PART II
THE LETTERS in this part are despairing letters which take an increasingly frenzied tone as Ruskin vainly pursues his ideal; they are complemented by constant references in his diaries to ghastly dreams. After Rose's refusal of his hand—on February 2, 1866—clashes occur between her parents and her suitor. But, as Letter 26 suggests, Ruskin did not forsake his hopes and, under the vigilant eye of John La Touche, actually visited Rose. Yet restraint rigidly circumscribed their relationship, a restraint that by June caused Ruskin to write Rawdon Brown:

But they won't let her write to me any more now, and I suppose the end will be as it should be—that she will be a good girl and do as she is bid, and that I shall settle down to—fifteenth-century documents, as you've always told me I should.\(^1\)

Inextricably connected with parental opposition is Rose's religious fanaticism, fearfully mentioned by Ruskin in Letter 35 as he writes of her "exaltation" during her recent illness.

After an altercation with Mrs. Cowper which nearly ruined their friendship for good, Ruskin persuades her, with her husband, to intercede for him by visiting Harristown, which

\(^1\) *Works*, XXXVI, 509.
she does in September. This—after some bitter summer letters Ruskin wrote his confidante, letters ringing with hostility toward Mr. and Mrs. La Touche—brings a brief sign of hope for the harried man. But, by Letter 48, there is a retreat from this more optimistic position, followed by reiterations of the cruelty of the La Touches. Shortly thereafter, in the new year, 1867, Rose writes him “beautiful” and “lovely” letters, but by February the antipathy toward the parents breaks out anew; this persists, to the accompaniment of acrimonious letters from Mr. or Mrs. La Touche, throughout the spring of the year.

His hostility toward the parents Ruskin echoes in his spring and summer letters to Mrs. Cowper up until mid-1867 when, with Ruskin’s departure for a holiday in Scotland, the correspondence terminates abruptly, not to be renewed until the following February.

But, during the months when he does not, apparently, write Mrs. Cowper, Ruskin’s mind does not stray from thoughts of Rose. In his diaries are frequent references to her, including a poignant entry of August 3, 1867, when he records that half his time of waiting—until he can propose again—is over “to-night, at twelve.”

Also, he mentions rowing a little girl like Rose on the lake and writes his mother from Keswick on July 24, 1867: “Since Rosie sent me that last rose after refusing her other lover, I have felt so sure of her that everything else begins to be at peace with me.” Unfortunately, his tranquillity will not endure long. With the coming of 1868 the emotional storm breaks out anew.

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2 Diaries, II, 627.
3 Still, to biographers, an obscure figure.
4 Works, XXXVI, 531.
Letter 26

Denmark Hill, s.  

[February, 1866]5

Dear Mrs Cowper

They say there are some good honest astrologers among us still—if they were not forced to remain unconfessed [?]. I wish I could find one—I want to know what is the matter with my stars. I am glad always to know that about her father—I have mistaken him all these years. He walked about the room, one day, when his wife had a headache and asked him not—and I interpreted everything afterwards by that fragment of Rosetta stone,—and I'm no Champollion6 at such work. Then he did terrible things to me without saying why,—and I interpreted them all into mere selfishness. Yet I have known before now—intensely feeling hearts which nevertheless felt only for their own pains,—if one saw well into them.—God knows that at this instant, if Rosie were to tell me she loved any one, and could not see him without my help—I would do all for her—bear—if it were necessary—to see them together all day—be their footman and walk behind them—nay—be their servant after they were married—if they needed it—I don't think her father loves her so well as that. But I never once thought of the difficulty taking that form—I always thought it was mere and pure objection to me—on various—not unreasonable grounds. Why—how possibly could he less lose her than by giving her to me? He might live with us—or have us to live with him—always—he never need be a day

5 The tone of this letter suggests the emotional crisis of February, 1866. Also, the reference in the text to the “three years since I last saw her” echoes the entry in Diaries, II, 585, where Ruskin notes, on December 10, 1865, that “I saw her first after three years.”

6 Jean François Champollion (1790-1832), whose reputation as an Egyptologist earned him the chair of Egyptian antiquities at the Collège de France.
away from her. She would not love him less—but more—
(though that would not easily be possible,) than she does now.

For me, it is not a question of pain and of healing. It is a
question of two kinds of life—spiritual or material: The love
of her is a religion to me—it wastes and parches me like the
old enthusiasm of the wild anchorites. I do not know how long
I could bear it without dying—in that waiting—I am not sure
even—how far in its conceivable happiness, it might be en-
durable by me—it might kill me soon—if the least pang of
doubt or regret for her, mingled with it; But I can part with
it, and take up material life, of a kind, among stones, and
plants, and the like—and not die—nay—not be unhappy I
told her this; and it is true.—I was really quite happy examin-
ing the angles of calcite, before she came this time—and I
can be again,—but it is no question of time or healing—it is
of being a lower or higher creature, for ever—or for such
ever as God has made us for.

Ever gratefully Yours,

J Ruskin.

I have been reading your letter again—it is better than I
thought—you speak as if the parents might at some far day
consent without utter sorrow—now the mother always told
me—never—never—Meantime, don't be vexed for me. I will
be quite quiet now, and courageous—for some time, at any
rate. You don't know what hard sorrow I've had breaking
me down in the three years since I last saw her—I was very
close to death in the first year, for the separation took me by
surprise.
Dear Mrs Cowper

So many thanks for your little note. But you had given me no pain—but relief. And you couldn't but have thought it was all play, unless you had asked me. And what you say is right—all love is good—even when it kills—for it kills into a pure marble—not into wormy dust: And things are not so bad for me, neither. If one is utterly despised or disliked—it is frightful—I don't know quite what it would be, then. But as long as the child trusts me so as to come to me for whatever she wants—and bid me do whatever she chooses, it is really all that one has any business to need.

Lady Cowper wrote me such a pretty letter the other day, and she has been so kind to me that I told her a little about it—(for I wanted her to see Rosie)—but not what I've told you—For it is too absurd to be told to anybody but—somebody that one has been absurd about before.

Ever affectionately Yours

J Ruskin.
Letter 28

Denmark Hill, s.

12th March. [1866]8

Dear Mrs Cowper,

I am very very sorry you have been so ill:—now please don’t laugh and say “of course you are”: I think however that when you are quite able again, you might perhaps do a little more for me. The black fates have surely had their will enough by this time. For you know it was fate—the child was really ill, and tried hard to keep up for me; and even her mother, cruel as she is, wouldn’t have played me a trick like that;—wantonly:—It was worse still at that horrible Elijah—for that was Rosie’s own plan, and she had wanted to hear it, & make me attend to it—ever so long; and I had got leave to have her beside me;—and she had violent cold & cough, & could’nt come, and tried to keep it off to the last moment and had to send me word when I was just waiting for her—& I could’nt get away till the first act—part—whatever it is—was over. And if ever I have a chance of writing a critique on the Elijah!—won’t I, kindly!

Then as if that was not enough, her mother gets an invitation for her into Northumberland—and she just gets well in time to go,—but she’ll be back on Friday—(injury [?] apart)—and then there are still ten days. You might say that you wanted to see them once more,—comfortably—might’nt you? I’m going to lunch with papa tomorrow—and shall be able to guess a little then whether it would be again possible. The mother is really the worst of the two now, I think. My cousin9 had a long letter from Rosie tonight—and she’s getting bright walks on the Cheviots—which is one comfort.

8 The performance of the Elijah, mentioned in the text and given at Exeter Hall on March 2, 1866, establishes the year of this letter.
9 Joan Agnew.
I have been quite forgetting, in my selfishness, to ask you about some papers I sent you, touching an old lady’s pension. I find you had been troubled about it before, and again I am sorry. Do you think—if I come to call at two on Wednesday—(Or before two) that you could see me for a moment—and I would tell you how the lunch passes tomorrow.

I am grieved for Mr. Cowpers illness also—and ever gratefully Yours.

J Ruskin.
Letter 29

Denmark Hill, s.

16th March, 1866.

Dear Mrs Cowper

I fear you thought it an insolently proud saying of mine yesterday—"I want no companion in my work—& can have none,"—but it meant simply that in my small specialty, I know that no one can help me—nor is it intellectual sympathy that I need. I have enough of it from men. I do not care for it from women:—nor is it even love that I need. I have had much given me: But I want leave to love: and the sense that the creature whom I love is made happy by being loved: That is literally all I want. But it seems to me indeed—all—that without that all else is nothing. I don't care that Rosie should love me: I cannot conceive such a thing for an instant—I only want her to be happy in being loved:—if she could tread upon me all day—& be happy—because it was me she trod on:—it would be all I want. I wonder if you thought me cold & lifeless about it yesterday—I could have said such wild things—if I had let go.

I am so grateful to you.

—You know, surely, that it must be comforting to me that you should be so kind—do not you?

Ever faithfully Yours,

J Ruskin

Do you know they have changed their house to 4 Upper Grosvenor St? They've come back—and there's a letter from Rosie today asking my cousin to lunch with her, and me to come to tea. I hope some room yet exists therefore for your intercession.
Letter 30

Denmark Hill, s. 20th March, 1866.

My dear Mrs Cowper,

You have certainly done me ever so much good already—somehow—the sky’s as blue again as it was—They actually let her come with my cousin and me shopping—(at least to one shop—) without mama, yesterday,—and we got a little talk—and she says she’s going to ask you to let her come and take tea with you by herself—“and will you think it very very presuming of her”—and I said you would’nt. And theyre coming to dine with me—and I’m to have another chance for the Elijah.11 It must be all your doing—you angel—only angels must’nt be ill,—please don’t be.

