INTRODUCTION

I should like a profession so much — not to spend my life crocheting mending my clothes & reading novels (Letter 17)

The letters covering the years 1852 through 1858 are marked by great changes in the lives of the Thackerays. After the first heady experience of being lionized as the author of *Vanity Fair*, followed by the solid success of *Pendennis*, Thackeray’s position was assured. He now set his mind to earning enough money to replace his own lost fortune as a patrimony for his daughters. Although Thackeray was still in his forties, mortality began to weigh heavily on him. One of the reasons for this was his own ill health, exacerbated by a near-fatal bout with malaria in Rome in 1853. Another and possibly more powerful reason was his loneliness. Despite his wholehearted acceptance of his role as paterfamilias, he suffered from the lack of a mutual love in a man-woman relationship.

It was not merely Thackeray’s desire to make a fortune for his daughters that drove him to travel for his lectures. As Ray describes it, a deep restlessness and insecurity left Thackeray “permanently in need of reassurance [which he found] in the companionship of a succession of women: his mother, his wife, Mrs. Brookfield, and, during his last years, his daughters.” During the period here under discussion, however, his daughters were as yet too young to be the companions he craved. Hence Thackeray traveled extensively, not merely for lectures or to further his work, but to satisfy his restlessness.
Because Thackeray felt the need to earn a large sum of money quickly, he plunged into lecturing. In the end he grew to hate it, but not before this highly remunerative occupation took him through England, Scotland, and twice to America. While Thackeray was thus traveling, Anny and Minny lived with the Carmichael-Smyths, as they had in earlier years when Isabella had been unable to care for them. When Thackeray returned from his lecture tours, his daughters accompanied him on holidays.

For Anny and Minny most of the results of traveling with Thackeray as a guide and companion were beneficial. Not only did they get to know their father intimately, but he was able to increase their knowledge of the world. The people they met became lifelong friends. In 1854 at Chateau Bréquerecque, Boulogne, they lived near the Dickens family. Kate Dickens became Anny's close friend. While in Rome Anny and Minny were taken in by the English colony living there and became regular guests of the Brownings, the soprano Mrs. Sartoris, her sister, the actress Mrs. Kemble, and the Storys. Her stay at Chateau Bréquerecque so impressed Anny with its colorful peasant life that she used the location for *The Story of Elizabeth* and *Village on the Cliff*, and "Across the Peat Fields."

The first thing that becomes obvious upon reading the manuscripts of this period is that the letters are no longer a conversation among members of a tightly knit family. The majority of Anny's letters are written to friends who have displaced her grandmother as confidantes. Anny's correspondents are of two kinds. One group, consisting of Mrs. Fanshawe, Mrs. Stoddart, and Mr. Synge, are friends of Thackeray's. With the women (including Mrs. Synge) she is on an intimate mother-surrogate daughter relationship. The other group are young women of her own age, and interestingly enough, all are daughters of Thackeray's friends. This Victorian girl's choice of friends, as often in her age, was circumscribed by the people her parents knew.

Many Victorian practices surface in these letters. The morning after a dinner party, Anny brings leftover food, "mouldy scraps of things we could not get down our selves & treated three little boys in S jean Georges Hospital whose eyes lighted up at the squashy grapes and eager little hands stretched out" (Letter 25). The Victorian habits of bringing jellies to the sick and saying farewell to the dying, of wearing mourning and using black-bordered stationery, of clinically describing illnesses, are all part of the news (Letters 21–23, 25). With such
preoccupation on the Victorian rituals of death, Anny was especially sensitive to Thackeray's growing ill health (Letters 17, 18).

Although Thackeray wanted to take care of his daughters financially, he treated them as adults and exposed them to the realities of life. They knew about his financial problems (Letters 17, 19, 20); they shared in the responsibilities of the family. Twice he promised to take them on lecture tours; twice Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth became ill and needed them to nurse her. Thackeray went alone while his daughters looked after their grandmother (Letters 21, 22).

Thackeray embarked on his first lecture tour in America on 29 October 1852. Before this, on 14 June, he took his daughters on a tour of Europe, but finding it "an endless leave taking" he suddenly "jumped off at Frankfurt and left them to their good old Granny: It will be a year nearly before we shall be together again." Trying to justify his absence to his daughters, he later wrote, "But we can't have all we want in life: its my clear duty to go fetch this money. The months will pass over, and the duty will be done." He outlined what their duty was: "you must speak French perfectly by the time I come back. Learn dancing and play me some good music when I see you again consider yourselves as at College; and work work with all your heart."

When Anny realized the predicament she was in (alone with Minny and the Carmichael-Smyths), she rebelled. Thackeray would not be shaken from his resolve, and good-naturedly, Anny made the best of the circumstances. However, Mennecy, the village she lived in with her grandparents after Thackeray's departure, always had for her an association of gloom and misery. Yet, in her letter to her friend Laetitia Cole describing her travels, Anny dismissed the hateful town with "After our tour we went to Mennecy, & then came back to Paris" (Letter 12). When faced with the inevitable, Anny did the best she could to enjoy life. Her melancholy moods did not persist for long and once they were over she did not brood about them. This adolescent ebullience would later mature into an adult appreciation of life. After complaining to Thackeray about the separation from him, and Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth's high-handed ways, Anny settled in to enjoy Paris and she recorded, "the Champs Elysees wh are as broad as three Oxford S's beautiful carriages & horses trotting down the middle & such splendid gentlemen & ladies who look as if they had walked out of those fashion prints." Despite the fact that Anny
outlined her busy day, the letter is not quite as open as it first appears. In addition to glossing over her stay at Mennecy, she does not complain about the confirmation cours she is forced to attend by Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth; these complaints are family matters and private—for her father’s ears only. That this was her father’s expectation is shown by Anny’s report in her 1864 journal of her father’s chiding her for talking outside the house. The phrase about ladies and gentlemen on the Champs Elysées is repeated. These fascinating people, supposedly closer to the company Thackeray kept in London, are the ones Anny would like to know, rather than her grandmother’s old cronies.

The confirmation cours and religion in general became a great problem for Anny. An ardent Evangelical, Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth tried to impress her beliefs on her granddaughters. Younger and more pliable than Anny, Minny accepted what her grandmother preached. Anny, however, questioned every tenet, seeking clear and logical but less limiting answers. In dismay Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth complained to Thackeray, “poor Nanny’s is a stiff heart of unbelief I heard her declare that she ‘did not care for the old Testament & considered the New only historical.’” Applying to Thackeray, the oracle of last resort for relief from her grandmother’s harangues, Anny received the following answer from him:

I should read all the books that Granny wishes, if I were you: and you must come to your own deductions about them as every honest man and woman must and does. And so God bless my darlings and teach us the Truth. Every one of us in every fact, book, circumstance of life sees a different meaning & moral and so it must be about religion.

Thackeray outlined his beliefs and explained why he differed from his mother, but the choice, he insisted, was Anny’s, and neither his nor his mother’s to dictate. Anny answered:

I am afraid Grannie is still miserable about me, but it bothers me when the clergymen say that everybody ought to think alike. Monsieur Monod tells us things about the Garden of Eden, which he proves by St. Paul’s epistles. I don’t understand how God can repent and destroy His own work, and it is things like these that they think one must go to hell for not respecting and believing. I am sure when Christ talks about ‘My words’ he means His own, not the Bible, as Grannie says.

Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth’s letters at this time portray a grandmother concerned for her granddaughters, a mother doting on her son, and
a wife devoted to her husband. An intelligent woman, she wrote to Anny and Minny with intimacy and love, treating the young girls as adults, yet never able to admit their independence of her. Although she harassed her granddaughters over religious matters when they were living with her, there is no evidence of fanaticism in the letters. A strong woman, Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth did not relinquish her struggle for authority until shortly before her death. Letter 16 contains an indignant protest against the trial of Celestine Doudet, who was acquitted of murdering a young child in her care. Her forceful response, as well as her reticence, are indicative of her nature. No mention is made by Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth to her granddaughter that Doudet tortured this little girl and her sisters to prevent them from masturbating. The Victorian taboo against labeling masturbation anything but a heinous crime silenced Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth. But her outrage over the mistreatment of children and the widespread publicity of the case made it news she could not overlook.

In 1854 another great change occurred. The Thackerays moved out of Kensington to 36, Onslow Square, Brompton. Although they lived there until 1862, none of them was fond of the house, which lacked charm and grace. During their first year in Brompton, Thackeray added another member to his household. Amy Crowe, daughter of his friend Eyre Evans Crowe, came to live with them. Six years older than Anny, Amy became at once the suitable and adored companion of Anny and Minny. Thackeray's search for the ideal governess had ended.

On his second tour of the United States (1855–56), he prescribed a course of subjects to keep his daughters busy, as well as a separate apartment for them. The flat was in the same building in which the Carmichael-Smyths lived, but this time Anny and Minny enjoyed a more empathetic chaperone in the person of Amy Crowe.

During these years many changes occurred in Anny's life and in her view of the world. In addition to the changes in Thackeray's literary position and the external changes of travel, foreign residences, and new abode and companion, Anny became twenty-one. She was now Thackeray's hostess and his primary amanuensis. These social and secretarial duties to her father were augmented by social work; yet the early rumblings of dissatisfaction with what she considered her useless life began to surface. Her cosmopolitan view of the world—her easy acceptance of all kinds of people and her awareness of the universe outside of her Victorian girlhood—dates from this period.
Above all, Thackeray wanted his daughters to think for themselves. His teaching and her own questioning mind awakened within Anny great dissatisfaction with this ridiculous world with its absurd forms & twopenny tittle tattle. O! if I was only a boy, I should make myself a clergyman in order to give a sermon w[h] would make their hair stand on end. I am continually longing for something but I don’t know what. I should like a profession so much — not to spend my life crocheting mending my clothes & reading novels — w[h] seems the employment of English ladies unless they teach dirty little children to read w[h] is well enough in its way — but no work to the mind — & I don’t want to write poetry & flummery . . . as my favourite Miss Martineau says it is far nobler to earn than to save. I think I should like to earn very much & become celebrated like the aforesaid Harriet. (Letter 17)

When Anny fantasizes a position of power it takes the form of a clergyman. The fancy to be a clergyman goes along with a more possible ambition to be, like Harriet Martineau, a respected woman writer. Anny wrote this to Mrs. Fanshawe, a friend of Thackeray’s and old enough to be Anny’s mother. This last fact, however, did not inhibit Anny from giving the older woman advice. Throughout her life, Anny made friends regardless of age, sex, or position in life, treating everyone on the same basis.

In addition to giving advice, Anny asked advice of Mrs. Fanshawe, recognizing that she had “no one to talk to” about female considerations. Thackeray was, after all, a man; her grandmother was too old and opinionated; Minny was too young. What bothered Anny was growing pains—particularly those of an unemancipated Victorian young woman with an intelligent mind, who had been urged to think for herself. From today’s vantage point, it seems inexplicable that Anny’s writings have not been more thoroughly explored by feminist writers. She imbued her heroines with the same questioning of female inequalities that she had felt. In the end her heroines spend their lives in supposedly happy marriages, as did Dorothea Brooke and scores of Victorian heroines. The point is that Anny asked the questions and explored the options open for Victorian women, while she herself earned money writing until the day she died.

Anny’s letters have a casual tone. The letters in which Anny is most confidential are those written to Amy Crowe. When writing to close friends, Anny’s letters are full of enthusiasm and good nature. Not yet
a writer, she exhibits humility about her craft when she tells another friend, Laetitia Cole, "I feel very much flattered at y.' acting my play, & I think Mr. Smith a much better name than Castletoddie" (Letter 12). The play is lost in oblivion; perhaps rightly so. But in general Anny's writing was becoming more polished. A particular process of maturation was taking place. Anny was acting as Thackeray's secretary. She answered his mail (Letter 14); she took his dictation as he wrote his novels. Aware of words as she was, Thackeray's mode of composition, as well as the works themselves, must have made an impression on her. In Letter 12, in which she uses "very" four times, Anny noted, "What a quantity of verys." In describing a dinner at an inn in Le Havre, Anny wrote, "it was just like people in Pickwick," and her account of the scene is indeed Dickensian: "Mulligan poured out incoherently to the Hotel Captain who solemnly nodded his head every minute or two as if he were too wise to speak" (Letter 22). Her ability to encapsulate a scene in precise and telling detail became more striking as she got older. Writing Thackeray's words helped Anny see with his eyes and hear with his ears the real world around her. Telling a friend about one of her district pensioners, Anny used his vernacular: "'Wouldn't it look orkard now for me & my old woman & pertickler, seein wt we fears we must decline' " (Letter 25). In Letter 15, she described "a fine young Crimean with one leg doubled up," and the horror of the Crimean War is brought home. She also sprinkled Yellowplush cockneyisms through her letters: Feyther for Father, Heving for Heaven, 'ope for hope (Letter 23), dele for little and prospex for prospect (Letter 26).

Life for his daughters centered on Thackeray and his work. When he finished a monthly number of his novel, they celebrated by going to the country for the day. Reminiscing later about Thackeray's dictation to her, Anny wrote:

I remember writing the last chapters of The Newcomes to my father's dictation. I wrote on as he dictated more and more slowly, until he stopped altogether, in the account of Colonel Newcome's last illness when he said he must now take the pen into his own hand, and he sent me away.12

In Letter 24 Anny discusses the composition of The Virginians. The bustle and noise of Brighton, where the Thackerays were on holiday, "fairly drove Papa into Germany with his 'Virginians.' " The duties of being a father (and taking his daughters to Brighton) often conflicted
with the demands of his profession. Telling a friend about the social requirements of Christmas, he wrote, "And how go away when the girls are invited to hospitalities? They are so happy and pleased that I must be so too; and ma foi The Virginians must wait for a day or two." 

In Letter 26 Anny discusses the Garrick Club affair with great candor. Anny and finally even Thackeray were both tired of the imbroglio. The Yates affair, better known as the Garrick Club affair, began on 12 June 1858 when Edmund Yates published an offensive article about Thackeray in Town Talk. Because he did not know Yates outside the Garrick Club, Thackeray felt that his privacy as a member of a private club had been invaded and complained to the club after Yates had refused to apologize. The club demanded that he do so. Dickens (in a disturbed period of his life: he had just left his wife) took Yates's side. The club was adamant and Yates was expelled. When Yates realized that lawsuits against Thackeray and the Garrick Club were too expensive, he dropped the matter, but not until he had written a pamphlet again attacking Thackeray. Because of Dickens's involvement in the affair, his friendship with Thackeray ceased. It was not until just before Thackeray died, and on his overture, that they spoke to each other. Because of the personalities involved, the affair was soon blown out of proportion, with people taking sides for or against Thackeray or Dickens, and not on the issue.

Although their worldview was broadened through contact with their father's literary and social circumstances, the constant upheaval of moving out of their home, of leaving Thackeray, and of going to live with a more and more intransigent grandmother did not make for stability in the lives of Anny and Minny. Being older, and having had a family base of three and a half years of life with her mother, Anny was better able to cope with this problem. Still, in later years she wrote about Thackeray's first trip to America, "That whole summer of 1852 seemed darkened by the coming separation." Thackeray felt that Anny's sturdy character would see her through adversity, but he was apprehensive about Minny. What manifestations of weakness Thackeray saw in Minny's behavior are not made clear, but it is apparent that besides being sickly as a child, she lived under the shadow of Isabella's madness.

