, 22 October, 1878

Brantwood,

Coniston. Lancashire.

22nd Oct 78

Darling Dr Brown

It is so delicious to me that you enjoy those Turners.

(1)
and my old things so much. I don't recollect what the 'Calais' is, but you are utterly and infinitely welcome to it, whatever it is,—and to Turner's dog, too. It ought to be your's of all people in this world.—So please put them both up in any corners there are to spare in the pretty rooms,—and for the rest keep them at present with you—if they're not too troublesome.

Yes I was at Hawarden (2) last week—(three days of it)—but I cannot now go into society. People are perpetually trying to discuss things with me of which I know the bottom and all round;—and have told them the bottom and all round, twenty years ago; and the deadly feeling of the resilience and immortality of the undintable caoutchouc of which most people's heads are made is too much for me.

The Duke of Argyll (3) was there—too; and I couldn't say half what I wanted to Mr. Gladstone (4) because one had to be civil to the Ducality—(—the more as it was in mourning) My refuge was always Mary Gladstone, who is a very "perfect woman,—nobly planned". (5) Papa and Mama, and the Duke and every body went away on the Tuesday—and left Mary to take care of me all Wednesday—and she did:—and I was very sorry to come away.

All the same, I'm glad to be at home again—but have to put bridle on my lips well about that blessed Bank! (6) People are beginning to understand a little, then, are they?

Can't write more to day

Dear love to Miss Brown.

Ever your lovingest J R.
1. See LJB, 257 for Brown's letter of 19 Oct preceding this. Some drawings by Ruskin and Turner had been deposited with Brown, apparently not by Ruskin, and Brown wrote enthusiastically about them, saying of Ruskin's drawing of a lighthouse and belfry at Calais: "the Calais drawing is worth £50 to me, if I had it to give" and of a drawing by Turner of a dog: "What a dog!". The Calais drawing, dated 1842, is reproduced in Works XIV, plate xii; on p.408 Ruskin mentions giving it to Brown. Brown tried to refuse the gift (see next letter) but Ruskin insisted.

2. In his letter Brown asked if Ruskin had been there. Hawarden, in Flintshire, is near Chester. Nearby Hawarden Castle was the seat of W.E. Gladstone, and Ruskin was a visitor there from about Saturday, 12 Oct, to Thursday, 17 Oct. Before 1878 Ruskin had a prejudice against Gladstone (derived from Carlyle), and the two men only became friendly after Gladstone had been deeply impressed by an article by Ruskin in Nineteenth Century Magazine for Jan 1878 called "An Oxford Lecture". Ruskin's visits to Hawarden began hesitantly, but soon the two men discovered that though they differed in almost every opinion, they got on cordially. Gladstone's daughter, Mary, became a great friend and correspondent of Ruskin, and pleased especially with her gift for music.

3. George Douglas Campbell (1823-1900). He was a statesman and an enthusiastic amateur of science, particularly geology and glacier theory; and was an old antagonist of Ruskin from the Metaphysical Society. His position was that the existing order
of things was quite satisfactory, and this put rather a stopper on Ruskin's effervescence about political topics. His first wife, Lady Elizabeth Leveson-Gower, was a friend of Dr. Brown (see LJB, 343); she died in 1878, which accounts for the ducal mourning.

4. William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98); DNB. He was acquainted with Brown as well as Ruskin, and was in fact his cousin: see LJB, 261. In 1878 he was in opposition.

5. From Wordsworth's "She was a phantom of delight"; Poetical Works ed. E. de Selincourt (5 vols. 1944), II, 213.

6. The City of Glasgow bank had stopped payment on 2 Oct 1878, occasioning a total loss of about £8,000,000. The managers and directors were convicted of uttering false balance sheets, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Brown had remarked in his letter: "What an awful calamity and crime this Bank Cataclysm is; it will put Scotland back a generation." (LJB, 258). This no doubt is one of the subjects Ruskin would have liked to discuss with Gladstone, had it not been for the presence of the Duke of Argyll.

Letter 75
Brantwood, probably about 25 October, 1878

I believe Susie has sent you the doggie? She does so pine for a line from you

Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire.
Darling Doctor

Alas—i must send you a nasty dose of physic for your friends—I daresay they'll throw it to the dogs. (I enclose a portrait of one, however—who has more sense in him than—alas—most of us. Even you havn't much—in thinking I would take my Calais back. My darling doctor—I hold it more honoured in being your's and more useful in giving you a little pleasure—than in any other possible possession or office.

Ever your lovingest

J R.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire.

* 1. A letter by Brown dated 22 Oct 1878 (LJB, 259) seems to be the reply to this letter. This is odd because Ruskin's last letter, in which he gave the Calais drawing to Brown, is also dated 22 Oct. The most likely thing is that Brown's letter has been wrongly dated by the transcriber; his letter would have to be dated at least 27 Oct, if the sequence of letters is as follows: on 22 Oct, in reply to Brown's letter of the 19th (LJB, 257), Ruskin gave the Calais drawing to Brown (see previous letter); Brown, in an untraced letter, tried to refuse the gift; Ruskin in this present letter insists; Brown, in the letter erroneously dated 22 Oct, accepts the gift with gratitude. Brown's final letter must be dated at least in late Oct. This present letter might be dated about 25 or 26 Oct.

3. The nature of the medicine is not clear. Perhaps some remarks on economic matters, about the failure of the Glasgow bank? (see previous letter). The reference of course is to Macbeth's "Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it." (Macbeth V.iii.37).

4. Of a dog, that is. Brown had evidently refused the gift of Ruskin's Calais and Turner's drawing of a dog, and had sent them back to Ruskin; here Ruskin returns them—it is Turner's dog that has more sense than most of us.

Letter 76
Brantwood, probably early November, 1878

Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire.

I have said nothing of your solemn words about the Glasgow Bank. But the deeper perdition which the love of money has cast the entire heart and industry of the country into, surpasses all physical suffering. I see the Scotsman still has the impudence to sneer at my Political Economy! --What is their Professor teaching them, under the circumstances now illustrative of their & his view of the Science? He honoured me, some time since by beginning a correspondence,—which he seceded from at the third letter.
MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, / Coniston. Lancashire. Notation on letter: Oct.—Nov. 1878. Perhaps this is part of a longer letter—there is no "Dear Brown" or "Yours affect." It may be a post-script.

1. This letter, or part of a letter, seems to be in reply to Brown's letter dated 22 Oct (LJB, 259). As explained in the notes to the previous letter, the letter from Brown should probably be dated a few days later in October; so the most likely date for this present letter is early in Nov, 1878.

2. See Ruskin's letter of 22 Oct 1878, n.6. Brown had written to Ruskin: "There has been nothing in Scotland like this infernal Bank since Flodden and Darien in villainy." (LJB, 259)

3. In Nov 1873, in the letter column of the Scotsman, Ruskin had a sharp interchange of views on economics with Professor William Ballantyne Hodgson (1815-80), first Professor of Political Economy and Mercantile Law in the University of Edinburgh, 1871-80. On 6 Nov a report had appeared of a lecture given at Edinburgh in which Prof. Hodgson complained of Ruskin's denunciations of conventional economic principles. Ruskin wrote to the Scotsman explaining that there could be no question of denouncing principles, since the laws he had objected to, the laws of supply and demand etc., simply did not exist. Hodgson replied in a long letter to the effect that economics, being a pure science, could not be concerned, as Ruskin wished it to be, with questions about the moral value of economic laws, such as those of supply and demand; but only with objective observation of the operation of such laws. Ruskin retorted that the conventional economists' omission of the moral
element rendered their "objective observation" nonsensical, since moral values were fundamental in economic matters, and a science which did not deal with existent phenomena was no science. Hodgson made no reply to this third letter: but he had promised a "sifting examination" of Ruskin's economic teaching; in a book which unfortunately was to remain unfinished at his death. See Works XVII, 503-5.

Letter 77
Brantwood, 7 December, 1878

Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire. 7th Dec. 78

Darling Doctor

Little Connie(1) left us to day, after a pleasant fortnight--to us, at least and I think to her; she is fairly well; but not strong as she ought to be. But she has had much to try her lately--as all nice people have in these days. I suppose I'm not so nice as I was, for things are going smoothly with me now on the whole--(only I fell in love again(2) the other day, very sorely, to Connie's extreme jealousy and indignation). I've given up my Professorship(3) and am at work on my botany in peace--except as aforesaid!

I have burdened you too long with those drawings(4) have not I?--they may come back here now when you have quite done with them. I want to send one or two to America to my dear Charles Norton--indeed, if you think your Edinburgh packers can be trusted for sea-voyage packing, it would save me trouble if the whole parcel
could be shipped from Edinburgh, but if you have any doubt of
the matter, send them here and I will get them shipped at
Liverpool. (5)

I hope you will like a little bit or two of assertion of
old thoughts in 19th Century (6) I thought Proserpina(7) would have
been with you long since, but the new nomenclature needs great care;
and I've got the Dean of Ch.Ch (8) to look it over for me, which
involves some correction and useful reconsideration.

I'm rather pleased with the re-christening of a little
Alpine yellow pansy, as saucy and perky as violets usually are
supposed to be modest "Viola pervicax",--"Vixen Violet" (9)

I can't make out the mystery of Spurs! (10) What in the
world (earthly or aerial) do flowers want with them?