Ever your devoted—And before I could sign—here is your kind note—just come. Look here—I am sure Rosie wants to have a little talk with you by herself; I think she offers to come to tea because you said something about not being able to see more than one person each day while you were so ill. But I feel sure too that she wants to ask your advice about several things—at least she would rather be by herself—not that I’ve told her a word about your being (our!) my Madonna and Stella Maris;—but she likes you so much—and I daresay thinks she could talk to you better than to anybody else.

The insolence of my writing that!12 indeed I did’nt mean it:—Still I know she is a little happy in being kind to me—and I don’t want to come to tea with them—because—now that she is kind to me—I’m so grateful that I can’t behave

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10 Ruskin originally wrote “yourselves”; “herself” is a superscription, inserted in his hand.

11 Presumably a reference to the performance of this oratorio given in Exeter Hall on March 27, 1866, by the National Choral Society.

12 Ruskin has drawn a line that leads from the beginning of this exclamation to the parenthetical “(our!)” of the preceding sentence.
properly at all before people,—and she feels it, and gets nervous—and then headachy—I'm only comfortable when I can be near her without having to talk—either to her or anyone else; and just look at her dress, and think it is hers: So please give her a little talk—you & she—You will find out what she is, that way, too—she wouldn't say a word before her mother, at present. Her mother puzzles me terribly. She was ever so nice, once.

I will be as patient as if the Hesperides apples grew on aloes. I have lived in patience wholly without hope till now—it would be strange if I could not be patient—now. Only the spring & summer & winter, and the Stars—are not patient.

I shall leave this note today. I may just have a chance of seeing you.

Ever your grateful J Ruskin
Dear Mrs Cowper

I am in all unselfishness, grieved deeply to hear of your intention of going to Broadlands. I am sure it is dangerous for you to travel in this season, when you have been so ill. I have seen so much harm come of these efforts that I feel it my duty—however presuming or impertinent it may seem—at least to say what I feel. At least half of the sorrow I have seen in my life, from illness, has been brought about by conscientious efforts, made at a time when absolute and remorseless repose was needed, and when nothing more was needed—but—that denied all harm has followed.

Little right have I to say this—I who have disturbed and troubled you so much—day after day! I have some comfort in thinking that you will like Rosie by herself—she, at least will be good for you. I don’t know if she will come today. I hope so,—she is promised to me a little while—but I’ll part with her if she wants to go to you.

I am free on Friday, and if—

It is just conceivable that you might like to have her & her mother & me to tea—& that it mightn’t fatigue you—and—if it were so, and could be? Well—I cannot be more grateful than I am now—nor more devotedly yours.

J Ruskin.

Please—there’s one word in your kind letter—sent down yesterday—which I can’t make out—and its just the most important of all—forgive me therefore for asking you—you say Rosie writes such an affectionate little note—and it cant be for merits of yours known to her—so it must be for . . . . . . .’s sake?

13 The opening sentence of this letter and of the one immediately following, which Ruskin himself dates as 1866, show that this one belongs to that same year.
Letter 32

22nd March
1866.

Denmark Hill, s.

Dear Mrs Cowper

One word more—(you know I cannot plague you at Broadlands)—perhaps you have been a little surprised at my not speaking more of the deeper reasons for my love of her:—but you know I count on your doing me the justice of thinking that so much va sans dire when I say “I love her”—the strong, stainless,—grave heart—the noble conscience—the high courage—the true sympathy with me in all I hope or try to do of good;—the quick rebuke of me in all hopelessness—or ceasing to do—or to strive—her utter freedom from all affectation—her adamant purity of maiden-heartedness—and all this with a child’s playfulness—and a noble woman’s trust in my constancy and singleness of love for her—is not this enough to make me love?

She was terribly hard to me yesterday however—only gave me one little syllable of comfort—I suppose it was because her father was watching—but she should not do that, tell her—for it can only make him think worse of me—as if I were now wholly on false terms with him. And she does not know that I wrote to him asking leave to speak about her—(meaning only to ask what were his real and final wishes as to my conduct to her)—and that he only answered “my dear friend”—and went on to other matters,—and as I had told him—if he did not let me speak to him—not to blame me for any reserve between us, Rosie may surely, when he does let us see each other—not snap at me in a fright; nor refuse my arm when I’ve ordinary etiquette right to give it. She knows best however—only yesterday she made me think something had gone newly wrong. But it is inexplicably foolish of the parents to put any restraint on either her or me—we are not of the
ignoble kind who can be dealt with in that way. If they gave us both absolute trust and let me speak to her fully & freely—telling both of us what they wished or resolved,—she and I would either end the thing at once, if we made up our minds that it was right, or we would accept what terms they chose to impose without heartburning: or we would give them fair battle, on open ground—far more really favourable to them than the ground we are on now. They treat us so as to give her the greatest possible weariness—and me the maximum of pain—contriveable by human art—and if they go on so, will lose all the fair advantage they might have had, and probably keep Rosie from all frank acceptance and trial of other probabilities of settling in life—for at least some time to come, when I would have made her do just as you think she should do, openheartedly—and with perfect sense that she was doing me the truest duty also, by such trial of her own heart. Though it is a little harder upon me than even you seem quite to feel. To wait is nothing—If I could be nobler, for her, every day I waited—I would promise not to see her face for a hundred years—and “think them as a day, for the love I bear her”—But what three years,—when I am seventy or eighty—if I live—can repay me the loss of these? If she can cast me into the dark at once, without too great pain to herself—I think she should. I solemnly think that—only I can’t say so to her. Try, you,—with such tenderness as you know to use. That is the main mission you have today.

Ever your grateful & devoted
J Ruskin.

and caution, also—remembering that she has been very ill, and cannot think, just now—without harm. This has paralyzed me in many ways, and kept me from acting—or speaking—as I should otherwise. She is still on her sick bed, and I can only do just as she bids—I will always do that, indeed—only I can’t so much as reason with her about it, now.

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14 Ruskin has drawn a connecting line from the beginning of this postscript to the word “tenderness” in the next to last sentence in the body of the letter. Thus one should read the postscript as a gloss on “tenderness.”
Letter 33

Denmark Hill, s.

[Late March, 1866]¹⁵

Dear Mrs Cowper,

Things are always sorrowful for me.—This has been a sad long "week" since you went down to Broadlands; and now you are ill. And I should have been sorry for that always, and now I think it is a part of my star's malignity cast on you.

—I have no power of managing anything about Roses [sic]. Whatever I ask—is therefore not done:—The mother is as bad as the father in that. I have written to her, as you bid me in your note: but I don't think it can be, I spoke wrongly to you of Mr La Touche: he is very good—only I've always been so far a trouble to him. You might ask them all three—in the formal way—and not tell them I was to be there. That would hardly do either:—the child wouldn't be angry: but she would be uncomfortable, thinking her father & mother were:—Look here, I've written to Mrs La Touche telling her either, to be good for once, & bring Rosie, or else to write to you and ask you to send them formal invitations for all three. That's the best I can think of.

Always gratefully Yours,

J Ruskin.

¹⁵ The connection between the opening paragraph of this letter and the commencement of Letter 32 suggests the date ascribed.
Dear Mrs Cowper

Edward Jones wrote to me that you have been so very kind to Mrs Jones: and that she was so happy, and admired you so much, at breakfast, and I'm pleased with her for doing that, and very grateful to you.—I hear also you wrote a kind letter to Rosie for which still more thanks. I get a syllable or two—worth a good many words—sometimes, out of the letter she is still allowed to write to my cousin—and I am working at the spring flowers, and trying to be quiet, but I'm not well.—However, I am going to rest thoroughly, except a little flower drawing; the preface to the little book I ordered my people to send you is the last word I shall write—for three years—at the end of that time I shall either be dead, or in better humour—or worse—and perhaps shall have something to say—one way or another: but whatever I do henceforward shall be as well as I can—I've written too carelessly and diffusely: but I like the note at p. 217, and a bit of my preface. I wish you could tell me you were better: a line to the Hotel des Alpes here would find me always, whether I was at Lauterbrunnen or Thun: but never mind if you are not better—you've had trouble enough with me.

Ever—with sincere regards to Mrs Cowper

Faithfully and gratefully Yours

J Ruskin

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16 This date is doubtless a slip of the pen for May 25 or 30, at which time Ruskin was at Interlachen.


18 Perhaps some introductory remarks to a future edition of The Crown of Wild Olive, the first edition of that work having appeared on May 14, 1866.
Hotel of the Giesbach.
10th June. 1866

Dear Mrs Cowper,

I have just received your letter and indeed I am grateful for it: and for your having been so good to Rosie and made her feel so much love for you;—only I cannot understand her letter—for I don’t know of any clouds that have been upon her, in all her life—except illness—nor do I know why she speaks of “shadow” as if she saw it upon you also; nor do I know what it was that you asked for her, which she was so thankful for your asking, about the next world (—which is indeed to me so wholly “shadow”) and of which she says, “if S C would only pray that prayer, too.” But I must not trouble you about these fancies,—for after all—earnest and lovely as they are—they are but conditions of exaltation connected I think closely with her past illness: and which would probably pass away with recovered strength. Though it is all more and more a mystery—for how can one say what this feverish “exaltation” is, or how far it is a strength of soul possible only through weakness of body. If I thought it my duty to fancy anything, I could fancy it—and get into passionate states of reverence or affection—or anything else—for my imaginary God. But I do not think it my duty—it seems to me I am bound to act only on what I know to be fact—and that is little enough.—But I shall come out of this state—for good or evil—some day,—so it is of no use talking about it,—the only thing good for me at present seems to me to be, living as much like a grasshopper as I can, and attending only to my surrounding blades of grass. But it is difficult to live wholly without hope—and though I have hope—and that distinct, as I told you—yet I have much more fear—and a high hope—quenched in a deeper terror—is worse than the blank of life, at the time.
of life when men are meant to be at peace, and to see good
days.—And in other things, I have indeed no hope—for the
past has been always error & disappointment and increasing
sorrow: and how can I look for anything else in the future,—
and what you showed me—at least—what I saw with you—
of wonder—while it showed me the possibility of things being
true which I had not believed—yet took away from me so
much confidence in my modes of thought that I am now quite
helpless—and don't care to think of anything—it is all so fath­
omless—and so distorted & ludicrous in its gloom.

