PART V
The final part of this correspondence is richly diverse. It was in the middle of 1871 that Ruskin, soon after his illness at Matlock, brought to fruition an idea that had long been germinating: the foundation of the Guild of St. George. Its goals, ideals, and bases of operation are stated in approximately a dozen letters to the Cowper-Temples; the trusteeship of William Cowper-Temple and Sir Thomas Acland is also discussed, as are the expenditures of the fund and the prospectus of that strangely utopian undertaking. Ruskin speaks, too, of the problems connected with Fors Clavigera, the purchase of Brantwood, and the meeting between Charles Eliot Norton and the Cowper-Temples. The letters of the seventies—and to a limited degree of the eighties as well—are, in fact, valuable for their biographical data.

Yet, it will be noticed that there are almost identical hiatuses in Ruskin's diaries (from November 1 to December 21) and in his letters to the Cowper-Temples (from October 29 to December 21), during which period Margaret Ruskin died.¹ In spite of this not wholly unexpected blow Ruskin was not idle, for in the late autumn and early winter he wrote prefaces to both Aratra Pentelici and Munera Pulveris, and he continued the monthly issues of Fors Clavigera as well.

¹ On December 5, 1871.
Neither had the unhappy man forgotten Rose. In his diary he notes dreaming vividly of her, and echoes of her are sounded in *Fors*. With the coming of 1872 his despondency is apparent, and he is still obsessed enough to record (on February 2) the anniversary of his proposal of marriage:

> And so I have waited my three years, twice over—and now.” Yet he continued his activities—lecturing at Oxford in February and March—and in mid-April he set out with companions upon an Italian journey from which he was to return under the most dramatic circumstances.

In the spring of 1872 Rose La Touche, who had a modest acquaintance with George MacDonald, released her feelings to him in a series of letters characteristic of her neurotic condition. In April and May she wrote him of her sensitivity to pain and suffering, of her despair over the Irish poor, of her unhappiness at home, and of her mother’s dislike of Harris-town. Permeating these melancholy documents is a strong religious strain revealing her confused beliefs. In a letter of mid-May she writes of Ruskin:

> If it could have been so that I could have kept the friend who has brought such pain and suffering and torture and division among so many hearts—if there had never been anything but friendship between us—how much would have been spared.

It seems that about this time more calumnies directed against Ruskin came to Rose’s attention; and in her psychasthenic state she tended to believe them. Also, it is possible that an aunt in whom Ruskin perhaps had confided, further disturbed the girl by some hostile criticism of her lover. This perhaps motivated Rose’s letter of June 19, 1872, from Tunbridge Wells, sent to MacDonald to forward to Ruskin if advisable;

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2 *Diaries*, II, 715.
5 So modest that in her first letter—dated April 20, 1872—Rose thought it necessary to identify herself to MacDonald, even though he had been on close terms with the La Touches and Rose years before, and had paid visits to her home.
7 Leon, pp. 487 ff.
fortunately MacDonald judged the contents so bitter, so disturb­ ing, that he refrained from sending it on. In it Rose—retrospectively judging Ruskin from some letters he wrote in 1870—accuses him of dreadful sins. The document is, in fact, suffused with her own morbid religiosity, and it is as well that the already bedeviled Ruskin did not see it.

Rose, soon after, came to stay with the MacDonalds, and George MacDonald, sensible of her deep agitation, exchanged a series of letters with Ruskin, in Venice, urging him to return to England to meet with Rose. After a show of reluctance, in which he revealed his bitterness and resentment, Ruskin, finally comprehending Rose's anxiety—heightened by the insistence of her parents that she return to Ireland from England—returned speedily from Geneva. And, between the end of July and the middle of August, he saw Rose both at the London house of the MacDonalds and at the Cowper-Temples' country seat, Broadlands, as he happily records in Letters 184 and 185. Supplementary to these letters are diary entries for the corresponding period.8

But—an old story now—the happiness does not endure, and the familiar cycle follows. No sooner are the lovers brought together than Rose makes him miserable.9 Shortly after, in early September, Ruskin writes of Rose's "mental derangement," of her "fierce letter," and of the termination of their relationship. After this, in the Cowper-Temple correspondence at least, there are additional references to Rose's mental difficulties counterpointed by reminiscences of the blissful period spent at Broadlands with her. Ultimately Ruskin comes to excuse her treatment of him on the basis of her illness. Little more about Rose appears in these letters; and from 1873 whenever Rose is mentioned, it is in tones of his hopeless quest and of his resentment toward her.

By 1874 Rose's mental condition had seriously deteriorated, although she wrote Ruskin, in the autumn of that year, some of "the loveliest letters." She came to London shortly after and moved steadily toward her early death. There is reason

8 Diaries, II, 729-30.
9 Ibid., II, 729.
to believe Ruskin saw her once more, for in a letter to Francesca Alexander he speaks of Rose as

out of her mind in the end; one evening in London she was raving violently till far into the night; they could not quiet her. At last they let me into her room. She was sitting up in bed; I got her to lie back on her pillow, and lay her head in my arms, as I knelt beside it.

They left us, and she asked me if she should say a hymn. And I said yes, and she said, “Jesus, lover of my soul,” to the end, and then fell back tired and went to sleep. And I left her.¹⁰

Soon after this Rose died, but Ruskin does not write of her passing to Mrs. Cowper-Temple; instead he turned to a great contemporary whose emotional problems were not without resemblance to his own. In a letter to Thomas Carlyle, Ruskin poignantly remarks:

I had just got it [Academy work] done, with other worldliness, and was away into the meadows, to see buttercup and clover and bean blossom when the news came that the little story of my wild Rose was ended, and the hawthorn blossoms, this year, would fall—over her.¹¹

Ruskin bore Rose’s death, so far as can be ascertained, with reticence and stoicism. But the phantom of this elusive creature haunted him and dominated his writing and, indeed, his entire career, until its terrible end. Even his funeral pall was embroidered with wild roses.

After Rose’s death Ruskin in his correspondence with the Cowper-Temples shows distinct signs of mental deterioration. He resorts to the language of the nursery, referring to himself as a “loving little boy” or as “poor little S* C.” His recipients are addressed as “Grand Papa” and “Grannie”; and his emotional collapse is further indicated when he asks if he can come to dine “with some other little boys—who play at being Bishops.” True, he works hard in the later seventies—lectures at Oxford, continues Fors, and writes and speaks on

¹¹ Works, XXXVII, 167-68.
the usual diversity of topics. He is, in 1881, visited by Mrs. La Touche and he enjoys new friendships—with the Alexanders, for instance—and travels with much of the old verve. But the clouds darken in the seventies too; and in 1878 comes the first fierce attack of brain fever, to be followed in the 1880's by constant mental breakdowns. The eighties are, in fact, the beginning of the end, for Ruskin's mind crumbles steadily under appalling mental onslaught. He continues doggedly, but by 1889 the strain is too great and—one year after the last letter to the Mount-Temples is written—Ruskin moves into the shades of madness where he is to remain until his death on January 20, 1900.
My dear William,

Was I so very ill, really? when you saw me first? I never for one moment lost grasp of myself. Everybody thought I was acting in mad or foolish whims of sickness, but I could have written you a medical statement of the case, when I was too weak to raise myself; and was acting all along with as fixed purpose as in painting a picture. I dare say Phile thought me wandering when I made her write down Hellish! abomination of—"Colman’s Mustard." It was an accurate memorandum for a careful page in the next Fors but one. I have been up and about, these three days, and can do everything but walk—but I can’t yet get any steadiness on my feet:—however, I’ve cut off the brandy & water stimulus and I think I stagger for want of being Drunk:—but I’ve got back now to a couple of glasses of sherry—and shall soon lessen that—this illness has taught me the preciousness of pure water—Me—who—of all people supposed myself to know that best!—but I did’nt half know it.

I’ve finished my August Fors—too—it is a page or two shorter than usual—but also, more important. I have desired one to be sent to you tomorrow, please read it soon: for I want you to consider of something. This number announces my first gift of £1000 to lay the foundation of the “St George’s” fund, for buying land in Britain. I have ordered my agent to buy 1000 Consols and lay what is to spare—the £90 or so—by to begin another round sum; but this stock must be of course bought in the name of Trustees. Now, I

12 Ruskin’s severe illness in 1871 is noted in Works, XXII, xviii.
13 Ruskin refers here to the commencement of the Guild of St. George, first called St. George’s Fund. For further information about the genesis of this utopian scheme see Works, XXVII, 141 ff.
want so much to have you for one, and Sir Thomas Acland\textsuperscript{14}—(Sir Thomas only within this last week,) for the other.—On his Devonshire estate there is primitive ground yet—and, better still, primitive manners—and I think he will help me by maintaining what is left on his ground,—he is a very dear friend of mine—and the brother of a dearer one, Henry Acland,—and if you & he would be the Trustees—it would be so nice. I would quit you by any asseveration you dictated,—of any complicity with me in my views or absurdities—I only want you to take care of the money—for—upon my word—I scarcely know—if you will not—where to look for a man whom I can wholly trust. So please think, whether you can do it, as soon as you can.

So many thanks for all you say about R. but I’m tired writing now & will dictate to Joanna what I’ve to say of her. I sent her a very civil letter to which she sent an answer which for folly, insolence, and selfishness beat everything I yet have known produced by the accursed sect of religion she has been brought up in. I made Joanna re-enclose her the letter, writing only, on a scrap of paper with it—(Joanna writing that is to say, not I) “my cousin and I have read the enclosed—You shall have the rest of your letters as soon as he returns home—and your mother shall have her’s”—so the letter went back, and the young lady shall never read written, nor hear spoken, word of mine more. I am entirely satisfied in being quit of her, for I feel convinced she would have been a hindrance to me, one way or other, in doing what I am more and more convinced that I shall be permitted to do rightly, only, on condition of putting all my strength into it.

