

83
W
To Mrs Hicks Beach

Colonel Noel had two sons, one of whom became 1st
Earl of Gainsborough of the present creation. His wife
was Lady Burham in her own right. 12 Jan 1803

46 George St Many 12th 1803

My dear Madam

When you & I argue face to face, I generally get the better of you - when we argue by letter, you forget what I have written. - I never denied that there was danger in a University Education - or conceived that the discretion of any young man at 20 could be so confirmed, as to leave his friends without any apprehension of his conduct - but I said that there could be no good education without danger, & that the age & disposition of the party were such as to reduce that danger within bounds in which it would be timidity rather than prudence to fear it. [91] Will you allow me to put it to Mr Beach & yourself as a query - whether Cambridge would not be a better situation for William than Oxford. - In the first place, his turn of mind is much more adapted to the acquisition of mathematical than classical knowledge. He is much more fond of Mathematics, & if you let him remain to take a degree, as I sincerely hope you would, it is by no means improbable, he would participate in that emulation for University honors by which so large a portion of young men in that place are actuated. -
TS [109] I believe he would from his connexion with the Noels, & from some other line of introduction, get into a much more eligible Society than he would fall into at XChurch, & into a different species of it altogether. - Lastly, I submit to you, whether it would not be better on all accounts to make him a commoner rather than a gentleman commoner. [91] I shall be happy to talk over these points at full length in the Spring with Mr. B. & you - if your opinions are not already fixed. - I really love William very

(13 Jan 1803)

suggestions

sincerely - there are in him the rudiments of a very excellent & valuable man - & place him where you will, be sure that no suggestion^S of mine (which I think he will listen to) shall ever^E be wanting. I will take an opportunity of writing to Michael before his departure - & sincerely hope you will find him improved by his excursion, if he requires any improvement, as most young men of his age undoubtedly do. My little Girl thank God, & my wife are quite well. Will you present my best regards to Mr Beach, & believe me my dear Madam sincerely yours

Sydney Smith.

I beg to be very kindly remembered to Astley, Michael, & all my friends. It occurs to me I could talk to Michael better than I could write to him; he owes us a visit, & we shall be extremely happy to have the debt discharged. - If it meets with the approbation of Mr Beach & yourself, I will write to invite him, & would do so immediately but that I am not certain it might not counteract some other scheme to which you would give the preference. Edinburgh will be very gay all the time we remain, & he may come to us so as to return with us - but that will be just as he finds most agreeable to himself - All times will be equally agreeable to us. -

MS. Gordon N. Ray, St John transcript, pp. 153-4.

TS at Williamstrip, with Ps as noted.

8A
To Mrs Hicks Beach

W
14 Feb 1803

1803 Feby 14th 46 George St.

My dear Madam

I sincerely wish with you it had occurred to me sooner, but as it has not, the mischief done must be repaired as well as possible if Mr Beach should think it adviseable to make any alterations in his plans. -
[91] Should that be the case, you are surely (as it appears to me) quite right in your idea of giving the Dean immediate information, in doing which, you may remember that you are not subtracting a benefit, but resigning a favor, for such he considers admission to his College to be. - Of the following points I am very clear that the chance of Williams engaging in Mathematical learning is much greater than that of his becoming a Classic - that there is a great emulation in that line of knowledge existing in the university of Cambridge, & no emulation of any kind at Oxford - & that if the motive of taking a high degree inspire him with an ardor for study, you will have gained a very serious good, & prevented some probable evil. At the same time, I request you to consider that these are but opinions, which may contradict the opinions of much more discerning men, & which cannot be of any importance if they do. Charles Noel I believe will leave Cambridge soon, Gerard, meaning to take Orders, will remain. There are two or three very sensible Cambridge men here, with whom I have talked over at considerable length, the comparative discipline of the two Universities but I cannot find any confirmation of Mr B's opinion.
[91] Whether or not William will obtain rooms in College, is a matter of chance -

84.1

(14 Feb 1803)

[9] is it a matter of consequence? The two best Colleges are Trinity, & St Johns - the Noels^{are} of the former. I think I can get for William good Letters of Introduction - some, I can give him. My idea of making him a commoner & of letting him take a degree ^s confirmed by Cambridge men here. You know what a Lottery Education is, but as far as wisdom has any influence upon it, I think this Scheme ^s is the best - though I say so with real deference to the opinion of any prudent man who may differ from me.