The prospect of war is of course painful to me—but chiefly
in the intense amazement and sense of solitude with which
I see my fellowcreatures go mad in heaps—and drift into
deepest guilt and misery as helplessly as dead leaves.

—Of immediate pleasantness, in surrounding things, I have
enough.—This place (—south side of Lake Brienz), is quite
a wilderness of Elysian fields in the springtime—and the Swiss
people of the valley of Masli are the best I've yet seen—mod­
est—dignified—kind:—and I've two bright girls with me, my
cousin & Lady Trevelyan's\(^1\) little niece—a wonderful child
of 14, full of sweetest mischief, and noble promise:—only now
that I'm left alone with them every breeze and sunbeam
frightens me lest they should get ill—and I believe they're
as much harm as good by making me anxious,—but they keep
me from doing any work, and enjoy themselves, mightily, and
make friends wherever they go, in the funniest way—generally
getting spoiled by all the world. They've got hold of a pretty
Oberlandaise of 17, here; very simple and sweet—and the
only mountain girl I've ever spoken to who had any romance
in her: but this one is as full of German fairy-worship and
fancy as one could wish her; We had all a fine long ramble
through the rocky glens yesterday; and met an old peasant—

\(^1\) Paulina Trevelyan (b. 1816), wife of Sir Walter Trevelyan of
Wallington, Cheshire, and one of Ruskin's closest friends. She died at
Néuchâtel, a few weeks before this letter was written, while visiting the
Continent with her husband, niece (Constance Hilliard), Ruskin, and
Ruskin's cousin, Joan Agnew. Lady Trevelyan was a woman of modest
literary, scientific, and artistic abilities. Carlyle spoke not unkindly of
her, and she was a friend of Dr. John Brown, author of \textit{Rab and His
Friends}. She reviewed Ruskin's \textit{Pre-Raphaelitism} and assisted him with
some of the drawings for \textit{The Stones of Venice}. 

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just at one of the turns of a rock path, with a white orchid in his hand. His instant presentation of it to my cousin, as a matter of course, the moment he looked at her, made us all laugh—afterwards.

I am going to let them see Lucerne & Schaffhausen and so bring them home very early in July: a line to poste restante Schaffhausen would be sure to reach me—but do not write unless you care to tell me something. I know how much you must have to do.

Ever gratefully Yours

With sincere regards to Mr Cowper

J Ruskin
Dear Mrs Cowper

You have given me a useful lesson as to the folly of hoping for sympathy, and the rudeness of asking for it—in matters such as I have lately teazed you about; yet I wonder, with all your pretty ways and sweet feelings in little things—(about my mothers netting for instance—) that you can give it me with this wholly unconscious severity—and write—"we are not going to H. town"—with more careless ease than I should feel in disappointing a child of a promised coming down to dessert—I wish we were all children—you make me acutely feel myself a very foolish old person. "You say you must be bright as you looked"—I was not bright that evening. You and Mr Cowper were both tired—I did my best not to be a heavier burden on you than I could help—and I was grateful to you for wearing my mother's shawl—and a little foolishly happy in thinking I should be grateful to you for—not the sort of lesson you have given me now.

—I have forwarded your letter to Miss Hill.

—During the summer of 1866—Ruskin had returned from the Continent on July 12—he tried to persuade Mrs. Cowper to intercede at Harristown, with Rose's family, on his behalf, as the conclusion to Letter 40, dated September 1, indicates. Thus this letter must have been written before September 1—hence the date suggested. The curt tone shows the strain Ruskin's request placed upon his friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Cowper.

—Octavia Hill (1838-1912), reformer and, for a number of years, an assistant to Ruskin in minor artistic matters. She interested him in improving housing for the poor and was tireless in her efforts for social amelioration. Her allegiance to Ruskin never faltered, although their friendship was subject to not infrequent stress. She was—to sound a topical note—one of the founders of the National Trust.
Dear Mrs. Cowper

You must now forgive me for having put you to this pain, and I will quite trust your kindness henceforward:—but consider a little how impossible it was for me to feel otherwise than I did. Your letters have always been very short—on this subject, sometimes in illness—sometimes in haste—unavoidable—as I am now assured—but having always the aspect to me, of getting quit of the matter with fewest possible words. Now—you are the only person—to whose judgment, feeling—and world-knowledge I can trust in this matter—who knows Rosie. I have one friend—Edward Jones—whose judgment I could trust (if he did not love me too much)—but he is not a woman—and not in this world. You are the only creature who can guide me—and every one of your letters seemed an avoiding of the subject, which I thought was partly because you did not like the pain of otherwise and more directly discouraging me; and partly from not perceiving how much I felt.—Your answer after reading those letters of hers (looked for, you certainly do not know how anxiously)—was only an inevitable line—sent in the hurry of packing—and in the very gist of it—uncertain to me in its meaning.

“She certainly loves you—though it may have been then with a child’s love.” (Does this mean that you think it is likely now to be more than a child’s—or only that it has been or may have been—never anything more?)—I thought you would write again—and tell me more of what you thought; and when you were going there—and say that it was cruel of them

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22 The tone of this letter, the reference to Octavia Hill, the remarks upon the visit to Harriotown, and the mending of the little disagreement between Ruskin and Mrs. Cowper indicate, plainly, that it was written very shortly after Letter 36.
to separate me from her so sharply at once, after these years of love: And then your little note came—looking, mind you, as if it had been only written at all because you did not know Miss Hill's address,—and speaking of the not going to H.town as merely a slight disappointment to me! Surely you cannot wonder that I felt rebuked; I sat still a little while, with my eyes full of tears;—and then I tried to put myself in your place—and I said, "Suppose now—I were in the world, as she is—knowing many histories of people, (as she must—full of far deeper interest, as romances, than this poor foolish little story of mine)—and suppose that a woman, older than myself, and quite out of the world, and knowing little of me, but that I had recently been kind to her; and with no other plea than that she had loved me ages ago without my knowing it—should come to me, and tell me her foolish too-late love—and expect me to be interested in it and to help her in all ways that I could—What should I do? or think?" And then I answered to myself, "Surely, it is not quite so bad as that!—the difference of sex does make a difference in the fitness and grace—and even possibility, of such a thing—But even so—though I'm afraid—I should write her very short letters and put an end to the business, speedily, I should say precisely what I did feel—or not feel about it and give what advice or small pity I could, and decline acting, or hearing further—in so many plain English words—I would not answer in a hurry, nor with notes that wanted an address."

This was what I said to myself—and so I made up my mind that I ought to be angry with you, and so wrote as I did. And now do not think I tell you this in continued distrust. I tell it you only that you may understand what I felt. I quite trust you again as I did:—only you must give me your address and let me write one grave letter to you telling you why I want you so much to see her. For you must go to Harristown, please—at least—if you would, if I were on trial for my life, and you had possession of the only facts that were likely to save me—if you would go then—go now, if it is made any wise possible for you on their side, or by circumstances. For you alone can find out for me whether Rosie is acting only in childish love and pity, or whether there is indeed any feeling
on her side, deep enough for me to trust to, to secure her happiness with me; deep enough to justify me in persevering as I secretly persevere—against the absolute device of both her parents.—You only have tact—tenderness and enough of Rosie's confidence—to find out this for me. You may not be able—with all—but at least try for me. I can be patient—for any years of years—but—I want to be assured that I ought to be patient. Ever gratefully yours

JR.
Letter 38

Denmark Hill, s. 6th August 1866

Dear Mrs Cowper

My mother was deeply touched by your kindness in the matter of the poor little Penelope-work—(pictureless—as befits work done with no hope of any one’s return—) That it found some favour with you was a great wonder and comfort to her—the feeling of being useless is one of her chief troubles. I was coming in to try to see you this afternoon, but the gusts of windy rain make me uncomfortable (or my coachman)—and I’m not sure whether you are in town. So I write to ask—and also to say what I perhaps should not in speaking say clearly, that I was sorry, as you were, that night—for Mr Home—and that in all the manifestations of this new power I have great sense of a wrongness and falseness somewhere—It seems, in the best people, to mean some slight degree of nervous disease: while in most of the instances I have heard of—or seen—it has not been manifested at all to the best people,—or the wisest. You, I believe know some mediums who are wise and good and—beautiful:—But All my experience (little enough)—huddles itself round the amazing fact that those two people the Marshalls whom we had always at Mrs Gregorys are mediums—and that you—are not. Again, I like Mr S. C. Hall; but he has assuredly all his life been doing mischief in his own editorial business,—he knows nothing about art, yet talks and works at it—in a wholly harmful and mistaken manner. And the spirits come to him. I am bold to say that I do know my business—and have worked at it, (in many ways erringly indeed)—but on the whole—rightly: and the spirits don’t come to me! Much more could I compare many of my unspiritual friends to their advantage, it seems to me, with Mr Home. Again I like Capt. Drayton—
and have no objection whatever to the spirits, for liking him too—only—much more—it seems to me—than to an officer in quiet scientific life at Woolwich. They ought to come to men like Henry Lawrence and Herbert Edwardes in their all-important and troublous work in India. And they don't. And finally—to Turner—or William Hunt—or Edward Jones, I find the spirits have no advice to give on the subject of art—though all these men would be—or have been the better for it—but I met a Greek painter the other day—evidently a very fourth or fifth rate kind of person (though pleasant & amiable enough,) and the spirits are painting his picture for him by moving his elbow. I can but tell you my poor puzzlements—opinions I have none—I have not had one clear impression of the thing at any time, and content myself as best I can, with waiting to see what will come of it. I have a good deal of “waiting” to do—just now—too sorrowfully saying of every Evening and Morning, “It is another day.” Will you give me the help of a happy hour—and tell me when I might hope to see you? With sincere regards to Mr. Cowper Ever faithfully Yours,

J Ruskin

23 Henry Montgomery Lawrence (1806-57), an extraordinarily able civil servant and militarist who was created K.C.B. for his services to the Crown in India, where he died of wounds received in a native uprising.