Anny was changing from an adolescent into a young woman; only three years younger, Minny was still a little girl, the pet of the family, pert yet timid. Her letters to Thackeray while on his first trip to
America (Letter 13) are, as Thackeray described them, "funny little scraps." Her love for Thackeray is underscored by her jealousy of his affection for any young girl other than herself. Minny harbored not-so-secret feelings of jealousy toward her sister. Minny's jealousy of Sally Baxter, the daughter of Thackeray's newly made New York friends, was pointed. "Miss Sally what an ugly name she has got fancy a Novel with Sally for the title" (Letter 13). Minny was maturing, but slowly, and if she thought deeply as Anny did, nothing of this surfaced in Minny's letters. Anny could admire Minny in a generous and openhearted way. In Letter 21 she wrote, "Dear old Minny's a trump isn't she." That Anny was also jealous of Minny can nonetheless be perceived clearly in her private journals of 1864 and 1878.

Thackeray continued to feel a special affection for Anny. His letters of the period are full of loving references to her. In 1856 he wrote, "What shall I do, if any scoundrel of a husband takes away Anny's kind cheerfulness from me?" Later he would worry that no one had come to claim her. He always assessed her objectively: when she was fat, he called her "My dearest Fat"; when she turned out plain, he admitted that "Nobody is come after my homely girl who is the delight of her father." He was proud of her growing writing abilities and the sketches she included with her letters; he also admired her character. In 1858 he wrote, "As for Anny, she seems determined to be happy anywhere, and good tempered always." Everything about her pleased him. He wrote, "there goes my Anny singing in her room, with a voice that is not so good as Adelaide Sartoris's but which touches me inexpressibly when I hear it." Without a wife to act as buffer between him and his daughters, it was small wonder that Thackeray favored the more amiable Anny. "Anny's happiness," he wrote, "makes almost me happy — unblases me when I am under the influence of it — I say to myself 'Good God what a good girl that is! Amen.'" Ray states that "Thackeray's daughters gave his life its real focus after his return from the United States in 1856." But Anny and Minny were growing up and would soon be aware that their lives now revolved around Thackeray; they wanted more than a devoted, loving, and famous father. Despite this, Thackeray continued to perceive his daughters as his "2 little wives," and for the time being Anny and Minny accepted the roles he chose for them.

With Thackeray lecturing and away from his daughters so much of the time, their correspondence to each other became significant. His
letters to his daughters as well as two from Anny to him appear in Ray's third volume of *Letters*. This is not to say that Anny wrote only twice to her father during this time; rather the explanation lies in the fact that Thackeray was so delighted with her letters that he sent them on to friends to read. “My Nanny writes me the most delightful letters”; “I send you one of Anny's Isn't it a fine letter Miss Sara?” To a friend he sends along “this enclosed letter of Anny's which I think you'll like to read. Why, in 5 or 6 years, she will be able to do the writing business; and I can sit on the sofa as easy as the Professor of Deportment in Bleak House.” If Thackeray thought, hopefully or seriously, that one day Anny might become a writer, he did not push her into making a choice. In 1852 he even forbade her to write any more plays or novels. Not until 1860 did she attempt any professional writing.

Anny's letters are honest, open, and thoughtful. To Thackeray in America she wrote, “I wonder what makes people cry when they are unhappy, and when they are happy too, and when they are neither one nor the other?” In 1852 she described with exactitude and humor the parade for the emperor's coronation:

There were soldiers all down the Champs Elysées and splendid aides-de-camps with feathers galloping about. Generals with their staffs trotting off to St. Cloud, regiments dashing by, all in the drizzling rain, and opposite a whole regiment of Dragoons, there was sitting one of Mr. Doyle's little dogs looking up at them, and nothing would induce him to move.

Ray explains that Richard Doyle “liked to introduce small dogs into his drawings.” Anny's letters reveal both the ability to express herself clearly and concisely and her facility at rambling on without periods or paragraphs to close one thought and open another. She was beginning to create art out of her life.

In Letter 17 Anny asks advice in seeking a profession. At the same time she refers to many novels and, as we have seen, expresses admiration for the woman of letters Harriet Martineau. By 1856 she admits an addiction to novel reading, English lady occupation or not. In Letter 22 she wrote, “I have taken to spending all the money I can lay hold of in novels.” Even though she might be loath to admit it openly, it would seem that Anny had chosen her intended profession.
LETTERS 12–26

To Laetitia Cole

Letter 12
Ray/Morgan [2 Dec. 1852]

Beloved Laetitia, I am very sorry I did not write to you before, but I assure you I have a letter w* was never sent & that I was just going to write today when y*/ arrived. I was very happy to hear of you & it was very kind of you to send a letter to me. We knew you had another sister because Miss Trulock* sent us a Times with Mr. Cole of a daughter in it & we were very glad & want to see Miss Rose* very much. What a quantity of verys. After our tour we went to Mennecy,* & then came to Paris on the 1* of October. Now we work very hard & besides our walk I have only an hour in the evening to amuse myself. Grannie takes us to a Cour, that is a confirmation court, but as Minnie is so young she only listens as for me I have 5 or 6 pages to write twice a week a great deal to read besides. Also I practice a great deal & have just learnt a grand new piece w* goes up & down the Piano & shakes & runs & gallops & goes to sleep & bothers my fingers extremely. There is a piano under our room w* plays quite 4 hours a day & learns to sing besides, so you see we are becoming very musical. Minnie & I have got such a nice large room with such a gay lookout, we live very high up, up four pair of stairs but once you get here it is a very large & nice apartment. Yesterday :N:* was declared Emperor at the all Mayors, who are much grander personages here than in England. We saw him the other day in a beautiful coach & 4 horses & outriders & postillions, his hair has turned quite grey. That is the only news I can give of him. Last week we had a g* happiness w* came by the post with the Miss Thackerays on the outside, all the way f* Hallifax Nova Scotia. You may guess how glad we were. Papa had got there quite safely though with rather a bad passage & says he lived upon Champagne all the way out: & says every body on board was quite sick of the journey. I see I have made a pun but I didnot mean it. We have
not been very gay. I have been to one party Grannie gives small ones very often when I beg very much to dance, & there are some little girls coming this evening. I feel very much flattered at y's acting my play, & I think M's Smith a much better name than Casteltoddie & Lieutenant Montagne a much more romantic one than M's Young's husband. I have just a quarter of an hour more before dinner, so I must make haste. You have been having floods & earthquakes & all sorts of things but there has been the most splendid weather here. Today we walked out in the Champs Elysée & I can't tell you how charming it was there with the very blue sky & the splendid ladies & gentlemen who look as if they had stepped out of fashion prints. I send you 3 little pictures for you Henny & Mary & w'h I bought to send by the Perrys who have been here. Sunday. I wish you would come here & see us & Paris & my favourite Place de la Concorde. To get to it we walk down the Champs Elysées who are as broad as three Oxford S's, & trees & shops of toys & gingerbread & children & nurses & turnabouts, beautiful carriages & horses trotting down the middle & such splendid gentlemen & ladies who look as if they had walked out of those fashion prints.

From Minny to Thackeray

Letter 13
Ray/Morgan [Postmark: 12 Jan. 53]

My dearest Papa we were looking at a large box just now. and could not make out what was inside it & if you knew what a beautiful cake I suppose you have not seen it we are going to keep some of it for you and we are going to have a party for it. I dont think we shall ever be able to eat it it is so big and such beautiful gentlemen and grapes and above all an english cake & from an English papa. We could not make out who it came from but at last we found a little piece of paper which A loves we are going to the Italian Opera to night we had an invitation to M's Lovet's but I think we like the Opera best Miss Shakespeare is going too. it was Miss Dailey who gave Grannie the ticket. Last Saturday we went to Besses & played at cards and we went to M's Corkrans also. which we liked very much.

