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LETTERS FROM

THE HON. ROBERT CURZON JNR.

(1810-1873)

TO

THE REV. WALTER SNEYD

(1809-1888)

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 I.

Text cut off in original

A B S T R A C T

1. The Hon. Robert Curzon junior is a figure of significance for three reasons that have long been a matter of record. Firstly, he was the only person ever to investigate the contents of the monastic libraries of the Middle East and Meteora, others both before and after his time being either content or forced to confine themselves to one area or another. Secondly, he saved from almost certain destruction among the remains of some of these libraries a number of important manuscripts which are now, as a result of his efforts, in the British Museum. Thirdly, he described this enterprise in Visits to Monasteries in the Levant. Ruskin described this work as the most delightful book of travels he ever opened. It went through three editions in its first year (1849), three further editions appeared in 1851, 1865 and 1881, a seventh edition appeared in 1916, and the last edition appeared in 1955. The notice in The Dictionary of National Biography by Stanley Lane-Poole has remained unaltered since it was written in 1886. It is very short and has virtually nothing to say about Curzon. He deserves to be better known.
2. In 1966 I began an investigation to ascertain the whereabouts or fate of manuscript material that would throw light on Curzon. There

were over five hundred of his letters to the Rev. Walter Sneyd among the Sneyd Papers in the University Library at Keele, but the whereabouts of the Parham Papers was unknown. They were last seen in 1927 and it took five years to trace the largest surviving portion of them, during which time a second, smaller but quite unknown, portion came to light, followed by a third. From this material and from the letters to Sneyd it has been possible to make the first detailed biographical study of Curzon, and this forms the major part of the introduction.

3. The letters to Sneyd have an importance of their own. Firstly, apart from the light they throw on Curzon's career they are often more valuable for what they tell us about his personality than for what he actually says. Secondly, it is very rarely that one is made party to confidences of the sort Curzon shared with Sneyd. Curzon's letters illuminate over a period of nearly forty years the struggle taking place behind the scenes in an ancient, land-owning, Victorian family, from almost devastatingly close range. Thirdly, the unique character of the letters gives Curzon a claim to be considered as a letter writer.

In so far as any undertaking which has had the advantage of freely given expert and local knowledge, constant encouragement and

constructive criticism can be called original, this work represents
the results of original research.

University Library,

University of Keele.

Spring Term 1973.

C O N T E N T S

Introduction

1. Source material and method..... i - xvi
2. Curzon and Sneyd..... xvii - cxxxi

Letters

1831 - 1834

Visual effects - poetastering - preparing for European
tour with Sneyd - proceeds to the Middle East..... 1 - 37

1835 - 1838

Difficulties at home - visit to Kedleston - visit to
Abbotsford - returns to the Middle East..... 38 - 84

1839 - 1841

Further difficulties at home - visit to Italy -
dissatisfaction with life in England - leaves for
Constantinople..... 85 - 125

1841 - 1845

Frustrations of subalternity - Erzurum - Parham - visit
to Knole - decides to go to Italy..... 126 - 184

1846 - 1850

Disappointment with Italy - strained family relations -
visit to Albert Way - begins writing..... 185 - 249

1851 - 1866

Marriage - making a home at Parham - impressions of
Paris and Germany - arrival of his parents at Parham
- their financial difficulties - illness and death of
his wife..... 250 - 365

1866 - 1873

Widower - death of his mother - rebuilding at Parham
- final illness..... 366 - 445

Discussion..... 446 - 471

Appendixes..... 472 - 485

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dissatisfaction with life in England - leaves for
Constantinople..... 85 - 125

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visit to Albert Way - begins writing..... 185 - 249

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- their financial difficulties - illness and death of
his wife..... 250 - 365

1866 - 1873

Widower - death of his mother - rebuilding at Parham
- final illness..... 366 - 445

Discussion..... 446 - 471

Appendixes..... 472 - 485

PLATES

I. The Hon. Robert Curzon junior, artist unknown.	<u>Frontispiece.</u>
II. Curzon's handwriting.	Following p. x.
III. Letters and envelope decorated by Sneyd.	" xxix.
IV. The Hon. Edward Cecil Curzon, artist unknown.	" xxxiii.
V. The Hon. Mrs Edward Curzon, artist unknown.	" liv.
VI. Parham in 1834, by Edward Lear.	" lxxiii.
VII. Harriet Anne, 13th Baroness de la Zouche of Haryngworth, artist unknown.	" lxxvi.
VIII. George Richmond's drawing of Curzon, engraved by W. Holl.	" xciii.
IX. Letter, Emily Julia and Curzon on their honeymoon, to Harriet Anne.	" cvii.
X. Emily Julia and Darea, by Alexander Glasgow.	" cxi.
XI. Parham, south front.	" cxxi.
XII. Letter, Curzon to Sneyd, incorporating the word 'NTS'.	" 6.
XIII. The Rev. Walter Sneyd, 1861.	" 37.
XIV. The drawing-room at Cheverells.	" 74.
XV. Denton.	" 84.
XVI. The garden at Denton.	" 167.

XVII. Curzon, in eastern dress, attended by (?) William Fuller, and Sneyd.	Following p.	204
XVIII. Curzon's room at Parham.	"	230
XIX. Curzon and Robin; Lady Wilmot-Horton.	"	326
XX. Curzon and Robin, by Alexander Glasgow.	"	361
XXI. Edward and Amelia; Harriet Anne and Darea.	"	395
XXII. Darea.	"	414
XXIII. Thackeray in bed.	"	458
XXIV. Curzon's collection of armour.	"	471
XXV. Sneyd and his children, with Miss Pritchard.	"	472

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

A number of people have made possible the writing of this thesis on a part-time basis over a period of years, and I have traded on their good nature, incurring many obligations. The largest and most long-standing of my debts is owed to the Hon. Mrs Clive Pearson and to her son-in-law and daughter, Mr and Mrs P.A. Tritton, the former and present owners of Parham, who gave me access to their set of bound transcriptions of the Parham Papers, directed me to other papers that I should never otherwise have known about, told me things about Parham and Curzon that I could not have found out for myself, and provided me with some of the photographs which have been reproduced. For their patience, enthusiasm and many kindnesses I shall always be grateful.

The Hon. Roger Frankland lent me an important group of Curzon's letters, which had never been transcribed, and allowed me to have photographed a drawing of his great-grandfather, the Hon. Edward Cecil Curzon. Lord Shuttleworth, as Lord Zouche's trustee during the latter's absence abroad, lent me a number of the originals of the Parham Papers, some of which had never been transcribed, and allowed me to reproduce photographs of pictures formerly at Parham, some of which are now in

Lord Zouche's possession, and I am therefore very much obliged to them. Mr D.W.H.Neilson, of Catton Hall, whose great-great-grandmother, Lady Wilmot-Horton, was Curzon's mother-in-law, lent me further letters and photographs from the family papers, and allowed me to have photographed pictures at Catton, painted by Curzon's wife.¹ Without such

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1. Enquiries made in 1969 about the possibility of there being material relating to Curzon at Catton Hall led me to believe that everything had been deposited in the Borough Library, Derby, from whom I received the most helpful information. There was in fact little in the Borough Library that was of interest to me. It was only when the present work was in the final stages that I learned that there was material at Catton Hall which was likely to be valuable. This indeed proved to be the case, as it included items which had come from the Parham Papers, the most important of which was Curzon's commonplace book, which he carried about with him, the existence of which has not previously been recorded. The volume measures some 5" x 8", is bound in hard covers covered with what was originally red velvet, now faded to purple, and contains just over one hundred leaves, twelve of which are unused. Half of one leaf, two consecutive leaves in another place, and six further consecutive leaves have been carefully cut away, and there is a note by Curzon about some of this mutilation, which resulted from his beginning to copy some information which he subsequently decided was too lengthy, so he copied it elsewhere and cut away what he had written. The volume is divided into two, the title page of the first part being dated 1833, that of the second, 1843. The entries are entirely miscellaneous and include bibliophilic notes, references to secondary sources, names and addresses of friends and useful contacts, tables of characters from ancient alphabets, inscriptions, inventories of the contents of boxes sent home, lists of officers in the diplomatic service, with details of salaries and allowances, lists of things he wanted to see, or wanted explained (such as the principle of the steam engine), notes about things he had already seen, and a description of his dog. Other manuscript material includes an account book of his honeymoon expenses and a number of letters, some incomplete, mainly from his wife to her mother. As far as possible this material has been used to establish or confirm the identity of certain individuals and to supplement the present work, and one of the pictures and seven of the photographs have been reproduced.

generosity it would never have been possible to make use of any of this material.

Lord Aldington kindly allowed me to have photographed his drawing of Parham by Edward Lear, and I am grateful to Messrs B.T. Batsford Ltd., and to the proprietors and editor of Country Life for permission to use photographs previously published by them.

My particular thanks are due to Viscount Scarsdale for telling me about the picture of Louis XIV by Henry van Minderhout at Kedleston, of which Curzon was so unappreciative on his first visit, and to Mr Richard Ormond, Assistant Keeper, National Portrait Gallery, for help with several other pictures. I am grateful also to the Trustees for permission to reproduce an engraving of George Richmond's drawing of Curzon, to which Mr Ormond drew my attention.

In another field of expert knowledge I am grateful to Professor A.W. Woodruff, Wellcome Professor of Clinical Tropical Medicine, University of London, for giving me his opinion of the possible nature of the illness Curzon suffered at Erzurum in October 1843.

For all the help I have been given in identifying references to people, places or events, which frequently baffled me, for help and advice in finding source material, and for permission to reproduce some of it, I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr J.N. Allen, Chief Librarian, Brighton Public Libraries, Miss J.M.

Backhouse, Superintendent of the Students' Room, Department of Manuscripts, British Museum, Dr D.M. Barratt, Bodleian Library, Mr E. Bletcher, Borough Librarian, Derby, Mr M.F. Bond, Clerk of the Records, House of Lords Record Office, Dr W.H. Bond, Librarian, the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Dr Cecil Clough, School of History, University of Liverpool, Miss Rosemary Courcier, Secretary, Parham Park, Mr E.J. Davis, County Archivist, Buckinghamshire, Mr K.W. Dickins, Hon. Archivist, Sussex Archaeological Society, Mr Roger Ellis, Secretary, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, Mr M.B.S. Exham, Diocesan Registrar, Lichfield, Mrs Susan Fraser, Mr Roger Fulford, Mrs Patricia Gill, County Archivist, West Sussex, Mr A.J.M. Henstock, County Archivist, Nottinghamshire, Mr C.G. Holland, formerly County Archivist, East Sussex, Miss J.M. Kennedy, City and County Archivist, Norfolk and Norwich Record Office, Mr R. Malbon, City Librarian, Portsmouth City Libraries, Dr J.F.A. Mason, Librarian of Christ Church, Mr L.J. Mayes, Librarian and Curator, Public Library, Art Gallery and Museum, High Wycombe, Miss E.D. Mercer, Head Archivist, Greater London Record Office, Dr A.N.L. Munby, Fellow and Librarian, King's College, Cambridge, Dr Ruth Murphy, Senior Lecturer in French, University of Keele, Mr S.C. Newton, County Archivist, East Sussex, Dr Helmut Nickel, Curator, Arms and Armour, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Mr A.W.H. Pearsall, Custodian of Manuscripts, National Maritime Museum, Miss Felicity Ranger, Registrar, National Register

of Archives, Miss Barbara Raw, Senior Lecturer in English, University of Keele, Mr A.L.F. Rivet, Reader in Romano-British Studies, University of Keele, Miss J.C. Sinar, County Archivist, Derbyshire, Mr W.J. Smith, County Archivist, Berkshire, Messrs Sotheby & Co., Mr F.W. Steer, formerly County Archivist, West Sussex, Mr F.B. Stitt, County Archivist, Staffordshire, Messrs Strutt & Parker, Mr P. Walne, County Archivist, Hertfordshire, Mr H.M. Walton, County Archivist, Oxfordshire, Dr W. Williams, Department of Classics, University of Keele, Mr H.O. Wilson, Librarian, Members' Library, County Hall, London, Mr A.C. Wood, County Archivist, Warwickshire, and Brigadier Peter Young, formerly of the Department of Military History, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

I should like to record my appreciation of the help given me by Mr E.J. Killham, Reader in English, University of Keele, who has supervised the preparation of this work.

I should like, finally, to record my appreciation of all the help I have been given by Mr S.O. Stewart, University Librarian, University of Keele, in so many directions, and by his staff (my colleagues), particularly by Mr P.B. Durey, formerly Deputy Librarian, and his successor, Mr P.G. Tudor, and by Mr A.J. Vickers, Chief Photographer, who was responsible for all the plates.