Ever your lovingest

J R.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, / Coniston.
Lancashire.

* *

1. Constance Hilliard.

2. I have been unable to identify the beloved, but see next
letter.

3. Ruskin gave up his Chair at Corpus Christi in November 1876.
He gave as official reason his outrage at the finding against him
in the Whistler case, but ill-health had already decided him to give
up. See Works XXV, xl.
1. Probably those mentioned in Letter 74: Ruskin had given two of them to Brown and asked him "for the rest keep them at present with you—if they're not too troublesome".

5. Brown did send the drawings on to America: see next letter.

6. "The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism", published in two parts in The Nineteenth Century, IV (Nov 1878), 925-31; (Dec 1878), 1078-82. The article was inspired by some P.R.B. drawings Ruskin saw at Dunira, the home of William Graham (see Letter 73, n.7.)

7. The next part of Proserpina, the fifth, came out in Jan 1879.

8. Henry George Iddell (1811-98), Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and Greek lexicographer. He became Dean in 1855 and held the deanery till 1871. He was a lifelong friend of Ruskin, having known him since Ruskin went to Oxford as an undergraduate, and helped him out with the Greek derivations of the new nomenclature for flowers which Ruskin was devising for Proserpina. He read the work through in proof.


10. The hooked keels of certain flowers, as in the formation of the lowest petal of a violet. Ruskin held that spurs, with other peculiarities of petal structure, were a deformity and the badge of a "degraded" flower. See Works XXV, 390.
Letter 78

Brantwood, 11 December, 1878

Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire. 11th Dec.

Darling Doctor Brown

So many thanks for your lovely long letter, and I am so glad you can get these drawings packed for me.

Charles Eliot Norton

Shady Hill

Cambridge, Mass.

Insure please for 500 and let me know all expenses as soon as the things go.

It is delicious to have you to read my books. I scarcely care for anybody else to read them: but was surprised by enclosed sweet letter from Dean of Ch.Ch. whom I asked to look over the Greek derivations in the new nomenclature of Proserpina.

Alas, no—it isn't the New Zealander—but a blessed little English beauty who past most of her life in teaching children in the dark places of this English world. She writes me to day to tell me of her engagement—putting her lover on a Seven Years trial of good behaviour—Alas—I found him out by her radiant colour the other day,—and I know who will break down under the trial first! I've written to tell her that he's a good boy to face a seven years trial, but that it must not be quite so long! and have explained to her some points of chronology. And I'm really more miserable myself than I ever expected to be again—in this world.
(I had a very disagreeable anticipation of the other—last April & May.) (5)

Ever your lovingest

J R

Mr: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire. Notation on letter: 1878

1. This was evidently written shortly after Ruskin's letter of 7 Dec 1878.

2. See previous letter.

3. Henry George Liddell: see previous letter.

4. The New Zealander (unidentified) isn't the person with whom Ruskin has fallen in love: see previous letter.

5. Ruskin's severe illness of 1878, which brought him near to death, actually became acute on 23 Feb. He became sane again in early April, much weakened by the illness, and spent most of the rest of the year in convalescence.

Letter 79
Brantwood, about 16 January, 1879 (1)
Dearest Doctor,

I wonder if you are getting nervous about your 'In Memoriam' (2) I will soon now return it but in these short days the light hardly lets one do or see anything.

What a pity these precious drawings are mixed with the common type. They are more & more wonderful to me, as I study them.

Ever your aff.e

J Ruskin

--Yes--our snow keeps pure--and our best waterfall--a descent of about 300 ft in broken leaps in a very narrow chasm, was like a fountain leaping down a white thundercloud. I never saw such things even among the Alps in winter--and can't understand why. The fern leaves by my own brookside were enclosed in clear ice like preserved fruits in jelly.


1. So dated because Brown sent this letter to a friend when he received it on 17 Jan, 1879.

2. Here the editor of the transcripts in the NLS notes that this refers to a copy of Tennyson's poem, on the margins of which Miss Janet Johnston of 1, Great Stuart St., had painted some beautiful drawings of flowers, and presented the volume to Dr. Brown. Brown sent Ruskin's letter on to Miss Johnston, writing on the back of it "You deserve this 'sweet morsel'. Best regards. J.B. 17 Jan 1879." Miss Johnston was a frequent contributor of paintings of flowers to the Exhibitions of the RSA.
Letter 80
Brantwood, 11 May, 1879

Dear love to Miss Brown.
Is the nice beaming Miss Brown still in Edinburgh? (1)

Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire
11th May, 79

Dearest Doctor,

I was on the very "jump-off" of a letter to you—to say
I had got back to Scott again, at last, (2) which I thought would
please you.—Only I shall have sad things to say of him,—more
than perhaps you think—concerning the waste, and the cutting short
of his days,—by the double sin of writing for money and for mob—.
My "Alas" comes so often in the margin (3) that I shall have to
shorthand it into "A"—for alas—as I have already D—for Damn—
whenever the names of Terry or Ballantyne (4) blot the page

Never waste your time on people who want their pictures
looked at to see if they're genuine. They never are—and any dealer
will tell them so—for a guinea.

Ever your loving JR

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston.

1. The first Miss Brown is Dr. Brown's sister, Isabella, who
lived with him after his wife's death; the beaming Miss Brown
appears to be another one, whom I have been unable to identify.
2. This fresh work on Scott was partly incorporated in Fiction, Fair and Foul, a series of five papers on novels which appeared in The Nineteenth Century Magazine. The series began in the June issue, 1880 (N.C. VII, 265-394) and ended with a paper in the issue of Oct 1880 (N.C. X, 516-31). See Works XXXIV. The series was intended to continue but like so much of Ruskin's work at this time it was left incomplete.


4. Daniel Terry (1780-1829) was an actor and playwright. His acting and his personality impressed Scott, who lent him money to finance theatrical speculations, none of which bore fruit. Terry had a financial stake in Ballantyne's for which Scott stood surety; when the crash came Scott was saddled with his liability of £1,750.

The brothers James (1772-1833) and John (1774-1821) Ballantyne were the printers of Scott's works. James knew Scott from his school days, and one of his first ventures in the printing trade was to print Scott's early novels. By means of loaning the firm money and buying up its shares Scott acquired a controlling interest in the business and became its actual head, while leaving it in the name of the Ballantyne's—it was not considered gentlemanly to derive income from commerce—and leaving much of the day-to-day management in the hands of the Ballantyne family. The firm later went into bookselling and publishing, but it was the printing side of the business that prospered; that is, until 1826, when the firm crashed disastrously, having become involved in the bankruptcy of Constable and Co., publishers. This plunged Scott into the financial embarrassment that marked the rest of his days. Lockhart blamed the misfortune on James Ballantyne's incompetence.
Letter 81
Brantwood, 3 June 1879

Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire. 3rd June 79.

Darling Dr Brown

The enclosed letter,\(^1\) with the answer thereto--have cost me some fuming and fizzing this morning. I'm afraid the fool I've written to may cancel the document, and I think you may just as well see the gist of it--in case you perchance hear of other references likely to be made to me from Edinburgh. please let the letter be posted after read.

Ever your lovingest, patientest--piousest--

J R.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire.

*

1. This may have something to do with the subject of Ruskin's letter of 3 July 1879 (Letter 84) but if so the interval between Ruskin's present letter and subsequent one is puzzling; and entirely different business may be referred to.

Letter 82
Brantwood, 22 June 1879\(^1\)

Dear love to Miss Brown.
Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.
22nd June.

Darling Dr Brown

I heard yesterday from Susie that you were a little depressed—and that she thought a letter from me would do you good!—Well—I can write more cheerful letters, perhaps, than once upon a time—and I really hope it may please you a little to know how often I am thinking of you, and how the idea of your liking anything I may do helps me in the languid times when one says to oneself—or feels, without coming to the point of utterance—that it is of no use to do or say anything more.

I think one of my best mythological discoveries was that the Sirens were not pleasures, but desires and part of the cheerfulness in which I now am able to live, is in the accomplishment of that word upon me Desire shall fail—because "man goeth to his long home." The taking away from me of all feverish hope—and the ceasing of all feverish effort, leaves me to enjoy—at least without grave drawback or disturbance, the Veronica blue instead of the Forget me-not—and, above all, the investigation of any pretty natural problem—the ways of a wave, or the strength of a stem. With the persons whom I most loved, joy in the beauty of nature is virtually dead in me: but I can still interest myself in her doings.

I’ve just finished colouring a section of Cumberland rocks, for pattern to the hand colourers of the last plate in 1st Vol Deucalion, and hope soon to send you a copy. Also, I am well into my Scott work again, and do earnestly hope to send you something to read before the summer’s over.
Meantime—keep happy—and let us both look for the happy hunting ground—where we shall meet all our—dogs again. A darling little hairy terrier, who got kicked and killed by a clumsy horse the other day because he was too good for this world, will certainly get between St Peter's legs as he lets me in.

Ever your lovingest J R.


1. The references to Deucalion and to the Scott work make the date 1879 almost certain.

2. See Munera Pulveris (1872) sect. 90; Works XVII, 212. According to Ruskin the Sirens represent not sensual desires but "demons of the imagination"; "they corrupt the heart and the head" with vain hope. These desires never fulfil what they promise but "the men who have listened to them are poisoned, and waste away".