I hope to get home on Monday, and to get my Lectures on Sculpture\textsuperscript{15} out by the end of August—they are connected with the object of “Fors,” in a most curious way, which, however, I won’t undertake to explain to-day. Then, God willing

\textsuperscript{14} Thomas Dyke Acland, educational reformer and politician, born in Devon in 1809 and educated at Harrow and Christ Church. Acland was a prominent figure in the establishing of the Oxford local examination system and was also concerned with agricultural advancements. He was for many years an M.P. from North Devon and was a patron of the young Millais. He succeeded his father as eleventh baronet in 1871 and died, in 1898, ten days after his great friend, William Ewart Gladstone.

\textsuperscript{15} Ruskin refers here to \textit{Aratra Pentelici}.
I shall run to Verona and Venice and come home by Pisa. What would you, and φιλη say to a walk

"At evening on the Top of Fésole, 
Or in Val d'Arno—to descry new lands."

not in her spotty globe, but in our own England—through Florentine art and laws?
Lucca too is so lovely—yet.
Will you come?

Ever your affectionate
J Ruskin
Letter 173

Denmark Hill.

S. E.

1st August 1871.

7 o'clock morning—just struck

My dearest Isola

I was at the window, and it ajar, at least 12 times between 4 and 5 this morning—to see a white cloud that stayed opposite the window all that time, in a long silver path in the sky.

When were you up—and when did you go to bed?

I should scarcely know I had been ill—only everything feels so heavy—except my heart.

I know I had a pretty dream at Matlock of some one reading Redgauntlet to me. I don't think it was anything more.

Your affectionate & grateful

Nursling.

Love to William &—thanks.
My dearest Isola,

I am sorely beaten down; but I can read my Chaucer again. I have not been able, for a year, to read him, nor anything that is good or dear, for myself, but only for others. And I can write little letters before breakfast again. Do you recollect the surrender to the Lord of the Garden, in the Romaunt?¹⁷

"Ye may do with me what ye will
Save, or spill, and also slo
Fro you in no wise may I go."

and what he answers

For now I wote full utterly
That thou art gentle by thy speech,
For tho a man far would seche
He “shuld not finden, in certeine
No such answer of no villeine.”

Ever your grateful S't C.

¹⁶ The tone is recuperative and suggestive of the time shortly after his illness at Matlock in July, 1871.
¹⁷ Cf. The Romaunt of the Rose (Fragment B), ll. 1952 ff.
Letter 175

Denmark Hill.
S. E.

4th August 71.

My dear William

I got your two kind notes last night, and they gave me sound sleep. I think it very kind of you to let your name be used, for it will be difficult for you, so far as it may become known before next Fors not through me to make people understand it does not involve more than being holder of the Fund.

In next Fors, you yourself will see more what I mean. It is not to be Communism: quite the contrary. The old Feudal system applied to do good instead of evil—to save life, instead of destroy. That is the whole—in fewest words;—as the system gets power, I hope to see it alter laws all over England—(I shall go in at the lawyers very early)—so as to get powers over youth of a very stern kind indeed, and over lying & cheating tradesmen even to—

Well—I sent orders out of bed this morning to my cousin to buy 2000 Consols, for (I've 10,000 coming in from Yorkshire this month which gives another tithe of 1000) in the names of Sir Tho* Acland of Killerton and the Rt Hon* Wm Cowper-Temple. If Acland does'nt like it we'll get some one else—but I think he'll stay.

I hope the fatality of dual mischance is now ended; and that I may see you & hear of you riding for twenty years to come, without another danger. I'm going to teach my boys riding always without stirrups,—their state days riding with golden-bordered housings & light gold-inlaid bridles—the common riding with slightly stuffed horsecloth & steel bridle,—every three boys to have their own horse, when the eldest of the three is 12, having been of course tumbled on and off as soon as they could bestride one.
I entirely concur in your thoughts about other matters.

Me tabula sacer
Votiva paries, indicat—&c. &c.\textsuperscript{18}

Ever gratefully yours

J Ruskin

Dear love to Isola.

\textsuperscript{18} See \textit{The Odes of Horace}, trans. W. E. Gladstone (New York, 1894), pp. 8-9, for Ode V (Book I), of which this passage is a part.
Letter 176

Denmark Hill.
S. E.
Friday. Aug 18th [1871] 19

My dear William

I have two such pretty notes from you. One—written on the sixth—(not postmarked till the 16th) about Romsey island, the other yesterday beginning my dear John.

—I did not fully know how severe the hurt of the limb had been, until I saw Small yesterday,—and had not thought how much of care and pain, even though there was no fracture, the bruise of the limb would involve:—I am very happy in your being able to come on Monday. Shall it be to five o'clock tea? If the afternoon is fine, I think Isola & you would like that best. I am very grateful to you for writing to Mr Baker. I am not going to burden you in general with my work,—but I do not suppose you will think the time ill spent in giving first form & organization to the process of the scheme, such as may assure the public that it is under some rational checks and securities. Ever your grateful

JR.

If you send or bring me his answer and refer me to any solicitor whom you wish me to employ, I think I can free you from further trouble—I will make Mr Baker thoroughly understand—and the lawyer most clearly state—the conditions of gift.

My mother remains in a state in which I should not feel justified in leaving her again, except for very short intervals. I fear I must abandon thoughts of the south for this year.

19 The date is derived from the reference to the legal problems attendant upon the St. George’s Guild. See also Letters 172 and 175.
Coniston, 20th Sept., '71

My dearest Isola,—I don’t know where you are—such a floating Island—or indeed Island of the Blessed, nobody knows where—you have become. This semblance of you is very pleasant to me, in the character of Nurse, to which I owe so much. I have a nice line from William asking me to meet Mr. Harris, but it was too late. I am at work in my own little garden among the hills, conscious of little more than the dust of the earth—more at peace than of old, but very low down. I like the place I have got.\(^{20}\) The house is just the size I wanted; the stream, not quite, but (they say) ceaseless—all I know is, after a week’s dry weather there isn’t much of it left, now. I have some real rocks and heather, some firs and a copse, and a lovely field, with nothing visible over the edge of its green waves but the lake and sunset—when the sun is there to set, which, thanks to Lancaster smoke, he no more always is than at London.

"Brantwood, Coniston Lake, Ambleside" will find me (within a day or two) for three weeks to come (and always hereafter somehow).—Ever your loving

J. R.

\(^{20}\) Ruskin had very recently purchased Brantwood and had, in fact, made his first visit there only on September 12, 1871.
My dearest Isola,

It is true that I am tired to-day, and Joanie is so very dear that I can let her write for me even to you. Still, to-day, I must only quickly tell you what to see—first at Milan the chief thing is the Monasterio Maggiore—the whole church is covered with Luini’s frescos—my St. Catherine in the back church behind the screen.

Glean out at the Brera and elsewhere what of Luini you can find—and see the Monastery of Chiaravalle this last essential. At Verona—Murray tells you everything—except to drive at sunset seven miles out through Bussolengo towards the Lago di Garda—this is essential.

Give yourselves time to climb the little hills so as to see Verona behind, and the Lago di Garda in front. At Padua the frescos of Mantegna—both sides of the Great Hall—and its surroundings—of course the Arena Chapel—the Southern Chapels of St Antonio—and above all as examples of perfect sculpture its two small holy water vessels, in marble—the sculptures of the St. Antony Chapel are affected—but those among them by the Lombardi are fine—you need not trouble to see Titian’s frescos, but notice the so-called tomb of Antenor—simplest early Gothic—and all the tombs in the church where Mantegna’s frescos are—close to the Arena Chapel—enquire by the way—at Verona for the Parroco21 of St. Anastasia—and see if he is able still to keep the Chiaravalle chapel clear—and give my kind regards to my Landlord at the Due Torri—and, if you can, get my coachman for the drive through Bussolengo—My compliments also to the excellent custode of St Zeno.

21 Parish priest.
You may look at the Lantern Chapel of San Michele—as one of the most interesting examples of the frantic and fruitless grotesque—of the Renaissance—mad with its skill and ambition—and wholly devoid of piety and thought—on the other hand—the finest thing in all Verona—is the tomb of Can Grande—his Prime Minister over the little gateway at St. Anastasia—then Can Mastino second—at culminating skill with less nobility—and Can Signorio far far fallen—notice the Physicians tomb in the church of St. Anastasia—left hand going in on the inside of the front wall—it is very lovely—and give plenty time to the lateral porch and the pulpit of San Iserino. My Gryphons you will find in front of the Duomo, if they have been fools enough to stay, under Republican Government!—the Apse of the Duomo outside is quite consummate in proportion, & reserved use of decoration among Romanesque buildings—There is a little church among the Vineyards on the other side of the river with a precious early Sarcophagus in its crypt—and altogether full of tender sentiment—but I forget its name—and I am sure I have told you as you can happily see—whatever time you have—I know nothing of Pavia—but there are mighty things there. The Certosa is all rubbish—I am fairly well—and doing good work.

Love to William

Ever your loving J Ruskin.

Much love from Joan—& best thanks for the sweet letter to her—She will write again when she knows where to address.
Dear Mr Cowper-Temple

This is not Joan, but me that's writing! and I'm afraid it would be much better if it wasn't me.

But, I hope by this time that the milder weather has enabled you to conquer your cold.

And, I shall not tease you very much, and φίλη can write to me in a moment what I want to know.

There's some mistake at the Bank about the St. George's Fund.

I went yesterday to transfer another £5000 into the names of the Trustees, and they wouldn't admit that they had any account in Consols either in your name, or Acland's. Will you please tell me if the money has been placed elsewhere, or send me word how to transfer the additional sum?

