PART IV
During 1869 Ruskin was busy with numerous interests and endeavors. Early in the year he lectured a good deal and in April went abroad, where he remained until the end of August. While he wrote Mrs. Cowper-Temple with some frequency, he did not request her mediation with Rose for him. He turns, in fact, to quite different subjects, commenting upon the selling of his pictures and upon his plans for resettling the Rhone valley; he expresses confidence in the work he is doing and describes a meeting in Verona with Longfellow. Upon his return to England he again demonstrates a catholicity of activities in writing his correspondent about French songs and French philology and by planning his Chaucerian scholarship; he also mentions lectures he gives, and, in a letter delineating his working methods, he offers Mrs. Cowper-Temple a preliminary sketch of *Proserpina*. Ruskin’s correspondence during these months seems, on the surface, singularly revealing of the intellectual pursuits of a cultured and exceptionally gifted Victorian aesthete and man of letters.

But his correspondence is nevertheless haunted by the pitiless theme of Rose La Touche. In several letters¹ it is apparent that she is much in his thoughts. In references to color and in descriptions of the natural scene, the play upon her name is constant. And the hostility previously directed against her

¹ Letters 103 to 108, for instance.
breaks forth again as Ruskin speaks of her leaving him helpless and as he attributes cruel motives to her. He resentfully mentions the restraint, the doubt, the fear, that prevented him from writing love letters to her. Thus, even in its seemingly undisturbed stages, their relationship is ever ready to erupt.

The year 1870 commenced lamentably for Ruskin. On January 7 he accidentally met Rose—who was visiting London—at the Royal Academy; at that time he offered to return her her letter of engagement to him, a letter he carried between “golden plates”; this she refused to accept. But the meeting lacerated him emotionally at a crucial time, for he was preparing his Oxford lectures (he had been elected Slade Professor of Fine Art in August, 1869) and needed both serenity and clarity of mind. In fact, this encounter had a catalytic effect upon Ruskin, Rose's physical presence stirring him so profoundly that early in February he wrote her complaining of her treatment of him and Joan Agnew. Rose, in turn, replied by a letter of February 21 which she sent to Mrs. Cowper-Temple to forward at her discretion; fortunately, this document, while preserved, was never sent to Ruskin. In it Rose accuses him of ignorance of her feelings, of being without faith, and of doing her an injustice in the intended dedication to her of his Oxford lectures. What makes Rose's letter so amazing and so revealing of her mercurial temperament is that within two days she had reversed her position entirely, as one can deduce from Letter 147—written on February 23—where Ruskin joyously informs Mrs. Cowper-Temple that Rose has come back to him, that “She will not leave me any more.” A partial explanation for this volte-face is to be found in Letter 151—written on March 20—where Ruskin clarifies the relations that have existed between Rose and himself for the past several weeks.

In the spring and summer of 1870 (from late April until late July) Ruskin toured Switzerland and Italy. But, as Letter 156 suggests, Rose was never far from his mind. That he communicated with her is seen in the Diaries. It is likely, too, that soon after he returned to England Mrs. Cowper-Temple

2 Leon, pp. 480-81.
3 Diaries, II, 697.
sent him a picture of Rose.\textsuperscript{4} Certainly, during this period he became sufficiently drawn once more to Rose to arouse the fury of her mother, for Mrs. La Touche, agitated by the renewal of relations and by reiterated intercessions of Mrs. Cowper-Temple, determined to separate her daughter finally from the older man. To do this she took a drastic step: in October of 1870 she turned to Effie Millais for the circumstances of her marriage to Ruskin some twenty years earlier.

Effie, sixteen years after the annulment of her first marriage, had evolved from the physically engaging if flighty young woman of the fifties into a stern disciplinarian, a true Victorian matron, encircled by a multitude of attractive children born of her union with John Everett Millais. Unwillingly drawn into the glare of Ruskin's sentient life, she responded\textsuperscript{5} to Mrs. La Touche's inquiries with a document charged with the accumulated hostility and virulent memories of years. After a cant expression of sympathy for the difficulty confronting Mrs. La Touche, Effie deplores the "mischievous influence of Mr. Ruskin" and condemns his "present statements"\textsuperscript{6} as "perfect falsehoods." She then annihilates whatever hopes Ruskin may have entertained toward Rose by damning his conduct as "dishonourable," "impure," and "discreditable." She can, she remarks, excuse his behavior only "on the score of madness" and denies that their marriage was ever arranged. His mind, she notes, "is most inhuman," and "from his peculiar nature he is utterly incapable of making a woman happy." After deploiring his influence over young minds, she sums up by remarking that "He is quite unnatural and in that one thing all the rest is embraced." To these vengeful words of Effie's Mrs. La Touche returned an appreciation for her candor and stated the belief that Rose was now beyond Ruskin's influence; also Rose, as a result of Effie's letter, had promised her father to have no further association with Ruskin. Neither was his name to be mentioned in the La Touche family again.

At this point, however, modern biography tends to neglect the subsequent emotional problems of 1871, problems which

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid., II, 701.
\item \textsuperscript{5} James, pp. 254 ff.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Regarding his sexual normalcy.
\end{itemize}
plainly—as the letters of the following part show—derive from the fiasco of the closing months of 1870. Early in 1871, as was customary when subjected to emotional stress, Ruskin threw himself into multifarious activities: the monthly installments of *Fors Clavigera*, letters to the press, lectures at Oxford. And while his letters to Mrs. Cowper-Temple decline in number, there comes, in June, a rush of communications suggestive of activities antecedent to their writing and involving his relations with the La Touche family. For, as Letters 164-67 and 169-70 show, Ruskin, by using William Cowper-Temple as an intermediary, tries to convince John La Touche that he is due another hearing by the family and that his legal position is a valid one. There are numerous references to documentary evidence pertaining to his first marriage, to the importance of the facts being placed before Rose, and to the necessity for her enlightenment regarding the “unjust evil-speaking against me.” That the question of marriage was still to the fore is apparent from Letter 170 and, indeed, from the medical examination mentioned in Letter 167. These distraught letters attest to Ruskin’s desperate suit and, with other domestic difficulties, are testimonials to the state of mind which induced the illness—part physical, part mental—that attacked him early in July, 1871, at Matlock.
My dear φίλη

It is so very kind & nice of William & you to come tomorrow. —I think the evening will be best—(for I am always tired and giddy in the afternoon after some difficult work in diagrams I have on hand:)—It is just possible that two very good and gentle people—Mr Stopford Brooke\textsuperscript{7} and his sister Honor, might be with us, also. I cannot prevent this—nor would I,—for they will bring no discord into our thoughts—but meet us in all that we shall care to speak of—I have no better friend than Mr Brooke—and I met his sister, in Ireland on the day you sent me the letter which told about the flowers—and the Madonna-herb.

Please come therefore in the evening—we dine at seven—it is not coming "to dinner"—but will be best so.

Ever your faithful S'C.

\textsuperscript{7} Stopford Augustus Brooke (1832-1916), Anglo-Irish parson and man of letters. After a distinguished ecclesiastical career in London and elsewhere Brooke withdrew from the Church of England in 1880 when he was no longer able to believe in the doctrine of the Resurrection. He was a well-known literary critic whose \textit{Primer of English Literature} appeared in 1876. Ruskin influenced Brooke's work noticeably.
Letter 100

Denmark Hill, S. E.
[ca. February 12, 1869]8

My dear φιλη,

I cannot write to you—but please send me the least line to say how you are—and if I can do anything for you. I can't write—for I have no feeling. What pain may do to soften—I know not; but me it has only hardened more & more—and now—it has done its utter work with me—and I have got into a mechanical habit of common thought and material business—I hear of the most helpful things—they do not help me—of the most sad,—they do not sadden—there is no sorrow left in me for anything—and yet perhaps it might not harm you to come and tell me something about that spiritual world—which is not mine—or about the grief—which I cannot make mine. Or perhaps to speak of other things—you know that tomb study I showed you? Can Grande. It is all settled now that I put all my strength (little enough—yet worth something) into careful study of the tombs of Verona, for the Arundel Society who will engrave the drawings—with others in farther illustrations and I will do the necessary part in writing—So I throw up all other plans for this, that I may do it as well as I can,—and shall get away to Verona as soon as the days open—& live under those tents of the dead.

Send me just a little word—please.

Ever with love to William.

Your affectionate St C.

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8 This conjectural date is based, primarily, on the textual reference to the Arundel Society, which existed from 1849-97. Ruskin received a number of commissions from this organization (see Works, IV, xlv-xlv), one being an examination of the tombs of Verona. Because of this Ruskin spent much of his summer tour of 1869 in Verona. And in Diaries, II, 664, under entry of February 12, 1869, he notes a visit to the Arundel Society which was doubtless to arrange for the studies in Verona. There are a number of entries in his diary—in May and in June, 1869—indicating the work he is doing in Verona on the tomb of Can Grande (Diaries, II, 669 ff.).
Letter 101

Denmark Hill, S. E.

4th March [1869]9

My dear φίλη

I want William & you and Miss Tollemache10 to come and meet Mr Stopford Brooke—but I don’t know how to manage it—Can you give me a choice of two days after you return to town? and we’ll do our best to deceive the adverse Stars.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin

Will you give my faithful regards to Lady Cowper—lady Florence & lady Annabel11 &—to Henry if he is there.

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9 Evidence for the year attributed derives from Letter 99 where Ruskin mentions a possible meeting between the Cowpers and Stopford Brooke.

10 A sister of Mrs. Cowper.

11 One of William Cowper’s nieces.
My dear φίλη,

It is so delightful that you can come to dinner. I want to get the Brookes to come with you—so I send first there, and I have told my servant to bring their answer, with this note to you,—please read it—and so you will be free for any other engagement on one of the days.

—Also—Would you mind coming to University College—you & William and Miss Tollemache ¼ of an hour before the time—that your Madonna's protection might be over my group of girlhood—it's a little awful taking in 4! by oneself—(I've got my Irish "Lily"¹³ over for a little while)—but with Williams help it would be all right. At all events I've written to the college people to keep seven seats for me in a good part of the room, and if you could come at ¾ past eight and stay in the carriage till I come it would be very gracious of you,—but if you are necessarily late I will give orders that you shall be shown to the seats—if you will take enclosed card with you.

—Ever your grateful St C.

¹² The textual reference to University College and the connection with Letter 101 suggest the possible dates for this letter. Ruskin is referring to his lecture on the "Greek Myths of Storm" given on March 9, 1869. This lecture, modified, became the first lecture of The Queen of the Air.

¹³ Lily Armstrong.
Letter 103

Denmark Hill, S. 6th March 1869

My kind φίλη,

I will stay in all day on Friday—(and Saturday—if you cannot come on the first day.) so you can just come at your own pleasure—only I want you to have at least the last ray of daylight. Shall I have a cup of tea for you at 5—or will you come to lunch—or just in your afternoon drive? Any way it will be well for me to see you. Can you tell me anything of this "odd trouble" of your own?

I wish you would try to make my queen understand—with thoughtfulness of heart, that Hagar\textsuperscript{14} would never have said "Thou, God, seest me," if He had dried up the well from the sand—instead of showing it; She would never have said that "God was better than the water-brooks"—until He had led her beside them. I think she feels that she has already wrought some higher & nobler thoughts in me—but she thinks it is the distress—not the hope, that has done this—and she has no conception of the degradation of the wrath in which I am compelled to live daily—because of what has been done to me.—It is even all but too late for even her to redeem me now from its darkness—these seven years of pain have so mortified the springs of life.

Ever your grateful St C.

\textsuperscript{14} Gen. 16.
Letter 104

Denmark Hill, S. E.

17th April. 1869

My dear φίλη

It is so pretty and dear of you to care about my poor pictures—but why should you think it mattered to me—now—what I have—or have not?—I have not—anything, more, in truth.—So long as I have working tools—and they are to be found cheaply—it does not signify to me whether I keep or lose—the Louvre.

But—my pictures are working tools, yet—and I'm not parting with them. Only quitting some that are useless to me to get finer. I can't afford to go on buying—so I must change worse for better—all that I have parted with I can well spare—and at one o'clock today at Christie's. I've given carte blanche order for four, which will be more useful to me than the forty that went away yesterday. Three very little ones—not larger than this open sheet—but with world kingdoms in them—if one cared to be King.

The Slaver is not gone—they did not come to my price—and it shall not go but worthily—I do not think less of it than I did—but I am so sick for rest that only the quiet, grey, old gentleness of leaf and sky are good for me.

Am I to see you before I leave—on the 20th? It does not matter to me—I care much more for you than to care to see you, and you are always my best help—seen or unseen.

15 From the textual reference to the sale at Christie's it looks as if Ruskin has dated this letter incorrectly. The sale of his paintings took place on Thursday, April 15, 1869. For details see Works, XIII, 569 ff.

16 Turner's "Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying" was purchased by John James Ruskin for his son in 1844. Ruskin disposed of it in the United States in 1872, and it is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Ruskin often mentions "The Slaver" in his work; his most perceptive discussion of it appears in Modern Painters, Vol. I (Works, III, 571-73).

17 Actually, Ruskin left April 27, 1869, for the Continent (Diaries, II, 667). This date of departure is corroborated by Works, XIX, xlvi, n. 4.
Love to William—I was so glad to see that anything that teazed him was at an end.

I’ve done the best I could—the very best I could—with this book\textsuperscript{18} that chance set me upon. The wind blows where it listeth—and it seemed to me it had its call to life—of a kind—and I have obeyed—as the dust of the valley obeys. There’s a word or two here and there—which only \textit{p}\textsuperscript{19} will understand—a little botany about leaves that grow among ruins—which people will say is fanciful—and some Darwinian notes on origin—no—on distinction—of species—lacertine\textsuperscript{20} and others.

And so goodbye. I’ll bring you your island from Venice—if the seaweed has not forsaken it, and there is still Rest of waves beside it.

Ever your grateful S\textsuperscript{t} C.

Joan says I may see you next week.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{The Queen of the Air}, whose first edition appeared on June 22, 1869.

\textsuperscript{19} Undoubtedly the rho is a whimsical abbreviation for “Rose.”

\textsuperscript{20} The name Lacerta—as applied to Mrs. La Touche—appears not infrequently in Ruskin’s letters and diaries; its varying connotations should not be overlooked.
My dear φίλη

Your letter did me all the good that anything could possibly have done.—I could not answer instantly—hoping to have freed myself from some claims that break my days—but I cannot extricate myself—and all that I may hope is that you can let me come for the hour of afternoon quiet before you go to dress for dinner on Friday or Saturday. Do not write—I must be in town both days, & will come about ½ past four on Friday & take my chance—I would come to dinner; but am in a strange dreamy state in which I can’t bring myself to speak. You will have borne enough with me, in an hour.

—Also—my mother is alone now,—at least will be—then in the evenings—depending on me until I leave.—I only want to see you free and have William’s hand before I go.

