LETTERS FROM

THE HON. ROBERT CURZON JNR.

(1810-1873)

TO

THE REV. WALTER SNEYD

Edited by Ian H.C. Fraser M.A., Archivist, University Library, University of Keele.

Thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Keele.

Volume II.
Curzon was married for fifteen and a half years and the letters covering this period of his life have been presented in a single section. Notwithstanding his wife was the daughter of one of his mother's oldest friends, the marriage failed to improve relations between Curzon and his parents. These deteriorated more rapidly after his parents came to live at Parham in 1858, after they gave up Hagley, and in 1860 Curzon and his wife made their home in London. In the summer of 1862 there was a serious economic and domestic crisis at Parham when the agent embezzled the rent money, and subsequently went mad, causing a minor reign of terror before he was arrested for passing worthless cheques. The episode is mentioned only obliquely in the letters to Sneyd (No. 326), but at Catton Hall there are letters from Curzon's wife to her mother describing it in great detail. The episode illustrates how factors in themselves unimportant and basically personal could combine to undermine the prosperity of an ancient estate; and it also shows the strain they imposed on Curzon. A description of the events has consequently been given in Appendix E.

For this period sixty letters have been given in full with extracts from a further five.
My dear Sneyd,

My wife has produced an immense fat he baby, with a long nose and a very red face. He was born at a quarter past five yesterday evening. About an hour afterwards poor Emily was taken very ill and we were most dreadfully alarmed, however Dr Birch, thank God, was able to get her through her perils and she is this morning very well, as well as the baby. I am most humbly grateful to Providence for this, the greatest of blessings, and hope that my poor little son may have fewer of the troubles of this life than his father has experienced. Birch has gone away, so I trust it is all right and prosperous. I hear Emily and the baby making a most curious mewing and crowing in the next room, while I am writing. I have now only to hope that you will some day write me such a letter as this from,

Yours ever affectionately,

R. Curzon

1. Curzon has put 'Sunday July 1. 1851', but the 1 July falling on a Tuesday and the probability being that he had the date rather than the day of the week wrong, the date was probably 29 June.

2. Not identified.
Parham, 10 November 1851

My dear Sneyd,

I hope they will find that the snow has not done so very much harm at Keel, for snow, tho' it lops trees, does not destroy them, like wind; I doubt whether a snow storm is so bad a thing in a place as my father, as it does not top trees and so spoil their beauty, nor is a hurricane more to be dreaded than Michael Turnor, who, they say here, does a terrible deal of work in a wood; sure - ly.

1. Curzon was to become an authority on the damage his parents were capable of doing to trees but he knew little about snow, and Keele, which was on an exposed site, was ruined. 'I have really not had the heart to write', Ralph Sneyd told Vincent, 'to tell my disastrous tale - but as I nothing doubt the tentus amor casus cognoscere nostras (and to sympathize with them) you shall have the dismal story. On the night of the 3d. of this month, there fell in these latitudes the heaviest snow remember'd for years - As it almost broke in upon summer, - so fine had the previous weather been, - it found the oaks in full foliage - and my twenty years' labour have been thrown away! - The havoc and desolation is beyond what you can figure to yourself. The old trees either entirely smashed or so mutilated and disfigured as to be eyesores. - The young ones - by thousands - split from the top - or snapped in two. - The whole staff of woodmen, consisting of twelve men, will be employed the whole winter in clearing the wreck. My outlines are all spoil'd - my distances impoverished - my Dryads are turned into Chelsea Pensioners. - Effects that I had been long nursing, savagely erased - Angular, uncouth graceless shapes in the place of the graceful irregularities of a redundant growth. - Every object that meets my eye in my melancholy ride or walk a ruin and a regret - instead of hopeful promise - or perhaps even an achieved success. - The place is irrecoverably damaged - for even if I had life and energy to begin again - what would it avail? What could restore - or replace my old maimed, disfigured secular oaks? - The spectacle turns my blood to bile every time I cross my threshold, - even every time I look out of the window.' Keele, 17 November 1851. S.R.
Item/ It is not the voyage to Congo which is so frightfully rare, but the appendix to the voyage to Congo. The rarest of all the parts of de Bry is the Elenchus or preface to the Grands Voyages, sometimes prefixed to the first volume. It is worth nearly as much as the rest of the set. I have only seen two copies of it. There are compleat editions of de Bry in Latin and German. It was begun in English and French, but only the first part of these two was printed, of these the English voyage to Virginia is worth £105, the French £70, so I'll trouble you for those two. It is said that only one perfect German copy has been made up, as yet, in England - I never saw one, anywhere, did you?\footnote{1}

You cannot think what difficulties we have in making this place at all comfortable. There is nothing whatever suited to any particular room, as to furniture, quantities of old and new rubbish, that seems to have been bought in a fit of temporary insanity, and don't fit any where. The chairs and tables and so on are every one broken sets, nothing matches; a deal of cash must have been wasted in getting shabby things and giving vague orders, which have been taken advantage of by the tradesmen. A chimney flue upstairs smoked in the next room, when it appeared there was no mortar between the bricks, which had not been pointed; and the grate was contrived so shrewdly that the fire did not warm the fender, much less the room, as

\footnote{1. Theodor (Dirk) de Bry, engraver (b. Liège, 1527 or 1528), established at Strasbourg by 1560. He had two sons, Johann Theodor (1561-1623) and Johann Israel (d. 1611), who carried on his workshop. His work for Collectiones Peregrinationum in Indiam Orientalem et Occidentalem was begun in 1590 and completed by Johann Theodore's son-in-law, Matthaeus Merian the elder in 1634. De Bry obtained permission to reproduce the drawings of Jacques Le Moyne, who had accompanied Laudonnière's expedition to Florida 1563-65, and was persuaded by Richard Hakluyt to undertake the illustration of a collection of voyages, including Hariot's survey of Virginia, Report of Virginia. Collectiones Peregrinationum was published concurrently in Latin, English, French and German. A.M. Hind, Engraving in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (1952), vol. I, 124-28. A.W. Pollard, Fine Books (Cooper Square Publishers, Inc.,}
you may imagine. We live in the Great Parlour and are struggling to make it comfortable and less gaunt than it was, and hope to succeed, as far as can be done where we have not carte blanche to carry out common sense projects. The Green Room is however very snug; the cook not bad; Mr Dalman does very well, and so does Jeames. The nurses are horridly troublesome and will do nothing for themselves, and we are obliged to submit for fear they should worry the baby.

I wish you would come to Brighton and bring your sisters over here. We could only take in one at a time at present, as we are expecting other people and have not servants enough for a full house.

Is Shirley at Brighton? I purchased a carriage there the other day; it is not quite finished yet, but promised to be a pretty one, nomen eius - sociable. Dine and sleep at Arundel on Thursday; they asked us to stay but we could not, as Lady Horton is here.

Now it's all up with the paper, so here ends the yarn of

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

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(1. cont'd.) New York, 1964), 278-79, considered Grands et petits voyages '...the greatest illuminated work of the sixteenth century,...'
Nine parts of the voyages had been issued by 1602. The last part had the Elenchus, the 'index-volume, to the whole series.' Ibid.

1. Not identified.
2. Not identified.
3. This does not appear to be in connection with a meeting of any of the societies to which Curzon and Sneyd belonged.
Parham, 21 December 1851

My dear Sneyd,

A dampish Sunday this, rather moist hereabouts, how are you off for mud? I have been to Wilton, and to Castle Goring since, and the Eastnors came here, and Lady E. tumbled down stairs and hurt her foot. She was in very good looks and was a charming person I thought. He full of quaint ideas, and anecdotes, as usual.

The great event of the season has been the sudden desertion of Jeames the first, who has gone to service in a place where his wife is ladies maid, and left us with Jeames the second, and nobody else in this great house; so I am obliged to stand behind my own chair, and eat my own dinner, and drink my own health, for want of some one to do it for me, in the servants' hall. If you could tell me of a butler in livery, or a steady footman who wants to better hisself, you would do me great service. We really are sadly inconvenienced for want of a prime minister. I could get two or three out of livery immediately, but it is difficult to meet with a humble individual in shorts, so you see I am truly in a non-plush just now.

With this exception we jog along very cozily, only with occasional alarms from my father and brother, whose different ways of going on equally frighten my weak nerves and put me in an apprehension.

1. Presumably Charles (Somers-Cocks, formerly Cocks), 3rd Earl Somers (1819–83), styled (1841–52) Viscount Eastnor, married 2 October 1850 Virginia, daughter of James Pattle. She was admired for her character and beauty.

2. Curzon was undecided whether to write was or is.
...Item, I am in a quandary about ruining myself in getting a house in London; I have heard of one in Stratton Street, a nice position, where I should like to live (for a while), but it would make a sad hole in my capital, and a bigger one in my income, while I should prefer staying here if I was let to do a little more as I wished, for the sake of occupation. Now, I am rather bored with having nothing to do, and with standing with my hands in my pockets, seeing the paternal cash and labour thrown away, when I could make the place as nice as Denton, if I might, and time passes and life slips away, and I have the pudding before me in the dish, and must not eat it, and nobody else profits, and the whole thing that might be so good is no good to any one - Howbeit, nevertheless, notwithstanding, I am very happy with the wife and the babby, and with what I have of my own, and thank God for it, and the failure here is not my fault.

Now I am going to church. Which would you put on, the India rubbers or the antigroples, or both, or the umbrella or the Mackintosh?

Good bye,

Yours ever,

R. Curzon

Monday. I have got your letter and one from Brown of Venice,¹ in high admiration of your sister's translation of the Venetian report. My wife's best love.

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¹ Rawdon Lubbock Brown, scholar (1803-83), lived in Venice from 1833 until his death. Amongst other things he calendared a number of the Venetian archives relating to England.
Farham, 27 January 1852

My dear Sneyd,

I am sorry to see that your bowels are getting so much out of order, and should recommend an additional bin of bluepill, to be added to the regular stock. Don't you think it would be better to be pleased with the letters you do get from your friends, than to begin with a regular page of abuse and temper whenever you take up your pen to write to me? Better vent your spleen on your enemy, or hire a small dog to kick, when you are quite unable to contain yourself, for if I was equally to abuse you for not writing to me, our letters would be fit for nothing but making pickles with, and that is not the purpose for which I wish mine to be received.

I am sorry to hear of Ralph's accident, what did he tumble down stairs for? That is too violent exercise to be wholesome.¹

Poor Haddy's² illness does not make me feel hopeless on her account, for her powers of vitality are quite wonderful; I should not wonder if she recovered as the finer weather comes on, and I shall be truly happy to hear that she does so.

I am going to Castle Goring today and perhaps to Brighton tomorrow, when I may look in at Gancia's.³ The small ones of my Italian picture

1. '...I stumbled down a perpendicular stone staircase into a cellar — and it is in utter defiance of the logical relation of cause and effect that I am alive.' Ralph Sneyd to Vincent, Keele, 21 January 1852. S.P.

2. Harriott (1765-1852), sister of Elizabeth Sneyd, popular aunts of Sneyd's, known in the family as 'Haddy' and 'Bess'.

3. Signor G. Gancia, of 8 East Street, and later of 73 Kings Road, specialized in foreign books. Information Brighton Public Libraries.
gallery have arrived here and have been squeezed into the Green Room by main force, but I cannot get the de Brys from the bookseller. I have been waiting for months for the rare parts that are wanting, tho' I have been promised them over and over again.

I do not know what my plans are at all. I mean to stay here as long as I can, for I am very happy when I am let alone, only that my fingers itch to be making little improvements, which I dare not do, for fear of offence, and without that I have no occupation or interest in the place beyond old family feeling, and that is not enough. I imagine I shall take a furnished house, in the season, in London, if I have got any money, when the time comes. The baby prospers, thank God, and is now cooing and growling on a thick carpet in the bay window of the hall, which has given a picturesque flavor to that auntient chamber. Divers shillings and a few pounds have gone to brush up this house a bit, to try to make it look a little less pitiful. It is marvellous to see the want of common arrangements here, after such heavy sums of money have been spent on things which make no show.

We have new people at Wiggonholt, by name Bacon. They say the lady is very pretty, and M[r] B. agreable; I hope it is true and shall go and see when I return from Castle Goring.

I am very glad that Mrs Bagot\(^1\) seems to be so nice a person, and that they all live so happily together.

The 'ounds meets 'ere on the fift', so if you will bring your 'oss and pink we will finish the hevenink over a bowl of hot stuff, and won't go

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1. This suggests a recent bride, the most likely being that of William Bagot (1811-87), who married, 13 August 1851, the Hon. Lucia Caroline Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Lord Dover. William succeeded his father as 3rd Baron Bagot in 1856.
home till morning.

I do not expect any invasion from Louis Napoleon just at present. I wish I could have received him when he wanted to come here to see the armour, because I would write now to ask him to let us off when the froggys land at Worthing.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
209. No address.

Parham, 28\textsuperscript{1} February 1852

My dear Snayd,

I don't know where you may have got to by this time, so I send this to the Abbey, for the Abbess to forward, as I suppose she knows where you are likely to be; and when you get it, sit you down and write me an entertaining epistle, calculated to soothe my mind after the troubles incident to a family man who is moving his household to a distant region: direct the said epistle to Berkley Square, because I am going on Monday to an hotel in Dover Street, where I shall have to pay all my cash for sham bread and artificial cream, adulterated beer, wine unacquainted with the grape, and so on. And if you did know the trouble of maids and their luggage, heaviness and inefficiency, the moment there is any thing practical to be done — however, I only hope you will find it out some day; it is quite right it should be so, these difficulties are counterbalanced by much gain and they keep people at home, where it is best they should be, for their own sakes and the sakes of those around them.

I go after a few days to Catton and Hagley. I don't know what to do about London, my future plans depend much on that.

What do you think about the new ministry?\textsuperscript{2} They look a little better than they did, but on the first blush I was dismayed at the want of great names and experienced people. I hope they may do, but as they have not

\begin{enumerate}
\item Or possibly the 27th. It is extremely difficult to tell which figure overlies which.
\item The Earl of Derby's first cabinet, Disraeli Chancellor of the Exchequer.
\end{enumerate}
offered me a fat sinecure I cannot help feeling a little doubtfull.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
210. No address.

Parham, 24 June 1852

My dear WS.,

You have got a new seal, I perceive: what is it made of and what sort of a handle has it got? I hope it is a pleasant looking implement.

I have been suffering terribly, from influenza and tic in my face. I had a huge tooth out, on Sunday, a most horrid operation, the worst I ever experienced, but it did not cure me tho' it alleviated the pain, for there was inflammation in the socket of the tooth, the agony of which was excruciating and I was very ill with shere pain and want of rest. Tho' I am better I am seedy still and worried with the discomfort, now my parents are here, who certainly are the most unsnug people that ever were heard of - Tomorrow my brother and his family arrive; I am rather glad they come altogether, tho' they are quite different sort of people to you and me and the other fellow, and we have few ideas in common.

Why did you not enquire about Mrs Main? If you will take an old woman you may as well take one that can cook some thing better than mutton chops; Mrs Main is as good, if not a better cook, than the Nuneham or Trentham or any other great man cook, and being an amateur would probably like to live with you, now she has not strength to cook for a large family, besides she is the model of an old fashioned body to look at, and wears such a pair of spectacles that I don't suppose Mrs Minerva ever looked wiser.

Another Winken de Worde, eh - hooray! My books have overflowed and when my de Brys come, in twenty volumes or so, folio, I don't know how I shall

1. Not identified.
manage. I pitched forty volumes onto the top of one of the bookcases this morning, to make room on the floor.

The post man has been blowing his horn, so I must stop. My wife's love and the babby's best regards. He is in trouble with his teeth but not very bad, only nibbles every thing he can get hold of.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
Parham, 10 October [? 1852]

Why, I'll tell you why I haven't begun that long and interesting letter that you enquire about, just yet. The reason is because I have been voyaging and travelling and skirmishing about the country, and there hath been no rest for the seat of my trousers, even for many days; and behold moreover, writing letters is not my particular forte under the most favourable circumstances; and them is the reasons, and the causes, and the wherefores that I have not written the above mentioned long and interesting, or otherwise dull and stupid letter, which you are now going to receive.

Now as touching Denton, if you had not been swaggering down the boulevarts somewhere in furrie parts, Mrs C. and I should very likely have proposed to partake of viands (and pudding) with the Abbot of that distinguished refectory; but you was not there, and the opportunity passed. When we may get there now I cannot conceive, for ould auntient patriarchs like me don't simmer about in the light and easy style in which your gay bachelor doth skip from one rose bush to another. There are arrangements to be made, and ways and means considered, and sums to be made, and cash to be expended and trouble to be taken, not by the ounce but by the lb. or even by the cwt., and now we are stuck fast in the mire of Sussex and I know not when we shall get out.

Well, what gimcracks have you brought over besides the ivory antikity that you told me of? Have you found any old books or old pictures, or an old oak cabinet or anything large that will make a show at the Abbey? I have half a mind to run down for a night or two to peep at the new old
things, when you return from Guy's Cliffe, if it can be managed: I have not been at the Abbey now for above two years, and should like to refresh my memory a bit, tho' I think I remember it all pretty well. I am afraid the time is approaching when you and I will be considered by the virtuosos of these times as a curious old pair of antiquities ourselves, but I hope we shall not come to be stuffed and preserved "as sitch", like the illustrious Duke of Hamilton.¹

We have been to Scarsdale House, where we had capital good dinners and breakfasts - Stoneleigh,² for the Brumagem music, mighty fine - Crewe - Tabley - Conway - George Inn, Bangor Ferry, a beautiful spot near the Menai Bridge, and there we had Sir Watkin's³ pudding, a famous antient condiment - Hawarden, which put me in mind of the days of my youth. I was much pleased to be there again, but I caught the influenza by going out in the rain to see a church built by Sir Stephen, where the curate, Mr Traughton, has with his own hands made painted glass windows, fresco and oil paintings on the alter and screen and pulpit, something in the Perugino style, certainly the most beautiful English paintings I ever saw, antient or modern; and without understanding music he has turned a huge grinder into a finger organ, a most ingenious process, and he has besides made some carvings of angels which, except their heads and necks, which are too small, are remarkable works of art - Mr T. is something like a curate; I wish I could make him dean of some cathedral that wanted brushing up. So great a genius in that line I have never seen or heard of in modern times.

1. ? The 10th Duke (1767-1852), a noted magnifico.
2. Presumably Stoneleigh Abbey, near Kenilworth, seat of William Henry (Leigh), Baron Leigh (1824-1905).
3. Curzon's remark suggests that his itinerary included Wynnstay, near Wrexham, seat (at this time) of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynne, 6th Bt. (1820-85).
Well, what else have I to say? My de Brys, which have been a year and a half waiting to be completed, cleaned and bound are approaching towards the book shelves at Parham. In about a fortnight I hope to have the only complete set of the German edition that I ever saw even a scrap of, safe down here. This is earlier than the Latin edition. With it I hope to have a splendid copy of the Latin one, wanting the two last parts and the appendix to Congo, astounding rarities, but all of which I have in German, and I am to have the refusal of the first copies of these rare chapters which may occur for sale. They are worth £36, for three pamphlets—perhaps I may get them some day, but what I have, being remarkable copies, with all the folding plates mounted on linen, and containing all sorts of rare parts, baring those abovementioned, I presume my collection of de Bry to be worth a pound, perhaps, as far as it goes, better than most of the five or six known sets.

Why, bless my stars! here comes another sheet of paper: what is the next article? My dear wifey gave me a binding of a book on our wedding day, a sad extravagance on her part, but a very pleasant chattel. It is a slab of fine jade, about as big as a page of this paper, whereon are set in gold one hundred and thirty-eight rubies and thirty-four emeralds, in a pattern. It is Persian or Indian work and will serve as a cover for some wonderfull eastern miniatures which I have had for some time, and which will make together a remarkable tome. But the wife is in value above rubies and I wish and pray and hope that you may get one of these dear gimcracks to comfort you, and to look kindly at you, and to walk in the way that you would go, and help you to do right, and prevent you from doing wrong, even as my wife has done for me.

Now, my dear old WS I don't know why you don't get one of these

1. $4\frac{1}{2}$" x $7\frac{1}{4}$".
chattels, tho' they are certainly rare and not to be met with in every collection; but there are some of 'em about, and if you could but set a trap for one, don't you let it go, not by no means, howsomedever, but hold on for the dear life, and you may sit down and purr over your winter fire, and spread yourself out like a peach tree in the summer sun, till you pass into the hands of the great collector, from whose museum no Sneyds return.

We have passed a sad, dreary summer, a waste of existence such as I hope not to pass again, victims of all sorts of petty jealousies, and restraints and vexations, which are the most worrying of troubles in this world.

Monday. I wish you would make out your plans to come and stay with us a good while this autumn, after my parents are gone. Do come and stay till you get used to our ways, and we will make you as snug as we can – Mrs Bacon¹ and Lady May² are come, so I must go and do pleasant to the visitors, I wonder who Lord May was?

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

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¹ Mrs Bacon: The wife of the Rev. Thomas Bacon, subsequently (1864–84) Rector of Wiggonholt.

² Lady May: ? The wife of Sir Thomas Erskine May (1815–86), Clerk Assistant, later Clerk of the House of Commons, created Baron Farnborough in 1886.
Parham, 6 February 1853

...We go to 73 South Audley Street tomorrow, bag and baggage, for three months; the house not large enough, and I am grieved at losing No. 7 Grafton Street, a finer house than most in London, and considerably cheaper than this one. Lady Horton joins us in housekeeping and is most exceedingly kind to me, not only in helping to pay the bills, but in thinking of every thing that she /supposes/ may be useful, and advantageous to us, taking all sorts of trouble, continually, and sending things she supposes we might want, from Catton. A sad contrast on the other side, where no word of sympathy occurs, much less deeds, a sad check on the satisfaction of living and being alive...

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1. Substituted for '...thinks...'.
...I came back from Chichester yesterday, pleased with the museum, and the hospitality of the Bishop; bored with the dinners of four hundred and one hundred and seventy archaeologists, and the speeches, and reading stupid twaddling papers; and ashamed of the Duke of Richmond, who accepted the honor of Patron and took no notice of us old fogies, a very undignified dodge for a great man, and a very undiplomatic one, for the estimation of five or six hundred gentlemen is of more importance than that of the blacklegs and tenant farmers round about Goodwood, with whom he is always dining and speechifying.

I am in agony about certain chattels which Albert Way is trying to get for me, and tomorrow perhaps I shall know whether I have got them or not. They were found on pulling down an old house in Chichester, and consist of an iron or steel javelin of Indian workmanship, covered with silver, a pair of thumbscrews, and a silver mace belonging to a corporation, with the arms of James Ist or Queen Elizabeth on the top. This is a capital old thing and would be an acquisition to any collection. I made a long speech in praise of gimcracks, on opening the antiquarian meeting, but as there were no reporters present I have not had the chance of reading it, which I should have liked to do, to see how it sounded. Cock Hussey and Sir Stephen were there, and your things excited much interest, particularly the book covers, which Mr Farrer seemed to admire particularly...


2. Probably the Mr Henry Farrer, of 14 Wardour Street, who was a member of the Archaeological Association.
Royal Hotel, Whitby, 8 August 1853

My dear Sneyd,

Behold we are at Whitby, and here is a prospect of the Abbey thereof:¹ was you ever here? If you hav'nt you had better come and then you will know all about it. The ruins are magnificent, on the hill on the other side of the little harbour, opposite the windows of the hotel. Howbeit, a certain man of Belial, a tenant of Col. Cholmley,² is pulling them down, or at least trying to do so, for fear they should fall upon his cow! Only think that such a thing should be actually going on in the year 1853, and that any gentleman should allow a barbarian over whom he has any influence, to do so; and the savages have got long ropes to some of the beautiful Early English arches to pull at. I hope the fall of the grand old church will smash a few of them when it does come down — amen.

Now as touching York — where do you get certain coats of a soft thin sort of woollen stuff, which I remember you used to have? Are there any curiosity or old book shops at York? Write instantly and tell me. Also, when did the Duke ask you to Hamilton, because he asked me to come, and if &c., c., c. I could meet you there it would be a fine thing. Can you give me Jim Hope's³ direction? I should like to call in at Abbotsford, if I was going that way. What are the accounts of the couple at Denton? I hope they may find each other answer on tryal, and how does the new

¹. Letterhead, engraving by Cave & Son, York, published by S. Reed, Whitby.
². Not identified.
³. See p. 225, n. 1,2 above.
cook get on, and what have you been doing, and what are you going to do?

I went to church twice yesterday and heard the same sermon each time, but the artful curate put a new text to it in the evening. Saturday we went to Mulgrave, where we saw about ninety-nine portraits of the most noble the Marquis of Normanby, and smelt such a stink at the door of her ladyship's room that I shall never forget it, indeed I would not wish to smell a worse.

Yours ever,

R. Curzon

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1. Constantine Henry (Phipps), Earl of Mulgrave, created Marquess of Normanby 25 June 1838. He married, 12 August 1818, Maria, daughter of Sir Thomas Henry Liddell Bt., later Baron Ravensworth, an old friend of the Sneyds.
272. No address.

Parham, 9 November 1853

My dear Sneyd,

I have been going to write to you for the last week, howbeit I never accomplished that feat of larning. Forrest\(^1\) sends me word he has several pieces of Gothic silver: do you know what they are? Such things being rarissimi, I should be afraid to go to his shop for fear of immediate ruin if I was in Town.

I have been looking over some of my own letters from Erzeroom, several of them are not stupid as might be expected. Have you any of my epistles from thence?

I wish you would come and give us a good steady visit here, as I cannot go to the Abbey just now. We will provide you with puddings, and whitey brown,\(^2\) a discretion. I want my sentiments on jimcracks to be responded to, for fear they should wear out, which would be a sad job —

Monkey’s love to you.\(^3\)

The above is a very rare autograph of a distinguished character — I wish I could afford to get poor Baring Wall’s house;\(^4\) I wonder what it will go for? My father has had a sharp attack of billious illness, at Scarsdale House, but soon got right again, and today they are to start for Stoke.

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1. ? John Forrest, jeweller, 5 Pitt Street, Fitzroy Square.
2. In this context lavatory paper, but the term was applicable to any rough paper.
3. I have been unable to find another instance of this precise usage, but variations are given by Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English...* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 1188.
4. 44 Berkeley Square.
What horrid damp, unwholesome weather. Post going - a Jew -

Yours ever affectionately,

R. Curzon
Farham, 25 November 1853

My dear Sneyd,

I received the packet of letters last Saturday and deferred acknowledging the same "for a reason I had". Howbeit they are very interesting, some of them, and the Misses has got into a terrible scrape by offering to copy some of them out, for one has taken fourteen pages 4to already. You must have some more I should think.

Behold, the postman is come, so no more at present from

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
50 Berkley Square, 28 November [?] 1853

Well Mister, I mean your Reverence, it is a [blank] long time since I was at the Abbey certainly, Aug 23, 1847 I think it was, when I was there last, so now if you kill the cat on Saturday next, the paws and tail will make giblets for the soup on Monday, on which day I steadfastly purpose simmering down to Oxford on my way to your hospitable roof.

I could not have come now unless I had received a letter this morning from Hagley, saying that they are going to Gopsal, which leaves me free for a week. If you are squeezed to death when you go to hear Jenny Lind write me word and then I'll bring the black shorts for the funeral, and more pocket handkerchiefs for the mournful occasion. The deuce of it is that my drawers, shirts, stockings and pocket handkerchiefs have struck work; I fear they are infected with democratic principles for they are uncommon ragged and seedy, and it is no joke to discard all one's old ministers of the toilet which have gone on so long, and get new ones all of a sudden, particularly just now about Xmas time, when I annually experience an alarming depreciation in the currency; for the current of cash sets steadily out of my pocket and never runs in properly as it ought to do.

I saw Ed. Cheney today, moreover he gave an impression on vellum of a niello, it is the only one I ever saw and I am charmed with my new plaything. He says you have not asked him to Denton, so how would it be

1. Watermark 'J Whatman 1848'. In spite of the age of the writing paper, Curzon's date, 'Monday Nov 28.' would be correct for 1853 and his references to his book would fit for Armenia, but the date is not beyond doubt.

2. Of Badger Hall, Shifnall, Shropshire, b. 1803, brother of Ralph (d. 1869).
if you did? He is an amusing, intelligent fellow, indeed I have had a high notion of his talents and agreeability since he gave me the niello. My book torments me grievously, because I hoped to get out of the scrape of having my name put to it; but I suppose Murray thought it was too stupid to sell without, so now everybody accuses me of being an author, and if the tome aforesaid is a failure it will be a kettle to my tail in saecula saeculorum — amen. Job knew what he was about when he said "Oh that mine enemy would write a book".

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
232. No address.