As when the Youth who leaves his native shores
And leaves behind the maid whom he adores
Obtains her likeness; wears it on his Breast
Tis all but She - And deems he's all but Bles't
So when to Parham's fair demense we've been
We lingering sigh, and lothe to leave the Scene
Till with a pencil and portraying care,
Contrive when absent, still to think we're there

- P.P.. 67/14. unsigned.

Plate I. The Hon. Robert Curzon junior, artist unknown.

From a photograph belonging to Mrs P.A. Tritton
of the original painting formerly at Parham, now
in possession of Lord Zouche, by whose permission
it is reproduced.



S Y M B O L S

- [] Matter supplied editorially.
- [] Matter interlined above or below the line.
- [?] Matter illegible, approximate amount lost indicated in the foot-notes.
- [...] Matter lost through imperfection of the manuscript, approximate amount lost indicated in the foot-notes.
- < > Matter deleted but recovered.
- <...> Matter deleted and not recovered, approximate amount lost indicated in the foot-notes.
- / / Substitution, original reading, where legible, given in the foot-notes.

ABBREVIATIONS

1. Primary source material.

P.P.: Parham Papers. References distinguish between P.P.(T)., followed by a volume and page number, indicating the set of bound transcriptions at Parham prepared from the original manuscripts, 1922-27; P.P., followed by a bundle and item number, indicating the original manuscript, of which a transcription was probably made 1922-27; and P.P., indicating an original manuscript, also belonging to the accumulation, but not with that part which was transcribed 1922-27.

S.P.: Sneyd Papers.

W-H.P.: Wilmot-Horton Papers at Catton Hall (including Parham Papers among them).

2. Secondary source material.

D.N.B.: The Dictionary of National Biography, originally edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee.

G.E.C.: The Complete Peerage..., originally edited by G.E. Cockayne.

M.E.B.: Modern English Biography..., edited by Frederick Boase, originally published 1892, second impression 1965.

V.C.H.: The Victoria History of the Counties of England, originally edited by H.A. Doubleday.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

1. Source material and method

There is no biography of the Hon. Robert Curzon junior, later 14th Baron Zouche, and the available secondary source material is limited. In the case of the Rev. Walter Sneyd secondary source material is almost non-existent.

Curzon is to be found in the G.E.C.,¹ and there are two columns by Stanley Lane-Poole in the D.N.B.² No more than the bare announcement of his death appeared in The Times;³ The Illustrated London News⁴ printed a brief obituary; and a long obituary was printed by the Philobiblon Society.⁵ Edward Walford included him in

1. XII, pt. ii, ed. G.H. White and R.S. Lea (1959), 955-56.

2. Reprint 1937-38, V, 354-55. It was the Marquess of Kedleston who suggested Lane-Poole. Curzon's son sent Lane-Poole's draft to Sneyd, with the comment: 'As far as I can see the notice seems a very fair one' - 11 December 1886. S.P. As far as it goes this is true, apart from one or two minor inaccuracies, e.g. Curzon left Oxford in 1830, not 1831; and he was never an attaché at Constantinople. In his time there were four attachés, Percy Doyle, Charles Alison, J. Drummond Hay and the Hon. W. Maule, to whom, as the Ambassador's Private Secretary Curzon was junior. (P.P., 67, bundle of notes in Curzon's hand about the establishment, papers not individually numbered).

3. 6 August 1873. He died 2 August.

4. 16 August.

5. Miscellanies, XIV (1872-76), 5-24.

the first edition of County Families;¹ a single reference occurs in Seymour de Ricci's English Collectors of Books & Manuscripts (1530-1930) and their Marks of Ownership;² and more recently A.N.L. Munby devoted a chapter of his Phillipps Studies³ series to Curzon's association with the famous collector. Visits to Monasteries in the Levant⁴ and Armenia: a Year at Erzeroom, and on the Frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Persia⁵ throw little light on the author's personal life.

Sneyd as well as Curzon was listed by Foster.⁶ In earlier editions of Burke's Landed Gentry⁷ the Sneyds argued their lineage seriatim from King Alfred's daughter, Aethelflaed, but subsequently⁸

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1. The County Families of the United Kingdom (1860), 160. 2. (1930), 118.
 3. No.3. The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the Year 1840, (1954), 122-36 and Appendix B, 170-77.
 4. Curzon's best known work, first published by John Murray in 1849. Details of its publishing history have been given by Basil Blackwell in a preface to the 1955 edition published by Arthur Barker Ltd., London.
 5. Published by John Murray, 1854.
 6. Joseph Foster, Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886:... (Sneyd) IV (1888), 1326; (Curzon) I (1887), 330.
 7. A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain, Sir Bernard Burke, 13th edn., A Winton Thorpe (1921), 1631-32.
 8. Op. cit., 15th edn., H. Pirie-Gordon (1937), 2091-92. The cordial relations between Sneyd and Burke nearly came to an abrupt end in 1876, when Burke returned a cheque for a guinea which Sneyd had given for the re-issued Royal Families, on hearing that Sneyd called it 'a take in', an expression which, he protested, had caused 'deep pain'. Sneyd evidently expressed regret and the Ulster King-of-Arms was mollified: 'I have laboured honestly and earnestly in the paths

they abandoned her for an authentic ancestor of the late thirteenth century. As a member of what Walford called 'the untitled aristocracy', Sneyd was included in later editions of County Families.¹ He is not to be found in the D.N.B. or the M.E.B.; a notice of his death appeared in The Times;² he is referred to by De Ricci³ and Munby,⁴ but outside bibliophilic circles his name is now largely unknown.

All but one of the five hundred and seven letters to Sneyd known to survive, the remains of one side of a once voluminous correspondence, are among the Sneyd family papers in the University Library at Keele.⁵ In the nineteenth century the Sneyds conducted an unflagging correspondence with relatives and friends, and their

(7. cont'd.). of Genealogy and History; and now, when the shades are gathering around me [he was sixty-two] I am perhaps too sensitive on the score of my literary reputation.' Paris, 22 September 1876. S.P.

1. (1880), 962.
2. 3 July 1888. He died the previous day.
3. English Collectors of Books & Manuscripts (1530-1930) and their Marks of Ownership (1930), 136-37.
4. Phillipps Studies (1954), passim.
5. Keele University Library, archives, S[Rev.WS/Hon.RC]/1-506.
Included in this archive are occasional sketches, notes delivered

letters, written on paper of the best quality, are generally well preserved. Curzon used paper of varying quality, including straw paper, and partly for this reason his letters have not all survived in good condition. In some cases the fibres have been affected by damp, leaving the paper limp and fragile; and here and there damage to the text is now irreparable. Most of the letters are written on a bifoliated sheet giving four pages or sides approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x $7\frac{1}{4}$ ", loosely described even in Curzon's time as duodecimo. Some of the earlier letters are on paper of approximately 7" x 9" and fall therefore within the quarto range. Practically none of the envelopes survives. The earlier letters have been folded in the usual way, that is to say within themselves, and sealed, the address being written in the middle of the back page, which, folded, formed the front cover. Minor damage has sometimes been done to the text where no provision has been made for breaking the seal.

The fate or whereabouts of Sneyd's letters to Curzon is uncertain. A transcription of one is at Parham.¹ A few lines from

(5. cont'd.). by hand and jeux d'esprit. One letter, No. 136A, which has become separated from the main archive, is now in private hands. A Xerox copy stands in for the original, which the writer has examined.

1. Parham Park, Pulborough, Sussex. The house lies south of the (A283) Storrington-Pulborough road, about half a mile west of Storrington.

another have been inserted by Curzon in the middle of one of his own letters to Sneyd. A third, in the form of a mock examination paper set by Sneyd and answered by Curzon, survives in the present series. Parts of others, together with some envelopes, all with drawings by Sneyd, have been mounted by Curzon in an album now in the Houghton Library, Harvard University.¹ It is conceivable that the remainder may be preserved among a group of the Parham Papers known to be in London.² Curzon's only son died in 1914 and his daughter died in 1917, when the barony passed to Mary Cecil Frankland,³ grand-daughter of Curzon's younger brother Edward.⁴ Lady Zouche sold Parham to the Hon. Clive Pearson in 1922,⁵ and between then and 1927 transcriptions of the Parham Papers were prepared by J. Wentworth-Fitzwilliam.⁶ Two sets of transcriptions were typed, one remains at Parham and the other was retained by Lady Zouche. In January 1927 the originals were moved to Loxwood House (at the time of writing, Loxwood Hall), near Horsham, and subsequently to Windsor, where Lady Zouche died in 1965.⁷

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1. Houghton b MS Eng 1129. The volume was offered for sale in 1960 by Messrs Peter Murray Hill, and was purchased by Professor A. Jackson. A microfilm of the volume has been made available to the writer.
 2. Private information.
 3. (1875-1965).
 4. The Hon. Edward Cecil Curzon, d. 1885.
 5. Private information.
 6. Published Parham in Sussex. A Historical and Descriptive Survey... Accompanied by an Architectural Description (1947). It seems possible that he may also have been responsible for the summary list of the Parham Papers made for the National Register of Archives some time after 1945.
 7. Between 1966 and 1969 an exhaustive search was carried out by the writer in an effort to find out what became of the original manuscripts. This was

Among the transcriptions at Parham is one of a letter from Sneyd to Curzon, and one of a letter from Sneyd to Curzon's aunt, Elizabeth, which may be significant, as these may represent the only original letters of Sneyd's to have survived among the papers at the time the transcriptions were prepared. If this is so, the question arises as to what became of the rest? It is possible that after Curzon's death the bulk of Sneyd's letters (except for the two represented by the transcriptions at Parham, which may have been overlooked) were returned to Sneyd, as was common practice. Curzon died in August 1873, three years after Sneyd came into Keele: did Sneyd feel, as a result of his enhanced social status, that his letters might be detrimental to his reputation; and did he as a result ask for them back and destroy them? It seems unlikely, if only because he preserved

(7. cont'd.) entirely unsuccessful and the decision was therefore taken to ask for permission to use the transcriptions at Parham. While working from these it was learned that some of the originals were in London, but as the owner was in Vietnam it was not possible to see them. In July 1971 the writer was invited by Lord Shuttleworth to Leck Hall, near Carnforth, Lancs., to examine certain pictures which had formerly been at Parham. These were stored in the attic, and in an adjoining attic were a number of deed boxes. These proved to contain originals of the Parham Papers and the second copy of the transcriptions. The originals were generously placed at the writer's disposal. Subsequent examination showed that many of the originals of the transcriptions used by the writer are not among this portion of the accumulation, but those that are have been used to verify the transcriptions, and here and there to supplement the existing narrative. As was to be expected, there was no sign of Sneyd's letters to Curzon. This part of the Parham Papers should not be confused with a third part, described on pages viii-ix below.

Curzon's letters, which are so revealing of his own character. Sneyd's letters may have been lost by accident either at Parham or Keele; or they may have been deliberately destroyed at Parham. The evidence of the album now in the Houghton, and of the fragment inserted by Curzon in his letter to Sneyd, shows that Curzon had no scruples about mutilating his friend's letters; and the transcription at Parham of the single letter from Sneyd, written close to the time of Curzon's death, may in fact represent all that survives. If the bulk of Sneyd's letters had been among the Parham Papers at the time the transcriptions were prepared, it is difficult to explain why only one letter, and a very late one at that, was transcribed.

The transcriptions occupy fifty-three bound volumes and show evidence of a meticulous regard for the text of the original documents. Apart from indexes and transcriptions of material in the Public Record Office, they preserve the text of letters exchanged between members of the family, of diaries and accounts, and of evidence of title. The family letters are the only source of information for Curzon's childhood and youth, and for the latter period they provide information about him and his parents which is not to be found in the letters to Sneyd.

Through the kindness of the owners it was possible for the

writer to examine other material at Parham relating to Curzon, including family portraits, photographs of portraits formerly in the house, photographs and prints of the house itself at various periods, building and alterations carried out by Curzon, some furnishings and ornaments of his, and certain of the books he wrote, formerly in his or his wife's possession and since recovered and brought back to Parham.

In October 1969 over one hundred and thirty original letters, one or two of which were incomplete, together with some other items, all part of the Parham Papers, came to light and were generously placed at the writer's disposal. The letters were in a nineteenth century cardboard box file, now rather dilapidated, measuring approximately 10" x 12" x 2". This had a brown leather-covered false spine, bearing the word 'DRAWINGS' in gilt italicized capitals impressed on a black leather panel. The letters were mainly from Curzon to one or other or both parents, but there were others to his mother from his father, from his brother Edward, from his wife and from friends. There was a single letter from Robert Curzon junior to his son, and there were one or two strays. At some time, possibly when he was writing Visits to Monasteries in the Levant, Curzon arranged and carefully identified five groups of the letters, written during his visit to Germany 1830-31, during his European tour with Sneyd,

1832-33, during his first Middle East tour 1833-34, during his second Middle East tour 1837-38, and during his visit to Italy 1839-40. His mother put together and identified a further group of sixteen letters written during another visit to Italy 1845-46; and a seventh group, not arranged, consisted of letters written by Curzon and his wife to his parents at the time of their marriage and honeymoon 1850-51. There are no transcriptions of this material among the transcriptions at Parham, nor is it numbered in any way, and it would seem therefore that it had become separated from the main archive before 1922.