Ever your affecte S’t C.
Letter 106

Brieg. Valais
4\textsuperscript{th} May, 1869

My dear φίλη,

I thought it was best, after all, that I had no goodbye—for fear I should have uselessly made you sorry to see me looking so ill, as people said I was: and I have had no heart to write till now: but there came a plan into my mind, to day, which I want you to be the first to know of.

You know I have always had a strong feeling of the possibility of subduing the miasmic and other evil influences of the great Alpine vallies\textsuperscript{21}—redeeming their land; and their race. I never saw the Valais look so awful as it does, now, owing to the destruction caused by the floods of August, last year. And as I thought of it, all day long, in the hot sun and marsh wind, it seemed to me that here was a piece of Python-fighting as much needing to be done as ever any mythic contest; and that I knew how to begin it; and that it would lead on to the conquering of many of the worst of our modern falsely-economic stupidities.

And it seemed to me that for myself, it would at once be a sufficient fulness of purpose and being, to carry it on against all disappointment—as long as I lived, and that it would keep me from thinking of past possibilities—or present weakness or pain:

The thing to get done is simply this—The Alpine snows at present melt in every great heat—so as to rush down in flood, & devastate the whole valley; then the rocks are left without springs—they become arid—lose their trees, & crumble into horror of ruin over the ruined plain.

21 Ruskin’s desire to reclaim a large part of the Rhone valley is frequently expressed in his correspondence about this time. See, for example, Works, XXXVI, 567 ff.
Now, there must be vast reservoirs made at intervals on each flank of the great ravines, i.e. A railroad embankment a mile long—curving round and enclosing a hollow in the glen-side—every five or six miles down the ravines,—and smaller reservoirs on the slopes of the hills themselves.

Then, in flood time, the streams are to be let off into these reservoirs—and in general hardly any of the melting snow allowed to go down to the Rhone, till the water has been thoroughly used for irrigation over the whole hillside; trenching and trenching till the now barren rocks are terraced with grass and blossoming trees to the foot of the eternal snow.

Then, where the dead-level plain is, now all poison—nothing alive but frogs and snakes, the river once subdued finally;—there is a new kingdom of precious cultivable land.

I know this can be done. And when I've been to Venice, just now, I'll come back here directly; buy a small piece of hillside;—get what help I can from English sagacity—and set to work to show what I mean. Then—if I can redeem and show certain command, over a little piece,—it will be time to explain, aloud, what human strength and patience can do for it all.

I don't mean to give up my drawing in the least—or my art, but to make this my exercise—and rest, and never think of anything else. I will get my bit of land in a healthy spot,—but half of it barren: and I will redeem it to beauty: You know—the best bit of Modern painters is of the mountain gloom and glory;\textsuperscript{22} It was all written, or thought out, in this valley, so this is no new peak.

I am looking out as I write on a desolate little market place—more desolate chapel—desolate hills above, sullen with rain, the Python gathering himself together, at me—Vain marketing—vainer prayer—Hills—to which no man lifts his eyes for—Help.

—Well, I am fifty—and cannot climb them as I could once. But, I think I can conquer them yet—and in a better way. It is so precious to me to have you to tell this to. If you had not helped me, I should never have fought more. Love to \textit{φιλος} Ever your affectionate St C.

\textsuperscript{22} Works, VI, 384 ff.
My dear φίλη,

I am very happy with your letter;—it came a day too late for Mrs Laurie—though it would only have modified a little the brevity of my helpless reply to her card that I was quite tired, and could receive and pay no visits.—For all I can do, resting all I can, between work-times, is too little and tenfold too little, for what I want here.

My days, nevertheless, gain each a little step—and the gain is sure—nothing that I do now will be useless—sometimes of course I fail in a bit of work, but I do it again and beat it, and—if I live, this is the way I shall slowly do what I can against flood—and disorganization. For I shall at once set on foot this that I have had in my mind so long, in connection with the Alpine work. I see the corruption and horror of modernism, here, at its utmost, and that it can only be met by entire rejection of its companionship and infection. I shall ask whosoever will to join—in such place and manner as they can—in a resolute effort to recover some human law and dignity of purpose, and I shall soon write out the series of laws which they must promise—to the best of their power to keep.

Of these the first will be, to do something somewhere everyday definitely and solidly serviceable—either—if they are men—digging or building or teaching assured and instantly useful truth, or if women making clothes—or cooking—or teaching and taking care of children & sick people—but above all things enforcing among themselves and the men round them laws of refined beauty in manner and thought—and

23 This is an important letter for the light it casts on Ruskin as a social meliorist. In other letters—to Charles Eliot Norton in particular—Ruskin writes of reclaiming part of the Rhone valley.
outside dress & furniture—insisting on order and precision—formal laws of behaviour to be early taught to boys as their chief duty—and beautiful—though strong & simple dress down to the lowest dependents or poor.

Then the steady practice of music and athletic exercise without contention. (This very difficult—but essential if the object being to attain a given strength—not to be the strongest). Every person's income must be known, and their way of spending it known, but not interfered with, a certain sum, probably a tenth would be much more than enough, being set aside for the general purpose of the society.

I will have a decimal coinage in absolutely pure gold and silver, with a standard of bread. I do not care how small the scale on which I begin—if I only coin a thousand pounds of my own into absolutely pure decimal money, (with a lovely stamp)—of which one silver penny or ten décimes shall always command a given weight of bread fixed by a decimal standard of purity—it is enough. I know, once I begin, it will force its way.

It is curious that only today as I was finishing a piece of study of the establishment of the Kingdom of the two Sicilys I found the first step to its destruction was the issuing, by the very knight who founded it, of adulterate coin. And here, they have banknotes for twopence-halfpenny!—and charge strangers five per cent for money!

I got a letter only the day before yesterday from Chamouni—saying the people still believed a certain plot of hillside to be mine. I wrote back I would take it now—at once—if they liked.

I had such a marvellous sunset the day before yesterday.

[Drawing]

—hills literally plum blue.—I never saw such a thing yet—And vines—and hedges by the roadside with the—things—in them all out in showers of—just tinged snow—they are paler than ours.

Ever your grateful S't C.

24 He had purchased land at Chamouni, to which he was much attached all his life, in the spring of 1863.
My dear φίλη

It will be pretty and nice if I chance to have a letter from you to day on the first anniversary of the last happy day of my life.

I was reading a bit of my old Stones of Venice this morning—describing the approach to it. I recollect being so proud of saying that the Alps of Bassano rose over the waste grass of the lagoon, “Of the colour of dead rose-leaves.”

I have been writing letters to various people whom I count upon—giving directions how they are to help me with this new order of things and people. I write different things to one, and another—and I tell them to copy the letters and send their copies to you—(I mean, the girls, of course—Joan—Dora Livesey & Miss Scott—and an “Agatha,” whom I hope much from.) Then, will you, please read these copied letters carefully, and as you see good, carry on the work among others. You will see that the Valais work is made the beginning of the other, and first direct plan for it to be associated in & with. That Valais devastation was chiefly caused by the streams coming from the central mass of the Alps—between it and the plain of Lombardy—and I resolved to set the general work on foot at once, in consequence of

26 A pupil at Winnington Hall, Cheshire, during the time Ruskin took such an interest in that school, Miss Livesey—later Mrs. Lees—was one of the young women Ruskin put into the dialogues constituting The Ethics of the Dust (Works, XVIII, 189-368).
27 Perhaps Edith Hope Scott, later one of the original members of the St. George’s Guild.
28 Possibly a pupil at Winnington Hall.
the misery of this Italy: which these same mountains light—in vain.

There are several other curious reasons connected with the Birth place of Luini29—and of Titian, which, all point to this chain of mountains north of Lombardy as a kind of—Rock of Defence or For defence—when I get those who will work with me to feel and know one or two deep laws of work—well.

We shall want a name some day—not yet,—we must do—and be—something, before we name ourselves. But it seems to me as if “the Order of Mont Rose”—would be nice—Not far from St Bernard—and for wider good.

It’s terribly tiresome that there’s a stupid plebeian St George, and no proper tradition about St Georgiana. But there must be pictures of her, at Rome.

I am doing good work here—I never had more confidence in what I did being ultimately useful—and the drawings are coming pretty. But I am soon tired—and there is—Ah, such a world in ruin all round me—of dead art—and worse than dead souls.—But I am so glad to be among the old places again—I am going to Venice as soon as it is too hot here—to draw the island.

Love to φίλος. Don’t let him laugh at me too much. Very little—please—though it must be dreadfully difficult not to laugh.

Ever your grateful S’ C

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29 Bernardino Luini (1465[?]-1540[?]) of the Lombard school of painting. Ruskin’s awareness of this artist came relatively late in life, but he did much to bring him to the attention of the British public.
My dear φίλη,

This morning, as I was drawing, in the Piazza dei Signori, just in front of that building of which φίλος gave me the photograph, there came up the poet Longfellow and his daughter, a girl of 13 or 14, with a firm and nice fair face—and curly waves of flaxen hair over the forehead breaking over into little crests and spray in pure spirit of life—very pleasant to look upon in the midst of this pale—weary—and wicked people who fill the streets with their wretchedness.

They stood talking some little time by me, and I was vain enough to think that if the square of Verona could have been photographed then, with that exquisite building in the morning light, and Longfellow and his daughter standing talking to me at my easel—a great many people would have liked the photograph—on both sides of the Atlantic. I went to several of the places I like best with them—yesterday, and the lessons I got on the walk were several—also.

First. I found I was so very angry and hot—in my mind underneath—in perpetual Hades of indignation—where the worm dieth not & the fire—that I was not fit to talk to or be with, anybody else. They—Longfellow and his brother, and daughter, and an old friend travelling with them—were very nice and interested in things. But the coldness and content that all should be—(bad or good) as it is, was like a frightful glacier gulph to me, which moved beside me, and I was always falling into it with a shiver. It was no use trying to tell them what I thought about things—I should only have seemed mad to them.

30 Presumably Thomas Gold Appleton, who traveled with Longfellow's party in Europe in 1868-69.
Lesson the second. In these best possible examples of Americans I still felt the want of the ease—courtesy—delightfulness—of our best old English or French families—not that in Longfellow the substance of any courtesy is wanting—he is very nearly perfect—but still—that I should feel the Americanism even in these, shows the intenseness and extent of the Rude Evil of that life of Liberty.

Lesson Third.

I had ordered the carriage to meet us at such a place. The coachman and valet-de-place—instead of doing as I bid them—obsequiously haunted and spied us from street to street—giving me constant—unexpected & most troublesome runnings into the middle of horses and wheels—just when I wanted the quietest bits of my street effects. Nothing short of a fit of rabbriatura would have compelled them to do as they were bid.

Now one of the things which I want you to think of and to tell people as part of my main plan—(and a great part of it)—is the practice of an accurate and unquestioning obedience—as a most important part of Education. The great error in teaching Obedience has been the leaning on the Submission of it—instead of the Accuracy of it—as its chief virtue. It is not necessary always—or often—that it should be given in Humility. But it is necessary that it should be given in Perfectness.

To day—I may obey you—and tomorrow you may obey me, which of us is under the other's orders, may be a matter of chance—convenience—or momentary agreement. But whichever is under the other's orders must do them, and not think about them. Half the power of the world is lost, because people are not trained to accuracy of obedience enough to be able to act with certainty. It does not matter half so much who is captain—as that the captain—for the time—should be sure of everythings being done as he expected. And I want this to be made a daily element of discipline among children—giving first one—then another, the conduct of the play—enterprise—or study of the day; and requiring the others to give the most close—finished—absolutely unquestioning fidelity of obedience to his orders.
Of course, in other respects, the advantages to character will be great,—but the distinctive teaching among us will be, that one man must obey another, not that the other may crush him, but that he may count upon him.

I've so much to say—I must send this bit—and another tomorrow. Ever your grateful

St C.
Letter 110

Verona. 6th June [1869]

My dear φίλη

The much more that I had to say must yet be unsaid—for I have had many letters to write this morning. But it related chiefly to this—that while obedience must be taught chiefly for its practical use, Reverence is to be taught quite separately from it—for its beauty, and felicity. Nothing of all that I see in Italy—of real vice—of indolence—of inconsistency or absurdity—is so dark and truly hopeless as the insolence of the children and young men: the total absence of all human—nay of all higher animal—modesty or awe. They are as contemptible and as impudent as flies.—And I think it one of the vital points in resisting the American forms of degradation, to recover in the strictest way, all habits and ceremonies of respect—first of all, trying to find for ourselves and for those whom we teach, some persons—dead and living, whom we can think of with true reverence; and always keeping our thoughts as far as we have power—literally on "things (or people) above." But also by teaching the pleasantness of the mere temper of respect, and its dignity—and the advisability of rendering it to certain ranks and offices—irrespective of the merits of the persons holding them; though on the other hand we must make the persons who do hold them, think it the worst of wickednesses not to deserve the respect which their order claims. And in this we have to undo the French Revolution and all the issues of it. For the Loyalty and love of Kinghood and "Noblesse" (the word in French still sounds more real than in any other tongue) which it was an insane reaction from,—was indeed a beautiful thing

31 The commencement of this letter and the conclusion of Letter 109, linking one to the other, justify the year ascribed.
in itself:—but then—the nobles had no care to preserve it by giving it just grounds, and the arrogance of their assured divinity brought its necessary punishment.

But noblesse in a state is as truly necessary to it as fire on a househearth—It burnt up all France in its pride—and then came the steam fire engine—and though the ashes smoke a little still—people say triumphantly—We never will have any more fire! But they must rebuild their house—and light its true fire in it again. And one of the first functions of our order must be its perfect Heraldry—and recovery of every trace of the great lives of all the families of civilized races: and its consistent and ordered reverence for these—which will have advantage in many directions at once—making the study of all history more personally interesting to a great number;—making it partly necessary to all: giving motive for more than ordinary selfdenial and exertion to the members of leading families, and making reverence more easy & lovely by rendering it to the Dead in the Living.

Yesterday I was trying to draw the cornice of the tomb of Can Grande—a few leaves of it, I mean. It is formed by a series of little double leaves, bent like this [diagram]—and nodding over, as if they were a little weary, because Can Grande was dead. Well—I couldn't draw them a bit—and tried again and again—at last—I had actually to paint them completely, with the dust lying on them, before I could get their curves. And so, if Can Grande is alive—he would see an Englishman yesterday drawing the very particles of Dust upon his tomb.

This is a new chapter of my own Ethics\textsuperscript{32} for me—is'nt it?

Love to \textit{φίλος}.

Ever your grateful & affectionate

\textit{S't C.}

\textsuperscript{32} A reference to \textit{The Ethics of the Dust} (Works, XVIII, 189-368).
My dear φίλη

A word or two are still necessary to complete the sketch of what I meant in my last letter.

The two opposed parties of wrongly minded aristocrats and wrongly minded revolutionists centre all their errors, the first in thinking labour degrading,—the second in thinking reverence degrading. We have to strike at the root of both these base thoughts—and to show that idleness and insolence are degrading—labour and respect exalting.