We are going to have a party & I am going to cut the cake I intend to make myself sick thats what the little Corkrans say & once they brought
us a quantity of bonbons and made them selves so sick that in the morn-
ing we dident find one sugar plumb. Grannie & GP are dining out as
Anny & I had lunched we left them. I hope your young ladies in the
brocades are quite well, & particularly Miss Sally what an ugly name she
has got fancy a Novel with Sally for the title. Grannie says I am to go
to eat some pudding & I am very agreeable. thank you for writing to me
I hope Mf Bellows is bellowing good sermons we went to Mf Corkrans
to day she was ill & we met Mf Corkran with all his children

That's the Boulevards

I don't know how he put his arm in that position. poor Aunt
Ritchie has been very ill she has had the jaundice she has had
a picture taken of her which is very like her but they say it is
too yellow she is much better now. They always send you their
love but I have forgotten to give it to you before. I send you
my love too so now Good bye I will tell you about the opera tomorrow.

HM Thackeray
Letter 14
Fales

My dear Synge

Can you use y'. interest to get a joint passeport for William Makepeace Thackeray Aged 42 as also for Anne Isabella Harriet Marian Sarah Grey Eliza Jordan Charles Pearman

(PS. We are going away on Saturday and are going to say goodbye to Bobby & his parents one day this week. AIT)

And one also for the bearer Mf J A Sleap [?] my amanuensis.

To Susan Scott

Letter 15
Berg

My dear Susie.

I'm not going to make you any excuses for not writing before — I sh'd have to say so much that it w'd fill up the paper quite I have begun you ever so many letters w' have somehow never got finished, — I hardly know if this one will ever reach you. Miss Scott told us a great deal about you & Johnnie, she says you are taller than I am, w' I don't quite like, & I am very glad to here what a poised [?] quiet studious young gentleman Master Johnnie has become, not caring for any thing but histories & grammars & such like useful entertaining things I think I have got a brother too just now, for Minnie looks absurdly like a boy with her short frisy curls. I dont think Laure ever saw her like this or ever with her wig, w' I am happy to say is now lying in disgrace upstairs & only comes out for charades & dressing ups. Laure will tell you better than I can about Paris and Grannie & GP who dont change a bit & only grow kinder & dearer every year. Grannie writes us little leading articles about the war, & she & GP hardly think of anything else. I hope you havenot
got any body out there. We met such a fine young Crimean at Paris one day, with one leg doubled up, I have not seen so many here, w\(^b\) I am not sorry for, it makes me perfectly unhappy when I see those poor crippled heros. We are very proud of our new house,\(^5\) w\(^b\) is very nice & bright & clean. Minnie & I sit in state in the drawing room, & do our German Exercises, & we havent got a governess, but a very old friend,\(^6\) to live with us, & as you may think we like it a great deal better. I think I must finish now as daylight & paper are lessenin [sic] every minute. Will you give M\(^5\) Scott & Johnnie our love & believe me y\(^r\) affectionately A I Thackeray

\textit{From Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth to Anny}

\textbf{Letter 16} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{[Postmark: 6 March 1855, Paris]}

Ray/Morgan

Nanny dearest there wont be much in return for yr pleasant budget, my head is better but the old heart is very bad malgré all the joys I have in my darlings — but all resolves into “Lord be thou our pride” — GP has been out — 2\(^m\) since the fine weather & we have the sun so warm that we breakfast without a fire — the wretched Doudet\(^1\) is acquitted, by 6 to 6 w\(^b\) is considered a verdict for the accused — there is a general indignation against her & the jury, & no scruples as to how the verdict was obtained — the death of Nicolas\(^2\) has not caused half as great a sensation — Every body one met, Every shop keeper — had the same burst of indignation — What the 2\(^d\) trial may produce who shall say — a french Gent\(^an\) in the court said to M\(^f\) Chase, “I blush for my country’’ — & well he might — I spoke a good deal with M\(^f\) Rashdale\(^3\) about D\(^f\) Marsden, he says a kinder “hearted, more affectionate father does not live, sparing no expense, but weakly suffering himself to be alarmed by this horrid french woman upon a matter w\(^b\) he could not arrive at but through her — in all my experience of human nature I have never seen such an instance of malignity & practiced duplicity — I yielded half credence to her horrid reports of those dear children deceived by the power she seemed to have over them w\(^b\) made them speak as if she was kind to them” poor children\(^4\) they will live down the calumny & so will their Father — Enough of horror — Yesterday coming out of Church who s\(^hd\) come up in his shovel hat but Arch: Allan,\(^5\) whom I had\(^nt\) recognised
at the sacrament & I wonder how he knew my old face so shrivelled up since 16 years — he & his wife are here on acc of their daughter at school very ill — "Why do English Clergy or gentry send their children to french schools? he said many kind things of you all — & looked as if he had sat for Dobbin — I think its very doubtful if Pauline will go to London after all — the musical world are delighted with her, at Hermann’s Concert she had a grand succés & again in a company all Artists who are charmed with the quality of her voice — They were at the grand affair of Prince Czartorisky’s marriage to Miss Munoz, who was in regal splendor with her horrid Mother — “It made one sick said Mad. C: to see people bending to that woman. I kept my fine form erect & my Eye stern & no Calmache de Vanessy bent a knee — " how you’d have laughed at a scene with Miss Trotter. I was walking up the fbg with Mr. Corkran who said “There’s some one beckoning to you f’m a Carriage.” it was the big Trotter, “Miss Doubets acquitted” — “is she I’m glad of it wretched woman for her punishment is her own conscience & may God forgive her” — “is that the way you judge?” “I can do no other, knowing all I do.” Some circumstances proving her guilt & the terror in w’h she kept the poor children, from one of their own people who was not a witness — out jumps Miss Trotter “I wish I’d seen you before’ ”At any rate’ said Mr. Corkran “There’s a dilemma; if she’s innocent the others are guilty.” “Don’t look at me in [sic] manner Ma’am as if I were culpable.” Mrs. Siddons could not have given a more tragedy tone — deep, symbolical — poor Mr. Corkran hardly knew whether to laugh to cry; but she did smile, & Willie looked as if he could have knocked her down; for my own part, I was so astounded I did not know what to say, but fortunately I thought of Miss Lask & spoke of her, & we parted — “Isnt that a very wicked woman Mamma?” said Bubush — This is all I can send you to day my dear darlings, only that I’m so thankful for Papa keeping well, & I think it was very witty of you giving him such a bedfellow w’h might have scratched his poor xxxxx