Parham, 17 February, 1854

My dear Sneyd,

I was glad to see your letter for I had no notion where you was, having received no answer to my letter directed to some awful place in Scotland. You seem to have had an agreeable time among dukes and duchesses. I have been surrounded with troubles and sorrows from the acts of various relatives. Besides this I have written a book, tho' a very little one, about Armenia, where the Turks and Russians are fighting. I wrote it in eleven and a half days, so you may suppose it is neither very long or very wise.

Shall you be at the Abbey on Saturday, March 4, because if so my Missis and I would come to you on that day, till Monday, when we think of going to Sherborne?

I heard from Albert Way the other day, his sister has just married a priest. I am very sorry indeed to hear of Mrs Shirley's accident, I hope she is going on well. I suppose he is in Town for parliament. I find I am writing on two sheets of paper, which comes of doing things in a hurry, and the baby's determination to help Papa to write, which is a great delight to him. He is evidently a literary genius.

The only new gimcrack is a silver penner and inkstand [sketch], set with turquoises of the 16[th] century probably, but we have established a British Museum up in the Gallery and filled two glass cases with things which were in the drawers and nobody saw.
Times up.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
Hagley, 6 May 1854

My dear Sneyd,

How are you getting on, how is your trail, what is the news at the Abbey?

We have been here three days and return to Catton this afternoon. We were here about a fortnight ago and went over to Blithfield. My parents would go at one o'clock, which dismayed the Blithfieldites and my Lord's face and his account of his bowels were of remarkable length. I was much pleased with the church, which I had not seen for years. If Harvey can be killed, or made a bishop, before he builds a south porch and puts the organ in the corner, on the ground, and so destroys the symmetry of the building, it will be a most beautiful specimen of a country church. I am sorry that Ld. Bagot will not receive us just now at Blithfield, as I have said so much about it to Emily. I do not perceive why he declines to have us, because I have the vanity, or rather confidence in so old a friend that I think he could hardly feel bored at the prospect of seeing my wife and me for two or three nights. I fear, and indeed am nearly sure, that I never shall have an opportunity of going there again, in Ld. Bagot's life time, so I am quite sorry to be thrown over.

I go to Town on Monday, to look out for an hotel, in which we shall set up our tabernacle for a month or so.

What are your plans, are you going to Town? I hope you are, and we will rout out that astounding antiquity in Wardour St., which you or I ought certainly to possess.
Are you acquainted with this sort of paper? It is made of straw.

Ever yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

There is a report this morning that poor Sir Charles Wolseley is dead. I sincerely hope it is not true,¹ he was the best of our neighbours round here.

¹ The report was premature, but he died on 15 May, at Wolseley Hall, Rugeley, Staffs.
Parham, 9 December 1854

My dear Sneyd,

The fates ordain that I am to go to London on Wednesday, so I hope to go to you on Thursday, but I must be back to London on Friday, and here Saturday, early.

If you can send your dog cart for me to Abingdon Road, I shall be much obliged. I shall leave Town by a train after breakfast, I have not looked at the book yet. If you cannot send the canine equipage, pray write a line to the station, to have a fly, (I have no Bradshaw of this month here, to see for a convenient train) and then write me a line to 50 Berkley Square, to say what I am to expect. The constant wreck of flies on your roads rather alarms me in my old age.

I have got into a horrid lot of pens.

Then as I shall have no time, pray either make your plan to send me back to the station on Friday, or send for a fly for me in good time. I am putting you to a deal of trouble, but I can not come to you on any other condition, for at this distance I cannot make my own arrangements for your barbarous county, and I have no time to spare. As it is I am writing for the early post, when our three dogs are to carry the letters before I am up on Sunday morning. Here endeth this incoherent letter.

What a sad thing if the D. of Cambridge has gone out of his mind.

I should be glad to go by Oxford on Friday morning, or afternoon, to see my nephew George at Merton.

Glad you are so much better.
Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
Parham, 11 December 1854

My dear Sneyd,

I have at length got a Bradshaw, (but of September). I purpose to leave London by the two o'clock train, and shall be much obliged if you will write to the authorities to have a fly ready for me at Abingdon Road at 3.50, as it will be too cold and dark to go in your dog cart, if you thought of sending it. I trust there is a two o'clock train in December. It is rather a desperate effort to simmer away so far for so short a visit, but I hope I shall have a favorable glimpse of you for the few hours of my stay at the Abbey.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
My dear Sneyd,

Your letter has been forwarded to me here. We have been in very great distress, on account of the illness of my poor little boy, who has been laid up for a long while. He is better now, but the weather will not permit him to go out, to recruit his strength, and we are still sorry for ourselves and unable to leave this place to return to Farham, for the poor little Robin is by no means fit to travel.

I went to London on business and had the distinguished honor of being squashed for two hours in various anti rooms belonging to her most gracious Majesty, for those heroic paladins the Gentlemen at Arms have got a new dodge of sticking a wooden bar across every doorway, by which ingenious process the bowels of her Majestie's [sic] liege subjects are violently compressed four or five times more than they were before, by being pushed against these stupid rails by the crowd behind. It is one of those clever theories which don't answer in practise, intended to make the crowd less oppressive, and in fact adding sadly to their misfortunes and annoyance. They ought to build larger rooms, and make less stupid arrangements before the suffering courtiers get angry at the undignified vulgar failures of the present levees and drawing rooms; it makes one quite ashamed to see them.

I did not venture to go near the Bernal² sale but I receive satisfaction from the prices of some things of which I have the fellow

1. Ralph Bernal, born about 1806, died 26 August 1854. He was a barrister and, between 1818 and 1852, an M.P. for different constituencies including Rochester. He joined Albert Way in the
pieces. The fellow candlesticks (brass inlaid with silver) to those on the writing table in the Green Room, sold for £26, and two brass dishes not so fine as mine sold for £47 and £51. I must try and get a priced catalogue when the sale is over.

We go to Parham as soon as we can, I hope in a week or ten days. Lady Horton joins us there. I know the book you have bought. Boone offered me a copy the other day, for I think £15. Write to me here an amusing epistle, as touching gimcracks, for I want anything to raise my spirits a little bit.

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon

(1. cont'd.) foundation of the Archaeological Association in 1843, and was a celebrated collector of antiques and books, but more particularly of glass, plate, china and miniatures. The books were sold at Sotheby's in February 1855, The Times, 22 February, describing the prices as 'beyond all precedent'. The first eight days' sale of the porcelain, etc. took place at Christie's, and a report appeared in The Times of 4 March. Subsequent sales, beginning on 17 March, took place at Bernal's house in Eaton Square. Two catalogues, with an introduction by J.R. Planché (1796-1880), the dramatist, antiquary and (later, 1866) Somerset Herald, listed over 4,000 lots, which eventually realized nearly £71,000 (the Annual Register for 1854 - Chronicle, p. 326 - put the figure at 'upwards of 60,000'), and unsuccessful attempts were made to persuade the authorities to buy the collection for the nation. A number of items did in fact go to the Marlborough House Museum, and so later to South Kensington.

1. Thomas and William Boone, booksellers and publishers, 29 New Bond Street.
Parham, 23 August 1855

My dear Sneyd,

You have been wandering about so much lately that I did not know where to direct to you. I am glad it has agreed so well with you, as I seldom get a letter from you quite free of the mulligrubs, and still more rarely one rejoicing in the vigor of your health. Nuneham\(^1\) seems to be in a state of perpetual scrimmage. Pray give my regards to Lady Morley\(^2\) when you meet her there, she is sure to make any party agreeable.

You ask about my plans. As far as I can settle any thing at present, we are going to some watering place, by the sea, towards the end of September. Lady Horton says she will join us at Weymouth, if we go there. I had thought of Boulogne, for the sake of bolting off to Paris, where I want to go to see the great exhibition, and the numerous improvements the Emperor has made. I am now waiting here for my parents, who are coming some day soon, but they will not settle when, keeping us on the tenter hooks, as we dare not ask any one here and cannot settle our arrangements till we know of theirs—

I am sorry to say that they and my brother fill me with terror and alarm, spending great sums of money and both living beyond their income in a most regardless way. My father has ordered a number of trees to be cut down on this estate. What he does with the large sums which he gets rid of nobody knows, but it causes me much grief and anxiety, whereas all that Emily and I do prospers. If you ever come here again, within another

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1. When William, 3rd Earl Harcourt (1743–1830) died, his estates, including Nuneham Courteney, near Oxford, devolved upon Dr Vernon,
five years, you will be surprised how we have raised this place out of
the slough of despond, with our small means, and it is a pleasure to see
how the gardens and house respond to our endeavours, and how well every
little addition tells.

My little Robin is full of intelligence and fun, and makes me laugh.
He does not know how his ancestors are undermining his prospects, poor
little man. I will write to you when our plans can be made at all
practicable. I wish I saw more of you my dear old fellow. I am glad
Gooch¹ is proud of his son.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

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(1. cont'd.) Archbishop of York (d. 1847), when the latter's eldest son,
George Granville Harcourt (1785-1861) inherited the property.

2. Almost certainly Sneyd's friend Frances, Countess of Morley (1781-1857),
who made use of his drawings for her book (see p. xxx, n. 1 above).

1. Sneyd's cousin, the Rev. Frederick Gooch (1804-87), Rector of Baginton,
near Coventry (see p. lxi above), who had a son, George Walter, born
29 June 1855.
Parham, 15 September 1855

My dear Sneyd,

You seem to have been doing a great deal in the dissipation line, taking your pastime in the great houses, where no body cares whether you are dead or alive. Nevertheless fine places are fine things, well worth seeing, tho' the trouble I think in my case generally exceeds the amusement. In England where there is no dignity, a second class place is usually much more agreeable than a first rate one. Tho' we have plenty of vanities we have no pomps in these common place times. It must have been very different when your great lord had a coronet on his head, and five hundred retainers at his tail. I should have liked to have eat a manchet in his hall in those old days.

My little Robin is asking me all sorts of absurd questions, and climbing about me, so I can't get on. He wants to know whether Mr Sneyd is as clever as Miss Carr, and whether he himself really is a stupid monkey.

We have been sadly grieved by the death of poor William Pechell, who was killed in the trenches before Sevastopol on the night of the 3rd. It is a terrible blow to his parents, who have not heard any particulars as yet. Sir George's hopes of founding a family now fall to the ground. The Pechell fortune goes to a cousin who lives in Shropshire, his daughters, I believe, divide the rest, at their parents' death. I do not know

1. Not identified, possibly the child's governess.
2. Curzon's cousin, William Henry Cecil George Pechell, Capt., 77th Foot, b. 1830.
whether this will prevent Emily and me from going to Paris. We intended to go next week for ten days. Boulogne is given up, the last scheme is to go to Eastbourne, at the fall of the leaf.

My father and mother are here. I fear his affairs go on very ill, to my sad grief but I can do nothing. I will write again when anything certain is made out about Paris -

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
248. No address.

Hôtel Wagram, Rue Rivoli, Paris
25 September 1855

My dear Sneyd,

Here we are, au quatrienne, looking out on the roofs of the houses in a noisy back street. I went to near twenty hotels, and as many furnished apartments after my arrival yesterday, and could not get in anywhere, so I doubt the expediency of your coming. It would be impossible for me to engage a room for you, as they say there are twice as many English here now as there were when the Queen was here. Nevertheless people come and go every day, by the hundreds, so you might get better and cheaper rooms than we have got. We pay eighteen francs a night for three little dog holes not usually worth eight. Paris is however wonderfully well worth seeing. It must be the grandest city in the world, for the Emperor is evidently no small man, if he is to be judged by his works. The magnificent scale of the improvements round the Tuilleries and the rue de Rivoli is astounding. The quai Voltaire is nearly plucked clean. M. de l'Ange¹ is pretty well thank you, but he has not got a gimcrack worth buying. Indeed, tho' I have been here some hours, I have seen nothing that I coveted and desired with any extraordinary longing. The Exposition is a remarkable failure, when compared with ours. It looks like a big Oxford St bazaar, but there are some beautiful things in it, awfull drafts of air, and bad luncheons too. I have got a horrid cold.

We think of staying till next Tuesday. Capital dinner and good hotel (du Rhin) at Amiens, and what a glorious old cathedral. There are many

¹. Not identified, the reading could equally be de l'Auge.
new old curiosity shops at Paris, on this side of the river. I have not
looked them over yet, and there are little gold five franc pieces, an
amazing comfort, as one has not to hire a wheelbarrow to carry £10 now.

Well, I hope you are coming, all the same.

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon
Parham, 11 October 1855

My dear Sneyd,

How many more objets Bizantins have you got? and how few pounds have you left in the right hand side pocket of your waistcoat? Pray tell me all particulars. Emily would be much obliged if you would ask for any letters which there may be for us, at Lafitte's Bank, next time you go there, and forward them here, as there is one there which she wishes to receive.

We had an awfull passage from Boulogne to Folkstone, two hundred and twenty-eight passengers on board, every hotel full, and we were very lucky to get rooms over a shop, in the town. I should much recommend you to return by Calais to Dover, where there are fewer passengers. We might have been in great danger if the wind had been higher, from the great weight on deck. There should be a law against taking a crowd in steamers, for whom there is no room below, tho' they are made to pay first cabin fare. Now that bad weather is coming on, this is a serious evil.

Well, my gimcracks have subsided quietly into the ark and it does not seem a bit more full than it was before. Lady Wolseley and Robert Hay are here (Hay is gone). He gave me his famous Egyptian gold ring, the signet of Thotmes 3d., the Pharoh of the Exodus. This, if genuine, is one of the most curious relics extant and would be a gem in the Soltykoff collection, which I am sorry to say almost made me sick, for my poor

1. Mary Anne Selby, of Acton House, Middlesex, married, 1839, Sir Charles Wolseley, 8th Bart., of Wolseley Hall, Rugeley, Staffs., (1813-54). She died in 1873.

2. Curzon presumably saw something of it at the Exposition. The owner
little Green Room looks quite pitifull after it. If you extend your trip, I wish you would send me a rough sketch of any Gothic silver that you meet with, with dimensions, price and direction where to write about it, if you don't want it yourself.

I wish you would bring Denton down near here for I sadly want a companion in antiquarian persuits. No one cares a farthing about our astounding treasures in this part of the world. More than eighteen hundred Roman copper coins have been found, in a well, near here. They are in beautiful preservation, mostly of Constantine.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

[Address written on the back in an unknown hand, 'Mr Bourier rue Porte Parir No 29 Amien'].

(2. cont'd.). was Prince Petr, grandson of Field Marshall Prince Nicholas (1736–1816), described as '...si connu à Paris pour son intelligent amour pour les arts et ses belles collections d'armes, d'êmeaux et de bijoux anciens, dont une partie orne actuellement le louvre.' – Nouvelle Biographie Générale (Firmin Didot Frères, Fils et Cie., Paris, 1868), Bk. 44, 165. The collection was sold in April 1861.
My dear Sneyd,

There is certainly nothing very astounding here in the antiquarian line. Things look on the contrary rather unfinished, streets half built, with yawning sepulchres that look forward some day to being cellars [and] are ready to engulf the unwary passenger who may be rolling home from the Pig and Whistle at night. Nevertheless it is a pretty place for a bathing place, we have a very smart capital house, and the advantage on Sunday of hearing

1. Word omitted.
the discourse of that eminent divine the Hon. and Revd. Arthur Talbot.¹ Pevensey and Hurstmonceaux Castles are the lions of the neighbourhood, and are interesting ruins, on one side; and Beachy Head towers up in a precipice five hundred feet high on the other. We return to Parham at the end of the month.

That seems to be a wonderful grim gimcrack that you have got. I hope that the young man at Mr Durlacher's² did not make it, for I think that is not a work of art, or of intrinsic value, a dangerous speculation in these adultery days, howbeit I trust it is real. The two dragons, from the length of their backs, must have been turnspits in the devil's kitchen. Pray tell me how big it is, and if there is anything except a bad smell inside. I see various sales advertised.

Lady Horton is here, and two of my nieces, Emily and Blanche. Emily is very pretty, something like Lady Somers.³ Robin is in tremendous force and calls himself the Cub. I hope the sea air will do us all good.

Ever aff[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon

2. Probably Henry Durlacher, picture and curiosity dealer, 77 New Bond Street.
3. Although there were alive at this time three ladies of this title, including the widows of the 1st and 2nd Earls, it must surely be the celebrated Virginia (née Pattie) to whom Curzon refers? She was born 19 March 1829 and married Charles, 3rd Earl Somers (1819–83) 2 October 1850, not long after Richard Monckton Milnes observed Lord Euston pursuing her (see p. 457, n. 5 below). She died in 1910.
My dear Sneyd,

We have been three weeks at this place, in a very nice new apartment, in a clean new house, comfortable and cheerful, which is all very well so far, tho' otherwise a place more particularly out of my line would be difficult to find. Every thing is so bran new, and so utterly uninteresting, and there is nothing to see except the smart people in the gardens, and the Kur Saal, where in magnificent rooms gambling goes on every day, Sundays and all, from eleven in the morning till eleven at night. The Administration, as it is called, of the Kur Saal, are splendid fellows. They keep up every thing, give balls and concerts every week, all the springs are in their hands, and they spend above £100 a day in amusing the public who, in their turn, are so much gratified by this politeness that the gains of the Kur Saal are enormous, and M. Le Blanc, the chief evil genius of this Hell, bags about £35,000 a year, after paying a host of people and all manner of expences.

The Old Schloss where we saw the Landgravine is a sad contrast to all this modern splendor. It is sadly folorn and neglected. The old Landgrave is shy and sorry for himself. He is the last of the family, the empire reverts to Hesse Darmstadt at his death, so he seems to take no heed and lets things go to rack. He lives in the gardener's house, as he says there is no room in the Palace which does not put him in mind of some death, or some misfortune. Poor old man, I am quite sorry for him.

Gimcracks, you may suppose, are not to be found in such a place as this, but I have been over to Frankfort twice, and caught a prize each time. There are quantities of objets Bisantins there but very dear and suspicious. A
little box of the 4th century of whales bones, not whalebone, like yours, I suppose just finished, was offered me for a sacrifice by a Jew, who however agreed with me immediately when I told him it was sham. I have got a pax, late 15th century, of Limoges enamel, in a copper gilt frame [sketch], very genuine, 30s., a MS. of the Book of Esther, a roll in Hebrew in a silver gilt case, covered with coarse filigree, the most beautiful thing of its kind that I ever saw [sketch], about nine inches long, £5. 10. 0. Item, a gimcrack, which is hung in front of the Torah or MS. roll of the Penteteuch, in the synagog on grand occasions. It is twenty-one inches high to the hook at the top of the chain of silver, parcel gilt, of the 16th century, of good conque-cento design [sketch]. There are Hebrew letters on it, and it is altogether a handsome thing, of peculiar character. The great Hebrew roll of Parham will feel very proud when he has it hung round his old brown shoulders. I am looking out for the two silver ornaments, with bells, which go upon the sticks, on the top of the Torah or Penteteuch. Did you ever see one of those MSS. with all its clothes and ornaments on? It has a very strange, original appearance.

The waters here would be of great service to you. They would suit your case exactly, I should imagine. We remain a week longer and then, I believe, go to Schlangenbad-Nassau. Pray write there to yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon
260. No address.

Schlangenbad-Nassau, 15 August 1856

My dear Sneyd,

Divers passages in your letter put me on the tenterhooks of expectation, as to what is going to happen in your case. Pray write again, and tell me how it all is. I congratulate you much on the Duke of Hamilton's very ducal present of that little book, which of its size and kind I think is the finest book I ever saw, and is a wonderful addition to your treasures. Indeed one does not meet with such little tomes as that, now a days, nor indeed with presents of that sort of value and interest. Douglas is a generous fellow. He gave me a set of studs when we were at Oxford together, I have them on at this moment, and have worn them nearly every day, for five and twenty years, so that was a useful present as well as an ornamental one, and except for my natural follies and shortcomings, there is nothing that I have had so constantly about me as these little studs.

We went the other day to Maintz, where I saw a most wonderful curiosity, being a great part of Guttemberg's original printing press, with his initials J.G. and the date 1441. It was found on Easter eve this year in the cellar of his house, now a public beer shop, by workmen who were enlarging the vaults. Eight pieces of stone for rubbing down the printer's ink were found with it. A French gent offered £1,000 for it, but I hope it will remain where it is, "In alma civitate Moguntina".

1. It was not genuine.
There is a certain Jew at Frankfort, Mr Lowenstein, who deals in curiosities, and has the most beautiful cinque cento plate, almost worth Douglas's while to run up the Rhine to see, and get it — only it is awfully dear. I have got some lovely old silver gilt jewelry from him. Then there are two churches in the primaeval villiage of Kidrick close by here, which are stunners, one is ruined, but the other has all manner of Gothic fittings, candlesticks, benches, chandeliers, altar pieces &c., &c., all about 1450 to 1490, and the rich flamboyant Gothic, intricate and delicate to a degree. It looks as if it had never been touched since about 1520, and as if no churchwarden had ever been near it. I intend to go there again and rout out the priest, to see if the first Psalter is not to be found in the sacristy, in an old cupboard, full of reliquaries, in enamelled silver. The door of the said sacristy, of most elaborate iron hinge work, was locked, with a great Gothic padlock, which looks as if there was something worth taking care of inside. For its size it is the most beautiful old church I ever saw. The ruined one is like the Sainte Chapelle, with an oriel window at the end, of which the stone tracery is as rich as wood work. I wish you could see these wonderful old buildings.

Ever yours affect[ionately],

R. Curzon

I met Miss Pechell¹ here the other day, and Lady Caroline.²

1. Henrietta Katherine, shortly (26 August) to marry Percy Burrell (see p. 195, n. 2 above).
2. Not identified.
50 Berkley Square, 27 August 1856

My dear Sneyd,

This is the sixth happy anniversary of my marriage day, you may remember how pretty and rural that wedding was, at Croxal Church. God make me thankfull for the great blessing which that day brought upon me. I hope your married life may be as happy as mine has been, and your fortunes more prosperous than mine.

We came over from Calais to Dover last Friday, to be in time for the marriage of Henrietta Pechell and Percy Burrell. It went off very well, yesterday, and is a great match for both parties as far as the prospect of future wealth is concerned. The only person of my acquaintance whom I have seen in London is your brother, whose munificence is astounding. I am really surprized and do not understand it, with £20,000 a year, however these are not things to write about. Tell me more about your affairs, when and where is your marriage to take place, &c., &c., &c.

The Burrells are gone to Parham, my parents follow them there on Saturday, giving them only three days to themselves. They have no feelings but I could not interfere; they never told me that they had asked the Burrells to go to Parham, a curious way of doing things altogether. Emily was not able to come to the wedding, being knocked up with our rough sea passage, where we had a good deal too much of the spray of the sea.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Curzon has written 'the spray of the sea' in Greek.
Aunt Eliz sends you her kind regards. I return to Catton this afternoon. I left it on Monday. Emily and I went down on Saturday and found our little Robin in great force, and Lady Horton full of kindness and good will. Pray write to me there.

Do you take your bride to the Abbey, or where?

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon
Gandermass day - Catton, 29 September 1856

My dear Sneyd,

Nothing that lies in my power shall prevent my being present at the Halter, on Tuesday the 14th of October - Where is St Peter's church, Eaton Square? I must make out the situation of that conventicle, to be sure that I don't go to the wrong one. Item, where shall you be the day before the awful ceremony, as I should like to see the last of you before you are married, and done for? I am sorry that your father-in-law has given you that old cup because I had intended doing so myself, so now I must look out for another gimcrack. How very magnificent Lady Waldegrave and Louis Sneyd have been towards you, I hope you have restored the painted glass to Strawberry Hill, as it is to be inhabited...

1. Lady Waldegrave, as we know (see p. cvi above) lent Sneyd and his bride Strawberry Hill for their honeymoon. Lewis Sneyd was Sneyd's cousin, and a Fellow (1809-27) and subsequently Warden of All Souls'. What his gift was is not known. He died in 1858.

2. According to memoranda (see p. xxviii above) among the Sneyd Papers, two stained glass windows, still to be seen at Keele Hall, came from Strawberry Hill, an assertion which this comment would appear to bear out.
My dear Sneyd,

I believe a wedding gift ought to be ornamental and not useful, the latter quality will be perfectly exemplified in the dish which I send you, with my most sincere good wishes. I am on my way to Parham. I return on Monday evening, so that I fear I shall hardly meet you again before the Awful sacrifice... .
My dear Sneyd,

I have been charmed to hear that your honey moon is passing in perfect happiness, which I sincerely hope may long continue. I send this to your sister's, because I do not know whether you have left Strawberry Hill or not, the important part of my letter is to beg you to tell Mrs Dunn\(^1\) to write to my wife, and to say where she is, as we do not know anything of her whereabouts, and possibly may want her before December, but as my parents never tell us their plans, we do not know when they intend to leave this place, and consequently we do not know when we shall want Mrs Dunn.

Emily and I gave up Tabley and Eaton and came here in a hurry, leaving little Robin at Catton, on hearing that my father had had an attack of paralysis - We were never informed of this till my brother and his wife, who had been sent for, wrote to me from Parham. My father, who is almost as well as ever, was very glad to see us, but my mother, who is in a sad state of irritation, continues to make our stay most disagreeable. It is only the strongest sense of duty that keeps me here. The rooms which we had made so nice have all been altered, and all sorts of rubishy furniture brought in, so that they look quite crazy and foolish, but you can't think how good and kind my poor wife is, under continual provocation -

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1. Came to Curzon from Sneyd, as housekeeper.
With my kindest remembrances to Mrs Sneyd,

I am, ever affect[ionately] yours,

R. Curzon

If you write to me, be carefull to put a visible Junior on the direction.
Parham, 9 December 1856

My dear Sneyd,

Well, here comes a letter. I was glad to see yours, so now I will begin by an historical essay on the merits of Mrs Dunn - Mrs Dunn has merits, she makes puddings undeniable, and a fowl and a mutton she doeth remarkably - but there it ends, she doesn’t know any more. She never made a jelly, and she never gave a dinner with four entrées in each course. This somewhat dismays me, but I hope we shall manage. My place is one which no professed artist would take, because when my ancestors arrive here every thing is placed topsyturvy. In a moment right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right, disorder reigns supreme. My father paid for 374lbs of butcher’s meat, for the last week he was here, [with] about twenty-four servants. This besides game, venison, fish &c&c. Now this example is ruin to carefull housekeepers. Mrs Dunn has been taken as cook and housekeeper, but she knows nothing about desert-ices, taking care of a large house, &c. This is a fearfull business, for she marches before my wife’s maid, who is a superior little body, and who understands all nice things, can put pretty flowers on the table, arrange bonbons and "sotelties", and now, I fear, we cannot make her march before Mrs Dunn, who is in a blessed state of ignorance about such exalted forms of cury. Nevertheless Mrs Dunn is a good woman and seems to wish to succeed, so I trust we shall do, only it will be with trouble.

I had written you another side of paper, which I have torn up -

I wish I could see you and your wife, I beg pardon, your wife and you, in the Ash Parlour together. I wonder how you get on. How I should like to peep at you. I hope you have Lady Horton's glass, on Mrs WS's
toilette. How do you feel now you are a married man? What do you talk about together, what new schemes do you expound? We are far asunder, I shall never know, but I shall not feel the less interest, and good will, ever towards you and yours. Your prospects are far better than mine, and you don't know what it is to be subject to those who fill your soul with terror, whereas I trust that prosperity and good fortune are in your path.

We are expecting a curious party here at Xmas, Armenians and strange birds, whose coming frightens my dear old wife awfully. I hope Lady Horton will come to support her fainting powers. There are 1 a Turkish and an Armenian lady coming (tho' in Frank petticoats), but whose ideas to an English lady will appear miraculous. The fact is that if they came in their original trousers of gold brocade, and velvet jackets covered with seed - or seedy - pearls, they would be much more amusing and interesting than they are likely to be now, in what is called in the Levant 'à la Franca' gowns.

The collection of gimcracks has increased mightily. I have got a new helmet, such as you never saw in the flesh but only in an illumination. A base man of belial here said it looked like an old rush light, and so it does to a degree. Howbeit, Richard queu de lion wore such an other. [Sketch]. Its value is prodigious, and I gave 111! Then I have heard of a casket having arrived in England for me - such a box, meus occulus, my dear Sneyd, it is as big as a small portmanteau, in which our other shirt might be packed, and it is black wood (not ebony) but pretending to be ebony, nearly covered with silver bas reliefs, of Italian cinque cento work. I saw it some time ago at Frankfort, and soon hope to be the happy

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1. Curzon was undecided whether to write 'is' or 'are'.
possessor. I have nearly completed a catalogue of these sort of things, it is rather amusing to read, many of the objects having such curious histories. The men of Manchester have applied, but I do not want to send things which will not be appreciated to that horrid den of smoke, tyranny and vulgarity. I know what my things are, the Manchester school don't—they would value such works of art according to the wealth (not rank) of those who sent them, they could not understand the things themselves. The chieftest of these gimcracks, however, is my little Robin, who I think is the dearest of little cubs, and when he puts his arms round my neck and looks at me with loving eyes, I feel that God has blessed me in him more than I deserve, for I am happy at any rate, with my wife and him. Commend me to Mrs Sneyd.