Respect exalts in two ways—If there is any real nobleness in the person honoured, it brings it all into greater power: and if any nobleness in the person honouring, it becomes brighter in the power of laying its assertions aside for a time in the sight of man. And although the chief good of the principle of doing honour, is in the true discernment of the people who deserve it; yet the honouring of a certain number of persons indiscriminately, and because they belong to a race, has this further good in it; that it will bring out qualities in the persons so treated which we could not have known otherwise,—and make them the best they can be,—and as the pride which such respect causes in bad men, is of no harm to the state, provided its laws are firm, while whatever strength and resolution respect gives to them, can cause in good men, is all clear gain to the state, the “political economy” of honour remains unquestionable. Only it is before all things necessary to separate the ideas of Rank and of wealth.—Resolvedly Poor Kings and Nobles are of all the noblest—and there is no possibility of the Aristocracy now maintaining itself as a great

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33 The year is based on the close connection between this letter and Letter 110.
power to draw rents from and shoot over land. The days of
that Aristocracy are infallibly numbered—(and the number
is somewhat short, also)—there is the more need that those of
our Nobles, who care either for their own order, or for its
good influence over the people, should at once take stand on
higher ground.

I hope to be able to work out a piece of mediaeval history
here which will show very clearly by what tenure the Noblesse
of any age has stood—and by what follies fallen. But I can
do so little, each day, and the days are so few. Love to φίλος

Ever your grateful S\^t C
My dear φίλη

Your letter is a great help and comfort to me especially what you say of what φίλος thinks.—But as for “longing to begin the new life”—you have begun it—years ago—(and I believe—without talking of it—do much more than I ever attempted)—and neither φίλος nor you can quit or change your relations with the many public and private persons who depend on you, any more than I can sell Denmark Hill and leave my mother comfortless, while I go digging—We must all quietly and patiently confirm whatever is good where we are—and act as we can in consistent directions—To know where we are going—is the chief thing—not to move fast,—and chiefly to be quite clear upon the Employment question;—that is to say we are all bound to do as much as we healthily can—towards our own support and that of others—or for their good & help—and never to waste or consume under the quite —(I use a strong word—for it is the chief deception of this time)—the diabolically false notion of “giving employment” by our waste. Mr Harris\(^{34}\) is strong and clear on this,—but I do not think he is right in having no servants. The great human relation between master and servant is one of the most precious means of help and affection between persons of

\(^{34}\) Thomas Lake Harris (1823-1906), already mentioned in connection with Laurence Oliphant in Letter 59, n. 48. Harris, born in England, was taken to America as a child and eventually attained a reputation for spiritualistic and other occult activities. He founded a Brotherhood of the New Life, a singular community discussed at length in A Prophet and a Pilgrim, by H. W. Schneider and George Lawton (New York, 1942). This is an admirably full and copiously documented study of both Harris and Oliphant. Harris wrote, alas, abundantly and among his works is The Marriage of Heaven and Earth (Glasgow, 1903); authorities differ as to when this work was written, although, writing in his eightieth year, Harris states that the verses comprising it were put down in 1872-73. But the sentiments expressed in this letter are so similar to those in the volume that it seems possible that the book was under consideration by Smith and Elder as early as 1869.
different ranks in character. The sheets you have sent me are full of interest. I cannot judge of the view they take of sources of strength—but we all of us see darkly and little; and the great thing is to help each other in the unquestionable things in which we can at once agree.—But you will find some still more singularly close coincidences about Inspiration—or as M'r H calls it respiration (he uses too many fine words without understanding them. To "breathe" is the proper word for what he means. To "respire" is to breathe out again:—To inspire—or to be inspired—is the right word for receiving breath—or what else may be received from Heaven—To be sure that we use the shortest and rightest possible words is of great importance—men have been more deceived by their favourite words than even by their favourite sins.) —Well—this in passing—but for his concurrence in the main fact I am most grateful—you will find why, if you will look at the sheets I have ordered to be sent you from Smith and Elders—every kind of mischance has hindered the book—I ordered a copy to be bound in the prettiest blue for you—but it won't reach you for a month yet—so just look at these sheets, about what M'r Harris says of the sympathy of plants and animals. So strongly do I feel this, that one of the chief things that have driven me to this effort is the sense of a plague in the air of heaven—and on the beauty of the earth—caused by the wilful and defiant guilt of men,—and the strangest of all to me is that here at Verona.

I find the most marvellous painter's spirit in the flowers—the larkspur—bluet—blue vetch—Venus looking glass—blue salvia—comfrey—and purple thistle—all of them taking a blue or purple like that of the hills—which I never yet saw the like of—in those flowers—the larkspur coming up to the Gentian!

In this place, once "Verona la Degna"—and the city of all sweet love—there is now a population the most mean in insolence—and disgusting in foulness—I have ever seen in any part of the world—and I am more and more made positive about the immediate need for teaching Reverence and Purity—the latter beginning with Physical purity—especially of Streams and Earth. Read the bit about Adam of Brescia in
the Inferno XXX. 58—and what follows—and consider how subtly Dante has connected this longing for pure streams—and the falsification of the gold, (with the sign of the Baptists† on it)—and the insolence and anger of the base hearts—the only words Dante is chidden for listening to—This is the reason I am going to strike, with my own money, a thousand pounds worth of pure decimal coinage—of such gold as the old Venetian sequin—which you know I told you I had to buy in 1845 to gild my first Venetian daguerreotype with—no other gold in all Venice being pure, but that.35

—and for purification of the earth—see how the flowers teach us. Try to make gentians grow where nettles do! I had a curious lesson in my own place in this—There was a waste piece of ground—not pure—I tried to make flowers grow there—not one would—now for five years I have been getting the ground purer—and the wild flowers are coming—& moss, all over, already. Don't press any of these things on anyone—but indeed—I thought of Henry Cowper and of lady Florence!—

The only necessary thing is to be quite quite clear what is to be done—as we can, in time—and by the gentlest means.

Write here, now—Albergo due Torri.

Ever your grateful S* C.

†This is one of the prettiest occult teachings I know anywhere—it shows how you must watch Dante's every word.

I never thought of your knowing—how could you—my evil or good days—I only meant it would have been a pretty chance—But chance is almost always adverse to me.

All written before breakfast, and after a disappointing walk. Forgive the ill writing.

That I should be compelled—by former bad habits of haste—into the discourtesy of bad writing now—whether I will or not—is only the stronger cause to me for saying always—let us do nothing badly—at any time. Too late—for myself.

35 The manuscript breaks off here. What follows is on a separate page. But it is apparent that, although the next paragraph commences with a small letter, it is closely related to what precedes it. For instance, quite apart from the subject of the final paragraph, the small cross (here a dagger) in the postscript following Ruskin's signature refers to the same symbol used earlier in the letter.
My dear φίλη,

I wish—instead of only caring to read me—you cared to talk to me, and sometimes wrote me a line—not to thank me—or even help me—but because you wanted to say something yourself—or tell me things that interested you—The loneliness bears very heavily on me—not so much in actual depression, as in general deadening of all sense—and reducing each day to a monotony of labour, which has much more serpent than bird in the advance of it—and progresses in degraded oscillations of less and greater failure—The result of it all is daily more melancholy. I am much more just than I used to be in my estimate of the faults even of things that best please me—and—justly judged much that is most pleasing in early work as more or less childish and narrow—though exquisitely sincere—and the religion of all nations and times seems to me every day more dreadful in its folly and iniquity. That God should make us poor creatures—is to be accepted as His will—without murmur; but I feel as if we had a right to murmur at being left, poor creatures as we are, to deceive ourselves most fatally in a hope of reaching higher—or in utter inability to discern our own imaginations from external & perpetual truth.

I have done nothing yet, to speak of—in historical work—(having given all my time to drawing) and must come abroad again, (here) early next year.—I shall be at home if all is well by the end of next month for the winter—working at history chiefly—though it is very dreadful. But perhaps one use of all that I most mourn, is to fit me to see the darks in things that are dark—and of which others forget the existence—in the joy of their own quiet lamp and light of their room.
by its sufficient love—though all round—without—is—the
"outer darkness," and the cold.
—Write me a word if you can, to—Milan—within a week
after you receive this—if directly.

Ever your affec't S't C.
Milan 11th August 1869

My dear φίλη

I read your letter this afternoon with Monte Rosa clear against the west in front of me—and Leonardo's Cena under its circular convent crown is within a few hundred yards of me—and behind me—an accursed line of vast barracks—whence came bursts and howls of brutal song—the foolishest and most horrible—(now it is so through all this free Italy—) —that ever came yet from lips of men. For it is horrible with the insolence of refusal of all that is lovely and good—(Luini & Leonardo, and Mont Rosa, all as helpless to save as they would be to true herds of fiend-driven swine),—and there is the stamp of this in every town.

The last time I saw Mont Rosa—R was writing to me beseeching letters to be taken into favour again—"A trail of thorny—(too true) wild rose is not so easily untwined."! Seven years since, I am very weary with the unceasing scorn and loathing in which one must breathe all breath, here—and with the grief for destruction now going on like conflagration. But I have got some good work done—Do you recollect my first gray drawing of the tomb of Can Grande? I was up at his statue on the top of it this morning—and drew him with my arms round his horse's neck to keep myself from falling. Every buckle and boss of the armour of horse and man is as finished in sculpture as any Meissonier in painting—but with the noble finish—tender and living of the 14th century—at its

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36 In the early summer of 1862 when Ruskin was briefly in Milan. It was during that year that Ruskin and Rose agreed not to see each other for three years, for in 1862 Rose was only fourteen. For a comment by Ruskin upon this separation, see Diaries, II, 585.

37 Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier (1815-91), French painter noted for his microscopic painting; he excelled in miniature work in oils.
best. The face of the old† Knight is bright with the strange smile which all early, strong, nations give their heroes.

Thursday morning. I have been up the cathedral before breakfast—and Monte Rosa was cloudless—and all the Alps with it, and I am writing now for Count Borromeo who is going to show me his own Luinis. The old piazza Borromeo (I crossed it this morning) is still as it used to be—the grand dark brick walls and door of inlaid marble. But this town is now given up to modernism—yet it has a look of prosperity which is better than the frantic desolation of Venice and Verona—who show they are “free” only by throwing stones at the statues of their saints—and screaming blasphemy by the tombs of their knights and kings.

You say, show us the way—we will follow. You ought not to need a guide—and I—lame and weary—and plague-spoiled—what good could come of my trying to lead. The way is plain—if the will is—And more than this—the way is happy—Men have missed it so often—because they have thought the way of evil alone was pleasant. They would not believe that all Her paths were peace—and her ways pleasantness. They would not believe His yoke was easy—and his burden light—but they would not touch it with one of their fingers—and more than the burdens they themselves laid on other men.

The way is plain—and full of peace—but it must be trodden, not “thought about” only.

Ever your affectionate S* C.

† Old—no—he died at 39, but had done much. His armour is wrought all over with—what do you think? These things [diagram]

I will write you again soon.
I cannot to day to any purpose.

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38 Count Giberto Borromeo, member of a distinguished Milanese family.
Letter 115
Denmark Hill, S. E.
4th September 1869

My dear ψιλός

Yes—I knew you would!—I told φίλη you would laugh at me—ages ago. Never mind.—I'll have my dig, in spite of you—and get my roots too—and live in a cave.

I'm not going to be kept in England by this thing. I've taken it because I believed I could on the whole teach more sound and necessary things than any one else was likely to do. But I am not going to be the Oxford drawing master. I do not say my own work is one bit higher than that would be—well done—but I am not going to make Oxford the main business of my declining life.—I shall set things—as far as, with the help of the many good men who, I know, are ready to help me there, I can put them, in right train and say as much—in the course of the year—as anybody is likely to remember,—in a quiet way. But I'll bridle [?] that Rhone, or I'll know why. All the arts began in Italy with good engineering—and all the pieties begin with good washing.—And your flood of pauperism will find then, work, and land, both. I was shocked by the Rhone and Toccia valley as I went into Italy. But the Ticino valley was worse than either. Every tributary of the Ticino comes down into it—off granite—not a drop is caught by the way—and the streams seemed one and all to have chosen in their fury to go each straight through a village. In Gnuico not one house in three was left standing.

Well, come home—as soon as you can—and laugh at everybody else—as well as poor me. They all deserve it—worse.

Ever affectly Yours,
J Ruskin

Love to φίλη

Say to her—she may write whatever she likes to write about me. I shall not mistake light in the West for light in the East—now. I know the Evening and the Morning.

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39 His appointment as Slade Professor at Oxford.
40 An undertaking much in Ruskin's mind.
Letter 116

Denmark Hill, S. E. 6th Sept. 1869

My dear φιλη,

I have my book, this morning, directed to me in the hand I never thought to see my name written by, more;—it is an infinite comfort to poor little Joan—and I am very thankful for it.

I suppose I am meant to keep the book†—you will find out some day & tell me.

It was very pretty of you being so frightened to write to me—but please be at rest in this thing. I shall never ask—nor think, but don’t leave me so long again without a little word of some kind about yourself—or anything that interests you—I mean—little daily things. And don’t be always in a hurry and always over-tired—whether you write to me or not.

Ever your grateful S* C.

† The comments are shrewd—curiously cheerful—but the dear little thing does’nt know what death means—and therefore—not, what pain means.
My dear φίλη

I have just come on such a lovely little French song—I must write out a verse for you—the sun is so bright on the field—(clock strikes 8). I am obliged to take all the little comforts and helps I can get out of anything now—and am always gathering some bit of wool for my "deserted bird's nest—filled with snow" where I can get it—and trying to be as conceited as I can—Now you know, I have a particular liking for pictures of St Catherine. I drew another, this year—only very slightly for I was bound to do other work—but I’ve two, now—and shall draw all I can. Now this song is part of the commandments of Love to a good knight in the 14th century; there is a long charge, given in song after song,—but at last comes this, which is intensely curious—in one respect—here is the mediaeval—"partant pour la Syrie"—!—a little different from the modern—(I wonder if William will say—we must go on in the same direction of improvement.—)

Apres, t’en va en Surie
Par navie
Au sepulcre ou Dieu fu miz;
Et maine devote vie
Humble et tie.
Rens lui graces et merciry
Aiures le, crains, et cheriz.
Obeiz.
Humblement merci lui prie;
S’ainsi te maintiens, beau filz,
Soies fiz
A honneur ne faudras mie.
(That's *your* bit; now comes *my* bit)

Puis soit ta voie accueillie  
*Sans detrie*

*Par les desers* Arabiz  
Droit ou fu ensevelie  
Et servie  
Des anges de Paradis  
Celle a qui Dieu fu amis  
Et mariz,  
Katherine l'enseignie:  
S'en lui est ton, cuer espris,  
Et assis  
A honneur ne faudras mie.

——

l'Enseignie—is old Fr. for Catherine of Mount Sinai.  
Your loving St C.
Letter 118

Denmark Hill, S. E.
(Monday morning 4th Oct
½ past 7.
Sunshine through mist—dew on grass.)