24 Herbert Benjamin Edwardes (1819-68), created K.C.B. shortly after his return to England in 1859. Edwardes was assistant to Henry Lawrence when the latter was British Minister in Lahore in the 1840’s; Edwardes was also an important figure in the reform of Indian civil administration. He was the subject of Ruskin’s Bibliotheca Pastorum IV: A Knight’s Faith (Works, XXXI, 375-510), in which Ruskin collates passages from Sir Herbert’s diary and from his Year on the Punjab Frontier, 1848-1849 (London, 1851). A Knight’s Faith, which grew out of a lecture Ruskin gave in 1883, did not actually appear until 1885.


26 Ruskin refers here either to William Henry Hunt (1790-1864) or to William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). It is more likely the former to judge from the feeling for his work that Ruskin reveals in Notes on Prout and Hunt (Works, XIV, 365-448). Also, Ruskin did not become intimate with Holman Hunt until 1869, when they met by chance in Venice.
Denmark Hill, s.

9th August, 1866.

Dear Mrs Cowper

It will be a great grace to me if you will just glance at these letters, that you may see a little what the child has been to me for so long, and how cruel it is of them to take her from me now so utterly in an instant—how cruel, and vain, because what human thing—that was human—could be made to feel less, merely by silence—after years of love. Her marriage, if they can bring one about to their mind, will hurt me far more, if it comes after a year or two of silence, than it would if they let me be to her still what I have been—until then—and hear from herself—in her own time and way, whatever she had to warn me of, or to comfort me for, by telling me she was happy. You know they always say they do everything (that kills me) for my sake. They do me double harm by this—first because I feel it an insult to be judged for, by them—secondly because it makes me doubt their truth—because I must know they are thinking as much of their own plans as of my pain. If they were generous enough to admit that she might care a little for me, and that that was what they feared—it would seem to me so much nobler and more right of them than pretending to reason for me unreasonably—(which neither of them can do—I do believe that Mrs La Touche has true regard for me but she has cut me through and through with a sword of ice—again and again—in some of her later letters—) —and, if they do fear for her—they are still foolish enough to stop the letters—for she is not likely any more than I—to alter her mind in any way during a forced silence—but if they were to let us write frankly, as we used to do—I would play them wholly fair, and treat her simply (as she herself told me she wished to
be still treated)—as my child-friend, and faithfully keep from writing anything with double meaning or with any passionate or entreating tone in it; but wholly as I would if I did not love her otherwise than they would have me. And it would be far the best and straightest way—in all respects.

—I don't mean you to be martyred by reading all this packet—but I chose out a letter or two from each year—that you might see the kind of way we were in. (She was ill—all through—in 64 and I had only a short note or two)—These are not what I should have liked to send you best—but some of the long nicest ones are too difficult to read—and the dearest ones I can't let out of their drawer—and others had little incomprehensible pieces about her brother and all sorts of things—and these were the inteligestist [sic] I could choose when I came home last night—for I've to be in town again this morning and will leave them at Curzon St.

—One thing you will much wonder at—the evidence of the teazing I was always giving her. This was the mothers fault—She was always telling me Rose did not care the least for me—(see comments on Bonneville letters)—so that I—too ready at any rate to think no one like Rose could care for me—never trusted her kindest words—till too late.

The letter marked "me at home," always amused and delighted me much. The little monkey knew so thoroughly all the time she wrote it that I would ask for nothing better than to find "only me at home."

Well—please understand how grateful I am to you, & tell me where I may write to you yet. I enjoyed my evening yesterday so much, & my mother was so proud about the red thing. Ever affectionately Yours

J Ruskin

82
Dear Mrs Cowper

I write instantly, with all thanks but I can’t say the things I want to say, to day—you must give me another address. I have a mass of business letters to answer today.

Only this. Do not fear hurting me. The sooner the hurt comes that must, the less it will be—All that you can say of discouragement—thoughtfully and sternly—is good for me,—but shrinking from the subject, or from what you would feel to be a true friend’s best faith respecting it, hurts me as much, and is not good for me. Tell me simply when it is difficult for you to know what to say. Tell me firmly, when you feel that you ought to say what must give me pain.—I do not—surely you must know that I do not—think highly of myself in any wise, but this I will say fearlessly of myself, that I am wholly above the hypocrisy of asking for advice—when my mind is made up and when I only want to be encouraged not advised. And I am above the folly of laying to the account of my friend, the pain she is forced to give me. I think as darkly and sadly of all this as you can possibly do for me;—only I dare not cast away the last hope of happiness I have, in mere impatience of trial in the winning it.—For mind you, I am too strong hearted to be broken to nothing by the worst that can come—and—when once I get into steady work, with all hope past—shall live in my twilight perhaps more usefully to others than if my good were to come to myself. But if the evil has to come, the more I am prepared for it by all advice & previous warning, the better I shall bear it.

—You will have no difficulty, now, I think in accomplishing the Htown visit—but give me another address first, and then I will write to my boy’s ideal.

Ever faithfully Yours,

J Ruskin.
Denmark Hill, s.  15th Sept. 1866.

Dear Mrs Cowper

I should have written before, but have been troubled by those great waves you are enjoying—they have devoured my poor Boulogne pilot,—at least—he is dead—his wife could only write to me, "Je suis veuve—et Jean Paul est orphelin." There never was a happier family. Mrs L. T. will tell you it is the best possible thing that could happen a man, to be drowned—as he says it is the best thing for me to be turned from his door. Or else that it all comes of praying to the Madonna. But then poor little Jean Paul prayed quite straight—morning & night—to the Bon Dieu, for father & mother and me.—Much we all seem to take by it!

Well, to put you at ease about your relations with Mrs L. T. I don't want to know a single word of what passes at Htown—I want and pray you to go there—in kindness & truth to all of us—(how otherwise could I ask you to go—if otherwise I could ask any one?—) to act—according to your power for—or against me as you see good. I know it will be for me if you can—rightly.

It is just because there is more clandestine character in the matter at present than I like, that I want you so much to go. The enclosed piece of letter of my cousins—(quite an unnecessary one, for I knew Rosie's mind perfectly before, and wanted no more messages except little dainty bye ones of no consequence)—will however be now serviceable in enabling you to understand clearly the relations between Rosie & me. Verbally & formally—and in all practical right—she is wholly free—she has promised nothing—I would not accept even as much as she would have given. But in inner fact and force of things—I am certain that for the next two years she is
mine:—I am as sure she will not alter her purpose of keeping her heart free, till then, as that the Liffey will not run backwards. Now her father & mother have no conception of this—and I do not like the position at all. All their plans for her will be thwarted for more than two years, by circumstances of which they are wholly ignorant—if things stay as they are.

If you think this right—I will say, & think no more—but rest.

But I want you to let Rosie talk to you—if she will. It is as much a kindness to the parents as to any one else. They have not her confidence—cannot have: The father cannot—because she knows he does not understand me and cannot judge for me—and Rosie is always acting now for me, not for herself. The mother cannot—because we were once very dear friends, and the power of the daughter over me justifiably now pains her with a not ignoble jealousy—for the mother is in many ways greater-gifted than Rosie—and feels that she ought to have been always principal in power over me—which may perhaps be true—but she can’t understand that she can’t be to me what Rosie can—she thinks I ought not to need anything else than full friendship now that I am so old, and then, this is complicated with the real womanly weakness and unavoidably womanly pain of dethroned—or abdicating, beauty. But this makes her bitter & scornful, & separates her from Rosie. So the child is alone.

Now, you know all. Do now as you think best—and tell me nothing of what you judge or do. My own view—disturbed as it is by wild hope and wilder pain—is yet sternly this—that if Rosie loves me wisely,—there would be a great deal to write, about this little apparently forgotten word. But you can write that, all, yourself. Things are all right;—the clandestine colour—or discolour—cannot be helped—for a time—for her health would not allow her parents to act with decision—even if they knew all—(if she were quite well & strong I should not allow things to be as they are for an instant).

But if she is only acting in pity for me—and childish tenderness—things are all wrong; and very cruelly ordered for me—and dangerously for herself.
There is yet another element I want to know—the degree of absolute final resistance which the father would offer—and the mode of it—This—as far as you can discover and tell me, I think you honourably & kindly may—if you cannot without pressing wrongly or imprudently of course you will not. The one main thing is to let Rosie have you to speak to.