Now I’m going to see Mr. Allen & Mr. Gaskell & GP will come out I hope for its sweet balmy air — GOD bless my dearest Maids if you see Mr. Robinson give my love — We were not at home when her brother came — GP just awoke & sends you his love. I dont know what’s become of Eyre love to Amy Maria’s Out & I’m y’ own old Granny
Dearest A. F. I have a long letter for you in my desk but as you have so many bothers of yf own I won’t treat you to ours. Sufficeth it to say that we have had a severe attack & three minor ones — I think we shall go to Paris very soon. & Papa will be very happy for you to come into this mansion during our absence instead of letting it go to rack & ruin without any body in it — Write soon to me dearest creature we are so happy to hear f:\ you & tell me who it is abusing you in Southton & what about. I would bet six pence that its Miss Chamberlaynes or M:\ Fitzgerald — but pray stick up for yourself & don’t bear it with Christian patience they will respect you a g:\ deal more for it — also give them my compliments in a satirical manner — am I not talking fudge but you see its a comfort to fly away this ridiculous world with its absurd forms & twopenny tittle tattle & say what comes first to our beloved aunts. O! if I was only a boy, I should make myself a clergyman in order to give a sermon w:\ would make their hair stand on end. When I heard to day some stuff about cherubs and cherubims & white clothes with crowns on for virtue; & frying pans for vice — I felt the greatest desire to start up & preach Nature & not what shall I call it — tracts Miss Holmes quietly says — you know we are infallible — & I quietly think I wish you may catch it. We are to be tremendously learned at Paris & follow Cours of literature &ct w:\ I like the idea of very much. I cant make out what it is just now but I am continually longing for something but I don’t know what, I hope it isn’t f:\ my favourite castle in Airing [?], pray tell me when thou writest. There is one thing w:\ seems delightful When we are old & go to parties with papa, & make breakfast & write for him — I should like a profession so much — not to spend my life crocheting mending my clothes & reading novels — w:\ seems the employment of English ladies unless they teach dirty little children to read w:\ is well enough in its way — but no work to the mind — & I don’t want to write poetry & flummery — so I am in a fix what to do when I leave off lessons. Please write by my birthday & give good advice for I have no one much to talk to & I like my jaw very much indeed. Papa says in a few years we shall only have 200£ a year to live upon & as my favourite Miss Martineau says it is far nobler to earn than to save. I think I should like
to earn very much & become celebrated like the aforesaid Harriet who is one of the only sensible women living beside thee & me & 2 or 3 more I know. Give my very polite compliments to Df W. Bullar & thank him for forwarding or bringing this interesting epistle & give my love & this to Wose.

yf Affect Niece
A Thackeray

To Mrs. Carmichel-Smyth

Letter 18 [Postmark: 16 August 1856]
Ray/Morgan

My dearest Granny. We are wondering very much where you are & what is becoming of you, & I am thinking that it can do no harm to send another line to Langen Schwalbach, w\h can but not reach you at the very worst. You didnt & I remembered afterwards that I didnt say anything about what we were going to do & go to. We were going to N. Germany & S. Devon when I wrote — to stay with L. Elgin in Scotland to pay a visit to the Thackerays & the Pyrenees to stop at some quiet watering place in England or to Germany & learn artistic life or to Switzerland & write a number. So we set off to all these places last Friday — Amy to stay with Edward & then on to Eugenies (By the way do you know that secret, that he wants to marry Miss Wynne only nobody knows anything about it except Papa who told us) and we began by the Thackerays at Bagshot who were very kyind only it wasnt quite as good fun as the Coles. We took down grey gown & white barege & pink bows w\h we gravely assumed for dinner & questo bothers me so that it is quite enuf to cast a shade over the pleasantest visit. That was sweet, pretty country tho where they are they have got a pony carriage, w\h has one horse & 2 seats, & I drove round the corner & stopped & said wo, just as if one had been in the habits all ones life. I dessay riding about in the fly gave one some experience. Our friends the 2 Elder girls were away so that we were rather disappointed the old gen\l told more stories than ever & Lady Eliz & her daughters [sic] just as kind as they always are. There was a man-servant of the name of Davis & another (from 6 to 7 or 8) called Tomkins, & when ever the gen\l said severely Tomkins — my lady speaks to you (T. was rather deaf) it always upset ones gravity
somehow. Davis was a retired soldier with 3 clasps to his medal & quite a different party. Lady Eliz. said it was rather a bore to have such a hero in the house as all the maids were setting their caps at him, & he had proposed to two of them already. We only stayed there two days then we went to Winsor [sic] on Sunday — to Sf Georges Chapel where I felt dreadfully ashamed I got so muddled with an enormous prayer-book belonging to a K of the G. & the chants & anthems that I could not find a single place, & a gentleman next me kept looking contemptuously over his folio to see if I hadn't got it yet. But o what a jolly place it is — Isnt it Granny — there were the old Winsor Knights in orders & old coats & the sun gleaming thro' the windows, & & you've been there & I neednt catalogue it, then in the afternoon we went & walked on the terrace & looked at the beautiful view (there I asked Minny why Sf Lukes was like Vevay & she said it was a wretched pun when I told her they were both pew-full). & the sacred spot where Majesty descends. Majesty was somewhere else but the music played just the same. They told us that she'd locked up the P. of W. for a couple of days in some room looking out on the terrace, & the second happened to be Sunday so when the people were all there walking about, our future Monarch came to the window & made the most hideous faces at his subjects & then put his thumb to his nose, while the unconscious Q. I suppose was calmly blessing them below. Papa has gone out in a cab with Mf Davison — (for we are now in a very fine city, large & populous on the banks of a river We have a pleasant view of green trees from our windows which are all open to let in as much warmth as possible. We have just had a visit from Captain Mark & Cheri. Cheri snubs us till we dont quite know what to do. I told him we were all alone w'd he come & walk in the Sq with us w'h he is to do if a visit he is going to pay is not at home. And there is a ring at the bell & I shouldn't wonder if it was him. I always make a point of calling him my dear w'h is a great shame isnt it. He gets on much better with Minny than with me I think. They have just gone off together in to the Sq. Min is about a head taller than him though he has got on a very tall hat. Minny has got one too and I am sure you w'd be reconciled to them could you but see how pretty my maid looks in hers Wednesday When Cheri came he didnt say do you like me to go with you but is my presence desirable — He brought us y' address this mor w'h wed lost & U. C. had luckily written down, they are all going off they dont know where under the care of Mf G. Wood & as for us I
think we like like this place so much, & have such comfortable lodgings & such pleasant parks to walk in that I shouldn't wonder if we didn't go any where farther. Papa is well again now but I daresay you guess he has had another sea-sick attack, it was only for one day one but as he did not feel well at Winsor he thought it w'd be better to come home, & that's how it is we haven't been to all those jolly places. But we don't care as long as he only keeps cured & cheerful, & Mf Davison is going tomorrow to the Baron Osy, & what will you bet that we are not on board. No I don't think we will be there, so please write very soon to us at 36 & give us news of Major & Mf Smyth if you should happen to meet with them. We made their acquaintance in Paris & found them very agreeable people. O you dear old Grandmother Goodbye & GOD bless you always. We have got some wedding cards from yf favourite T. Fraser. Shes married a Mf Urquart in the harmy with some calabalistic [sic] letters after his name.

Little Edy Story came running up to kiss us in St. Georges Chapel itself. Little Boy looks very pale & heavy & is expecting another brother immediately.

One thing keeps us at home is that Pa aint got no money. Only £200 for the next 3 months isn't that little & my ball dress isn't paid for yet. New book is to be about J.J. Ridley — the rejected play worked in.

To Amy Crowe

Letter 19 SPA
Ray/Morgan Friday [22 August 1856]

Dear Amy,

Ecco un piccolo per dirtel that we're all right here at Spa, that we [word illegible] last Thursday three or four months ago that Calais was charming and all the little children made sarcastic remarks about our hats, while here we feel quite ashamed of them so brilliant & feathery & cocky & becoming are those of everybody else. Calais sent us to Ghent wth an uncommonly jolly old town with a moat & gables & convents & all the people wear crinoline. We went there with the Hawthor of that conversational work Eyre lent you (wth I read all Monday week I remember in the most desperate state of melancholy) Well he goes on
just like Millemere & Dunnington benevolently thrusting his opinion down your throat & wearing a very smart travelling costume as do his wife & Daughter. I remember he lay flat down on the sofa while we were at breakfast & informed me I never was tired & utterly worn out & then of course one felt quite young & ashamed of oneself. Then we went to Brussels & had a pretty stupid time looking out of window all day at a sentinel opposite & the pour-pour pouring rain. We had one damp mildewy deserted walk on the soppy paths of the dying park & werent at all sorry to pack up in a spendid new box the tray of the old one broke & the things to support it & the division, & the corners were bursting out & so we sold him for 8 franks & got a bran newer Also Papa made us 3 presents 1 a soap-box 2 a soap box 3 22 volumes of Lantine rest. We begged him not but he would & so were in for it. The first sight wh greeted one here was a lot of crinoline, & 3 feet with heels out & Miss Piggo & the proud girls walking back wards & for wards with the swells the 2d was Mf Lytton in a waistcoat all covered with red bees, & then Mf & Mfs Martin, whom I think we will go & see today. Papa is very well & says this agrees capitally with him. M & me scrambled up some mountains yesterday & I think we shall be off again as soon as we poste questo were going to Dusseldorf fhere We have no news of Granny but we expect to meet them at every turn almost. I know you are having a capital time, so I wont write any more now & am always your affectionatest

AIT

There are jolly little children here. Are they as nice as Ginny & Amy, whom I dont send my love to because its a foolish practice but I dont like them the less for that.