My dear φίλη

I've just found such a lovely thing for us;—Hear this little bit of beginning of another song

"Et se ton bon eur t'envoie
Et ottroie
Que tu te puisses trouver
Où fortune ceulx avoieł
A qui joie,
Veult, de vaillance, donner." &c

—Now what a lovely expression—and how exquisitely French, in the best sense—thinking of them as the Fiery nation, that—"Joie de vaillance"! and remember, their old war cry. Not the English—Mon Droit††—But—"Mon Joie;" afterwards becoming by corruption—yet a pretty corruption "Mont-Joie." Now, you know, we are to be the company of Mont Rose.—And we are to be different from other companies who have tried to do right in that we are to make everything joyful and beautiful—so that literally it is to be "Joie de Vaillance." Then farther—you know we are to be good Heralds. And from Dante's time—Heraldry and its Blazoning were acknowledged to be French par excellence—and "there is no question about their pre-eminence"—("professor of art at Oxford").

Now—does not it all come beautifully?—the French name of the mountain—with its pretty, bye and far away echo of the name of the loyalest and noblest knights of Scotland (the old French allied country)—when we English could think of nothing but fighting them—and then that we can take from it at once for motto and war cry—the title of the old French Roi
d'Armes, being exactly and in every way the precise word we want, to show what we mean—Strength—set in gladness—and then—if you choose to go on (—I dare not—) to “Beautiful for peace—the Joy of the whole Earth—the Mount of Judah” —you may have your way. Mine lies Dead-sea wards among those who fall in the wilderness—but I may guide a few—still —and get sight of the blue beyond Jordan—before sleeping. —Yes—please make Mr Oliphant understand how very glad I am that he can come with you.

We had hardly any talk—Neither can we have—there's too much—for anything to be said—which is in some ways—helpful to getting things Done. But I am always quite weary & dead in the evening and cannot find my thoughts,—but I think I shall be better on Tuesday.

Ever your loving St C.

[††] from “avoyer”—like “envoyer”
[†††] A base cry—in its assertion of personal claim.
Denmark Hill, S. E.
5th Oct. [1869]41 (Bright morning again—after fog—and such wonderful cobwebs everywhere—all dew—and wholly innocent & useless—as regards flycatching.)

My dear φιλή,

I've found out another thing that I like—ever so much. That the old French—not royal—but universal knightly motto—is “Dieu et Droit”—not Mon Droit. The mon puts it all wrong for ever,—whereas the personal claim to the Joy is right & pure. I forgot to say that the mon, for ma, joie comes from a straight-down tradition of the latin meum gaudium. The gaudium becomes first goie—then joie—and the meum first mon, and then slides away into Mont,—by a curious parallel and equally pretty corruption—(multiplicare becomes Montepliier, and is used for an increase by Ascent—You do not Multiply love—but Monteplie it, in old French.)—Now—it just struck me—as I was looking at the song again this morning that the Scottish King-at-arms—and Troubadour, “Davie Lindsay”—was, “Sir David Lindsay of the Mount.”—I have not looked yet for the origin of the title—but if it is a mere chance that he should have been “Lindsay of the mount” as distinguished from the other Lindsays, still—what an exquisite little bye-way help it is that the Scottish minstrel-herald should have had this title.

—To day—by chance—not, I hope—mischance—it happens that my dear old Oxford private tutor—afterwards censor of Christchurch—now Rector of East Hampstead—(on the moors of Ascot—), a farming—squire loving—conservative—thor-

41 Neither this letter nor the two following are fully dated, but their connection with one another and with Letters 117 and 118 plainly indicate they belong to the year ascribed.
oughly sensible—except for a little (rosy!) edge of Ritualism on the softest leaves of his mind, clergymen of the old school—having always leave to come here whenever he likes, has chosen to come yesterday—and stays until dessert—to-day—leaving about seven oclock—I warn you—that you may not think I asked any one to meet you—and that you may not be checked in anything that might otherwise have been talked about—even at dinner—by Osborne Gordon’s seemingly light or somewhat careless manner—which is indeed the veil that this kind of Englishman always manages to throw over what is best in him—complicated in Gordon with a curious sort of cheerful despair about old Toryism, which he intensely worships in the spirit of it—without seeing his way to do it in the letter—(or motto) also, as we do—because his farmer’s “commonsense” trips him up always, the moment he feels himself becoming romantic.

Love to William.

Ever your loving S't C.
Letter 120

Denmark Hill, S. E.

6th October. [1869]

7. just striking.
Sun lovely through mist
Study looking nice because ψιληος & φίλη have been in it.

My dear ψιληη

It was very nice for me last night: but I remain under a fixed impression that you are getting to be just as bad as William and that, between the two of you—I shall never be able to say a word.

I have just looked at the use of "lie" in the song I sent you. The last line in each verse is, "you shall, in nothing—not in the least—fail of, or want for, honour."

The meaning of lie is "freely or brightly glad" from the latin lactus; distilled, as it were—with another latin word—lautus,—"splendid and finished in delivery"—the old French knight’s dialect distils all this into one little sweet—essential—violet-scented syllable, "lie," you will see how principal it is in the idea of character by this general change of Love’s to the young knight—that he is to be

Lie, gent, joieux—doux—et plaisant,
Prisant les faiz de bonne gent.

Prisant. Prizing—honouring, the deeds,

(Love is very earnest about this—presently afterwards he sings again,

"Les faits d’autrui a mal ne glose;
Pense en t’amour, qui est la rose
De bien, d’onneur, de courtoisie.
La plus belle, la plus jolie
Qui soit; et la pensée tele
Sera a ton cuer joie assouvie,
Tant lui sera plaisant et belle."

Ever your loving S† C.

227
Letter 121

Denmark Hill, S. E.
7th October [1869]

(Such a bright morning
—as if every dewdrop
were a little sun in itself,
and every daisy a Solar
system)

My dear φιλί;
—And—here's a description—of a little Fourteenth century
sun of “Rosée.”

“Son joyeux regart, plain d'umblesse†
Son plaisant maintieng seigneury,(111)
Son doux parler—qui en tristesse
Ne me laissast jour—ne demy

(Alas—the change from 14th to 19th century! Ask William if
this also is an improvement.)

Son beau corps gent, joliz, et droit,
La fresche couleur que portoit
Sa douce acountance amoureuse
Sa loialte—que tant valoit,††
Sa belle beaute gracieuse,—
Celle fu m'amour.”

††“Which was so strong;”
not “which was so precious” only

Now—I won’t write any more little letters like this—but will
put down little bits of things that I like—day by day and so
make a long one.

Then—its sure to be lost—in crossing the river—and so you
won’t be wearied.
Mr. Oliphant told me wonderful things. Please—cancel all I said about Mr. Harris's imperfect writing.\textsuperscript{42} I understand it now.

Ever your loving S\textsuperscript{t} C.

† Not "humbleness"—by any means!! but Latin "amoenitas"—gentleness—or perhaps, more, "attractiveness"—"ameuer."

\textsuperscript{42} In Letter 112.
My dear φίλη

It was very sweet of you to write to me today.\(^{43}\) I have the little view of Rome beside me, and have been thinking thirty years away.—And I am glad to have the day for my own little calendar, of festas and days of memory, that no one else knows.

You need not fear hurting me—but you cannot comfort or help me—by anything you can now send. Words—and omens—and promises—and prayers—have failed me too often—to leave me any care now for any of them—were it otherwise—all is now too late. I can never be to her—what I was to her once—Nor she what she was to me. That I can play, in the words of my morning letters—means—in the depth of it—a greater sadness than if I did not—It means that I speak as another person would—feeling what I once felt. But nothing she could now do—or give—could efface the pain she has given,—or restore to either of us—what we have lost.

Yet do not be unhappy about me—In many ways—this pain has fitted me for my work—and in the work itself, if I am spared to do any part of it—I shall have a true and increasing happiness, of a certain hard kind,—you say you will love me more—I don’t think you will—for I shall be more and more separate from you in the material and mechanical thoughts which are all that I have to depend upon in my work, but I am not afraid of your leaving me—now—helpless—as R did, and this is a great good to me.

You made Joan and Connie so happy this afternoon—the birthday has been bright to them, at any rate.

\(^{43}\) Mrs. Cowper’s birthday.
Connie wants sadly to have a photograph of William too—may she have one? I said I would ask for her.

I will try—as far as is in me—to make your next birthday still happier.

Ever your loving St C.

(Turn the leaf)

Here is a little song—out of Chaucer’s honied lips, for the eighth of October.

Within an isle methought I was,
Where wall and gate was all of glass.
And so was closed round about
That, leveless, none came in, nor out.
And of a suit were all the towers,
Subtilly carven after flowers.
But man, or live, I could not see.
Nor creature—save ladies play,
Which were such, of their array
That, as me thought, of goodlihead
They passed all, and, womanhead.
For to behold them dance and sing
It seemed like none earthely thing.
And of one age every one
They seemed all,—save only one,
That had of yeeres suffisance
For she might neither sing, nor dance,
But yet her countenance was so glad
As she no fewe yeeres had,
As any lady that was there.
Fairie had she been—in her daies,
And maistresse seemed well to be
Of all that happy company
And so she might, I you ensure,
For one the conningest creature
She was, and so said every one—
That ever her knew—theire failed none
For she was sober and well avised,
And from every fault disguised,
And nothing used but faith and truth,
—That she n’as young it was great ruth,
For everywhere—and in each place
She governed her, that in grace
She stood always with poor and riche
That—at a word—was none her like,
Ne half so able maistresses to be
To such a happy Company.\(^4\)

Letter 123

Denmark Hill, S. E.
10th October. 1869.

Misty morning, a little dim

My dear φίλη

I mistranslated “umblesse” in the song of “celle fut m’amour”—it comes not from attractive, but from “humane” in Latin. I can’t yet find its right relations to humilitas and humilis, but it comes itself from humanitas—and humanus,—and here is a marvellous line I came on, this morning, which has everything in it “Courtois serez d’umble courage.”

Courtois is a very curious word. Its own cour—comes from the cour meaning court—Italian Corte—the Enclosed place,—where the King is throned. But the “cour” in courage is from Cor, the heart, and “Courtois” reads its own cour into that when it becomes “courteous” in the deep sense of it in this line.

“Thou shalt be courteous with humane fulness of heart,” that is the literal translation of “courage.” Heart-fulness—as cheer-fulness—&c. Of course you know most of this as well as I—and some of it better—but it happens that what little I knew—and what little more I can learn—seems just now to come prettily together and to be worth telling you—in this matter.

I must post this fragment of a letter for poor Joanna has been called to Scotland to nurse a sister who is seriously ill: and the last thing last night, before leaving, asked me to tell you—for she could not—how very, very happy she had been in seeing you on Friday. Which indeed she was, and is happier now in any sorrow she has to bear—or anxiety—in thinking of the regard which William & you have given to her.

Ever your loving St C.
My dear φίλη

I was very—and more than very—grateful for your letter—though promises, for heavenly times to come—are vain to me. I shall never claim them—but thanks for them no less.

I should have written before—but had nothing but pain to tell you about poor Joanna’s sister—and poor Joanna herself.—The illness protracts itself. As soon as I have intelligence—dark—or hopeful I will write.

Ever your loving S* C.

My own work goes on—I think the name of my flower book⁴⁶ is fixed, now—Cora Nivalis (or perhaps Cora Nivium) (Proserpine of the Snows). An introduction to the study of Alpíne and Arctic Wildflowers. I think I have all my chief orders of plants fixed. There are to be seven orders of the Dark Cora

1. Draconids.

2. Anemone
3. Nightshade.
4. Ivy
5. Hemlock
6. Poppy
7. (Deadliest) Forgetmenot.

I'll tell you the Bright orders—Well—I may as well now—for all chance of brightness is alike at all times—for me—There are the bright ones.—Turn leaf again.

⁴⁵ The year is based on Ruskin’s reference in Letter 123 and in this letter to the illness of Joan’s sister.

⁴⁶ Ruskin is referring to his botanical book, Proserpina, which was issued in parts from 1875 until 1886. This letter’s early study for it is noteworthy. The background of this publication is given in Works, XXV, xxxii ff.
The 12 noble cinqfoil orders.

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The Two Quatrefoil orders. Of the Mountains. Heath. Of the lakes. *Lotus*†.

(†I alter the present name to this) for water lilies.

The Four Domestic Orders.


And then, the orders of Cora.
Don’t show my classifications to any one—it’s only for you & William.

Do you see what Proserpine spells—if you take P (for pet)—and R—(next the Rose)—away from it? Ros-Epine.
Letter 125

Denmark Hill, S. E.
24th October [1869]

My dear φίλη

Indeed, I fear that poor little Joan is still foolish enough to be troubled by that piece of news; though—when I think how I should feel—if I heard that some one else was going to be married—I don’t wonder. But I must know the circumstances—as far as one of the public may know them—before I write to Joan about it.

Poor little Proserpine never understands other people’s pain—and as long as she thinks she pleases her own chief Friend—and supposes He is taking care of her in a special manner—she can’t have very acute pain of her own.

Remember—I ask nothing—only—if—irrespective of any communication with her—you could form any guess what she meant by sending me that book—(there was a bit of my own weed—and a single rose-leaf (green leaf only) laid together into the page about the Dioscoridae)—and as far as I can make it out—she seems to think that since I can’t be anything else to her—I may be a correction of the press. Which is not a very nice notion for an inspired young person, like her.

Thank you for all you say—about Broadlands—and William for his little signature.

47 That the year ascribed is likely may be deduced from Diaries, II, 685, where, in an entry of October 31, 1869, Ruskin writes of his Chaucerian studies, as he does in this letter. Also, his plan to edit great literary works, among them Chaucer’s, for young people, is noted in a letter of November 17, 1869, to Charles Eliot Norton. See Norton, II, 254.

48 Most probably a reference to the engagement of Percy La Touche to Lady Annette Scott, daughter of the Third Earl of Clonmell. The couple married on February 9, 1870.

49 A heart-shaped plant deriving its name from the Greek naturalist and physician Dioscorides.
Next year I might be able to come—and not be troublesome to you, but I am still restless under the pain and am better at home, or alone.

Also—I have much on hand—In order to set as well on foot as may be the beginnings of effort towards recovery of the love of fair and quiet things. I am going to do as I have long intended—edit a few books for young people—with such notes as may make them—I hope—more easily—yet more attentively read.

—The first of these is to be Chaucer's "the Flower and the Leafe"—as beautifully printed and bound and interpreted—as I can contrive.—Besides I have to prepare myself in thought—very quietly—for Oxford work—and to choose some definite series of studies for the Schools.—And the days glide by with dark speed.

Ever your loving St C.

†It will soothe me a little—next year—if I have been able to do some of the things I want to do—so that people may hear of me a little.