3. Ecclesiastes xii, 5.

4. The Speedwell flower. Ruskin may mean that he is reconciled to time passing away, rather than being disabled by useless desire for the past. He contrasts the two flowers in a similar way in Proserpina, Works XXV, 449-50, saying that the Veronica is the better emblem of a lover's pledge: "the blossom is significant also of the lover's best virtues, patience in suffering, purity in thought, gaiety in courage, and serenity in truth."
5. This plate appears in part VI of *Deucalion*, which was first issued in Oct 1879. It is reproduced in *Works* XXVI, pl.xvi.

6. This saw light eventually in *Fiction, Fair and Foul*.

Letter 83
Brantwood, 1 July, 1879

Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire.
1st July 79

Darlingest Doctor

How lovely of you to write to me when you were so sad:—and how very naughty of you to say 'goodbye' at the end of the letter—when next you are minded to say that—say 'Bad-bye' instead and repent immediately.

I know so well, now that feeling of darkness, and its connection with the tiredness of brain; but the intensely curious point, for me in my crazy fit, (1) was the power of the perverted mind to make distinct things out of indistinct ones. One of the pieces of veined marble in my chimney piece, for instance—became a demon's head—and this demon a consequently important character in the various transactions—underground—(to say no worse!)—which took place during a week or so of the illness. This piece of marble, now that I am as sane again as I'm ever likely to be, I can just trace the demoniac face in,—the impression having been once made. But the Artistic finishing touch into diabolic perfection!—wouldn't I give something to have it at will and under control!
There was a curious languid intermediate state—as I recovered, in which indeed—I did not feel damned at the moment—but only (with resignation)—sure of being damned next day! I wonder, occasionally, still, whether this is—or that was—the really and divinely rationalest state of mind! But I am sure my present one is the pleasantest for other people—so I shall try to stay in it.

--One thing I want to say to you very specially—playing 'Doctor' myself! I am sure it is very bad for you to read stupid and flimsy modern books. I think—of all devils, the Rubbish devil is in these days the most dangerous—and reading such stuff as P.G. Hamerton(2)is enough to unknit and dirty all the delicatest parts of your brains.

--You should never read any thing but the noblest books, or the simplest.--You ask me about this new Odyssey.(3) Now you have no business with new Odysseys. Old Chapman is entirely insuperable—another Homer—or for us English and Scotch—better than Homer—an entirely blessed and mighty creature of our own--Here are four lines at random opening for you! (See next page)

I send you the old book itself—it may revive you to bathe in it—like the Dysart sea.\(^{(4)}\)

Ever your lovingest J R

The Cheerfull Ladie of the Light, deckt in her saffron robe
Dispers'd her beams through every part of this enflowred globe—
When Thundering Jove a court of Gods assemble'd by his will
In top of all the topmost heights that crown the Olympian Hill.\(^{(5)}\)

--I don't know if there's an honest modern edition. If you Edinburgh people cared for a real Temple of the Gk Spirit—on your Calton—you would republish it letter for letter—and make a modern—Argos of yourselves.—Homer was an Achaian—not an Ionian. Gladstone\(^{(6)}\)
has shown that—and I forgive him all the rest of his existence for it.

The Scott's Life will be separate—now. Fors is wound up on her own authority. You see that sentence about Jael's nail was the real finish.


1. This began at the end of Feb, 1878, and nearly killed Ruskin; for five weeks he lay in a state of delirium.

2. Philip Gilbert Hamerton (1834-91), artist and essayist. As an artist he was something of a dilettante. Early in his career, during the early fifties, he resorted to Ruskin for advice, but not liking the advice he concluded it was misleading; by the sound of it Ruskin had a low opinion of his talents even then. He went on to edit The Portfolio, an art magazine, and to write novels and essays on various topics.


4. Dysart is an ancient coast-town in Fife (where Brown had been staying, perhaps?)

5. The opening lines of book 8 of Chapman's Iliad. Brown followed Ruskin's advice: later in the month we find him writing to J.T. Brown "I am reading Chapman's Odyssey slowly and with great relish; a wonderful poem—read it." (LJB, 263.)
6. Gladstone was a learned classical scholar, with pretensions to being an expert on Homer. In 1858 he published a rather speculative work, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*; he continued to write on the subject and a treatment of the point in question can be found in his articles on "The Place of Homer in History", in *The Contemporary Review*, 24 (June and July, 1874), 1-22 and 175-200.

7. In *Fors* Ruskin was desultorily writing a kind of biography of Scott. Dr. Brown had suggested in 1873 that Ruskin should make his work on Scott "a separate book by and by" (LJE, 222); and had perhaps repeated the suggestion more recently. But the intended "Scott's Life" was never completed.

8. The sentence, coming after a description of unemployed working men, is enigmatic: "Well—will they hear at last then? Has Jael-Atropos at last driven her nail well down through the Helmet of Death he wore instead of the Helmet of Salvation—mother of Sisera?" (*Fors* 87, March 1878, *Works* XXIX, 379). Jael, wife of Heber, is the woman who slew the Canaanite general Sisera, as he was sleeping in Heber's tent, by driving a tent pin through his temple with a workman's hammer. The deed was commended and celebrated by the Israelites. Atropos is one of the Fates; she cuts the thread of man's life with scissors. Ruskin seems to mean that the fated end has already begun of unjust and falsely organised society. *Fors* 87 was written just before a spell of madness; it displays Ruskin's great perturbation of mind about the state of the world. It was the last *Fors* for some time: in 1880 the series was resumed for a while, irregularly.
Letter \#8
Brantwood, 3 July, 1879

Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire.

Darling Dr Brown

Your letters never can be other than precious to me. -- I hope it may be a little tiny pleasure to you that I do instantly as you advise; (or don't do rather -- i.e.-- don't send the letter.)

But could any mortal man have invented more red rags for the bovine bits of me than that blockhead? \(^1\)

Ever your loving

J R

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\(^1\) In the NLS transcript an explanation follows this letter, as follows: "Note by John Brown. This refers to a letter which Mr. Ruskin sent to Dr Brown. Dr Rogers of Stirling had written to Mr. Ruskin requesting a subscription to a John Knox Statue. So far as I can recollect, the letter began somewhat in this fashion, "The Devil I know, and John Knox I know, but who in particular are you Dr Rogers?""

Charles Rogers (1825-90) was in fact a Scottish author, who for some time was chaplain to the garrison at Stirling Castle. His zeal for John Knox is shown by his authorship, in 1879, of
Genealogical Memoirs of John Knox and of the Family of Knox, which was the 16th publication of the Grampian Club. Ruskin's reply to his letter must have been worth reading: there is no expression of his opinion of Knox in his later works, but as his well-known dislike of enthusiastic evangelicalism grew more intense, his admiration for Knox and his adulators is likely to have waned. I cannot discover what became of the statue scheme.

Letter 85
Brantwood, perhaps October, 1879(1)

Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire.

Darling Dr Brown

Nothing can possibly be better managed, but I'm sorry for all your trouble

I enclose cheque

Your lovingest

J R

*.

1. If it could be dated earlier in 1879, this letter might refer to an arrangement by which, at Ruskin's request, Brown was sending some drawings to C.E. Norton—see Letter 76, of 11 Dec 1879. In default of other evidence, however, the attributed date must stand.
Letter 86
Brantwood, perhaps 1875

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

Darling Dr.

You shan't make any drawbacks to the Heart of Midlothian
—or I WON'T be sweet blooded!—"All but the end" indeed!!!—
Suppose I were to say—all but the beginning—which would be more
to the purpose?—the long Fortescue mob business is a duller thing
than the beginning of Waverley—But that dark first background—and
the ghastly close—are all essential—only it was Heaven and Nature
did it for him—not He. Scott—who was exactly like Turner—
inspired quite rightly only when quite passive. I've just been
reading the Pirate again—there is a farrago of ugly stuff for
you—at the end, indeed! very difficult to analyze—like Turners
bad work.

But the end of the Heart!—What could have ended it otherwise
—should Staunton's son have had an attaché's place like
Cunningham Falconer? Do you know Patronage?—there's good and
refreshing reading in it.

Ever your lovingest
J R.

I've got Cranberry blossom all aglow on my moorland—It and
Anagallis tenella! and milkwort! (Giulietta) and the bog
heather just budding—can you fancy all these together—mixed with
rain out of rainbows?
1. This is the date conjectured by previous editors of this letter, though it is not clear whether or not they had substantial evidence for it. The only internal evidence is the talk about Scott, which perhaps links with work on *Fiction, Fair and Foul* (first published in 1880).

2. The story of *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) opens with an account of the Porteous riots of 1736 in Edinburgh, in the course of which the Commander of the City Guard, Captain John Porteous, was siezed by the mob and hanged.


5. In *The Heart of Midlothian*, Effie Deans is seduced by George Staunton, a young nobleman, and has a son by him. The child disappears and Effie is accused of his murder, but in fact he has fallen into the hands of vagabonds and brigands, who bring him up to be an outlaw like themselves. He kills his own father, whom he has never seen, in a skirmish; is transported to America, sold as a slave, becomes an outlaw once more, and is last heard of in the company of a tribe of savage Indians.

6. A novel by Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849): 4 vols, 1811. Cunningham Falconer is a character in this novel who depends on patronage for his livelihood, a dependence which eventually ruins him.
7. The bog pimpernel. See Proserpina, Works XXV, 543.