Yet, observe, I don’t want you to tell me even which way you think it is. But to guide Rosie—as far as you can.

And so I leave all to your loving kindness.

Ever gratefully yours

J Ruskin.
Denmark Hill, s.
28th September. 1866

Dear Mrs. Cowper

Your note has made me very happy. I felt always convinced that you did not know how much ground for hope I had—but you seemed to think it so fearfully impossible that she could care for me that I couldn’t tell you. Not that I can believe it a bit, myself, only it was terrible to find you so incredulous too. I don’t mean that I distrust the child’s word or faith. I am as sure of her as of the standing of the Jungfrau crest, for what she has promised—only I don’t know if it is pity—or love—that stays her—and it makes all the difference.

It was pretty and right of you to scratch out “patient,” but Jacob was not so astonishing a person neither. Only give me his chance! let Mr. La Touche take me for a herdsman—at Harristown—give me a shed to sleep in—and the husks that the swine did eat, for food—and see if I should tire! But, as it is—I am so sick already for the sight of her, that—if it were not that it would plague herself, I would go to Ireland now, and lie down at their gate—and let them do what they chose with me, but I would see her. It is strange—I never heard in any story—or any history—(that’s not a right distinction—but may serve) of any lover’s doing that—yet it seems to me the simplest thing to do. How could they help themselves—if I chose to do it?—They might have me carried away—if they chose to have talk over the whole county—but I should simply come back again, & back. What could they do—but let me see her. I would make terms for an hour’s look, and no talk.—I would do it instantly, if it were not for teasing her.

For one thing—you will never hear me complain again of lifes being too short—or if I do—(God grant it may ever again
be happy enough to make me do so)—it will only be that part of it is. For I have lived a long sorrowful life in these last six years.

Rosie is a real Irish child—whatever else she may be. Fancy her telling Joan that “now I had waited so long, it couldn’t much matter to wait that little bit longer!”—a fine reason—truly. It’s just eight hundred and twenty eight days—twenty four hours long each—to her 21st birthday. And its eight hundred & fifty eight to the day when she told me I might “ask the same.” And to think how long one hour is!—when one’s waiting, for some things.

Well—you know it isn’t of any use to talk about it with reference to your visit there. For first—you must be able to say that you are not going to communicate with me on the subject at all. Of course I would not ask you to give her any message: and as I wrote to you before—I shall not ask you to tell me anything. I want her to be able to speak to you, but I have a notion she will be so closely looked after during these two days that she will have no chance. Thank you always however for going—if you do go. But I should’nt be surprised if M’r La T. said that there were disagreeable people there and that you would’nt be comfortable. I am past all of disappointment now,—except for my one beacon light:—nothing remains to me—all my delights are gone—and my friends dead—or lost—M’s La Touche herself is the very ashes of what she used to be to me, and in little things—all goes adversely to me.—I am sure you won’t go, after all. But I must write you one little line tomorrow—please bear with me.

Ever yours,

J Ruskin

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27 Which occurred on January 3, 1869.
28 That is, her hand in marriage, which he had already requested on February 2, 1866.
Letter 43

Denmark Hill, s.

29th Sept'. 1866

Dear Mrs Cowper

Yes this once more!

Yesterdays letter was only to talk a little—uselessly—except that it lets me breathe—for a little while—when I may talk of her. But this that I have to say today is more needful.

Look here: I know the La Touches don't know what they are doing—or they would not do it—and I can't make them understand—you may, a little. They could no more do this to me that they are now determined on, if they knew & felt the meaning of it, than they could fasten me to a pillar and saw me in sunder. They would not dare to do that—would neither have courage nor physical cruelty enough to give me ten minutes sharp pain and end me;—yet they think nothing of poisoning my life and thoughts day by day and killing me with an infinite pain. They took the child away from me—practically—four years ago—and since that day of April 1862, I have never had one happy hour,—all my work has been wrecked—all my usefulness taken from me—I am not given, indeed, to think much of that—and yet I know there are many who love me—whom I might have loved and helped—whom I cannot love because of this—though I could have loved dearly through her;—there are hundreds—literally hundreds, whom I know—among my work people alone—who are all more or less paralysed and broken because I am, I, who, weak as I might be—was once their leader—and now have no strength or heart to lead them. And there are others—(surely many others?—) who were more or less helped by my work—and would have been, by its maturer energy—far more—who are now discouraged by every word I say
—and all through this. You may tell me it ought not to be so—but it is so—and will be. I don't say I ought not to be braver—But I am not. There is a little good in me—which, helped, might have been great good. No man of honester or simpler purpose lives—no man more merciful or just—I say it fearlessly—no man of kinder heart (if you will carefully distinguish kindness from affection—for I never loved many—and now—but this child, none) and yet, I am denying myself many things that I may help those whom I have never seen. And this might all have been carried up and on into bright life—if these two people—one "religious"—the other saying that she loves me had but trusted—the one his God—and the other, the truth of her daughters heart & mine, so far as to deal with mere justice by us both. It is not as if they had been asked to risk their daughters happiness. It was not I who would have asked for help at that cost. If it would indeed not be well for her to come to me, I would live on the other side of the world rather than she should. No man could be more easily convinced of this,—if this be so;—only it must be by my own watching—and by the words of her own lips. They ran no risk in letting us be as we were—no risk whatever in any wise. My pain might have been—in one way, a little greater—but it would have been acquiesced in—sustained resignedly,—without indignation—with full acknowledgment of God’s hand in it, with conclusive putting it in His hand again—and trust to Him of all my tears—which now—it is with sense of horror—and mischance—and doubtful, helpless—striving to the light—and writhing—as a worm “cloven in vain”—above all—with scorn of the “religion” which is so merciless to me—and through that—the doubt of all other. And they are doing the worst for themselves also. Had they left us free—nay, if they will yet leave us free now—and let Rosie write to me in her old way—no error at all is possible for either of us,—that which is best in this matter for her,—and for them therefore, must, as far as human truth can reach it, be hers and theirs—if they persist—indeed I may yet conquer them—but with farther loss of my own best life and irrevocable shadow between them and me—Or they may conquer me and kill me—and I doubt if it will be well for
them, even so.—for many, besides myself, it will be ill—"if anything is ill" (to counter your consolation [illegible]).

They may say—the mere contingency of my winning her is not to be endured by them—but why this? If they either of them believed one word of the one calumny abroad against me—they ought never to have let me speak to their child. If they do not, what else is there so dreadful in me?—I am old—(older now, by ten years for what they have done to me)—but many a youth is indeed older yet, and contingently nearer the dominion of the shadow of death. No human creature can say I have injured them.—Thousands can say I have aided them—I am pure-hearted—pure-bodied—many—both young & old—love me—the young most—and I love their daughter & have loved her—as few men ever love—young or old. I do not say or think that, for all this, they ought not to try to separate us: But assuredly not in the way they have dealt with me hitherto and are dealing now. They ought to leave both of us wholly free—and prove to me in a generous & human way that my love for her could not make her happy.—Then they would be troubled with me no more—and I,—whatever came to me—should know that I had "fallen into the hand of God—not into the hand of Man."

Indeed I will burden you no more, now, but will be

Ever gratefully yours,

J Ruskin.
Letter 44

Denmark Hill, s.

[October 6, 1866]29

Dear Mrs Cowper,

There's no post tomorrow—Forgive me—but I want you to have seen her—I could'nt wait till Monday to know if you had—and I may be hindered from getting into town tomorrow. —Again forgive me. Don't answer but one word—in any case. If you say there's no answer, I shall understand you have not seen her.—and I do not hope better (it is for the worst always with me, in these things)—only I could'nt wait.

Ever your grateful J Ruskin

I never meant, by the way to press this father. I wanted only to know if his resolution would be final under certain far away conditions. Of course his no is plain enough, as things are.—I have accepted that long ago.—I wanted only to ask how he himself would have me act, under certain conceivable conditions.

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29 It is clear in this letter that Ruskin is impatient for news from Harristown, which, as Letter 45 indicates, he did receive on October 6. It is most probable, then, that Letter 44 was written earlier on the same day, for the reference in it to “no post tomorrow” suggests that it was written on a Saturday, and October 6 was the first Saturday that Ruskin might have had news of Mrs. Cowper's Harristown visit (in this regard, compare Letter 43, written the Saturday before, with Letter 45, in which he acknowledges receipt of the letters “from her place.”
Denmark Hill, s.

6th October [1866]  

Dear Mrs Cowper

This is only to thank you for the three lovely little letters, from her place—and to say it is a great relief to me from one weary longing I had, that you have seen her & let her “open her petals” to you a little. You know I told you it was that intensity of pure heartedness which was always her great charm to me—but my great distress also. Religious enthusiasm is one thing—love, another. It is vain and foolish to confuse the two: They sanctify each other—(I say this deliberately—the Religion being profane without Love—as love with religion)—but the one cannot take the place of the other, and my own impression always is that Rosie really cares very little for me, but that the little is made to seem great to her own heart by the deep religious enthusiasm which directs it. And then you see that the whole question of what is right or wrong—wise or unwise—in this matter—depends on the faith that may be given to that Religion itself. If Rosie’s faith is well founded—she and I are alike safe in what her God will guide her to. But—? —That is the fatal sign which has taken the place of the †—for so many of us now—and all depends on the answer to that. If unanswerable—it seems to me that all worldly wisdom would consist in refusing to let Rosie go on in this trust—by refusing myself to trust to it.

—But I have trespassed on you already too long beyond thanks. I hope you yourself enjoyed the Harristown visit a little & Mr Cowper.