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50 As Slade Professor of Fine Art.
My dear φιλή

Here is Joan's sad little letter of this morning for you (perhaps she has written to you herself—but I send it) I am obliged to go on with my work absolutely refusing to allow my mind to stay on anything that pains it. The moment I can work no longer, I try to sleep, or to get into some vegetative state—in which—while I am conscious of a darkness about me on all sides, I can yet avoid looking at it so as to trace its evil spectres—but of the work, and the various gratifications either of curiosity—or self-love which it more or less involves, I get enough light even for cheerfulness—on the condition of being daily harder and more withdrawn from other people—either in their happiness or sorrow—if great. I sympathize tenderly with Joan when she tears her dress—or breaks her plate. To day, I am not thinking of her. I enjoy exceedingly, bringing her home a new necklace; but if she ever is greatly happy again, I shall tell her—to keep out of my way.

Now, if I can do this, and on the whole keep on at decisive and useful work, while I have no hopes nor help of any kind, —except those of the desire of being useful, and the desire of worldly praise—and the interest of the work itself—(while also, I have to fight with a form of sorrow which I think you must allow in its subtlety—humiliation, and complex mystery of loneliness and horror, to be one of the most curiously frightful you ever knew or read of in invented story)—it puzzles me singularly to understand why you should want support—or

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51 The date is based on the reference in the first sentence to “Joan's sad little letter.” In Diaries, II, 684, in the entry under this same date, Ruskin writes of a “Sad letter from poor Joanna.” Further references in the text to Joan's sadness and to his own Chaucerian studies suggest strongly the date editorially ascribed.
even think it necessary for others—in any practical action you think right. You have hope that I have not—companionship that I have not—above all—purity of thought and memory and nature that I have not—and yet you hesitate about definite action because you have not directly supernatural aid. If what you believe is true—that aid would come as soon as you entirely gave yourself to declared and uncompromising exertion. If untrue—well—I will write no more today—What is the matter with my paper—it's all over coal dust on one side—blots on the other—like my mind & fate.

But it carries its message—still—in its poor rude way. I'm working hard at my Chaucer. I'm pretty sure now of being able to edit a piece this year, which will throw great & tender light on English character in the 14th century—above all on Chaucer's own personal Love.

I wonder what somebody will say when she reads his description of his lady

"Well—All is well—now shall ye see, she said
The fairest lady under sunne that is
Come on with me—demean you like a maid,
With shamefaced dread—for you shall speak, ywis
With her that is the mirror of joy & bliss
But somewhat strange, and sad of her demean,
She is:—beware your countenance be seen

Or over light—or reckless—or too bold,
Nor malapert—nor ruining with your tongue
For she will you obeisen and behold
And ask of you why you were hence so long
Out of Love's court—without resort among
And Rosiall her name is called aright
Whose heart as yet is given to no wight."
My dear φίλη

I am at a pause because I don’t know how far I wrote out the plans of our society.—I wish Florence would be gracious enough, if she’s with you still, to write out of your letters from your dictation—what I can use publicly—& send it me—and ask me—both, please—what more I ought to make clear—I’m in great haste today but have put off from day to day saying this—& here’s Saturday.

Ever your loving St C.

No model of courtesy—this—But it is because I am clumsy & rude—that I know the need so well.

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55 The date ascribed is based upon other letters of this year dealing with ideas for a Utopian society (e.g., Letter 107); also, the reference to "courtesy" connects with Ruskin’s concerns of this period (see, e.g., Letter 123).
My dear φιλή

So many thanks for the little sermon. But it is impossible for me ever to be as I was in the day of my youth again,—and, believe me, I am better—as I am, for all I have to do, now. Nor for the things I might have done—and never can—now. But that is so with many men's lives. They lose the best that was in them, but another good of an opposite kind—equally theirs, takes its place, or may take it if they do their best. Meantime—be as religious as you please—but do not let yourself be lulled into trust in the great heresy of this age—that God will put great things right—though He lets little things go wrong—if only we trust in Him. The great things—like the little—will turn out finally ill—or well according to our own human care—and are properly to be called “ill” or “well” according to human perceptions. If the Cook makes the Pudding heavy—through her trust in Providence—she is even a more capable Cook than if she had done her poor impious best—and failed. And a Heavy Pudding is a Bad and not a Good Pudding, and there an end—and that's what I've got to preach—now.

Ever your—(within comfortable and undisturbing limits—) loving,

S* C.

56 The salutation suggests that the letter was written no earlier than 1868. Since Letter 91, dated November 30, 1868, seems, from internal evidence, to be the first letter that Ruskin wrote Mrs. Cowper (who became Mrs. Cowper-Temple on November 17, 1869) upon his return from France, then Letter 128 was probably written on November 19 of one of the three remaining years that Ruskin's residence was Denmark Hill.
My dear φίλη

Yes—it’s all very fine—you will Joan to be loving to me because “I want it”—and then you go and leave me in the fog here without a word of comfort for a month—and then you say I’m fading away. I really was beginning to think R had made you give me up—I’m always afraid of that. I said I wasn’t;—but that wasn’t true—I always am—when you’re more than a week or so without writing.

Don’t send any thorns to Scotland—nor here. Joan and I have both enough just now. I shall be scolded by Joan afterwards; but I’m sure you had better not. I am getting her gradually into heart again—partly by being intensely provoking—and writing her word every day of something I’ve turned upside down in the house—till she’s in a perfect panic about the china and glass and things—Then I send word that nothing’s broken—and she’s quite restored to peace of mind. It’s the most successful homoeopathy!—But no thorns—thank you. They get in, and fester.

Look here—I really want that letter about obedience. I’ve got to give a lecture on Tuesday next—to the Woolwich officers—it’s to be on the Future of England—and I really can’t be at the trouble of writing all that out of my head again. —Please send me the letter, or the two letters, and I’ll take care of them—as Joan says you care for them—like a kind little flattering φίλη.

57 The textual reference to the lecture on “Tuesday next” helps to date this letter with reasonable accuracy. On Tuesday, December 14, 1869, Ruskin lectured on “The Future of England” at Woolwich, and he is apparently writing this letter within six days of that time. For the lecture, see Works, XVIII, 494 ff.

58 Most likely a reference to Letter 109.
Do you know one of the things in a small way—that I’m sorry about the loss of in myself—and for others—is the loss of the love letters I—should have written.

There would have been some generally not-readable bits in them now and then—which would have been nice—You know—I never wrote her one real one. They were always restrained—broken—either on parole—or in doubt and fear. They would have been nice.

Joan is pretty well, now,—seriously—in spite of news—she is very strong in her sense of right, now, and always does it, I think, and is useful to everybody.—But I don’t know when she is coming home.

Love to φίλος.

Ever your grateful

St C.
Dear φιλη

Thanks. The lecture went off well—much the better for a bit I could read out of one of those letters. But I must write you some more.

φιλος has been making a lovely speech about drawing, I hear. He had much better leave political economy to me—and take the Mastership of Gardening and Art Work—together. Not Market Gardening of course. I'll undertake for the cabbages if He & you will, for the things I don't like. Ever your

S't C.

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59 The date is derived from the textual reference to the lecture mentioned in Letter 129 and given, as noted, on December 14, 1869.
Letter 131

Denmark Hill. S.

[1869]

Yes. φιλή always.
And I am not unjust to her.
I have but one word of eternal blessing for her—one thought of eternal love—though she slay me.
But the purpose of God is that angels should love as angels, and children as children. But maidens, as neither of these. And it is because she loves only as these—that now she cannot help me—though angels—& children—may. And that she does love only as these—you yourself have been most earnest that I should know.—I know it too well.
Can you come out here some day? I could show you a sketch of her which I kept for myself—You would like it better, a little than the one at Harristown—but all are vain.
You do not quite know the depth of this thing. You do not know what the Mother seemed once to me—nor what acuteness of mockery there was in her [illegible]. And R. could not have gone but that she is yet a child. For it was there—on the same day last year—that I had the only hour of perfect peace in love that life has ever given me. She gave herself to me for the time—without shadow—even caressed my arm a little as we walked.
Yet do not you be unjust—nor think me unthankful—for what I have but I have served my seven years—and I am old—and weary.

60 The conjectural date of this fragment will doubtless be as unsatisfactory to the reader as it is to the editor. It is derived from Ruskin’s reference to his weariness after seven years of “serving” Rose, a theme that appears in other correspondence of 1869 (see, e.g. Letter 114).
Dear φίλη

Thank you for wanting a line—but there's no good in me, neither—just now. Joan has come back\textsuperscript{61} & will help me,—and you will have some pleasure in what I am doing, if I can get it done,—but—that Rose has been driving me quite mad again. I think it is so horrible of her while she leaves me to die or live as I can, (deservedly or not—if deservedly all the more cruelly)—while she amuses herself with pretty dialogues with the Angels on the noble and all engrossing subject of herself.

I am seriously beginning to wonder whether she's a demon made of red earth, sent to take all my strength and good out of me that's left for any use.

Joan is a real angel;—she keeps as cheerful and sweet as ever while I am by, to keep from hurting me—then I see the poor face get sad in a minute or two—when it's by itself.\textsuperscript{62}

But she is looking better than I hoped.

Will you be in town near end of month. No—I mean the beginning of next. I'm going to give a lecture on Verona on 4\textsuperscript{th} February at the Royal Institution.\textsuperscript{63} If only that pink thing could hear it—I've something to say about the wife of Theodoric\textsuperscript{64}—which would vex her—I fancy.

Love to William. Write quickly and tell me your cold is better.

Ever your loving S\textsuperscript{t} C.

\textsuperscript{61} From Scotland.

\textsuperscript{62} Joan had much to sadden her at this time. The sister she had gone to Scotland to nurse (see Letter 123), a Mrs. Simson, was very ill indeed; also, the memory of Percy La Touche's conduct was strong upon her, and Ruskin's relations with Rose were moving toward another crisis.

\textsuperscript{63} "A Talk respecting Verona and its Rivers" (Works, XIX, 425-48).

\textsuperscript{64} Who is not, actually, mentioned in the lecture.
Letter 133

Denmark Hill.
S. E.

8th January, 1870

My dear φίλη

I went into the rooms of the Royal Academy yesterday at about noon: and the first person I saw was R.65

She tried to go away as soon as she saw me, so that I had no time to think—I caught her,—but she broke away so that I could not say more than ten words—uselessly.

She then changed her mind about going, and remained in the rooms apparently quite cheerful and undisturbed. Having looked at her well, I went up to her side again, and said “I think you have dropped your pocketbook,” offering her her letter of engagement between the golden plates.66 She said “No.” I said again—No? enquiringly. She repeated the word. I put the letter back into my breast and left the rooms.

She is usually as quick as lightning but I am not sure that she saw clearly what it was I offered her. She might have thought it was only an endeavour to give her a letter. I am so brisé that I can hardly move or think, to day.

What shall I do? It is so very dreadful its coming just when I wanted my mind to be clear & strong.

I can deal with it all as pure devilry—and put it wholly away if I choose—and remember her only as my curse—but then—I cannot any more do the half of what I meant.

65 The meeting recorded in this letter explodes a popular fallacy about Rose and Ruskin, a fallacy perpetuated by scholars and originating with E. T. Cook. In The Life of John Ruskin (2 vols.; London, 1911), II, 168, Cook notes—while examining Ruskin’s diaries—he found the following entry: “Last Friday about 12 o’clock noon my mistress passed me and would not speak.” By a queer series of scholarly transformations, the words “in the street” have been affixed to this statement, as in Diaries, II, 692-93. Similarly, Joan Evans in John Ruskin (London, 1954), pp. 311-12, speaks of Rose and Ruskin passing in the street. And Derrick Leon, p. 478, mentions the same incident occurring under the same conditions. What actually happened on January 7, 1870, is apparent from Letter 133.

66 Between which it was Ruskin’s habit to carry certain of Rose’s letters.
Even as it is, however, the Chaucer and French are stopped—my lectures now giving me much trouble—and those books coming set me all wrong at the beginning of the year.

I was talking with Helps last night about the way both he and I who were both trying to do good have had our best strength crushed. He answered, "Indeed—there is but one answer. There is a Devil." Don't say a word to Joan about this.

Ever your loving S* C.

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67 Arthur Helps (1813-75), novelist, historian, essayist, and civil servant, whose "beautiful quiet English" Ruskin recognizes in Modern Painters, Vol. III. In 1860 Palmerston offered Helps the position of Clerk of the Privy Council, which he accepted. This office brought Helps a close, harmonious friendship with Queen Victoria, extracts from whose journals he edited. But Helps's literary efforts earned him only the most frugal recognition by posterity. However one critic, H. Preston-Thomas, paid him tribute in Blackwood's Magazine, CXLVIII (July, 1890), 44-53. Helps, who was knighted in 1872, suffered disastrous financial reverses in the sixties when he tried to establish a pottery business in Hampshire; this may be what is referred to in the rest of the sentence above as crushing his "best strength." This unhappy business venture, designed partly to establish Helps's notions of correct relations between labor and capital, is discussed in the Correspondence of Sir Arthur Helps, edited by his son, E. A. Helps (London, 1917), pp. 10-11.
Letter 134

I did not send this, for fear you were ill. Read the last page first. Tell me how you are yourself.

Denmark Hill,
S.E.
Sunday, 9th Jan. [1870] 68

My dear φίλη

I wonder how you are. I have been little helpful to you—with my last two letters I know. This is only to say that I am a little better today and not going to be beaten, for the moment, though I will not keep up this struggle for long, for I find it is telling upon me more than I knew.—If she really does not care for me any more at all—I cannot go on—the whole thing will have been so horrible that every word I tried to say about God or right would choke me. Do you know that feeling of breathlessness? I don't think it is brought on by any degree of common, right, human grief,—however deep. I think it comes only with—what you do not know—the sense of frightfulness & bitterness in the manner of it—and the having no comfort. However—I will still keep the 2nd February for the first lecture 69 as I meant, and I shall use the collect 70 for the day in beginning;—only omitting the words "only begotten."

68 The year ascribed is based on several facts. First, January 9 fell, in 1870, on a Sunday. Second, toward the conclusion of this letter which, it will be noted, seems like one complete letter followed by another without a heading, Ruskin remarks upon his mental state eighteen months previously; he is thinking of an especially grievous stage of his blighted relations with Rose, as Letter 85 (June 2, 1868) indicates; see also Diaries, II, 649, for his unhappy entry on the same date. Finally, the reference to the devil in the second part of this letter comes hard upon a similar reference in Letter 133.

69 Possibly a reference—erroneous in date, however—to the Lectures on Art Ruskin gave at Oxford in Hilary Term, 1870. They were delivered on February 8, 16, 23, and March 3, 9, 16, 23 respectively. They are to be found complete with bibliographical information in Works, XX, 1 ff. These lectures are frequently mentioned in his letters at this time. February 2, 1866, was the date Ruskin proposed to Rose.