It is £5000 Consols clear—and I want to get it transferred quickly—because I have said in my Xmas "Fors" that it is transferred.

Can you telegraph on receiving this what they are to ask for? to Messrs Pawle & Co 31 Throgmorton St. I have'nt a minute more to-day, but am very glad you are both home.

Love to Isola.

Ever your affe. J. Ruskin.

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22 The textual references to the St. George's Guild suggest the year ascribed.
Dear Mr Cowper

As far as I can judge you may with perfect freedom of purpose and great power of doing good, now join our sanguine society—but of course there are a thousand things you have to consider, which I know nothing about.

The prospectus will be out, now—in two or three days, and you can think it over then—but of course we should all be grateful to you if you would join us at once. It simply means that everybody is to do all he can—and that everybody knows his neighbours work—and helps it as far as possible.

I am just going out, and can only say this—and how sorry I am for what causes you sorrow.

Ever faithfully Yours

J Ruskin

23 The allusion to the Guild of St. George serves to establish the year. The Guild begins to take shape in 1871 and Ruskin did not reside at Denmark Hill in December after that year.
Letter 181

Denmark Hill.
S. E.

8th January 72

My dear William

Best thanks. There is no haste however, about dividends. I have already some minor subscriptions in hand, and shall publish, in Fors, monthly, the state of the accounts. When you come to town and have seen Acland it will of course be well to open an account at the Bank: but as yet, I should be ashamed to have one, as nobody joins me,—I shall go on patiently, till somebody does. I am very thankful for the bright weather, which extends even here,—and for Isola's letters. I am preparing, for the Oxford schools, my first bit of natural history—to wit "The Mythic and True History of common English Birds." Arranged for the use of the lower School of Drawing at Oxford, by—&c &c.24

I

The Halcyon.25

—Have you got any King Fishers about that river of your's.

Ever your very grateful & affectionate.

JR

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24 A reference to a series of lectures given at Oxford during Lent Term, 1872. They were entitled The Eagle's Nest (Works, XXII, 111-288).

25 The halcyon gives its name to the title of Lecture IX in The Eagle's Nest. Actually, this lecture had already been given at Woolwich by Ruskin on January 13, 1872, five days after the above letter was written. At that time the lecture was entitled "The Bird of Calm."
My dearest Isola,

I received the Sacrament this morning, from the head of my college—for the first time these—I think—seven years, and heard the Epistle read, with more understanding than ever before.

It is all very fine, when—some day—one hopes for anything better. But what of this poor Pelican?

I write you my first note on paper with my College crest\(^\text{26}\) and am ever

Your loving and faithful

J Ruskin

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\(^{26}\) Which appears, centered, at the top of the page.
Letter 183

Love to William

Venice 12th July

My dearest φίλη

I have your little note—I fear you never got one of mine asking you to write to Florence—It was not worth getting, and I have not been able to write or think, or feel, most of my days,—except needful matters for my routine work.

I am coming home, now, in haste27—but not for my own sake—nor perhaps, much for any one else’s. Whatever good can come now, is too late, except peace—which I hope to get or give, at last.

Ever your loving

J Ruskin

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27 To meet with Rose La Touche, in response to George MacDonald’s urgent requests.
My dear William

I have half killed the poor girl and her mother I had charge of, in coming home at speed from Geneva—and now you don’t want me till Sunday afternoon—and I have not had one rational word from any of you all this fortnight. First Φυλη writes to say she must’nt write—Then that the poor child is in such a state of mind—and she’ll tell me all when I come—and then—that she’ll be glad to see me on Sunday.
—Well—I’ll come, if I can.

Yours always, affectionately
JR.

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28 Ruskin arrived in England on July 26, 1872 (Diaries, II, 728) and saw Rose shortly after, as Letter 188 indicates. This letter, then, was written very near the end of the month.

29 Mrs. Hilliard and her daughter Constance, who had been of Ruskin’s party in Venice.
Dearest Isola,

Now, wouldn't it be lovely if you had sent me a little note telling me to come to church tomorrow at Romsey, and that I might have a walk afterwards, beside the Liffey. No, it isn't the Liffey—you know—what is it?

Of course, it's as impossible as the Kingdom of Heaven. (Heaven be praised for it's not a Queendom—there, at least, and there will be peace for poor tortured wretches.)—but I shall get a note presently, exhorting me to Patience and all the Virtues. Or perhaps no note at all. Or a note to say you meant to write, but it's post-time—or dinner time—or bed time. Patience! But what is to be done with me? What is she going to do? Is she going to wear that white hat again, and is everybody to see it except me. Please don't let her wear that white hat. Perhaps—if she weren't allowed to wear white hats—she might feel something was wrong,—when she makes other people wear black, all over. Do you recollect the order of Mercy in Florence, with the black marks. They even—have their eyes left open. She puts me in black iron, and closes the helmet over the eyes.

Please—please—please—don't let her wear that white hat, —nor white shawl. Make her wear a black veil,—as they do at Verona—only quite over her face. Who should see her, if I may not?

I've been working so hard on Pietro Perugino, in Italy this time—and I've found out how he did all those lovely things—You would never have had Tobit and the angel over your chimney-piece,—if he had been treated as I am. "Pietro took a very beautiful girl to wife; and he is said to have had so much pleasure in seeing her wear becoming headdresses, both
abroad and at home, that he was occasionally known to ar-
range this part of her toilet with his own hands."[30] I suppose
that was because she was like some Irish girls—and “loved
with her head, and not with her heart.” She wished she could
let me see the heart—which she can’t—and won’t let me see
the face—which I can—which only I can. No other ever saw
her rightly—I am sure of that.

After breakfast. There is no letter—and its very dreadful—and I don’t know what to do.

Am I alive again—or are you only a beautiful Witch of
Endor,—and I only raised for a moment to say—“Why hast
thou disquieted me”?

—I’ll do all she bids me that is possible—but she can’t bid
me be happy.

Ever your poor Sth C.

30 See Vasari’s Lives.
Dearest Isola,

I do not believe that ever any creature out of heaven has been so much loved as I love that child. I am quite tired tonight—not with pain—but mere love—she was so good and so grave, and so gay, and so terribly lovely—and so merciless, and so kind—and so “ineffable.”

You looked sadly grave and worn all day—Was anything more wrong for me than before? I have got anxious, thinking over the thing. You never said a word of my letter? Did you ever see anything half so lovely? as she was at last. How shall I ever thank you enough—I will try to be so good—but I am very weary—six years and a half—and scarcely any hope now. But the great good to me is finding how noble she is—she is worth all the worship—How thankful I should be for the change since this time last year.—William was so kind to me

—Love to him.

Ever Yours,

St. C.
Dearest Isola

I have no words to day—I should come and lie at your feet all day long, if I could, trying to thank you with my eyes.  

Nothing can come now that I cannot bear—No death, nor life shall separate me from the love of God any more. However long she is kept from me,—whatever she does to me,—I will not fear, nor grieve—but wait—and be more like her when she is given at last—and more worthy of her. Oh how foolish we all were,—thinking it was she who was unworthy—were not we? So much love to William too. As much as ever he will have, I will give him. You will tell me how much he would like? And you must have ever so much whether you like it or not.

Ever your happy & loving St C.

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32 In gratitude for the day of August 13, 1872, which Ruskin spent at Broadlands with Rose (Diaries, II, 729).
Oh me, dearest Isola—we are poor weak things. I thought my one day at Broadlands might have lasted me for a century,—and now—I am quite sick with pining for—one home—one minute more—Why did you let her go away—I was too timid & feeble,—but I did not know what hold I had. If only I had seen—what I saw yesterday: her letter to Mr. Macdonald after she had first seen me—(28th July)—she never should have gone home—except to mine—now I'm all restless and wretched again. And though I know and am wholly sure, that unless some fearful tragic thing happens—she must come to me—still—this pleasant year is flying fast—another month of pain—and all the sweet summer days will be ended. Can't you get her back again for me. I was so foolish and wrong to let her go,—and yet I did it more in faith, and in reverence, than in foolishness—and I ought not to have more grief for it. Ah, get her back for me, and give me yet some days with bright morning and calm sunset—in this year—I am very old, to wait,—think!

Ten oclock—your letter—and William's—and Two from Her,—and I shall see her—God helping me—and keep her:—at least save her from all fear.

I was praying so hard all the morning—from light till I rose—that she might not be taken from me just now—and that I might not have more change or horror of doubt. And so it is.—All you say is true. This little lovely thing—doesn't

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33 Ruskin errs in dating this letter: Saturday fell on the seventeenth.  
34 See Letter 187, n. 32.  
35 Rose went from Broadlands to visit the Leycesters, relatives of Mrs. Cowper-Temple, where Ruskin, upon her request, went to join her (Leon, p. 496).
she see that I do love God best—in the form I see Him. I did not leave the work He had set me—because she was taken from me; I would not leave it now, for her, if she were indeed set before me for temptation—I would leave life for her; if I might, but neither lie for her, nor fail in any duty I had upon me, for her. She is second, if she would only forgive me for loving secondly too well!

—I am so thankful too to be relieved from the feeling of having delivered her up to her tormentors by my folly and hesitation—I see I could not have rightly done more, then: but now!—I don't mean that I will press her about marriage—but she shall not go back there,—Come and Help us. Ever your lovingest & William's S' C.
My dear William

Your letter is wise and kind; yet how can I entirely trust your judgment? It must have been mainly formed since Wednesday? You had as much hope as I, then? had you not. You did not then think her a basilisk.

Among the mocks of fortune at me in this, one of the strangest is that the Carpaccio chapel, from which I dated my letter saying I would come home and do what R wished, if she would ask me, face to face, contains, and was haunted by me because containing the fight of St. George with the dragon, and of St. (Urban?) with the Basilisk.