30 The letter reveals that Mrs. Cowper actually did go to Harristown for Ruskin. The year, then is 1866, as other letters dealing with this visit are so dated.
I wait—still anxiously—your fuller letter. My own health seems failing fast & steadily at present & this makes me look very darkly on all things—much more so than this spring, when I came to you first to ask for help.

I liked my little flower—only please don't call it "toad flax"—It is the "Erba della Madonna" of the Venetians—

Ever gratefully Yours,

J Ruskin

You got both my long letters, I hope?
So good of you, to write when you needed rest so much.

Denmark Hill, s.
9th October [1866]

Dear Mrs Cowper

I can’t thank you anyhow enough, but don’t you feel now why I was so wild with disappointment when you wrote first you wer’nt going? I knowing how the child needed you—My cousin has a lovely letter from her today saying “she feels as if you had taken the greater part of her away with you.” She was so happy in the little talks you gave her and in the before dinner ones with Mr Cowper and you. I’m very thankful to have you both now with me.

I’ve to go down to Harrow today to talk to the boys, and I can’t trust myself to begin writing anything that is in my heart—only then poor thanks. Ever yours

J Ruskin

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31 Ruskin refers in the text to his visit to Harrow, where he lectured on October 9, 1866—hence the year ascribed.
Dear Mrs. Cowper

I cannot come to Curzon St but my cousin would like very much to be with us in the evening. So we will both be at 45 Gt Marlborough St—waiting—before ½ past eight—do not be in any concern to be severely punctual—it will not matter if we wait for you. With love to Mr. Cowper, always affectionately Yours.

S t C.

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32 It is not possible to date this letter more closely. The formal address to the Cowpers is seldom used by Ruskin after the spring of 1868, and "St. C." is not used until the autumn of 1866.
Letter 48

Denmark Hill, s.

18th Oct. 1866

Dear Mrs Cowper

Indeed I would fain come—but I dare not talk—or hear about her just now. I am strangely weak and ill, and it seems wrong to think of her, or hope in the least, and this is very bitter and terrible to me, and I’m looking horrid and old and pale, and I’m ashamed that you should see me—I got chilled at Kensington the other day and have cough coming on which may shut me up for some days:—it will be an excuse for looking ill however afterwards, and then I’ll come—please don’t forget anything in the meantime—because you know—if you let me ask—I shall ask—ever so many things. Only, you know, it was’nt so much for me, as for her, because I knew she had no one to speak to—that I wanted you so much to go there—for I knew enough to rest on—for myself—only I wanted you to know her—and to be able to comfort me—or at least to pity me, with the understanding you now have of the pain—and of what she was to me—and is—and may be—to all—except me. So deep thanks for the letters.

And do not any more think there was any word wrong in what you wrote, because it made me angry. It was simply the saying, to you, that it “could never be”; because however fixed their own thoughts may be, it seems—(it is, to my judgment)—deep insult to say this to my friend. For why am I so utterly inferior to—such a poor clergyman as they let Emily33 once give hope to—her brothers tutor—as to make it their resolve to see me die rather than let me also have so much as one ray of hope?

33 Who, in 1865, married Major the Honourable Bernard Ward, fourth son of Viscount Bangor.
—Do not answer this note—I only wanted to explain my feeling to you—there was not one syllable in your letter except the mere repetition of the saying which you felt it due to me to repeat. Do not vex yourself any more for me now—you have done all you can, in the loveliest way.

Ever with affectionate regards to Mr Cowper

Your grateful S* C.
Dear Mrs Cowper,

Perhaps I give you too much pain, and make you think less hopefully of me, by expressing these passionate thoughts. But it is not that I cannot master them and myself, as far as expression, or conduct, is concerned—only I want Rosie and you to understand the pain.—You do—though not quite the manner of it—she does not, and yet I cannot reject the thought of her being in some way inspired and commissioned to teach & save me, and it is all so wonderful, in its bitterness.

Look here—If I were lying wounded—bleeding slowly to death—and Rosie were withheld by her father from coming to bind the wound—she would not then be content to bid me "not stir—lest I should break the charm." Now this is literally so—in a far deeper sense. Every hour of this pain takes more life out of my soul—It may, if I conquer it—(even supposing she never can help me) give me a certain calmness of bitter strength which I had not before, but otherwise it is simply making my heart cold and my hair grey—at a time—at the time, in all my life, when I most needed the help of any one who loved me. Do not think that I underrate the help she gives me—and if things were indeed as she fancies—if it were possible for my mind to become like hers in its mode of rest—such help would be all I needed. But it is because God does not teach her the difference between her & me, that I doubt all her messages.

34 It was about this date that Rose sent Ruskin the verses mentioned in paragraph three of this letter. (See Derrick Leon, *Ruskin: The Great Victorian* [London, 1949], p. 371. Hereafter referred to as Leon.)
One word of common sense, as to the kind of life which she believes we might live together—counting justly the difference of age—circumstance—temper & the like—and the way in which supposing herself to love me, she could bear with the difference in our faiths—one word, I say of simple forethought and advice, whether such advice related to the contingency of her accepting or refusing me, would be worth a thousand verses to me, just now. I know you cannot get this—it is not in her power—and would not consist with her present ideas of her duty, to say anything of the kind,—and for such thought & tenderness as she expresses—do not think me ungrateful—but—forgive me—it is just because I have such perfect confidence in her truth and love that I don't much care for these pretty sayings—if I could write to her, I should say, My pettie, do you think after, through six years of my unbelieving, petulant, querulous love for you, you have never failed for a moment in your steady tenderness of care for me, that I doubt you now, when you know how intense the love was, and is;—(unbelieving and petulant because so great). Do you think I cannot trust you for three years—when I have tried you since you were a child? I know perfectly that you think of me—pray for me—and would and will—save me from all evil in your power. You need not send me any words to tell me this. But that which I do distrust in you, is knowledge of yourself—of me—of the world—and one word showing that you knew the real pain I was suffering, and that you had any clear conception of what my life was likely to be in either alternative, (your acceptance or refusal of me)—would give me more peace than a thousand texts.

So it is not a desperate wicked refusal of God's goodness in giving me so much of her, or of His voice—through her. I want you to see this clearly. I am so desperate, because I cannot feel it to be God's voice at all. And yet, I am always less sorrowful on the days when I most listen to it.

Ever your faithful S* C.
My kind φίλη,

Your letter was a great comfort to me last night, and made me feel rich—with even a little more than the riches it told me of—in its wise friendship. I think—if when I am better, you would drive out this far, some bright day—I would ask you things less nervously than in your own drawingroom—where I’ve always a sense of your having to forbid people to come in, when I want to talk about Rosie—or that if you hav’nt—they’ll come in just when I’m getting absurd about her, and I never feel at ease for a moment. Besides I think there are some sketches here by Edward Jones which you would like better than anything you have seen of his.

My good physician-friend John Simon, who is in my heart in all ways and in all things—has been here—all the forenoon nearly; and he laughs at me for thinking myself old & ill—or at least irremediably ill—and says—if I would only be happy—and not halt between two opinions—and look on this thing as settled—and take the happiness of it without doubting, it would come all right.

I had a great deal more—oh, so much more to say—but there’s no time left now—I had written this enclosed note for lady Florence for you to give her—and to ask her forgiveness for me—for I’m very fond of her.

—And I’ll write and tell you when I’m a little less ashamed of myself, & ask you to come to talk.

Ever with affectionate regards to Mr Cowper, Your grateful S{t} C.
If you think you could send me a word or two today, my servant would come at any hour you order, for the [answer?].

Denmark Hill, s.
[Early November, 1866]

Dear Mrs Cowper

I am not ill; but dare not come to see you—or ask you to come to see me, being only able to get on by forcing myself to hard work—and dashing the other thoughts down the moment they come—that is why I have not come—If you could help me, or if I could help myself, in any way, I would come to take counsel with you, but I think nothing can be done yet. The father’s letter to me was insolent in the last degree—and I have never been able to do the slightest good by any appeal, or reasoning, to, or with him: I answered it firmly—not uncourteously, but I do not know what to tell him now, which those letters he has read have failed to tell him.

To the mother, who thinks me “faithless to her,” what can I more say. Which of us is really faithless to the other. She—who caused me years of pining misery & doubt—by words concerning her daughter which now she calls it treachery to repeat—or I—who never spoke word of any human being of which I feared the repetition to them—or to all the world?

—But for her,—any one of Rose’s many letters would have given me passionate joy & peace; and there were years of life in every sentence of them. She destroyed them all—slowly

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36 The close relationship between this letter and the one immediately following seems to justify the conjectural date. In both Ruskin refers to correspondence he had with Rose which her parents have read; further, the similarity of the references to Mrs. La Touche in both letters is revealing; and, finally, the question of whether or not Ruskin should write to Mr. La Touche comes up in both letters.
murdered me, day by day, and now she calls it treason, because I cannot lay my whole heart bare to the woman I love, without also telling her what it was that so long kept me from esteeming or understanding the deep grace she did me.

Yet I can forgive the mother all this,—but there is one thing I shall now never forgive, the miserable selfishness with which she now broods in anger over the momentary estrangement between her daughter & her—(accusing me of it instead of herself) and has no remorse for the sorrow she has caused me—nor thought—seemingly—for the bitterer sorrow which she hopes is for ever to dwell with me.

Ever your grateful S* C.

If you still think there is anything I can with any hope of good, say to the father—tell me—and I will write to him and send you the letter to look over and forward or not as you think best.