This material¹ and the transcriptions at Parham form two of the main sources for the present study. The third source has been the Sneyd Papers, details of which have already been published.² Much of this accumulation remains to be listed and permanently numbered, and for the purposes of the present work and for the sake of consistency references have generally been given in terms of items, correspondents and dates.

It was originally envisaged that all the letters at Keele from Curzon to Sneyd would be published as they stood, but for two reasons

1. Referred to by the letters P.P.

2. See the writer's 'Sneyd MSS., University of Keele', Bulletin of

this plan was abandoned. Firstly, there were too many: the writer's transcriptions alone, without notes, occupied over one thousand pages of quarto. Secondly, many of the letters, written when Curzon was bored and had little to say are boring or trivial, and some are no more than acknowledgments or notes by hand. In consequence, of those selected, only a proportion has been given in full, with extracts from others. To facilitate reference, particularly in cases where it has not been possible to indicate more than the probable period of an undated letter, the letters printed retain the serial numbers carried by the originals, but because they represent a selection the numbers are not necessarily consecutive.

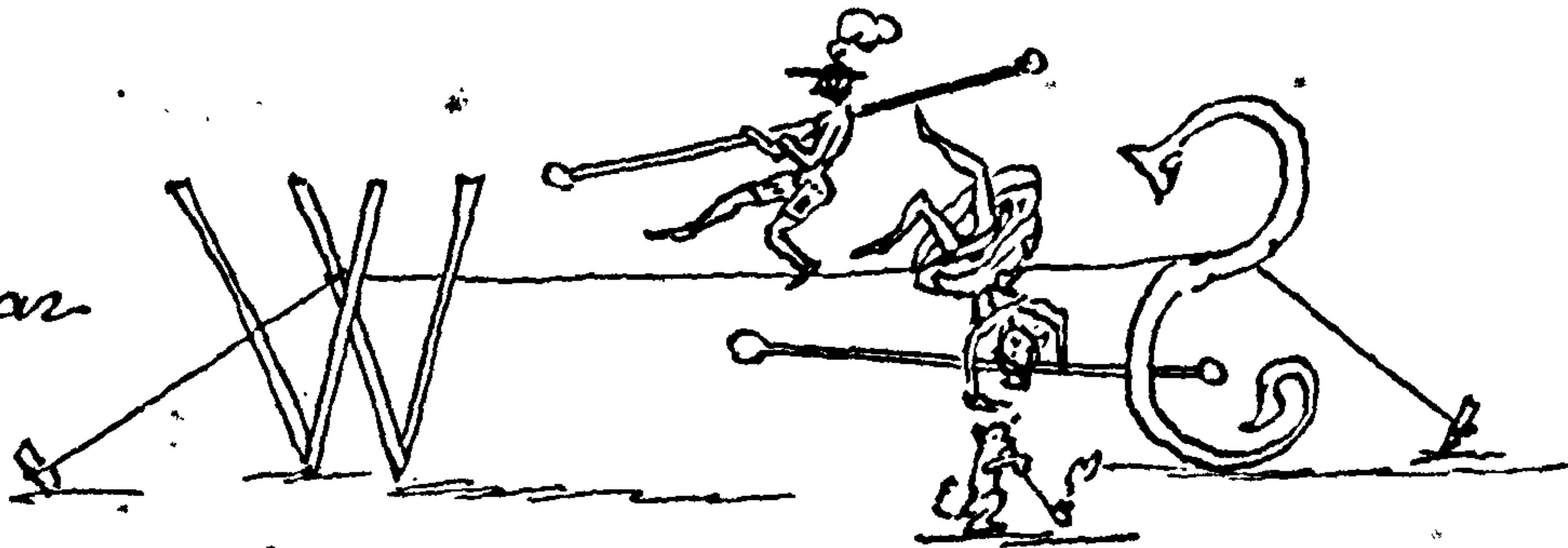
Every effort has been made to present a faithful text, but the reproduction of any manuscript material other than in facsimile must represent a compromise. When the task of transcribing and editing the letters was first undertaken it was intended that all idiosyncrasies, however unaccountable, should be reproduced, but as the problems developed the impracticability of this became increasingly apparent. Curzon's handwriting was fairly large, round and generous (see

(1. cont'd.). the National Register of Archives, No. 14, Historical Manuscripts Commission, H.M.S.O. (1967), 34-35; 'The Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Keele', North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies, 7 (1967), 58-62.

Plate II. 'Curzon's handwriting was fairly large, round
and generous,....' No. 144, enlarged.

Parham Oct 7. 1846

My dear



What numbers of nice places you have been at, and what multitudes of surprising things you have seen, and what astounding travels and adventures you have been undertaking according to your last epistle - will Leigh, ready horse, has Lewis Brought any taste, to make it better; or has he none, to let it alone; or has he bad taste to make it worse; or how is it to be. Alton is

Plates II, XII), and after 1843 his paper was generally small. His exact spacing of words to a line, reproduced in typescript on a modern quarto sheet, looked ridiculous - an effect that could be achieved only at considerable expense; and in a number of instances, where the original spacing was dictated by a drawing¹ which was not being reproduced, would have been quite pointless. The idea of reproducing the original spacing or of indicating it with vertical virgulae was consequently abandoned. This created an immediate minor problem: it reduced catchwords, occasionally used by Curzon in the earlier letters, to mere repetitions. These could have been explained in foot-notes, but because the repetitions served no purpose, rather than write editorially contrived obscurities into the text, words thus repeated have been omitted.

The punctuation raised difficulties of two kinds. Curzon had a habit of combining the top half of an interrogation mark either with a comma, or with a dash instead of a dot. (That it is a comma and not simply

1. The drawings are comparatively few in number. Most of them are simple outline sketches, one or two of which are mildly erotic (see No. 13). The style is reminiscent of Thackeray's, which may owe something to the fact that he and Curzon were friends at school, but not Thackeray at his best, and lacks the comic extravagance and facility of Sneyd's grotesques. The illustrations in Visits to Monasteries in the Levant and Armenia are hardly representative of Curzon's work. In the former book he makes acknowledgments for some of the work that is not his, and two of the woodcuts, prepared from sketches supplied by him, are signed 'M & C'. Four of the woodcuts used in Armenia bear Curzon's name but are obviously not his, one of them (facing p. 175) being inconspicuously signed by Josiah Wood Whympere (1813-1903), whose work is to be found in a number of Murray's books.

a badly made full stop may be seen in an example in No. 304, in which he changed a full stop into an interrogation mark. To do this he put in an upper loop and converted the existing full stop into a comma). At times he put a horizontal dash instead of a dot below the vertical stroke of an exclamation mark. For mechanical reasons it has not been possible to reproduce these marks. (A typed interrogation mark with a comma typed over the dot looks like a comma typed over the whole interrogation mark). Also for mechanical reasons diagraphs have been separated and monograms have been extended, and a form of capital 'S' favoured by Curzon, having a vertical stroke through it, giving it the appearance of an incomplete dollar sign, could not be reproduced. It would have been mechanically impossible to supply a missing accent in square brackets without bracketing the accented letter as well; and if missing accents are to be supplied, superfluous apostrophes ought equally to be suppressed - Curzon frequently wrote 'Your's affectly' - but suppression cannot be effected with square brackets, and the substitution of a foot-note reference number for an apostrophe in the middle of a word does little to reduce the incongruity of its appearance. For mechanical reasons, too, badly formed letters, e.g. letters lacking a minim, uncrossed t's or crossed l's cannot be put right by the use of square brackets; nor can underlining be supplied in square brackets for the titles of books, periodicals or plays without the whole title going into the brackets.

Where necessary, therefore, punctuation has been modernized.

The mechanical difficulties were apparent long before the second and more fundamental problem arose or was recognized. Curzon commonly used a full stop or full point in place of a comma, and commonly began a new sentence without using a capital, but his intention is not always clear. 'The fact is,' he confessed to Sneyd,

that tho' I like writing to you as a general rule; as a particular one, I dont like writing at all. My pens dont spell well, some of them cant write in any respectable way, witness the present example, and as for crossing ts, and putting in stops, they cant do it for the money... .¹

In cases of doubt - and they were not infrequent - any claim to have transcribed a particular punctuation mark presupposed the existence of criteria by which that mark could be consistently and accurately identified: i.e. it presupposed the existence of recognizable limits for the shape of a particular mark, beyond which it might be rejected as, say, a full stop, and accepted as a comma. The same difficulty applied to distinguishing certain upper- from certain lower-case letters, particularly 'K' and 'T'; and it also applied to deciding whether Curzon had written words normally written as one - such as 'anyone' or 'suchlike' - as one or two. At times he clearly wrote them as two, at other times the gap separating the first from the second half of the word was simply

1. No. 270, Parham, 8 March 1857.

shorter than the gaps between the rest of the words in the sentence, reflecting his own indecision. The absence of any valid criteria to go by, and the recognition of the fact that the more borderline the case the more arbitrary the transcription, led to the acceptance of the fact that certain of Curzon's punctuation marks, letters and words were not capable of reliable transcription and provided a further argument in favour of modernizing.

Even this left something to be desired:

Well what else have I to say? my De Brys, which have been a year and a half, waiting to be completed, cleaned, & 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 last 2 parts, & the appendix to Congo, astounding rarities;...¹

Such passages have received the minimum of attention to make them readable, and some very long passages have been broken down into paragraphs. What remained to be seen was how much of what it was going to be possible to reproduce was still desirable to reproduce. It may have been a peculiarity of

1. No. 212, Parham, 10 October [? 1852].

Curzon's that he sometimes began a new paragraph close to the left-hand margin; or sometimes used a full stop in place of an interrogation mark; or sometimes used a comma immediately before an interrogation mark; or sometimes used a full stop immediately before a comma; or sometimes used a capital letter for the first word on a fresh page: obviously, it is impossible to say. It was common Victorian practice when ending a sentence in parentheses to include the full stop inside the second bracket, but to reproduce this kind of thing seemed to add little to the value of the text. Generally speaking, therefore, capital letters used indiscriminately for emphasis have been suppressed but underlining has been retained; false starts have been ignored; interlinings have been brought into the line, and the most obvious abbreviations, including most ampersands (but not, for example, in cases like Payne & Foss, and '&c.' or the equally favoured '&c. cc.')

have been extended. As far as possible words accidentally omitted have been supplied in square brackets, as have individual letters or words which have been broken or lost because of imperfections in the manuscript. Where legible and significant words overwritten have been given in a foot-note; sums of money with the £ sign written above or after the figure have been given in the conventional way; figures have generally been written in full; and passages in Greek have been translated, but their occurrence is noted.

The use of headed writing paper has not been noted.¹ For the sake of consistency the position of the address and date, and of postscripts has been standardized. Curzon dated his letters in a variety of ways - on two occasions with pictorial puns.² Often he was uncertain of the date, often he got it wrong. Incomplete dates have been completed and wrong dates have been corrected, and where necessary explained in the foot-notes. As far as possible the original spelling has been preserved, but inevitably some readings are doubtful. Curzon mis-spelled for effect as well as unintentionally. In some of the latter cases attention has been drawn to unexpected lapses (e.g. villian [sic] for villain) which might otherwise be taken for typing errors. The procedure outlined has been followed not only with Curzon's letters to Sneyd but with all primary source material used, and, as far as the nature of the material allowed, with the transcriptions of the Parham Papers.

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1. Apart from a single lilac coloured initial 'C' embossed on a sheet addressed from Parham in October 1854, the earliest surviving example of headed writing paper in the correspondence with Sneyd is dated 23 August 1855. It has 'PARHAM. STEYNING. SUSSEX.' embossed in blue caps.
 2. Nos. 9 and 21 (the latter not selected).