70 For the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin, which falls on February 2.
In that letter you never got—from Como—I had told you of a lovely evening on which I went from Milan to Como. The sun set cloudlessly—behind—(with precision)—behind Monte Rosa, drowning the whole mountain in light—it could be dimly seen, through one's hand in the middle of the flame. As the sun touched the edge of the crags—we stopped at a station, “Stazione di Desio”71—I notice so many of these quite futile—helpless—merely strange chances and omens—like the flowers at the lecture.72 When we went on again the sun was gone.

Do you know—I think, almost, it would help me just a little if you would not write to her any more—I am so jealous of you—it takes away your own power of being kind to me. If I were to send you these books she sent me—could you send them back to her—and the prayerbook?

Mind you tell me at once what you can or cannot do—without being afraid of hurting me. I can get them sent back to her otherwise—only I would rather you did it.

Ever your affectionate St C.

I have your lovely little note. It is very helpful. But—do you know I am not quite sure that the devil is beaten, by beating. I am rather fancying that sometimes he is to be beaten by yielding. What is to say, suppose I were able to bring what you would call good and victory out of this. Then you would all say that it was all right. And saintly pink personages would just do the same to other people—Whereas—supposing I were beaten—and—suppose—after giving some few opening words at Oxford to show what I had meant and hoped to do—I confessed that it had become impossible for me now,—and did what I would fain do—get away somewhere out of it all—and ceased troubling. Then people would understand at once that wrong was wrong. Which is the sum of all I have got to say with all my labour—And my mind is getting so mixed up now of desire for revenge—and a kind of hatred which the love is changing into that my whole existence is becoming distorted—and I don't well understand anything—besides a shame and anger at myself—increasing day by day,

71 “Station of Desire.”
72 See Letter 80.
—which checks me and lowers—too fatally. But don't be afraid for me for the moment. I know I am very wrong in being so wretched—for—on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of June\textsuperscript{73}—a year and a half ago—I had not even the hope of being useful any more to any one—and should have thought the day had come back in brightness if I had had certainty of but half the power for good that I have now.

But the truth is—when she sent me my book all marked over with her writing,—I am afraid—I got into a state of deadly hope again, though I thought I did'nt.

—It is more than not knowing what to do—that makes me so tremulous now.

Ever your loving S\textsuperscript{t} C.

\textsuperscript{73} Cf. Letter 85.
Dear Isola

I’m going to call you that now,—(bella understood, of course—and the lago—che si fa sempre maggiore). I won’t any more call you what any one else does.

Please send me a little line, about Something. I don’t care what. And say that you like writing to me—if you do. Its so very nice & pretty of you to ask Mr. Macdonald. It will be such a joy to him, and you and he will be so happy talking—nonsense, together—I would’nt mind any wager that you did’nt either of you say a word that anybody could understand—or that everybody did’nt want to—from the time he comes till he sorrowfully departs.

What do you think is to be the gist of my second lecture at Oxford—on the relation of Art to Religion? That—on the whole—Art has always suffered for helping Religion—and Religion for being helped by art!

(Poor little Pussie is busy “illuminating” beside me—and making letters that nobody can read.—Now if only she could do all your & Mr. Macdonalds talk—that way—how lovely it would be!)

But won’t the high church people be nicely taken in? I won’t let the low-church people have any the better of them however—you may be sure of that! We know something of that side of the question—don’t we—and the good that comes of—&c—&c.—&c?*

Don’t you think—Isola—you had better let me go away somewhere—after all—and not say such horrid things? If you don’t write to me directly—I’m capable of anything.

Ever your loving St M.

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74 As Letter 137 indicates, Ruskin was calling Mrs. Cowper-Temple “Isola” by January 19. This letter was most probably written, then, shortly before that time.
My dearest Isola—

I should like her quite well enough to make me much more comfortable than I am: but whether she would like me well enough to make her comfortable at all—on those terms, is another question. Not that it is at all necessary that a man should love a woman, to be loved by her,—quite the contrary, as far as I know; at this instant, there is quite a precious girl—(not Flo, though she’s precious too)—whom I am quite sure I could get—if I asked her,—and, though Flo’s very proud, (so’s the other for that matter—as a girl ought to be)—I think if I were to try very hard perhaps I could get Flo, and either of them would be quite happy, if they did take me, at least I think so,—in the real tenderness & care I should give them. But they would not make me happy—these—the first, because she is’nt what I want to look at, and the second because she’s in weak health—and besides she’s too clever. I want nothing in a girl but bright health—delicate features—and contentment,—the power of taking pleasure in little things. Joanna was exactly right for me—in that matter†—Flo tries me after my work, by being too clever, and fanciful. Twenty years ago, she would have been the very creature for me—but now, I only want a sort of fawn, or bird.

I do want that. Very seriously if I wer’nt a professor and lecturer on morals, I should go away to some far [illegible] French town and get a French girl out of a convent—or a cottage—it would not much matter which, and stay with her in her own country and be heard of no more,—only I’ve such a horrible set of “duties” to do, and every day I feel partly as if the devil found them for me, partly as if he hindered me

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75 Letter 135 indicates that Ruskin intends to call Mrs. Cowper-Temple “Isola” from this time forward—hence the conjectural date.
in them, never as if any help or good was coming to me—always as if what good I have was sure to leave me.—Still, I am really beginning to have a little faith in your staying, and liking to have me for

Your loving S* C.

except that I'm much worse, really, than I used to be. It isn't merely a fawn or bird that I want—but a soft thing for a pillow, mainly—which is horrid of me.

[†] So is Flo, only she would want me to play at the little things with her—and there's no play left in me.
My dear kind Isola

I am very thankful, and will begin to shape little fancies and idols for myself out of coral. But I could not come—neither last night, nor to day,—the drawings are being framed and catalogued for Royal Institution and I cannot leave my work. Nor can I well do anything else but work. I cannot speak—except what you would call the saddest form of nonsense. I am so sad. Joan insisted that it was—behaved like a “fiend,” instead of “flint.” It ought to have been—but she thinks herself much too far from that for the idea to have entered the little golden head—and also—you don’t always cross your ts,—(no more do I.) So I showed poor Joanna that it was a terminal, t. Alas, if only she did behave like a flint! My flints comfort me. When I’ve said all that’s in my mind against religion generally, I shall settle myself quietly to write the “history of flint”—long intended,—headed by the species, “Achates Rosacea”—I gave her such a pretty piece of rose-quartz ages ago—little thinking—when I told her laughing—it was a type of her (which made her very angry, then) that she would ever say so with her own lips.

Look here—Joan wants so much to see you—and has had such heavy times lately, that I’m made uncomfortable by feeling that I keep her here; and I’m going to send her down by the one o’clock train to morrow—Please cosset her up a little for me—as you only can. I’m so sorry for her, that it makes me better able to spare her than to take her help, though that is much.

76 Joan had recently heard that her sister, mentioned in Letter 123, had died. See, also, Letter 132, n. 62, and Diaries, II, 693, entry of January 16, 1870.
It was much better to write to me than to go to prayers. And a real long sweet letter!: I’ve never had so nice a one yet, quite. If Mr Macdonald is with you, give him my love.—I do love him, he has been very true to me. I am so—happy—Yes—even that—in thinking of your being kind to him and how he deserves it, and how he will sun himself in it.

I could say so much to you—only it is all confused—& will not word [sic]. Only I’m ever your grateful

S†.—(minimus.)—M.
Dearest Isola,

I'm not coming ashore to day there's rough work to be done out on the lake—: this is only to thank you for being so beyond everything to my poor wee pussie.

I've watched her reviving and spreading out her little tussels and playfulnesses,—just as a tress of seaweed does when the water gets to it again—after it has been lying weary.

My lectures are giving me great trouble. I have to think over so many things before saying one,—and it's so difficult to say all one wants in any clear order.—And the weather has been—just for these important two months—the worst possible—when I ought to have been out in the air every day—I have been shrivelled like a sour apple in a cupboard,—wits—will—& courage—all at once.

However I think there will be enough in them to be of use. Love and thanks—exceedingly—to William also.

Ever your poor Crusoe.

S't C.

77 That this letter was written close in time to the one immediately following is clear from references in both to Joan's recent visit and to the difficulty over the lectures, and from the signature "Crusoe."
Dearest Isola

I am anxious about you, hearing what pain and over-care was on you when Joanna left. She has been telling me the loveliest things and bringing me loveliest flowers and leaves,—and being a perfect little alabaster vase of healing brought from you—for me;—(and she is so much better herself!) But I cannot write any play to day, for I am tired—the time having come when it is needful that I do all I can in my morning writing,—sometimes I cannot in my present state—(I do not say—“command,” but) find anything in, my mind—even when I know there is something if I could get at it,—then I waste hours in vain,—constructing all wrong for want of the right one clue, lost, in numbness. But, though not what I thought I could have made them—or in any wise what they should have been—the lectures79 will contain more than most people could have told,—and I may the better maintain general character that the first are not too highly finished.

When I know that you are well I will write of several things. Dear love and thanks to William.

Ever your loving S't C.

Crusoe, you know—now—always.

Joan’s in town, or would send much love.

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78 The date on the envelope of this letter.
79 Lectures on Art.
My dearest Isola

You will be glad to know that I am keeping fairly well, and am in hopes of being fit enough for my Tuesday’s work. It is not nearly what it should have been—owing partly to the East Wind & Fog,—which kept me from walking (and all best thought comes to me when I’m in open air)—but chiefly because of that unlucky child—the three weeks work after that had all to be done again—they were so stupid with the pain. I have not got over it, nor shall,—but it has got itself into a lump, now—which I can throw into a corner out of the way at work times instead of mixing itself all through me. She made me more angry than I was before by this ineffably stupid &—everything thats bad—letter. I hadn’t looked at it since. It doesn’t read so very bad—today. Only it’s of no use being angry with living creatures any more than with the east wind, but one is, and then, even little Joan disappointed me heavily—(but don’t tell her, for the world.)—I thought it so senseless of her—getting actual hold of the creature for ever so long—and letting her go without telling her a word of the truth, about her selfishness or cruelty.—She might, you know, meeting by chance—like that. Give me some praise for making no use whatever of the knowledge Joan had of her address—for fear of blame coming to you, or rather—because I knew you trusted Joan knowing that I might be trusted also. But it was difficult not to send her some abuse. She shall have it—hot—one day, if we both live. What do you think she means by underlining her name. Does she do so usually?

80 The inaugural lecture at Oxford.
81 The meeting of Ruskin and Rose at the Royal Academy (see Letter 133).
All which it is of no use to write, to make you uncomfortable—except that I like you to know what I am really feeling—& I think it is better so—in the end,—also—I’m provoked that I can’t send you any nice little French poems—or fancies,—being frozen this way.

Write Care of Dr Acland

Oxford

But don’t send me back this horrid thing—till I’ve got home again.

Ever your loving S t C.

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82 Henry Wentworth Acland (1815-1900), who attended Christ Church with Ruskin and became his lifelong friend. Acland was a distinguished medical man who was appointed Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford in 1858; he did much for the cause of public health in England and was created baronet in 1890. Acland also advanced the study of art and archeology at the university and wrote on the topography of the Troad. Ruskin has left a delightful portrait of this versatile man in Praeterita (Works, XXXV, 206-8).
Letter 141

Oxford. 8\textsuperscript{th} February [1870]\textsuperscript{83}

My dearest Isola

Thank you for little comforting letter written in pain. The ina

aug. lecture has been rightly given, I think, & whatever may now happen, I have been permitted by the Fates to begin the teaching of Art to the Universities of England.

Joan has been enjoying herself.

Ever, my dearest Isola

Your loving S' C.

All love to William, I'll send him a report—if there's a good one.

\textsuperscript{83} The year is determined by the reference to Ruskin's inaugural lecture at Oxford.
Letter 142

The University Galleries.
Oxford.

11th Feb 1870.

My dearest Isola

I want you to see my official notepaper—Are’nt we grand!—but its too thick to write any of ones little heart upon. I like paper to be like leaves—about—in thickness, for writing to anyone I like to write to. Not that I’ve got anybody but you & Joan—& Little Connie, who has been very good lately to me, too.

The flowers were lovely,—I’m rather too black just now for them—but I liked their coming.

—I’m going home tomorrow, until Tuesday—so you may send me that letter back—not that it’s much worth postage. I’m very well—I think the second lecture will be pretty good also. I hav’nt often (about any common thing)—been in such a passion as I was with the Pallmall\(^84\) for cutting out nearly all the important parts of the lecture, because they told against their set—and cramming me—full of misprints—into a bye corner, and an ugly corner too—But I believe the Clarendon people will print the whole corner—& then you’ll like a bit here & there, I know.

Ever your loving St C.

Don’t write if you’re still in pain (—but I trust not.)—

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\(^84\) The *Pall Mall Gazette* reported the inaugural lecture on February 9, 1870.
My dear little island,

Well, of course your "cold" doesn't matter—if it's only a cold—nor any body dies neither, but your cold would matter very much to me—as well as other people's (—Acted?) cold,—if it got worse.

Yes. That's all very lovely—and you know so well how vain we poor men are—and should like to be thought of in a St Michaelesque attitude. But it does one good—in spite of one—though one sees through the cunning of it—you naughty. Dear little Joan has been behaving like a St Michaeline (I forget the right feminine)—and a darling—and a little golden St Michael's orange—all sweetness and balm. She would'nt be a bit melancholy yesterday—though—would you believe it she had—literally—weddingbells ringing in her ears several times during the day. Literally,—“Not Real ones” as poor Nancy said of the Coffins. But Joanna is a little witch—of your species—and far out of my way—towards celestial quarters.

—Judgment indeed! And blessing people at it! I should like to hear myself doing anything of the kind! (Would'nt I do the other thing—if it were the least use?)

Do you know your Dickens?—Miss Flite—and her expectations of Judgment? Above all—Do you know your Dante. Have you read all? Do you know Who everybody is?—Where everybody is? I want much to know if you do.

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85 Both from the salutation, which Ruskin did not adopt until early in 1870, and from the reference to Joan's state of mind, it seems highly likely that Ruskin misdated this letter 1869. And the wedding bells Joan claimed to hear doubtless refer to the marriage of her former suitor, Percy La Touche, to Lady Annette Scott, on February 9, 1870.

86 Oliver Twist, chap. xlvi.

87 Bleak House.
I think in spite of islands—and coral—bells—and coaxing—I should go away and rest—if it were not for that one line “Che fece per vilta il gran rifiuto”\textsuperscript{88} and a dim—ever so dim—remnant of desire to help still other people a little.

But the lectures are coming into some good form—you will like some bits—but alas—how you will be disgusted at others!

Thank William for his nice letter. What does he mean by telling me there are good times coming?

I am better however. Joan says your letter was “inspired.” (I told her—that I might read your letter to her—and it took her thoughts a little aside, also.)

—Ever your grateful S\textsuperscript{t} C.

\textsuperscript{88} “Who made through cowardice the great refusal” (\textit{Inferno} iii. 60).
My dearest Isola

It is a soft clear afternoon at last, and there's some sunshine and I like thinking of you, and I wonder where you are. Please be good and write me a little tiny isolated bit of comfort—to Denmark Hill.