There is another gentleman, a particular friend of mine to whom I will write upon the subject, & whose answer I will forward to you. Williams foot is well, as is his throat - so that he is now recovered from head to Foot. I am very sorry we are not to see Brother Michael, I will certainly write to him. - I am surprised you should discover me in the Edinburgh Review, or imagine I had any share in it. -

[9] // Best regards to Mr Beach & yours dear Madam very sincerely

Sydney Smith

MS. Gordon N. Ray, St John transcript, pp. 11⁵-6.

TS with ~~ing~~ as noted.

85

W

(1803)

To Mrs Hicks Beach

22 Feb 180³

Feb 22nd 180³ Edinburgh

My dear Madam

-burne/

Mrs Smith expected from her Aunt Mrs Blackburn the cares & attentions which are so important to women in her situation, & had intended to recover at Bush Hill & to carry her little girl there - but Mrs Blackburn is ~~just~~ dead. - It would be very melancholy for Mrs Smith to lye in where she has now no friends or relation to be with her - for which reason I am resolved to take Lodgings here for her till the 1st of September. Would it be any convenience to you & Mr B. that William should remain with us till that time - his company is always a pleasure, & the care of his education an honor to us. - I should be particularly obliged to you for an early answer to this question, that I may accomodate the size of the house I am about to take accordingly. [¶] I expect Mrs S. to be brought to bed about midsummer. - [¶] My brother sails this day; if the whole of his passage is so breathless, he will never arrive. If it will be any accomodation to Mr B. I will enter William at Cambridge some time before the long vacation - [¶] No answer has yet arrived from the Cambridge gentleman to whom I have written - you shall be apprized of its contents when it does arrive. [¶] Mrs S. begs to be kindly remembered to Mr B. & yourself - her little girl is as well as I hope you & yours to be remaining ^{my} dear Madam very sincerely yours S. Smith

MS. Gordon N. Ray, St John transcript, p. 140.

TS at Williamsip. This noted. Some variation in the order of the last paragraphs.

To Mrs Hicks Beach

15 Mar 1803

46 George St March 15th 1803

My dear Madam

When the thing was undecided was the time for debate - now you have fixed, we will agree to say that Oxford is better than Cambridge, & we will comfort ourselves with the notion that we have done the wiser thing of the two - & so there is an end of that. [P] - William shall be with you in May - Mama's & Papas will I am afraid always be Mama's and Papas as long as the world lasts - & after all what can they be better? [P] I enclose these hints to Michael - If you can contrive to ^t tell Mr Astley that I wrote the letter at your request, it may prevent him ^{from} being displeased with me for (what may otherwise appear) an unmannerly interference. Mrs Smith & my little Girl are quite well, as I ^t hope all your family are. We have just received here the news of a probable war - what wretchedness in prospect - but I will not believe it till the first gun is fired. [PS] I will accompany William to Oxford in October with the utmost pleasure, if Mrs Smith is well. - My best regards if you please to Mr Beach & the family. - God bless you dear Madam - believe me yours very sincerely

Sydney Smith

See NCA
87N

MS. Gordon N. Ray, St John transcript, p. 157.

TS at Williamstrip with paragraphing as noted.

87

Britt of Sabra 62-5

Note 1802-54p.

21
T

To Robert Smith

28 Mar 1803

My dear Sr. —

Note 1802-84p

I hope you will have the kindness to excuse me for writing to you a few lines to clear up two mistakes into which you have inadvertently fallen respecting the conduct of my wife. — You say that my late difference with Mr Beach was owing to the pride & folly of my wife. — the fact is my wife remonstrated in the strongest manner upon the folly & absurdity of what I was about to do. — & if I had follow'd her earnest advice I should never have done it. — In another part of your letter — you consider the settlement of her fortune to have been made in great part at the suggestion of my wife. — whether that settlement be right or wrong I do not intend to discuss. — but let it be what it may the fact is she had no sort of share in its construction. there is nothing whatever upon this point that she would not have consented to at my request. — The mother & daughter were both so ignorant of the subject that with them I could have done any thing. — the settlement as it now stands was entirely my own act & deed. — dictated by the strongest sense of honest duty. — so help me God. — I request you to accept my thanks for your intentions of using your interest for me in my profession, — & for some other acts of kindness you are so obliging as to mention in your Letter. — at another time & under other circumstances I would explain to you my reasons for living in London. — & should be happy to avail myself of your advice upon that point. —

87.1

(28 Mar 1803)

at present I **feel** I have no right to trouble you with any of my concerns. — at the same time I am sure you will have the good nature to excuse my intruding upon you — with these few lines merely to do justice to my wife — whp (tho' she has the misfortune of having displeas'd you) is to my partial view — an excellent irreproachable woman — who has ever done her duty to me & intended to do it to all the world —

I remain Sr with respect, & submission your Son —

Sydney Smith —

March 28th. 1803 — Edinburgh 46. George St. —

? whether April

[Addressed:] Robert Smith Esqr / Circus / Bath. — / 25. —

[Postmarked:] AP 1803 29 [and][illeg.] MAY 2 1803 B PAID

Huntington Library microfilm.