2. Curzon and Sneyd

Assheton, Viscount Curzon of Penn (1730-1820), younger of the sons of Sir Nathaniel Curzon Bt., of Kedleston (1675-1758),¹ was married three times. By his second wife, Dorothy,² youngest daughter of Sir Robert Grosvenor Bt., he had two sons and two daughters. Robert, the younger son, born 13 February 1774, was Robert Curzon junior's father.³ He married at Parham, 14 October 1808, Harriet Anne, elder daughter of Sir Cecil Bisshopp Bt. (1752-1828).⁴ In right of his mother, Susan Hedges, Bisshopp claimed the Barony of Zouche, which had been in abeyance since 1625, and

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1. The elder son, Nathaniel (1726-1804), was created Baron Scarsdale in 1761, and the barony descended from father to son until 1856, when the 3rd Baron died unmarried. The 2nd Baron married twice. By his first wife he had a son and a daughter. By his second wife he had ten more children, the first six of whom were illegitimate, and the seventh, Alfred Curzon, was the sixth, but second legitimate son. Alfred predeceased his half-brother, the 3rd Baron, but left a son, Alfred, who succeeded in 1856. This Alfred, 4th Baron, the Rev. Lord Scarsdale, was George Nathaniel Curzon's father. There was therefore no direct connection between the Marquess of Kedleston and the Hon. Robert Curzon junior. It is not known whether they ever met. They may have done, but there was nearly fifty years' difference in age.
 2. Died 25 February 1774.
 3. Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage, 101st edn., L.G. Pine (1956), 1142; G.E.C., ed. the Hon. Vicary Gibbs and H.A. Doubleday (1913), III, 582-83; ibid., ed. Geoffrey H. White and R.S. Lea (1959), XII, pt.ii, 954-55.
 4. His ancestor, Thomas Bisshopp, purchased Parham in 1601. The second sale of the house took place in 1922.

his claim was upheld by a resolution of the House of Lords, 24 April 1807.¹ Bisshopp's younger son, Lt. Charles Bisshopp R.N., died of yellow fever in Jamaica, 10 May 1808,² and his elder son, Lt.-Col. Cecil Bisshopp, 1st Foot Guards, was killed in action at Black Rock, Upper Canada, 11 July 1813.³ This left two sisters co-heiresses, Harriet Anne ('Fright')⁴ and Katherine Annabella ('Kitten').⁵ Harriet Anne was awarded the barony in 1829, a year after her father's death, and styled herself Harriet Anne, Baroness de la Zouche; and in 1832 the estates were divided between the two sisters, Harriet Anne taking most of the Sussex property including Parham, each division being valued at £141,579. 3. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$.⁶

Curzon senior was one of the Members for Clitheroe and Colonel of the Staffordshire Volunteers. He was a J.P. in both Staffordshire and Sussex, and in the latter county was Deputy Lieutenant and served his turn as Sheriff.⁷ In his private capacity he was interested in domestic

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1. Journal of the House of Lords, XLVI, 193 (not 189 as given in the G.E.C.).
 2. After his ship the Muros, formerly the French privateer Alcide, met with disaster, 24 March 1808, attempting to destroy some batteries in the neighbourhood of Havana. A lock of Bisshopp's hair and his watch were sent home. Information National Maritime Museum and A. Whyte to Sir Cecil Bisshopp, 16 May 1808. P.P.(T)., V, 155.
 3. 'Where wild Niagara her torrent pours
Dark and resistless to Ontario's shores' - F.D. Cartwright, 'On Seeing a Print of Lieut. Col. Bisshopp', 13 April 1814. P.P.(T)., IX, 16-17.
 - 4, 5. P.P.(T)., passim. Their mother, also Harriet Anne ('Snuggest'), was the daughter of William Southwell of Frampton Cotterell, Glos. . She died 10 December 1839.
 6. P.P.(T)., XIII, 11-12.
 7. County Families (1860), 160.

curate-in-charge.¹ Price and his wife ran the vicarage school on fairly strict lines, and censorship of the pupils' letters may have given rise to ambiguities: 'It is very near the holydays', the eight-year-old Curzon remarked in one letter home, 'and I am very happy.'²

That summer both sons were taken by their parents to Harriet Anne's great-aunt Lady Holland, at Cranbury Park.³ On the way they were allowed to take it in turn to ride on the box, but Robert found it cold sport and was inside the coach with his parents when one of the wheel horses fell. The cry of the alarmed coachman, and the noise and confusion of slithering beasts and upset passengers had a bad effect on the over-tired child. In half an hour the party was on its way and no damage done, but the Curzons suffered a disturbed night. 'Little Bob slept in a little bed in my dressing room,' Harriet Anne told her mother,

which is a charming apartment, double dressing rooms and water closet complete to itself, a great comfort indeed, for heat and fatigue I suppose has brought on a return of my complaint, but I dare say it will go off and

1. R.S. Downs, The Parish Church (1904), 40-44. Information Borough of High Wycombe Public Library, Art Gallery and Museum.

2. [High] Wycombe, 30 June 1818. P.P.(T)., X, 16.

3. Near Winchester. She was Harriet, daughter of Sir Cecil Bisshopp (d. 1778) and the Hon. Anne (née Boscawen), and widow of Sir Nathaniel Dance Holland (d. 1811), her third husband.

perhaps may be better for me. I was just going to sleep when Little Bob screamed and called out. I jumped out of bed to him and found him in such a fit of nerves that neither Bob nor I could pacify him for sometime, and we took him into our own bed to console him, poor love. He was so over-tired he could not rest - I found it was such close quarters I got into his bed and at last went to sleep like you, my dear Snugest, and left the two Bobs together. Little Bob waked again in the night but Papa Bob quieted him and he is very well today. Edward looks very pale, but he is very well...¹

In April 1819 young Curzon was visited at High Wycombe by one of his father's closest friends, Bucknall Estcourt,² who reported him 'looking considerably better than when I last saw him in Town,...³

He says that he is, and certainly appears to be very happy, and has now taken so thoroughly to his schoolfellows that he has of his own accord quitted the protection and comforts of Mrs Price and her parlour for the greater delights of the study, from whence he is not to be extracted except by the orders of Mrs P. ...all this you and Mrs Curzon will consider as a satisfactory proof of his being initiated into the more manly habits of a schoolboy... Mrs P. (whose pupils gentlemen of his calibre more particularly are) informed me that he was very good, and that she, who so constantly saw him, was satisfied of his amendment...⁴

But for their part the Curzons were so far from being satisfied that they took their son away from High Wycombe and sent him to Wimbledon, to the

1. Harriet Anne to her mother, transcription dated '[7 August 1818]'.
P.P.(T)., X, 23. P.P., 17/23 shows it to have been dated from the frank.
 2. Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt, of Tetbury, Glos.
 3. P.P.(T)., X, 61-62. 4. Ibid.

establishment of a Mr Ruddock, whose rule was less rigorous. Whatever tales young Curzon had been telling his brother about High Wycombe, he now assured his mother that she could tell him that

...this is a very nice place, so he need not be afraid of coming here. No body looks at our letters, so I think that I shall not write quite such stiff letters and will perhaps sometimes make you laugh a little... .¹

In September 1821 he changed schools for the last time when his father took him to Charterhouse. 'He kept up surprisingly', his father reported,

but his heart was in his mouth all the way, constantly asking whether we were near, or halfway, or a quarter of the way. Dr Russell went with us to Mr Penny's and introduced us to him. Mr P. looks about four or five and twenty, rather tall, fair with light hair, and was a Charter House man, brought up under Dr Russell. When we arrived the boys were at dinner. Little Bob, on being asked whether he would have any, said 'No, thank you', and stuck close to me, poor fellow. After I had gone over the house with him and settled his room I went into the dining-room, which is a new one, built in the yard, lofty, spacious and airy. Rob, finding I was going away, no longer declined eating. All the boys at Mr Penny's are new comers... I felt much for him at being turned amongst four hundred and fifty boys he had never seen before... .²

1. Dated from Wimbledon, 13 February 1819 (in error for 1820). P.P.(T)., X, 93.

2. To Harriet Anne, 20 September 1821. P.P.(T)., X, 168. 'Little Bob', he added, 'has left his pistol behind.' It was not only to distinguish him from his father that he was known as 'Little Bob'. In July 1826, when he

Curzon was at Charterhouse for some four years, but failed to reach the necessary standard in Greek to equip him for Oxford. He was admitted to Christ Church in February 1828, and in company which included Gladstone,¹ went up for the Michaelmas Term. In the following May he sat and failed his Responsions - 'It is a great bore having to pore over a stupid book instead of enjoying this fine weather...'² - and so failed to gain admission to the schools. He was still at Oxford in the Hilary Term of 1830, when his Tutor, John Williams,³ appears to have dashed any hopes he may have had of staying on.

(2. cont'd.). was sixteen, his grandmother recorded that he 'was not five feet three, he is such a love, one cannot but wish there was more of him...'. 'I wish you would not sit still so much,' she told him, 'I think it prevents your growing.' Shortly before he was eighteen his mother noted that he had reached 5'5½". By contrast, his brother was tall. He complained to his parents that at Christ Church 'the doors are so low that we tall people are obliged to stoop to go in,...' P.P.(T)., XI, 100, 102, 220; XIII, 127.

1. Gladstone records that he met Walter Sneyd on 17 October, that year, but makes no mention of Curzon. At the gathering he refers to was Hugh Cholmondeley, 2nd Lord Delamere, Curzon's lifelong friend. Gladstone met Sneyd again on 22 October. - The Gladstone Diaries, ed. M.D.R. Foote (1968), I, 205, 206. Politically wide apart, Sneyd and Gladstone never lost touch. When he was Prime Minister, Gladstone visited Keele, in November 1873. - Letter to Walter Sneyd, 4 November 1873. S.P. Curzon and his wife visited Hawarden in November 1862. - No.328.
2. To his mother, 12 May 1829. P.P.(T)., XII, 63.
3. The writer is indebted to Dr J.F.A. Mason, Librarian, Christ Church, for a facsimile of Williams' reports in the Collection Book. It was Dr Mason's opinion that Curzon's report was one of the worst he had ever seen. - Personal communication, 3 January 1969.

Curzon wrote to his father on 28 January:

My dear Papa,

I am exceedingly sorry to find that Mr Williams does not think me fit to go into the schools, and your kind letter has made me very unhappy indeed about it.

I have seen Mr W. and my private tutor, Mr Furbrick, and consulted them about it. Mr P. says that I was so badly prepared when I came to Oxford... that he does not think any reading, except such as would not have allowed me any enjoyment whatever, could have made up for it. My Latin I know well, and was in hopes that it and the Logic would have been enough to have carried me safely through, as many people with less knowledge has often done, but Mr W. says that as it is not of any very particular consequence that I should take a degree, he thinks the risk not equal to the disgrace of my not succeeding. Both tutors say that it is all owing to my not being sufficiently well grounded in the Greek grammar as in the Latin, [with] the grammar of which I know I have succeeded pretty well, and can read it well enough to be amused.

I am exceedingly sorry for it all. I do not know how I shall bear to look you all in the face again, and from your always having been so very kind to me - particularly last vacation, it makes me more unhappy to have dissappointed your expectations - as well as my own.

It is not necessary, I believe, for me to leave Oxford without you wish it - as I should still learn more here than any where else, and should be able to read more usefull books, I mean which would be more usefull hereafter than I have yet read.

I am much better, as far as my illness goes, and hope to be able to go out in a few days. I hope you and Mama are pretty well. I am extreemly

sorry that I have been the cause of so much vexation to you, and wish I could do anything which would give you a good opinion of me. Pray be so good as to answer this - I shall be very anxious to hear from you again.¹

The reply must have been unfavourable, and Curzon left Oxford after keeping just over four terms. 'Strictly classical studies, ...presented no attractions to him,' commented the anonymous author of an obituary notice,² but Oxford did, and taking leave of his friends must have been humiliating. 'I think upon the whole', Walter Sneyd the younger reflected in a letter to his elder brother Ralph, 'Christ Church is uncommonly dull this term - but as it is favourable for one's reading, I don't mind...'.³

Walter Sneyd, born 13 July 1809, was the younger son of Walter and the Hon. Louisa⁴ Sneyd of Keele, Staffordshire, an ancient family of some local consequence.⁵ The Sneyds and the Curzons were originally neighbours,⁶

1. P.P.(T)., XII, 148-49.

2. Possibly Sneyd, Philobiblon Society, Miscellanies, XIV, 5-6.

3. Christ Church, 27 February 1830. S.P. Sneyd was a year senior.

4. Daughter of William, 1st Baron Bagot of Bagot's Bromley and Blithfield.

5. See Appendix A. In 1776 the area of the Keele estate was guessed at 6,000 acres. The estimated gross income in 1781 was just over £5,000. In 1786 the debts secured by the estate were approximately £30,000. S.P.

6. Shortly after their marriage in 1786 the Sneyds took the lease of

Sneyd the elder was a Member of Parliament for Castle Rising,¹ and he enjoyed the high esteem of a wide circle of friends. After bread riots in Newcastle-under-Lyme in March 1783, the Secretary of State for the Home Department made a gratifying disclosure: 'The active part taken by Major Sneyd, as a magistrate as well as an officer,' he informed Lord Gower, 'has attracted the King's particular notice'.² Another distant admirer, T. Townson of Malpas, confided to the Hon. Louisa before her marriage:

He appears indeed to me to have so many superior good qualities and virtues to most of the young men of the times, that I do not at all wonder at the distinguished preference you give him...³

His mother-in-law's opinion was equally favourable: '...we cannot help flattering ourselves,' she told the Bishop of Norwich,⁴

there is a fair prospect of happiness before us. A long and tried attachment (and I may say a mutual one) on Mr W. S - d's side, together

(6. cont'd.) Ravenhill, part of the Curzon estate, near Hagley, and paid Lord Curzon £172 a year for the farm. While Sneyd and the Hon. Louisa were on their honeymoon in Italy, Lord Bagot himself inspected the property, and reported to the couple in rumbustious couplets. The Sneyds' elder son was born there, and the Hon. Robert Curzon junior eventually inherited it and lived there with his wife from time to time.