Ever yours,

R. Curzon
Parham, 8 March 1857

My dear Sneyd,

I believe for once you are right, and that I do owe you a letter. The fact is, that tho’ I like writing to you as a general rule; as a particular one, I don’t like writing at all. My pens don’t spell well, some of them can’t write in any respectable way, witness the present example, and as for crossing ts, and putting in stops, they can’t do it for the money, but they are goose’s quills, and I can’t get on with a steel pen.

I met your sister Charlotte at Bedegbury, and she told me Mrs S. was not quite well, a piece of news which I hope is of great importance in the history of the Sneyd family. I am sure you have my sincere good wishes and hopes, and I trust I may hear something interesting from you on the subject, some of these days.

I have been in London, where I naturally got a little gimcrack or chattel, of which I send you a very rough sketch [enclosed], the size of the original. It is of silver filigree florid Gothic, about the year 1450. It is so very elaborate that it would take me hours to draw it properly, I have never seen so beautifull a thing of its kind. The little Gothic hinges and hasp are silver gilt, and the workmanship very peculiar, for the filigree is stuck on to a flat silver plate, in bas relief. In London I dined so much that I am rather seedy in consequence, from the effect of Grillon’s, and a dinner at the Clarendon, by Beriah Botfield,¹ to twenty of us. I should think he did not get off much under £100. What a much better use might be made of such a sum, in charity, gimcracks or other

¹ (1807-63), collector, sometime M.P. for Ludlow, member of, amongst other societies and clubs, the Philobiblon Society and the Roxburghe. A Christ Church man, he was a few years senior to Curzon.
good works.

I am sorry, very sorry, to hear a bad account of poor Delamere's eyes. De Tabley seems particularly flourishing, as usual. They say Lord Talbot\(^1\) gives up his claims on the Shrewsbury estates, is this true? Now, who is nearest of kin to the late Ld. Scarsdale? Is it Lady Noel Byron, an important question, £160,000 depending on it. He said he would remember my father &c., yet they have produced no will. The whole history is full of mystery and romance. I wonder what will turn up.

We go to Hagley on the 16th to attend on my father, who is however very well. I dread going there, there is so little sympathy with me, and no pleasing prospect to dwell upon, a sad business altogether. We are very snug here. Mrs Dunn has roasted the snipes wonderfully, but she has no head, and I rather grudge her board wages. She can not learn any thing, and our last cook was a greater genius than she. I have only sent one large picture to Manchester, because I do not believe they know anything about the matter. It is all for the benefit of the hotel keepers. Ye man of Manchester is a Snobbe, he believes in nothing but cash. He hath worse than no taste, he hath bad taste, he is a vulgar Snobbe. My best things also are of intrinsic value; not the sort of things to be bandied about. They might be stolen and they won't insure, and the good taste of Manchester is so very inferior to that of even savage nations, that I consider it nonsense sending them anything beautiful, tho' they might appreciate things of great rarity, merely because they now sell for no end of money.

Ever yours,

R. Curzon

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1. See p. 36, n. 3 above.
My dear Sneyd,

I suppose you are gone to the Duc d'Aumale's. I am sorry not to go too, for besides being a prince he is the most intelligent man of the Club, and knows more about books and pictures, and what is what, than most of us.

I dare say you are very snug in the Abbey in the midst of your flowers. We never had such fine roses before, either quantity or quality, and the garden is in great beauty, tho' most of the said roses are over. We have been to Brighton for change of air, and returned here last Saturday. We have been in many troubles, and now have two servants unwell. Mrs Dunn is utterly unfit for her place. She says that you said that my establishment was much the same as yours, and that we never saw any company. She seems to have no head, or memory, and does not even understand weights and measures. How do you manage at the Abbey? Do you take whatever the butcher sends you, without weighing the meat, and whatever the gardener sends in, without enquiring what is in season, or what there is, and if so be as you do? When do you retire to Her Majesty's Bench? We find weekly bills are articles which require considerable looking after.

I have been to London twice lately, what a wonderful enamelled pot Mary Q. of Scotts gave to I forget who. £2,000 has been offered for it, tho' I should think that must have been a swagger on the part of the gent, who knew it would not be sold. A crosier by the same workman is in the

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1. Henri Eugène Phillippe Louis d'Orléans, Duc d'Aumale (1822-97), fourth son of Louis Phillippe. A professional soldier but also a man of wide cultural interests. From 1848 until the end of the Franco-Prussian war he lived at Orleans House, Twickenham. He succeeded Prince Albert as Patron of the Philobiblon Society, of which, like Curzon, he was one of the original members.
Meyrick collection. ¹ Did you get any wonderfull things while you was in London? With kind regards to Mrs Sneyd,

I am,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

My black seal is for Sir Robert Bromley.

¹ Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783-1848), an authority on armour.
Hagley, 20 March 1858

My dear Sneyd,

I returned here from Teddesley¹ on Wednesday, and yesterday I met George Gooch playing billiards with Mr Sneyd. Gooch told me that you are again suffering from boils, which I am very sorry to hear. The only thing likely to do you good is to go to the right bathing place in Germany, not to the wrong one which would probably kill you, an event which I do not wish for, since you have taken up with the young woman, to whom you intend to leave the gimcracks and old books, which she can't read (any more than I can). I congratulate you on the Warden's legacy,² have you bought a wonderfull antiquity with it yet? I am glad he left your poor brother £200, as it will enable him to pay you a year's allowance without distress. I trust you will look with admiration on the strength of my forbearance, not to say exalted virtue, when I tell you that I have not bought a blessed gimcrack this year.

I don't know what to do about going to Paris, the English are looked upon with so much suspicion and hatred because the Italians try to blow up the Emperor.³ I have no zeal for London, in an hotel or lodging house, and perhaps shall subside into Parham, where I wish your wife and you would come in the fine weather, on your way to or from Germany.

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1. Teddesley Hall, seat of Lord Hatherton, approximately five miles south of Stafford, on the western fringe of Cannock Chase.

2. Lewis Sneyd (c.1788-1858), Warden of All Souls, left Sneyd £500, out of a total of some £45,000. Sneyd to his brother, Denton, [25 February 1858]. S.P.

3. The attempted assassination of 14 January. The fact that Orsini, the Italian, and his three confederates set out from England and used English bombs caused some feeling.
I feel the loss of poor old Parker very much. I owe him all that love for the arts and antiquities which has been so great a resource to me during many sad years of my life. He used to be a great acquisition here, where we are now leading a forlorn existence, much relieved however by the capers of Robin, who don't care a farthing for any body, and seems an incarnation of happiness and enjoyment, for which I hope God sees my thankfulness.

Being basically a Tory, I have given various hints as to the benefits which would accrue to at least one of that party, by giving me one of the numerous little places about the Court, which are provided by the British constitution for the cousins of great people. I am only second cousin, unluckily, to some of the great officers of state, so of course I have no chance till their first cousins are provided, and my distinguished merits are passed over accordingly. Now I don't see why I should go on caring for any set of people who don't care for me (while I want to be cared for), and I should not be surprised if I was to find myself making a speech the other way some day, when I am independant, if that ever happens, for I do not believe that one party can govern the country better than another now a days, when parliament stands in the way of everything which is not supported by a popular cry, but I did not intend to get into a political tirade.

Tell me about your plans. We are going to Merevale on Easter Monday, for a week, and then shall be going southwards. I hope the railway will be finished to Parham by the end of this year, which will be a great event. Do think about Germany, I am sure sourcrout and hot water would just suit your case. With kind regards to Mrs S.,

I am,

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. See pp. 96, n.1.
My dear Sneyd,

I have been going to write to you for some days but my natural antipathy to pen and ink has kept me from doing so. I have heard of a very simple cure for sciatica which has done a deal of good to various unfortunate hobblers. You must get a piece of new flannel, and steep it in spirits of turpentine, lay it on the place, and keep it there, as long as you can bear it, but don't take the skin off. When you remove it, place a clean piece of new flannel without turpentine over the limb, and keep it there, to prevent catching cold, sew it into your drawers is a good way. If you are not cured the first time try it every day and it will probably do you a very great deal of good. Item, are you aware that pain, and particularly gouty pain, is much relieved by applying a handful of the undressed wool of a black sheep? White wool has some effect, but not so much as black. I have seen this done. Dressed wool is of no use whatever. Your best plan is to tell Tummas to catch a sheep and cut a piece of wool off his back in a clean place, and make him hunt out the varmint before he brings it in -

I am sorry to say I can not make any plans. My parents think of coming to Parham to live there. I fear it would be impossible to live with them, everything relating to them is, and long has been, very distressing, I am quite worn out with their troubles and don't know what in the world to do. We go to Parham today, where I hope to remain in peace for a short time, till I know what my parents are going to do. I think it not impossible that Emily, Robin and I may be driven abroad altogether - God only knows.

Well, my old friend, I hope these prescriptions may be of service, they
can do no harm. Remember me kindly to Mrs S., and believe me,

Affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon
Parham, 13 July 1858

My dear Sneyd,

You seem to have made a very prosperous trip, and I envy you your expedition to Dresden, where the glories of the Green Vault\(^1\) will astonish you, if you have not seen them before. The picture gallery also is as fine as any in existence. The armour, coaches, prints, china and books (the psalter on vellum) are most wonderfull collections.

The name of the extortioner at Frankfort is Löwenstein, he lives in the Zeil, nearly opposite the Hotel de Russie. He is one of the great dealers in old and modern antique plate, now perhaps the greatest in Europe. He is a very gentlemanlike man, and his wife quite a lady. His younger brother is a sharper hand, and his wife a pretty Shebrew. They have superb things, but sell them directly to dealers, for immense prices. The Frankfort Rothschild has a fine collection of gimcracks.

I have a sad account to give of myself. My father has, after spending nobody knows how, every thing he can get hold of, been obliged to give up Hagley. My parents are coming here in a few days, they pay me a small sum to keep them. My brother has got into another scrape, and has more in prospect. My mother's want of sympathy (and my father's) and the ruin which my father has so deliberately brought upon me, has worried me into a fever. I was very ill a little while ago, but am now recovered, tho' I fear to

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1. A room in the Royal Palace, rebuilt in 1534, so named from the character of the original decorations, it contained a collection of precious stones, ivories and other objets d'art.
live with my parents under such dreadful circumstances will be a heavy
trial for Emily and me. All my friends have been very kind to me. Ld. Howe
has been of essential service in saving a large sum of money – this is a
great consolation. But all this is hard to bear, and it is only the
strongest sense of duty which keeps me here to submit to such proceedings.

I was the other day at Up Park,\(^1\) I have seldom seen such fine things
as there are there, such old plate, one dish I think beats or equals mine,
and at least fifty pieces of Sevre China, seven or eight sets of vases, of
the finest kind, worth from one to two thousand the set; Buhl furniture of
the real sort, Chelsea and other china &c., &c., besides pictures and
tapestry, and hardly one little shabby thing in the house, the value must
be portentous.

I hope Mrs S. is quite well. I am sorry your sciatica still troubles
you. I hope you will stay at the baths long enough, for you know that these
water cures are of no avail (for good) if you do not carry them out to the
full extent.

Ever yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

You see Miss Jones Loyd\(^2\) is to marry Robert Lindsay, Mrs Holford’s\(^3\)
younger brother. The brother and sister have done pretty well, in the way
of cash.

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1. Or Uppark, Harting, Sussex, at this time the property of Mary Anne,
daughter of William Bullock of Hastings, married, 1825, Sir Harry
Fetherstonhaugh Bt. He died in 1847.

2. Col. Robert James Lindsay, V.C. (1832-1901), 2nd son of Lt.-Gen. James
Lindsay (1793-1855), married 17 November 1858 Harriet Sarah, daughter
of Samuel Jones (Loyd), Baron Overstone. He later became Lord Wantage.

3. Mary Anne, married in 1854 Robert Stanyer Holford (see p. 121, n. 2
above).
My dear Sneyd,

What a nice old place Melbourne must be, and how you have been rampaging about. However, I have been anything but quiet myself, and here followeth my history. About a month ago I was summoned by telegraph to London, to see my aunt, who was supposed to be dying, but she is much better and may go on for any indefinite time. I fell ill, Lady Horton came to Town and Emily came up too, to see me. My father had promised to settle Hagley on me, saddled with a sum for Edward's fortune amounting almost to the whole value thereof. I was glad of this, because if it is not settled he or Edward is likely to get rid of it altogether. My mother says that I have behaved very ill to Edward, and that Hagley and everything that my father possesses ought to be left to him, disinheriting me entirely. The last hitch is that my father refuses to make any settlement and the whole affair is so strange and unnatural, and is so astoundingly stupid, and inexpedient, that I do not know what to do. It will probably end in my making my bow to my family and going abroad in the spring -

Well then, we sent for Robin from Parham, and went with Lady Horton to Dover for a fortnight, to the Lord Warden hotel, for a change of air, and came up here the day before yesterday. We think of returning to Parham on Monday. Nothing can be kinder than Lady Horton, and it grieves me that my wife should be tormented with the ruinous and unreasonable conduct of my parents and my brother, who have made such a sorrow where none need exist.

Now as touching gimcracks, I got one of those common old brass dishes the other day, with Adam and Eve on it, but with the date 1571, 1417,
very grim - Item, I had an agate cup mounted in Gothic silver gilt, but with a later leg. I have got a later cup and an older leg, so made two. The Gothic one now is one of the finest I know of, about 1490, nearly a foot and $\frac{1}{2}$ high, a splendid gimcrack. Item, some very unusual apostle spoons. Item, Kip's views, with Audley End, &c., large paper, a mighty tome, I believe entirely right. The most curious thing is, that while some of my family are cantering down the road to ruin, with nothing to show for it, I buy things of considerable value, and do not run out at all.

I should much like to see your last acquisitions, but fear it is not very likely at present, unless I could run down some day. My wife joins in kindest regards to Mrs S.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

1. Johannes Kip (1653-1722), *Britannia Illustrata: or, Views of several of the Royal Palaces as also of the principal seats of the Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain...*, 1720.
Parham, 27 September 1859

My dear Sneyd,

Who is the man you told me of, who cleans and repairs old armour? Can you give me his direction? I have an old shirt, and a pair of stockings to mend, of chain mail, they are oldish clothes, as the party who wore them died in 1190.

What have you been doing? How are you off for bowels? Mine are none the better for the mushrooms I put into them at dinner, yesterday. I hope the Buxton waters have washed some of the pisin out of you, and set you up a bit for the present. The worst of it is, one never does get any younger, under a Whig government.

I am in treaty for a house in London, a serious undertaking. Lady Horton is so good as to help us in it, and as she lives with us in London, we want rather a large house. I expect to hear towards the end of this week, whether I get the said house or not.

How is Mrs S.? I have got several new gimcracks, one or two beautiful bits of plate, for which I am visited with condign punishment, by the dragon who watches over my aberrations in that line. I wish you would come and back me up; one wants support when a big box arrives from Town sometimes, and particularly when it contains what is properly called, old rubbish, but there are some very wicked people in this world.

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon
301. No address.

31 Hertford Street, Mayfair,
26 March 1860

My dear Sneyd,

I confess my remissness in writing to thank you for the solemn picture that you sent me on the 16th, ten days ago; it was a remarkable work of art, only too true to be pleasant. In your quotation from Horace, I think you made a mistake in calling me Mecaenas, Atavis would be more appropriate to such an Olde aunciente fader as I am –

The reason why I have not written is because I left Parham on the 15th, my Mrs met me here on the 16th, from Catton, and ever since we have taken up our residence in Hansom Cabs and scattering our cash all over the town in furniture for 24 Arlington St., which is now full of bricklayers, carpenters, plasterers and glaziers, et hoc genus omne. It is a terrible business to pay hundreds of pounds for rush bottomed chairs, wash handstands and kitchen dressers. However, we have some fun in poking about Wardour St. and other places, for something more in our line. I have got a cabinet to put gimcracks in, seven feet three wide, and eight feet six high, as big as the front of a small house, of black Bnhul, the Mrs consenting on condition that I was not to buy any more old rubbish to fill it, so we went on to Willson's,¹ and in half an hour's time we both together invested in an image by Luca della Robbia, to put into the big ark, and we quarrel fiercely about looking glasses, and sofas, and then order both of them at Mr Wright's,² where I am going again today, after lunch. Mr Wright's brother told me how he cured himself of sciatica, which I forward for your edification, viz. put plenty of flowers of

¹. Probably Samuel Willson, dealer in curiosities, 393 Strand.
². Not identifiable.
sulphur between two pieces of new flannel, and apply it to your fundament, or wherever the pain is, keep your bowels open, and the sciatica will depart.

We lost several trees at Parham in the storm, some very high poplars I fear will be missed. It was snowing here half an hour ago, now the sun shines, there is to be a storm this week and another in the second week of April, and then a very hot summer, so look out. Remember me kindly to Mrs WS.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

This house is lent us by Lady Byron, we remain here till Saturday, or peradventure till Tuesday or Wednesday in next week.
My dear Sneyd,

I have been going to and fro in the earth, backwards and forwards, to London, about my house, which seems never likely to be finished, and time passes, the London season is going by, and I am not giving or receiving indigestions as people do, at this time of the year. We are living really in the slough of dispond here, whenever there is a chance of anything going wrong, the wrong takes place, and when there is a chance in the right direction it generally slips by. We see nobody for nobody will come to see such wretched folks as we are, and I feel sometimes inclined to sit upon my tail and howl, it is so stupid and dismal.

We have a rifle corps, which seems popular among the Storrington men of war, indeed the Parham corps is one of the best in this part of the world. As it is an institution of my own making I am interested in it and wish it every success. I have got good officers and it might be rather a proud affair under other circumstances. We consider ourselves infinitely superior to the wealthy armies of Arundel and Petworth, who I dare say despise us, for such is human-natur.

To my great astonishment Emily is going to produce (please God) another little Curzon, after eight years' consideration, not at present, however, or for some months, but this prevents her from going to Keddleston, for a christening of an other Curzonet, to which I am to be godfather [on the 15th] I wish Em could go, as I have an antient, oldfashioned respect for the head of my house, and shall be glad to see those stately rooms, the grandest I have seen in England, properly inhabited - whether that is the case, however, remains to be seen -
My father is grown rather old within the last five or six months; he is carried up and down stairs in a chair of wonderful construction, which takes three men; my mother, who used to be all day long lying on the sofa, now runs about incessantly, she is never still, up stairs, and down stairs, and in my Ladies' chamber, she wanders without rest, but there is no sympathy with me or mine. Robin most fortunately don't care a rap, climbs up trees, rides a frisky little poney, jumps on my back, and has it all his own way, and yet is never naughty or tiresome, and is the ray of light in this dark house.

Now, I have told you enough about myself, because you abused me for not doing so before. I do not do so on principle, for no one cares to be bored about other people's concerns, when they are neither amusing or agreeable.

I must tell you one thing more, we are awfully disappointed about our parson, who I have unluckily engaged as tutor to Robin for a year, six months of which are nearly gone. He has no notion of undertaking the duties of a parish, goes away every week, won't be troubled with the poor, and is a failure altogether. If he does not reform I shall show myself to him in a light which he does not expect. It annoys me to keep on familiar terms with a man who has forfeited my respect.

Are you going to London? Pray tell me when, and where you will be. I saw Shirley the other day in Town, what a good old fellow he is. Albert Way is going abroad, the Duke of Hamilton has broken his leg, I wonder how he managed it. The Duke of Norfolk is making a map of Arundel Castle, with an architect who is ignorant and unworthy, a sad pity in a castle of such historical interest –

Remember me kindly to Mrs S., I hope I shall see her again some day, and write me an epistle to Kedleston, Derby.
Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
Plate XIX. Curzon and Robin, studio portrait, C. Pilvy, 38 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater, W., undated; Lady Wilmot-Horton, studio portrait, Mons. Charles, 2 Midland Road, Derby, undated.

Reproduced by permission of Mr D.W.H. Neilson, from an album at Catton Hall.
My dear Sneyd,

I have been very seedy and am still rather in the same case. I have been up and down and returned here yesterday, the weather is enough to make a dog sick. I hope you will continue to get better. I feel very sorry for myself.

The scrimmage going on in this house almost rivals the row outside, of carriages, &c. in Piccadilly. I never thought of that when I took the house, and hope I may get accustomed to it, but now that I am not very well it worries me sadly. The scrimmage aforesaid, however, inside, is very amusing, it is such an excuse for going to all the curiosity shops, to look for something useful as well as ornamental, and there is room for much outlay of genius and cash here, the house being quite un-commonplace. In about a week it will be fit to be seen, so pray come and see. We have only two chairs now, but we shall have two more by that time, for Mrs S. and you. I have lost your letter, so I hope you will get mine in course of time. I have forgotten the name of your house, but so celebrated an antiquarian is sure to be known in your island.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

I have found your letter. I do not know that Mr Beck has any authority at the Archaeo, but I imagine they are only too glad if anybody will do anything. They had a very curious show of old plate last week.

Have you any new gimcracks?

Kedleston is the finest palace that I know in England after Blenheim, even there there is nothing to compare with the hall and saloon at Kedleston. They do not know how to live in it. My room was about four hundred feet from my servant's room, by the kitchen — they do not use the bedrooms in the centre of the house, which are excellent. I was on the ground floor in the wing, where I suppose I got a chill. The pictures are very fine indeed, there are ten worth certainly more than £10,000. They use the dining and drawing room, called the Musick Room, so the distances are tremendous. They should live in the house and shut up the wing where they do live.
305. No address, no salutation.

24 Arlington Street, 9 July 1860

Hullo! My dear Sneyd, why this is a pretty business. What are you gone away for? and I have not even had one prowl with you, about the purlieus of Grub Street and Gimcrack Row. Now when you come to Town again, do take up your abode a little nearer Wardour St., because my going down in a cab to Belgravia after luncheon some day, is a mere ceremony to leave cards, that is what wives are for, for any practical purpose I might just as well stay at home, and I have at present so many little occupations that it is a waste of time travelling into those unknown districts for such an inane purpose.

You might have come to luncheon here any day, if you had been in the humour for an inroad on the curiosity shops.

Emily has been very ill. I hope she has really turned the corner, poor old woman, but she is still in bed up stairs.

Sir G. Pechall is dead. He continually told me, ever since his poor son died, that he considered me as his son, and that he had made me his heir. I understand he has not left me a shilling. Only think what a catastrophe this might have been, if I had trusted to his word. Nature has provided me with some very curious relations –

Ever yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

Ain't you coming up again some day? I may have a room for you, but there is not one yet.
My dear Sneyd,

I am glad to hear that Buxton has done you good, I heard from Lady W Horton that you was there, and that poor Lady Williams¹ is also mending, through the agency of the baths and waters.

I hope I may see Keel some day, I dare say it is a very proud edifice,² and all the things which your brother has been collecting for so many years will make a great show, if they are set up in order, and utilized, before we are all dead and buried. I often reflect on my own collections. If they never are put in a row, so as to show what it all means, my posterity will wonder at the immense quantity of rubbish, and odds and ends, that were got together, by an idiot of an ancestor in the old time, and will thank somebody who will cart away whole heaps of things which would have been very interesting if they had ever been properly arranged, to illustrate the art of writing or the progress of inventions for defending ourselves against our enemies by shields and swords, after they had been properly set against us, by that much more terrible weapon, that comes out of a goose's wing.

Here I am, living in a house that would delight you. Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh lived to put all his gimcracks in their right places, and nothing can be more perfect than the suite of seven rooms, all in

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1. Not identified.
2. Keele Hall was rebuilt between 1855 and approximately 1860, by Salvin and Ralph Sneyd, but the decoration of the rooms went on for some years after the latter date.
perfect keeping, of the year 1790, à la Louis XVI. Such furniture! Right old Buhl and marqueterie, such Sevres vases and old Chelsea, such splendid old plate, always used every day, and four sideboards of gold plate from the year 1500 to Queen Anne, which are always displayed and have never been moved, I believe, since they were placed where they are, very many years ago.

Then Lady Fetherston is such a dear little woman, so clever and pretty and well dressed, and such a capital hostess, and a famous cook, quite perfection altogether, and such a magnificent place, fit for any duke or prince.

I rode about the hills yesterday, with the Bishop of Oxford, and Knox, who wrote that amusing book, on birds, and, Lord! to see what a man to ride, is that high priest. We gallopped about from soon after eleven till a quarter to six. Knox was knocked up, and I had no sleep last night, and the Bishop had not half enough, and could have ridden six hours more, and liked it all the better. I rode one of his horses, I enquired about the poor beast, and the groom said he was 'middling' this morning, however he is off again. The Bishop was in the saddle at eleven, and is to ride home to Lavington, about sixteen miles, only I suppose he will go round thirty-two more on the way, just for a little exercise, and he will have confirmed and preached at Hurst Pierpoint, Brighton, Canterbury and I don't know where else before a week is over. I don't think that whenever a new patent steam bishop is invented and set a going, that they will get more out of him than what S. OXON does, without any stoker or poker to keep him up to his work.

We go to Town on the 1st of November, more or less, and the great event

1. Mary Anne, eldest daughter of William Bullock esq., of Hastings, married in 1825 Sir H. Fetherstonhaugh Bt., who died in 1847.
3. Probably A.E. Knox, author of Ornithological Rambles in Sussex (1849), Game Birds and Wildfowl (1850), etc.
is expected towards the end of the month, so we shall be there till Xmas or later, I imagine. I hope we may meet in the winter. We return to Parham on Friday. My father has consented to have the Hall warmed with hot water, which I hope will save our lives. My mother is much grieved, I do not precisely understand why, for she suffered from the cold as much as any one.

With kind remembrances to Mrs Sneyd, I am

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

Pray remember me to Col. Gooch,¹ and to George² if he is at Melbourne, what an interesting old place that must be.

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¹ Lt.-Col. Henry Edward Gooch (1793-1867), brother of the Rev. Frederick Gooch of Baginton (see p. liii above).
² Probably Major George Cecil Gooch (1832-98), son of the Rev. William Gooch (1798-1876). He was a first cousin twice removed of Col. Gooch.
Parham, 16 November 1860

My dear Sneyd,

On Sunday last my poor dear wife was taken with a most awful attack of headache, ending in convulsions and insensibility. I have seen many horrors, but to witness the fearful state of one so much loved was almost too much to bear. On Tuesday evening she was prematurely delivered of a little girl. Both are now doing as well as can be hoped for, after so horrible a catastrophe. I feel as if I had been torn to pieces and badly put together again. By the mercy of God we may hope that my poor wife may recover. She, poor thing, does not know what happened on Sunday and Monday and we, of course, dare not say anything.

In the middle of this we hear, not from my brother, that his son George has sold out of the Rifles, some manoeuvre that I do not understand, but which undoubtedly is the forerunner of some new distress. My mother says she knows nothing about it, but as she tries to prevent my speaking to my father, I suppose there is something that I shall hear of in due time, which I cannot expect to be satisfactory.

Well, my old friend, I hope you may not be subjected to the sorrows inflicted by Providence, or the annoyances brought on the the injudicious conduct of relatives, that I have had to undergo for years, past, present and to come.

In the settlements made at my marriage my father disinherited my daughters, and now that I have a little girl I feel the more that injury, incomprehensible to the lawyers as much as to myself.

1. Single word struck out.
With every good wish for the prosperity of yourself, your wife and child, I am

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
Parham, 28 November 1860

My dear Sneyd,

I am sorry to say I am by no means rid of my anxiety about my poor dear wife yet, she has had some terrible headaches and is not well. Please God care and time may carry her through. The little girl is as well as can be expected under such circumstances.

Tho' I have seen many horrors in my life, and death of all sorts and kinds, I never knew what it was to see the terrible sufferings of one I love so dearly as my poor wife. The sight of her convulsions and her heavenly patience and innocent looks have been almost too much for me. Unluckily my Erzeroom illness has left my brain more sensitive than other people's, and I suffer very much indeed.

Today Robin is not well, I hope the doctor will set him right again.

Lady Horton is a much bolder man than I am, and she says of course women are ill - always are, &c., and she went back to London yesterday, to my sorrow, for her cheerful view of things comforted me, and I think poor Emily too. However, we are in the hands of the Almighty and must not repine, tho' I feel it very difficult to bear as I ought to do.

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon
My dear Sneyd,

A merry Xmas and a happy new year to Mrs S. and you. We got here on Tuesday last, without any misfortune, and are going on in a middling sort of way, neither Emily or Baby are quite well, and I sleep so badly that I am broken down with anxiety and want of rest. I have had a great shock, which I shall not recover in a hurry, and which has left an impression of horror on my mind not readily to be effaced. I am glad we have got here, however, where we can expect to see the face of a friend sometimes, and amuse ourselves a little.

All the Edwards are going to Farham as soon as our backs are turned. A great event has happened there, in the house having been warmed with hot water, it is now as warm and genial as can be wished, without being stuffy, a wonderful improvement in this cold weather. The frost and snow are dismal in London; it prevents one getting about and hearing what is going on.