Letter 87

Probably December, 1879 (1)

Dearest Dr Brown,

I hope you will like some of the bits in the notes (2) I've just got done, and sent on Friday: and that you won't be other than pleased with the reasons for bothering you to send Calais. (3) But I'm only writing to-day to use you as postman--and have the enclosed letter given soon to Boehm--you and he are certain to have foregathered by this time!—being intensely like each other in many ways. He would have made such a Doctor! and you such a Sculptor! I'm pretty well—Rather overtired—and a little bit over-excited about this infernal St. Mark's Maelstrom (4) of a business, but it shan't draw me in again!—and I've just bought a picture of a pretty girl carrying faggots—who is an immense comfort and solace to me.

Ever your lovingest,

J.R.

Text: Copy, the NLS. Notation on letter: 1879/80

*
1. So dated from the references to Notes on Prout and Hunt, to the St. Mark's business, and to Boehm.

2. Notes on Prout and Hunt, which came out in Dec 1879. They were written for an exhibition of pictures by these artists. Ruskin sent a copy of these notes to Carlyle in December (Works XXXVII, 304), probably at about the same time he sent them to Brown.

3. A drawing by Ruskin that he had given to Brown: see Letter 74. He wanted the picture again to reproduce it in the Notes on Prout and Hunt, where it appears side by side for the purposes of comparison with a drawing by Prout (Works XIV, plate xii). In the text (ib.408) he mentions his gift of the picture to Brown and thanks Brown for the loan of it for use as illustration.

4. Venetian architects had proposed the "restoration" of St. Mark's Cathedral in a manner which entailed the demolition of the entire West Front of the building and many other "unsuitable" features. Since 1877 Ruskin had been involved, with an Italian nobleman, Count Zorzi, in an eventually successful campaign against this vandalism. On 19 Dec he wrote to someone who was trying to get him to write publicly on the matter and said more or less what he says here, that he didn't want to get drawn into the business again (Works XXXVII, 304). All the same, he made another protest in his Notes on Prout and Hunt, Works XIV, 426-9.
Darling Doctor

It is two years today since I first got down into my study—after that crazy fit, (1) and I'm in hopes I'm not much the worse—after all. Your pretty little note about Fors (2) cheered me much.

I'm at work now to finish my prosody; (3) and please, I want a copy of Hey tuttie taitie as Burns took it up; he refers to "Clarke's set of the tune in the Museum"? (Works, Bell and Bradfute 1800. Vol IV, p 110) (4) Urbani (5) who wanted him to make soft verses to it! —was my mother's ideal of Music Angel in her Edinburgh days.

—Please—can you spare me my Chapman; (6) now. Has it cheered you as it does me?

I've promised Knowles (7) for the June 19th Century a paper on Scott—and Byron—as against George Elliot & Browning. I think I shall enjoy it mightily.—it will be nice to give one or two of Scott's grandest bits—the character of James for instance in the Fortunes of N. from the MS. (8) There are only two words altered in that whole elaborate piece. What a wonderful page of Ivanhoe, (9) too, that is, in vol VI of Lockharts last edition!

Dear love to Miss Brown

Ever your lovingest

J R.
1. The illness which began in late February and ended in early April of 1878.

2. Ruskin's illness in 1878 had brought to a halt the monthly publication of Fors, and his doctors advised him to suspend it during his long convalescence. It was resumed in March 1880, but only three letters had appeared before publication was interrupted again by serious illness in the spring of 1881.

3. The Elements of English Prosody was published in 1880 after having been in preparation for a long time; Ruskin referred to it as "already written" in 1877 (Works XXXI, 114).

4. Burns wrote his famous song "Scots wha hae" to the melody of "Hey Tuti Tatey", the tune and some words of which are given in The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns ed. James Kinsley (2 vols, 1968), I, 395. Writing about it to Thompson in a letter of 30 Aug 1793 he remarked: "Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum" (Life and Works of Robert Burns, ed. R. Chambers and W. Wallace (4 vols, 1896), IV, 38.) The Museum is a song collection, The Scots Musical Museum, ed. James Johnson (6 vols, 1783-1803), containing 184 songs written or collected by Burns. Ruskin's reference to "Works, Bell and Bradfute" etc. is rather confusing; presumably he is referring to Bell's edition of Burns works which was published in 1836 and subsequently; but "1800. Vol IV, p 110" is evidently a reference to the fourth volume of the Museum. In any case none of the above information was used by Ruskin in his published work.
5. An Italian singing-master and composer who was resident in Edinburgh about 1781-1809 and became a strong influence on musical life there. He published a selection of Scottish songs, some of which were by Burns. Burns knew him and wrote to a friend that he had "introduced the musician...to the air Hey tutti taitie.... Urbani....begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject...." till thoughts of Robert the Bruce and the Battle of Bannockburn "that glorious struggle for freedom...roused my rhyming Mania." (Works ed. Chambers and Wallace, IV, 37.)

6. A copy of Chapman's Homer; see Letter 83.

7. Sir James Thomas Knowles (1831-1908), the founder and editor of the Nineteenth Century Magazine. Ruskin's article became a series, Fiction, Fair and Foul; see Letter 80, n.2

Letter 89

Brantwood, 15 April, probably 1880\(^{(1)}\)

Brantwood,

Coniston. Lancashire.

15th April

My sweetest Dr. Brown

The books came straight away to me, and I have been greatly delighted with Stenhouse\(^{(2)}\) which however I return to day, as if I have at all time to go into the question of music, I must get the book. My little prosody\(^{(3)}\) has become I think, very interesting and you will like the quantity of Scotch in it—the moment it is cut of
hand I set to work on Andrew Fairservice and Richie Moniplies. (1) 
I shall not condescend to take any of Scott's really nice people to fight the riff raff with.

I read with sorrow some of the drooping words at the close of your note

Susie and I have been very downie too--this last week or so, but I'm coming more right now, and she generally revives when I do. But there's something always sad in the spring to me, now--from my having been so happy in starting on spring journeys with my father & mother.

Ever your grateful & loving

J Ruskin

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire. Notation on letter: 1875

1. So dated from the references to the Prosody and to Fiction, Fair and Foul, both of which came out in 1880.

2. William Stenhouse (1773-1827), a Scottish antiquary who lived in Edinburgh and had strong musical leanings. He is best known for his notes in the 1839 reprint of Johnson's Musical Museum (which Brown must have sent to Ruskin; see previous letter), a useful reference book for Scottish music.

3. Ruskin's Prosody quoted several Scottish poems, especially by Burns and Scott, as metrical examples.
Andrew Fairservice is a rascally character in Rob Roy; Morleys appears in The Fortunes of Nigel. A contrast between the characters of the two men is made in Fiction, Fair and Foul. Ruskin promised to write about them in paper 1 (Works XXXIV, 295) which came out in June, 1880, and kept his word in paper 5 (Works XXXIV, 383-94).

Letter 90
Brantwood, 23 May, 1880

Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire. 23rd May, 80

Darling Mr Brown

I've got my Sir Walter article, (1) for next 19th Century, done & revised—and I do hope you'll like it a little. I've written it all twice over with my own hand, and the enclosed leaf—three times—adding a bit at the X which you'll see in the print. I was going to throw this waste sheet into the fire—and then thought that perhaps you or Miss Brown would like to have it, or give it to anybody who cares

[OUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]

... ... ... ... ... ... ...

Scott (2)

It is not in his reading of the laws of Providence a necessity that virtue should either by Love or any other visible blessing, be rewarded at all, and marriage is in all cases thought of as a constituent of the happiness of life, but not as its only
interest, still less, its only aim. And upon analyzing with some care the motives of his principal stories, we shall often find that the love in them is merely a light by which the sterner features of character are to be sometimes irradiated; and that the marriage of the hero is as subordinate to the main interest of the tale, as Henry the 5th's courtship of Kathrine is to the battle of Agincourt. That Scott was never himself in the sense of the phrase as employed by lovers of the Parisian school, "ivre d'amour", may be admitted without prejudice to his sensibility, and that he never knew "l'amor che move il sol e l'altre stelle" was the chief, though unrecognised calamity of his deeply chequered life. But the reader of honour and feeling will not therefore suppose that the love which Miss Vernon sacrifices, stooping for a moment from her horse, is of less noble stamp or less enduring faith than that which troubles and degrades the whole existence of Consuelo, or that the affection of Jeanie Deans for the companion of her childhood, drawn like a field of soft blue heaven beyond the cloudy wrack of her sorrow, is less full in possession of her soul than the hesitating and self-reproachful impulses under which a modern heroine "forgets herself in a boat," or compromises herself in the cool of the evening.

† See below, note on the conclusion of "Woodstock".

* See introduction to Ivanhoe, wisely quoted in Letter 6. 106

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire. The signature is cut out.
1. The first of the *Fiction, Fair and Foul* series, which came out in June 1860.

2. This passage, up to "in the cool of the evening", appears with interpolations and modifications in *Works* XXXIV, 264-6. The MS. is not with the letter in the Bodleian, but among some of Dr. Brown's literary papers in the NLS, Acc. 6134.

3. This is probably untrue: Scott was passionately in love for a time with Williamina Belsches (see Edgar Johnson *Sir Walter Scott, the Great Unknown*, 2 vols, 1970).


Letter 91
Brantwood, 5 June, perhaps 1880(1)

Brantwood,

Coniston, Lancashire.