The dragon is bridled, (not utterly killed)—and the Basilisk, made innocent, and tame.

The Basilisk is such a comic Basilisk! Yet in its way of walking and holding its head—there is really what might make one think of our Basilisk.

Well, from that chapel, I wrote solemnly, saying I would do what I could to help her. And in your house, I vowed loyalty to her, to the death, and she let me kiss her. I cannot break my oath. I do not think she can even give it back to me. Basilisk or not, I must service her, obey her—live and die for her, now. Suppose she should not be a serpent—but a flower—Or a stone? Women have been changed into flowers. Why not flowers into women? They have been changed into

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36 The date is derived from the connection between this letter, through its fifth paragraph, and Letter 188. Also, August 19 of the year ascribed fell on a Monday.

37 While always interested in Carpaccio, Ruskin’s enthusiasm increased after 1870, and in the summer of 1872 he studied that artist in Venice. For some observations of Ruskin’s directly connected with this letter, see Works, XXIV, 339 ff.
stones—and Heaven knows—have changed men into them. But—was it for nothing we went to see Pygmalion? And you know—Edward said he was going to better the statue? I can do nothing. I have been miserable in liberty. It is better to be miserable in bondage. Such servitude is at least in itself a noble state, the liberty always an accursed one.

Think for me, therefore, as thus bound, & believe me

Ever your grateful

S't C.

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338 Ruskin is most probably referring to a series of four oil paintings by Edward Burne-Jones which have the general title "Pygmalion and the Image." These were started in 1868 and completed in 1878. They are distinct from the twelve illustrations to "The Story of Pygmalion and the Image" executed by the same artist in 1867.
My dearest Isola,

I don’t know where you are—and as you are Isola more than ever now, that is hard.

If ever you write to that child, send her this, from me.


The verse comes to me as the end of my first morning’s reading in my own house on my own land;—and I don’t feel as if it were meant for me. At all events, I never understood it so clearly as I seem to do—thinking—not of myself.

What are you doing in that wretched Ireland.

We have had nothing but rain here. The lake—six miles long by half mile broad has risen 3 feet vertical—you may fancy what that means of rain. My house is on a rock, very literally, else my hope had been as the hypocrites indeed.—But I think it will be dry by the time you & William come back from Ireland, if you like to come & see it.

Ever your loving S C.

39 “[Ye] have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.”—Matt. 23:23. See also Diaries, II, 732, where Ruskin uses this biblical excerpt.
Letter 191

I say I will send you the letter—I don't to day, not to give you too much pain.

Brantwood.

Coniston.

28th Sept. 72

My dearest φίλη

I am glad of your letter. I wrote a line some fortnight since to Prince's place, which you have not got.

I knew perfectly well that there was mental derangement at the root of all. Which does not make the thing less sad; but it prevents it from being cruel or monstrous. Except as all insanity and worry are connected—and a kind of Possession.

I will send you a letter I wrote, but did not send, partly by Joanna's wish,—frankly and solemnly telling her this. Instead of sending it, I tried to soothe her by affectionate play, which, she being at the time neither affectionate nor playful, put her in a fury, and she closed all intercourse.

Nothing but prolonged pain or death can, so far as I can judge—follow—for one or both of us,—for my own strength of body is almost entirely gone in the ghastly loss, I do not say of hope for I have not lost it altogether—but of courage and faith—which no effort—I was going to say, will recover, but the fact is I can't make the effort. I received her last fierce letter, re-enclosing mine unopened, at the door of the church as I was going in.—I suppose I ought to have gone in—but even Joan could not—or thought she could not. 40 So we came home and since, I have been playing chess—digging—and writing history—as I can.—My last entry in diary is—"Fallen & wicked & lost in all thought—must recover by work." 41

I have got pretty Lily Armstrong and Lolly Hilliard here—however—and the house rings with laughter all day long. Yet

40 This distressing situation is noted in Diaries, II, 732, under entry of September 8, 1872.
41 See, for this entry, Diaries, II, 732.
only Lolly is really gay,—poor Lily has not forgotten her wicked English lover—any more than I've forgotten my mad Irish one—but she is bright by nature, and pretty to look at—and wonderfully dear & thoughtful to Joanna.\footnote{Who had come, with her husband and first child, to stay at Brantwood.}

I wish you would or could tell me what sort of "anguish" the mother is in. Is she furious as well as anguished, still? What sort of terms does she keep with you? I can't fancy.

I am thankful for any dim report either of death or life. I did what I thought best for her alone only; I never once in all those hours and chances, pleaded for myself, except merely as a present lover. I never put forward any past claim, never told her how she had injured or would, injure, me by quitting me. I wish I had now, but all my life I have seen too late what should have been. So it will be to the end.

Ever your lovingest S\textsuperscript{t} C.
Brantwood.
Coniston.
2nd Oct. 72

My dearest Isola,

You have not been a Siren's Island. All that you have done has always been good for me, and successful in every point. It was entirely right and good for me that all this should happen, rather than that the former state of things should have remained. What you say of the horror that might have been, is also true and wise. But the horror that is, becomes more marvellous to me, day by day.† (see last page).

One thing you have now in your power, to help and soothe me,—do not allow yourself any more to be broken by overwork as you have lately been—not least by me,—by us, (—for—mad, or dead, she is still mine).

—Write to her as you used to do—whatever can soothe her (I meant—don’t let her think that I’m satisfied with her, but you won’t speak of me.)

I shall never more come to Broadlands,—but you and William may have really happy times here, when you want Cottage life—absolute peace—and any kind of Watery refreshment.

Love to William. He has good right to be provoked at the trouble I’ve given you—I hope to torment you no more, but to be in some poor measure—pleasant to you & always your loving S* C.

Do you notice how intensely selfish all insanity is? Very curious? “Troubled”—between fear of hearing of me, and fear lest she should be misjudged. Is a baser or more wicked state of mind—supposing it sane, conceivable?

† You say everything is bearable but Remorse.
Now I have that also, to bear—I failed in faith & perseverance, long before she gave way.

I shall always feel, that had I deserved her, I should have got her. But then! my own weakness,—my own incapability of feeling what real saints have felt—joined with what I cannot doubt in myself of kindness & usefulness—is only a greater darkness to me than if I had deserved her & not got her.

Why did not our God make me but a little stronger—her but a little wiser—both of us happy—? Now—granting me faultful, her foolish, I suffer for her madness—she for my sin—and both unjustly. Why should she go mad, because I don’t pray faithfully.
Before Breakfast
Brantwood.
Coniston.
4th Oct [1872]

My dearest Isola

The good that you may be sure you have done me remember, is in my having known, actually, for one whole day, the perfect joy of love. For I think, to be quite perfect, it must still have some doubt and pain—the pride of war and patience added to the intense actual pleasure. I don’t think any quite accepted & beloved lover could have the Kingly and Servantly joy together, as I had it in that ferry boat of yours, when she went into it herself, and stood at the stern, and let me stop it in mid-stream and look her full in the face for a long minute, before she said “Now go on”—The beautiful place—the entire peace—nothing but birds & squirrels near—the trust, which I had then in all things being—finally well—yet the noble fear mixed with the enchantment—her remaining still above me, not mine, and yet mine.

And this after ten years of various pain—and thirst. And this with such a creature to love—For you know, Isola, people may think her pretty or not pretty—as their taste may be, but she is a rare creature, and that kind of beauty happening to be exactly the kind I like,—and my whole life being a worship of beauty,—fancy how it intensifies the whole.

Of course, every lover, good for anything, thinks his mistress perfection—but what a difference between this instinctive, foolish—groundless preference, and my deliberate admiration of R, as I admire a thin figure in a Perugino fresco, saying “it is the lovliest figure I know after my thirty years study of art”—Well—suppose the Perugino—better than Pygmalions

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43 The close relationship between this letter and Letter 192—even to repetition of phrase—is highly suggestive of the year ascribed, as are the references to the day Ruskin spent with Rose at Broadlands in August, 1872.
statue,—holier—longer sought, had left the canvas—come into the garden—walked down to the riverside with me—looked happy—been happy, (—for she was—and said she was)—in being with me.

Wasn't it a day, to have got for me?—all your getting.
And clear gain—I am no worse now than I was,—a day or two more of torment and disappointment are as nothing in the continued darkness of my life. But that day is worth being born and living seventy years of pain for.
And I can still read my Chaucer, and write before-breakfast letters—Mad, or dead, she is still mine, now. Ever your loving

S\textsuperscript{t} C.
Dearest φίλη

So many thanks for writing, when all that grief was with you. Yes—one day—forty years—a thousand years—One might feel enough to make all the same.

I know she could not treat me so but in illness, so that please tell me everything.

I don’t know, of the knowledge what it is worst to know but I know silence is worst of all.

—I am going on with my work. You know I did it for a year,—before, hopeless,—and I’ve learned a great deal in this.

For one thing—I always fancied before that I was ill,—not knowing the effect on me of the want of joy,—now, I know what is the matter, and can reason about it.

—I shall be at Oxford on Tuesday, D. V.

—Write when you can, there—but I am in hopes now that you will get to find it some relief to write to me—as you can’t but do me good—and can’t do me harm, except by silence.

Ever your loving S’t C.

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44 This conjectural date derives from Diaries, II, 733, where it is apparent that Ruskin was at Oxford—to which place he refers in the letter—on Wednesday, October 30, 1872.

45 Doubtless a reference to the death, on October 13, 1872, of Emily, Lady Shaftesbury, one of William Cowper-Temple’s sisters.
So many thanks for being kind to Lily.