I cannot say how grieved I am at the savage Frenchmen and English too, having sacked the Pallace at Pekin. They have no doubt destroyed things of inestimable value, and interest; we have no right to abuse the Mahometans for burning the Alexandrian library now, we have wantonly destroyed records of antient civilization whose loss is the more irreparable because we know nothing about the true history of the venerable Empire of China, which existed in splendor and power centuries before our foggy island was known to exist. How full of trouble the world has been this year, Roman Catholics robbing the Pope, subjects rebelling against their kings, kings acting as captains of banditti, plundering other states, without a quarrel to justify them, religion and right set at nought every where, and as Id. Russell says
in his wisdom that it is all quite right, and the mob is to choose their sovereign and govern themselves, I suppose we shall have Garibaldi, or some one else, over in Ireland, and then all the thieves and outcasts of the plébiscité will elect Louis Napoleon King of England - hooray.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon
Parham, 30 July 1861

My dear Sneyd,

It is a long time since I have written to you. I have been very unwell and have had three separate attacks of fever during the last six weeks, a state of affairs not much to be desired. Our Devonshire tour was a failure. Emily was very ill at Ilfracombe, in a wretched little inn. This gave me such a fright that I was glad to get back, tho' it is here that the cause of all my illness exists. I find in my old age that the incessant annoyance of having nothing but unhappy mistakes and distresses, brought on by the want of ordinary judgement or right feeling of my parents and my brother, is too much for me and I literally cannot bear it. I am so ashamed and disgusted with my own family, of those whom every body wishes to be proud of.

We go to London for two or three days on the 15th or thereabouts, on our way to Gatton. We went to Brighton yesterday, to bring Robin home from school, a joyful event, but I was quite tired even with that small trip.

The Duc d'Aumale came over from Worthing one day, with the Gaisfords, and passed the afternoon looking at books. What a gentleman he is, and so intelligent, I admire him much. There is an assembly of the French royal family at the dull town of Worthing, where they have taken the whole hotel and no end of lodgings. They sit down fifty to dinner, twenty-five of whom are princes and princesses.

I am very glad to hear of the prosperity of you and yours. Is there any

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1. The Gaisfords of Offington House, near Worthing, of whom the most distinguished in the nineteenth century was the Very Rev. Thomas Gaisford (1779-1855), Regius Professor of Greek and Dean of Christ Church. His son Thomas (b. 1816) was a member of the Travellers' Club.
chance of your coming to Catton during August, or the first two weeks of September?

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
My dear Sneyd,

What a wonderful event, a long letter from your Reverence without the brisk cathartic of a letter from me to force an epistle from your reluctant quill. So you have been making a tour to the kitchens of rich men, and have been faring sumptuously every day, instead of drinking cold water, at the Bridge of Allan, which you told me was what you was going to do, till one could cross the stream without the help of the bridge, no wonder your liver is affected with high living. But I hope the ivory diptich and Mrs Sneyd, and the babby will do you good and you will soon be all right again.

I hear your brother is in Scotland, but I must get over to see Keel from hence, tho' he is not there to show me the wonders. What ought I to look at more particularly, whenever I do go there?

I am thinking of making a northern tour to Brodick &cc., after paying one or two visits in this neighbourhood. I wish I could have met you and De Tabley and Delameres in those northern regions, which will be all new to me. I should be very glad to give you a call after my Scotch expedition, if it is found to be feasable. Our plans are not sufficiently cut and dried yet to be able to say what we shall be able to do, we think however of spending November in London, to enjoy the fog, which is to be had in perfection at that season. With kind regards to Mrs S., I am,

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
Send me a sketch and description of the diptich. How big is it, what is it like?

How is it about your brother's marriage to the Duchess of Sutherland?¹

¹ Curzon's most enigmatical remark. See p. 449, n. 1 below.
It is just as you say, I have been worried into an illness and am not well. What sorrow and ruin and evil comes of wrongheaded jealousy and improvidence.\(^1\)

I shall be in London for the present, arranging money matters. Pray come here if you come up.

I am very sorry for Mrs Sneyd, what pain she must have been in.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

You can catch all the wasps in the parish with hand glasses, in the garden. I think you know how it is done [sketch].

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1. See Appendix E.
Catton Hall, Burton-on-Trent, 5 December 1862

Well Sneyd, now then! What are you all after at the Abbey?

What is the Abbess about? Here am I waiting and looking in the newspaper and the backs of my letters, and there were 900 girls and 1,800 boys born in the metropolis last week, and I don't see anything about the population of Oxfordshire that is at all interesting to me. How is it? Pray write me word, for I am getting very impatient to hear the news.

We came on here three weeks ago, and were obliged to give up several visits, to Eaton, Tabley &c., because my poor little Baby got the hooping cough. She is pretty well, considering, but it makes us anxious. I went to London last week, and to Brighton, to see Robin, who we expect next week for his holidays. He is well, thank God.

Now write me a line, and hoping for good news, I am,

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
330. No address, no salutation.

[Catton, ante 12 December 1862]

You horrible old

WILLUN

Why don't you answer my letter, ain't I sitting cross legged for luck, and waiting for the post to hear the news? Now write before return of post, or dread the vengeance

hof,

Garibaldi2

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1. Sneyd's second child, Isabel Clara, was born 12 December 1862.
2. Mock signature.
My dear Sneyd,

Well, I am sorry really, and disappointed, tho' little girls are nice things. My little she baby is now sitting on my knee, helping me to write to you, and you will love your's very much, tho' she has certainly made a great mistake in not being a Boy.

Better luck next time. It all comes of your not going to bed in a cocked hat and feather, jack boots and spurs, that plan never fails they say.

I am just off to Liverpool to see the docks, back in a few days.

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon

My wife's and my kindest regards to Mrs S.
Well, mister, I am getting on middling, as well as can be expected in the tremendous surging and rolling of this here great metropolis. Nothing like the preparations for the exhibition of the new Danish Princess were ever known or remembered by the oldest inhabitant. They are rather awful to my thinking, and if I was their Royal Highnesses I should feel much as if I was passing between the jaws of the great sea sarpint, or through the bowels of Mount Vesuvius, on the triumphal procession on Saturday. What an irresistible power to arouse, would be the wrath of this great Babylon, which a little spark might kindle in a moment. More than a million of money will have been spent by more than a million of people on Saturday, to see a young lady and gentleman in an open carriage for not five minutes, said lady and gentleman not having crowns of diamonds, or royal robes, or anything different from any other two ladies and gentlemen, to make a show, for people to remember for the rest of their days. But the appearance of the immense multitudes of spectators will be very wonderful indeed. They say that the house at the corner of St James's St. and Pall Mall has been let for £500 for the day. Seats on a plank on a scaffold are to be had, for one to five guineas, where you must sit all day, for no one will be able to get along the main streets after breakfast time. His most gracious majesty the Lord Mayor, and his aldermen have been in a state of most profuse perspiration and anger at the arrangements. The terror they have felt lest they should have to trot, has only been equalled by their astonishment at the idea that a Lord Mayor could trot. Fancy the dear old gingerbread state coach

1. Princess Alexandra, eldest daughter of Prince Christian (later Christian IX) of Denmark, married 10 March 1863, the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII).
trotting, and the Lord Mayor holding on inside, and the man with the City sword, and the fur hat, who looks out of the window, being took worse, having had too many helps of turtle for lunch; and fancy Master common hunt trotting after the state coach, on a great City'unter. How sore he would be before he got to Paddington, however they are not to go out of a walk, so that is all right. I hope we shall have a fine day.

Today it is like August. Why don't you come up for the ceremony? I don't know whether we can give you a bed or not, but you can have a place on a scaffold, at the end of the garden, and Mrs Sneyd another, and if the scaffold don't come down, as I told the foreman I expected it would, this morning, it will be very pleasant, and you will see the Duke of Devonshire, and Miss Coutts, and the quality, on other scaffolds, on the other side of the street; and if their scaffolds tumble down you will see that interesting circumstance, and if your's tumbles down they will see the predicament that you will be in, which will be pleasing to them.

With our kind regards to Mrs Sneyd, I am,

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
24 Arlington Street, 21 March 1863

My dear Sneyd,

Well it was not over civil of me, certainly, not to answer your letter of condolence on my being so much above a century old [sketch]. It was a very good letter considering the circumstances, and I am much obliged for the same.

I have been very seedy with sleepless nights, which unfit me for anything the next day, and I can't do my three r's, Reading, Riting and Rithmetic with any comfort or satisfaction at all, at all. At last on Thursday I took twenty-seven drops of a new medicine used by poor Lord Hatherton, 1 Faulkener's sedative, and it very nearly settled me altogether. Instead of making me sleep it paralysed me, and I lay like a lump of lead all day yesterday, however more physick restored me again today and I am alive and kicking, that is to say I could kick a little, not hard; and I understand some easy questions, not difficult ones.

I am sorry to say I can not take you in, next week, for George Horton comes here on Tuesday, till Saturday. You can come on Saturday if you like, till Thursday the 26th - when we go to Lord Lovelace 2 for Easter, and afterwards to Parham for a while. Every thing there is in the usual state of wretchedness. The rascally agent's accounts have just been sent in and he makes out that my father owes him several hundred pounds, tho' the fact

1. Presumably Edward John Littleton (formerly Walhouse), 1st Baron Hatherton (1791-1863), who died 4 May.

2. William King (afterwards King-Noel), Lord King and Earl of Lovelace (1805-93).
is, that he has robbed my father to a large amount. As the law throws difficulties in the way of honest men, it may be difficult or impossible to prove this.\footnote{A reference to the events of the previous summer, described in Appendix E.} My parents know nothing of their own affairs, and they have such a curious hankering to support the wrong side, that if Michael Turnor cannot help them they most certainly will not help themselves. What invaluable people they would be at the North Pole, for they have never been out of hot water for the last forty years.

Ever affect\[ionate\]ly yours,

R. Curzon
My dear WS,

I hoped to have had a line from you today.

I am obliged to go to Parham on Saturday, on not very pleasant business, therefore I am sorry to say I cannot receive you next week. I shall not be back till after Easter Monday.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
24 Arlington Street, 24 April 1863

My dear Sneyd,

I have been going to write to you for some time, and am glad to see your letter as I did not know where you was. I have no doubt that Keel is beautiful at this, the most charming time of the year, and all the fine things in the house must be amusing and interesting to look at.

We leave London on the 10th of May, having let this house to Mr and Lady Mary Craven, for three months. We went to Lord Lovelace's for Easter, and to Parham on Easter Monday. I was glad to get away on the Thursday, for the state of affairs there is shocking, and quite hopeless. My mother's jealousy effectually prevents her putting any trust in me and there is no one else to help her. They have placed themselves entirely in the hands of Michael Turnor, who I trust is a good and honest man, but if any thing was to happen to him they are unable to manage their own affairs and one don't see what is to happen.

It appears that the late agent, and ten or twelve other rascals, at Storrington, have been in the habit of backing each other's bills, and raising money in other nefarious ways. One of them, who had been forging his brother's name and expected to be found out, hung himself while I was at Parham, and another man, who however was not connected with the above mentioned people, blew his brains out two or three days afterwards, with a rifle, in one of my cottages. The neighbourhood is quite demoralized, most of the smaller inhabitants are convicted rogues, some are victims,


2. 'Hear' in the original.
some are both rogues and victims, being fools as well as rogues. You may imagine that such a contemptible position of matters is not pleasant, particularly when I must remain passive and cannot interfere. I believe there is nothing so bad but that worse has happened, nevertheless this is a melancholy history of the affairs of an old family.

We are to leave the little baby at Parham on the 10th, when Emily and I think of going to Paris for a short time, to see the last improvements. I find I have little zeal, and should prefer creeping into a small hole and going to sleep till better times. I am weary and tired of family misfortunes, tho' those things are not misfortunes which are brought on by willful neglect or want of common sense.

I wish you would come to Paris. I should like to have another prowl along the Quai Voltaire with you. I hope the change of air will make you strong and well again. Emily and I are very seedy, mostly from want of sleep, in addition to which I have had the lumbago. Remember me kindly to Mrs S. and to your brother.

Ever yours affectionately,

R. Curzon
No address.

1 Cleveland Row, London, 26 May 1863

Thanks for your kind letter, my dear Sneyd, I have so little sympathy at home that it touches me when it comes from afar.

The history of my inheritance is this. Hagley is left to me - but - I am to pay my brother's fortune and a mortgage of my father's out of it, amounting to the full value of the estate, so I am disinherited and get nothing. Fortunately I got the old pictures and Curzon plate, as a sort of gift, from my father in his life time, in consideration of money advanced by me, so I hope these memorials of better days will be preserved.

I succeed to about £1,400 a year, of money left to me by my Aunt Elizabeth, who was really father and mother to me.

Nobody has succeeded as yet, in making my mother understand her own position, for my father (and her also) having spent everything they could get hold of, she is now badly off. She has been prejudiced against me to such a degree that she has not mentioned a word about affairs, but is constantly talking to Mr and Mrs Edward. This is very inconvenient to me, as I do not know what to do, I cannot stay at Parham and she will say I desert her if I go away.

Tho' I expected all this, or some thing of the sort, it has been a severe blow now that it has come upon me. I think I have been more shocked at my mother's conduct than at my father's death. Whenever any thing is settled I will write again.

I am sorry to hear that you have got the influenza. Change of air and home will do you good. Has your brother done anything for you?

With kind regards to Mrs S., I am,
Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
Parham, 4 July 1863

My dear Sneyd,

Many thanks for your kind invitation, we cannot accept it at present, however, because we are going at the end of next week to Paris, for two or three weeks. I wish you would come too, with the Mrs. -

Things here are really too bad, I can hardly believe they are true, tho' there is no doubt of it. The sums my father and brother have got rid of are incredible, and I am treated as the villian [sic] after all, instead of the victim. My mother does not believe me for an instant, and sticks up for my brother and his rapacious demands, against justice, common sense, truth and her own interest. She is more like a person under mesmeric influence than any thing else, except that there is certainly no clairvoyance in the case. I shall be very glad to get away, we leave on Tuesday for London. I am so far happy that we leave on civil terms and do not quarrel. We leave the little baby here, till we return from Paris, when we take her and Robin I think to Llandudno, having nowhere to go to.

I hope please God the scales may drop from my mother's eyes some day, tho' perhaps she would be horrified if she could understand the consequences of the improvidence that has been going on, so many years. It is a horrid history.

If you know of any one who wants to purchase Hagley, pray send him on[e] of the enclosed circulars [missing].

Ever yours affect[ionately],

R. Curzon
Gopsall, Atherstone, 13 December 1863

My dear Sneyd,

It was only this morning that I heard of the wonderful event which took place at the Abbey on Thursday last. No words of mine can convey the extent of the congratulations that I wish to offer. I hope and pray that your little son may be the greatest of all Sneyds, and that he may continue the antient house of Keel, in honor and prosperity for many a long and happy course of years.

Pray give Emily's and my kindest regards to Mrs Sneyd, who I trust is going on well. I hope the young gentleman will be brought up with a due regard for old books, old wine, old customs, and old friends, and that among them he may number

Your affectionate old gossip,

R. Curzon
Catton, 8 August 1864

My dear Sneyd,

We arrived here last Wednesday, and remain under this hospitable roof till we can get in to Ravenhill, which I hope will be in a fortnight's time. Pray let me have the promised photographs to play with. I have long intended to have my own done, but do not know how to set about it. You shall certainly have a set, whenever they are ready.

Ravenhill promises to be very pretty inside. I got some very fine Belgian carving for the banisters of the staircase, large bold scrolls, leaves and grapes. It is to be offered up this week. It is a great amusement putting up the ornamental part of the establishment. The drawing room is covered with all the smaller Hagley pictures, some of which are very good in their way, and the frames shine. The worst of it is that the Hagley things are too big, the beds and the wardrobes being somewhat larger than the rooms. However we shall shake them all down some how. I do not know what I shall do when it is finished, as it is very painful to me to live there at all. I suppose I must turn gardener, like the late Father Adam, when he was turned out of his estate, poor man.

I should much like to see Keel while you are there. I do not see, however, how that is to be done, as we are necessarily kept near Ravenhill just now, the works cannot get on without me as they are finishing up and the last touches are very important.
Kindest regards to the Misses,

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

Where [sic] there any very remarkable gimcracks in the Warwick Museum, any early helmets?
Ravenhill,  
Rugeley,  
Staffordshire.

What a will you must be,  
cause you never write to me.

The house of Ravenhill did breed  
The firstborne of ye house of Sneyd.

His parents showing their good sense,  
Christened him Ralph in consequence.

The above is quoted from the rare black letter Chronicle of Friar W. de Snedesnest, preparing for publication by the Borem Society, of which you doubtless are a member.

Well, here we are at last, established, tho' in a rude way, at Ravenhill. Whenever you come over to Blithfield you must come and have a look at us, for I fear we shall hardly be in a condition to receive a guest this winter, except perhaps as a bachelor, for we have one little room vacant now, which has been got ready for Robin's holidays on the 16th of next month. I want some hints from you, it is impossible to describe so very unconventional a house, for it is not like anything else. We have not struggled with the outside of the house and garden yet, but inside it is getting very pretty and quaint. The old Hagley books cover the walls of the room in which I am writing, wonderful rubbish mostly, but every now and then you come to a book somewhat better than the rest. The staircase
is really very good, and the dining room begins to have a flavor of its own, and to lose its resemblance to a commonplace new room. I long to show it all to you. The house is well warmed with hot water, and when shut up and the lamps lit of an evening, it is certainly very comfortable. Nevertheless I sadly grudge the money I am laying out here, which I should have so much preferred laying out at Parham.

I have been very unwell this last week, in bed two or three days, and not out of the house yet, at all, with influenza, coming on the top of bad sleepless nights. However I have much to be thankful for, and am grateful for what I have got, tho' it is not what I want. I wish Charles Bagot was on this side of Rugeley instead of the other side, but he is very friendly, and comes over every now and then, and we get a walk together. His is a capital house and wants nothing doing to it, but it is not romantic to look at either inside or out1 - I hope you are all well. I went to London with your two sisters the other day, they were in great preservation.

Yours ever,

R. Curzon

1. ? The Hon. and Rev. Hervey Charles Bagot, of Blithfield Rectory.
Ravenhill, 5 December 1864

My dear Sneyd,

I am sorry for your household troubles, servants are a curious race of beings, being proud in proportion to their ignorance and common sense. They will leave a good place and go to a worse, because they consider that their dignity has been assailed. I remember all old L[or]d Verulam’s servants going off because the footman was above carrying coal into the drawing room, and it was not the business of any one else to demean his self by doing the footman’s work. L[or]d Verulam had to carry his own coals, while they all looked on – till they were all sent off. Our cook scorned to stay with us because we praised the kitchen maid’s cookery one day. I hope you will meet with some comfortable folks.

We have all been laid up with influenza, which my wife and I cannot shake off, it is a plaguy disease and kills old people. It seems to undermine the vital energies. I hear it only came to England in 1831, the same year that the cholera first made its appearance in Europe. It makes horses very ill and unfits them for any work. We cannot get rid of the workmen here, and are sadly tired of them. They always manage to leave something unfinished, and of dirt and hammering there is no end.

When are you coming this way, I long to show you what I have done, tho’ I have done it sorely against my will. With kindest regards to Mrs Sneyd, and my other niece, I am always,

Affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon
Plate XX. The Hon. Robert Curzon junior and Robin, by Alexander Glasgow. Picture exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1864.

From a photograph belonging to Mrs P.A. Tritton of the original painting formerly at Parham. Whereabouts now unknown.
My dear Sneyd,

I hope you continue to like Eastbourne, and that the air agrees with you better than it did; the sea side must be very pleasant in this hot weather.

We have been at Parham again, last Saturday and Sunday, and left little Darea there. My mother seems to like to have the little thing there, and it is much better for her than London, tho' we miss her very much. Yesterday I went to Eton, to the 4th of June, which was kept on the 6th this year. The procession as it is called (tho' there was no procession) of the boats was a pretty sight, such a crowd of papas and mamas and sisters on the river side, but it was tremendous hard work, and some people who returned in the same train with me were tired to death. I got back at 10.30 p.m. It was a beautiful day and the view from Windsor Castle was glorious -

I have purchased a crosier head or rather a pastoral staff [sketch], copper gilt and some enamel. It is Gothic, which is very rare, and I believe Old English. It was dug up somewhere and I have sent it to be cleaned up. I have also got another old helmet, and have written a treatise on these old hats, with fifteen wood cuts, for the benefit of the Archaeological Institute.

When do you return through London? I hope I shall see you.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
There was a very agreeable philo breakfast at Murray's, such a pretty place, at Wimbledon.
Ravenhill, 14 December 1865

My dear Sneyd,

Please give the enclosed to the Lord Abbot, or to the Revd. Secretary Grimsgulphus.

I am very anxious about my poor wife, who is gone again with Lady Horton to Chester, to consult Dr Waters, in whom she has confidence. I hope, please God, he may do her some good. It seems that all the anxiety which we had for the last two or three years of my father's life, when he was cutting down trees, spending more money than he had got, till we feared we should be utterly ruined, and what with my brother and Geere, we were almost in despair - all these horrors have broken poor Emily's strength and she has quite given way. She has lost nearly two stone in weight, you may imagine what grief this is to me. I wrote some time ago to my mother, what the doctor said, and she answered she could not in the least understand what I could mean, or what cause of anxiety we ever could have had, cannot think what I allude to - !!! This is a puzzler, I don't know how to answer it. I suppose the less I say the better. I expect Em and her mother back here tomorrow, as well as Robin from Eton. I hope all yours are well.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
My dear Sneyd,

I write a line as you desire, tho' I am not up to much writing. My poor dear wife continues much the same, one day a little better, another day not quite so well. The hopes are that the doctors may be able to improve her general health, sufficiently, to make a rally, but the distress and anxiety of watching one whom I love so much, day after day, breaks my heart, and tho' I say God's will be done, and try to bow to his decrees, my unfortunate shattered nerves are hardly strong enough to bear me up against such sorrow.

The kindness of Phillimore is really more than I can express, he takes me out walking, which they say is the only thing for such poor creatures, to get out in the air, and he comforts me with such goodness and judgement, that I can never be sufficiently grateful. God spare you dear old friend, and

Ever yours affectionately,

R. Curon
1866 - 1873

It might have been expected that, apart from his interest in his children, Curzon would have found the world to be a largely meaningless place after the death of his wife. To a large extent this is true, his grief was genuine and immense, but there are contradictions in his behaviour that are difficult to explain, and his evident enjoyment of a bawdy French play, which he saw in Paris in September 1867 in company with his son and the Rector of Parham, strikes an enigmatical note. A second visit to France in September 1869 was less successful, and in October of the same year he sent Sneyd a very interesting description of Thirlestaine. Most of the rebuilding he did at Parham in 1871 and 1872 can be seen to-day, and this, seeing his son graduate, and making some further additions to his library were the most positive achievements of his last years.

For this period forty-two letters have been given in full.
Catton Hall, Burton-on-Trent, 16 July 1866

My dear Sneyd,

I am sorry you are not going to Buxton, because Lady Horton talks of going there for a few days, and in that case I should go with her for a change. I am not at all fit to go anywhere "promiscuous". I hope I may recover in some degree in course of time, for I now get a sort of fit of despondency every now and then, which knocks me over altogether.

Robin's holidays begin on the 3d. of August, I do not know what to do with him, for a wretched old widower is no merry companion of a happy boy. What with this horrible war and the cholera, I suppose it will not do to go abroad. Have you been at Eastnor? The entrance and great hall are very imposing. It is not very far from Malvern, which is now become an immense town, it was a pretty village when I was there with Delamere years ago.

I dare say the Prince of Wales &c. were much edified with Keele, I wonder if he had tea cups for thirty? The first Philobiblon breakfast that I gave enlightened me on that subject, for as a general rule, nobody ever has thirty teacups of one pattern, your brother is perhaps the only man likely to have so many –

Newton Lane and family are at King's Bromley, but I have not seen them as they have not called here. Give my kindest regards to Mrs Sneyd, let me

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1. Reading uncertain, Curzon has had at least two attempts to spell the word.
2. Reading uncertain.
3. John Newton Lane (1800-69), of King's Bromley Manor, married 8 January 1828 Agnes, second daughter of William, 2nd Baron Bagot.
know your direction at Malvern.

I am reading the dreadfully well written description of a war, in Le Consocr,¹ it seems wonderfull in these enlightened days, that there should be such unnecessary horrors as wars; perhaps if the wretched Lord Russell had listened to the Emperor's proposition of a congress last year, to settle European matters, we never should have had another war.²

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon

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² Between Prussia and Denmark. Possession of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein had been in dispute since the death of Christian VIII of Denmark in 1848. When Bismarck threatened to overrun Jutland, the Danes looked to Britain for assistance, because the Prince of Wales was married to Princess Alexandra. In November 1863 Napoleon III suggested a European congress, to settle the Schleswig and other questions, but Palmerston, fearing the Russians would raise the eastern question, snubbed the Emperor. In so doing he threw away all hope of French support, which was necessary if Bismarck was to be stopped. As a result the Danes were left to their fate and Bismarck laid the foundation of the new German Empire.
Perham, 10 September 1866

My dear Sneyd,

I was charmed to receive your amusing letter yesterday, and to hear what you have been about. I am sorry that you have been suffering from a boil in your ear, it must have been horridly painful. I think drinking "the waters" brings out those sort of things, in those who are subject to them, but I suppose they are better out, than in.

Robin and I returned from Paris on Tuesday, we had a dreadful passage from Boulogne. The sea and the waves roaring, and men's stomachs failing them through fear. I have been many a voyage, but never saw so much water shipped on the deck, it came in literally in waterfalls, over the bows, and the paddle boxes. I presume there was no danger in a good strong ship, but it looked as if no boat could have lived in such a sea, for ten minutes. In contrast to this we had the smoothest passage possible from Folkestone. I take it those narrow seas round our foggy island are among the worst in the world. In returning from Paris in the marvellous short time of ten hours, one feels very much the great change of climate. The gloom and chill of England strike one sensibly.

I was very well at Paris, but have been seedy since I came here. Perhaps sorrow deeper than the deep sea has a good deal to do with it. My brother, his wife, Mr and Mrs Gore and children are here, some more coming this week. Independent of family misfortunes they are such a very different sort of people, from you, and me, and my friends, that I am out of my element, and

1. Not identified.
my mind dwells terribly on the blessing which I have lost. Time has brought no relief, tomorrow it will be six months since my dear one died. I think I am less able to bear up than I was some time ago, my eyes are getting very bad, from tears that will not flow.

Paris is a new town, splendid, but by no means so interesting as it was before, curiosities are extinct, there is nothing hardly left, and if by a rare chance you do meet with something good, the price goes by thousands of francs, and yet they are sold immediately. An imperfect copy of the Mazarine Bible sold for £600. A common knight's helmet such as there are many here, 800 francs. A suit of embossed armour, £2,000 — There must be manufactories of modern antiques of all sorts, on a large scale, somewhere, for you see every kind of sham in the shop windows, enamels, majolica, carvings, arms and armour, all brand new, and they are sold too, I wonder who the happy possessors are. The rage for antiquities seems to be greater in France than in England. I believe an immense quantity of false curiosities goes to America, there are quantities of Americans at Paris. There is another sad change, there are no longer any Grissettes, there are no clean nice girls in beautifully made cotton gowns, and bright smooth hair. The women are more dowdy and vulgar in their dress, than the English, I mean the common women in the streets. In this respect London has now the advantage, a very great loss to Paris, for the women are so awfully ugly, that when so badly dressed, they are frightful. Then the ladies are outrageously over dressed, and look silly and ridiculous. One of the finest sights in Paris was our neighbour, the Rev. Bacon,¹ in a blue coat, white waistcoat and gold buttons, many studs, chains, &c., a light blue neck tie, and a shirt with pictures of dogs, or some thing of that sort, all over it, a broad stripe down his trousers, and his handsome wife in a turquoise gown.

¹. The Rev. Thomas Bacon, Rector of Wiggonholt 1864-84.
and scarlet petticoat. I don't think the cutest bishop, not the Pope himself, would ever have found out that he was a country clergyman, with a cure of souls.

I never saw Little Malvern church, which must be very interesting from your description, and the old R. Catholic house. I should also like to see the Revd. Wilberforce,¹ in his white flannel petticoat. Is Mr Parsons a descendant of the founder of the English college at Douay, whose small quarto works are very rare books? Mr Tierney² had a collection of them –

I hope I may come and see you at the Abbey later in the year. When Robin goes back to Eton, on the 26th, I want to take little Dares to the sea side, somewhere near here, if I can find a house. She is cutting her back teeth, and the sea would be good for her.

With kindest regards to Mrs S., I am,

   Ever affectionately yours,

   R. Curzon

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¹ Possibly the Rev. William Wilberforce (1807-73), who became a Roman Catholic in 1850, and was Samuel Wilberforce's brother; a third brother, Robert Isaac, also became a Roman Catholic, but he died in 1857.