I've got my second lecture given nicely—everybody heard—and they say everybody is likely to be pleased. There were some bits that I really wanted Isola to hear—so they must have been nice. You know—any good I can do is all Isola’s doing—I know I should have been under the snow—somewhere, just now—but for her.

I am not tired, neither, which is curious—considering how much more than usual I am trying to do.—Still—I cannot understand how anybody who has always things to do, and is responsible to people, or for people—can exist at all—William & you, for instance.

—I wish I could go on chattering—wait till I’m at Verona again—& you’ll be tired enough of registered letters. I’m not going to let you escape as you did the Como one, any more.

Ever your loving St C.
My dearest Isola

I was obliged to come up to town for two days, and Joan thinks it just possible that you might be able to come out to afternoon tea tomorrow. I wish you could, for Flo is here with her sister, and she has long wanted to see you that I should like to give her the delight, at last, if it at all is contrivable. If you can come, just send me a little telegram of Yes, that I may have the happiness of expecting you through my forenoon walk. *Please* come, for I am very sad—& need a look of yours.—William too, if he can?

Ever your loving St C.

You must come at least as early as five for Joan has a dinner! nominally at 7, and I've to go!

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89 The salutation suggests this letter was written no earlier than 1870. Also, a letter to F. S. Ellis in *Works*, XXXVII, 638, suggests Ruskin is going to London, from Oxford, on February 17, 1870.
Letter 146

Denmark Hill.
S. E.

[February, 1870]

My dearest Isola,

I'm like to go "distracted" myself—for that distracted letter has never reached me—Of all letters, to be the one to miss. Can it have gone to Oxford—no—I should have had it there. Are you sure you sent it?

—To day—except that you've caught cold—is delicious—If you'll come and sit in the garden—& look into the study sometimes—just that I may remember Aracoeli—I'll never go & live anywhere but at Denmark Hill.

Ever your loving St C.

I'm so glad William heard some good of me.

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90 It seems clear from Letter 147 that Ruskin has received the letter he mentions here as not having reached him. Letters 146 and 147 are further connected by the repetition of the word "distracted."
Dearest Isola

She has come back to me. She will not leave me any more. "If my love is any sunshine to you take it—& keep it."

—I may not yet see her—not even write. But with you, and her both—(loving?) me—I may be content—I think! I rather rejoice in the thought of the far-away—dream-worship I must render to you both. She says she had not gone away. All I know, is—if I had’nt had an Isola—that did’nt disappear in mist—she would have had no S’ C to come back to. Yes—I got the tiresome child’s letter—It is I that was "distracted." And now—Joan says—you are so ill and suffering. I am so sorry—It’s all for helping me—And I have so much to do—and am a little giddy besides & confused—as you may think—and I don’t know how to do you any good—and you have been all good to me.

Please get better—& come here.

Ever your loving S’ C.

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91 From the chronology of correspondence given by Ruskin himself in Letter 151, it would seem that he misdated Letter 147. In all probability it can be dated no earlier than February 24 because the letter from Rose referred to here was not received before that date.
Dearest Isola

Thanks for being angry for me.

But I am getting much good. A grievous time today however. No letter from Ireland.

Ever your St C.

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92 The conjectural date is based on a period of relative harmony between Rose and Ruskin at this time; despite his statement in Letter 147 that he may "not even write," Ruskin did receive letters from Rose, as Diaries, II, 694, indicates.
Dearest Isola—

Are you really in town?—And are you better?—And will you come?—And will you care for me—even now when I'm not so unhappy? You know—it will still be difficult to keep me quite good—in this lovely feeding on—the West Wind and its Spirit. It's better than the East—but I can't do without my sweet South—and breath of the violets of England.

I send you some thoughts of her Future.

Ever your so loving—St C.
Letter 150

Denmark Hill, S. E.
Oxford. Thursday
[March 10, 1870] 93

My dearest Isola

I've got my two lovely little notes. It's a shame of me to tease you when you are tired—but if I didn't—you might think—I didn't want to—so I always will when I need help.

The two little notes are lovely and put me all right this morning—I hope the wind won't be east at all—on Saturday.

Fifth lecture yesterday went very well, I think.

Ever your loving S't C.

I'm wondering so if that child has said anything about it to you—or written, since—But I don't ask—you know—But I think she must be a little least bit happier.

93 The date is derived from the textual reference to the fifth lecture of the Lectures on Art, which was given by Ruskin at Oxford on March 9, 1870.
Letter 151

Denmark Hill. S. E.

20th March. 1870.

My dearest Isola

I suppose it's all that impatience of mine—which makes me naughty—No—you couldn't have asked to see the letter,—and been quite nice—but then I don't want you always to be quite nice—I want you to be a little weak, & rude—and foolish—and more like me. You're ever so much too nice.

Well—this was how it happened—Just a month since—on Saturday, 19th February—I had left my study for a few minutes, & was hunting upstairs for something I had lost—& came down dreamily & was going to my place—at the table. And—There was a letter on the table which made me start as if it had been a snake—So I looked at it—& looked—and took it up—thinking there must be somebody else who wrote like that. And it had the postmark I knew so well.

So I took it to the chimneypiece & leaned against that—& looked at it still—

At last I got it opened—& it had the thick paper inside—with the star.

And it began—"Dear St C."

Well—It was'nt much better than the one before—94—and it was more absurd—if possible.—For it was to ask "if all was at peace" between us!—and to say she was'nt quite happy till she knew it was so—: and if I could say anything that would make her happy—I might write—before 5 P.M. But if I didn't write—she "would think all was well and be content."

So I did write—before 5 P.M.—and gave her a little insight into some of my "peace."—Which—whether it "made her happy" or not—I do not know—but I did not intend it should.

94 Possibly a reference to the letter from Rose mentioned in Letter 140 as "this ineffably stupid &—everything thats bad—letter."
Among other things I told her the dedication I meant to put to these Oxford lectures—not in public—but in her copy,—which I meant to send her—you know, in exchange for those she had the impertinence to send me—at the New Year.—And this was to have been the inscription

"To the woman,
Who bade me trust in God, and her,
And taught me
The cruelty of Religion
And the vanity of Trust,
This—my life's most earnest work
Which—without her rough teaching,
Would have been done in ignorance of these things
Is justly dedicate.'

—Besides telling her this—I accused her of several things—perjury—& the like—And I told her how happy I was—and how the only thing that kept me from being perfectly happy was—that I could not help loving her still.

So the letter went—& Monday came—& no answer—and Tuesday, & none—and I had to go to Oxford—& give the third lecture—and on the Thursday my letters came from home to Oxford and there was none. And so I came home on Thursday afternoon—and went in to my mothers room—& then into the study—and there was a pile of about eight or ten letters on it—I turned them over slowly—one by one—and it was the undermost! It was square—& felt fearfully thin—and I thought all was over—So I took it up to my room—& shut myself in—

And when I opened it, I saw—not the star but a little red and green and golden rose. And this was what was written—if I do not dream.

"I will trust you.
I do love you. I have loved you, though the shadows that have come between us could not but make me fear you and

\[95\] Ruskin notes the reception of this letter in *Diaries*, II, 694, under entry of February 24, 1870. See also Letter 147.
turn from you—I love you, & shall love you always, always—
& you can make this mean what you will.

I have doubted your love. I have wished not to love you.
I have thought you unworthy, yet—as surely as I believe God
loves you, as surely as my trust is in His Love.

I love you—still, and always.

Do not doubt this any more.

I believe God meant us to love each other, yet life—and it
seems God’s will has divided us.

My father & mother forbid my writing to you, and I cannot
continue to do so in secret. It seems to be God’s will that we
should be separated, and yet—“thou art ever with me.” If my
love can be any sunshine to you—take—and keep it. And now
—may I say God bless you? God, who is Love—lead—guide,
& bless us both.

Ever, dearest S't C.

Your loving

Rose.”

—I did not answer—I was afraid of doing some mischief—
of my letter’s by any mischance getting into wrong hands—I
don’t know if she expected me to answer—If she did—I’ve
“expected” things too,—sometimes.

—I am very anxious about Joanna—she has a violent fever-
ish cold—I have been unwell all this last week with face-ache
& sorethroat—but have got through—& am better today.

I think you must have the rough sketch of the island at
present—You’ll have to wait many a day—if I don’t finish it
till I’m happy—There’s a little light in it—as it is—if you put
it in a very dark corner—I’ll send it you.

Ever your loving S't C.
† I'm all wrong—now—I think it will have to be Easter Sunday—if that would do?—I'll write again tonight.

Denmark Hill,
S. E. 6th April [1870]

This is no thanks—
—only to say—day by day I will try to thank you.

My dearest Isola,

No one need think of his life as an unhappy one—who has ever received such words as these of yours from one so good—Though indeed, but from one so good, how could they come. What can I say,—for so much.

I must come for a day—Would from Tuesday to Thursday of Easter† week—next week is'nt it—

I'm so dreamy—I've got Clouds & light—But not directed in her hand—Poor thing—how she is wasting her sweet soul.

Ever your grateful S't C.

I've been working to put myself quiet—and am so tired. Your letter was a great blessing to me this morning.

96 A very likely date in view of Ruskin's reference in the letter to Rose La Touche's slender volume of devotional prose and poetry, Clouds and Light, which was published in London in 1870.
Dearest Isola

The thought of what I might have—if I came—helps me—more than anything else could. The perfectness of it would be too great for me—Rest, I could of course—delightfully—and silently, but think I could not, of anything but you, and,—tiresome thing that you are—to haunt one so—why could'nt I have been content to love something on earth.—It just would make me forget everything—and I have failed too utterly largely[?] in getting the harmony and order that I meant & planned in the Oxford things, & have to change and lose—at the last—enough—without losing myself altogether in Irish clouds and Isola light.

—Joanna comes home, I hope on Thursday—then on Tuesday I take her, and Connie, and Connie's mother, Mrs Hilliard—and my gardener—to Paris, where neither Mrs Hilliard nor Downes have ever been before,—and where I think they will all be happy.98 Then on Friday or Saturday to Geneva—and so over Simplon—and on the other side of the Simplon, because it will be near Isola Bella. I mean directly to ask C* Borromeo to let me have some land—he's sure to have some crags & fields Simplon way—I only want a few acres, and then—[text mutilated] really begin.

I know William would have welcomed me; If I trusted him less, perhaps I should speak of him oftener. Whenever I've anything useful in my head, I'll write to him about it, first.

97 The tour mentioned in the letter suggests the date ascribed. The exact day of departure was Tuesday, April 26, 1870 (Diaries, II, 694). And Ruskin's reference to Joan's return "on Thursday" (April 21) dates the letter before that day, almost certainly on one of the two days ascribed.

98 For the route taken on this tour see Works, XX, xlix.
You know, if she wrote those books for me, she oughtn't to dedicate them to Edithé\textsuperscript{99} and people I never heard of. But it is not that. It is the forming of her mind permanently in the fatal dream and narrow furrow of thought,—just when I could have formed it so differently.

—I mustn't whine

Ever your poor loving S\textsuperscript{t} C.

\textsuperscript{99} To whom Rose La Touche's \textit{Clouds and Light} was dedicated.
My dearest Isola,—I wonder what you have been thinking of me. It is not because I had people with me that I have not written, but because the various work and pain of this year have put me in a temper in which no pleasant thoughts ever come to me, such as I should choose to write to you; but on the other hand I have not been suffering much—except from my old grievances about pictures and buildings, for I am compelled to think of them now nearly all day long, and my life is mere inquiry and deliberation. I have only had some good to tell you yesterday, and this morning having found great part of the Pisan buildings safe, and the little chapel of the Virgine della Rosa at Lucca—so I write to you. I have learned much on this journey, and hope to tell things in the autumn at Oxford that will be of great use, having found a Master of the religious schools at Florence, Filippo Lippi,\textsuperscript{100} new to me, though often seen by me, without seeing, in old times, though I had eyes even then for some sights. But this Filippo Lippi has brought me into a new world, being a complete monk, yet an entirely noble painter. Luini is lovely, but not monkish. Lippi is an Angelico with Luini's strength, or perhaps more, only of earlier date, and with less knowledge. I came on to Florence from Venice feeling anxious about many of these things, and am glad that I have. I have been drawing little but thinking much, and to some good purpose. Will you send me a line to the Giessbach? I am very weary in the innermost of me, into which, you will see, there is more

\textsuperscript{100} Actually, Ruskin says very little indeed about Fra Lippo Lippi in his Michaelmas Term lectures in 1870 at Oxford. These lectures, under the title \textit{Aratra Pentelici}, are in \textit{Works}, XX, 181 ff.
surrender perhaps than there used to be, and even a com-
parative peace; but my plans have been broken much by
this work and I am languid with unfollowed purposes. We
are on our way home. This is not a letter, but only that you
may know why I do not write. Love to William always.

Ever your affectionate St. C.
Letter 155

Denmark Hill.
S. E.

5th August. 1870

My dearest Isola

Are you yet in town, and would you like to come with William and dine with me quietly any day—when you needed rest?—I have little to show you—little to say—finding myself more and more in a dreary weariness, from which I rouse a little if something must be done—and into which a thought sometimes finds its way,—but very slowly. Still, I have enough to tell you of the last three months—to last through one evening, if you will come.

Love to William always

Ever your affectionate Srt C.

Joanna is gone to Scotland—like other people.
Letter 156

Denmark Hill.  
S. E.  

9th August. 1870.

My dearest Isola,

Don’t you think it is time you should give up “scuffling”—What can you possibly say to yourself about bazaars, to justifiy the fretwork of them?

I am not writing to you, because my work is very material and cold just now—and I am myself in a more or less degraded state of feeling† and almost unconscious of what is better in me—while I live in this strange dream, of possessing and not possessing.

—Sometimes I think that all my old thoughts are going to pass away—and that I am to live a mechanical life—for a little while & so end. Then—I ask myself how I should feel if R or Isola were dead—and then I find that all I am able to do is still theirs, even when I am not thinking of them. I never think of either of you now when I can possibly help it—but am nevertheless.

Ever your loving S't C.

† I mean—I’m interesting myself in potatoes, & celery, and pigs—and everything that I can that’s gross and horrid. Will you come & see me? such? [sic]
Letter 157

Denmark Hill.
S. E.
12th [August, 1870]

Dear φίλη

I said I would write to day—but I am very weary—my mother—for want of Joanna, without knowing it—is much more nervous and makes me so, necessarily; and I find it difficult to get on at present—and I can't come away to you while she is like this.

I've been very cross all day too about that speech of William's about education. Spiritual people should know better. Of course if you compel people to be educated—you must pay for their education. They pay you just as your child pays you—by being good—If there is any money payment—it is in raspberry-tart funds from you—not by the child to you.

But I like those hymns. They are very lovely. Available for Anybody, who is trying any good.

Ever your affect. S't C.