HM 30731

88
To Mrs Hicks Beach

W
1 Apr 1803

46 George St April 1st 1803.

My dear Madam

Will Mr Beach lend us his carriage that we have with us till the Autumn for Mrs Smith & her two Children to come up in. I have then William's consent to ask, for whose use it certainly should be reserved more than for ours - but a Woman & two children are a plea to which I dare say his gallantry, & your good nature ^w till yield. If Mr Beach has any use for it between May & August, our request is of course ^c superseded, & we withdraw it with the utmost cheerfulness - if not I am sure he will have pleasure in lending us the carriage. I beg you will be candid with us on the subject - it is a fair thing to ask, & quite as fair to refuse. -

[9] ^w The Edgeworths are here, so that you see we are strong in Education people. The family now in Edinburgh consist of a Father, a Mother, & two daughters, the eldest of which daughters writes the treatise on Education jointly with her father. - The father is 60, a man of the world & a great rattle; his conversation however is very good & very full of information - the Mother is very agreeable, & unaffected - the younger daughter very handsome, & very engaging - the eldest extremely deformed - diminutive almost to invisibility, & with a manner which scarcely does justice to those talents & good qualities which she is said to possess. - They are barely passing through so that my means of judging are hardly ample enough to enable me to speak so decidedly. [no 9]

The influenza here is more injurious to Conversation than it is to health - it is very slight, but very universal - every body suffers a little by it,

Richard Ford
+ Maria
(aged 35)

88.1

(1 Apr 1803)

W

& talks a great deal of it. - William is very well, & conducts himself as he has done from the first moment of his entering my roof.

[A] Mrs Smith [&] and my little Girl are quite well; the latter runs, & talks &c. - I am afraid this war which now appears almost ceryain, ^t will put an end to Michaels travels - unless you chuse to send him among the Northern States. - Miss Hamilton, the Education woman, we have made great friends with - she is extremely pleasing, as well as good - I have not met with a Lady for a long time who pleases me more. She was well acquainted with Sir Howe & Lady Hicks. -

My best regards to Mr Beach. - Adieu dear Madam - yours very sincerely
& gratefully

Sydney Smith.

MS. Gordon N. Ray, St John transcript, pp. 158-9.

TS at Williamstrip with #ing as noted.

Elizabeth
Hamilton

89
To Robert Smith

15 Apr 1803

Good
April 15 46. George Street 1803 — Scotland. —

My dear father. —

Brother
I hope you will not for a moment imagine at the sight of a letter from me — that it is my intention to plague you with applications for reconciliation. — & to prevent you from living at peace yourself — because you will not live at peace with me. — I have ever enjoyed so small a portion of your affection~~s~~ that I had no hope of preventing what has happen'd myself. — my only dependance was upon the influence of my brother & Mrs Robert Smith. — the moment I learnt what has happen'd with respect to them, I lost all thought of reconciliation — because I knew that ~~any~~ ^{every} hope of it was at an end. — my only motive in writing to you now — is to make you a few requests — & to leave with you my most solemn protestations of the motives which have govern'd my conduct. —

I beg you will not take the language of despair for the language of indifference. — If writing like a suppliant would bring back days of peace to us all I would write like one — but I have no manner of doubt that your decision is taken, & I think it more manly & more respectful not to be your persecutor if I cannot be your son. — It is impossible for me not to know how injurious, & discreditable to me such a quarrel must prove — & with a wife & family to provide for I feel it very deeply —. my

89.1

(15 Apr 1803)

sisters affliction adds to mine — & I would add other reasons why a reconciliation would make me very happy — ^ddid I not despair of being believ'd — but as no reasons I can urge will effect it — I have for ever done with the subject —

I request you to keep separate in your estimation my brothers conduct from mine — whatever be his blame do not add it to me. —

fana I do most solemnly declare ^X that in settling my wifes fortune upon her — I did what every principle of honor appear'd to me to require that I should do — I had but £500 of my own — & could have had no motive to put ~~£~~8000 out of my power. — I might perhaps have done myself some good in your estimation by producing to you some letters that pass'd on this occasion — but as three Years have elaps'd before you discarded me & I have twice been your guest in that period — I thought all was over — & have destroy'd them —