My dearest Isola

I’ve just written a note to you, and forgot to say the main thing I wanted—namely, that you would let Miss Norton—Charles Norton’s eldest sister, call on you; & then go and see them—His Mother cannot now go out much—so his sister must come,—he is not well neither—but I particularly want William & you and Charles & all of his family to know as much of each other as is possible—in this poor month. And you’ll be going away at Easter—I’ve just got a letter about poor Joanie needs answer—must stop.

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46 The date is based on Norton’s presence in London at this time; he was quite ill during this winter residence in England.
Brantwood, 17th Febry., '73. Morning.

... I am getting this place into some form, and I think it will soon be pretty enough to ask you to come and grace it with more sweetness than even its best spring flowers can. Fancy how I was taken in, the day before yesterday. I came down from London without stopping, and was therefore crossing Lancaster Sands at five o'clock. It had been steadily cloudy, and I was reading and not looking out, when, the train stopping at a little station, I saw, looking up, an opening in the west, and a range, as I thought, of thunder-clouds in red light. I was greatly amazed, and said to myself, “Well, I thought I knew something of skies, but those are the grandest clouds I ever saw yet.” In five minutes more, as the train went on, I saw they were my own mountains in their snow. And I would rather have had a Turner drawing of that view over Lancaster Sands than even my “Arona” on the Lago Maggiore. I’ve got a cat, but she scratches, and I can’t keep her tail out of the candles in the evening; and I’ve got a dog—a shepherd’s—who won’t do anything wrong—but it’s so horribly moral, it’s more dull than I am myself. Love to William.—Ever your loving

St. C.

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47 This letter appears, in fragmentary form unfortunately, in Works, XXVII, 62.
Dearest φίλη,

Thanks always for any word.

Yes those marbles are precious to me, beyond speaking. I have a great sealed well of feeling—under the ice still—thank heaven, and you,—for nature—and her true children, and for my work.

In much haste today.

Your ever grateful

JR

I often try to fancy myself at Matlock. Not—at Broadlands.
My dear William

Will you please tell me if the present Lord Derby has done anything in the book way? It was his father who did the Homer—wasn't it?—Has this one written anything?—I want to speak of him incidentally in next Fors, as an “unscholarly blockhead,” but I must keep out the unscholarly if he has written anything—(though it is true enough anyhow.)

I shall soon have this place now, in a state fit for you & Isola to come and see. I find it was measured by the northern “acre” instead of the south English one—and that therefore, instead of 25 I have some 28 or 30 acres—and in that, there are little bits of in and out and up and down—quite pretty—and the wild primroses stick themselves so cunningly into the right corner—as if they had been planted by the charmingest French milliners.

I should have written about this to Isola, instead of you—you satirical person—only Isola would have expected me to say Angels instead of French milliners—and I don't feel inclined.

Always your affect

JR.
My dear William

I think that will be an excellent plan about the interest and subscriptions, keeping the former only for appliance.

I enclose you two letters from the man I mean to set on the cottage ground—if we get it. I have every confidence in him. I can’t get to Stanhope St till near six tomorrow. I come up by the 2/15 train but must go to Vauxhall to see the Doulton Potteries first.

I bring Crawley, not Klein, this time, as he knows my lecture business.

—Of course I shall keep tickets for Isola & you. But I thought Joan had seen to that.

Ever your affe.

JR.
Letter 200

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.
5th Aug.
1873

My dearest Isola,

I am very thankful for the note, to day. Please come, and
stay as long as you can bear it, or have time. I have been
going to write about it, this many a day,—but never liked to
tease you,—and I think the thought of me must, more or less,
now: and I was not sure of my own staying here all the
autumn, but now I do so, so that William and you can just
choose your own time, and perhaps to save me a day or two
out of your busy life. Joan and Arthur will be here. I think
more highly of Arthur as I know him more intimately, and I
should like you also to see him in this more true state of mind
and occupation.

I am working very hard—and scarcely know why—or how
—not hoping to be of use to anybody, yet not able to keep
quiet.

Joan is in an ecstasy of delight at the thought of your
coming—and I like it, and there’s enough in the neighbour-
hood to interest you, in its moorish, grey-craggy way. The
house is about the size of a yacht-cabin—and it will be like
a gipseying party to you, in a caravan.

You shall see the pretty Italian book too—Such witches and
necromancies in it—But you and William are all in the R
school of divinity again—it seems to me. Work witches in
that, or rather than in mine.

I don’t know which is worst—and am in a miserable dead
eddy between R and Voltaire.—I got such a copy of the Dic-
tionnaire Philosophique the other day! If only I could learn
some Philosophy out of it!

Ever your loving
S C.

50 The Mount-Temples arrived at Brantwood on August 19 (Diaries, II, 755).
My dear William

I was very grateful for your letter, and am especially thankful that you care enough for me to write such an one—enough to see that I am not well and to try to help me: or make me help myself. But it is too late for any wisdom of my friends or my own to be of any use.—I find my health now steadily declining into the state of age—and should feel myself wholly unjustified in asking any young girl to throw herself away upon me. The sense of its being thus, checked me even in my pleading with R.—I perhaps only mortified and offended her by never pressing the thing except with the implied persuasion that it was best for her. And that would only have been so under the condition of her having loved me too long to change. It would be mere selfishness in me to try to win any new love now.

Besides, I cannot take the risk. I can bear melancholy—but not more anxiety or distress. I am quite fool enough to fall in love still to a point which would make failure a new calamity to me—and I believe that my destiny is never to fall in love when I should have a chance of success.

Quiet end of life in faithfulness to R would be best for myself and others. She has been so cruel to me that I cannot be rightly faithful to her; this is the real root of all that is worst in my present days.—I cannot rest, even with my cold glass idol—it is flawed. But I think the best way of looking at the whole business is—to remember that the happier life might have led me away from what I had to do, and given me false views of fate and of the spiritual world. At all events, in this darkness I can think at leisure, and am not liable to mistake myself for a particular favourite of Heaven—which
I was beginning to think myself—when I was last at Broadlands.

But I must really come and see those nice Irish people of yours.—I think I really might perhaps carry a very poor, bare-footed, grey-eyed Irish girl home to Brantwood.—I'm afraid even she would want to get back to her own moors—and to Isola's smile.

Ever your affectionate J Ruskin
Letter 202

Brantwood.
Coniston. Lancashire.
[September, 1873]51

Darling φίλη
Thanks, so much, for both lines received today—I'm very sorry for your cold—but I'm living the life of Tantalus and Prometheus in one, and can scarcely feel for anyone but myself. Still—Tantalus & Prometheus are better than Romeo's banishment,—and I am doing good work through the torment. But if unfledged angels always behave so, I think no more ought to be hatched.—Love to William. Ever your loving

JR.

51 The similarity in tone between this letter and Letter 201 suggests the possibility of the date ascribed.
Letter 203

Brantwood.
Coniston. Lancashire.
[September, 1873] 52

My dearest φιλί

Do you know, its really very bad of you not writing me a word about anything just now. What are you and William about.

What a really grim book that Queen of the Air is!—especially its account of the life of Tantalus.53

Ever your loving S t G.

52 The allusion to Tantalus here and in Letter 202 suggests a closeness in time of writing.
53 Works, XIX, 315-16.
You are compromising somehow between God and Satan, and therefore don't see your way. Satan appears to you as an angel of the most exquisite light—I can see that well enough; but how many real angels he has got himself mixed up with, I don't know. However, for the three and fortieth time—in Ireland or England or France, or under the Ara Coeli perhaps best of all, take an acre of ground, make it lovely, give what food comes of it to people who need it—and take no rent of it yourselves. "But that strikes at the very foundations of Society?" It does; and therefore, do it. For the Foundations of Society are rotten with every imaginable plague, and must be struck at and swept away, and others built in Christ, instead of on the back of the Leviathan of the Northern Foam. —Ever your affectionate St. C.—not the Professor.

54 In Works, XXXVII, 110, Cook and Wedderburn so date this fragment.
Dearest φίλη

That sentence is written—then, also on the gate of Heaven, you think?

Yes—in a sort, and so I accept it from you.

And yet with this difference—that my heaven—on such terms—can only be that of the verde smalto\textsuperscript{56} floor.

I cannot answer your letter today—not because of its enclosure—but because there is much to be very seriously answered, respecting your feast of Tabernacles proceedings &c.

In the mean-time—I think a little very surly (?) and guilty bit of me will be good for you, not a bit of good Italy at all.

You know, I think, that I gave some money to two of the monks here. I still think them good and religious men:—but I have the sorrowfullest reason to think they are not acting honestly.—And I find this money text—it is Christ's main one, always,—the Real one (and final—in 1000 cases to one). Miss R's letter is full of—what you very properly call 'moonshine.' She and her family spent ten napoleons a day for rooms only, when they travelled—and the three women had three lady's maids. And she can't give tenpence for my Fors!!

Now my dearest φίλη,—believe me—I know more of the matter than either she or you on its evil side: and there are considerably more devils than angels at work on you both—at present—possibly for your—future good.

But assuredly—you are both being deceived—which is peculiarly diabolic business.—You—in not having believed in Utopia at all till you saw it, (which is not belief at all—but

\textsuperscript{55} In the MS, above Assisi and in Ruskin's hand, is the following: "(Letter signed at Top: John Ruskin, signature being unusually necessary!)"

\textsuperscript{56} See Dante's Inferno iv. 118.
by grace & courtesy to St Thomas—) and She, Alas, was then ever yet so "deceiving and being deceived" a daughter of Israel.