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101 The conjectural date is based partly on the textual reference to Joan's absence, which is mentioned in Letter 155 as well. Furthermore, Ruskin's comment on "that speech of William's about education" is evidently an allusion to a speech, concerning the Elementary Education Bill, delivered by Cowper-Temple on July 22, 1870. Not surprisingly, Cowper-Temple's interest was primarily in the religious issues attendant upon this legislation.
My dear φιλη

I've been looking at the seal this morning—and I think it horribly ugly—and I hate Hebrew—and tell R—from yourself—which I'm sure you may—that prosper is spelt with a p, and not with an f.

And of all texts that never come true and there are plenty—heaven knows—that's about the interest in all the past and present. From the day of Tears on Olivet to the death of St Louis,—which was the greatest calamity that happened to the cause of good in all the middle ages.

Tell R not to be a little fool—No you wont tell her that from yourself. But, if I don't make her little ears tingle yet—there will be sad silence—somewhere—for one of us.

Thank you for those lines—but did you remember where they came from? I am most likely going to Germany too—to study agates at Oberstein—I would get near her—only it might come to the end of Maude103 indeed. Well, there are warnings enough against anger—from the Iliad till now—and I'll be very quiet,—only, if I don't get a word or two said to that Lacerta—one day—that will make her ears tingle—my tongue will be as much in need of dew to cool it as ever Dives' was.

Love to φιηος. Make Rose put her accent on properly.

102 The year ascribed is highly conjectural. Since Ruskin does not address Mrs. Cowper-Temple as φιλη consistently before March, 1868, it is likely that that year or later would be possible as a date. Actually, on October 9, 1868, Ruskin was out of the country; on that date in 1871 he was in Lichfield; and by late 1872 he was living at Brantwood. Thus, either 1869 or 1870 would probably be the year, and the tenor of the letter suggests the latter. So, with considerable reservation and very little convincing evidence, 1870 is the year ventured.

103 Tennyson's poem.
I spent all yesterday in visiting museums and institutions—made two speeches extempore—and had tea with Rose's cousin. (Miss Cole—I've got her safe, at any rate—& made some way with her mother,) and with a middle aged Miss La Touche, of another branch, a very noble person—quakerlike in severity—but graceful. We got on fairly—I fancied her studiously cold—but it may be her manner at first.
Letter 159

Denmark Hill.
S. E.

2nd January, 1871.

My dearest Isola,

You have my first letter,—the second will be to Smith and Elder with first sheets of the new edition of all my books,—to be bound nicely, and begin a new order of things.

Send me a line now—anyhow—to say how you are—and whether you are ready for any thing desperate—Politically & Economically,—if William will let you—of course I can’t expect him to be desperate—but my love to him.

Ever your loving

St C.
My dearest Isola,—I am grieved to have made you write when you were so sorely burdened, but I needed the letter greatly. It is a great comfort to me to see you really out of patience at last. I think perhaps if Job's wife had been patient, it would have been too much for him. Yes, we'll do something desperate directly now—only it's very cold, and difficult to get one's courage up for anything quite over head and ears. But we'll really take the centre arch presently, I daresay we shall have to go very slowly up stream at first; William will run along the bank in a greatly alarmed state. I'll send you Fors Clavigera\textsuperscript{104} when I get the second number out, and then the crocuses and things will be getting their heads up, and we'll get ours.

There ought to be a letter of mine in the Telegraph\textsuperscript{105} tomorrow; please look. I am almost in a fever myself. Would you come and nurse me if I got into—just a very little one, so as not to be troublesome, but only to want some orange juice and things? It's no use telling you if you won't. Joan's always away now, somewhere. Seriously, I've got so utterly savage that it has done me good, only I'm greatly tired—but not out of heart—and it is so nice your being "desperate" (Spirits and lilies and all). Ever your loving

St. C.

\textsuperscript{104} Whose publication commenced in January, 1871. The insignia on the title page is a rose.

\textsuperscript{105} He refers to a letter about the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris that appeared in the Daily Telegraph on January 19, 1871. It is reprinted in Works, XXXIV, 503.
My dear William,

I have been great part of the time since I returned from Oxford admiring and taking delight in the flowers[sl] and birds —both exquisite. I was just in time to see the lovely arrangement of the flowers, and I have sent one pheasant to Oxford —pulled ever so many feathers out of the others wings—and am proceeding to dine upon him.

Please look over and return me the enclosed from Froude. It is the end of it I want you to notice—you see that he has darker thoughts and more perfect fears than I.

The beginning of the letter is however more frightful to me. I know much evil of England, but not the possibility of such a thing being uttered as this of Palgraves.^{107}

Ever your affectionate

S't C.

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^{106} This appears to be the only year Ruskin was at Denmark Hill on February 11 immediately upon his return from Oxford, which he mentions in this letter.

^{107} Francis Turner Palgrave (1824-97), critic and educational officer. He was of the circle of Arnold and Clough at Balliol and was subsequently elected Fellow of Exeter College. Palgrave was an assistant private secretary to Gladstone and later spent many years in a government department of education. A friend of Tennyson, an art and literary critic as well as a poet of modest abilities, Palgrave is perhaps best remembered for the "Golden Treasury" anthology. He occupied the chair of poetry at Oxford from 1885-95.
My dear William

Please put address on enclosed,—the letter sent me has none. I am coming to town for a fortnight now—if Isola & you would like to come & look at the flowers—there are some pretty little blossoms about here and there on the walls.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin.
My dearest φιλή,—Do you really think scythes were never whetted nor set against swathes of grass “under the hawthorn in the dale,” before patent farming? All that is alleged against such labour is by the absurd over-workers of modern trade. I have swept dew away with the edge, before now, myself. I should have been wiser and happier if I had kept my own lawn smooth daily. I want to see Mr. Harris more than he can possibly want to see me. I’ll make him [sic] my way across the country to you on Saturday evening, somehow, and stay till Tuesday morning.

Yes, I saw what was to be in the New Forest, and thought that both were happy, beyond most.

I don’t in the least believe you’ll come to Utopia, so you needn’t pretend you will, but I’m ever your loving

St. C.
My dear William

I am very grateful for your letter. Yesterday I wrote to Mr Martineau, and to my cousin, Mr W. G. Richardson, who was once a lawyer, (and is now a West India merchant and Cambridge student!)—and who when I told him the Father's question, instantly proposed a reference to indisputable legal authority as essential. I have desired him to act with Mr Martineau and to obtain whatever interpretation of the decree may be final, from the proper sources.

It would indeed destroy both health and usefulness, if I allowed hopes to return such as I had once. I wish that they could return—if they were allowed—but I have been too often & too sorely betrayed to trust, or hope, more; and even if all should be determined favourably, as regards the legal question, I shall only request that, with the Bishops aid and influence, you would undeceive Rose as to the points of unjust evilspeaking against me. I am very weary of life;—and will not ask her to come to me.—If she wants to come, she must say so to me,—nor can she yet—say so, wisely until she understands a little what sort of life she must in that case join. I have pledged myself now publicly to many things—in my own mind, I am resolved on many more. I will not in one jot interrupt my work for her. I have to prepare an entire scheme of elementary teaching for the lower school at Oxford, at once, and to be sure that the schools can be opened with it complete, in October; after I have got this done, I am going with Mr Goodwin to Venice & Verona, to get some pieces of

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109 Albert Goodwin, a relatively unknown Victorian artist who accompanied Ruskin to Italy in 1872. Goodwin's name appears occasionally in Ruskin's writings and on one occasion at least, in an appendix to The Art of England (Works, XXXIII, 405), he takes a drubbing for his moralistic contributions to the Old Water-Colour Exhibition. Goodwin assisted Ruskin during the latter's illness at Matlock in July, 1871.
colour there for the last time that it will be possible—then, at Christmas all my accounts must be made clear, selling the pictures I don’t want, and fixing my future rate of expenditure—which must be a low one.

Then, Rose will be able to judge whether she would like to come & help or not. If she means to have the option, I should insist on her corresponding with me freely in the meantime, otherwise I will have nothing more to do with her. However much a man may love a woman, he cannot be twice left to die, (if he chooses)—and then be asked to prove that he is not a villain!—and yet obey the whistle as he did once.

I have heard of a house in Wales which I think may do for me—whatever does or does not happen—it is very small—but has a little land, and a stream.

I will soon tell you more about it.
Love always to you both.

Ever your affect[, S]t C.
My dear William

I am so grateful for your letter—the moment Phile and you can fix your day, please tell me that I may have the pleasure of looking forward to it.

Phile knows my great pet Connie,—she and her sister and their father & mother are staying with me just now—they are all so nice I do wish you could come soon while they are still here.

—I am deeply interested about Mr Harris—Yes, the organization of labour is everything—or the foundation of everything.

Ever your loving St C.

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110 From *Works*, XXXVII, it is apparent that Ruskin was at Oxford on June 6, 1871, and was probably staying at Abingdon while lecturing at the university. The reference here and in Letter 163 to a Mr. Harris also serves to substantiate the year ascribed.

111 The Reverend and Mrs. J. C. Hilliard and their two daughters, Constance and Ethel.
My dear William

I think you will be pleased to see the enclosed letter. I hope, in the course of next week, you will have all the documents, and be able to form whatever judgments you & the Bishop can finally act upon. You say she is probably too ill to decide at once. I am too ill also—and I hope—too wise. I am not going to offer—still less to urge—marriage, now. But I insist on free intercourse—face to face. She never understands my letters.

What I want you and the Bishop to do is to insist on being allowed to put the facts before her, so that we may not be separated by lies; (—and those so unworthy of all against whom they are used—so foul to put into the child's heart—so vile, to charge a man with when toiling for the good of others with all his strength). When she knows—& understands all—she is to decide at once,—I mean in three days at the utmost—whether she will see me or not.

I will not go to Ireland. You won't mind asking her to Broadlands? Let her come there and talk to me.

After that, if she will, I want her to feel a little of my quiet life—by coming to stay with Joan a week or two—in the house in which I passed my happy childhood. If she will not come, I close—irrevocably—all relations with her—come of it what will.

—I am still very unwell but better, and at the level of beef tea—I think I shall get that child to like her dinner again, if Phile orders it for her.

Ever your grateful
John Ruskin

112 Herne Hill, where Joan Agnew and her husband, Arthur Severn, married in April, 1871, went to live.
That's an important notion of yours about pulpits—Very fine & right—and orthodox—old—Catholic.
But—Wm dear, we must give up preaching—& take to—showing the way.
My dearest William

Yesterday evening I made search, at once; and found the documents which I send you herewith; you may perhaps like to see my Father's account of the matter; and if you will glance at the passages underlined now, by me, in the lawyers letters, they will also help you to form at least your own conclusions more pleasantly. You will see that the lawyers advised me not to look at the depositions, and I did not—and have no copy of the judgment but of course that is easily obtained. I have also written to John Simon today, to come and determine my bodily health. I have just spoken to my mother about it—in respect of mere age and feebleness—she says my blood is so pure that I should have perfectly healthy children—having never touched a woman, and being of pure descent, (especially my mothers constitution being strangely vigourous).

It is curious however, that the annilizing [sic] of all this evil, and the being obliged to prove that I am not a villain, has a deadly effect on my general thoughts and increases whatever feeling of indignation or separateness existed previously.

I shall write now to my best lawyer friend, to get copy of judgment.

Letter just came from John Simon, enclosed.

Love to φίλη

Ever your grateful

JR.
Dearest Isola,

The sun is shining—divinely this morning—and I feel just able for a tiny before-breakfast letter.—There is the most comic aptness in the perpetual disappointments that come on me—whenever I begin to think of any one I care for, except you—last night you know I was to see the Bp of Limerick—dine with him—and talk of things.

The dinner was to be at the Athenaeum which I thought odd—but I went there & sate two hours—from seven to nine—in the corner looking out on the plunging rain up Waterloo place—and he never came.

—And my work had been spoiled all the day before.

—How curiously wrong most of our notions of old far away scenes and people are; for instance, Read Milton’s fancy of Dalilah in the Agonistes. Not that many people are as stupid as Milton—in such matters. Still—one does fancy—generally—Dalilah to have been a rather tall, rather round limbed, rather boldfaced,—and rather wicked person—with black hair & eyes. I know, now, quite, what she was. She was rather tall. She was very narrow-waisted—& very shy, and had the trimmest little sweet knot of golden hair at the back of her head. And she had grey eyes—and was so good—so very good—and always did as her people bid her.

I tell you what it is, Isola.—I’ll have a Bureau des demolitions at the house of Diane de Poitiers—and Irish oak “au poids”—if this goes on much longer. I can’t afford to be blinded, of all things. I shall go off to Venice, with the gates of Gaza on my back—and paint you another Island.

Ever your lovingest S* C.
Letter 169

[5 July 1871]113

My dear William

Thank you for the letter of yesterday—and for its encouragement in the line I mean to follow,—though it has not prospered hitherto, for, do what I will, the gnawing anxiety has upset digestion & everything else and I get out of bed to write this,—and to enclose this half letter of my lawyer Cousins114—on the fly leaf was a statement of the question clearly put, which I have revised, and sent back to be immediately submitted to Counsel.

Try and see lady Desart.115 She and I had a long correspondence—and all seemed to be going well between us, when she suddenly stopped. The ways I am teased as well as grieved in it all are very strange. Love to Phile. Ever your grateful

St C.

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113 The envelope for this letter is so dated.
114 W. G. Richardson.
115 The wife of the 3rd Earl of Desart; the latter was an Oxford friend of Ruskin’s and also the half-brother of Mrs. La Touche. From an unpublished letter of Ruskin’s written in September, 1870, it is quite clear that Lady Desart knew a great deal about his relations with Rose.
Matlock
23rd July 71.

My dear William

I sent by yesterday’s post the final legal opinion, for your support.

By today’s post, I have written straight & simply to R. herself telling her all is ascertained & safe, and that you and Phile, and her aunt—and others—if she chooses, will tell her that I deserve her trust.

The rest of the letter was merely a quiet statement of what I told you I should say; that she must now correspond with me—and rationally determine if it will be advisable to marry or not.

So now I count on you two and the Bishop to support me with her, if needful.

I am not in the least agitated or anxious in this.

My plans are for far greater things than my own poor love, now,—but if, wisely, it can now be fulfilled, I think it will help all my purposes—not least in recovered honour before all the world—and of course in peace of heart.

I’m getting stronger every hour—Thanks to Phile & you for helping me at the worst need.

Ever your loving

S't C.
Dearest Isola

Thanks for the letter—and for your “notes”—but I am partly at pause—wondering if William has got my letter of Sunday;—he may be anxious about legal matters for me and not have spoken of it to you. Send me a little line here—if you can, tomorrow, saying if he has seen, or heard from, the Bishop.

I have been all the morning on a rocky hillside covered with wild roses and creeping St John’s wort. It’s very humiliating to me, it is so very low all round the feet of the roses.

I’m going out again to paint a spray of rose against a rock. If it comes rightly it will be pretty.

Ever your loving St C.

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116 The textual reference to “my letter of Sunday” (i.e., Letter 170) yields the date ascribed.