To Amy Crowe

Letter 20 10th 7bt/56
Ray/Morgan 36 r. Godot

My dearest Amykin. I ain't got many things to write to thee, for this paper bothers me so that I can only think of it instead of all the clever things I would say upon foolscap & valuable information. This is only to
tell you that our address is 36 r. Godot, & our health is most reassuring & our finances in a desperate state of confusion. Paris feels like a foreign city and travelling without our two dear old faces we had made so sure of, we never thought Marthas so ugly before, as when it stepped out to greet us, as did Miss Osborne from the r d c & the concierge in his blue velvet cap. Then we drove here very much out of temper & what was our surprise to find a brown young lady from India who made us come away from our hotel Bristol & live with her here where we get up very late & go to bed very early, & are implored to eat cakes & meringues all day long by Felicie who has a great many conversations with us & expressed the greatest contempt for Miss Burnett. Miss Burnet is at Dieppe with her young charges I must tell you & Charlotte & Budsworths & M.Trimmer; whose congestion is a much more serious affair than we imagined. As she now finds that she had been suffering from it for these last 20 years. Our Papa is still at Hotel Bristol we go & see him every day & have larks zusammen. We drove out in a little open carriage yesterday to the Bay, old M. Browning wd be quite delighted with N I think if he c see all the new rivers & trees & pagodas & promenades wh are springing up. Let me thee [sic], Minny wrote to you at Aix — isnt she a much faithfler friend than I am, & I suppose she told you that we dined every other day with the Rothschilds there & went 2 to the play & to a concert & had very good fun till one bad day our poor papa got another & then & then we came away as fast as possible and as we wanted news of Granny & GP, & thought that they had not likely come back here to be with poor Major Robert we came back here too & found them at Heidelberg. Poor Major Robert. I cant tell you how simply & unaffecte­dly his be [sic] his grief & goes about his dismal funeral business. M. Fraser told us he had seen it in the paper at Aix & when we got here we found it was true & the poor kind little woman gone for ever. She died quite suddenly one morning. She had been out at the fire works on the 15 & getting up the next day fainted, & never spoke again, & died that evening. The little boy is at Lady Carmichaels & Frederica at Grannys as I told you Fredericas a bore I think. So is Miss Mac Swell Papa calls her who is coming to turn us out of our room poor girl Granny calls her, & so is the fact that we arnt to go nach Scotland mit unserin Vater. I think we shall come here. That wd be very jolly & then he’d fetch us & then I dont know what next. Granny & GP are having a very good time at Herr Werners Anlage, if you like to write to her & so are we with kind
Jane & Felicie & do please write off this very minute & tell us thou art well & happy & ever our affectionate AMA Crowe. I dont think that a bit like & we kiss the little ones (we saw Amy in the Louvre yesterday) & Eugenie with all our heart.

From Anny & Minny to Amy Crowe

Letter 21
Ray/Morgan

theatres & lecturing halls Endless copies & busts & skeletons beautiful garden to sketch in astronomy & geometry & everything possible going on inside. We went to the play last Saturday & woke Miss Douglas who looked very handsome. It was the prettiest thing in the world Mids mrs Nights dream fairies & wood-scenery moonshine & sunrises. It was charming. I like Shakespeare very much indeed. But I dont like M' Keene in short sleeves & earrings. Dear old GP it makes ones heart ache to see him. The fever's worse & worse & she's down again lower than ever. Its the pulsatelea they say O Amykin I should like to swear a little at somebody. Minnys with her Its no use my going it only creaks, & when Mins tired she can come out & then Ill go. I dont know why people think fever so bad —

My dearest Amy, Anny says Im to finish her letter & I think its time, but I happen to want to write to you myself so here goes 4.D. to days Sunday & Grannies better her pulse is only 100, 20bp and sometimes not a hundred & now Ill tell whats made her better. She's wished for grapes two or three days but that beast Jah said she might only have 3 & the other who is a fool said she mightened have any and last night she was very low and thought she was going to die, (but she always thinks so if she's at all worse so we dont much mind now, and poor soul she sent for Papa to say good bye, she would not see him for 3 days before that, and he cheered her up in no time and said that the 3 grapes was all fudge and he got her a great heap & she eat about a pound & thought them very nice & has been wonderfully well ever since wasnt that a good thing & now she's taken some magnesia. I wrote you another letter but I wont send it for this ones more cheerful as I was very frightened at first with poor Grannies dreadful screams and sometimes she is so low spirited and will tell us what we are to do when she is dead but now I know its all
nothing but nervousness and I dont think there's the slightest danger. It is such a mercy that we came for poor GP. you may fancy what a way he is in, but Papa has cheered him so well, and he looks so happy now that she is better. Mrs Corkran was so kind and stayed here till we came. Please dear Amy write to us soon and often I assure it will be a great comfort to get a long cheery letter from all crossed.  

Im only afraid that poor Grannie may have a great many more palpitations, which perhaps are not very bad but they always make her so low, and then she screams out so, all out of nervousness for she has no pain what ever and then poor dear old GP is almost as bad as she is. You see Anny & I never nursed any one before and Im afraid we're very clumsy. So if you sugestions [sic], in that line to make say so in your next letter Eliza is as good as gold so is Martha but she snores Mrs Brice came over with us, & at Boulogne caught a glimpse of Miss Markers nose but that was enough for me so I cut  

Papa is in with Grannie who goes on very well, my dear Amy its an awful long time since we saw you. Edward dined with us this day week in london I suppose he's at Moscow (I dont know how its spelt) now I should like to see you so much but as I cant please write to us. Im afraid Papa will have to go to Scotland very soon now. tell me some more about little nieces, we havent seen the Ritchie children yet but Charlotte or Jane come every day. Oh my dear Amy I shall be very glad to write and tell you that Grannie's well for GP's sake & for hers & for our, but I think it prudentest to expect a great many more relapses adieu mon cher chum

Je suis votre affectionate mais melancholy

PS. Grannys much better today, & O so hungry. Dear old Minny's a trump isnt she said A Amy do write soon

To Amy Crowe

Letter 22
Ray/Morgan

Hotel Wheeler
Havre
Friday
[after 21 Nov. 1856]