Write here when you like—not in mere indulgence to me; You are only helpful to me by liking to write—Rose herself could do me no good, unless she liked! But she shall assuredly give tenpence for Fors, as far as I am concerned—and I most solemnly beg you to send her nothing to please—or flatter her vanity—or assist her [illegible]—except with [illegible] come.
My dearest Isola,—I get leave to write here, always now, for the perfect quiet—two little windows looking out into the deep valley which runs up into the Apennines give me light enough, and there's the lower church, with Giotto's fresco of Poverty in it, between me and any "mortal" disturbance. St. Francis in his grave a few yards away from me does not, I find, give me any interruption. I have been thinking as I walked down the hillside to the church, why you couldn't believe in Utopia; and whether you really, since you don't see Him either, believe in Christ. Are you quite sure, William and you, that you do as if you saw Him? I can guess (I think) what He would say to you if you did. Do you ever try to fancy it, seriously? Suppose He were coming to dine with you to-day, now, Isola, and you've got to order the dinner, what will you have? Now, just get a bit of paper and write down your orders to the cook, on that supposition. Mind you do as I bid you, now, or I'll never write to you any more. And then, think where He's to sit, and where William is to sit, and how you'll arrange the other people, and what you'll talk about, if He doesn't care to talk. Mind, you mustn't change your party; I suppose Him to have just sent Gabriel to tell you He's coming, but particularly that you're not to make any alterations in your company on His account.—Ever your affectionate

St. C.
My dear William,

Can you spare time to send me a short note of the present state of St George's fund for publication in the Christmas Fors?

Dear love to Isola. I give my last (of 12) lectures\textsuperscript{57} tomorrow—I wish she had been at one—nobody ever comes that I care to see.—That's not quite true neither. Joanie & Connie came—last week and said it was nice.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin

\textsuperscript{57} Some of the lectures referred to here appear in Works, XXIII, 179 ff. entitled The Aesthetic and Mathematic Schools of Art in Florence. They were delivered in Michaelmas Term at Oxford.
My dearest Isola

I've just cut this leaf out of the book—very prettily bound— in which I intended the Monte Rosa's to be inscribed—These—you see—are all I've got—in the four—no—three years since—or four altogether from beginning, and I believe of these three—the third's the only one to be counted on.

Do your fine spirits and good people ever say aloud about the matter?
—I have not stirred out of the house since I came into it except once to the door to gather a saxifrage leaf. What are you and William about?

Ever your affe. St C.

C must stand now for 'Cereel.'—Well if it is'nt [illegible]

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58 Down to here the writing is not in Ruskin's hand.
Brantwood, 16th January, '75.

My dearest Isola,—I am so very glad of your note; but more than usually ashamed of the quantity of trouble I have given both you and William—all turning to no good—and I'll try not to be troublesome by recollections of door steps or garden walks, or the like, in future; and I would come down just now at once, but for mere and absolute need for me to be in my own house all the time I can be, especially as the servants are out of temper with the place and the walls weary of rain. It is curious that I have been reading the 24th Ezekiel this morning. Did you ever hear anybody pitying him? Yet, I fancy, he was much more really to be pitied than Job unless—do you recollect Coleridge's epigram on Job ending "Shortsighted Satan not to take his spouse"?59 The worst of me is that the Desire of my Eyes is so much to me! Ever so much more than the desire of my mind. (You see, that is what William doesn't allow for, and I think it's such a horrid shame of him, seeing what he has got himself. But I suppose you are so good, he has no idea you are anything else!) So that the dim chance of those fine things in the next world does me no good, and though I've known some really nice girls, in my time, in this world, who wouldn't perhaps have been so hard on me as some people, none of them had a thin waist and a straight nose quite to my fancy. But you know, if I am to do any great thing in St. George's way, I needn't expect to do it without trouble, or ever to be rewarded for it with red lips. But the worst of all to me is that I have not pride or hope in myself. Meantime St.

George's work is now coming fast into literal form, and among other matters, the girl I once spoke to you of is making her will, and her lawyer wants some proper form for St. George's Company to be expressed in, as well as the names of the Trustees. This, I fancy, must be drawn up now with some care to answer this on all other occasions. Shall William's lawyer do it, or mine? —Ever your loving

E Minor.
Dearest Isola,—Your sweet letter has done me so much good, specially the prettiest word about adopting me like Juliet; it is so precious to me to be thought of as a child, needing to be taken care of, in the midst of the weary sense of teaching and having all things and creatures depending on one, and one's self a nail stuck in an insecure place. I should like to come to Broadlands and feel like that. But if I come, you must let me keep child's hours, and not even come down to dessert; you must let me have my dinner at your lunch time, making then any little appearance, or being of any poor little social use I can; then I must have my tea and bit of toast in my own room at your dinner time, and go to bed at my own time. I can do nothing now unless I keep these primitive hours; and am always hurt by any effort to talk or think in the evenings. It is very dear and wonderful in you to want to have me at all, and really I think you might like having me, so, knowing me to be quite comfortable. And if you—how I repeat myself!—if I could but feel indeed that you had a kind of motherly, being old in holiness of heart, feeling for me, it would be the best thing the world could now give me. And your telling me a little about yourselves is the best thing you can do for me: though I shall need always to be told of singing hymns by that river, for I shall never sing anything any more. I may like to hear it through my window, perhaps. I am doing some good work, when there is any weather, however,—things that you will like to see on your table, I hope. And I am getting a little stronger, lately. Write and tell me if William and you will let me have tea in my room.—Ever your loving

St. C.

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60 The Mount-Temple's niece, whom they adopted; she later became Madame Deschamps.
My dearest Isola

I have William’s kindest letter and your’s, and I’m coming by the forenoon train tomorrow, arriving at ½ past one to be in time for lunch—my dinner—and I’m bringing, not Crawley, but an old darling of a Dutchman whom I’ve long known and had sometimes for a courier, for my servant—He won’t be in anybody’s way I think, belowstairs, except by mischance, never by presumption or wants—Crawley was in many ways, (some not wholly or possibly known to me,) less fit for Broadlands.

Joan was greatly delighted with a letter she got this morning too.

I have’nt time to write to you, mama dear, for I’ve so many books and things to pack up to bring home.

Ever your poor loving little boy.

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61 The month and year derive from Ruskin’s entry (Diaries, III, 864) that he went to Broadlands on October 6, 1875. It was in that year that Ruskin was given his own room at Broadlands.
Oxford, November 16, 1875.

I want to find a school for a little girl who has no papa, nor mama, nor granny, and nobody [sic] to take care of her. I found her playing on a roadside bank at Abingdon when she was nine years old; now she's fourteen, but very little, and I think she's very good, or would be if she saw granny sometimes. I will pay for her schooling in any school you think best for such a child, anywhere about Romsey. She's four brothers or sisters—poor little things—in the Union at Abingdon, and must go in herself soon, if I don't take charge of her.

62 For the poignant episode behind the little girl, see Works, XXVIII, 661.
My dearest Granny

I felt as if I ought to have come through snow or fire to you, to keep my day. But I think that I ought to do, henceforward, always what I believe to be healthy and wise for myself; and to trust one's granny, and mamie, and people who care for one, to understand that this is well.

I would have come to you today through any labour or pain, but I hold myself bound not to run risk of serious harm—and I do find that even a couple of hours sedentary exposure to cold is very bad and dangerous for me. I will telegraph you now, therefore, when I am coming by what train I come. Do not expect me until I telegraph. The love of vital energy that can keep me physically warm is the chief sign of failure in me, as far as I can judge brought on either by the distress or the fatigue of past years. I am working today, in good spirits and writing the beginning of my commentary on the life of Moses with much zest. But I have no zest for snowballing or travelling,—I would come to see you and William, with as much real will in the matter as if Rosie were there—Only, if Rosie were there I should be warm all the way, and now I should be chilled. That literal and physical difference is the main one, to me, now.

Love to Annie and the children.

Kind regards to Mrs Goodall & the servants and I'm ever Williams and your good little boy.
Love to Annie & Juliet,—
and gratitude to all the servants

Corpus Christi College
Oxford

[Early February, 1876]

Dear Grand Papa

So many thanks for your sweet note—and I’ve a lovely one of Grannie’s unanswered;—I can’t answer with any of my heart today—and must not even begin work before answering somewhat—namely that they want me at Sheffield much more than—Grannie & you want me (well, they may!) and I must go there, if anywhere, to stay and I could’nt run down to my nursery, to run away again directly. But I never know but from day to day what I’m to do, or where I’m to go—and when my lectures here are over, perhaps, Rosie may order me to play a little—I don’t know; only I am ever your and Grannie’s loving little boy.

JR.

I’m more & more ashamed to use my S* C. as I feel really naughtier everyday.

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63 The conjectural date is based on textual evidence suggesting that Ruskin has recently come to Oxford from a visit to Broadlands; this is corroborated in Diaries, III, 883. Also, he is soon to go to Sheffield. And the reference to Rose very probably reflects some spiritualistic experiences at Broadlands involving her “appearance” (Norton, II, 128-29).
My darling Grannie

Just read enclosed! —the end of it—on second leaf—and think how naughty of you to let your poor little boy “forget” to take your photograph! And please send me one directly. And please tell Grandpapa I really must have my pocket money—because I’ve lent—I mean, he must make that other boy Tom⁶⁵ pay me my pocketmoney because I want to buy some tarts.

Oh, grannie—if you only had seen how funny it was when I went into the cathedral yesterday with my masters hood on!—I had got it tucked under my arm, and Dr Acland⁶⁶ the minute he saw it—pulled it right—and then it went all wrong together somehow and all the choristers were so amused!

Ever your loving little boy

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⁶⁴ The textual reference to Acland on which the date is based is similar to an entry for that date in Diaries, III, 883, in which Ruskin speaks of lunching with Acland and attending cathedral services.

⁶⁵ An allusion, no doubt, to Sir Thomas Acland, one of the trustees of the St. George’s Guild.

⁶⁶ Henry Acland.
Dearest Grannie

Are you in town—and if so, might your little boy come on Tuesday instead of Wednesday?