² Almost certainly the Rev. Mark Aloysius Tierney (1795-1862), F.S.A., chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk at Arundel, 1824-62. His books were sold at Sotheby's 1-4 December 1862.
Parham, 12 November 1866

My dear Sneyd,

I went to Folkestone for three weeks, and came back here on the 2d November. I liked Folkestone better than any of the watering places on the S. coast. There are pretty walks and drives, and it is amusing to see the packets come in and go out. I went there for the sake of little Darea, who was quite well, but they said the sea air would be advantageous to her teething, a process which is always troublesome from the cradle to the grave. John Ashley was there, in a lamentable state of weakening intellect, I hope he may get better poor fellow, it is a sad thing for his wife. My old friend Bankhead, and Lord Ebury were also at Folkestone. I saw a good deal of both of them.

You get by rail to Dover in fifteen minutes. I met Lord Granville there, who asked me to Walmer, and introduced me to his new wife. I went to London on Thursday and came back on Saturday, the Bagots were in the train, but I did not get speech of them, where are they gone to? I am sorry for Lady Delamere's mishap, do you know what was the cause of it? I see by the papers that De Tabley has sold his Lancashire estate for £140,000, I hope he will gain income, as money pays better than land.

I am happy to think that you are all right. Lady Horton has been making a tour in South Wales, in her 80th year, and comes here today from Portsmouth.

1. Probably the John Ashley who helped Curzon during the crisis at Parham in the summer of 1862. See Appendix E, p. 482 n.1.
2. Not identified.
I shall be here off and on till just before Xmas, when I take Robin and Darea to Catton for the holidays. Mr Beck has been to Lapland, and has brought back some very curious silver things, some antient and others in the style of the 14[th] and 15[th] centuries. He has let me have a Gothic knightly belt, and some bosses, like large buttons, all of silver gilt, very unusual sort of gimcracks. I wonder at myself for getting them, as I do not care now for any thing in this world, but the mania is chronic, I have got into the antiquity groove and can't get out. I gave no end of cash yesterday for an old rusty helmet, which has been taking a bath in the pig tub, in hopes of cleaning the rust off. It was sent to me from Belgium, and has a snout like a pig, which was the fashion in the 14th century. I have now got between forty and fifty old hats, which sell at Paris for above 1,000 francs each. They are remarkably ugly, and may be considered as one of the most painfully curious collections extant.

I am afraid there is no more chance of my getting to Denton just yet than there is of your coming here, however I live in hopes. Remember me kindly to all Sneyds at Denton.

Ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

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1. ? The Rector of Parham (see p. 322, n. 1 above).
My dear Sneyd,

You seem to be living on the fat of the land, with the new cook at Keele. I fear I am not likely to assist at the glories of the dining room, even if I was asked, for fate leads me the other way. I go with Robin and Darea to London on Wednesday, and to Parham on Saturday, and later to Folkestone, if I can get a house, in which I have not succeeded as yet.

Things as usual go sadly with me, I have just had to pay £1,000 for my mother, and M. Turnor wants more next month, and a great deal more afterwards. If it was not presumptuous, I should almost think that God was trying me, like Job, for one misfortune after another falls upon me, by no means of my own making. I suppose I have got into an unfortunate groove, and that I am to be swept away with millions of other unhappy wretches, for some reason unaccountable to me. I feel thoroughly frightened, and am not fit for general society, I lie awake at night, in dread of what is to happen next.

We have had beautiful weather this last few days, the garden here is teeming with fruit, at Parham there is none. I suppose you must have wagon loads of peaches, &c. at Keele. I saw Mr and Mrs Lane the other day, they both look much older; they and the two daughters are to dine here on Monday. It is some years since I had seen any of them, I was glad to see them again.

Phillimore is a Privy Councillor. I should not wonder if he was Lord Chancellor some day, I take a great interest in his prosperity, for he has

1. Reading uncertain.
been a most kind friend to me. Remember me to Mrs Sneyd and your brother,

Ever yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon
My dear Sneyd,

Robin and I, and Mr Beck,¹ have been doing the great exhibition diligently. It is a wonderfull place, and the 'History of Labour', that is, the antient part of the show, is really quite worth your coming over to see. Sweden and Russia have sent wonderfull gimcracks, of gold and silver, and armour, Portugal also comes out splendidly, in Gothic plate of the 14[th] and 15th century, large elaborate things, like the Duc d'Aumale's [sketch].² Nevertheless, howbeit, the Quai Voltaire "Helas ce n'est plus le Quai Voltaire", as M. Schmidt, one of the old extortioners, expressed to me his sentiments, with a deep sigh and the national shrug of the shoulders - He sold me (very dear) an agnus Dei like yours, in horn and silver gilt, with an inscription in Gothic letters round the rim.

This hotel is a tremendous way off from Paris, near the Arc de l'Etoile, but it is convenient for the Exposition, but³ I spend a fortune in cabs. Luckily we have had beautiful weather. Next door is the entrance to the Jardin des Fleurs, a sort of Cremorne, where they dance all night, and what with the band, and the shouting, and the fire works, one cannot get to sleep. We went there one night, and I was much disappointed, for except that some of the young ladies kicked up rather high, there was no

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¹. Probably the Rev. James Beck (1819-96), Rector of Parham 1859-79.
². Of a cross surmounting a small orb.
³. Reading uncertain.
impropriety at all, and none of that vulgar drinking, and sottish looking people, that you see in England. Last night we went to the play, La Biche au Bois. In the first act or two the ladies had very little on, and in the third act, nothing at all, which was very cheerfull. It ended with a man going into a cage of lions, a disagreeable sight, which I think ought not to have been allowed, and seemed to have nothing to do with the story, and besides the lions did not eat the man.

Monday, Sept. 9.

We went to Versailles yesterday after church, I think you and I made a mistake in not being born in the days of the Grand Monarque, tho' a very grand perriwig must have been warm in this weather. Mrs Mildmay is in this hotel, with two granddaughters, she has had her pocket picked, with all her memorandums and letters. I hope the thief will publish them. Now we are off again to the Exhibition. It is very hard work, I wish you was here to help - With kindest remembrances to Mrs Sneyd, I am always

Affect[ionate]ly yours,

R. Curzon

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1. Not identified.
My dear Sneyd,

I send you the Boke of Nurture, as also ye Boke of Kervyngel, of which right worthi and profitable bokes forty copies have been printed, besides one on vellum. Some of the notes are very dilectable and quaint, moreover there are pictures, so that I hope altogether it is not quite so stupid and unreadable as many of the Roxburghe books. As the members of that effete society never meet except once a year, at a very expensive dinner, I thought the subject of the book was appropriate, and the privacy of future generations of book worms may possibly be disturbed sometimes by the descendants of the present possessors, who may take it into their heads to look at the prints on some rainy day.

I am here for a few days looking out for a house at Folkestone. I have not succeeded in getting one yet.

Robin went back to Eton on Thursday, and I feel very lonely, but I am better here than at Parham, where the restraint and worry are past bearing.

Hoping you are all well, I am,

Ever yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

Can you tell me any particulars as to what I am to do, to get Robin's name put down for Christchurch?

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My dear Sneyd,

I am always glad to see one of your kind and friendly letters. An old friend is I suppose very rare, for I have never in all my experience, met with one for sale, either on the Quai Voltaire, or in Wardour Street, tho' it is a species of antiquity that I value more than any other, and I thank God that I have two or three very good specimens in my collection, that I would not part with, at any price, for in my sorrowful life they have been by far the most precious of all my antient possessions.

Now you see old Abbat of Dentoun, it is not so easy for me to repair to your venerable Abbey, I am always tied by the leg, by one thing or other. At present I am looking after my little Tot, and I am going to London on Monday, to get some things for her birthday on Thursday next, perhaps I may get away again, during the next week.

I am invited by the Dean of Windsor to spend a day with Robin, and then to dine and sleep at the Deanery, and I will write and tell you when that comes to pass, hoping I might get on to you the next day. Howbeit, I don't know whether I shall manage it at all.

My mother is in an uncomfortable state of health, she has something the matter with her tongue and gums, which prevents her eating enough to keep up her strength. She is better than she was, and it would be of no consequence if it was not for her advanced age, as she is now passed eighty. Then she don't know how to live, and her life is a failure in almost every respect; there is no joy or comfort, and all the money goes, without getting anything for it. The life here is very different from that at the Abbey,
tho' certainly we don't knock our heads against the trees as you do, to try which is the hardest. Now if you always wore a golden mitre, it would save your skull from these accidents. I hope you will have one ready before I come.

Remember me kindly to Mrs WS\textsuperscript{1} and believe me,

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

\textsuperscript{1} Written as a monogram.
24 Arlington Street, 24 February 1868

My dear Sneyd,

Here's a pretty business! What are you about? down there in your Abbey, and your sisters waiting for you, and I was nearly committing myself to the expence of six pennorth of herrings, to ask you to dinner, but luckily I went to Eaton Square, and heard that you was still blowing your nose at Denton, and had never put in an appearance in the metropolis at all. Now tell me all about it.

London is about as nasty as usual. Robin is here since Saturday and goes back to Eton this afternoon. I got a charming Italian Gothic candlestick of gilt metal, at Willson's¹ the other day, when are you coming to see it?

My kindest regards to Mrs S.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

¹ Presumably Samuel Willson's (see p. 322, n. 1 above).
My dear Sneyd,

I fear that my motions are not likely to be hastened as to my journey to the north, for the weather has been too oppressive to allow of my taking little Darea a long journey, tho' now however it seems as if the rigors of the summer were beginning to moderate.

A sad event has happened, in the unexpected death of my nephew's George Curzon's wife,¹ she was only twenty-seven, and had not been married a year; she was buried at Parham last Saturday, I am very sorry for poor George, it is a melancholy thing.

That wretched man Geere² died a few days ago, in a mad house at Haward's Heath. He had threatened to murder me, and I believe done the same to his wife, and other people. He was hiding in our woods, with a gun some time ago, and we were in a state of siege, not daring to let Darea go out of the gardens. His death is a relief to every one, but what a dreadful history of wrong and ruin.

Ed. Cheney³ is here, and a pleasant party. I go to Red Hill tomorrow, to meet Robin, and go on with him to Parham.

We are to go over to Ashburnham this afternoon. I will write again when

¹ Mary Florence, died 21 July 1868, daughter of Morgan Treherne M.P. George married again, 19 March 1873, Mary, eldest daughter of William Anderton, of Euxton Hall, by whom he had Mary Cecil, later the 17th Baroness. Mary died in 1889 and George married again in 1905.

² See Appendix E.

³ Edward Cheney, of Badger Hall, Shifnall, Shropshire.
my plans are settled.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

(No black paper).
My dear Sneyd,

We are just off to London on our way to Parham on Saturday morning, having enjoyed the sea breezes of the S. coast very much. Indeed, Tot and I are quite sorry to go.

I went to Walmer again last Saturday, and on my way back through Dover, on Monday, I bought a wonderfull Abyssinian MS., a great big 4\textsuperscript{to} on vellum, with forty large hideous pictures of the miracles of Our Saviour, it is in fact King Theodore's\textsuperscript{1} bible, and was plundered from his palace or hut, at Magdala, by a soldier, who sold it to the extortioner from whom I got it for a tenpunnote. As I was sweltering down the street with this lumbering old tome under my arm (it was a very hot, close day), I thought how my dear old Abbot would laugh, if he saw me pounding along with a cloak and an umberella, on my way to the station, resting my precious bundle on the cill of a window every now and then, for it weighs about a ton, and stinks like pison, for I refused the proffered services of a small boy to carry the big book, and I was glad at last when I landed it safely in the train, which took L[or]\textsuperscript{1}d Ebury, the Dean of Windsor\textsuperscript{2}, and the Emperor Theodore's voluminous volume back to Folkestone. Nothing can exceed the grimness of the flaring illuminations of the Abyssinian artist, each of them had a very dirty rag, to cover it, and when I had sent them all to the kitchen fire, it did not smell quite so much as before, and I think when it has been

\begin{itemize}
  \item[1.] An expedition, under Sir Robert Napier (1810-90, later 1st Baron Napier of Magdala), was sent to Abyssinia to release a number of Englishmen held prisoner. After Magdala was stormed, 13 April 1868, King Theodore was found dead.
  \item[2.] The Hon. Gerald Wellesley (1809-82).
\end{itemize}
brushed up by the binder, it will be quite pleasant.

24 Arlington Street, 4 P.M.

We have arrived bag and baggage in four cabs, but what a scrimmage moving maids, and children, or one child is. I hope all your large small family and Mrs Sneyd are well and happy.

Ever your affect[ionate]

R. Curzon

A sad catastrophe about the magnificent old kingdom of Spain. If Charles V, or Philip 2d was to catch mister Prim, I would not be in his breeches. What a disgraceful woman the Queen must be, with her intendants. Now the fighting will begin, I expeck.

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1, 2. The despotic rule of Queen Isabella II (1843-68) came to an end at this time with an uprising that drove her from the throne. General Juan Prim (1814-70) was one of the leading figures who attempted to find a more constitutional monarch and to re-establish parliamentary government. A regency was set up until a candidate could be found who would accept the crown. Eventually Prince Amadeo of Savoy agreed to take it, but Prim was assassinated on the day the Prince arrived in Cartagena, 27 December 1870.
My dear Sneyd,

Many thanks for the picture. I have not written because I cannot get an answer from Eton, to say how long they will give Robin leave of absence. I hope to bring him to Denton on Wednesday afternoon, 19th, to stay till Saturday, but I must write again when I know what the Eton dons will let him do. I want to take him to Oxford one day, to show him some of our old haunts, in the days when I was full of hope and joy.

I trust Mrs Sneyd does not intend to run away, as she always does when I come to the Abbey.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

I am sorry to say I am no better, I do not know whether you will like to receive such a cripple [just now] write and say.
Clarendon Hotel, 18 May 1869\(^1\)

My dear Sneyd,

Here we are at the antient Star, now Clarendon. We dine at All Souls, with Walter Phillimore.\(^2\) Robin's examination is tomorrow, and I hope we shall be with you in the afternoon, but of course that depends on the new rules and regulations which I know nothing about, so put not your trust in us, till we appear.

I am shocked and scandalised at the new state of affairs at Ch. Ch. The dirty tutors dine at the high table, and the noblemen at a side table below them, and the servitors are put on a level with the commoners, all liberté and égalité, that is to say insubordination, and envy, hatred and malice—disgusting.

Ever yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

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1. Using writing paper embossed with the 24 Arlington Street address.
2. Walter George Francis, fellow of All Souls' 1867-71, eldest son of Sir Robert.
Dinan – Bretagne, 5 September 1869

My dear Sneyd,

This is a most curious country, and in the matter of cathedrals, and stinks, more remarkable than any where, where I have been. The two things that have interested me most are the Bayeux Tapestry, and Mont St. Michel. You went there years ago, but you never impressed me with any idea of the magnificence of the buildings, I think it is one of the most wonderfull pieces of architecture in Europe. I was prodigiously edified with it, and astonished at the prodigious height and beauty of the four great halls, as well as the church. The tower is five hundred feet from the level of the sea, and the chancel of the church above one hundred feet high inside.

At Caen I found an old oil merchant, M. Cavalier, who has a library in a garret, with five or six books printed by Faust and Schoeffer, and many other printed books, as well as about one hundred fiddles, hanging over the books, but he would not sell. However he had nothing that I envied very much.

I am always wanting you, for tho' Robin and George are exceedingly kind to such an old cripple, they have no enthusiasm for a gincrack, and Robin is quite sick of churches. I find I am too aged and infirm

1. Not identified.
2. Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer, of Mainz, who were printing books in the second half of the 15th century.
3. Presumably Curzon's nephew.
4. Single word overscored, possibly 'quite'.
for this sort of tour. I am weary of bad inns, bad stinks, and bad people, who cheat you and plague you every time you see them. One wants a courier to do the quarrelling, and to let no one cheat you but himself. Then the laws and regulations of the railways are so tiresome. The Grande Nation is very far behind us in all useful things, with brag and pretence, as if they were superior to all the world.

I have not seen anything whatever to buy. We are in an English boarding house here, with some pleasant English people. We are to pay six francs a day for everything. Dinan is very cheap, and in a most charming country, and there are lots of 2d chop English here. There were between three and four hundred Britishers at church yesterday, in an old hay loft. They are building an English church, with all the true English conceits, no west door, the organ on the ground, a tower on one side and none on the other.

I have written three letters, but can hear nothing of my ancestor, the Comte de Courson, who is to be Grand Saladier de Britagne, when I am Comte de Bretagne. We go tomorrow on the way to Carnac, and Morbihan and Nantes, howbeit I shall be glad when we are safe back, in the antient neighbourhood of Wardour St., where there is much more to be seen in our line of business than in all Normandy and the Cotes du Nord.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
Well my dear Sneyd, I have been to many wonderfull places, and seen many wonderfull things, but certainly Thirlestane is one of the most wonderfull of all. The house is a Grecian palace, finely built of hewn stone, with bas reliefs in marble, and stucco, niches and statues, let into the walls. It is more like the National Gallery than any building that I know of, it is three hundred and eighty feet long, standing in a narrow strip of garden about fifty yards wide, in the middle of the town.

Inside, there is a picture gallery, eighty feet by twenty-seven, and very high, where they sit and dine, and live. Some of the pictures seem to be fine originals, some copies, some very bad, an incomprehensible collection to make out what is good and what is good for nothing. Fourteen of the other rooms are full of wooden boxes, each four feet long and high enough to contain one row of books. There are 2,400 of these boxes, piled one on the other, about eight feet high, containing 20,000 odd hundred manuscripts, and 80,000 printed books, none of which are visible. Two or three rooms are full of loose papers, piled on the top of every thing else, cart loads of them. I never saw anything so dangerous for fire, a candle upset on one of these mountains of paper, and the dry wooden boxes would burn like a volcano, nothing would be left in half an hour.

The collection as far as I could make it out, is not so fine as Lord Ashburnham's, as it has been bought for quantity more than quality. Sir

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1. Sir Thomas Phillipps moved from Middle Hill to Thirlestaine House, Cheltenham, in 1863, and died there in 1872. The house is now part of Cheltenham College.
Thomas gets up at about 3 p.m., has no breakfast or lunch, dines at 6, drinks lemonade without sugar, and no wine, goes to bed at 4 a.m. and never goes out of the house. He has only four or five maids in this vast palace, one is a female librarian. The offices are very extensive, but on the other side of a long narrow court, like a street. Hardly any of the bed rooms are furnished, but some seem to be full of books. He has lost some of the most precious volumes, that is, they have got into one of the 2,400 boxes and cannot be found!!!!

Enter Robinson with the mazer, very curious but not worth such a sum to my mind. I am starting for Parham. Remember me kindly to Shirleys. Shirley promised to get me some of the long crosshilted iron swords, found in Irish bogs, please ask him if he can get me any. I shall be glad to pay for them, within certain bounds. I want them to complete a series of very early arms, and armour.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

There is a thundering big vol of Shirley pedigrees, at Thirlestane.

1. Not identified, presumably a servant.
Catton, 11 January 1870

My dear Sneyd,

You're a pretty fellow for an abbot, to call the Old Testament the Bible. It is lucky that St Ignatius Loyola, or the holy St Torquemada don't live at Cuddesden, or you would be accused of the truly Spanish crime of Judaism, and having been duly convicted, and handed over to the secular authorities, they would have chained you to a post, and warmed their holy fingers with roast heretic, in this cold weather an act of faith very seasonable just at present; and as for Cassiodoro de Reyna,¹ if they had caught him, they would have served him out, just the same, and a nice pair of candles you would have made. The familiars of the inquisition would have enjoyed the fun, even more than my other niece did the tricks of Herr Frikell, at the Vicarage.

We go bag and baggage to London, next Monday, to remain there for the present, for I find that Robin does not want to go to Parham, where my mother can neither live nor let live. As I should be sorry that he should be disgusted with what I hope may be his home, I shall keep away till he returns to Oxford on the 28th, and then I must see what is to be done next. The Dean of Ch. Ch. has been nibbling at my purse too, but unless he will pay my Xmas bills I cannot give him any cash. Besides, I grievously mistrust people who can perpetrate such ghastly monstrocities as the Keeble college, new Museum, &c. I wish they would let the poor old cathedral alone.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

¹ Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (487-583), senator, writer,
(1. cont'd.) founded the monastery of Vivarium, in Bruttium (in Calabria, in S.W. Italy), where he founded a library. He wrote on, amongst other things, pagan Rome, and Curzon may be referring here to his de regimine eccle primitue hystoria tripartita, an edition of which was published in Paris in 1490 by Georg Wolf.
No address, no salutation.

24 Arlington Street, 17 March 1870

My sincere and heart felt thanks, dear old friend, for your kind sympathetic letter. Those sort of letters are oil and wine to the wounds of the afflicted and broken hearted, and I am gr[?ate]full for them. I wish I could bear up better, but Parham is a bugbear to me, and I live in a state of alarm, expecting with terror some new misfortune, and this is a very dreadful disease.

Well, I did get the Bartholomeus, de Proprietatibus Rerum, an amusing tome no doubt, and it is gone to the binder's to be shined up; and I have got an antient British shield, and helmet, much at your service, to walk down Regent St. in, when you came to Town; and I have altered the inscription round my room, for a less cynical one, do you remember it? 'Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris', which was utterly false in my case, as few people have better and truer friends than I have, thank God, tho' my tempora have been very nubila all my life. The new legende is,

Old books to read,
Old friends at need,
Old wine to drink,
Old faults to sink.

1. Spelling uncertain, word smudged.
2. Bartholomæus, Anglicus, Incipit prohenium de proprietatibus rerum fratris bartholomeis anglici de ordine fratrum minorum is the title of the earliest copy in the British Museum, printed at Cologne, 71.472.
3. The second half of Ovid's donec eris sospes, multos numerabis amicos: tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris. Tristia, I, ix, 5-6.
4. An adaptation from Bacon's Apothegms, 'Alonso of Aragon was wont to say
Field Marshall Grosvenor\(^1\) used to say that he had such a bad memory that he was obliged to make all his own jokes. In like manner, as neither Stirling\(^2\) or any body else could find me a sentiment to fit the space, I have been forced to invent this distich myself, and it is as good to look at, as a better one.

I am to dine with the Bishop of Winchester today, to meet the Greek Archbishop.\(^3\) As I do not believe in Greek archbishops, bishops, priests or deacons, I hope I shall get off without a subscription, for I suppose he is not come to England for nothing, or he will be very unlike his cunning and ignorant bretheren.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

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\(^1\) Presumably Field Marshal Thomas Grosvenor (1764-1851).

\(^2\) Sir William Stirling-Maxwell Bt. (1818-78).

\(^3\) Archbishop Lycurgus of Syra and Tenos. According to The Times, 31 March 1870, he left England to return home on 29 March.
Plate XVI. Edward and Amelia, studio portrait, C. Pilvy, 38 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater, W., dated by Curzon 1861; Lady de la Zouche and Darea ('Tot'), photographer unknown, undated.

Reproduced by permission of Mr D.W.H. Neilson, from an album at Catton Hall.
444. No address.

Parham, 23 April 1870

My dear Sneyd,

On Easter Sunday, at 10 p.m., as we were going into the hall, for prayers, my mother put her foot on her gown, and fell down. Tho' it did not seem to be a heavy fall, it hurt her hip and she has never recovered from the shock, and now lies in great danger. She cannot bear to lie on her right side, poor thing, but except that, she is neither in pain, or anxiety, and is generally in a half conscious state, sometimes knowing one, sometimes not. I am sorry to say that there is but little hope for her, at her age, but still there is a hope that a good constitution may enable her to rally. It is the greatest blessing that my poor dear mother does not seem to suffer, and is cheerful and happy, tho' generally unconscious of what is going on.

My little Tot is not quite right, the doctor says it is nothing important, nevertheless between these two troubles I am in an agony, tho' perfectly aware that I ought not to be so. My nerves are so disordered that I have not power to control them —

We are helpless when it pleases God to afflict such weak creatures as I am. The doctor would not allow Robin to return to Oxford, so he is here.

Mrs Ed. Curzon is also at Parham, and is exceedingly kind, sitting constantly in my mother's room, and I have found a very kind and good woman as a nurse, so my mother has everything that we can do.

I wish you lived near here, I want a companion so much. Robin is a good boy, but he is too young even to understand what I suffer, and I hope he never may.
I trust you are all well, and with Mrs S. and the little ones.

Ever your affectionate,

R. Curzon
Many thanks for your kind letter my dear Sneyd, what a pleasure it is, to feel sure, that one has a good old friend in the world.

My dear mother's last illness brought out some beautifull proofs of the innocence of her heart, and her perfect confidence in the mercy of God. Often she prayed God to take her, and she had not the slightest fear of death. I feel much touched and grieved, now that she is gone for ever.

But alas my dear Sneyd, how terribly I feel the cruel loss of my most dear wife, I can hardly bear it. Now, if it had pleased God we might have hoped to pass the remainder of our days in peace and happiness, for now it is no longer possible to tamper with the weak minds of my father and mother, who would never have done me any harm of their own accord.

I shall inherit very little, if any thing, for my mother's income was not large enough to pay her expenses, and a peerage brings responsibilities, which require much more money than what remains to me.

While I am in sorrow and trouble, this is a cause of great jollification and plunder to servants, labourers, lawyers, doctors and other children of the horse leech. Every body is to have a suit of mourning, the maids are enjoying the delights of shopping, and sending to London and Storrington for all sorts of things, for which I am to pay, and Gladstone's succession and other duties press hard on one in my position, for while what I am to receive is theoretical, what I have to pay is a matter of fact. Where it is to come from I do not know. You will have a far better inheritance.
Remember me kindly to Mrs Sneyd.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. Curzon
Parham, 21 June 1870

My dear Sneyd,

I am here for Saturdays and Sundays, this week I stay till tomorrow, and return to the heat and dirt of the Metropolis tomorrow, hoping to get back on Saturday. Delamere has been here, Robin came home yesterday, I fear his vacation will be dull for him. It is so hot now that we cannot get out till the evening. I am employed in putting back all the things which my parents turned out, when they came here in 1858, and replacing what was in the rooms when my dear wife and I lived here. Old Mrs Francis touched me, by admiring the return of old and better days, which she said looked so natural in their old places [sic], tho' it seems to me almost sacrelege to move the shabby rubbish which I have groaned over for so many years.

I hope if all is well Mrs S. and you will come and pay me a visit later, in August or September. I should like to walk about with you here again - I feel very sad, I miss my wife more and more, tho' my children are a great comfort, if I was not always in such a state of alarm at any little illness that they may have, tho' I know that children are often out of sorts.

The House of Lords tires me very much. I have only sat up there twice till about 12, but was knocked up, both times. I suppose it is the heat, and gas, and tiresome speeches. However it is a deal better than the House of Commons. I have a supreme contempt for speeches, which take an hour to say what could be much better told in ten minutes -

Well there are lots of roses, anyhow, but hardly any hay. We have about half a crop, luckily we have a good deal of old hay. The poor servants will
have to drink a great deal of beer, for want of water. Are you going off to the Oxford Commemoration - what a long word -

I am too hot and blind to write any more. With kindest regards to Mrs S. I am always

Affect[ionate]ly yours,

Zouche
Parham, 11 July 1870

Well, my dear WS, how do you find your brother, and matters at Keel? The weather here is horrid, as it has been all this year. The heat is stifling, not a breath of air, it is I fear very unhealthy. We have little sprinkles of rain, but not enough to do much good, and the ponds and springs are drying up. Robin is well thank God, but the little Tot, tho' not ill, feels the weather, and so do I, for I am very dolefull, and cannot get up my spirits - I miss my poor wife more and more every day. I feel so lonely here.

How are you and the liver? I hope all the small Sneydlings are well, and your nice wife -

Well I have nothing to tell you, so you write and tell me all about it.

I was sorry to miss you in London. I suppose I shall have to go up again soon, for the education bill, whereby all the young folks are to be brought up as first rate atheists. I have two or three rather jolly idols. I expect to get a good price for them, when Gladstone's bill is passed. Tell me about the new church at Keel, do you think it would be easily converted into a hall of reason, or a temple of Plutus, or any thing of that sort, when old fashioned notions are swept away.

[Valediction and signature cut away]
451. No address.

24 Arlington Street, 28 July 1870

My dear Sneyd,

Well this is great news. I am very glad to hear that your poor brother departed this life without pain,\textsuperscript{1} for that is what we all must hope for; I did not expect it would be so soon. But what a good will he made, it could not be better, as far as you have told me, as leaving you only a life interest, under the circumstances increases your security against accidents, or misfortunes, to which all properties are liable, and which often come on, so unexpectedly.

No one, oldest of friends, can congratulate you, and wish you every happiness, that health and wealth can give, more sincerely than I do.

Now let me ask you to do one thing.