5th June

Darling Dr.

That's the very thing.—I'm so glad to know of such a dictionary.(2)

I did not answer one chief bit in your letter—'the difference to me'(3) I cannot distinguish in myself the change caused by old age from that caused by loss.

What all the lovely things round me here would been [*sic*] to me—had I had--Father--or Mother now--or what they would cease
to be—if I were to lose Joanie—I cannot fancy

The only real sorrow is the thought of pain given long
time—the rest is loss—not pain—and even a certain gain of
nobleness in bearing loss.—But the Difference—yes immeasurable.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood,/ Coniston.
Lancashire. Notation on letter: 1880 Fbd: Works XXXVII, 316;
LJB, 308.

1. o dated in Works. This dating may be supported by the
reference to the dictionary.

2. Perhaps Jamieson's Dictionary—see Ruskin's next letter,
note on "coup the crans".

3. A quotation from Wordsworth's "She dwelt among the
untrodden ways":

"But she is in her grave, and, oh,

The difference to me."

Poetical Works ed. E. de Selincourt (5 vols, 1940-9), II, 30.
Perhaps Brown had referred to the death of Rose, the anniversary
of which (25 May) was just passed.

Letter 92
Brantwood, probably June, 1880 (1)
Darling Doctor

It is so sweet of you to write me such a long letter—but
know there was no one whose praise I wanted to much as yours,—or
whose pleasure I had more worked for. (2) Had I felt myself able,
before, for sensational work, you should not have been kept waiting
so long, and it is a profound gladness to me to have been able to
begin it at last. The Whitsun Holidays prevented my getting a
second revise—and caused the misprints of

1 full, for fall. (total—soup the crans)
2 scarcely, for securely of written words—
making the sentence nonsense nearly.

3. The note that should have been 18 I think to
'for the trade' of Peveril backed to Ivanhoe, and put to 'imagination'.

4 and Redgauntlet missed out of the Italic list—
makes it 11 instead of 12.

The next paper (6) on his style—with verse examination—is
coming out nicely I think—and will have no nasty bits in it

Ever your loving & grateful,

J R.

McGeorge (5) is very funny & nice.

---That's awful about Lady Scott! (6) The brutal vulgarity
of it! and the letting the coachman be turned off But he missed
her, for all that. She shows her bad stuff in her first letter in
L. (7) it was very like somebody else I know of!

* MS: The Bodleian Library.  Letterhead: Brantwood,/ Coniston.
Lancashire.
1. So dated because the first of Ruskin's Fiction, Fair and Foul papers had evidently just appeared, and Ruskin speaks of the next paper, which came out in August 1880, as in the future.

2. Brown had been praising the first paper in the Fiction, Fair and Foul series which appeared in The Nineteenth Century Magazine in June 1880.

3. See Works XXXIV, 320-1. Here, at the end of his second (August) paper in the Fiction series, Ruskin gave a similar list of the misprints in his first paper, adding "My dear old friend, Dr. John Brown, sends me, from Jamieson's Dictionary, the following satisfactory end to one of my difficulties:--"Coup the crans." The language is borrowed from the "cran", or trivet on which small pots are placed in cookery, which is sometimes turned with its feet uppermost by an awkward assistant. Thus it signifies to be completely upset." In the first article (see ibid.300) Ruskin had conjectured that it meant "fall total", and this is what he indicates in the parenthesis, which at first sight looks garbled.

4. This appeared in August 1880, and had the title "Scott, Ryme, Wordsworth". The first paper had dealt extensively with the nastiness of contemporary fiction, in comparison with Scott's wholesomeness.

5. Possibly Andrew MacGeorge (1810-91), ecclesiastical writer, watercolourist and caricaturist. He illustrated the dogfight in Brown's "Rab and His Friends". Brown may have shown Ruskin some of his caricatures: he is alleged (in DNB) to have shown Thackeray some.
6. The wife of Sir Walter, whom some thought to be rather too self-willed.

7. In J.G. Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, Part. (7 vols., 1837-8). When writing her first letter to Scott confirming her consent to his proposal of marriage, Charlotte Carpenter (the future Lady Scott) uses a somewhat pert and almost haughty tone (see first edn., I, 271). Perhaps the "someone else" was Effie Gray or Rose La Touche? Both had refused to be the ductile and sweet flatterers Ruskin wanted them to be.

Letter 93
Brantwood, 4 July, 1880 (or 1881)(1)

Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire. 4th July

Darling Doctor

Joan's out, and hasn't given me a letter of your's with which Susie trusted her! — Susie says there's such a lot of love [in it] for me: this is to say, [I am] glad.

Also, to say how delicious it is to have you in Edinburgh still binding [me] to the auld town.

Also, to say that I hope to give you a [great] deal of pleasure yet [by] pulling myself well together, and getting my good pupils well into harness — and I've quite a team now of jolly Esquimaux dogs.

--Have you, --you must have--read "Far out Rovings retold"? (2)

We haven't forgathered yet about the dogs. You know I've
never forgiven you for making Rib kill the terrier—but alas—when I read of Cerf Volant that "the cock and his companions invariably lost their heads—" (p.17) --I resign myself—in peace of mind— even to being a man, and not a dog.

Susie’s wonderfully well—and has quite lost her head in pride at having a letter instead of me. Never mind. I m ever

[ CUT OUT FOR SIGNATURE]


MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood,/Coniston. Lancashire. Notation on letter: 1881. The signature is cut out, which damages the text vertically on the other side of the leaf. Guesses at the missing words are in square brackets in the text.

1. So dated because Butler's book came out first of all in 1880, and Ruskin quotes from the first edition. The only other possible year is 1881; Brown died in May 1882.

2. Lieut.-Col. W.F. Butler's book of travel reminiscences, For Out: Rowings Re-told (1880). Cerf Volant was one of several Esquimaux dogs owned by Butler, who describes (p.17, 1880 edition) the havoc made by them among local farmyard poultry: "the cock and his companions invariably lost their heads to my team's inability to comprehend their true functions in civilization". Ruskin quotes from the first edition: the second, and so far as I can see, only other edition, of 1881, has this anecdote on another page.
Letter 94
Brantwood, perhaps 1880(1)

Dear love to Miss Brown--your own one, I mean.

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

Darlingest Doctor

Tell Miss Brown (2) and please--anybody else who remonstrates on the matter—that German isn't a 'language' at all; but only a 'throatage'--or 'gutterage'--a mode of human expression learnt chiefly of wolves & bears—with half of the things it calls words stitched in the middle like wasps and ants—or ass panniers—and letters scrawled out when people were mostly drunk,(3) so that they didn't know the tops from the bottoms of them

Ever your lovingest

J R.

Please, I want to know what Dattern & Thut are in the following

Was haben doch die Gänse gethan
Das so viel muss man lehen lan?

\underline{Dattern} Die gans mit ihrem Geschrei und schatten
mit ihrem Geschrei und schatten
Sanct Martin han verrathen
Darum thut man sie braten. (4)

Evelyn says that often on the doors of the houses in the streets of Brieg a wolves, bears, and fox's head might be seen altogether (5) The throatage of modern German Metaphysicians (Fichte (6) &c.) is truly Geschrei & Schattern(7)
1. There is nothing to indicate the date; Works and LJB date the letter 1880 for reasons no longer evident.

2. Not the same Miss Brown as above the address, who is Dr. Brown's sister, Isabella, but another, possibly one of Brown's relatives, whom I have been unable to identify.

3. Cfr. Works XXXIV, 585, where Ruskin declares that "a well-trained gentleman" has "no need for his troubling himself with the language or literature of modern Europe". Ruskin had little liking for the German race: see Works XXXVI, 391.

4. One of the Martinsliede, songs to be sung on St. Martin's day, 11 Nov. A translation as follows is given in LJB, 309:

   "What have the geese done,
   That so many must lose their lives?
   The geese with their cackling,
   With their screaming and chattering,
   Have betrayed St. Martin.
   That is why one roasts them."

   The songs are not mentioned anywhere else in Works.

5. "Late at night then we got to a Towne call'd Briga which is build at the foot of the Alpes in the Valtoline: Every doore almost had nail'd on the outside, & next the Streete, a Beares, Wolfes or foxes-head & divers of them all Three, which was a Savage kind of sight: but as the Alps are full of these beasts,

6. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), German philosopher, not mentioned elsewhere in *Works*.

7. i.e. screaming and chattering.

**Letter 95**

Brantwood, 3 February, 1881

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Brantwood,

Coniston. Lancashire.

3rd Feb. 81.

My Darling Doctor Brown

Your goodness in writing to Susie has given more pleasure and done more good, both to her & me, than even you have often in your long & benevolent life, been able to give—of your gift of healing. Susie has the blessed reverence which enables her to be proud in her pleasures— and that you should write to her, and I (for it must cut) go to tea to hear the letter, literally 'sets her up' in the most innocent—practical and medicinal significance of the Scottish phrase.

Also the treatment\(^{(1)}\) you prescribed has done her real, and quite apparent good, and the parts about me and my books please her as if she were my nurse.

They please me—in many and far-going ways. I had not sent you any of them, fearing that however yet you might sympathize with me in all I am trying to get said, much of it is now repetition,
and much more, done imperfectly in the perpetual ebb of years, and that sometimes you might not be inclined to read anything. But on the whole, I have thought it best to tell Allen to send you everything, from me, as soon as I get it out.