1. 1784-90. 2. Thomas (Townshend), 1st Lord Sydney, 29 March 1783. S.P.

3. 1 January 1786. S.P.

4. Lewis Bagot, uncle by marriage.

with the good understanding, integrity and sound principles of religion, which a long experience has convinced us he possesses, added to her most excellent of all dispositions, must I trust assure them as much happiness as we are to expect in this world...¹

In 1797 the Staffordshire Regiment of Militia was in camp at Weymouth, and the Hon. Louisa and the two elder children,² Lou and Ralph, enjoyed the bathing. The third child, Harriet, at fifteen months was thought by her father to be 'very much grown and improved' and was 'beginning to talk'.³ They were 'all very intimate with the King... The Prince of Wales is here and is to dine with me next Saturday by his own desire.'⁴ Presents were exchanged - 'I am desirous of sending the best cheese you can pick from our dairy to the Queen'⁵ - and after the regiment completed a long and successful tour of duty at Windsor⁶ - 'the most

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1. 6 January 1786. S.P.
 2. Six of their nine children survived.
 3. Sneyd to his steward, Thomas Breck, Weymouth, 23, 29 August 1797. S.P.
 4. Ibid.
 5. The Hon. Louisa to the same, Weymouth, 18 September 1797. S.P.
 6. 'The late Walter Sneyd, Esq. was many years Lieut.-Col. of the King's Own, or Staffordshire Militia, a distinction which the regiment acquired under his command, whilst stationed at Windsor, where it remained as a kind of body guard for upwards of fourteen years, and where Colonel Sneyd received many marks of Royal favour...'. William White, History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Staffordshire... (1834), 643. Sneyd himself had left Windsor by the spring of 1806: 'I have intirely given up my house at Windsor', he told Breck in a letter from 14 Grosvenor Place, 13 March 1806, ' - His Majesty and indeed all the Royal Family have been most gracious to us upon that occasion... .' S.P.

expensive quarters in England;¹ - the King ordered two copies to be made of Sir William Beechey's picture of himself reviewing the troops, and presented one to the Colonel, the Earl of Uxbridge, and the other to Sneyd, to be hung at Beaudesert and Keele.² The King was godfather to the Sneyds' youngest daughter, Georgiana,³ and the easy friendship between the King's daughters - Princess Mary, Duchess of Gloucester, and Princess Sophia - and Sneyd's daughters continued until the death of Princess Mary in 1857.

Walter Sneyd the younger was devoted to his parents and to his brother and four sisters. He went up to Christ Church from Westminster, and graduated B.A. in 1831.⁴ He was of the same build as Curzon⁵ and the two were similar in temperament. Both were highly strung and nervous of illness, a tendency which in Sneyd was later recognized as something akin

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1. Sneyd to Breck, Winchester, 4 April 1798. S.P.
 2. Almost certainly 'Review of the Horse Guards', 1798. Memoranda (? in the hand of Mrs Walter Sneyd, d. 1913), S.P.
 3. Georgiana Mary Sophia, born 16 September 1805, died of typhus at Blithfield, 15 July 1816. The infection was carried to Pool Park, Denbighshire, where Lady Bagot caught the disease and died 13 August 1816, at the age of twenty-nine. G.E.C., I, 375, S.P.
 4. M.A. 1834.
 5. A passport of Sneyd's for 1830 or 1831 (the final figure is smudged) gives his description. As in the case of Curzon, Sneyd's family were concerned at his lack of inches: ' - Walter is just arrived from Oxford', his sister Charlotte Augusta told her brother Ralph, ' - looking well, but I am afraid not at all grown.' Keele, 'Friday' (watermark 'G & R Turner 1827'). S.P.

to hypochondria. The cause of much of this lay in over-indulgence in rich food - 'How is your little belly?'¹ his uncle the Bishop would ask, with Bagot candour, when he was out of sorts - but the boils, rheumatism and sciatica were difficult to avoid. 'One could hardly wish him to be quite without a twinge in the loins and kidneys,' a common friend once remarked to Ralph Sneyd, ' - he would be so désœuvré! - but in spite of an occasional little groan, I think he is really pretty well.'²

Curzon and Sneyd were ardent bibliophiles and the acquisition of antiquities - or gimcracks, as they called them - was almost an obsession, although Sneyd never shared Curzon's interest in armour.³ Sneyd was possessed of strong imaginative powers and considerable skill as a draughtsman (see Plate III). 'Walter is gone to Blithfield', his brother told Vincent on one occasion,

to perform a Chinese play of his own inditing [sic] - His daemonical imagination continues "to people with a hell of ugly devils" every sheet of paper he can lay his hands on.⁴

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1. Richard Bagot, postscript to a letter from The Palace, Wells, 17 July 1848. S.P.
 2. Henry William Vincent (1796-1865), sometime Queen's Remembrancer in the Exchequer and Recorder of Middlesex, letter from Thornwood Lodge, Kensington, 14 February 1860. S.P. Vincent found that Sneyd's suffering could be 'much relieved by buying a bargain...'. Letter to Ralph Sneyd from the same place, 5 December 1851. S.P.
 3. Curzon's collection (see Plate XXIV) was sold at Sotheby's 10, 11 November 1920. Information Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Museum acquired eight lots at this sale and subsequently three more lots. Curzon described some of the items in The Archaeological Journal, XXIII (1865), 1-14.
 4. Keele, 3 January 1829. S.P.

Plate III. Letters and an envelope decorated by Snoyd.
Enlarged from microfilm.

Houghton b MS. Eng. 1129, reproduced by
permission of the Harvard College Library.

Denton Abbey
Tuesday



My dear



Denton Abbey
March 3.
1863



DEAR CRZON



The Hon^{ble}
R. Curzon, Jun^r
24. Arlington St.
Piccadilly
London

Evidence of this survives among the papers at Keele, and other of his drawings, given to Frances, Countess of Morley, for a charity, can be seen in Portraits of the Spruggins Family Arranged by Richard Sucklethumkin Spruggins, Esq., which she had privately printed in 1829.¹

In the summer of 1830, six months after he left Oxford, Curzon was invited by his father to stand for parliament in the general election that would follow the King's long anticipated death, but he declined, arguing that as he was

...not likely to make so talented a speech as to astonish all the electors, I think it is not [in] my interest to come forward in such circumstances as these;...²

Instead, he made a tour of Ireland, returning late in July³ in time to pack for Weimar, where he and his brother were to make an extended visit.

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1. Bodleian Library Record, vol. 8, no. 3 (February 1969), 163-64. A letter to Sneyd from Lady Morley, about producing the book, is at Keele, as is Sneyd's own copy.
 2. The letter is from 'Eatindon' (rectius Eatington alias Lower Ettington), the home of Curzon's friend Evelyn Philip Shirley, archaeologist and antiquary. P.P.(T)., XII, 154. (The transcriber has completed Curzon's date, 15 June, with a tentative '[circa 1830]', but there can be little doubt that that was in fact the year. In the summer of 1829 Curzon was still at Oxford, and by May 1831 he had taken over his father's seat).
 3. P.P.(T)., XII, 159-70 (Irish journal).

Escorted by their father they left England on 10 August, and after a bad crossing¹ travelled through Bruges, Ghent, Brussels and Waterloo to Namur, where they turned north-east for Liège, Aachen and Cologne. Near Julich² they met Lord Bagot³ on his way home from Italy; and at Frankfurt were greatly impressed by the accommodation offered by the Hôtel de Russie.⁴ Continuing north-east through Gotha, they disliked Weimar so much when they saw it - 'the ugliest and worst looking place in the whole of Germany, at least as far as we have been'⁵ - that Curzon senior decided to make for Dresden: 'I think I shall take the Duke of Wellington's advice,' he told Harriet Anne in a postscript to one of Robert's letters, 'and fix them there.'⁶ Mr Ward, the British Minister, and General von Schreibershofen, to whom the Duke had given them a letter of recommendation,⁷ were to keep an eye on them, although Curzon senior thought they were perfectly capable

1. P.P. Journal, of which only two pages survive or were ever written.
2. Curzon senior knew it as Juliers. Letter to Harriet Anne, Koblenz, 20 August. P.P.
3. William, 2nd Baron Bagot, the Hon. Louisa Sneyd's brother, a man of reckless extravagance. In 1832 the state of his affairs threatened his family with ruin and his debts were estimated at £127,000. His nephew, Ralph Sneyd, was one of three trustees appointed to reduce this figure. S.P.
4. Originally built as a palace at a cost of £50,000: '...our room is a beautifull saloon thirty feet by thirty-five and fitted up with marble and scaliola,...' Robert Curzon junior to his mother, Frankfurt, [27 August]. P.P.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Curzon senior to Harriet Anne, Potsdam, 3 September. P.P.

of looking after themselves. Before leaving he took them north to Potsdam and Berlin, and wrote reassuringly to Harriet Anne that he had

...desired either one or the other to write home once a week. I think they will do well as they seem to be steady and I am satisfied are to be depended upon.¹

On 9 September he started back, travelling by Cassel, Dusseldorf, Rotterdam and The Hague, where he visited his friend Sir Charles Bagot.² Unfortunately for the peace of mind of both parents, Curzon had no sooner left Dresden than rioting broke out throughout the kingdom,³ so he took the opportunity at The Hague to slip a letter to Harriet Anne into Sir Charles' diplomatic bag. In the view of the professionals, he was able to tell her, the riots were nothing serious:

The witnessing such scenes will tend to mature their judgment and give them habits of reflection...⁴

Their aftermath brought something of an anticlimax. There was much

1. Potsdam, 3 September. P.P.

2. (1781-1843), British Ambassador, brother of the Hon. Louisa and lively correspondent: 'There is nothing like having a thing one's own', he once assured his nephew, Walter Sneyd the younger, ' - Nothing like looking out of one's own water closet window and feeling that you are monarch of all you survey...'. Letter, 16 May 1840, S.P.

3. The King of Saxony, Frederick Augustus II (1750-1827) had been succeeded by a septuagenarian brother, Antony, whose unpopularity sparked off the riots in favour of Prince Frederick Augustus, the King's nephew. As a result, the latter became co-regent.

4. 17 September. P.P.

in Dresden to interest his sons, but after a visit to Leipzig fair - 'very well worth seeing'¹ - and Saxon Switzerland - 'a very extraordinary place'² - they became increasingly aware of the air of decay which had long since settled on the ancient town. They made half-hearted attempts to study German, but were discouraged by the discovery that the people to whom they were introduced spoke nothing but French; and they found that the Germans were not

...great readers, except the students, who dress in a very odd way, wearing hair and beards à la Charles the First, and continually fight duels...³

They were elected to the Resource, the local club, but reports which they read in English papers about the Labourers' Revolt,⁴ and uncertainties then arising over the settlement of Parham⁵ were of greater interest than anything going on in Dresden. 'The place is getting rather dull

1, 2. Robert to his mother, 7 October. P.P.

3. Same to the same, 6 November. P.P.

4. 'I read... that the people in Sussex have been burning hay stacks and committing sundry other depredations, I hope they have not injured any of the Parham tenants,...' Same to the same, 4 December. P.P.

5. 'Pray tell me about Parham, have you settled any thing or put Capt. Pechell into Chancery?' Same to the same, 16 November. P.P. Katherine Annabella married, 1 August 1826, Capt. George Pechell R.N., later Vice-Admiral Sir George Brooke-Pechell. The dispute was settled amicably.

Plate IV. The Hon. Edward Cecil Curzon, artist unknown, but the partly legible German name on the original, and the age of the sitter suggest that the drawing may belong to the period of the Dresden visit.

Reproduced by permission of the Hon. Roger Frankland.



and cold,' Robert told his mother,

...all the galleries are shut up for the winter and there is no society at all, besides which there is no such thing as fish sauce in all Saxony,...¹

Just before Christmas they were presented at Court, which gave them something entertaining to write about, and in January they came home. They had just enough money to get them to London, where they were stranded at their parents' house, 24 Upper Brook Street, until their mother sent them the fare to Hagley.²

For the next eighteen months Robert Curzon junior remained at home. After the dissolution of parliament in April 1831 he took over his father's seat for Clitheroe, which the latter had occupied since 1796,³ and consequently witnessed at close hand the dramatic events associated with the first three parliamentary reform bills. Like his religion, Curzon took his politics for granted and the two were not unconnected. He saw nothing

1. 6 November. P.P. Notwithstanding which, in a letter of 4 December he asked: '...is there any particular reason for my return in January, as it was settled before that I was to remain here till March,...' P.P.