Let your first act as a millionaire be to do some good with the first money that you spend in your new and enviable capacity, let\textsuperscript{2} your first cheque be to some good charity. If you know of any thing that would be a great benefit to any one, which you could not do before, do it now, and God will bless you in this world, or in the next; and it will be a pleasure to you, to look back upon, besides, in the prosperous old age, which I hope and trust is now before you, with your nice wife, and children. I look forward to your next letter, telling me more particulars. I do not understand the heavy debt.\textsuperscript{3} I suppose there are some legacies. I shall be going north,

\textsuperscript{1} 27 July. \textit{Times}, 29 July.

\textsuperscript{2} Reading uncertain, original word overwritten.

\textsuperscript{3} Before embarking on the rebuilding of Keele Hall Ralph Sneyd mortgaged a considerable proportion of the estate to make available a sum of approximately £150,000. S.P.
towards the middle of October, and will give you a call, after that time, if you like to have me.

I go to Farham tomorrow, and probably return here on Monday.

Ever affectionately yours,

Zouche
Caton Hall, Burton-on-Trent, 7 October 1870

My dear Croesus,

I suppose this is the last letter I shall direct to poor little snug old Denton. I am sorry to think that I shall never see it again, or partake of roast fowl and Denton pudding, the the Ash Parlour, never no more. What you will do with all the Abbey gimcracks I cannot imagine, unless you add the Denton Gallery, from Keele to Newcastle, to put them in. I also am in trouble on that score, divers rooms and closets and drawers being full of old things, that I don't know where to put.

Mademoiselle, the governess, exclaimed 'Oh mon Dieu, quelle tat [sic] de veillérie [sic],' on seeing one or two lumber rooms cram full of armour. Her notion of things being comprised in the exact opposite, viz. a magasin de nouveautés, which is not so much in our line. But Mrs Sneyd will sympathise with the feelings of the 'Institutrice' (there are no governesses now).

Poor old Lady Horton is failing, I grieve to say. She is carried up and down stairs, on a chair, and is one day a little better, and another day not so well. She will be a great loss to all who had any thing to do with her, she is so much respected in this part of the world.

I propose to go to Tabley, for a few days after Crewe, on Monday the 17th, and then to Vale Royal, if Delamere is there, but he is in Scotland at present. Robin and Tot are here, Robin goes to Oxford on the 14th. He is about as tall as you and me together, more or less, and a good boy, thank God. I wonder whether your son and heir will be seven foot high.
Tell me when you get to Keale, and I will tell you when I can come.

Ever affectionately yours,

Zouche
Parham, 17 February 1871

My dear Sneyd,

First I had the lumbago, so that I could not turn round in bed, and take the mixture as before. Then came the death of dear good old Lady Horton,¹ and I wrangled² myself out of bed and went to Catton, to the funeral, which took place on Friday last, in a sudden storm of sleet and snow. Nevertheless, so much beloved and respected was the kind hearted and sensible old lady, that the churchyard at Croxall was full of poor people, drenched in the wet and cold, to see the last of their benefactress, for her charity was extended everywhere round Catton. Some of the attempts at mourning were very touching. One poor woman had a shawl with broad black stripes, which she had pinned together, so as not to show the coloured part, and all had some antient and threadbare scraps of black. On Sunday we had a funeral sermon, in which his Reverence told us that we should never again be blessed with so good a landlord, mistress, neighbour or friend, which sounded complimentary to Sir Robt. Wilmot, who comes after her.

She left me a silver cup in which Robin was christened, it is precisely in the style of Paul Lamerie,³ and of his time, but it was made by [sketch].⁴

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1. 4 February.
2. ? wrangled.
3. English silversmith, born in Holland of Huguenot parents, died 1751.
4. Hallmark, W surmounting a P within a cruciform outline, unidentified.
I don't know who he was, also the great necklace or collar, given to her by the Prince, or Adigar, of Ceylon. It is set with rubies and cat's eyes, a stone much valued there, tho' not in Europe, and it weighs about 20 ounces of gold. There will be some scrapings of personalty to be divided, and I hear I shall get about three thousand, more or less. This is really a godsend to me, as I embarked in building in a small way, without thinking how much there was to pay here, and this will be quite a relief to me. This time last year I was very rich, and could buy an old Bible or so, and go on my way rejoicing. Now I have twice as much money, and am as poor as a rat, and that rat of the most meagre sort.

I should have liked to have seen you in all your glory, with your tail spread out, like the father of all peacocks. I am glad you put forth all your splash, as you say, for grand things are of no use or satisfaction in the cupboard, and these days are so levelling and so common place that one never sees anything worth looking at.

What a failure the opening of parliament must have been, what an odd notion of the Queen putting her other garment over the throne, instead of on herself. I wonder whether the Prince of Wales put his other trousers on his chair.

What a wonderful mistake the Americans have made in their spite and jealousy, in giving a public reception to those miserable outcasts, the Irish Fenians, classing themselves with the scum

1. It was reported in The Times, 17 February 1871, that a group of Fenians had been given a civic reception in New York, and a gift of fifteen thousand dollars.
of the earth. I think that since the beginning of history, no nation ever committed so mean an act, which will hand them down with shame and contempt to all future generations. 'When thou sawest a thief thou consentedst unto him, and has been a partaker with the traitors.' How sold the American gentlemen must be, for I believe there are some, at this public exposure before the whole world, of such unworthy conduct —

Those old papers must be very curious and interesting. I representing a younger branch of my family, have nothing of the kind. How short a time is comprised in what we call antiquity, for except a few Egyptian papyri, there is not a book or a paper in the world 1,800 years old. I hope some day you will see my British Museum, it is a quaint sort of place, in no shape in particular and full of things which no fellow can understand.

I am almost sorry that you have got a house in Portland Place, that is, at the other end of it, which is almost as far off as Belgravia. What has become of the Duke of Newcastle's house, in Carleton Terrace? That would have suited you and me much better.

You see there is a bill to be brought forward, to

1. The Sneyd Papers.
prevent bankrupt peers sitting in the House of Lords, an awful warning to inveterate old purchasers of gimcracks –

Ever your affect[ionate],

Zouche
My dear Sneyd,

I answer by return of post, as you desire, but I can't come to Keele just now, it is impossible. I go down to Parham tomorrow, to meet Salvin, the architect, and I have all sorts of things to do, which will keep me between London and Sussex for the present. I hope to pay you a visit in the summer, when the sun shines, and if you don't eat all the mayonnaise de volaille I should be glad of another help if you please -

Yes, your great-grandmother was a jolly old soul, no doubt, and winked her eye as she put the empty bottle back into the cupboard, I dare say. I wonder whether she gave Charles\(^1\) any? Susanna Outon\(^2\) only got the bottles when my lady had disposed of the sack.

I return her small account with thanks.

So you are to be in the neighbourhood of the Zoological on the 9th - Oh no, I see it is at your sister's. Possibly I may be in Town while you are there, so good bye for the present.

Ever affectionately yours,

Zouche

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1. Not identified.
2. Not identified.
Parham, 3 April 1871

My dear Sneyd,

I cannot get on in my building, as I cannot get the stone from London, or any answers to my letters to Salvin, who I suppose is better employed somewhere else. But we have made a famous dust, in pulling down the old partitions. They found some black letter ballads pasted on the old walls, one about fair Rosamond, but they threw them away while I was not here. I hope they were not Caxtons, there seem to have been a good many of them, from all accounts.

Pray tell me how Bagot got that charming house in St James's Place? How much does he pay for it, is it to be sold, who does it belong to? Why did not you get it, that would have been so very nice.

Have you settled when you come to London?

I am very seedy, it could not be the sucking pig? What do you think?

Ever yours affect[ionately],

Zouche

? Or the sparkling Moselle, I rather believe that is pīsin.

1. Not identified.
Parham, 24 July 1871

My dear Sneyd,

I dare say you made a capital speech, and no doubt that part of it had a fine effect, when you gave back ten per cent of your rents, but what did you do that for? What a bad example to the poorer landlords in the neighbourhood. Well, I wish I could do that, and build a school, too. That is what I want to do so very much, but by reason of my poverty, I can not - That ere poverty is a curious sort of a plague. I have a few thousands a year, and no debt whatever. I have twice as much as I had last year, but I am not half so well off and no rat, or company, or ragged regiment of rats is so badly off, worse luck.

My dear little Tot has not been well. The doctor always told me there was nothing dangerous but I was so distressed that it has brought on a fit of the gout, a miracle of bad luck, I, none of whose /ancestors/ ever had anything of the kind, and I am hopping about on one leg, with a ferocious big toe on the other leg, which is the greatest plague because Delamere and Charles and Mrs and Miss Bagot are here, and the workmen hammering away in all directions. The doctor says this fit of the gout is not so bad as it might be, as it is only the first attack, so I am to make up my mind to a second - which is to be worse.

A pretty scrimmage Gladstone is making, and all the peers are to be up on Monday to defend their lives and liberties; and the Queen signs anything that

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1. A report on the reasons for this, submitted by the agent to Sneyd, survives among the Sneyd Papers. The reduction was allowed because of bad harvests and foot and mouth disease.

2. Substituted for '...family...'.

3. Probably a reference to the Army Regulation Bill, which was designed to abolish the purchase of commissions in the army. Great indignation was caused in the Lords when Gladstone achieved his purpose by royal warrant.
Gladstone orders her to sign, without even a squeak, while he is sawing off one leg of her throne after another. I wonder what the Prince of Wales thinks about it.

I have heard nothing about Mrs Harcourt's affairs yet. I fear I shall not be able to do anything.

Yours ever,

Zouche

Plate XXII. Darea, succeeded as 16th Baroness Zouche 31 July 1914, died unmarried 7 April 1917. Under the terms of her will all her father's manuscripts, deposited in the British Museum by her brother, became the property of the Museum. Left, London studio portrait by Rejlander, undated; right, photograph taken at Farham by H.W. Freeland of Angmering, undated.

Reproduced by permission of Mr D.W.H. Neilson, from an album at Catton Hall.
24 Arlington Street, 13 August 1871

My dear Sneyd,

I hope the waters of Buxton will do you good, and enable you to take another help of that pertickler capital dish, that you would only have taken one help of, under other circumstances.

Many thanks for your generous offer to lend me some cash, and that without any interest, it is a kind thought and worthy of our antient friendship. But I hope I can do without. I have managed pretty well hitherto, and owe no man anything. I have set aside some money for the building at Parham, and hope not to be found wanting when the day of reckoning arrives. Indeed I have not a very bad income, tho' I have much less than I ought to have, but the failure is that I am in a false position, my expences are too great for my fortune, and I feel humbled and mortified because I cannot do what is expected of me.

Just now I am in a wonderfull quandary, Lord Clanricarde has given me the refusal of the vineyard of Naboth, even Jesreel, which is called Rackham, and Amberley Castle, about £20,000 at least. It is a matter of life and death to Parham, i.e. to Robin. I must sell outlying farms, my other trousers, &c., and this comes in the middle of my expences in building. Between this and the dog days I find myself in a by no means insensible perspiration.

Tomorrow I go to Eastnor Castle for three or four days, it is a long way off, I wish I was safe back again. Robin enjoys himself at his Island of

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1. Ulick John (de Burgh), Marquess of Clanricarde (1802-74).
2. Near Ledbury, Herefordshire, seat of Charles Somers (Somers-Cocks), Earl Sommers (1819-83).
Cumbrae, and is going to Ireland, to see Lord Antrim.\textsuperscript{1} Tot is bathing at South Sea, which is doing her good, thank God, and I am too hot to write any more.

With kindest regards to the Misses, I am,

Ever affectionately yours,

Zouche

\textsuperscript{1} William Randal (McDonnell), 6th Earl of Antrim and Viscount Dunluce (1851-1918), Eton and Christ Church.
My dear Sneyd,

I hope you did not eat too much goose, yesterday, and was not took worse in the night.

I am sorry to say there is no chance of my travelling into those distant regions where you reside, at present, but I hope I may pay you another visit, some day. I am too much occupied to leave this, and in consequence have been asked everywhere.

Robin came back from Scotland, and Ireland, and Alnwick, and Ripon on Tuesday. He won a silver cup (it ain't silver) on Wednesday, for rifle shooting, and made a nice little speech at the dinner afterwards, in the new, unfinished dining room, where we had about sixty volunteers. They smoked, and spit upon the floor, and have left stink and stains in great abundance. Don't you have the army into your hall, if you have to give a great public feast; it would be better to put a tarpaulin over the stable yard than to have people in hobnailed boots in the house. I shall stick to the coach house next time.

How are all the large small family, and Mrs S.? I trust all well.

You said F. Gooch was coming here, but I have heard nothing of him. I have not one spare bed room now, but hope to have some, in two or three weeks. I am tired of the workmen and wish they were gone tho'. It is charming till you have too much of a good thing.

I suppose there is no chance of your coming down here this winter? I
long to show you the changes and I hope improvements.

Poor William Dugdale¹ is a great loss to me. I am happy to think that his son is very well disposed to me. H[e] died of that fearfull Bright's disease. Mrs D. has Elythe.²

I have sent a proposal to Lord Clanricarde, but I do not know which is the greatest scrape, to buy the property, or let it alone.

Ever affectionately yours,

Zouche

¹ William Stratford Dugdale M.P., of Merevale Hall, War., born 1 April 1800, died 15 September 1871. His grandfather's first wife, Charlotte (d. 1832), was a daughter of Viscount Curzon and aunt of Lord Howe's.

² Blyth Hall, Shustoke, War.
My dear Sneyd,

I was just thinking whether I owed you a letter, or whether you owed me one, when yours arrived this morning, with the history of all your hospitalities. I am also busy enough, preparing I hope for future guests, that is in future times, for I expect that no one except very old friends will trouble themselves to come and visit a decrepid old widower, without any lady to do the honors, but you see that at present I am my own architect, builder and decorator, and cannot get away at all, and I cannot hope to participate in any of your gaities this autumn or winter, more particularly as Keele is about one hundred thousand miles from hence, and I fear there is not much chance of your coming down south, even if I had a room to offer you, which I cannot do at present, in any comfort.

The Great Parlour is now a very pretty room, as gay and light as day, with a window ten feet wide and twenty feet high at the south, and one bow window and one little one to the west. It used to be a dark, dull room.

The old drawing room and library are thrown together, and make a room forty-three feet long, but very low, with the beautifull old Elizabethan cieling, which has been copied in many modern antique houses, and I have some good marqueterie furniture for it, and it is to have the walls covered with small pictures.

Item, the dining room is unfinished, but between fifty and sixty feet long, twenty-four high, and twenty-three wide, with a large bay window at
one end, and another at the side, fifteen feet wide, so that the room is about thirty feet wide in that part. The side board is in a recess, the cieling of which is supported by four old Venetian whitish marble columns, and the chimney piece is old Venetian marble, that I bought out of a palace there in 1844. It has a magnificent ponderous cieling, very bold, which I copied and enlarged from the cieling of the dining room at Catton. The frieze below the cieling is a very original production, of brass, partly enameled light turquoise blue, and china dinner or desert plates, let into it at intervals. It looks beautiful near the eye, like jewelry, but the effect is sadly lost at twenty-four feet high, and I must make some alterations in it to make it look bolder. I am rather in a fright at some of my originalities, for fear that Ed. Cheney, or some other wicked and cynical man, when I tell him I was my own architect, should say 'Ah, so I thought!'

Outside the house, I am building a gatehouse, with a great archway for carriages to pass from the Fountain Court into the stable yard. They put the keystone into the principal arch this morning. I hope this will look well. Inside the archway there are aisles like a church, with arches on each side, but they are not built yet.

Then this morning also, I got Lord Clanricarde's agreement, to sell me the Rackham, Amberley Castle, and Waltham Park property, for twenty years. This is a dreadfully precarious affair for if those blessed Ecclesiastical Commissioners do not agree to enfranchise the land, I shall lose land and money on the expiry of the lease. I must hope for the best, as it is a matter of life and death to whoever the owner of Parham may be, in twenty years. I dare not refuse purchase, as whoever holds that land has poor old Parham at his mercy. However it is a fine thing to be lord of a castle, towns and towers, as long as it lasts, and I hope dear Robin may be more fortunate in life than me, and that it will be all right.
A wonderfull event has come to pass, at Storrington. A Mr Faithfull, and twenty pupils have come there. Two dined here one day, very nice fellows, gentlemen. The said Faithfull has one hundred children, more or less, so that Storrington is looking up. Houses are let, butchers and bakers are shining up the shop windows, and seeing to business, and I suppose I shall find myself in an inhabited district some of these days, where as yet there are only deer and squirrels. The trade in cerise ribbands is looking up, as all the young ladies who live near the pupils are investing in charms. These pupils are grown up young men, who have been plucked a few times, and come to Mr Faithfull to be crammed. Many of them are of good families, sine strapping fellows, going into the army. I think it a mistake to examine them in ologies, and to keep a good soldier out of the army, who could chop up an enemy at short notice without reference to the classics.

Well I wish you lived near here old fellow. You will have to bolt some day, when, or if you are wise, before the great volcano of the Potteries bursts, and the irruption of Newcastle carries all before it. I will have a room ready for you and the family, when the time comes.

Ever yours,

Zouche
Parham, 20 December 1871

My dear Sneyd,

This is to wish you many merry Christmasses, and happy new years, and powers to digest mince pies, for ever and ever, amen.

And you seem to be fulfilling the duties of your position, by filling fully the stomachs of many guests, all of which is right and proper and pleasant, and much to be desired, and I wish you joy thereof.

I have nothing particular to tell you, I cannot get rid of the workmen, who always find something to do as soon as the last job is concluded, and hammer away, louder than before. The old drawing room is shaking down into a very pretty old fashioned room, full of pictures, some of them very good, but pictures are an invention of the enemy, they stoutly resist going every where where you want them to go, they are worse than books. They have been "stacking" my books, in passages and lumber rooms, which means piling them up one on the top of the other, so you can't find any thing, and the number of them no man knowith.

I am glad to see that the Prince of Wales is going on well. I hope this severe illness will be a lesson to him, and enlighten him as to the great responsibilities of the man who happens to be the heir to the throne.

There is to be a public subscription, to rebuild Warwick castle,¹ which was not insured for a farthing. I hear some of the historical armour has

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¹ Extensively damaged by fire, 3 December.
been fished out of the river, where it had been thrown out of the window.

Many thanks for the photograph, it is a very good one; is there not one of Mrs S.? I send you one, which has the convenience of looking as well upside down as right side uppermost.

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

Zouche
Parham, 25 January 1872

My dear Sneyd,

I have had a melifluous account of his visit to Keele, from George Horton, who seems to have eaten too many good things, and was took worse when he got to Capesthorne.¹ He says you were swearing at me (internally) for not coming to Keele, but if you take the matter into consideration, there is a great gulf fixed between you and me. I am very busy building, you are doing nothing, but I should like to see your face at the idea of coming out two or three hundred miles in the cold, to pay me a visit. I hope nevertheless that you will come here, some fine day. I think it would interest you, to see what I have done with my very small means. I don't think I have made any great mistakes, but nobody has been here yet whose opinion is worth minding, and that makes me want you, and Delamere, and someone who does understand. Two heads are always better than one in these kind of things. I wonder who were the wretched idiots on the committee, who approved of Mr Street's² new Law Courts, as /exposed/³ in the Illustrated News.⁴ It is the most flaring piece of Florid Cockney (I cannot call it architecture) that ever was dreamt of, in an architectural nightmare. It looks like a pile of children's toys, just as they are emptied out of the box, on the nursery table.

I was staying at Lavington with the Bishop of Winchester,⁵ and there

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¹ Near Congleton, Cheshire, home of Arthur Henry Davenport, son of Edward Davis Davenport M.P.
² G.E. Street (1824-81).
³ Substituted for '...exhibited...'.
⁵ Samuel Wilberforce (1805-73).
we had the Archbishop of Cant¥.¹ and other condiments. A party there was desperately in love with Mrs S.

'You know Mrs S.? quoth the party, 'is not she nice?'
'Very' says I.
'Charming?'
'Yes'.

'So pretty, such beautiful hair, such beautiful ey[e]s? Quite the right sort of ey[e]s, and altogether so very, very... - &c! - &c! - &c!
'And I like Watty, too, very much.'

'Ah, I shall tell him he must not ask you to Keele', said I.
'Oh, you wouldn't do that! I should so much like to go there some day.'

'Well, I shall certainly tell him', I said, but I think I shan't tell you who it was, so you look out.

We have had the most tremendous rain, for the last week. They have been emptying the slops out of the sky, with a vengeance, the Wildbrook is a vast lake and makes a magnificent view, backed by the mountains, that men call Downs. I have hardly been out for a week, and please pity me, I have got to go to a ball tonight, at Mr Gibson's,² alas. Woe is me, what a horrible business. I am so very sorry for myself they will think me a beast if I do not go, but they don't know how I suffer, or they ought to be hanged for asking me.

All the neighbours have been signing a petition to let off Miss Edmunds, the Brighton poisoner³, but I have refused to sign it, as I think

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¹ Archibald Campbell Tait (1811-82).
² Not identified.
³ Christiana Edmunds, reprieved on the grounds of insanity.
cold blooded murderers ought to be hanged for the encouragement of others, and don't want to have my innocent children murdered, with impunity, by a vindictive, heartless she devil.

Yours ever,

Zouche
Farham, St Valentine's Day, 1872

Yes, my dear Sneyd, the Father of Bibliomaniacs is gone - out of print. He was rare, if not unique, and the last time I saw him he said he was going to leave his library to his daughter, Mrs, not Mrs Hallowell, but the eldest I think - who has a tremendously pretty daughter, Kitty, one of the prettiest damsels I ever saw.

I breakfasted at Grillon's Club last Saturday, and Desraeli and the Archbishop of Canterbury were going to the British Museum to elect a new Trustee, and to look after Sir Thomas's books, which they won't get for nothing, tho' you or I might have done so.

I got the book from Leader, I enclose a letter from him, for you to read and to tell me whether you think he has married his countess - or not.

Shall you be in London, for the Thanksgiving? I don't think I shall go.

Yours ever affectionately,

Zouche

I was at a grand wedding at Somers's; and he has been here - left yesterday.

1. Sir Thomas Phillipps died 7 February 1872.

2. Sir Thomas's eldest daughter, Henrietta Elizabeth Molyneux, married in 1842 James Orchard Halliwell, later Halliwell-Phillipps (1820-89). Sir Thomas, in a complicated will (see Minby, Phillipps Studies No.2 (1952), 100-101) left the house and library to his youngest daughter, Kate, wife of the Rev. John Fenwick.

3. Probably John Temple Leader (1810-1903), a contemporary of Curzon's at Charterhouse and Christ Church, connaisseur and M.P.

4. Not identified.
My dear Sneyd,

You showed the wisdom of your generation, in getting out of the way of the Thanksgiving, which was however a most wonderfull, and awful sight, so far as the British public were concerned. There must have been perhaps two millions of people, in the streets, mostly orderly, good gaping people, walking themselves to death, for no particular reason. Such quantities of women with babies in their arms, many of whom were spoilt, as I see by the papers, today. One blessed babby whom I followed down Ludgate Hill, had his head banged about a dozen times, by hurrying people tumbling against him, and I suppose must have been dead by the time he got home; or like the Irishman, who was asked how he was, said to the doctor, 'Well yer honer, I'm pretty bad, entirely, for if I ain't dead, I'm spacheless.'

I was struck with the good humour of every body, and particularly of the police, who must be a sort of angels, and seem never to be tired, tho' they are on duty twenty-five hours out of the twenty-four, and had to contend against constant parties of filthy roughs, always trying to push against the stream, and annoy honest people, probably for the purpose of picking pockets in the confusion.

The decorations of the streets were wonderfull, with miles of red baize, and mottos in white tape, and prince's feathers of cotton wool, and other substances. The "Venetian masts" would have looked very well, if they had been more like those in the place of St Mark, but they were generally so small that they put one in mind of radishes, with the thin end uppermost.
There was a triumphal arch, nearly as big as Keele, in Farringdon St., very splendid indeed, of the best carpenter's gothic, all gilt and painted, splendidly, and the view of all the flags and red baize balconies, in the Strand, through the arch, was beautifull, almost as good as a transformation scene, at the play. But there was an army stationed under it, who would not let us go through, I don't know why, so we were compelled with shame to take a lower place.

The view inside St Paul's was also curious. All the red baize balconies, not used up, in the streets, were set up there, but dignity and good taste had been admitted into the cathedral, or indeed had been made use of, any where. The Lord Chancellor and the Speaker, certainly, had red arm chairs, but as they were not raised above the floor, those two dignitaries were immediately concealed by the crowd of Lords, and House of Commons, the moment they sat down.

The hymn was very good. The Archbishop preached rather grandly, and distinctly, so that we heard every word, from the miraculous pulpit, and the tin sounding board over his head. This is in the shape of the under side of a prodigious saucer, with a hole in the middle about two feet in diameter, filled with more red baize, and hanging from above by some wonderfull mechanism of iron bars, which we supposed were contrived so that the preacher's head might be received into this hole, when they let the sounding board down on him, at the limited time of twenty minutes. But as the Arch Bishop only preached for thirteen minutes, this was not done, to our great disappointment, for it seemed a beautifull contrivance altogether.

1. Single word overscored, possibly 'all'.

The Queen and princes were brought up, against a red railing (seemed red baize) perhaps velvet, or silk, and had exactly the appearance of prisoners at the bar, while the Archbishop gave his sentence. Charles Bagot walked up and down a certain gang way, kept with ropes, between the Lords and Commons, like a race course. He acted the part of the inevitable dog, at the Derby, and did it very well. It was a blessed moment, when we all crept out of a small hole, in the bottom of the south door, all darkened with beams, and scaffolds (and red baize). We should all have been killed if there had been a panic. Thousands of pounds must have been spent, in making this labyrinth, which would have been so much better if they had let it alone.

I did not see the procession, so called. What a very great pity it was, that there was not a procession, with the state coach, and the cream coloured horses, &c. When I was a school boy, I always took off my hat, when I saw "three in a buggy, and a long way to go," but here we had five in a shay, and the poor Prince of Wales dragged backwards, all the way, for about seven miles. I sincerely hope he is none the worse today, but it was a cruel experiment, and exposure. It put me in mind of John Gilpin's wife -

My sister, and my sister's son,  
Myself, and children three,  
When we have all got in the chaise,  
The chaise will filled be

I must tell you that we, the Fords,¹ and Robin, got to St Paul's very pleasantly, for a liberal government had hired four penny steamers, two for Lords and two for Commons, which started from the clock tower, at

¹ Not identified.
Westminster St., that is to say I was very cold, with a bitter east wind, but we got to St Paul’s in no time, and crept in at the same hole that we crept out of, afterwards, and got home in peace.

And then came the real grand event of the day. !!

Robin, who was looking out of the window of the Arlington St. drawing room, called frantically to his ancestor, in the Park drawing room. I ran to see, and there I did see, something worth seeing. A cavalcade of knights, in complete armour, one on a horse in armour, the only one I ever saw, in the flesh - Nobles, and kings, and princes, in all sorts of dresses, and ladies in no dresses (to speak of) at all. Three omnibusses of solid gold, each drawn by six or eight horses, covered with velvet, not red baize; and on the top of these omnibusses or triumphal cars, thrones, and principalities and powers, in gorgeous attire - more men in armour, more ladies in tights, and riding habits of divers colours, and gold, two men riding on camels, and lastly a real live elephant, with a church steeple on his back, and flags all over him - this was a climax of glory. I was quite revived by the sight, that was something like.

Now the Liberal government ?? might have hired all this, for £100,000 or perhaps less, and there would have been something to see. If her Gracious Majesty had sat on a throne, on the top of a gold omnibus, with Gladstone the first, waving a flag, not red baize, over her head, how FINE that would have been, and the great high Lowe ?? might have lit a lucifer

1. The second '1' has been struck out in pencil.
2. Single illegible word.
match at intervals, and Mister Bright\(^1\) might have roared, and Mister Bradlaugh\(^2\) might have mouthed at Trafalgar Square, and the British lion, now in the Zoological, might have been let out for that day only, and been fed on the roast beef of old England (now mutton), and it would have been, as one of the Grande Nation might have said, \(''C'est beau, c'est magnifique,'"

vot you say in de English, ah "t'is pretty well"."

Ever affectionate[ly] yours -

Zouche

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1. John Bright (1811-89), President of the Board of Trade.
2. Charles Bradlaugh (1833-91), freethinker and politician, elected M.P. for Northampton in 1880, he was refused the right to affirm in the House of Commons and it was not until 1886 that he was allowed to take his seat.
My dear Sneyd,

Well, I expect to honor the metropolis with my presence, on the 8th more or less. George and Mrs W-Horton are coming to stay with me, which is kind of them, as I am very sorry for myself, all alone.

I am going up to Town on Tuesday, to the levée, as I see that the Queen is going to hold one, herself for a change. That is, I have asked Delamere to present me, and he has not answered my petition. Tho' a roaring Tory, I know very few Tory peers, most of my great friends being Whigs, as I suppose all ladies are, as they all wear chignons. (N.B. This is a joke). What are you doing in the garden? I hope you have got some flowers.