†I enclose it—with my answer.
Letter 52

Please—one line, to say your cold is better.

Denmark Hill, s.

4th Novr. [1866]37

Dear Mrs. Cowper

I cannot write of these things—it is all terrible to me—and words are useless. I can neither tell you, nor any of them, what I would the more I say, the less they understand. I cannot retract anything I wrote of Mrs. La Touche; Her "help him to forget us" is to me the Sin of Sins;—hopelessly frightful—unforgiveable—base—I do not mean unfor­giveable in the common way—for when I have once loved any creature, I am true to them to the death—theirs or mine—through whatever decay of soul or body: and whatever she became—however she changed—I change not. But I mean un­forgiveable, in that since she spoke those words—(not spoken first now) she never could be to me again what she was once—if you only could know how sacredly and devotedly, in all that was possible to me, in pure truth to her as wife and mother, I loved her, and would have—what would I not have done for her—except leave her: as she bade me—to her poor world of shadow and nameless—purposeless being—And then she says—"Forget," when this love has become

37 Though 1868 is penciled on the MS, 1866 seems the more likely date because of the connection between this letter and the one that follows, which is dated November 11, 1866. In both there is talk of a possible letter to Mr. La Touche, with the hesitation about sending it perhaps providing the link between the two letters. Also, the quoted "forget" of Letter 53 seems a deliberately ironic echo of Mrs. La Touche’s "Forget" in Letter 52.

Further evidence against the 1868 date is provided by Letter 91 below, which is dated November 30, 1868. The wording of Letter 91 strongly suggests that Ruskin is communicating with Mrs. Cowper for the first time since his return in October, 1868, from a trip to France. It is thus unlikely that he would have written to her on November 4, 1868, from his Denmark Hill address.
involved also with a deeper still—for which there was no true hindrance but that which she and her husband have now wrought indeed, in murdering me slowly—day by day for years,—for this—for ever—I shall charge them with—& judge them for—as in dying—for this is the bitter thing to me—that now I believe the best that they could grant—and all Rosie's sweet faith & pity—come too late. Did Rosie show you those letters?—Did you too misunderstand them?—I have been dazzled into some hope since then; but when I wrote those—I had no hope. The last words I spoke to her alone—in finally parting—were You know I have no hope. She said "why should you not"? I answered—"Rosie—you cannot have read those letters carefully—or you would understand why I cannot." For the letters were—in all the compass of them—just the repeating of one word—"Too late, Rosie, love." Too late.—They were all but a refusal even of the promise she gave & has repeated to you—and now they blame me for telling her the whole truth of what I had felt for her—My God—would they have had me refuse the child's grace to me—and not tell her I loved her?—not tell her the truth about all that had kept me from understanding her sweet ways and thoughts—till it was too late. If she is a child—and they can turn her as they think—away from me—it will ennoble her—not harm her, to remember that she was so loved—and by me. If she is a woman—much more—in answer to her first word of tenderness to me—had she the Right to know my heart—from the first to the last;—its fullness of love I could not have told—I did not permit myself even to attempt to tell.

I wrote the enclosed to the Master— but do not send it him, even if you think it might do some good—I have never lied to my own soul—or to another—and there is a vain feigning of gentleness to him in this—which when I try myself—is not in me. For in truth—the only deep feeling about him in my heart just now is a kind of agony of thankfulness for his pain—the deep drawn breath of—as of one half slain—striking back.—It is of no use to tell me what I ought to feel—or ought to try to be to them—I cannot be but what I am—nor say but what I feel. Their misreading of these letters is

38 Evidently John La Touche, Rose's father.
very horrible to me, for I know with what entire nobleness and religion of passion they were written.

I only send this to thank you—and to show you I tried to do as you bade me. Nothing more can be done now—I have much—oh—how much—even through all this, to thank you for. Those words of her's which you copied for me—if they cannot give me hope—or make it right for me to hope—yet—how much do they not bring of strength and sanctification. Ever your grateful S' C.
Letter 53

Denmark Hill, s.

11th November 1866.

Dear Mrs. Cowper

On the morning when I received your note, I addressed mine to Mr. L. T. and was carrying it to the postoffice, when my cousin asked me about it—and besought me so earnestly not to send it, saying that "she had good reasons, if I would but trust her," that I yielded to her and for the present, laid the letter aside. Do not for an instant think that I take my cousin's advice instead of your's, but she has had some letters lately which I believe, from the little she tells me, would have modified your own judgment:—this at least I know, that Rosie is quite happy, writing little songs and stories,—that her father & mother have made it up with her;—that they write pleasant letters to my cousin—and if they choose to ignore me—let them. I don't mean that Rosie does or ever would: but her religion keeps her happy, and, for her father and mother, they have now treated me too insolently to make it even right for me—with any respect either to Rosie or myself—to take farther steps—with any view to conciliation. For Rosie's happiness I would do anything (bear anything at least)—but that seems for the present enough secured—and I should probably only disturb it by any effort to alter the position of affairs. Besides—whatever I did or said, they would not let me write to her—far less see her—and if not—what does their opinion of me matter to me. They will "forget" it, some day—whatever it is. I am not well—but working hard at some bits of natural science, which I can still feel interest in—I don't want to write about anything that would wake me, or make me feel. Forgive this seemingly thankless note—and disbelieve all that so seems in it.
Ever with affectionate regards to Mr Cowper. Your grateful S't C.

I should have told you before I had not sent the letter—but thought my cousin might change her mind—however, she still prays me earnestly to be quiet.
Dear Mrs. Cowper

I knew that was the chief reason for your not writing. I thought also you might be allowed to help her more, if you were known to give no help to me. It is better so. Neither you nor she, poor little thing, can help me now. If she could understand the suffering and the deadliness of it & how it kills the body and does not purge the soul, she might help me—not thus—Not by grave words one day—& going to the Crystal palace within two miles of me to amuse herself the next. By the way—I have a great curiosity to know—what any of the people thought that day she had the headache, & left—last year—Lady Florence—or her brother—or your husband himself? Did they think that she disliked me, and that I was annoying her?

There is no estrangement between me and Joan—I did a selfish thing and risked—and cost her, three days of pain, sharp enough, poor thing, in one last frantic effort to save the father & mother from fulfilling their work upon me. I besought him for Christ’s sake—that I might see her face once more—He answered in such terms as—A Banker uses to his clerk I suppose—but the words did not matter—the deed is hardly believable to me yet.

You know—it is very pretty of her to be so anxious that I may be helped by sacrifice. Do you think she in the least knows what help there is in not being able to eat—nor sleep—

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39 The textual reference to the gospel readings “last night” is directly connected with *Diaries*, II, 612, under entry of February 25, 1867, where Ruskin records his reading of the Epistle and Gospel for the first Sunday in Lent. It is clear, then, that the letter was written “at two in the morning” of February 27 and continued later in the morning of the same day.
and moaning about my room, as I am just now—at two in the morning?—If I lie down—I shall only toss there—to & fro—I can’t read—I can write—to you—to no one else—

I got her prayerbook—by true chance, as far as she was concerned—by God’s grace indeed—as I have written in it—on my birthday, and though I had given up specialty of morning and evening reading as superstitious—I have gone back to it for the book’s sake, now—and read a little bit—straight forward—irrespective of the day’s service or form—as much or little as I find good.

And it is strange. It seems always to strike me where I need to be struck, & to comfort me when I need comforting (more than always)—It would have saved me from doing that wrong which cost Joan such pain, if I had listened to it—it gave me the epistle for the 3rd S. after Epiph′, that morning. I tried it by Disobedience—and found it right—and now I feel as if I had committed a piece of the unpardonable sin. But it gave me the end of the gospel of the first Sunday in Lent, just when I was raging at myself worst, last night.

I knew she did not love me womanly—but I did not think she could have gone merrily wherever they wanted her—knowing I was in such pain—Or—not knowing it. If she had but had one headache for me—as once—against me! But the least she gave me—or none—would be enough for me—if only I could be near her always—and could be “cared for” only enough to make her happy.

Wednesday morning 8. oclock.—I have had some sleep—but I woke in the same horror—and I was going to write something horrid to you—but the book has said to me—“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law—do ye not hear the Law?” So I cannot. Write to me—if you do know anything about that old headache—And then, you can’t help me; so tell the old people you’ve done with me—& help her. Don’t think though that I think she needs help for any sorrow about me—Set her to love her mother better, for one thing—& to make her mother understand she does—She’s Cordelia—twenty times worse—if ever a girl was.

Ever yours. JR
Denmark Hill, s.

19th March [1867] 40

Dear Mrs. Cowper

Thank you so much for your note. I am a little better, and very, very thankful for this comfort which you—can't give me. So I take it,—and it is better thus, and that nothing should come between you and her just now, or shorten your power of helping her. But what will come of it? I do not want you to tell me anything of what she says, but I wish you would tell me something of what you yourself feel—as to the possibilities of happiness for her in granting mine—or endeavouring to grant it—for mine could not be, but in her’s. The intense hostility of the parents, now—(in answer to a stern statement of facts which I gave them the other day,) proceeding even to the length of gross and indecent insult—while it in no wise diminishes my chance of success—very materially affects the probability of happy future relations with them—not on their side, but mine. I do not know quite—how much I could forgive,—for love’s sake. But I can more easily conceive the fulfilment of any personal sacrifice—than the forgiveness of certain words & acts. I could die for Rosie, if it were my duty to do so—rejoicingly—but I cannot feel as if I could ever see her father’s face without scornful anger, but that is not what I meant. It is the thoughts you yourself have—as you see more of her—as to our fitness for each other—or unfitness—that I want to know.