—I believe the next bit of Amiens will be really a valuable digest of things

[cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ...

—-but unspeakable hitherto—and if my health is spared,—perhaps I shall fulfil more of what misfortune has shortened in past life than at my present age—I can without presumption.

—I'm getting prosy and here's the maid for the post. All love and light and life be to you—and—all whom you love—me, please—maynt I say too

Ever your grateful and loving

[cut out for signature]

... ... ... ... ... ...

All true and fond memory to Miss Brown

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire. The signature is cut out, damaging text on both sides of the leaf. Fbd: Works XXXVII, 339; LJB, 309. Both omit the paragraph beginning "— I believe the next bit", and the post-script.

1. Miss Beever suffered from inflammation of the eyes, for which Dr. Brown prescribed various remedies; in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, there are letters from him to Miss Beever which mention it.
2. George Allen (1831-1907) first became connected with Ruskin when he attended his classes at the Working Men's College. By trade he was a joiner, and a very skilful one; but after meeting Ruskin he devoted himself entirely to his service, first as general assistant, then as engraver and finally as publisher and confidential factotum, over a period of fifty years. Ruskin set him up in business as his publisher in 1873, and though he had no previous experience whatever in the profession he ultimately made a success of it.

3. "Our Fathers have told us" The Bible of Amiens was an endeavour to trace in outline the historical and religious conditions in which men and nations created exemplary works of perfect art. In this investigation Ruskin used a discussion of the Cathedral at Amiens as starting point. The book came out in five parts: the first on 21 Dec 1880; the next in Dec 1881; the subsequent parts in Sept 1882, Oct 1883 and June 1885. The delay between the publication of the first and second parts was partly due to a severe attack of mental illness which incapacitated Ruskin during most of March.

Letter 96
Brantwood, 5 or 6 February, 1881(1)

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

Darling Doctor

Your letter is a delight to me—even though with it comes the message of Carlyle gone. In this bright day— I trust he sees
still clearer light at last.

What you say of Turner is such a joy to me. But how did you get to understand Beethoven?—he always sounds to me like the upsetting of bags of nails, with here and there an also dropped hammer.

--The account of Ada Dundas(2) is very delicious too. She has been the wisest of all my young and stranger correspondents—(in my two senses of wisdom—caring much—and troubling little)—and I count her among my jewel-friends.

--You—among my more precious frankincense friends. Two or three true ones I have good in the myrrh manner—also, but I don't quite like them so well.

I've just been writing a word or two to a Scotch country clergyman(3) at Abernethy which I hope will get to your eyes—somehow—they're about the Monastery & Abbot—How few Scottish youths understand that story—or consider whether Halbert going into the Army—& Edward into the Church, were more honourable—dutiful to their widowed mother—or serviceable to themselves,—and Halbert happier with Mary,—than Dandie Dimmont with Allie— or Cuddy Hedrigg with Jenny. Ever your lovingest

J R.


1. So dated because Carlyle died 5 Feb 1881, and Brown's reply to this is dated 7 Feb.

2. Adela Dundas (1840-87), daughter of William Pitt Dundas of Edinburgh. For a time she was Ruskin's friend by correspondence
only; he advised her on drawing and arranged for her to take lessons from William Ward. She suffered from curvature of the spine and needed constant nursing. In 1881, she came to Brantwood for two visits. Dr. Brown also knew her: see LJB, 275.

3. Rev. W. Forsyth, who was organising a Young Man's Mutual Improvement Society and had asked Ruskin for advice. The only letter to him from Ruskin that survives is in Works XXXIV, 553, but in all probability there were more, as Ruskin invited the clergyman to write again.

4. Halbert and Edward Glendinning are characters in The Monastery; Mary is Mary Avenel in the same novel. Dandie Dinmont and Milie are an honest rural couple in Guy Mannering, and Cuddie Headrigg and Jenny Dennison are simple and good peasant characters in Old Mortality. Brown's reply to this letter is in MS. in the Ruskin Galleries at Bembridge School; in it he writes: 'I would rather choose the lots of Dandie & his Milie & Cuddie & his Jenny—than those of the two Glendinning boys.'

Letter 97

Brantwood, 29 March, 1881

I'm living on oysters—milk—and honey,—
and sleeping like a dormouse, now. No wine—but I can't do without tea.

Brantwood,

Coniston. Lancashire.

29th March, 81.
Dearest Dr Brown

Susie* tells me those entirely poisonous papers have been frightening you about me. I've been wool-gathering a bit, again, that's all—and have come round all right—with more handfuls of golden fleece than on my last voyage to Medea's land. (1)

I'm a little giddy and weak yet—but was up on the hills yesterday in the sunshine and snow, teaching Joanie's three children how to cross snow on a slope.—

The poor little things had no nails in their fine London boots, but we got up about Salisbury Craig (2) height for all that.

The illness (3) was much more definite in its dreaming than the last one, and not nearly so frightful.—It taught me much (4) as these serious dreams do always, and I hope to manage myself better—and not go Argonauting any more. But both these illnesses have been part of one and the same system of constant thought, far out of sight to the people about me, and of course getting more and more separated from them as they go on in the ways of the modern world—and I go back, to live with my Father and my Mother, and my Nurse—and—one more. (5) All waiting for me in the Land of the leal. (6)

One of the most interesting parts of the dream to me was a piece of teaching I got about St. Benedict's nurse, while I was fancying my own had come back to me.—Which will be entirely useful to me in the history of St Benedict (7). Have you read the preface to the Monastery lately?

I had scarcely got my wits together again, when they were nearly sent adrift by my getting hold of the MS of St Ronan's!

* Susie wonderfully well, all but the eyes.
I've now got.

1. The Black Dwarf
2. Nigel.
3. Peveril.
4. Woodstock
5. St. Ronan's

--besides all the letters on the building of Abbotsford.

Pretty well for a Lancashire cottage library!

—Ever your lovingest

John Ruskin

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire. Fbd: Works XXXVII, 347; LJB, 310.

1. Pelias set Jason and his Argonauts a seemingly impossible task, that of procuring the Golden Fleece from Colchis, the land of King Aeetes; but Jason, aided by Aeetes' daughter, Medea, who was in love with him, was enabled to perform the feat by magic.

2. On the west side of Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh (about 600 ft. high).

3. A severe attack of mania afflicted Ruskin at the end of February, 1881, lasting almost a month. His recovery from it was slow and he was not fit to do much work for the rest of the year.


5. Rose La Touche.
6. A Celtic term for the land of the faithful or blessed: Heaven. Ruskin has in mind a song by Caroline Oliphant, Baroness Nairne, "The Land o' the Leal", which he quotes elsewhere:

"I'm wearing awa, Jean,
Like snow when it's thaw, Jean,
I'm wearing awa'
To the land o' the leal."

(Works XXVII, 601; XXIV, 291).

7. Ruskin's lecture of 1882, "Mending the Sieve", in Valle Crucis, deals with Cistercian architecture and St. Benedict. The title relates to an anecdote about the Saint's nurse, recounted in Works XXXIII, 236.


Letter 98
Brantwood, 5 August, 1881

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.
5th August 81

Darling Doctor

I've seen Susie's note (1) now, with its wonderful saying about Shakespeare (2) and the Carlyle gossip--

I do not look at the article (3) I told Froude just what you say--months since--that the world had no more to do with Carlyle's life than with his old hat. But Boude felt too deeply, and besides had promised this & that--I don't care an old hats brim
whether it's printed or not,—nor whether the public swears or howls or squeaks or blazes—only I don't like Froude's wasting his time on old love-affairs—(as if there weren't always enough on hand!) and I can't waste mine on anything,—now it's running so short. But I'll look up that letter which you say is 'perfect'. —What can you possibly mean?—when a woman refuses a man, she's a mere brute if she pretends to have any reason.

I send you the first proof of the end of my bird-catching for this year,—it ends in Scotland—so you must see it first—else I mightn't have bored you with it yet. For I think some of it as tiresome as—(Shakespeare?)—I've even worked through a proof of [sic]—but the ending has some mint sauce—and see the Dorcas Society women's letter!

That weariness of reading is a totally unexpected calamity to me, also, in growing old. I can read nothing now but Scott—and Frederick the Great and I begin to know them a little bit too well. My drawing does not tire me, but the focus of my best—farthest seeing eye has altered more than that of the nearer sighted weaker one—and now, in small work, they begin to dispute about where the line is to go. Which I am sorry for, but shall take to larger work—Suppose I do a Panorama of the Alps, with Our Lady of the Snow crowning our blessed old Jamie?

Ever your lovingest,

J R.

2. Brown had written: "I read Cymbeline & the Winters Tale & a lot of the Sonnets lately—you know his "infinite variety"—his infinite richness & yet how tiresome he sometimes is, just as Nature is."