He wants to dine with some other little boys—who play at being Bishops and—that kind of thing—at the Grosvenor Hotel—and he must be dressed as if he was quite old! but he's only your good little boy.

I've learnt some wise lessons to day Grannie. Love to Grandpapa.

Ever your dutiful S't C.
My dearest, own, grannie,

I will come to you, and stay in your upper room, on Tuesday as I said. I have so much to tell you of things that have "chanced" to me, today, all gathering together for good, I can't tell you them all—before you hear the lecture, which I do not doubt will interest you in the bringing together of old evidence about spirit power or at least instinctive power, in arrangement of colours. Things have been brought so to my hand for it—and today, I had to take the Sacrament in my chapel, here, and to be at evening service in my own Christchurch cathedral, for the first time obeying my Deans order to wear white surplice as Honorary Student. It lay—putting me in mind of a shroud, in the shadow of my room in the dawn of morning,—and I took out my missal and looked at my photographs, and then opened her letter to see what she would say. So she said "God shall bless us" (—underlined, the shall)—Then in the morning service—just look at the psalms, and the lessons were 1st Genesis, and—It shall be given 'unto this last.'

—Then, I got your sweet note—and a gift of a hundred pounds for St George, at breakfast from the very lady who had warned me against spiritualism and to whom I had answered "If anything is to be told me, only one spirit will bring it."

—Then, I had the power of buying, for fifty pounds, from Professor Wedgwood, the most exquisite series of drawings

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67 Given first on February 17, 1876, at the London Institution. It is printed in Deucalion (Works, XXVI, 165-96).

68 Probably Hensleigh Wedgwood (1803-91), philologist and one of the founders, in 1842, of the Philological Society. In his later years Wedgwood was a devout spiritualist.
of Irish missals I ever saw in my life: and lastly, just now, before sitting down to write to you, I opened her drawer to look for her sketch of the Madonna weed\(^69\) with R and St C.— and came on the textbook we used to read together. I have not opened it as far as I remember since her death. I said— Let me see what this will say to me. It opened at her death-day—on the words, "Lord, teach us to Pray."

So I'm coming to you on Tuesday. You know your note was even nicer than any other—because it said—"own" little boy. The discussion at the Metaphysical\(^70\) is to be on Miracle-evidence!

I hope this will meet you in that room at Stanhope St. where you looked for her, once.

Ever—with dear love to GrandPapa

Your dutiful St C.

and loving little boy

I must be very quiet on the Wednesday, my lecture is all in bits. But I've no doubt I shall be taught to put them together.

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\(^69\) See Diaries, III, 884, n. 1.

\(^70\) Ruskin's connection with the Metaphysical Society (1869-80) is given in Works, XXXIV, xxviii-xxx. He read several papers before this group.
Darling Grannie

After all, I can’t come till Wednesday;—my diagrams won’t finish themselves and such a quantity of things have happened to put my head awry—(or rather, straight on my shoulders and upright at last.)—but off my work, at any rate. I got one message after another yesterday, of the stronger distinctness as they went on, and this evening again—some from the Koran! —I dare not go to the debate on miracles; I am sure in my present mind I could’nt keep my temper and besides, I’ve abused Gladstone so in Fors\textsuperscript{71} that I should be shy.

But Wednesday afternoon, D V without fail.

Ever dear Grannie

Your devoted little boy

S\textsuperscript{r} C.

\textsuperscript{71} See \textit{Works}, XXVIII, 403, where it is noted that Ruskin withdrew his attack upon Gladstone. In a later Fors (\textit{Works}, XXIX, 364) he apologizes generously for his remarks about Gladstone. While both men differed over many matters, each developed a signal respect for the other. In 1892 Gladstone considered Ruskin for Poet Laureate but dropped the idea because of Ruskin’s poor health. For an interesting account of the relations between Ruskin and Gladstone see \textit{Works}, XXXVI, lxxvii ff.
Dearest Grannie

I have had nothing to tell you, till today, of good,—but at last the sun has come and the old Inn here is unchanged—and there is a window looking through blossom into the garden and up to Brignal woods,—and I had a walk up the glen yesterday, wholly quiet; nothing with voice of harm—or voice any wise except the Greta, and the birds. And I found, up the glen, the little Brignal churchyard, with its ruined chapel—and low stone wall just marking its sacred ground from the rest of the violet,—and the chapel untouched—since Cromwell's time—the river shining and singing through the east window—scarcely larger than a cottage's—and the fallen walls scarcely higher than a sheepfold—but the little pisciner and a stone or two of the altar steps left—and the window and wall so overgrown with my own Madonna herb that,—one would think the little ghost had been at work planting them all the spring.

And it's still lovely today, and I'm going to take Joan to see it. Please send me a little line—to Brantwood.

Ever your loving little boy.
My dearest Grannie

Have you no little ghost’s word or work for me? Can’t she come to you sometimes—If only le Pere Hyacinthe would open her little mind farther on some subjects!

—I forget which way the accent goes over Pere,—please dear Grande Mere, forgive your poor little boy—he can’t do those accents.

Ever your good little Johnnie.
Letter 221

Brantwood

11th July, 1876

Dear Mr Temple

I don't quite understand Mr Rydings' accounts in last Fors. But I know I paid the Bagshawe and Talbot cheques out of my own balance and I must ask you to be kind enough to write me a cheque on the Union for £330, of St George's money,—the other balances we will let settle themselves as we go on. I have no time at present to write any but business letters, having undertaken all I am able for: but hitherto, remain able for it, D. G.

Ever your grateful

J Ruskin

The Rt Honr Wm Cowper Temple.

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72 The accountant of St. George's Guild. The fiscal arrangements of this organization seem consistently baffling. Ruskin is evidently referring to the cash account of the Guild as noted in Letter 67 of *Fors Clavigera* (Works, XXVIII, 658 ff.).
My darling Grannie

I want to write to you sadly—but you have such a way you and Joanie—of playing me the same trick you did at Matlock, and leaving all the pepper out—of what I give you, now as of what you gave me, then.

Now look here—Here’s a girl’s letter just come, which must be answered without more ado—so you can’t have any today Grannie—(but do look for the peppery bits in those old letters.)

I’ve written her rather a nice answer I think! You may read it, and send it on to her. I would give anything to know if shes pretty—it makes all the difference in teaching her—I’m afraid she’s a fright,—how am I to find out—(Shes only 17.)—

Ever your poor little boy.
Letter 223

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.

[July, 1877] 73

Darling Isola

Yes, you told me of your sorrow. There was a word in my letter to Wm meant to refer to it. Do not let him trouble himself just now with letters to me: but only release the trust, which Sir T. Acland has already done.

—How dear of you to like keeping my books. The Bible and Rogers 74 are all I want—if you can really let the rest stay. The first vol of the Bible is here. I had it travelling with me,—and there's no hurry for the others if there's anything you care to look at in them.

Would you really come to nurse me again? It's enough to make me do everything I shouldn't directly!

Ever your loving St C.

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73 The textual reference to the resignation of William Cowper-Temple and Sir Thomas Acland from their trusteeships in St. George's Guild suggests the date. To judge from the June Fors (Works, XXIX, 137, n. 2) that event had occurred a brief time before, but Ruskin did not reach Brantwood until the middle of July, hence the month ascribed.

74 A reference to the work of Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), the banker-poet, whose acquaintance Ruskin made many years earlier. Rogers presented copies of his poem Italy to Ruskin.
Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire
[July, 1877]\(^{75}\)

My dear Mr Temple

I think it is now about a year and a half or two years, since you signified to me your intention of retiring from the St G. Trusteeship,—and since that time ill or well—I have had to answer about two lawyers letters a month on this matter and received today the enclosed epistle asking *me* how much you have got!

It seems to me it is wholly Sir Thomas's and your business to know that—and as I am drawing a larch bud—and don't mean to leave off—to look for documents to establish a claim on you, I will beg you to determine what you have got, without further bother to me—and to transfer it to the new Trustees.

And for the rest—please think of me as dead—in, and to—all such matters—unless you want me to be dead to all others, too.

Ever affectionately Yours
J Ruskin

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\(^{75}\) For the date suggested see Letter 223, n. 73.
Brantwood,  
Coniston, Lancashire  
25th April, 1878  

Dear & Kind Mr Temple  

Your letter is just what is best & helpfullest to me, but these eight weeks of delirium\(^76\) have left me 'contrite' in a quite to my own mind 'despicable' way and so sad that I forbid myself any expression of feeling at all—as it would only pain those to whom I would fain spare all concern about me till I'm better worth it.  

One of the contritions that has beaten me very small, has been the thought how much I lost at Broadlands by not asking you to show me how Parliamentary and your own various estate-work was daily done by you without ever seeming to be hurried or tired—able always to come to encourage me in faggot making—or listen to the impertinentest things I used to make lunch intolerable with—or should have made it so to anybody less kind. But I might have learned & seen so much in those days!  

I am better. Solomon says & so does Joan—but must write no more. I am in hopes of being good for a little more flower or stone work—some day—and not wholly grieving you & Isola. Ever yours

JR

\(^{76}\) In March and April of this year Ruskin suffered severe mental disturbance. See Works, XXV, xxv-xxviii.
My dear Grandpapa,

Grannie says you are older than I am!—but that is all her mistake. I am a hundred years older since last year, and go tottering and grumbling about, and can’t do anything, to speak of—though I see and know a thing or two still.