40 The year ascribed is based on a number of textual references: Ruskin’s descriptions of the bitter March weather, expressions of increasing hostility toward Rose’s parents (from whom he had had unfriendly letters in February and March of 1867), the request both in Letter 54 and in this letter that Mrs. Cowper find some way of helping Rose, and the references to his prayerbook that are common in letters of the time. See Diaries, II, 612-13, for additional confirmation of the evidence.
It is very frightful & wonderful. The sense of demons in the dark air, and in the cold—joins strangely with my own bitterness, as if all the black cold were sent for me only. And it might be all so sweet & right & worthy of us all—but for the mere, sheep-like—stonelike stupidity of these Irish people.

Thank you again for your kind words about my mother.
As soon as spring comes, I want to see you.
Love to Mr Cowper.

Ever affectionately and gratefully Yours
S. C.

My prayerbook helps me a great deal—but I've got into the terrible Passion Week services—in reading straight through, and I never know how much or how little I should read. (Could you have fancied any religious people angry at this affair of the book!)
My kind φιλή

I do not think it is at all right for you to come out in this bitter weather,—if you caught cold, I should be sorry. Also I am in a state of black anger, into which the pain has gradually knit and resolved itself—(not with her, of course) in which I am not good—to see—or speak to. So wait till the days are kinder—and till I have got into my mechanical work & furrow again, and it will be nicer, every way: at all events the grass and flowers will be—though even they cannot quite forgive the Frost that kills.

Ever your grateful S't C.

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41 The date is suggested by frequent references in *Diaries*, II, 613, to the extremely bad weather of this month and by evidence in the diaries and other letters of this time of Ruskin's difficulties with Rose's parents, difficulties which perhaps explain the "black anger" of this letter and the "scornful anger" of the preceding one.
Dear Mrs Cowper

Your letter is not "nonsense"—but it seems to me that only one side of the matter is considered in it—Rosie is a very dear & noble child—but you must not think that all the conditions are to be of her making—If our faiths are to be reconciled, it seems to me quite as reasonable to expect that an Irish girl of 19, who cannot spell—reads nothing but hymn-books and novels—and enjoys nothing so much as playing with her dog, should be brought finally into the faith of a man whom Carlyle & Froude call their friend, and whom many very noble persons call their teacher, as that he should be brought into hers; The difference of age is an evil—but it never troubles me. It is difference of temper and of general habits of life which are really the things to be considered.

I have never seen an unhappy marriage between a girl & old man, when the marriage was really one of affection—the question is—is there the affection? For the relations with the Father & mother—the breach cannot be wider—on my side at least—and if you have lately had any communication with them—I should think you must have seen it was sufficiently wide on theirs—There is no possibility of reconciliation—contemptuous endurance is all that either of them can have from me—Rosie must come out from her country and kindred for me, like Ruth or Rebekah—or she is not worthy of the love I bear her—and she shall see it perish in white ashes rather than ignobly given to her. If she can join herself to my life and its purposes, and be happy, it is well—but I am not to be made a grotesque chimney-piece ornament—or disfigure-

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42 The textual reference to Rose's age establishes the year ascribed.
ment—of the drawingroom at Harristown. I will serve her with all the strength of my life—but not with its weakness—I should think by next week these equinoctial winds will have done howling, and my peachblossoms will be out. Then I want you to come here. I cannot come and dine.

Ever affectionately Yours

   St C.
My dear Mrs Cowper

I very resolutely abstained from writing, even to ask about your sister, in order that it might not seem as if I wanted to tease you into sending me more letters. But I am very sincerely thankful your anxiety for her is less.

Come any afternoon you like this week; but, if not tomorrow, let me know which it will be. Your little niece will like the garden at present, and seeing my bird's nests; and my cousin shall be at home to receive her.

Rosie is a darling little stupid Irish rose—to ask you to go to Cambridge and become a member of the University.

She can't mean the lecture I am to give at the Royal Institution—at least I took no means to inform her of that one—and it will be of no interest, such as she ought to ask you to lose an evening for.

With faithful regards to Mr Cowper

Ever gratefully Yours,

J Ruskin

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43 Marianne de Burgh, known in the family as “Mummy.”

44 Juliet (b. 1866), the adopted child of Charles Spencer Cowper (William's brother) and his wife Lady Harriett Anne, widow of Count d'Orsay. In 1869, the year of Lady Harriett's death, the Cowpers adopted Juliet.

45 Where Ruskin went on May 23 to receive an honorary degree and to deliver the Rede Lecture (Diaries, II, 618).

Dear Mrs Cowper,

It is very nice and kind of you to come on Friday, and I’ll try and mend the lecture\textsuperscript{47} a little in the dullest places—or rather, I’ll try and mend it in the best bits—and cut the dullest out—(—which will be sharp surgery—) and here are the only two reserved seats I have, for you & lady Florence: and two other places besides.

But please don’t ask me to dine—I should be always fancying some one was upstairs or in the other room. I can’t. I should like to meet Mr Oliphant\textsuperscript{48} better than almost any one; but I’m not fit for talking. By the way—I doubt not that Mr Cowper and you understand why I do not move in reply to the Times article\textsuperscript{49}—(if you chanced to see or hear of it)—and for the people who do not understand—I am content to let them think what they will. I shall simply republish my letters without a changed syllable—and take no farther notice of the matter—at least that is my present intention. If any notice, it will be in a word or two of preface to the letters.

Ever gratefully yours,

J Ruskin

\textsuperscript{47} See Letter 58, n. 46.

\textsuperscript{48} Laurence Oliphant (1829-88), a most bizarre Victorian. Author and diplomat, Oliphant nearly lost his life during an attack on the British Legation at Yeddo (Tokyo) in 1861. He subsequently came under the influence of the mysterious spiritualist and adherent to the occult, Thomas Lake Harris (see Letter 112, n. 34), and left England to join, in July, 1867, first at Amenia, N. Y., and later at Brocton, N. Y., a weird utopia controlled by Harris and known as the Brotherhood of the New Life. Oliphant lived for some time in America doing menial tasks and was later permitted by Harris to return to Europe. But it was not until 1881 that Oliphant freed himself from Harris’s domination, when he went with his wife to live in the Middle East. A recent and popular study of this strange man is Philip Henderson’s Life of Laurence Oliphant (London, 1956).

\textsuperscript{49} Of June 3, 1867. For details, which concern an unfortunate altercation between Ruskin and Carlyle, see Works, XVII, 481-82.
Letter 60

Denmark Hill, s.

14th June 67

Dear Mrs Cowper,

So many thanks—for writing so quickly. I fear indeed you had too true ground for your impression from the letter. I have none from Joan today. There must I think be one tomorrow, with some clue.

If I could spare the child any pain now—I would never trouble them more—but by no self-sacrifice can I help her—unless I know that she wishes it. It looks much like a Shakespeare tragedy (just now)—where all the misery is brought on by petty mistake—and all beautiful hope & strength cast away in vain. If I hear from Joanna tomorrow, whether good or evil—(good, alas, it cannot be—but may be less evil than I fear)—I will write to you.

If I were strong and cheerful otherwise and able for my work, I could wait in certainty of conquest and of making her happy—but I am weak & ill—and if the parents only give way when it is too late—and Rosie herself cannot save me—it will be a darker thing than any of them believe possible—They cannot understand, I suppose, that a man of my age can suffer for love like a youth—but who would not—for such a love;—She is so different from other creatures that nothing else can in any wise break the steady sense of utter want. She herself said to me once—"I think you ought to consider yourself very well off—to have Joan"—She said this quite seriously—with no shadow of jest, or jealousy,—meaning simply that Joan ought to be a great comfort to me, and that I ought'nt to whine so for my own own [sic] mistress—And Joan was there;—so that I could'nt answer.
—Why are you also sad—in that electric [sic] state? Your sister is better?

Ever affectionately Yours
St C.

I have sent you the book—my own copy—not writing your name in it because of its dark title. But keep it—it is all so beautiful—so far as I have read. And it must be—elsewhere.
Dear Mrs Cowper,

I am so thankful you are going to send the book, though unmarked,—but indeed I meant the marked copy for you. I thought you would not mind the mark in it. I make no effort whatever to say or convey anything to her, for I am quite sure of her faith in me; I know she never has a moment’s shadow of concern about that. She never had, from the day she was twelve years old—till now. All that troubles me is the fear she is deceiving herself in thinking she cares for me—and that when she sees me again, she won’t like me.—I’ve no more doubt of her, as long as she does not see me, than she has of me. But I think she is caring for a dream—not for poor me—or rather—caring for my mind and heart only; not for the burden and mortality that they bear with them.

What strange work it will be, when it comes fairly to the push—and the Father & mother begin to come to their senses—and feel where they are!

I’m going down into Scotland for a week or two—please send me a line—if after tomorrow to care of Lord Henry Kerr. Huntly Burn. Melrose. I always underline my pet bits—even in addresses—I don’t think I could have got myself stirred out of the shadow here—but for that last syllable.

Are you better? Send me word of that—and if the child seems less disturbed. My impression is they had forbidden her to write to my little friend Constance Hilliard,50 just at the time she wrote to you.

Love to Mrs Cowper. Does the East wind darken Panshanger—into the aspect of November—else why have you come back—what is the use of taking care of the parks now—the mob will soon be the Gardeners, everywhere.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin

50 A friend of Ruskin’s from childhood, she later became Mrs. W. H. Churchill. With Ruskin, Joan Agnew, Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan, she toured the Continent in 1866. See Letter 35.