3. Brown had written: "I fear Carlyle's death must have shaken him—and these sad things about him & his wife, which should never have been known must have pained him. Did you read Miss Gordon's letter to Carlyle—she was Blumine in "Sartor"—bidding him a final farewell—if not, get it—it is in Froude's paper in last 19th. Centy. It seems to me a perfect letter." Froude's paper, "The Early Life of Thomas Carlyle" appears in The Nineteenth Century X (July 1881), 1-42. The passage in the letter from Margaret Gordon to Carlyle is quoted pp.19-20. Froude's publication of Carlyle's Reminiscences, (in which were revealed "sad things about him and his wife"), on 5 March 1881, only a month after his death, had caused a storm of controversy. Many doubted the wisdom of publishing the work with so few cuts; the biting satire and sharp judgements of Carlyle's character-sketches were very offensive to many of his acquaintances still living, or to their relatives. Mary Carlyle Aitken, Carlyle's niece, to whom most of Carlyle's MSS. had been willed, vehemently criticised Froude's editorial practice in the columns of the Times and the Telegraph; and there arose a bitter wrangle over his use of the MSS. to write his biography of
Carlyle. Ruskin took Froude's side, even though his close friend, C.E. Norton, was a prominent member of the Mary Carlyle party. Ruskin did not like Mary Carlyle: he called her "a mere selfish and proud and cowardly Molly Foulservice" (Waldo H. Dunn, Froude and Carlyle, 1930, p.210).

4. This was the third part of Love's Meinie, a series of lectures about birds, the first part of which came out in 1873. The third part was published in November 1881, and was in fact the final part; part four was advertised as being in preparation but never appeared.

5. This letter on the question of birds' ears was printed in the Appendix to Love's Meinie, Works XXV, 149.

6. Dr. Brown had remarked: "I have lost all appetite for reading—almost—I am like a leech that bites but doesn't fix."

7. In a letter to the British Weekly dated 3 June, 1887 (Works XXXIV, 606) Ruskin made a similar comment: "The book oftenest in my hand of late years is certainly Carlyle's Frederick. It is one of the griefs of my old age that I know Scott by heart; but still, if I take up a volume of him, it is not laid down again for the next hour."

8. James Forbes, the Scottish scientist and authority on glaciers.
Letter 99

Brantwood, 8 August, 1881

Brantwood, Coniston.

Lancashire. 8th August

Dear Dr Brown

I am ashamed that you should have thought I sent you that proof to be looked at and returned. I never send you anything of mine to be returned—and should have thought it utterly wrong to send you anything expecting you at once to give attention to it. Please, whatever I send in future, read if you like—but at any rate keep.

I never go—or will go—to Oculists. My father had a piece of skin experimentally peeled off his lower eyelid by Alexander, which plagued him to the end of life—and what a stark blockhead like Leelu—e—(whatever his name is) might do to me, only the Deuce knows—If I go blind I shall have plenty people to read to me—but I know more about eyes than all the oculists together, and am afraid of nothing but the nerve. The only wonder is I've any eyes left in my head; after that first illness the walls shook round me like a jelly if I looked at them—and things used to cross over each other like people in the Lady's chain of a quadrille. In this last illness, sometimes the pictures in my room were all aglow with twice their proper light—and sometimes—the black window at night filled with white phantoms.

That doggie of yours is pen and ink straight off the bat. Two minutes worth at the most. Neither Turner, Velasquez nor Coeur de Lion ever strike twice.
Love to your—nobly wasting Isabel. (8)

Ever your loving

J R.

MS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire. Notation on letter: 1881

1. The references to the previous letter and to Ruskin's illnesses make this date certain.

2. Of Love's Meinie; see previous letter. Ruskin's omission of his usual endearments "Darling Doctor" and "Ever your lovingest" show his annoyance that Brown had sent it back to him.

3. Possibly Henry Alexander (d.1859) of Cork St., London; surgeon oculist to Queen Victoria. John James Ruskin was seeing Alexander or another doctor of the same name in Aug 1871, according to The Ruskin Family Letters ed. Van Akin Burd (1973), II, 686.

4. Professor Liebreich (see Letter 56, n.5), who attributed Turner's later manner in painting to defective vision. This talk about eyes relates to the last letter in which Ruskin complained of failing sight: Dr. Brown had evidently recommended him to see an oculist.

5. The severe mental illness of Feb and March 1878.

6. The one in March, 1881.
7. A sketch of a dog by Turner which Ruskin gave Dr. Brown on 22 Oct 1878.

8. Brown's elder sister Isabella. She was sickly and Brown often feared for her life, but in fact she outlived him by several years.

Letter 100
Brantwood, perhaps 1881

Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire.

Darling Doctor

I didn't half answer yesterday. First—I'm rather despondent and subdued about my Ada Dundas! Ample—as well as good?—and I like all my sylphs to look like—the reeds of the lake of Purgatory.

Then you troubled me by asking what I thought of Sambourne—who belongs entirely to the lowest circle of Caina worse than Dore, in that Dore has some bitter sense of real horror—but Sambourne is merely rotten mud and nightmare.

You are so accurately right in what you say of DuMaurier & Leech. But D.M. has done some wonderful things lately, by very hard study, and much good material to his hand.

Fearful wind to day, always something wrong with weather now—when I ought to be out all day

Ever your lovingest

J R.
1. There is no evidence for the date except the notation on the letter, which may have been inspired by some information now lost.

2. See Letter 96, n.2. Ruskin may here be referring to some drawing, or perhaps Brown had just described Miss Dundas as plump.

3. Probably Edward Linley Sambourne (1844-1910), artist in black and white. He contributed to Punch, eventually joining the staff, and illustrated books. He was most noted for his grotesque imagination.

4. The name given by Dante to the first of the four divisions of Circle IX of Hell, where traitors (like Cain) were punished: Inferno, xxxii, 58.

5. Gustave Doré (1832-83), the most popular French illustrator of the mid-nineteenth century, who commercialised the romantic taste for the bizarre.

6. George Louis Palmella Russon DuMaurier (1834-96), artist in black and white, born in France. He was a longstanding contributor to Punch and became a member of the staff. He was a satirist of the fashionable and artistic world.

7. John Leech (1817-64) humorous artist. Trained at first in medicine, he turned to caricature and comic art. In 1841 he became connected with the new magazine Punch and was its chief
artist till his death. In the development of humorous art he comes roughly between Cruikshank and DuMaurier. He was a friend of Dr. Brown, who at one time intended to write his biography: he accumulated papers about him and went to see his family, but nothing came of it, except an article in *Horae II* (1861). Ruskin wrote of Leech: "His work contains the finest definition and natural history of the classes of our society; the kindest and subtlest analysis of its foibles, the tenderest flattery of its pretty and well-bred ways, with which the modesty of subservient genius ever immortalised or amused careless masters" (*Works XIV*, 332).

Letter 101

Perhaps 1881(1)

My dearest Dr Brown

I've just heard from Susie that you're ever so much better; and it makes me better to hear it. I've been so despondent and wretched and unable to work this last month—but it turned out to be all stomach—put wrong originally—last December, by nasty things happening.--I'm getting round now if only the days would—-and if you will be idle so will I, and we'll cheer each other up.

Ever your loving

JR.

J.B. ----------- J R.

There isn't such another pair going in harness, that I know of.
There is no evidence for the date except for the notation on the letter.

Letter 102
Brantwood, 28 December, 1881

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

28th Dec. 81

Darling Dr Brown

You will not at all believe the joy it is to me to have a letter\(^1\) from you; and to see that you also are—as you used to be;—my own sweet Doctor that had perpetual sympathy with all good effort—and all kindly animated creatures. And I trust we shall both go on yet—in spite of sorrow—speaking to each other through the sweetbriar and the vine, for many an hour of twilight as well as morning.

I sleep\(^2\) much better than I used to do; and have good hope that I should now recognise any approach of the illness which has twice so nearly ended me, in time to parry or evade it. The curious point about it is that there are always entirely separate conditions of accessory coincidence, which have increased the excitement—as for instance, when I perfectly well knew I was in some danger, this last September,\(^3\) and was most carefully watching
myself—the illness always being primarily founded on too much 
thinking about my dead Rose,—suddenly one evening a letter came 
from a friend of long ago enclosing a drawing by R, of a palm-
blossom,—which of course made me think all sorts of things—and 
in these dangerous times, my books always open—perhaps ten times 
during the day—at passages which strike back into the line of 
thought,—no matter how apparently foreign to it the book may have 
been—Punch—or Dante—is all the same—they are sure to open 
like Sortes. Whereas, at present, and in times when I am fairly 
tranquil and safe—they never play me such tricks.

But indeed, the illnesses themselves taught me lots about 
early Xlian legends (1) that I could have had no notion of, without
them, and I'm very thankful I had them—but I don't want more.
In each of them—I dreamed at the end that I was dead—and it isn't 
pleasant.

—How glad Susie will be to have your letter! Your portrait 
is the main ornament of the main side of her room, and I've given 
her a lovely little Rout (5) drawing of Martigny for the centre of 
another. The third belongs to my St. Ursula. (6) I've been promising 
her to write to you this month—and never doing it—partly for 
fear of plaguing you,—partly days always too short, but I'm ever 
your lovingest

J Ruskin

NS: The Bodleian Library. Letterhead: Brantwood, Coniston.
Lancashire. Fbd: First paragraph only in Works XXXVII, 383, and 
LJB, 312. The passage from "The curious point..." up to "play me 
such tricks" is published in The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin ed. 
1. Brown's letter dated 27 Dec 1881 (LJB, 275), which acknowledged gratefully the gift of part 2 of The Bible of Amiens.