I beg you to reflect that the office of trustee is merely nominal, that (if you were as you have told me I think you) a man not to be trusted: — you could have done me no injury as my trustee: unless you suppose I was apprehensive that two men whom you had never seen would have join'd with you in injuring me. — without whose concurrence you could not have touch'd a single shilling. — but of such absurdity as this I hope you do not think me guilty — I ask'd my brother to be trustee — because he was a younger man & a Lawyer — & resident in London — surely my dear

89.2

* any immoral, & dishonest action - you disown me. -
unless you do this I am afraid nobody will (15 Apr 1803)
believe me when I say it is on account of

father these are probable reasons why I should have done so -
which do not render it necessary you should have recourse to
such painful & unfounded suppositions. -

I began our last correspondence with inviting you & all the
family here - surely [~~? deleted~~] you will allow your answer was
a little warm. - If however I have violated my respect towards
you in that correspondence - I very humbly ask your pardon. -

I have never been able to get out of my head that you think
I am likely to be a burthen to you. - now if so pray look back. &
see if anyone of your Sons has ever behav'd more honorably upon
the subject of money than I have done - I should be quite shock'd
if I thought you consider'd me as a mean man - which I should be
if I were ever [to] ask you for another farthing. -

I hope you will allow my Sister to come & see me - without
blaming her for the wish - I would much rather give up all hope
of seeing her - (tho' it is the chief pleasure I have in the idea
of returning to England) than be the means of committing her with
you. - ^{para} I hope you will remember that my reputation is my
bread, & do me the justice to say to the world that it is not on
account of ^{see above *} my marriage settlement, as so much time has elaps'd
since - & we have met so often between that period, & the
present. - I end my Letter with repeating - again - that in
giving up my wifes money - I thought I was acting with the
highest honor - & in a manner that would reflect credit upon

89.3

T

(15 Apr 1803)

myself, & every body connected with me — I have always endeavor'd ^t to conduct myself like an honest, & respectable man & not to disgrace the good education you have given me — I am hurt I confess to find myself an outcast — but it will be a great consolation to me if you will notice my children as they grow up — & if anything happens to me — shew some countenance to my wife — who never meant harm to any human creature — & who has lost all her friends on my account — accept my dear father my fervent thanks for all the kindness I have ever experienc'd from you — & may god Almighty bless & protect you —

Sydney Smith —

[Addressed:] Robert Smith Esqr / Circus / Bath / England. — / 25.†

[Postmarks:] B PAID APR 19 1803
AP. 1803. 16

26

Huntington Library microfilm. HM30732

90
To Mrs Hicks Beach

W
4 May 1803

46 George St May 4th 1803

My dear Madam

The Globe paper is in my opinion just like all other Newspapers - it began with some pretensions of being a literary paper, which would have been a bad plan had it been carried into execution - but it is no more literary than any other, except it deserves that name for printing two or three columns out of any book which happens to be in vogue when there happens to be any dearth of news. - The fact is, that a daily paper is a very profitable thing & that the connexions of the booksellers enable them to give with the greatest ease circulation to any paper they may patronize.

[¶] If you read the Edinburgh Review, you will find an excellent article in [sic] - on Hayleys Cowper, not written by me of course - I wish I could write as well. [¶] The influenza has killed a great number of old people here - who were in debt to nature, that has thought fit to settle her accounts this year, & put her affairs in order. - Gordon & William propose departing so as to be in London about the 16th or 17th. - You will find Gordon, whom I suppose William will introduce to you, a very well disposed pleasing young man. - I have written to thank Mr Beach very kindly for his loan of the ^aChaise - & as I know you do kind things in common, I beg you will accept our thanks also. -

[¶] I hope my friend Henrietta is very well - she will have plenty of leisure in the Country for reading. She has very good abilities & ought to improve them. [¶] Pray request Mr Beach to vote against this stupid doctor, [*] who is not so fit to be a prime Minister ^{as} ~~than~~ I am - it moves every particle of bile in my composition to see ~~the~~ Country under the influence of such Goosocracy. -

90.1

(4 May 1803)

I sympathise with you upon the loss of poor Bloxam, & the ~~circumstances~~ of his death render it the more distressing - his loss^s is great, I admit - but you will think it irreparable - no new thing ever compensates to you for the loss of an old one - a new hat or bonnet which gives pleasure to other Ladies, is, to you, a source of sincere mortification - the preceding one becomes dear to you as it becomes shapeless, & when it is on the eve~~s~~ of dissolution, you quit it with a pang. - I remain dear Madam with great respect & regards

yours very sincerely

Sydney Smith

[*] Addington

MS. Gordon N. Ray, St John transcript, pp. 160-1.