2. Same to the same, (postmarked 21 January 1831). P.P.

3. It may have been his own seat that he had intended giving up the previous June.

incongruous in defending his right by birth to a privileged position in a society whose structure was pre-ordained, and for whose victims he felt genuine pity. He feared the mob but felt little more than amused contempt for the comic vulgarity of democracy in embryo. He contributed nothing to the debates,¹ and in February 1832, while London experienced its first outbreak of cholera, slipped away for a week in Paris.² The third bill reduced Clitheroe's representation from two to one,³ and by the time the reformed House of Commons was being elected for the new session he was in Italy with Sneyd.

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1. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Forming a Continuation of "The Parliamentary History of England, From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803". Third series, III-XIII (1831-33), indexes to those who spoke in debates. '...the youth is in Parliament', Thackeray told Mrs Carmichael-Smyth, 15, 16 December 1831, 'but does not intend to spout - '. The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray, collected and edited by Gordon N. Ray (1945), I, 177.
 2. 'I have written to Papa', he told his mother, 'to ask him to let me go to Paris for a week, and I hope you will put in a good word for me,... You remember when I wanted to go to Ireland, Papa said 'Fool! Nonsense! Fiddlesticks!' but you took it into consideration and so at last he thought it a very good idea...'. [14 February 1832]. P.P.(T)., XIII, 36.
 3. Under Schedule 'B' of the Act. The overall population of Clitheroe in 1831 was 5,213.

The two of them embarked in the Earl of Liverpool steam packet at Tower Bridge on the morning of 21 July 1832, accompanied by two servants and enough luggage, if not for a Grand Tour, at least to get them to Rome, and to get Curzon to the Aegean. During 'a horrid passage'¹ they met a friend of the Percys, Colonel Dundas, who offered them a lift in his britchka as far as Cologne, which they were glad to accept. At Ostend they put the servants and the luggage into a diligence and travelled in style to Brussels, where they spent Monday - Sneyd's birthday - exploring the town. Next day they visited Waterloo and Genappe, as a result of which it was getting late before they started for Namur. They were in high spirits, but before reaching Namur landed themselves in an unpleasant situation.

The trouble began shortly after a change of horses at Sombrefe. At the foot of a hill the postillion pulled up to take off the drag. This necessitated moving the britchka back a little, and Dundas's courier stood by to hook up the drag once it was clear of the wheel, but the horses refused to back. The passengers made no secret of their amusement, and Sneyd describes what followed:

...we could not help laughing at the [po]stillion's awkward efforts to back - upon which he got off his horse in a violent rage and proceeded to swear at, and insult us, and especially the courier, in a most outrageous way - This excited the courier's wrath and he gave the man a sound thrashing.²

1. Curzon to his mother, Ostend, 22 July. P.P.

2. According to Curzon the postillion dismounted to attack the courier. Letter to his mother, Spa, 29 July. P.P.

We jumped out of the carriage immediately and separated them - and the man mounted his horse, apparently humbled, and proceeded with us till he came to a lone house in a bleak spot about eight miles from Namur. It was then between nine and ten o'clock - He pretended he wanted to water his horses, but having called up two or three men of the house, he told them that we had all set upon him and licked him - He then took off the horses, put them up, and swore we should continue there all night, for he would not take us an inch farther... vowing vengeance against the courier - upon which we gave Dundas's sword to the courier and bid him sneak off unperceived and make the best of his way to Namur, and send horses from there.

So there we were in the dark, without a servant, in the middle of the road, with three or four fellows armed with great bludgeons,¹ in a furious rage, cursing us and heaping every sort of insult upon us, evidently in the hopes of irritating us, that they might have an excuse for falling upon us. However, we kept perfectly quiet - and thus we remained till past one in the morning, the postillion in the mean time having got very drunk and more than ever outrageous. At last we got one of the men to hear reason a little, and they agreed that if we would pay for a man and horse to ride with us to Namur, as a protection to the postillion, he should take us on.

After some consideration we consented to this, the horses were brought out and the guide galloped off before us. However, while they were bungling at the harness two of the horses set off and galloped back in the direction of Sombref, and the drunken postillion at their

1. Curzon explained to his mother that these were yokes from a cart. 'I told them I was armed', he said, 'and Dundas stood up very boldly with me...'. Spa, 29 July. P.P.

heels. The other two horses were harnessed to the carriage - we sat waiting for half an hour, but neither postillion nor horses returned - so at last, after arguing some little time with the people of the house, Curzon mounted as postillion and we drove off - intending to return the horses to the guide at Namur - We went on very prosperously till within half a league of Namur - The horse on which Curzon rode was dead tired and stumbled, and in pulling up, it being dark and the harness ill contrived, we were overturned into a deep ditch on the road side, luckily none of us in the least hurt - but the horses huddled one over the other.

There we were, without a creature to help us! We cut the traces and with some trouble got out the horses - Just then the guide, who had preceded us to Namur, returned - and we told him all that had happened - but he was either frightened or bewildered, and saying he would go for assistance, he galloped homewards and we saw no more of him - It was then settled that Curzon should walk on to Namur and send us horses, and return with the servants to get the carriage out - So away he went - and Dundas and I remained in the road, to hold the horses and look after the carriage.

It was then three in the morning, bitter cold and not a house near, or a creature stirring - After some time we heard horses' feet approaching and then came up a postillion from Namur, with three horses, having been sent by the courier - so we made him leave two of his horses and ride for assistance - which he did, and brought three or four men. After several attempts we succeeded in getting out the carriage uninjured - and having given the Sombref horses into the care of a peasant, and

paid him to take them back, we proceeded in the carriage to Namur.

On entering the town we met Curzon and the three servants - We decided not to stop, as it was four in the morning, but to make the best of our way to Spa - so we desired our two servants to follow with our baggage by the diligence...¹

They changed horses at Namur and continued as far as Liège, where they obtained baths and a poor dinner at the Hôtel d'Angleterre before going on to Spa - 'a stupid little dirty watering place'² - where they spent the night. Next morning, Thursday, 26 July, Sneyd stayed in bed until the diligence arrived with clean clothes, but when it did arrive there was no sign of the servants; instead, there was a note to say they had been detained by the Namur police, because they had no passports,³ and that the luggage had been seized following complaints from the Sombreffe postillion, who claimed that one of the horses had died. The man lost no time enlisting support because a further note arrived from the servants' hotel-keeper in Namur, informing them that neither servants nor luggage would be released until Curzon and his friends returned to settle up. Accordingly, taking their time, Curzon, Dundas and the courier set off back to Namur after

1. Sneyd's journal, 24, 25 July. S.P.

2. Curzon to his mother, Spa, 29 July. P.P.

3. Their names were on the passports of their employers, a practice with which the Namur police must have been familiar. - Sneyd's journal, 26 July. S.P.

dinner, while Sneyd for some reason was allowed to remain behind. He went to the theatre and later amused himself watching roulette at some gambling-tables. Curzon's party was away the whole of the next day, and only 'returned to Spa with the servants and baggage between one and two o'clock in the middle of the night - having settled the affair... satisfactorily.'¹ Curzon was furious: 'I will never enter Belgium again, if I can help', he told his mother, 'as I despise and detest the people with all my heart...'.²

They left Spa on 30 July and travelling by road and river visited Aachen, Cologne, Bonn and Koblenz, before reaching Mainz a week later, sightseeing, walking about and admiring the dramatic scenery. 'This is the wildest and most beautiful part of the Rhine,' wrote Sneyd, of the road between Koblenz and Bacharach, '...the mountains are covered with the ruins of old castles'.³ Dundas left them at Cologne, 'to our great regret,'⁴ so at Mainz Curzon and Sneyd bought carriages of their own, Curzon selecting a

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1. Sneyd's journal, 27 July. S.P.
 2. Letter from Spa, 29 July. P.P.
 3. Sneyd's journal, 3 August. S.P.
 4. Ibid., 1 August. S.P.

droshki, 'a small, low carriage, which is very comfortable but carries very little luggage',¹ Sneyd preferring 'a sort of phaeton'.² By 7 August they were in the Hôtel de Russie in Frankfurt, and in the course of a four days' stay drove out to Homburg to visit the ageing landgravine,³ whose kindness greatly moved them. 'I would not have missed that visit for the world', Sneyd told his brother, ' - Homburg is a poor, rattle-trap sort of old palace - grassgrown and moth-eaten - but she has done wonders for it... she must have found it a bad substitute for Windsor when she first came.'⁴

They left Frankfurt separately, agreeing to meet in Munich in a week's time. Curzon went to Nuremberg and Augsburg, Sneyd more directly south, to Darmstadt, Heidelberg and Karlsruhe, where he turned south-east to visit Stuttgart and Ulm. On 16 August they met unexpectedly at the Three Moors in Augsburg, where they stayed two days before going on to Munich. Here they remained for nearly a week, admiring pictures, books, manuscripts and other treasures, inspecting the statuary in the 'Glyptothèque', and lionizing with

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1. Curzon to his mother, Frankfurt, (postmark 11 August). P.P.
 2. Sneyd's journal, 7 August. S.P.
 3. Formerly Princess Elizabeth, third daughter of George III (1770-1840). Before they left she presented each of them with a little marble slipper for a keepsake. Curzon thought her 'one of the most charming people I ever had the pleasure to meet,....' Letter to his mother, Frankfurt, (postmark 11 August). P.P.
 4. Letter from Salzburg, 26 August. S.P.

M. de Baader, 'a very agreeable, clever old man - who was extremely civil and kind',¹ to whom Lord Bagot had given Sneyd a letter of introduction. He took them to the palace gardens at Nymphenburg and proudly showed them the two fountains he had designed, which 'by means of an engine'² threw a column of water ten inches in diameter one hundred feet into the air, 'like a great column of glass', said Curzon, 'with a waterfall falling from the top';³ and on 24 August, the day on which they planned to leave, he took them, rather against their own inclination, to a gala performance of Macbeth, given in honour of the King's birthday.

It was dark when they came out and pouring with rain,⁴ but they left the city that night and early the following evening came to Salzburg. 'You did well to rave about the beauty of this place', Sneyd wrote to his brother, 'I never saw any thing so glorious as the situation... or so stupendous as the mountains...'.⁵ While they were there Curzon made two expeditions by himself, one to the salt mines at Hallein, which Ralph Sneyd had warned his brother to avoid, and about which Curzon is unforthcoming in his letters

1. Sneyd to his brother, Salzburg, 26 August. S.P.

2. Ibid.

3. To his mother, Munich, 24 August. P.P.

4. Sneyd's journal, 24 August. S.P.

5. Salzburg, 26 August. S.P.

home; and another into the mountains near Berchtesgaden, to shoot. There, he told his mother, he spent

...two days in the most romantic manner, generally above the clouds, and at night slept in a block hut with nine yagers and a quantity of goats, pigs and cows. I only had one shot at a deer, which trotted up to me in a narrow valley, but my gun missed fire and the deer bounded off, accompanied with the groans and lamentations of William,¹ who was already supping on venison fry in his imagination.²

From Salzburg they moved to Innsbruck, where they stayed three days before going through the Brenner Pass to Bressanone³ and Bolzano.⁴ Here they turned north-west to Merano, crossed the Stelvio Pass, and came down to Bormio, a journey that was accomplished in conditions of considerable discomfort. With the mass of the Ortles lying to their left, they trudged six miles to the summit, 8,400 feet above sea level, according to Sneyd.⁵ Here parts of the road were protected by twelve immense wooden canopies, erected by order of the Emperor, but there was snow in the pass, it was intensely cold and the light was failing. 'I walked up nearly all the way in advance of the carriages',⁶ wrote Sneyd, but when they reached the top the post house was unable to give them either accommodation or fresh

1. ? William Fuller, Curzon's servant. Additional MS. 39656 is inscribed by Curzon to the effect that it was a gift from Fuller, who has signed his name in a space left by Curzon.

2. Curzon to his mother, Innsbruck, 2 September. P.P.

3, 4. Then Brixen and Botzen.

5. Journal, 8 September. S.P. The Nagel travel guide series, Italy (1956), 338, gives it as 8,967 feet.

6. Sneyd's journal, 8 September. S.P.

horses, and they were forced to start down fourteen miles of zig-zags in the dark, with tired horses.