That is where your affectionate A & M are my dearest Amy, & where their Grandmamma is finding herself back again Thank God, & will
Letters

leave her melancholies & unwellness we hope. She got better a great deal at Paris & then seemed to stop somehow and so we urged her off in the face of all the friends, & came away on Monday not without some secret trepidation on the part of those rash advisers who were bearing her off to certain death people told us. I wish to goodness they wouldnt give so much advice. She bore the journey famously slept it through & had a better night than she had had for 6 weeks she said & is really a great deal better. But you know after a nervous fever one need not be surprised at nervous attacks occasionally particularly when one has had them before the illness & that is what Granny will insist upon doing & theres no talking her out of it. She had a bad one last night the 1st for ten days, Eliza came & called me up, & there she was groaning & moaning & starting poor dear, & so wretched it became quite melancholico-comic at last. E is admirably good & sympathetic & patient, & respectful, & so Granny got calm about 4 and I daresay there wont be any more for another week or so. But except that, she is as well as you or I, & I dont think 4 or 5 hours melancholiness is such a dreadful thing do you? We want her to come to O. Sq again with GP & Im sure that w'd cheer her up. Its dreadful to think of going off and leaving them all by themselves those two dear old people & so we shall stay till Xmas at all events, & then our Father will be able to come over & then & then who knows. Only I should like to say howdy doo to my dear old Amy again. Dnt you think we have been quite long enough without seeing each other. Granny took her first walk today, its been such abominable galosh weather that she has been kept perforce to cabs and substitutes of that sort. But I assure you there is nothing equal to our old friends & I am certain she will eat a good dinner & be all the better. We have had two famous letters from our Father hes making 500£ he says and many more compliments than that fall to him & hospitalities. Middleton seems to be a very jolly place & he says Fanny was regretting us very kindly indeed to him & sends you her love. But he's having a capital time out there & received a note of thanks from grateful Edinburgh for his admirable lectures. He sent us a little notice of G IV wh is very funny & good. M. Corkran brought us the kindest notice of him in an Ed. paper wh I never read the like of in all my life. Well then it is settled that he is to come back at Xmas to us, & to lecture as hard as he can meanwhile. Isnt it an odious business. We have been reading a disgusting book of Albert Smiths called M. Ledbury (I have taken to spending all the money I can lay hold of in novels) and theres a good deal of his show in it. One felt personally
defrauded somehow when one came upon it. We are so idle here that we have not even time to read novels. Its very good fun as I think I have told you before, & this Inn is exactly like one of M's Dickens's early novels. Nothing but the queerest snobs come here — Though its very snug & comfortable with a rosy chambermaid called Lucy, & passages w^h look into a covered court where the maids & the boots^ are frisking about all day long G P and I dined at the table d'hote one day in company with 5 sea faring Captains (for the most part h-less)^ & a sort of mad Mulligan^ joined to the most graceful manners & the master of the Hotel a retired Captain carving at the head. The Captains were all joking one of em who was going to be married. And one wretched snob took some pie — & said Sweets to the sweet, while Mulligan poured out incoherently to the Hotel Captain who solemnly nodded his head every minute or two^ as if he were too wise to speak. I havent room to tell you all the queer things they said, but it was just like people in Pickwick. Its so amusing in bed of a morning through the door, I heard a ruff voice asking his morning to be shown into a gentleman called Gollegan, small fond of talking with a feminine voice, What a stupid letter I never has anything to say with a steel pen Granny is asleep on the sofa. I am afraid she looks a good deal older dear old soul It was quite odd just now she looked so like Grandmama come to life again. Minny has been drawing a set of the funniest pictures theres one [sic] the children swinging the cook w^h is capital & when the rope breaks & poor cookey comes to grief.

I really cannot stand the ink any longer its so comic that you cannot help bursting out a laughing. This is tomorrow. Granny had a capital night and theres a sweet soft grey veil out of window putting one in mind of dear old England. I'm sure it is not a foolish fancy, I feel it penetrating the pores of my heart. I am afraid my poor Mulligan has come to grief he tumbled down the hold of the Southton Packet last night & was brought back here & rubbed all over with mustard: Theres a good old couple staying in another room waiting for a steamer w^h has been out 80 days with their daughter on board, w^h they had been afraid was lost at first & theres an old lady in a braided wig — blk satin gown & yellow barege shawl w^h has a very sweet effect when it turns out upon the porte. Marias last note to me was dated one October at night & full of dark allusions, & disagreeable I thought. She said being without a maid she had really had no time to write to you. As I know what a lot you have to do dear Miss Amy I shall look out for a letter next w^k to y^r affectionatest Anne.
Letters

We have faithful letters from our Tishy who is here at the Dramer schools & Uncle Chas seems to have some idea of coming over as A. Mary is sick again. We have been seeing E. Thackeray at Paris who is really very nice & now that there is no more room I seem to remember how little I have told you. Bess & Maria are very busy with a lodger & no servant. We have had a little sort of tiff which is made up again. I didn't answer a letter of Bess's & so I pounced upon the opening I saw in M not answering you & we made it up.

How do you do, dear old Amy

I've no paper nor time to say more than your affectionate.

To Amy Crowe

Letter 23

Ray/Morgan

Paris. 28. 9.

(Postmark: Paris, 30 Nov. 1856)

My dearest A.M.A. I send you a dismal Havre letter and here I hope is a cheerful Paris one. We were so glad to see one of thee when we came back last night after our ten days with quite another Grandmother to the one who went away. Your note lay on the top of Mr. Synge's flowery handwriting & an invitation — if not engaged for tonight from Mrs. Giles. Mr. Synge begged us to accept the blessing of an old man & says they've all had the influenza. Our dear old Feyther sends lots of letters & newspapers. He's having a very good time still & all the places are bien besides ever many more. Heving only knows when he's coming home again but Xmas I think & ope. Isn't it delightful about Mr. Davison? Sir Henry Davison doesn't that sound harmonious, & £500 a year with a 1000 retiring pension — My dearest Amy when Granny made certain arrangements why did we all burst out laughing at her. W. Ritchie the croesus was dreadfully afraid of having this offered to him, because he wouldn't have been able to refuse, & advocatgeneralism is a much better business still. Then poor Monroe is dead. I'm so sorry. I went to see her the last day I was here, one evening & Miss White begged me to go in, & she was so changed & softened, & kind, poor soul, she took my hand & held it & seemed quite touched. Mr. Chave buried her the other day, & the 2 poor daughters are going away & I really am so sorry, aren't you rather? We have been grumbling at the rain which kept falling.
at Havre but it seems they've been having snow here — Yesterday was charming & as usual the journey was capital for G. who was getting back into her painful nervous state of hers, so that we thought it best to move off again. She has put on her blk jacket with the worn elbows today & looks quite smart — I am speculating as to this evening. Don't you think the high white barège will be the thing? The Miss Burnett's have got black & red velvet bonnets & tight jackets & look sweller & scornfuller than ever. M'f Dunbar is dying & it was the ugly one who was to have married him only he bullied her so, thats why she was so thin. Hennie informs her faithful Minny that she had seen M'f Crowe at the D.C. & that this is her last letter as she has only 3 d of her allowance left, but she has begun to leave off butter so as to earn a little more. Laure has been playing in public for a 100£. Papa doesn't tell much of his G. that one doesn't read in M'f Cunninghame. I dreamt of the Dickens's party you tell of last night. & we said yes you were quite right & that everything was settled between Kate & M'f W Collins.

When you next write say if you are very jolly or if you begin to think you'd like to come back. Granny has some notion of that sort in her head.

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To Mrs. Stoddart

Letter 24
Ray/Morgan

36 Onslow Sq.
Sunday

[late August/early September 1857]

Dear Mrs Stoddart

It is very nearly bed time & I have only a sheet or two of very queer note paper at hand, but I hope you wont mind if I write to say howdy do to you upon it & to hope that you have been having as pleasant fresh breezes this summer as we have. We all went down to a place wh I know its very snobbish to like, & took a very nice lodging at 126 Marine P. d. Brighton with no end of waves out of every window, & carriages & horses & Punch & Judys, & organ boys f m morning to night. They fairly drove Papa into Germany with his "Virginians" who are bursting out next month in their yellow covers, & I hope it will be all right now but I can't tell you the state of misanthropy & disgust into w h they had plunged him. It must be a great bore to be forced to write novels when
one is so sick of them that one (Papa I mean) cant even read one without going to sleep over it. He is away just now, & we are orphans with a grandmother only, to keep house for, but we are looking out for him every day, & now that his book is coming out we know that he is obliged to return to his family whether he will or not. His Oxford bills have been just coming in, over wh I assure you he has been pulling very long faces. I cant tell you how disappointed we were when he didnt get in. We minded it a great deal more than he did, but I think the bills affect him a great deal more than they do us. I thought at the time that I w4 tell you what you might perhaps care to hear. When he came back after his canvassing he told us how scarcely any of the College servants voted for him except those of S' John's But these all came forward, & when they did so it was not from any personal interest in him but for old times he said.