I am busting with indignation, about the English law. There is nothing to prevent any one claiming Keele, and all your gimcracks, and the lawyears may rob you according to law of £100,000 or ten times as much, and you would have no redress. Who are the greatest thieves, the claimant who tried to rob Lady Tichborne and her son, or the lawyears who have really done so. It is an enormous shame, and a disgrace to a civilized country, and not satisfied with what they have got, they seem to have given a verdict by which the case is not settled, and may be brought on again, till the unfortunate Tichborne family are squeezed quite dry.

When you bring your large small family to London, I hope Tot and my other niece may make friends —

1. Letter written in purple ink.
2. The case is too celebrated to require reiteration. Suffice it to say that the hearing in the Court of Common Pleas (following proceedings
Ever affect[ionate]ly yours -

Zouche

(2. cont'd.) in Chancery) began in June 1871. The issue turned on the identity of the claimant to the estate of Sir James Tichborne Bt. (d.1862), the heir being his son Roger. The case ended in March 1872, when the claimant and plaintiff failed to establish that he was Roger Tichborne. As Arthur Orton he was prosecuted for perjury and fraud, found guilty, and, in February 1874, sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment.

3. Presumably one of Sneyd's four daughters.
Parham, 5 April 1872

My dear Sneyd,

I do not travel so Royally as you, but in a more humble way. I hope to get to Arlington St. on Tuesday the 9th; George and Mrs Horton come up the same day, so we shall air the metropolis for you and hope you will be all the better for our forethought. With best love to my other niece, and her mama, I am,

Ever affectionately yours,

Zouche

Beatrice Lane?¹

She is a pretty girl is she not? Who is she going to marry, is it a good match? Dreadfull job is a wedding, i.e. in London. You have to puzzle your bowels by eating chickens, and lambs, his head with his legs, and the purtenances thereof, with your shoes on your feet and your loins girded, at some unusual hour, and feel as if you had swallowed a bolster for the rest of the day, and the difficulty of finding a present which has not been equally given by twelve other people, and yours being the last one left in the shop, is the worst of the lot.

I am sorry to go to London, just as the primroses and cowslips are coming out, and the hedges teeming with what Totty calls violence.

¹. Isabella Emma Beatrice, youngest daughter of John Newton Lane, of King's Bromley Manor, Staffs., and the Hon. Agnes Bagot, daughter of William, 2nd Lord Bagot, married 11 April 1872, Percy Brodrick Bernard, eldest son of the Bishop of Tuam. She died in 1876.
Parham, 23 July 1872

My dear Sneyd,

May you continue to enjoy your otium cum dignitate, in saecula saeculorum amen; and indeed you are very likely to do so, I am happy to think, and I think you deserve it, too, for you are a good old fellow, and have a great cook, and if that ain't virtuous, what is?

Why did you not get the Duke of Newcastle's house, instead of Lord Granville? I am glad to hear that he is in a position to take such an expensive mansion, for I have a great admiration of him, in the House of Lords, I only wish we had him on our side. He was made on purpose for his position,¹ and I have no doubt but that he was born with a piece of red tape round his neck, and made diplomatic speeches to his wetnurse.

The fête at Cliveden must have been beautifull, it is such a fine situation. I am going to Up Park, on Wednesday till Saturday, to go over to the Goodwood races for Thursday. Not much in my line, but I have never been there since I went with the Ld. Marquis of Westminster, in the days of my youth and I should like to see what sort of scrimmage it is.

Why is your smart little governess² going away? Is it a heart disease? Pretty governesses are very subject to it. The Sussex Archaeological

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¹ At this time Gladstone's foreign secretary.
² See Plate XIX: Miss Pritchard came to Denton in October 1868, from Knockin, in Shropshire, where her father was curate. She taught French, German, Italian and music, and was '...rather good looking - with gentle, quiet, unassuming manners - un-governessy, & un-vulgar...', Sneyd to his brother, Denton, 7 October [1868]. S.P.
Society makes an invasion on Parham on August 8.\(^1\) I shall be away, as I am too sad and sorry to meet a crowd, and make speeches, and I think it a pitiful position, to be showman to your own house, more particularly to people who neither know or care about "rubbishing old stuff" such as there is here.

There was a mighty wedding of Raymond Burrell\(^2\) yesterday, to Miss Loder, with about £150,000 all made out of hides and tallow. Mr Loder is said to have three, some say six millions.

Robin is going to read at Festiniog. I hope my building really will end some day.

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

Zouche

1. An illustrated article on Parham, by William Durrant Cooper, was published in *Sussex Archaeological Collections...*, vol. xxv [vol. xiii] (1873), 1–22.

2. Charles Raymond Burrell (1848–99), nephew of Percy, whom he succeeded as 6th Bt. in 1876.
My dear Sneyd,

I am sure there must be some mesmerism or other mystery about it, for yours is the third letter that I have received, just as I was thinking I had not heard of from my correspondent, and was sitting down to write to them. But your letter takes away my breath, what a state of perpetual motion you have been in, and in this miserable weather too. I think you and Mrs Sneyd must be gone mad to be scampering about in that way, when you have such a nice house, and can get your friends to come and see you.

As for me, I feel that I am much too aged and infirm to go about in the winter. It is bad enough to be anywhere, in this climate, and here, every place is wet, except the pond, for we have let the water off there, to build a boat house. How I wish I could get away to Naples, or somewhere where the sun shines.

I was very sorry to hear that poor Warburton\(^1\) is losing his eyesight, I sincerely hope it is not true. Arley\(^2\) was very pretty, and well done, but when I was last there, years ago, it was not a good house to live in. The aspects were all wrong, and the only room one could sit in was the hall. Perhaps he has made some more practical improvements.

Nov. XXI

I should like to see those books. I love a folio picture book, and the

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1. Rowland Eyles Egerton-Warburton (1804-91), poet and sportsman.
2. Arley, near Northwich, Chesh., Warburton's home.
ivory dyptic, that sounds marvellous. Did the Count make it, or is it really an ould anciente holi chattel?

I wrote to Shirley, who is in Ireland, to ask what relation Anne Margaret Meredith, who married Viscount Curzon,¹ was to Miss Meredith, who married Lord Ferrers, the great hero of the Shirley family, and he could not tell me!!!!! I thought he knew the pedigree of every body connected with his family. Can you tell me?

Tot is very well. Robin is in the act of examination for his degree, which makes me sadly anxious. I have nothing of astounding interest to communicate. I wish you would pull Keele a little nearer this way, I would push behind, for it is a great failure our being so far off. I have all sorts of things to ask, and tell you, invaluable information no doubt, but I don't know what /it/² would be about even if we could meet.

A most unheard of and incredible event has just come to pass, the Sun has come out. I write it down immediately, lest he should have gone in again before I have time to subscribe myself,

Ever affect[ionate]ly yours,

Zouche

Who are the William Russells?³ Has Tabley been furnished, and brushed up?

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1. Curzon's grandfather, Viscount Curzon of Penn, married 3rdly, 17 April 1777, Anna Margaretta, widow of Barlow Trescothick, in 1770 Lord Mayor of London. She was a daughter of Amos Meredith, son of Sir William Meredith Bt., of Henbury, Cheesh. Laurence, 4th Earl Ferrers, married 16 September 1752, Anna's younger sister, Mary.

2. Substituted for '...they...'.

3. Not identified.
Parham, 5 December 1872

My dear Sneyd,

I am sure you will be glad to hear that Robin has taken his degree, or rather passed his examination, so I hope he may now throw those stupid books into the fire, and begin to learn something usefull and practical, and better worth knowing, than the mediaeval humbug of a scholastic education. I wonder whether we shall live to hear the bells ring, when the young squire of Keele takes his double first, in litteris humanioribus. I don't know what that means, I think it is Latin or Greek or "summat o that".

A wonderfull tough book Ld. Crawford has sent me, about Etruscan inscriptions,¹ which I always thought was one of those things that no fellow could understand. He says the Etrurians were Germans. I cannot say that they were not, not being acquainted with the party, but I cannot fancy "Mars, Bacchus, Apollo virorum" drinking beer, and smoking a meerschaum pipe in the Elysian fields, or Venus speaking from her stomach, instead of her mouth, saying 'Donner und blitzen Herr Upiter, wir haben ser schlectes vetter, yetzt, assach - '

Ever your affect[ionate],

Zouche

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My dear Sneyd,

I have not answered your prosperous letter of the 25th because your kind heart will be sorry for what I have to say, and I did not want to write, in the midst of your festivities.

My bowels had been irregular, and I went to London, about a fortnight ago, to consult a doctor, who gave me to understand that I was in danger of a speedy and horrible death. This sudden and unexpected announcement came like a thunderbolt, and completely prostrated my nerves, which have been in a miserable state ever since my dear wife's death.

That good Phillimore took me to Dr Andrew Clarke,¹ who says that there is a thickening, or induration of the lower intestine. As my general health is good, I may possibly recover. I am put on a regimen, and take Pulna water, &c. But I suffer so terribly from anxiety, and nervousness, that I am in a miserable state. I have kept Robin with me, and he is a great comfort, but one of my sad miseries is when my little Tot looks up at me with her loving eyes and wonders why Pap looks so dull, and I have to pretend that it is nothing.

As I humbly trust in God's mercy, I do not so much fear death, as some horrible suffering. At present I suffer very little, except with the mind.

Pray for me, dearest old friend, and believe me,

¹ Sir Andrew Clark Bt. (1826-93).
Ever yours very affectionately,

Zouche
Parham, 14 May 1873

My dear Sneyd,

Pray come on Saturday. We have a fine cold NE wind for you. I cannot write any more today.

Ever very affectionately yours,

Zouche
Parham, 31 May 1873

My dear Sneyd,

Many thanks for the books. One of the prayer books is a very good one and I have had great comfort in reading it. The Moonstone is too small a print, for such an old cripple as,

Your very affec[ionate],

Zouche

1. First published 1868.
Parham, 16 June 1873

My dear Sneyd,

I am very much obliged for the beautiful fruit, that you have been so good as to send me. Totty quite appreciates her share of it. Phillimore and my lady left this morning.

Ever your affect[ionate],

Zouche
DISCUSSION

Curzon himself described his travels in Visits to Monasteries in the Levant and in Armenia, and his collecting has been described by Munby. The notice by Stanley Lane-Poole in the D.N.B. is short and uninformative and has remained unaltered since 1886. Curzon deserves to be better known; he also merits consideration as a letter writer.

Let us consider the individual first. Curzon was possessed of a neurotic conscience, and it would therefore be interesting to know more about his childhood. All we have is a glimpse of a small, sensitive, timid boy, to whose schooldays there attaches an important question-mark. What exactly Mrs Price of High Wycombe meant when she told Bucknall Estcourt that she 'was satisfied of his amendment' we shall probably never know, and he went on to a tough school, so it seems likely that his self-confidence was undermined at an early age. It was almost certainly shattered at Oxford. This again is a period that we should like to know more about, but all we can say is that it appears


to have left Curzon with a sense of failure that he was never able to escape. It was one thing to take leave of a college, it was impossible to take leave of a generation, and Curzon's generation at Christ Church included men who rose in eminence with the passing years. A number of them were his personal friends, among them Walter Hamilton, who became Bishop of Salisbury, Robert Phillimore who became a judge, and Viscount Canning, who became first Viceroy of India, and meeting them, hearing from them, or reading or hearing about them reminded Curzon of the gap that increasingly widened between him and them. To some extent Curzon's social rank mitigated the disadvantage, which may have been why he set such store by it. Had he been wealthier his having to leave Oxford would have mattered less, but lack of money (which he not incorrectly attributed to his parents' folly) left him exposed and sensitive, and sometimes separated him from his friends. Curzon had a lively mind and was too intelligent to be content with idleness, but he lacked the ability to excel at the things that interested him most, which brought home to him the significance of his failure and made him over-critical of other people's failings, particularly those of members of his own family. His experience at Oxford placed him at a moral disadvantage in a family he despised. Given his naturally cheerful disposition, he might have survived unscathed the being outstripped by his contemporaries if he had had his family's support, but in this respect he proved unfortunate.
Academic inadequacies apart, after leaving Oxford Curzon determined to be a model son and to his astonishment (and fury) found himself rejected in favour of his younger brother, whose secret marriage had disgraced the family. Edward, having reinstated himself in favour, sponged off his parents to an extent that compromised his own as well as his brother's prospects, presenting Curzon with a moral conflict that he was never able to resolve.

Curzon is a figure of considerable interest, partly for the personal reasons given above and partly because of his position in society. Both factors bear on our consideration of Curzon as a letter writer. He belonged to the minor nobility. He had contacts in the Roxburghe Club and in the Philobiblon Society. He knew a number of distinguished scholars, collectors and specialists, such as Sir Frederick Madden, Henry Tattem, Sir Thomas Phillipps, Robert Holford, Robert Hay, the Egyptologist, and Rawdon Brown of Venice. He worked with Stratford Canning, he met Sir Austen Henry Layard, he knew Monckton Milnes, he entertained Wiseman,¹ he married a daughter of Sir Robert Wilmot-Horton, Gladstone was married to the sister of Sir Stephen Glynne (one of Curzon's oldest friends), Sneyd's brother Ralph was intimately acquainted with the

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¹Cardinal Wiseman has been here with a flock of priests, he is a mighty great antiquarian, but he wears a fancy dress in the evening, a long red silk cloak, which is infra dig to my mind. I find he reads Syriac and Hebrew, he is certainly a very accomplished man, and has a proper respect for a gimcrack." Curzon to Sneyd, Parham, 28 November 1857. S.P.
Duchess of Sutherland,\(^1\) in short prominent Victorians were never far away. Curzon had leisure to observe the world from comfortable vantage points, in idleness, advantages to which one can add a third, that whilst it was important to him that he belonged to fashionable society, he was never carried away by the glitter:

I went to Petworth Wednesday, came back yesterday. Thundering scrimmage I found there, forty people in the house, more or less, all justices, magistrates of the Quorum and Custalorum and so on—barring the wives. They had lots of wives, and we fared sumptuously every day, and they spiflicated all the wicked people that stole ducks and sixpences, and we drank our own healths in champagne and thought how good and worthy a set of people we were, and moralised how the others had their deserts at the Quarter Sessions, and we had our deserts, too, with strawberries worth more than a duck each at this season of the year, and vases of gold and silver—as we deserved. And in the evening we danced to soft music and I fell at the feet of a lovely little damsel, who picked me up again, and the wicked people took gentle exercise upon the treadmill, or had to pump an engine like mad for twenty-five hours a day; and it

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1. Harriet Elizabeth Georgiana, 2nd Duchess of Sutherland (1806-60), Mistress of the Robes to Queen Victoria 1837-41, 1846-52, 1853-58, 1859-61. In a postscript to a letter to Sneyd, from Crewe, 28 September 1861, Curzon asks: 'How is it about your brother's marriage to the Duchess of Sutherland?' Ralph Sneyd was a great admirer of the Duchess, and a constant visitor to Trentham. After the Duke's death, 28 February 1861, he told Vincent '...the house of mourning hardby has engrossed me to the neglect of all correspondence,...' Keele, 11 March 1861. S.P. Sneyd's visit to Cliveden between May and June of that year may have given rise to gossip, or it is conceivable that Walter Sneyd had dropped a hint to Curzon, but as the elder Sneyd was then sixty-eight and the Duchess fifty-five Curzon's question is very difficult to explain. A portrait of the Duchess, mounted in a frame specially carved by William Rogers hung at Keele, and there was also a bust by Matthew Noble. *G.E.C.*, XII, Pt. i, 565-66; S.P.
struck me very forcibly that there is certainly a great and wide difference between virtue and vice, and I have come to the conclusion that it is better to be very good and virtuous, and drink champagne, and dance with nice pretty girls, than to be wicked and sinful and be caught stealing sixpence, and have to pump like the deuce in a cold yard with a high wall round it, in the gaol.¹

These things are important, because examination of some of the most celebrated correspondence suggests that letter writing at its best requires certain conditions, some of which are advantageous, others essential. Powers of observation and leisure to exercise them, good manners and youth, count as advantages; a favourable climate of exchange is the first essential. If the charm of love letters is anything to go by, being in love may represent the ideal state of mind. Failing this there must be at least affection and sympathy between minds that are attuned. A predominantly acrimonious exchange between correspondents with little in common, sustained for its own sake over a period of time, in all seriousness, is conceivable, but neither party would be a letter writer in the sense in which we propose to use it here, where the ability to derive pleasure by bestowing it forms a necessary part of the relationship. It is easy to see what makes the letters of Dorothy Osborne attractive; it is less easy to define the qualities of a letter writer. Character alone is not enough. To be a letter writer demands the quality – quality rather than gift – that

¹ See No. 153 above.
imparts immediacy to writing by communicating a state of mind, rather than conveying merely what is in it. This, I believe, is the other essential.

If we are to draw conclusions about letter writers based on their letters we must distinguish between accumulations and collections. An accumulation (or archive) is the result of a natural process. Dean X, let us say, is in the habit of writing to Miss Y, who keeps his letters. Now if we are going to use these letters to assess the Dean's character, the fact that all the letters were written to the same person, that throughout the correspondence the Dean's mind was attuned to Miss Y's, is important, because it had an influence on what he said and the way he said it, and that influence represents a constant factor. We can see the Dean in the light in which he intended Miss Y to see him, or possibly (if our mind is sufficiently attuned to her's) in the light in which she saw him, or in a mixture of both; and we can also see Miss Y. In the case of a collection, where all the Dean's letters that is is possible to trace have been brought together artificially, the result, as source material, is not quite so straightforward. It will have the advantage of showing us something of the company the Dean keeps, but if we are to judge him by it we must use it with a little care. It will be interesting to compare the light in which the Dean presents himself to one correspondent with that in which he presents himself to another, but his humour, say, as illustrated by his
letters to Miss Y, cannot be contrasted with his pig-headedness, say, as illustrated by his letters to Bishop Z, without reference to Miss Y and Bishop Z. Both, no doubt, will be familiar with the humour and the pig-headedness but they may be the humour and the pig-headedness of two different people, neither of whom, in, as it were, the wrong envelopes, might be familiar either to Miss Y or to the Bishop, but from whose collected letters it would be easy to reconstruct a single but non-existent Dean. If we are to get as near to the Dean's character as we can, and take full advantage of the material offered by a collection of his letters, we must make allowance for the different archives within in it and take into account the constant factors in each.

A further point has to be borne in mind. The fact that some of the letters of letter writers have stylistic similarities does not necessarily mean that the writers had anything in common. It is indicative, rather, of the inescapable fact that the letter form has its limitations, and that the tricks of the trade must inevitably reappear. Letter writers may have points in common but it is not particularly surprising that they have. Neither Walpole nor (to anticipate) Curzon was intellectually or physically robust, both were egotistical, both were snobs, both were enthusiasts for practically everything Gothic, both enjoyed collecting and sought through it to extend the impression of their personalities, and both liked dogs, but they were not very alike. Nor is it particularly significant that from time to time letter writers should echo each other's thoughts or
appear to do so. If (to anticipate again) Curzon had been born three centuries earlier, how easily we can imagine him sighing: 'Tis a sad thing when all on's happinesse is only that ye world does not know you are miserable.' It is the limitations of the letter as an entertainment rather than any characteristics that the writers had in common that led Curzon when he was writing to Sneyd, as it led Swift when he was writing to Stella, to use the imagery of the stable and nonsense words. Like Cowper, Curzon could write a letter out of very little, and like his near-contemporary fellow-Londoner, Lamb, Curzon used cockney speech – 'hoss' for horse, 'passon' for parson, 'krittur' for creature, 'tickler' for particular, 'sitch' for such. When Curzon 'simmers' up to London he may be using coaching or railway slang, the point is not of great consequence here, what matters is that Curzon is using the tricks of the trade. This by itself does not go far towards establishing Curzon as a letter writer, but it ought to make us more interested.

By Curzon's time the letter is no longer an art form. The epistolary essay has gone and there are fewer letters written with an eye to posterity. Letter writing has to some extent reverted to its more natural form, but it has lost something in the process. Mme. de Sévigné and Mrs Carlyle have more in common than Walpole and Mérimée, but there is a difference between Dorothy Osborne and the ladies of Alderley.¹ Lord Chesterfield would have

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¹ Nancy Mitford, The Ladies of Alderley Being the Letters Between Maria
been dismayed at the amount Curzon laughed, but much as Curzon enjoyed comfort and cordon bleu he was not interested in gracious living as a means of getting on. He thought cash was more important and he thought polite conversation was a bore. He wrote to Sneyd as, presumably, he talked to him, intimately as between close friends, being himself, using slang, being vulgar, at times even indelicate, but nearly always spontaneously, and the acid test of his spontaneity is that we can read most of his letters to Sneyd as Sneyd read them — as a contemporary. On more than one occasion Curzon let it be known that he disliked writing. He refers to 'my natural antipathy to pen and ink', but in fact writing was for him almost compulsive. Zirker has written of Richardson's epistolary novels:

What I would suggest is that Richardson found in letters a way to create for himself an emotional life otherwise unavailable to him. In his fiction letters become an artistic medium for representing real life. In his own life, letters became the equally artificial means whereby he came to live in fact an extremely important part of his life.

Richardson and Curzon both needed something that gave them nothing else in common. Curzon needed Sneyd, as Swift needed Stella and Parson

(1. cont'd.) Josephine Lady Stanley of Alderley and her daughter-in-law Henrietta Maria Stanley...1847-1850 (Hamish Hamilton, 1938, re-issued 1967).

1. See No. 277 above.

Woodforde needed his diary. Imprisoned in particularly stifling surroundings, Curzon's need to express himself was acute. He collected gimcracks, incunabula and manuscripts with extraordinary fervour, and their 'grim aspect' or 'ghastly rarity' lent substance to the gothic fantasies that filled his mind when he was not thinking about himself, but it was not enough. Some of the unfulfilled urge found expression in his writing - in the articles the Philobiblon Society printed, in an elaborate edition of The Lay of the Purple Falcon and in Visits to Monasteries in the Levant - but not all of it; and when he attempted a greater degree of personal involvement in Armenia he missed the mark. His only outlet was to write to Sneyd, who was affectionate, understanding and, like Stella, undemanding. It enabled him to fulfil a need that he was incapable of fulfilling in any other way.

Unlearned men of books assume the care
As eunuchs are the guardians of the fair.

Curzon was not unlearned. He produced a popular travel book and was highly regarded for his success as a collector, but his reputation to-day is largely confined to the Travellers' Club and to bibliophilic

2. See p. 234, n. 1 above. Curzon's copy is inscribed by him: 'R. Curzon - Parham - Nov. - 1847. This is an unique copy, on vellum, 30 copies only, printed on paper.'
3. Edward Young (1683-1765), Love of Fame, lines 83-84.
4. For example, Gerald de Gaury, Travelling Gent The Life of Alexander Kinglake (1809-1891), (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 96-97.
circles. His letters can be shown to have qualities which place them clearly above the average unpublished letters of the nineteenth century, but placing them where they seem to belong, evaluating them against letters already recognized for having similar qualities, is another matter. Most of the published letters of the nineteenth century come from men and women who are figures of national importance, including the great literary figures. Not all of them are letter writers but their letters all have value as source material. Curzon is not a figure of national importance about whom it would be interesting to know almost anything, and the value of his letters is more intrinsic. If it would mean anything to extract and tabulate certain qualities from all the published correspondence (assuming, for the sake of argument, it were possible), and to compare the results with a similar processing of Curzon's letters, we might have a more methodical basis of comparison than the criteria put forward earlier in this discussion, but it would be difficult to know where or how to begin. If, however, we take the letters of a man who was acknowledged as a master in his own day, and whose literary stature is beyond question, on the one hand; and the letters of a woman who, whilst not herself a literary figure, lived at the centre of the literary world and is acknowledged as a letter writer in her own right, on the other, it should be possible to bring some perspective to our view of Curzon.

It is appropriate that Thackeray and Jane Welsh Carlyle should have been friends, but scarcely surprising, because Thackeray knew practically
everybody. At school he had been in the same house as Curzon, and they saw each other in May and June 1832. Ray includes 'the Robert Curzons' among the friends Thackeray found 'in literature and learning', but there is nothing in either Thackeray's or Curzon's letters to suggest that they remained close friends. Thackeray first met the Carlyles in 1837. There is no evidence that Curzon ever met the Carlyles, but there were people like Richard Monckton Milnes who knew Thackeray, Curzon and the Carlyles; and Kinglake, who must have met Curzon at the Travellers', was friendly both with Thackeray and the Carlyles. It is surprising that Curzon never mentions Kinglake, and it may be that the latter's openly professed atheism offended him.

Apart from Charterhouse, a youthful spell in Germany, and his rather


2. Ray, op. cit., I, 199, 205 (' - Curzon is a noble little fellow, as he was at school with all his old enthusiasm & no humbug - When I supposed him grown cool it was I that was conceited & not he... Meeting Curzon again has made me very happy.' - Diary, 4 June), 208 ('Curzon came in the morning & sat for a couple of hours. Then we went to see the Steam Gun & then to his house where I sat drawing till 6.' - Diary, 11 June).


5. 'I shall be left the only bachelor in town. Lord Euston to the beautiful Miss Pattie (Thackeray's idol), and Robert Curzon to Miss Hunter [sic, recte Horton], born in Ceylon.' The Life, Letters, and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes, First Lord Houghton, T. Wemyss Reid (Cassell & Co., 1891), 444-45, letter from Richard Monckton Milnes to Mrs Macarthy, Pall Mall, 20 July 1850.


7. Ibid., 20.
brief visit to the Middle East, Thackeray had not very much in common with Curzon. Thackeray was a large man of not wholly likeable character, and he had to work hard to make a name for himself. Physically Curzon was small and by nature he was possessed of a more agreeable disposition, but he never had to earn a living and he never had a printer's devil picking at the paintwork. Thackeray's wife became insane four years after they were married. Curzon married late, but his marriage was a refuge for fifteen years. After *Vanity Fair* was finished (1848) Thackeray's reputation went from strength to strength. He was compared with Dickens,¹ and he was courted and lionized by fashionable society. Curzon was never a public figure. *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* (1849) was very well received, but it was his only literary success.

Notwithstanding the difference between the two men, a comparison of their letters is extremely interesting. We have already suggested that powers of observation and leisure to exercise them count as advantages in the business of letter writing. Nearly eighteen hundred of Thackeray's letters have been published, and it is evident that whilst his leisure was limited his powers of observation were those of a professional writer:

'... I saw the camels coming stalking along with their great splay feet and jangling bells...'.² He had, too, the eye and hand of an artist. He was

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¹ 'There is no use denying the matter or blinking it now. I am become a sort of great man in my way - all but at the top of the tree: indeed there if the truth were known and having a great fight up there with Dickens...'. To his mother, 7 January 1848, Ray, *The letters and Private Papers etc.*, II, 333.

² To his wife, Constantinople, 17 September 1844. Ray, *op. cit.*, II, 182.
Plate XXIII. Drawing in Curzon's album. Curzon has added the month and year after Thackeray's 'Saturday', and the caption. On Tuesday, 23 February 1847, Thackeray wrote to Henry Reeve from 13 Young Street: '...I have got an hydraulic disorganization, wh. compels me to give up going out for a little...'. Ray, The Letters and Private Papers etc., II, 280. The drawing is not among those published by Ray. Enlarged from microfilm.

Houghton b MS. Eng. 1129, reproduced by permission of the Harvard College Library.
influenced by Hogarth and Gillray,\textsuperscript{1} he learned etching from Cruikshank,\textsuperscript{2} and he studied in Paris at the atelier of Edmond le Poittevin.\textsuperscript{3} As a result he could illustrate a letter with great charm. On the other hand, in Thackeray's case, being a professional writer was a disadvantage when it came to letter writing. It is noticeable that that essential factor, the favourable climate of exchange, was not always established between him and his correspondents, even when the letters were personal and the correspondence was conducted over a period of time. There is a favourable climate of exchange in his letters to Isabella Shawe before he married her.\textsuperscript{4} And between 1848 and 1851 a favourable climate of exchange developed between him and Mrs Brookfield,\textsuperscript{5} to whom he had no difficulty in communicating his state of mind.\textsuperscript{6} The same condition prevails (if to an obviously less marked

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{1} J.R. Harvey, \textit{Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators} (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1970), 76.
\item \textit{Ibid.}
\item Ray, \textit{The Letters and Private Papers etc.}, I, 266. Le Poittevin (1806-70) was a landscape painter.
\item For example in his letter to her of 10 April 1836. Ray, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 300-302.
\item Formerly Jane Octavio Elton (1821-96), niece of the historian Henry Hallam and wife of Thackeray's college friend the Rev. William Brookfield (1809-74).
\item For example 'ma soeur', 18 December 1848, Ray, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 470; '...she is a sister of mine and her name is God bless.' 19-22 December 1848, \textit{ibid.}, 473; 'ma bonne petite soeur', 1-2 February 1849, \textit{ibid.}, 494; 'chère soeur si douce et si bonne', 4-5 February 1849, \textit{ibid.}, 503.
\end{enumerate}
extent) in his letters to other favourites, among them Edward FitzGerald and William Duer Robinson. In the case of Thackeray's letters to his mother there is a favourable climate of exchange while he was young, particularly after he came down from Trinity and their relationship was still a close one; but as time went by it becomes less noticeable, not because of any special lessening of their affection for each other, but because Thackeray became increasingly busy and at the same time more mature. Thackeray had a streak of meanness in him which in the present context should not be confused with the less pleasant side of his character that was revealed by the Garrick Club affair. He admitted to this trait when he joked about his dislike of paying even small sums in unnecessary postage. At the same time he had a professionally mercenary attitude to writing, which was a disadvantage when it came to letters. Thackeray was not prepared to perform for nothing. 'You get on these rare occasions when I write at all,' he once told his mother,

the fag-end of my day, when I am quite weary of the sight of a pen and my hand aches with scribbling. That is why the letters have such a dismal tone I think.