They had scarcely begun when the drag on Curzon's droshki gave way and a violent thunderstorm broke over the mountain, torrents of rain extinguishing one of the lamps. 'Nothing', Sneyd afterwards wrote, could well be more fearful or more actually perillous than our descent of the Alps this night - The rain and hail fell in such torrents that the driver could scarcely see a yard before him, even with the half of the lamps (which we expected every instant would be put out) - In some places the railing was broken down and there was no defence from the precipices - The roar of the thunder might very possibly have brought down loose stones upon our heads - and every instant we were enveloped in a blaze of lightening which shewed us with fearful distinctness the horrors of our situation and the chasms, rocks and cataracts, far beneath us - We had no confidence in our carriages, which were very slight, badly built and trembled under the fury of the storm - However, we luckily had excellent steady postillions, and good quiet drudges of horses - and by the mercy of Providence we succeeded in getting safe to Bormio...¹

'Walter is running about Europe with young Bob Curzon,' Ralph Sneyd told Lord Clare, 'and enjoying himself - as one does upon one's first travels.'²

Past Bormio the country and later the weather improved. They followed the course of the Adda and made pleasant progress towards Lake Como, through

1. Sneyd's journal, 8 September. S.P.

2. Keele, 14 September. S.P.

Tirano and Sondrio. On 10 September, a little beyond Morbegno, they separated, Curzon turning north to Chiavenna and Splugen, Sneyd going south along the new road which followed the eastern shore of the lake. 'It is impossible', he wrote,

to conceive any thing more luxuriantly fertile or more incomparably lovely than the borders of the lake - The road, which is close to the water, is protected from it by a parapet and wall, strongly built and coped with granite, and having at intervals stone stairs down to the water - In many places where the rocks project boldly into the lake, galleries have been cut out for a considerable length thro' the solid rock to admit the road - The waters of the lake are beautifully clear and of a /deep/¹ green color - and the banks on either side are covered with villages and country houses, amongst forests of Spanish chestnuts, olives and accacia trees - vineyards [are] in profusion - and every sort of fruit tree laden with fruit growing wild - numerous waterfalls - the air perfumed with flowers - In short, every thing that nature could devise to make this the most perfect spot on earth... .²

Sneyd made his way round the southern tip of Lake Lecco to Como and Lugano, and then went north to Bellinzona, where he rejoined Curzon. The latter at one time intended to make an enormous detour and to meet Sneyd in Lucerne, but they appear to have changed their minds. A detailed itinerary in Curzon's hand, preserved among his letters home of this period, gives a

1. Substituted in pencil for '...bottle...'.
 2. Sneyd's journal, 10 September. S.P.

route north of Splugen to Constance, Shaffhausen, Zurich, Zug and Lucerne; but as he was in Bellinzona on 12 September, he could hardly have gone far beyond Splugen.¹ From Bellinzona, in Sneyd's word, they 'traversed' Switzerland, from Lucerne to Berne, from Berne to Lausanne, and from Lausanne to Geneva. At Lausanne they discovered that part of Gibbon's library was for sale, 'and of course [I] could not resist a book or two, out of sentiment',² said Sneyd. At Geneva there was a letter waiting for him from his brother, telling him that he had inherited £8,000. 'I bore the announcement of Mrs Sinclair's demise with great fortitude', he replied, ' - it could not have occurred at a more convenient time.'³ Nothing like this ever happened to Curzon, and he searched the rue des Belles Filles for the house in which his mother was born, the Maison Pictée: '...the house is no longer known by that name,' he told her, '...though I have certainly seen it as I have looked at

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1. In a letter to his mother finished in Geneva, 5 October, Curzon wrote: 'I afterwards passed the Splugen and the Bernhardine, the scenery of both of which is very fine...'. He made no mention of any of the places further north, and went on to describe the St Gotthard Pass, which he and Sneyd crossed together on their way to Lucerne. Bellinzona is not listed in the itinerary, which must have been drawn up before they set out. It is headed 'Set out from London July 21. 1832', but this has been added later, as have certain other comments.
 2. Letter to his brother, Geneva, 7 October. S.P.
 3. She had been tenant for life of property in Romney Marsh and the Isle of Thanet, the reversion of which had been devised to Walter Sneyd senior by a Mrs Mary Finch. He devised it to Ralph Sneyd, charged with £8,000 payable to Walter, with interest at the rate of four per cent. as long as the £8,000 remained unpaid. Mrs Sinclair died 13 August 1832. S.P.

all the houses in the street.¹ In Geneva they found a number of their friends, including Lord De Tabley² and his bride, and Walter Kerr Hamilton,³ both of whom they had known at Oxford.

Taking Hamilton with them they set off for Italy on 8 October, and three days later crossed the Simplon. 'The view,' wrote Sneyd, as one looks back upon the valley of the Rhône and the long range of snow peaks beyond, is perfectly splendid - We arrived at the highest point of the mountains, beyond the "Gallerie des Glaciers", at about one - and then began gradually to descend - passed the new hospice, an immense building not yet completed, and in about an hour arrived at the village of Simplon, where we lunched - After that the scenery becomes wild and terrific - and soon the road enters the valley of Gondo, which is the most gloomy and fearful place I ever saw - It is so narrow that there is scarcely room for the river and the road between immense precipices of bare rock, which rise on each side to the height of 2,000 feet. It is like an immense crack in the mountain and the sun never shines at the bottom...⁴

Fifteen hours' travelling brought them to Baveno, on Lake Maggiore, where

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1. Letter finished in Geneva, 5 October. P.P. Harriet Anne was born 7 September 1787.
 2. George, Baron De Tabley (1811-87), one of Curzon's closest friends and executor of his will, married 21 June 1832, his first wife Catherina Barbara, daughter of Count de Salis-Saglio.
 3. Bishop of Salisbury 1854-69. He accompanied Curzon and Sneyd as far as Venice.
 4. Sneyd's journal, 11 October. S.P.

'...we found a capital inn and were very glad to go to bed.'¹ Before resuming their journey they explored the Borromeo Islands, and then proceeded to Milan, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza and Padua, '...stopping at each long enough to see them thoroughly,'² and arriving in Venice on 23 October. 'I can hardly find words to express my wonder and delight at its oddity and extreme magnificence', Sneyd declared, ' - and my regret to see the state of ruin and decay into which it has fallen'.³

For a week after their arrival Sneyd was confined to his room at the Europa by an attack of rheumatism, '...but I am now well,' he reported, 'and have lionized with all my might - what churches! and palaces! and pictures and marbles! My eyes are quite worn out with the perpetual blaze of splendid things.'⁴ On 2 November Curzon left by steamer to explore Trieste and the surrounding country, arranging to meet Sneyd in Florence in a week's time, and the latter rummaged happily. He told his brother that he had found '...a very satisfactory library',⁵ from which he purchased a number of items: 'What say you', he boasted, 'to Greek MSS. of Homer's

1. Sneyd's journal, 11 October. S.P.

2. Sneyd to his brother, Venice, 3 November. S.P.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Iliad and Odyssey, Thucydides - and Aristotle - all as perfect, clean and fresh as if written yesterday - in old wooden bindings!¹ At this time, too, he may have seen and set his heart on the remains of the Canonici library,² which he eventually bought, but if this is so the matter of its acquisition is not mentioned in the letters to his brother which survive. Sneyd spent three weeks with Curzon in Florence, after which they completed the last stage of their journey together, and arrived in Rome in bitterly cold weather on 8 December.

They remained in Rome until April 1833, when Curzon left with Sir George Palmer³ for Sicily and Malta, to begin his first tour of the Middle East, described in the first part of Visits to Monasteries in the Levant. Sneyd was depressed. He had suffered the indignity of being robbed in the street,⁴ and was uneasy on Curzon's account: 'I shall be grieved to part with him', he told his brother, 'and am unhappy about his eastern projects, for I doubt his strength being equal to the fatigue and difficulties which

1. Venice, 3 November. S.P.

2. Matteo Luigi Canonici (1727-1806), Venetian collector. Remarks later made by Curzon (No. 25) suggest that Sneyd may only have learned of the MSS. on his way home. The Bodleian Library bought about two-thirds of the material in 1817. Sneyd was corresponding with a man called Simone Occhi for the purchase of the remainder in July 1833, but Occhi was evasive and it was not until 1835 that the deal was concluded. Sneyd sold a number of items from the collection (British Museum Add. MSS. 10629-10919) at Sotheby's in June 1836. S.P.

3. Sir George Palmer, 3rd Bt., of Wanlip Hall, near Syston, Leics. (1811-66). The eldest son of Sir Charles Thomas Hudson, he assumed the name Palmer.

4. Curzon to his mother, Rome, 15 April. P.P. and No. 139.

he will have to encounter.¹

He proposed to return to England with Charles Bagot,² and to follow for much of the way the route of his outward journey, even over the Stelvio - '...it is all so beautiful', he said, 'that I am very willing to travel over it again'³ - but his mind was turning to another matter. From before the time of his father's death his family had taken it for granted that he would one day be ordained, and settled in Wolstanton,⁴ a parish adjoining Newcastle-under-Lyme. His elder brother had inherited the presentation and was anxious for a change there, and the Bishop was waiting for a decision.⁵ Sneyd approached the subject with caution. 'I certainly have felt scruples about going into the Church,' he told his brother,

from the consciousness of infirm health and bodily weakness - which so depress my spirits that I often think I am unfit to undertake a life of active duty and heavy responsibility. The aspect of the times is particularly threatening to that profession, and may require the exertion of energies which I don't possess - I have been greatly perplexed - have thought deeply on the subject, and consulted my friends - and have at last resolved to endeavour to fulfil my original intentions - I will do my best and buckle to my work as soon as I return to England, in the hope that I

1. Rome, 12 April. S.P.

2. Either of Sneyd's Bagot cousins, Charles, eldest son of Sir Charles Bagot, who became a soldier, or Charles Walter, fourth son of Bishop Bagot, who eventually became Rector of Castle Rising, Norfolk.

3. To his brother, Rome, 12 April. S.P.

4. The Hon. Louisa Sneyd to the Bishop of Oxford, 9 April [1833]. S.P.

5. Ibid.

may meet with encouragement, that my health may still amend, and that I may obtain some small charge which I may be capable of undertaking - I do not think it possible that I could prepare myself for passing a creditable examination by the Bishop of Lichfield's chaplain in the space of three months - I will set to work immediately, but I am a slow reader, and should wish to be able to attend Dr Burton's¹ divinity lectures at Oxford, and if possible to read with someone before I am ordained - I promise you there shall be no idle delay.²

He agreed to take Wolstanton,

...but with the understanding between ourselves that after a little while, I shall either give it up into your hands, or, with your concurrence, change it for something more suited to my capacities - My object will be, as soon as I can do so, to look about in the hopes of purchasing or somehow procuring a little quiet living, with a small population, in some retired, rural situation, where I could settle down for life - and in that case only could I look forward to entering the Church with an easy conscience and some prospect of passing a happy and contented life.³

In 1831 the population of Wolstanton was estimated at 10,853.⁴ The parish covered a large and unprepossessing area, inhabited for the most part by miners and potters. When Sneyd's mother heard of the imminence of her elder son's intention, she tried to persuade her brother, then Bishop of Oxford, to talk him out of it. The demands of such a parish, she protested,

1. Edward Burton (1794-1836), Regius Professor of Divinity.

2. Rome, 12 April. S.P.

3. Ibid.

4. Census.

would ruin her younger son's health,

...half Knutton Heath belongs to it and I lived too many years close to that place not to be well aware how numerous and reprobate the familys belonging to Wolstanton are.¹

The elder Sneyd was not to be put off, however, and she was in any case already too late - Walter was back in England in July, but he was not going to be hurried. He was ordained deacon 25 May 1834,² shortly after his mother's death. He spent the next year as curate to the Rev. Frederick Gooch at Baginton, near Coventry,³ was ordained priest 5 July, and admitted to Wolstanton 9 July 1835,⁴ but had little intention of remaining there in person. 'I suppose I ought to go and see how my new curate is getting on at Wolstanton,' he remarked to his brother in November, 'but I don't quite know how to manage it - and have no inclination for the Roe Buck at Newcastle.'⁵ In December he obtained a licence from the Bishop to absent himself from the parish for a year while the vicarage was made

1. The Hon. Louisa Sneyd to the Bishop of Oxford, 9 April [1833]. S.P.

2. Certificate of ordination as deacon. S.P.

3. Information kindly confirmed by the Warwickshire County Record Office. Gooch was Sneyd's cousin, the Rev. John Gooch (d. 1823) married Sneyd's aunt, Barbara. S.P.

4. Certificate of ordination as priest, certificate of admission and institution. S.P.

5. Hawarden Castle, 8 November 1835. S.P.

habitable,¹ after which, with the curate's assistance, he endured it until June 1837, when he finally resigned.