And now dear Mrs Stoddart I think I will say good night to you. Minny sends you her love by the name of Harriet, as she wishes to [sic] called now that she is grown up. Please write us another letter some day when it doesnt bore you & at all events believe me

Affectionately yours

AI Thackeray

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Letter 25 [before 10 April 1858]

Ray/Morgan

ill² till the Baker came and administered Salt — but tho' its much better Granny & GP have been telling me we ought to make away with it as its mouth might be poisonous & hurt the Mother & little browny — Papa is dining at Mf Delane of the times³ he's done his months wk.⁴ & seems now again a little bit better — Talking of dinners we had such a horror of a dinner last week. 18 people each more genteel than the other & Gray got bewildered and Charles went mad & Sims³ floundered about among the dishes and the waiters danced wildly round emptying everything down the peoples backs such a harum scarum spill em tear em I never beheld in mortal life. But enough of this painful subject Next day we charitably went off with little mouldy scraps of things we could not get down our selves & treated three little boys in S' Georges Hospital whose
eyes lighted up at the squasha grapes and eager little hands stretched out — it made one quite melancholy feeling — poor children to see their fever stricken faces and their wan little fingers — two of them have been in bed three months the other is going to have his eye taken out & put in again & they say he will see better than ever. He is one of my district people. M' Molyneux's low church ladies are at work in it with little tracts.

You will sympathise with their horror when one old fellow made a mistake & gave them back one of my fellow visitors pamphlets with Episcopal seals and mystic signs & symbols & frantic high Church Doctrines instead of their own little converted niggers. This same old soldier of 80 has been at Waterloo & my colleague is most anxious that he & his old wife the char-woman shd come & be confirmed next week & promises to hear him his catechism for the occasion. I went alone the other day & he rather timidly appealed to me — "Wouldn't it look orkard now for me & my old woman & pertickler, seein w' we fears we must decline" — He seemed very much surprised and immensely relieved when I said it was no affair of mine he must talk to Miss Hancock as she did the Religious part and I had only come about the soupe.

To Amy Crowe

Letter 26 [Paris] Ray/Morgan [late Dec. 1858]

You dear old girl to write such a nice Christmas letter to us. Mine was written a week ago & I lost him as usual & so Mins went without. Even now I think I shall stop this for a day or two to let it tell you the end of everything. Fancy the first thing when we awoke yesterday morning, in comes Caroline with a dele strip of paper. The pleasure of y' company is requested at 9.30. by a young fellow at the hotel Bristol. First guess who it was & see if you are as clever as we were: My dear young fellow looked famous but he went away last night saying, I think I am going to be ill — Don't come up in the morning. But the breakfast was so jolly one could afford to cry at night, and as he didn't mention the afternoon I think we will go out & see presently on our way to Ch. Granny cut the p. pudding Sure enough — Poussiac & Frantz dined & our dear old Daddy who we hadn't heard about for so long that we began to think he
was enamoured of being a bachelor that we shouldn't hear any more of him. What he says (for he's come to fetch us back) is that he wants if possible to fight against you coming to Granny as he's more solitary than ever and more away from home and that once you come she will never make a move for any body else and for me and Minny to leave without you ain't a cheerful prospect — however I don't think or talk about it and leave the elders to fight it out between them. Granny comes out every day about 12 and goes to bed at 10½ like anybody else — of course she hasn't put a foot to the ground yet — but sits up and has been almost quite herself save for feverishnesses. She wants to get up and carry her bed dreadfully poor dear. On the whole I fancy she's been lucky — her knee stiffness gives her more trouble than her hip now but all the Doctors say that always follows and will go away by degrees. I haven't asked Pap yet how long he could stay it rather stuck in my throat yesterday and we ain't seen him today — Just fancy what news he brings. Gray's going and Emmas gone — Emma went he wrote because G & she quarrelled like cats and dogs and all of a sudden up comes Gray & says she is going too — that her sister has come to town and they mean to live together — She had not a notion of it the day before and he thinks that it was some strong expressions he used when he found no soap and dirty towels in his room. Or perhaps that she read a letter I wrote in which I said I was in a great rage at Emma's going that she was in fact higher in the social scale than Gray & D. However it seems Emma went out larking and stopped away all night and said she was at her sister's when she wasn't. I'm beginning to hanker a little after poor Eliza again — Papa says he saw her at Mrs. Dillons where she only gives half satisfaction about the cooking and looked so old, so miserable so dirty crying and wretched that it made him quite sick and he gave her a sovereign. Gray told him she was always thinking and talking about us. It seems to me very heartless and unkind of Gray to go and so heres an end to sinking down into our graves surrounded by attached and whiteheaded servitors. Its rather comic to have come to 3 men and no maids at all now. Mrs. Russell has lost her baby poor thing and been dangerously ill herself with erysipelas. Mrs. Marochetti has got her two sons at home and looks very happy — Alice is better but has been awfully ill. Such a wretched letter as I got from Louisa — who says she behaved like a tigress all through but its a nice letter too — 8 pages of horrible metaphors and misery and description of illness (thats not what I mean by nice — ) I was thinking of her re-enthusiasm for Papa who had sent wine.
generous wine she poured like life down the lips of her darling hour after hour through the dark midnight watches — Jellys transcendant Jellies fit for Juno — had sustained her own numbed heart & brain. She says poor Alice was burning with molten fire within while clay cold damps &ct. But its been typhus & a sort of diptheria & a dreadful ab­scess on her neck burst inwardly & I cant go on with the dreadful list. Once she says she fell back fainting & M. Corkran thought it was all over. But however the swelling broke outwardly too & since then shes been better. What made it so bad was that she had inflammation of the bowels & together wanted 2 opposite physics so they gave them both. Dont you think neither have done as well. About the Garrick: its only 1/2 as exciting as it used to be. Papas getting disgusted. Everybody's been bullying him about his susceptibility. M. Dickens finding he have to be put up in the witness box wrote off to Papa to say that could not the lamentable affair be arranged — That M. Yates having rendered him a Manly Service in a Matter of he had Cognizance he had &ct. Cant you fancy him & his gusto over Manly Service. (It was going off from the smoking room at the G to tell all the stories Papa was telling of M. Dickens.) I am getting confused & indignant Papa says the story is that Charley met his Father & Miss Whatever the actress out walking on Hampstead Heath. But I dont believe a word of the scandal — After all the stories told of us we can afford to disbelieve it of other people. M. Fladgate always carries all the printed papers about in his pocket so as to have em constantly handy. He is quite affected abt it — I am 60 years of age — I shall see it thro' this crises he says & then retire from the Comittee. We went to pay Papa our visit yesterday and found him with a little leach. As soon as Granny is up we will go off again. Everything is still uncertain. But we shall be going in a day or two & now cant bear to think of Granny left all alone — She said something delightful today about coming to Brighton for the Summer when the apartment is up in April. Wouldnt that be the very thing? It's charming to hear abt all the nephews and nieces & the red habit Shirt & the Christmas tree — We manufactured one for the Ritchies we carried off in a cab. Such a business it was, all the little nuts & bobbins rattling & tumbling about, & the candles & bonbons & rubbish — As I was staggring upstairs with l'enfant the cab man called it the door opened & out rushed the children whom we had imagined safe in bed. We had wanted it for Xmas day, but Charlotte wants to keep it till we dine & that wont be for some months I fancy.