2. Brown had hoped Ruskin slept "full 8 hours in the 24h".

3. In the last week of Sept 1881 Ruskin became increasingly ill and on 20 Oct had another collapse into mental illness, recovering rather slowly. This palm-drawing by Rose La Touche is mentioned in a diary entry made after the illness, on 8 Nov 1881 (The Diaries of J.R. ed Joan Evans and J.H. Whitehouse, 3 vols, 1959, III, 1007). He records that he had, to his amazement, a good night's sleep: "Inconceivable, but deeply to be remembered and held for providential help: as also that the first thing this morning I find my sketch of the books of Our fathers have told us with Rosie's drawing of the Palm in it." Our fathers have told us was a projected series of books which began with The Bible of Amiens but was not completed.


5. Samuel Prout (1783-1852), water-colour painter. He was a good draughtsman and the most popular painter of continental scenes during his lifetime. In 1845 he came to live on Denmark Hill where he became friendly with the Ruskings.

6. Ruskin was fascinated by this picture by Carpaccio and made several copies of it; in his mind it came to represent to him an idealised Rose La Touche. See Letter 53, n.3.
Letter 103

Herne Hill, 13 Feb, 1882

Herne Hill

13th Feb. 82

Darling Doctor

What a delicious note, this morning—I have from you. I need some encouragement with Proserpina, for there is a good deal of difficult and—in other directions useless, work to be done for it; and I am apt to neglect it for history, now that I've got once more among cathedrals.

—Yes, I should call nettles and honeysuckle—much more all the ophryds injured blossoms. Honeysuckle seems to me quite a grievously slashed one—and its growth malignant to other plants. The frightful tangling of it about all my dying underwood is one of the chief dangers in my pruning work:—the inevitable nets of it are so apt to catch and turn the blow, if one is careless for an instant.

Yes, I take as much care of my body now as I can—it has become to me quite literally a sort of Telescope which I have to shut up and take care of—or like the talisman which the unhappy and obstinate lover of the Arabian nights brought the Efreet up by breaking. But I feel sadly that it still belongs to me—in all its naughtinesses and that it would do me ever so much good to be flogged and macerated at the Grande Chartreuse for a year or so —only Joanie wouldn't hear of it.

She copied your enquiry, to show Connie—and sends you, and Miss Brown, no end of love with mine.

No, I never heard Miss Wakefield sing the Creation. I always bar Beethoven and Handel before she begins at all,—but she
sang me the Evening Hymn,\(^{(9)}\). Sunday was three weeks, to my extreme satisfaction and moral improvement—for at least half an hour afterwards.

Ever your lovingest

J Ruskin

The muggy violet leaves\(^{(10)}\) are merely imperfect work. My sketch was extremely slight—with scarcely more than one wash to each leaf—I've no time for drawing now—and Allen could not get the clearness of a wash in a mezzotint.

---

**Ex: The Bodleian Library. **Fbd: Works XXXVII, 386.

1. In the "delicious note", a letter dated 10 Feb 1882 (**LJB**, 280), Brown had written: "Thanks....for the joy and comfort of Proserpina Part VII. It is delightful and informing, and more." Proserpina Part VII was issued in April 1882, so Dr. Brown must have been sent a proof copy.

2. Ruskin was at work on *The Bible of Amiens*: see Letter 95, n.3.

3. In his letter Brown asked if Ruskin considered the uphryd, nettle and honeysuckle to be "injured blossoms", as he had implied in *Proserpina* (Works XXV, 390). Ruskin refers again to the malignancy of honeysuckle in *Deucalion*.

4. Brown had remarked: "I hope you are taking care of your body, the instrument of the Soul, as well as its (present) house."
5. Alluding to the story of the Second Royal Mendicant.

6. The mother house of the very ascetic order of the Carthusian monks, near Grenoble in France.

7. Mary Augusta Wakefield (1853-1910), singer, composer and music festival organiser. She was born near Kendal and was most active in Westmorland; she edited an anthology called Ruskin on Music.

8. Beethoven’s Hymn to Creation, in German Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur; Brown mentioned it in his letter.

9. A number of popular hymns could be so called; one with this name appears in The Congregational Hymnal, p.625.

10. Brown had asked: "I suppose that shadowy, or almost smoky, look of the leaves" (of an engraving of a violet in Proserpina; see WorksXXV, plate xxv) "is indication of a sort of wetness".

Fragment

to make people understand the stupidity of Restoration. There you are, just now going to destroy the loveliest remnant of Kingly Times in Scotland, Linlithgow(1) and

MS: NLS, Acc.6134. This is all that survives of some longer letter.

*
1. Probably the mostly ruined Linlithgow Palace, in Linlithgow, West Lothian; birthplace of James V and Mary, Queen of Scots. Extensive repairs were made to it in the early 1850s; perhaps Ruskin's remark was written then.

Fragment

Isn't this life of mine a very quaint one, in its quietude?

Ever your loving

JR.

I shall sign St.C. to you after this—its her old name for me—(short for Chrysostom)

Text: Copy in NLS, Acc. 6289. The rest of the letter is lost.

1. Rose La Touche's. The initials also signified "St. Crumpet".
Brown's letter to the Scottsman, dated 7 Feb 1874, in which he disputes the account of an incident involving Dickens and Professor Syme given in Forster's Life of Dickens:

"Mr. Forster in his last volume of the Life of Dickens has occasion to speak thus of a painful affection of the left foot from which Mr. Dickens suffered, & for which he consulted Professor Syme when he was giving his readings in Edinburgh, page 217, "He (Mr. Dickens) was under the necessity two days later of consulting Mr. Syme, and he told his daughter that this great authority had warned him against over-fatigue in the readings and given him some slight remedies, but otherwise reported him in 'joost pairfectly splendid condition'. With care he thought the pain might be got rid of. 'Wa-at mad Thompson think it was goot?" he said often, and seemed to take that opinion extremely ill. Again, before leaving Scotland he saw Mr. Syme, and wrote to me on the 2nd of March of the indignation with which he had again treated the gout diagnosis, declaring the disorder to be an affection of the delicate nerves and muscles, originating in cold. "I told him that it had shown itself in America in the other foot as well. "'Noc I'll joost swear' said he, 'that ayond the fatigue o' the readings ye'd been tramping i' th' snaw. Goot! Bah! Thompson knew no other name for it, and just ca'd it Goot. Eeh.' for which he took two guineas." Thus far Mr. Forster. Now, does any man who ever heard Mr. Syme speak, imagine the hideous jargon I have put into italics, was his
customary manner of speech? If we are to judge of the
general accuracy and good taste ("for which he took two
guineas") of this reckless caricaturist and great genius by
this account of Mr. Syme's professional conversation, and by
the "Hone funeral" fiction in a former volume, so crushingly
settled by Dr. Binney, we will be obliged to acknowledge his
near relationship to the well known Ferdinand Mendez Pinto.

Mr. Syme it is needless to say was a gentleman as well as a
great surgeon, and spoke as he wrote English as few men do,—
the English of his master, William Cobbett,—pure, clear,
strong, and to the point. He knew well and relished our own
rich vernacular, but he never spoke it; not that our italics
are it, or anything else human. Is it creditable in Mr.
Forster, as a man of letters and a friend, to print such false
and sorry stuff as this?

Forster's letter to Brown, dated 25 April 1874, in which
he deals with the complaint which Brown had addressed to his about
the Syme/Dickens incident:

"Dear Sir

On the subject which you make the excuse for your letter of
yesterday's date to me, I shall not permit the tone you assume
to prevent me from saying what is due to myself—that, as soon
as the complaint to which it refers was brought under my notice,
everything complained of was removed. This was within a
fortnight after the book appeared; but a few copies were all
then left of the first impression, and in the second only the
correction could be publicly made. This was not issued until
the beginning of the present month.

I was sorry to be afterwards shown a letter which you
had published, I think in the Scotsman, without any previous
mention to me; and I regret still more to receive your present
letter.

In this you write: "It is more than six weeks since
"I wrote to Messrs Chapman & Hall requesting them to assure
"the family and friends of the late Professor Syme that the
"offensive quotation from a letter of Mr. Dickens describing
"his interview with Prof. Syme would be cancelled in future
"Editions of this volume of the Life. I have written again and
"again to the publishers, and have got no reply. This I
"think is neither the conduct or men of business or gentlemen."

I am thus first made acquainted with your communications
to my publishers—the fact of their having received such
letters having been withheld from me. Of their conduct in
not replying to yourself, I say nothing; but if they had
replied in any other way than by referring you to me as
alone having any authority in the matter, they would have
committed as grave an offence against the courtesies and
decencies that should regulate the intercourse of publishers
and authors, as you appear to me, in this case, to have
yourself committed.

Whatever fault was implied in the complaint made, was mine.
I had, for want of thought, certainly with no unkind thought
of one whom I honoured as a leader in the most humane and
generous of all professions printed what had been hastily
written by Mr. Dickens—who continued to the close of his
life grateful to Mr. Syme for an opinion from which (rightly
or wrongly) he derived a certain comfort. The entire blame was mine—I was the person wholly responsible. The book bore my name; and for any one, on any plea whatever, to call upon the publishers to cancel any part of what the author had placed in it, was a course quite unwarrantable—doubly so when taken by one who has obtained distinction in literature.

I am yours truly

John Forster."

In future editions of the Life Forster simply translated Syme's remarks into normal English, otherwise leaving the anecdote just as it was, with the conclusion that Syme had given an incorrect diagnosis of Dickens's ailment.
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