TS at Williamskip. Additional paraphrasing noted.

91

W

To Mrs Hicks Beach

9 May 1803

46 George St May 9th 1803

My dear Madam

I cannot take leave of you in silence without thanking you individually for the distinguishing kindness you have ever shewn to me. -

[9] If ever I can be of any service to you & yours, you will find me sincerely desirous (to) shewing my respect & regard. [9] I would say more on this point if I were not aware of your incredulity. [9] - God bless you dear Madam - do not forget us - our best wishes attend you. I remain your sincere friend

Sydney Smith

MS. Gordon N. Ray, St John transcripts, p. 162.

TS at Williamsrip. Hing noted.

✓

92

12th August,
[1803]

To Francis Jeffrey

For Jeffrey's reaction
to their departure,
see Cockburn L. 79.

Friday. — Tuxford. Nottinghamshire

My dear Jeffrey. —

We have proceeded thus far on our journey with some labor & inconvenience but without any bad effects upon the Weaker part of our Crew — Mrs Smith is fully as strong as when she set off —. Saba makes love to all the Ostlers, & Waiters on the road. — & kick'd, & cried for an hour at being separated from the gentleman of that occupation at Doncaster. — So that you are not to imagine her attentions to you proceed from any extraordinary merit of your own, but from the Polytechnic dispositions of the young Lady. — Your very kind Letter I receiv'd at the very moment of departure [.] I left Edinburgh with great heaviness of heart [.] I knew what I was leaving & was ignorant to what I was going — my good fortune will be very great If I should ever again fall into the society of so many liberal, correct & instructed men, & live with them on such terms of friendship as I have done, with you, (& you know whom) at Edinburgh.

on 8 Aug]

I cannot see what obligations you are under to me, but I have so little objection to your thinking so, that I certainly shall not attempt to undeceive you, in that opinion, or in any other which is likely to make you think of me more frequently, or more kindly. —

[I have not got the books from your house. For this No I certainly shall not be able to do them -- tho' I will do something if I possibly can. — I must enquire of Horner the mode in which he is supplied with books from Longman — The London Committee will now be tolerably strong] [This passage lightly scored over in manuscript.] — — I have found the

/country.....

92.1

Aug.
([1803] cont.)

Country every where full of Spirit & you are the only male despondent I have yet met with -- every body else speaks of the subjugation of England -- as of the subjugation of a minotaur -- or any other History in the mythological dictionary. -- God bless you my dear Jeffrey. I shall always feel a pride, & happiness in calling myself & in shewing myself your friend --

S S --

Our kind regards to Mrs J. Mrs S would write there herself but for the children -- tell Murray I will write to him when I get to London -- remember me to Brougham, Thomson, &c &c ----

N.B. I beg leave to except the Tuxford ^aWriter who desponds exactly as you do.

Text from my transcript of N.L.S., Adv. MS. 2.1.15, ff. 73-4: presented by Lord Knutsford in 1921. Postmark illegible. Endorsed '1803'.

This is the full text of NCS's Letter 78, printed from L, 4.

They moved on the 8th (Monday) [Cockburn. Jeffrey 2, 78-9], here at Deinglass on 9th [NCS 78]. This is presumably written on Friday 12th.

93

To Richard Heber

[? Apr 1803]

*very doubtful as Mrs
S gave birth to him.*

Dear Heber. —

I return you many thanks for the kindness, and friendship of your enquiries. — Mrs S I expect to be confin'd daily — and when she is — I shall not think I am troubling you if I send you word of the event. — Little Saba is very well — when Mrs S. is recover'd we shall resume our meetings — and will send you word of it — we hope not in vain — ys ever my dr Heber very affectionately & sincerely.

Sydney Smith. —

I heard the other day of you that you had 3 furnish'd Lodgings in different Quarters of the Town with 2 impure women in each — if this is the case you must attend my Spring course of moral Philosophy.

*

[Addressed:] Richard Heber Esqr / Mrs Heber / Westminster

Text from my transcript of Bodl. MS. Eng. lett. d. 215, f. 149; postmark illegible - dated from the Birth of a second child which ~~was~~ died in the following December (NCS, p. 79), but lectures still to check.