I have a kind letter from Acland today, of which the gist is that the first hint about giving up the Trusteeship came from me. I thought it my duty to direct your attention as well as his, to the main purposes of the Guild, as adverse in one grave respect, & the principles on which land is now held. But my own opinion is steady, and has never changed,—that you both should abide in your “places” (as first takers at my request)—saying,—“If this thing is not of God it will come to nought—if it be—it will be ill for us to have looked back from it.” —I think this, let me repeat, in the most earnest manner—and there is time enough for you both to reconsider the matter, if you care to do so—before I write the next Fors. But, if you do not wish to reopen any such question, no possible responsibility can attach to you in retiring. I find English law perfectly just and rational in its spirit—it is only the stupidity of the common sort of lawyer that keeps business back. And whatever forms of safeguard have to be written, please give orders that they be so without delay.

Sincerest thanks for your affectionate letter,—but I am too ill to move from this home any more. I can decay on here quietly, but should be only a pain to you if I came to Broadlands.—I will write tomorrow to Isola.

I have been troubled to hear of your own grief,77 & am ever your affectionate—poor little S C.

77 The death of William’s brother, Spencer Cowper, at Albano.
Darling φίλη,—Your lovely letter has come, as often in old days, just when I most needed it, having got myself lost in a wilderness of thoughts again, in the further course of the book of which the first number should reach you with this, and the wilderness is not even as good as Nebuchadnezzar's. I find no grass in it, nor sound of rain, and as many demons as ever St. Anthony—with no such power of defying them. It is a piece of blue sky, at least, to find that you still care so much for me as [to] tell me all this about William and you.

And Joan is so grateful also, and so happy in your rest, as in her own, for her little Lily is now thought entirely out of danger, and has been so good that we are all grateful for the illness, that has showed us what the child was. I am not well, myself, however, these last ten days, and begin to wonder if the number of plans I have been forming are an omen that I shall finish none. I wonder, if I have to leave all behind, how much you will believe then of what I have been trying to tell so long. This Irish Vial is the beginning of troubles only. I am too tired to send more than dear love to you both. —Ever your devoted

J. Ruskin.

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78 In all probability Part I—entitled The Bible of Amiens—of Our Fathers Have Told Us; it consisted of a preface and first chapter and was issued on December 21, 1880. See Works, XXXIII, 1 ff.
79 One of the children of Joan and Arthur Severn.
Letter 228

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.
2nd August, 81.

My dearest Isola

I am very thankful for your letter, except in its telling me you have been 'ailing'—but that would be the reaction after your anxiety for φιλος. I trust you will have happy autumn by the Sea.

I am fairly well again, except that I have lost much animal spirits; and am entirely forbidden some directions of thought—by all prudence—however, sometimes compelled into them by Fate,—Kind,—or unkind, or both. The last illness was not so terrific as the first,—though quite as sad in the close—and more of a warning, since it showed the malady to be recurrent, if I put myself into certain lines of thought. The visionary part of it was half fulfilled—as soon as I was well enough to make it safe for me, by Lacerta's coming to see me and finding—some manner of comfort (not to me comprehensible—but I was glad to see it,) in being with Joanie and me, and at this moment her old friend is here—Mrs Bishop, whom I am instructing in the practical principles of Catholicism—I have done, I think—rather a nasty bit for—your meeting people, you know—!—in the number part coming out of the Bible of Amiens—which shall be sent to William and you wet from the Press!

80 Ruskin refers to the last of several severe mental attacks which plagued him in 1880-81. This "last illness" is specifically mentioned in Norton, II, 167.

81 In spite of Margaret Ferrier Young's observation in Letters of a Noble Woman (London, 1908), p. 25, that the La Touches visited Brantwood for the first time in 1883, this letter indicates that Mrs. La Touche went there as early as 1881. Her reconciliation with Ruskin must have taken place, then, no later than six years after Rose's death, as Leon, p. 569, suggests.

82 Most probably a cousin of Mrs. La Touche's mentioned several times in Letters of a Noble Woman.
I'm breaking some crockery in the barrack yard too, as well as in the conventicle—and generally beginning to recover myself in any directions promising a row—or any other manner of mischief—I assure you—you would be too much frightened if I were to come to Ball—Colman's mustard was nothing to what I'm "putting down," now—one of my bravest secretaries said it made (her) hair stand on end! —But, verily if I go anywhere it must be to France, for my work there. Joan sends her dearest love—but she has—yokes of [illegible] to [illegible] of course!—she's building nests for her chicks—and what not—She'll write herself—instantly, and I'm ever your loveliest

S't C.

83 Apparently Part II of The Bible of Amiens; it came out in December, 1881.
Dearest Isola, —I am happy in your kind letter, and would fain that old times could return, but my two illnesses have changed all for me, and forbidden all kinds of excitement or exertion, except in directions instantly serving my main work. I have to resume the entire contents of *Fors*, with reference to the existing crisis, which it foretold to you all, in vain, and to gather my own past work in drawing or observing into forms available for my schools. I have a staff of good assistants now at work abroad, and hope to make the historical studies of the great churches such a body of evidence respecting the ages of Christianity as no one yet has conceived. But all depends, with God’s help, on my allowing no distraction any more to break the courses of labour—and you know, you, for one, are a very distracting person! There will be some pieces about Aracoeli for you nevertheless!—the plan of *Our Fathers have Told Us* is more laid out than that of any book I ever wrote—and its three chief Italian sections—Ponte a Mare, Ponte Vecchio, and Aracoeli—will be done—as well as an old man may. With all resolution to be quiet, I shall have enough on my hands to keep me at least out of danger of monastic serenity . . . .
Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire.

11th Dec. 81

Darling Isola

Yes, I shall greatly like to come; and the more because I can wait till you are entirely ready to take me—the most convenient time for you will be the best for me, only it must be before the pantomimes are over. I've promised to take Miss Graham\(^84\) to a pantomime and to Henglers!\(^85\)—and she says—that—besides—she must be taken to the Alhambra and the Aquarium!—Of course—as far as my own movements are concerned they will be merely oscillations between Stanhope St and the Cardinal's—Aracoeli and the Vatican!

Also you'll have to take me to see my Queen of the May at Whitelands college.\(^86\)

Dear love to ϕιλος

Ever your loving

S\(t\) C.

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\(^85\) A circus.

\(^86\) Ruskin’s interest in the Whitelands Training College in Chelsea is discussed in *Works*, XXX, 336 ff., where some of his letters to the various May queens are to be found.
I am very thankful for that little word about Aracoeli, for, though I had made my mind up how I would treat the Autobiography, and was resolved not to take advice about it! my law being that I would write what either I had pleasure in remembering or felt it a duty to remember; and though the plan of it, so traced, has come, I think, very beautifully, still I felt that many fine spirits and deep hearts would think me too open with sacred things, and that I ought simply to have told the public my public (virtually) life and the course of intellectual study which produced my books; but I determined that the book would be, on the whole, more useful if it showed the innermost of me, and I hope it will be very pretty in some places—but this little word of yours may perhaps let me dwell for another instant or two on what I have at present just told—and no more—at Rome. The chapter is headed Rome; it would have been headed Aracoeli, but that title is already given to the chapter of Our Fathers have Told Us. Here’s a letter of Sorella’s, just come, which I think you and Grandpapa will like to read.

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87 Praeterita.
88 Chapter ii of Praeterita (Part II).
89 Francesca Alexander (1837-1917), an American expatriate whose Roadside Songs of Tuscany and Christ’s Folk in the Apennine Ruskin edited and prepared for publication in 1885 and 1887 respectively. John Ruskin’s Letters to Francesca and Memoirs of the Alexanders, ed. Lucia Grey Swett (Boston, 1931) throw an interesting light on another of Ruskin’s poignant efforts at close friendship.
Darlingest Grannie

I'm so very thankful for the card letter—I really was very sad. There's any quantity of grief in me if I even dip for it—or down to it—but I'm rather happy now I've got to be able to skim over it—only sometimes—one wants to rest—and I only rest in darkness. Thankful that I can still be busy—and that I'm giving a great many people pleasure. My Florentine sorella is a great find; I forgot to tell mama that I had a Grannie, till last week, and she's as jealous as jealous can be.

I've got a little farm girl of 12, to be my wood-woman and she's very nice to see trotting up and down between the trees. And we've got a pretty governess for Lily and Lily herself is nice to see—and Violet and the Baby—but they're just the least bit too—talkative for an old di Pa. But, I might be worse off, mightn't I? Only Grannie mustn't leave me so long by myself again.

Ever her poor little boy.

Dear love to Grand Papa

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90 The conjectural date is based on a letter Ruskin wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, dated March 24, 1886 (Works, XXIV, 590-91), in which he speaks of the children of Mrs. Severn who reside in his house. The similarity between that letter and this is quite apparent.

91 Violet Severn, Joan's daughter, born 1880.

92 Joan Severn’s son, born 1882.

93 One of the many nicknames for Ruskin, it is a corruption of “dear papa.”
Letter 233

Brantwood, 23rd July, '87.

Sweetest Isola,—Is there no Isola indeed where we can find refuge and give it? I have never yet been so hopeless of doing anything more in this wide-wasting and wasted earth unless we seize and fortify with love—a new Atlantis. Ever your devoted

St. C.
There never—never—in any time—was such a dear letter as that φιλής, & Isola's and Grannie's—And the poor Dovie had no word to answer. If he could have come! yes, but he could not—it would be only sorry to the φιλός & φιλή to see him now—But he can at least say how thankful he is still—for their patient & constant goodness to him,—how thankful—to see—as he did in those sweet Christmas shadows of them, how their own life is perfected.

Joanie is with me today—and thanks you both out of her own pure & hopeful heart—During this last year, I have felt more and more bitterly every hour,—how I have failed to you both—Alas to whom have I not failed?—but to you, who have loved & given and forgiven so much—that I should become at long last—only sorrow—Oh me—

I cannot go on. Perhaps Joanie can add more cheerful word.

Your poor Dovie

She will write later