This is all very well, but it is noticeable that after Vanity Fair made

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1. An American friend who lived in New York. It is not clear from the letters whether Thackeray met him for the first time on his second American tour (1855-56) or not. He is not mentioned in Ray's biography.
him famous and Mrs Brookfield began to respond to his attentions, when
he wrote to her about something he also described to his mother, it was
Mrs Brookfield who had the better of it.  

All Thackeray's letters are
interesting and valuable as source material because of his importance as
a writer. But nobody knew better than Thackeray the difference between
writing letters and letter writing, and it was only when he put himself
out that his letters belong, as Ray contended, '...among the classics of
epistolary literature.'

With less skill but to the same end, Curzon made use of sketches to
enliven his letters, as Thackeray did. Curzon heightened the visual effect
by varying his handwriting or writing in patterns, as Thackeray did. And
Curzon would seize on a paper-maker's emboss or a letterhead, and incorporate
it in, or convert it into a decoration, sometimes ingeniously, as Thackeray

1. Compare for instance the respective descriptions he gave Mrs Brookfield
and his mother of his encounter with the grisette who gave herself airs
and Private Papers etc., II, 403-407, 408-410.

2. Ray, op. cit., I, [lxvii].

3. As when, on one occasion, he converted the letterhead he used when he
came into the barony of Zouche (a) into something more democratic (b).
would. Some youthful puns and mannerisms of Thackeray's - the odd 'Ajew' (cf. Curzon's 'a Jew'), wine that was 'pekoiliarly' good, and a place near Cambridge 'yclept Colton - may derive from a common Carthusian or wider source, they have a familiar ring. Curzon wrote letters in verse, as Thackeray did, and some of Thackeray's is not much better:

What do you think, most hard-to-please of men,
Of William Mitchell's patent broad-nibbed pen?
I've bought a box - three shillings for the gross -
At Mitchell's Stationer's in Charing Cross.
Try these: and if you like the pens, I'll trouble you
To write to 36. O. Square. S.W.
Where Somebody is found, who'll gladly spend
Three Bob to be of service to a friend.

P.S. I think they seem to suit better for the upright, than
the slantingdicular writing... .

Occasionally Curzon played tricks; as Thackeray did. 'I was staying at

3. See No. 227 above.
5. Ray, op. cit., I, 44.
6. To the Rev. William Brookfield, 7 3 August 1859. Ray, op. cit., IV, 147. Ray has a note on the postscript that it is written 'in Thackeray's slanting hand, the rest of the letter is in his upright hand.'
Lavington', Curzon once told Sneyd,

with the Bishop of Winchester, and there we had the Archbishop of Canty.
and other condiments. A party there was desperately in love with Mrs S.

'You know Mrs S.? ' quoth the party, 'is not she nice?'
'Very' says I.
'Charming?'
'Yes'.

'So pretty, such beautiful hair, such beautiful ey[e]s? Quite the right sort of ey[e]s, and altogether so very, very...' - &c! - &c! - &c! 'And I like Watty, too, very much.'

'Ah, I shall tell him he must not ask you to Keels', said I.

'Oh, you wouldn't do that! I should so much like to go there some day.'

'Well, I shall certainly tell him', I said, but I think I shan't tell you who it was, so you look out.1

Curzon left Sneyd to think this over before telling him in a separate note:

The party at Lavington was Mrs Basil Wilberforce.2 She is very nice, too.
Her husband has just got the living of Southampton, a good thing I believe.3

Thackeray once wrote to Mrs Brookfield as from New York, and included in a completely spurious account of his reception by the civic dignitaries a more calculating version of Curzon's suspense ploy. 'The clergy here', he told

2. Caroline Charlotte Jane, daughter of Capt. Netherton Langford R.N., married, 28 November 1865, the Rev. Basil Orme Wilberforce (1841-1903), Chaplain to the House of Commons and Archdeacon of Westminster. He was a son of Samuel Wilberforce.
3. No. 481, undated note.
her,

is both numerous and respected and the Archbishop of New York is a most venerable and delightful prelate, whose sermons are however a little long. The ladies are without exception the - but here the first gong sounds for dinner... .

"That's rather a sudden pull up, ain't it, Sammy?" inquired Mr Weller.

"Not a bit on it," said Sam; "she'll wish there was more, and that's the great art o' letter writin'".

Thackeray's appeal to FitzGerald to go with him to Paris in July 1832 is strongly reminiscent of Curzon's efforts to persuade Sneyd to come abroad from time to time.

...My dear Teddikin will you come with me to Paris - in a month? - We will first take a walk in Normandy, & then go for a fortnight or so to Paris. I have a strange idea that I shall be in Italy before the autumn is over, & if my dear old Teddikins wd. but come with me we will be happy in a Paradise of pictures - what say you o my Teddibus - reco (llect I sh) all have money enough for us both (of my) own - ... .

The confidence of his manner towards Robinson, again based on a favourable


3. 5-7 July 1832. Ray, op. cit., I, 247.
climate of exchange, is similarly evocative of Curzon's manner towards Sneyd.

A sudden gust of friendship blows from this bosom in the direction of Houston Street and my Wobinson. The fact is, Sir, I was in the drawing room just now, and out of a portfolio on one of the elegant rosewood tables, there peeped a photograph, which represented the honest old mug of W.D.R. How is he? Can he afford to drink Claret still?...

And so on.

Two things that FitzGerald told Thackeray are worth noting. FitzGerald found that, as far as he was concerned, the climate of exchange between him and Thackeray was affected by Thackeray's marriage. 'For now you are married,' he told him,

I dare not write nonsense, and what Mrs Butler calls 'potter' to you: I don't try not to do it: but I instinctively do not do it — .

As far as Curzon was concerned Sneyd's marriage appears to have made very little difference to Curzon's letters, but FitzGerald's point is understandable. His second point is more interesting.

...Now Thackeray, I lay you ten thousand pounds that you will be thoroughly disappointed when we come together — our letters have been so warm, that we

2. Italics mine.
3. 1 September 1837. Ray, op. cit., I, 347.
shall expect each minute to contain a sentence like those in our letters. But in letters we are not always together: there are no blue devilish moments: one of us isn't kept waiting for the other: and above all in letters there is Expectation! I am thus foreboding because I have felt it - and put you on your guard very seriously about it, for the disappointment of such hopes has caused a flatness, then a disgust, and then a coldness betwix many friends, I'm in a mind. So think of meeting me not as I am in my letters (for they being written when in a good humour, and read when you have nothing better to do, make all seem alert and agreeable) but as you used to see me in London, Cambridge &c - If you come to think, you will see there is a great difference. Do not think I speak thus in a light hearted way about the tenacity of our friendship, but with a very serious heart anxious lest we should disappoint each other, and so lessen our love a little - I hate this subject & to the devil with it!

The easiest way of keeping in touch with someone is by writing letters, not by letter writing. FitzGerald recognized the distinction when he warned Thackeray of the artificiality of the relationship letter writing created. As a means of escape letter writing may show the writer at his (or her) worst, as it sometimes did Curzon, when he was at Erzurum for example. As a means of display it may show the writer at his (or her) best, as it sometimes did Curzon, when he was describing some bibliophilic adventure, or a week-end at a country house. If we want to see letter writers as they normally are we must look at the letters they normally write, which are, predictably, unremarkable, even when written by Thackeray.

The ability to communicate a state of mind, to establish a favourable

climate of exchange, to make use of the tricks of the trade, distinguishes the letter writers from the rest. They are characteristics that are to be found in Curzon's letters as well as Thackeray's. The conclusion to be drawn is that both were letter writers; the difference between them is a matter of quality.

On the other hand the difference between Curzon's letters and the letters of Jane Carlyle is the difference between two stages in the transformation that took place in letter writing in the nineteenth century. Less than ten years separated Curzon and Jane Carlyle in age,¹ but their letters belong to different eras.

Jane chose earthy genius in preference to easy gentility with her eyes open, but whether she quite foresaw the extent of the earthiness, or the scale of the sacrifice that genius was to demand, seems less certain. The worst that Curzon had to complain about were his relatives and the lack of something to do. Jane had to contend with being poor after having been brought up in comfort, with a marriage that may never have been consummated,² and with

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1. Jane was born 14 July 1801 and died 21 April 1866.
2. According to Waldo H. Dunn, Froude & Carlyle A Study of the Froude–Carlyle Controversy (Longmans, Green and Co., 1930), quoting Sir George Forrest (1846–1926): 'Those who were at all intimate with the Carlyles knew that Froude was telling the truth about Carlyle's sexual incompetency. Jane Octavia Brookfield had the story from Mrs Carlyle herself, as did Geraldine Jewsbury. The facts are as well authenticated as any such facts can be.' Dunn continues: 'Those who were acquainted with Sir George know what a fund of information he had about the Victorian celebrities.' Footnote, p. 207. It seems rather inconclusive.
Carlyle himself. From beginning to end Frederick the Great alone occupied Carlyle for thirteen years, and taxed even his determination. Jane was a restless character, sensitive and proud; she was also self-reliant, courageous and very determined. She enjoyed indifferent health; like Curzon, there was no humbug about her; and like Curzon also, she had more of a creative urge than actual creative ability, but she felt frustrated. 'In fact,' she told Susan Stirling,

in my character of Lion's Wife here [in London], I have writing enough to do, by constraint, for disgusting even a Duchess of Orleans — applications from young ladies for autographs; passionate invitations to dine; announcements of inexpressible longings to drink tea with me; — all that sort of thing, which, as a provincial girl, I should have regarded perhaps as high promotion, but which at this time of day I regard as very silly and tiresome work; fritters away my time in fractionary writing, against the grain, and leaves me neither sense nor spirit for writing the letters which would suggest themselves in course of nature...'

Thea Holme has commented:

Jane had suffered, for years, from the frustrations of an artist who cannot find his métier. The household tasks, the feverish rearranging and redecorating of the house, the fussing over 'Mr. C's' meals, were not enough to occupy her quick mind; she was often bored. She knew — and Carlyle never

1. 'Indeed I am so crushed to death amid Prussian rubbish, these long years past,' he told Thackeray, 'I have nearly lost the power of thinking in any form, and am possessed by one sad futile ghost of a thought. How am I to get out of this cursed thing alive?' 20 October 1859. Gordon N. Ray, The Letters and Private Papers etc., IV, 157-158. Ray has a note on this comment that Carlyle began Frederick in 1851 and finished in 1865.

2. Formerly Susan Hunter, daughter of Professor John Hunter (1745-1837), of St Andrews.

3. 8 January 1841. J.A. Froude, Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle
ceased to reiterate the same philosophy - that idleness begot misery, that her salvation, mental and spiritual, lay in work. But what work? 'I tell her many times,' said Carlyle, 'there is much for her to do if she were trained for it: her whole sex to deliver from the bondage of frivolity, dollhood and imbecility, into the freedom of valour and womanhood.' Fine words! But what could the dutiful Victorian wife be trained to do? And Jane was dutiful. It was her duty to entertain the bores that Carlyle would not see; it was equally her duty to mend his clothes and see to his meals. She submitted, and her frustrated brilliance was poured into letter writing, as were her stored up miseries and some of her unspoken fears... 1

It is doubtful whether Jane can be considered seriously as an artist in any sense (unless it were in the art of being Mrs Carlyle), because it is difficult to believe that had this been the case she would not have left us with more than her letters, numerous as they are. Nor do they suggest brilliance. Jane was undoubtedly clever - a fact of which she was well aware - and often witty and perceptive at the same time, as for example in an aside to Susan Stirling:

What a likeable man, by the way, your brother in Edinburgh is; so intelligent and so unpretentious - a combination not often to be found in Edinburgh; so quietly clever and quietly kind... 2

She was seldom at a loss for words, but apart from the love letters there

2. 8 January 1841. Froude, op. cit., I, 131.
are times when it is difficult to decide with whom the favourable climate of exchange has been established, with her correspondent or with herself.

...Well! all this preamble was not essential to the understanding of what is to follow, but at least it will not help to darken it, which is as much as could be expected of a female writer.  

Her use of tricks of the trade is limited mainly to imitative speech, which she prefers to quote - '...I shall go then to see 'how the cretur gets through with it.'\(^2\) - or qualify, '...as they say in Annandale',\(^3\) or '...what the cockneys call...'.\(^4\) And there is no indication that she used sketches or other visual effects to embellish her letters. Froude's editing has been criticized, and the significance of Carlyle's preparation can only be conjectured. To what extent their combined efforts affected the original text it is impossible to say; even so, Jane's talent went far beyond the ability to 'write down' the neighbours' pianos and domestic pets. She probably had more competence than Curzon in Italian and German, and possibly written French; and her ideas are startlingly modern, in contrast to Curzon's. As source material there can be no doubt that her letters are unique. She is an intensely interesting figure in her own right, but for all this her letters are less original than Curzon's. They also enable us to see the extent to

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2. To Carlyle, 14 August 1842. Ibid., I, 161.
3. To Susan Hunter, 8 January 1841. Ibid., 130.
4. To John Sterling, 29 April 1841. Ibid., 132.
which, in terms of individuals, the end of the period of what we have understood by letter writing, to which Curzon's letters belong, was overlapped by the beginning of what was to take its place - in Jane's case, a literal recording of the pattern of daily life minutely observed. Jane, we are left feeling, might have been happier with a telephone.

Virginia Woolf once spoke of facts being 'a very inferior form of fiction.' The concept is familiar to students of literature but is one that the historian would approach warily. Nevertheless the historian knows how limited and therefore how limiting facts can be. There are never enough facts to tell the whole truth. The historian has a duty to his subject but he must abide by the evidence. The freedom of fiction gives the novelist more scope, enabling him to get nearer the truth by working in the abstract. Journals, diaries and particularly letters, by preserving the unrecorded facts of history - what people saw, or said, or thought - serve, as Virginia Woolf has written, to 'fill in the spaces between the great books with the voices of people talking.' Letters, like Curzon's letters to Sneyd, provide the nearest thing to common ground between fact and fiction. They enable us to go where there is no possibility of going by any other means, which gives them an interest and an importance that should not be underrated.

2. Ibid., 59.
Plate XXIV. Parham, east end of the Great Hall, showing part of Curzon’s collection of armour. Two windows lie concealed beneath the plaster between the screen and the ceiling, the line of the sill of that on the left being just visible between the left-hand and central pictures.

Photograph first published by Country Life, 19 April 1902, by whose permission it is reproduced.
APPENDIX A

The antiquity and standing of the Sneyds is indicated by an early fourteenth century connection with the important family of Audley, of Heleigh Castle. Burke contended that the Sneyds were originally Audleys - '...Richard de Alditheley, who took the name of Sneyd vel Sneyde, from the lands of Sneyd which he held under his cousin, Henry de Alditheley. He m. Rosia, dau. and heir of Henry de Praers of Barthomley, in the co. of Chester...' - but in the present state of the evidence this cannot be verified. Be that as it may, two deeds survive among the Sneyd Papers which record that Nicholas de Audley (later Lord Audley) gave Nicholas, son of Henry de Sneyd, and Idonea, daughter of Giles de Audley, five messuages, two bovates of land, sixty-nine and a quarter acres of land, and seven acres of meadow in Tunstall and Chatterley, in Staffordshire, which Henry de Sneyd previously held of the donor at will. Confirmation of this was issued at Heleigh, 13 August 1312, and a quitclaim followed, 23 September 1316. Idonea is described as

1. Landed Gentry, 13th edn., A. Winton Thorpe (1921), 1631.
Plate XXV. 'An itinerant photographer (not a very skilful one!) called here the other day - and we let him try his powers...', Sneyd to his elder brother, 27 July [c. 1869], S.P. From left to right, Isabel Clara, Caroline Henrietta, Louisa Georgina, Miss Pritchard, the governess, holding Eleanor Frances, Ralph (Caroline's twin), and the Rev. Walter Sneyd.

From a photograph among the Sneyd Papers.
daughter of Giles de Audley in both documents, and whilst the quitclaim might be expected to follow the wording of the confirmation, there can be no doubt from the reference to heredibus inter se legitime procreatis that this was a marriage settlement. Both deeds are referred to by Burke, but the regnal years have been incorrectly converted to the historical years 1313 and 1318, by which latter year Nicholas de Audley was in fact dead. The two families remained in association for a long time, and an important confirmation, issued from Heleigh, 16 November 1400,¹ by John Tochet knight, lord of Audley, and others, brought the Sneyds property at Bradwell, in Wolstanton, including the ancestral home which preceded Keele.

¹. The original deed, at the time of writing, was in the custody of Messrs Knight & Sons, solicitors, Newcastle-under-Lyme. The writer has examined it.
APPENDIX B

Curzon to his aunt, Elizabeth Curzon, Erzurum, 2 July 1843.

P.S. On looking over your letter I see you desire me to write to Edward. I had written to him just before your letter arrived, I suppose it must have been Mrs E. who complained of my not writing to Edward, for we never corresponded, and the two or three letters which I have written to him from hence are more than we generally write to each other in a year. However I will write again soon.

I am sorry to say that his marriage and the way in which my father, or more particularly my mother, have conducted that matter since, first in sending them to live at Parham, and since in showing off, as it were, this misfortune which has happened to our family, having had the effect of making my home uncomfortable and unhappy and of making my father so irritable that I cannot speak to him or make him understand me, it has made my life unhappy, and has caused me to leave England and wander about like an evil spirit, seeking rest and finding none.

This being the case, tho' Edward is my brother and I love him and wish him well, I never think of his family without a sigh. My mother's long illness has made her very ignorant of the affairs of this world. Perhaps it would have been different if she had been well, but as it is this marriage has had a sad effect on my fortunes.

I never shall forget receiving the news of it, on a terrace at Smyrna, surrounded by Egyptians and dressed as one myself. I was then...
on my way home, full of hopes and plans, never to be realized; that was years ago, and I have never been able to remain at home since; it is a sore subject therefore, and it is difficult for me to write amusing letters to Edward, for his family to read, with this weight upon my mind. However, I will trouble you no more about it...¹

¹ P.P., 36/10.
Dear Sir,

10 York Street, 9 November 1858

I am very sorry that I cannot accept your offer of sittings during the next few days, which I should be glad to do, even at the cost of postponing other things, but it unfortunately happens, that as I leave Town myself on Monday [next] for a good while, I have for the time of year and short days an unusual amount of pressing arrangements, which I have squeezed into my last week, and it would almost endanger my personal safety to put any of them aside now.

If you will not think it too much trouble to let me know when you come to Town again, I hope we may then finish the sketch.

I remain, dear Sir,

Y[ou]r much obliged S[ervan]t,

Geo. Richmond ¹

¹ P.P., 62/69. The original envelope, stamped and addressed to Curzon at 50 Berkeley Square, survives with the letter.
My dear Robert,  

S[carsdale] H[ouse], 19 July 1873

We feasted yesterday on fawn, thanks to you and much to my satisfaction, as I can only eat very tender food, so fawns are most acceptable as long as they last.

Emily¹ and I hope to be able to pay you a day's visit next Saturday, if I can get away, but I will write again —

I have this morning had a letter from Sir J. Campbell, who says that if your complaint is what we have understood it to be, a closing of the gut by an inward growth of a [?] filliment of some sort, that Capt. Stone, Adjutant of the South Gloster Militia, was completely cured of that complaint three or four years ago, when in a precarious state, by swallowing a leaden pistol bullet of moderate size, say half an oz., and then taking food immediately. The weight of the lead forced it through the obstruction and the food following widened the gut to its proper width, and he entirely recovered. He says he mentions this case, of which he knows the facts, for the chance of its being unknown to your medical men — This is well worth trying, of course supposing you are suffering from a similar disease.

¹. Amelia's family name.
I earnestly hope it may be so and thus effect a cure –

Your aff[ectionate] Brother,

E.C. Curzon

1. P.P., 62/122, writing paper embossed with the seal of the Companies Register Office, of which Edward was Registrar.
APPENDIX E

The circumstances of the 1862 crisis were these. Curzon's main expectation was a life interest in Parham after his mother's death. The only available security for the new loan of £26,000 which his father was contemplating in 1853 was Hagley - Edward's main hope. Edward had a wife and six children, and when they visited Parham they made a party of fourteen. Over indefinite periods Emily found the va-et-vient strained her financial resources. Edward, Registrar of Copyright Designs, found it a burden too, hence the frequency and length of the visits. He depended on Hagley for his future income, and it was probably as a result of hearing of his father's plans that he suggested to Curzon in 1854 that they should

1. For details of the mortgage on Parham see p. lxxxiv, n. 4 above.
2. Emily to her mother, Parham, 23 June [1863]. W.H.P.
3. According to the M.E.B., I, 795, he was Registrar of Copyright Designs 1842-63 and Registrar of Joint Stock Companies 1863-76.
become their parents' trustees. Curzon senior raised £12,500 on Hagley in June 1855 - he was then eighty-one - and may (there is no evidence) have applied it, or some of it, towards freeing Parham, but Parham was mortgaged when Curzon himself made his will in 1860, and over two years later Hoare's still held most of the title deeds as security. Curzon was given formal control over affairs at Parham in 1857, but having no control over his parents, who in turn had very little control over the steward, this in practice meant rather little. Even if the steward had been directly responsible to Curzon, the latter's dislike of Parham while his parents and brother were there kept him away too much to make effective control possible. The steward, Daniel Diones Geere, had been Edward's choice. He was accustomed to a free hand and he made the most of it. Matters stood thus until the midsummer audit of 1862, when some £2,000 of the rent money was found to be missing. Geere, who had been allowed to bank the income from the estate in his own name, was unable to explain, but claimed that Curzon owed him £600, after which he made himself scarce. An extraordinary state of affairs then followed. Immediate confusion was created when servants and tradesmen began bringing in

1. Will, proved 13 August 1863.
2. Proved 9 October 1873.
3. Emily to her mother, [Parham], 30 [July 1862]. W.H.F.
4. Ibid.
dishonoured cheques. Curzon's parents were so short of ready money that there was nothing with which to pay off workmen on the estate, who not unnaturally refused to leave. Curzon was forced to make withdrawals from his own capital to pay them, and was pressed for money by his parents, but they were more concerned for George and Willy, who were clamouring for their allowances, than for those who had more at stake. 'A poor young man from Chichester walked over yesterday', Emily told her mother,

- to state his case. He had just set up in business, Geere employed him, owes him above £40, has never paid him a 6d &c., &c. Next came a man G. has had as clerk to help with "the accounts" - his report was] that 'Mr G. is gone away - having locked up all his papers' - leaving this youth plantée - his London employers write to say if he does not return he will forfeit his situation - so to London he went last night.

Feeling eventually that in the interests of his family some sort of security must be forthcoming before he advanced his parents further sums, Curzon sought legal advice. This itself was an embarrassment because he had always gone to his parents' solicitors, locally and in London, and going to someone else, professionally, did nothing

1. Emily to her mother, Parham, 7 August [1862]. W-H.P.
2. Curzon's nephews, same to the same, Parham, 1 August [1862]. W-H.P.
3. Same to the same, [Parham], 30 [July 1862]. W-H.P.
to help the state of their relations.\textsuperscript{1} He also tried, not very successfully, to enlist Lord Howe's assistance. Lord Howe was a trustee for Harriet Anne under the terms of Curzon senior's will, and Curzon hoped that his cousin might be able to do something about the damage that Harriet Anne was doing to the estate, but Lord Howe, who was already familiar with Curzon's problem, was careful not to become too involved.\textsuperscript{2} In fact, apart from sympathy and assurances of his willingness to help if he could, relayed to Emily through Lady Howe, there was not much more he could offer. Legally speaking, if either of Curzon's parents chose to cut down all the trees at Parham to pay Edward's debts, there was nothing to stop them. Meanwhile Edward judged it prudent to visit Paris,\textsuperscript{3} and Geere, unhinged by the shock of discovery, began to go mad. Throughout the crisis, which lasted from about the last week in July until the middle of August, Curzon and Emily were at Parham with their children. Curzon's parents were too old to be left to deal with it by themselves, and when Curzon was in London Emily was left to cope. She vacillated between feeling sorry for the old couple and feeling furious with them. "Mr C. is quite childish", she told

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item He went to the Hon. John Ashley Q.C. (1808-67), 4th son of the 6th Earl of Shaftesbury, who was Emily's brother, Sir Robert Wilmot-Horton's lawyer. Ashley was helpful. Emily to her mother, Parham, 8 August, and Curzon to Emily, 24 Arlington Street, 12 August 1862. \textsuperscript{W-H.P.} Ashley bequeathed to Curzon f.41 of what is now Additional MS. 39641 (Parham MS. LIX), an illumination from a Book of Hours.
\item Curzon to Emily, 24 Arlington Street, 13 August 1862, 14 August 1862. \textsuperscript{W-H.P.}
\item Same to the same, 24 Arlington Street, 13 August 1862. \textsuperscript{W-H.P.}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
her mother,

- and seems rather pleased than otherwise, and yet he is terribly 'cute' sometime. My lady is alarmed - but hopes 'Kind Providence will settle it all some how'.

Geere terrified Emily, and both she and Curzon considered sending the children to Catton, but decided against it in case it invited measures against them. On one occasion Geere '...was seen driving in the park, with a large bouquet in his hand, looking 'very strange'...'. On another he was seen '...early in the morning prowling about with a gun...'.

Taking abnormal precautions induced an atmosphere of siege. The children were constantly watched, and when Curzon went for a walk with Robin he took to carrying a light rifle, ostensibly to shoot game. This nearly cost him his life when, on one such excursion, he fired at a heron and the barrel of the gun burst. Emily's nerves began to get the better of her. She admitted that the 'diddle de daddle talk of My lady at 'meals' is terribly irritating.' But it was not entirely her imagination. Geere was seen again, this time with his hand in bandages, the result, it was

1. Emily to her mother, Parham, probably 26 July 1862. W-H.P.
2. Same to the same, from the same address, 5 [August 1862]. W-H.P.
3. Ibid.
4. Same to the same, from the same address, 8 August [1862]. W-H.P.
5. Same to the same, from the same address, 7 August [1862]. W-H.P.
later discovered, of having cut himself dashing to pieces a framed picture of Curzon. 1 Eventually he turned up in London, at a hotel in Jermyn Street, not far from Curzon's house, at which stage, as Curzon remarked, the affair took on the character of a novel by Waters. 2 Geere bought a revolver at Colt's, but gave them a worthless cheque and they recovered the gun. 3 He also visited the International Exhibition at South Kensington, where he bought a picture from the Canadian commissioner, with another worthless cheque. 4 The Canadians reacted by getting a warrant for his arrest. Curzon was in London, ignorant of Geere's whereabouts, but on 15 August, when he visited Hoare's to draw out more money for Parham, he learned there that there were boxes lying outside the National Gallery addressed to Geere in Toronto. 5 He at once went to the office of Sir Richard Mayne, the Police Commissioner, but the latter was out. A plain clothes detective-sergeant then went with Curzon to Bow Street, but the magistrate advised Curzon to go to his solicitor. At this stage the detective-sergeant realized that Geere was the man he had arrested in the Strand the evening before. Geere's

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1. Emily to her mother, Parham, 7 August [1862]. W-H.P.
2. Pseudonym of William Russell, writer of detective stories, as Emily felt it was necessary to explain to her mother, 24 Arlington Street, [18 August 1862], quoting a letter from Curzon, now missing. W-H.P.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
reaction at being arrested had evidently so impressed the police that, without knowing anything about him, they had come to the conclusion that he was a lunatic, and had had him committed to St Margaret's workhouse.¹

The immediate crisis was over but only one important change came of it, in October, when Curzon senior made a new will which provided for the sale of Hagley after his death, to raise a fortune for Edward, on condition that Edward was not bankrupt at the time. Nothing else changed, and the repercussions were still being felt locally in the following spring.²

¹ Emily to her mother, 24 Arlington Street, [18 August 1862], quoting a letter from Curzon, now missing. W-H.P.
² See No. 338 above.