He was then out of work and in January 1838 Curzon reminded him that it was high time he settled down. 'I have been thinking', he wrote from Egypt,

that if I do not find you established somewhere in a house of your own, with or without a wife, next June, when I hope to be in England, I shall call you a maniac in more things than old books. How much longer do you intend to waste you[r] existance in paying visits in the country, and walking about in a new coat in London, without any earthly object in view? I would rather go and preach sermons to the makers of pottery in Staffordshire, at your horrible parsonage there, than live on year after year doing nothing at all. It is the want of something in which I can take an interest which has made me stupid and unhappy, and I am sure that if you had a house to pull about, and a wife to look pleased when you came home, you would be infinitely more comfortable than you are now... .²

What Sneyd wanted was to be near Oxford and his friends. In November 1835, when committed to Wolstanton, he had hopefully consulted his brother about an offer he had had of a curacy at Begbroke, near Woodstock.³ He was on good terms with his uncle the Bishop, and in 1838 he took a lease of Denton House, in Cuddesden, not far from the Palace. Just before Christmas 1838 he

1. Licence dated 20 December 1835. S.P.

2. No. 62. Letter begun at Thebes, January 1838.

3. Letter to Ralph Sneyd from Hawarden Castle, 8 November 1835. S.P.

thought of taking West Tytherley, in Hampshire, which his brother-in-law, Arundell Bouverie, had vacated for something better.¹ Curzon was staying at Denton at the time, and told his father that he thought Sneyd would accept,

...tho' he is annoyed at [the] idea of leaving this place, which he has just fitted up so comfortably, but perhaps as he is in Orders he would do wrong in refusing it. I hear it is a beautifull country round Tytherley, but I am afraid he will find himself a long way from his old friends and associates.²

Sneyd thought so too and turned it down, and Curzon copied his reply to the patron, their friend Charles Baring Wall.³ Curzon always had hopes that he would one day get Sneyd to Wiggonholt, beside Parham, or to Parham itself, but Sneyd's uncle frowned at the idea that he might be waiting for this.⁴ He would have frowned even more had he foreseen that Sneyd was going to remain at Denton, 'the rather Rev. W. Sneyd Esq.',⁵ in a state of animated suspension if not actual suspense,⁶ for the next thirty years.

1. The rectory of Denton, in Norfolk.

2. P.P.(T)., XIII, 284.

3. Of Norman Court (1795-1853). The copy survives among the Sneyd Papers.

4. '...I think you should put the chance of Parham some future day quite or entirely out of your mind.' Undated letter, watermarked 1838. S.P.

5. Address on No. 70, 14 January 1839.

6. 'The sloth... moves suspended, rests suspended, sleeps suspended, and passes his life in suspense - like a young clergyman distantly related to a bishop.' - Sydney Smith on Charles Waterton's Wanderings in South America..., Edinburgh Review, February 1826.

Plate V. The Hon. Mrs Edward Curzon, artist unknown.
From a photograph belonging to Mrs P.A. Tritton
of the original painting formerly at Parham.
Whereabouts now unknown.



About the time of Sneyd's ordination as deacon an event occurred that was to cast a shadow over Curzon's family and their relations with each other. While Curzon was in the Middle East his younger brother, Edward, in his last year at Oxford, secretly married. His bride, Amelia Sophia Charlotte Daniell, came of a respectable East India family, and Harriet Anne's sister Katherine, after some research into her background, was compelled to admit that Amelia was understood to be '...a most beautiful, accomplished and clever woman...'¹, but Edward's parents were furious. 'I am sorry to inform you', Curzon senior wrote to his elder son,

of what will be a subject of great grief and vexation to you, as it is to your mother and me, namely Edward's inconsiderate and most undutiful conduct, such as I am convinced you are incapable of. On the 5th of this month he married Miss Emily Daniell against your mother's and my consent and without our knowledge. We had no suspicions of his intentions - were thunderstruck when made acquainted with it - How he was induced to commit this unjustifiable act I know not, but the conduct of Mr and Mrs F[rederic]k

1. Amelia was twenty-four. 'I feel Edward's duplicity towards you and Bob so deeply,' wrote Katherine, 'that I can hardly bear the subject and people do not understand this part, and think it is our pride of birth which makes us unhappy.' P.P., 24/14a.

Long,¹ with whom Miss E.D. lived, in forwarding, being instrumental and keeping what was going on from the knowledge of his parents is disgraceful and dishonourable in the extreme, what no gentleman, particularly a relation, could be suspected to be capable of.

It is an alleviation in our distress that the girl bears an excellent character. He poor foolish fellow, by this unjustifiable conduct, has thrown himself out of the class of society he has been brought up in. He is now to take Orders, which he is desirous of doing. I hope he will bring down his ideas to the situation he has reduced himself to, and look forward with satisfaction to settle himself with his wife as a country clergyman.

When this unfortunate event took place I was in the act of paying his debts, which are very great, so much so as to distress me and put it entirely out of my power to do any thing more at Parham than the repairs now about...²

Edward was determined he was not going into the Church. '...I have ...much considered what you said to me about taking Orders', he told his father,

and have thought it over a good deal - I do not think myself at all qualified... never having till now thought the least on the subject, and having before made up my mind that I should study the law - I cannot consider it as a profession to be entered upon lightly or merely as a profession, without a mind entirely given up to its duties and bent upon the performance of them as the chief object... as I have never turned my

1. Amelia's brother-in-law and sister.

2. 24 Upper Brook Street, 29, 30 May 1834, addressed to Curzon at the British Embassy, Constantinople. P.P., 37/1. A copy of this letter survives with it.

mind to the subject, or made the study of divinity an object of supreme importance, I must decline the idea of taking Orders and have therefore given up all thoughts which I might have had of doing so... .¹

'Edward,' replied his father, measuring his words,

I have received your letter of Wednesday, which has surprised me greatly and with which I am highly displeased. Your abstract reasoning about entering into Holy Orders may be good, but is not applicable to your case. I am sorry to see you are still actuated by the wilful, undutiful, perverse spirit which has caused so much grief and anxiety to your too indulgent parents.

You had not made up your mind to study the law when, after considering my proposal of taking Orders for twenty-four hours, you told me you were desirous to take them. I gave up the idea of your studying the law from a conviction you would never make any thing by it, and also from the expense attending it. I now repeat what I have so frequently before said to you and hope it will make a proper impression upon you, that no encrease can I make to your allowance and several reasons - one of which is the great amount of your debts, all of which are not yet paid - put it out of my power (even if I had the inclination, which I have not) to do any thing more for you.

In the Church only can you expect to be in a situation to maintain yourself, wife and family, and to acquire a character which would enable me and your family to exert ourselves conscientiously to forward you in your holy profession. You now coolly say 'I must

1. Christ Church, 'Wednesday'. P.P.(T)., XIII, 155.

decline the idea of taking Order[s] and have therefore given up all thoughts which I might [have] had in doing so.' Mark my words - there is no choice - you must take Holy Orders as well for bread as for the respectability they will give you.

Your conduct has been such as to make it most desirable for you to acquire a character. Your education has laid a foundation for the Church, common study and application will fully prepare you for it, before you can take Orders. You have wilfully placed yourself in the situation you now are in and must reap the consequences of it - reject not the only means that can save you. Your wife and her advisers (friends I cannot call them), with full knowledge of the decided disapprobation of your parents, have carried into effect this marriage. She, I presume, before she took that step, had made up her mind to the consequences and will make some amends to you and your family by becoming a good and contented country clergyman's wife, and encourage you to perform the duties incumbent upon you both. The situation I propose to place you in is better than either she or you had any right, after such conduct, to look forward to. It is necessary she should be made fully acquainted with it. You will send her a copy of the whole of this letter.¹

The miserable Edward appeared to bow to the inevitable. He told his father that he had '...had but few happy moments for a long time past.' For two years he had 'seldom had a kind look and but few, very few kind words...', indeed

...I had almost begun to think that you had ceased to care for me, and

1. P.P.(T)., XIII, 159-60.

do you think I did not feel it deeply, wretchedly? You have asked me often, often remarked that I was no longer as happy and merry as I used to be, but how could I explain the reason to you? I could not have done it then, I could not do it now, were I with you... if you think I should be able to become a good clergyman and you still wish it - I think you say it must be so - it shall be my earnest endeavour to attempt to become so, as well for the sake of pleasing you as for my own... .¹

Curzon was at Smyrna when he heard the news. Plague at Constantinople had forced him to change his plans, and while waiting for a ship to take him to Greece he sent to Constantinople for his letters. 'I should never have believed it', he said to his father,

if any one else had told me of Edward's unfortunate marriage, I should have thought that a sense of his own dignity would have prevented him of ever thinking of making any low connection, and that his respect and love for you would, of course, have prevented his taking such a step without your sanction and approval.

I am sorry for you, for I am sure it must have afflicted you deeply, and I am sorry too for Edward, for this foolish match has blighted all his prospects in life, and I am affraid that much future happiness can hardly be expected from a woman who has had the duplicity to consent to a clandestine marriage, particularly as she must have known that it must be ruin to the man whom she has so heartlessly betrayed.

Who are those Longs whom you mention? I do not remember

1. Christ Church, 2 June 1834. P.P., 37/2, manuscript copy, differing slightly from P.P.(T)., XIII, 161-63.

anything about them. I suppose they must have persuaded Edward to take Miss Daniel off their hands, but I should not have thought that he was simple enough to be taken in by any of the numerous false friends of London society. Perhaps there is some explanation to come, which I shall hear in another letter, for all the letters in this packet only mention the fact without telling me any particulars whatsoever - I can hardly understand it now, though as it is bad news it is always sure to be true in every particular, while you are sure to be disappointed in your expectations from any rumours of unexpected good fortune. For myself I am very much hurt and humbled with this misfortune. You know my ideas are very aristocratic, more so perhaps than they ought to be in these days of mob government, so my pride has received a check which I can hardly get over, as I hoped that our branch of the family was now upon the rise and made sure that it would never be disgraced either by my brother or myself.

You say you never thought such a thing could have happened. I am sure I thought so too, and this is so very unexpected that it makes me quite fearful lest I should do something myself to give you pain, for I had not more confidence in myself than I had in Edward - I only pray God to pardon my presumption when I say that I would rather be cut to pieces than do anything intentionally which would [be] undutiful to you, or against the honour of my family or myself.

I am glad Edward wishes to become a clergyman. I think it is the best thing he could do, but how will he be able to live in the meantime, for I believe he is not old enough to enter into a living just yet? It is a great thing that at least the lady had a good character. I hope he may be happy with her, and that this inauspicious beginning may turn

out better than is expected as far as Edward is concerned, and that before you receive this you will have got over the affliction which his thoughtless conduct must have given you. My dear Father and Mother I hope that you may never have any other cause of vexation or unhappiness again, in this world or in that which is to come.¹

In a letter which awaited Curzon on his return home just before Christmas, Curzon's father reiterated his determination to put Edward into the Church,

...there is no other profession he can go into, and it fortunately is the one most eligible and desirable for him, both in a spiritual as well as a temporal point of view. Till he can get a living and a house of his own a corner of Parham is to be his residence...²

Amelia, he had to admit, was '...aimiable, prudent and anxious to please,'³ and '...expects to be confined about the end of February at Parham - We do not receive or notice any of her family...'⁴

The poor opinion Edward's father had of his intelligence - '...from having paid attention to his disposition and character I had come to the conviction that had he not married there was little or no probability of his doing any thing...'⁵ - did Edward less than justice. He was probably

1. Smyrna, 3 September 1834. P.P.(T)., XIII, 178-79.

2. London, 19 December 1834. P.P.(T)., XIII, 187-88.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

more intelligent¹ and less difficult than his brother; normally he got on better with his parents, and in later years, consciously or otherwise, Harriet Anne favoured him.² After his parents recovered their poise they accepted his marriage even if they found it incomprehensible;³ and his father's determination to put him into the Church gradually weakened. Some eighteen months later Edward unwisely mentioned that he had been looking at a house near Regent's Park, with a view to settling in London, so that, as he put it, he could exert himself '...in obtaining something, by personal enquiry and perserverence...'.⁴ He thought the British Museum or College of Heralds offered possibilities, provided, he told his father, '...you do not wish to obtain my reluctant consent to take Orders...'.⁵ The idea of taking on a house in London earned him a sharp rap over the knuckles, but not a word was said about the Church and his father told him he would look into the other possibilities.⁶ Meanwhile he lived at Parham with Amelia and some adjustment had already been made to his allowance.⁷

1. B.A. 1834, M.A. 1840, called to the Bar 1840.

2. See p.lxxxix below.

3. Over two years later Curzon complained to Sneyd (No. 48) that his parents talked of nothing else. It also affected Curzon, see Appendix B .

4. 24 Upper Brook Street, 29 January 1836. P.P.(T)., XIII, 204.

5. Ibid.

6. Hagley, 31 January 1836. P.P.(T)., XIII, 205.

7. Curzon's parents were evidently a little uncertain of how he was going to react to the arrangements they had made for Edward, on his return from his first Middle East tour in December 1834. In a revealing

Curzon had known Parham since he was a child.¹ It was the Sussex property rather than Hagley that he regarded as his home, a preference hardly likely to bring him closer to his father, and he found it difficult to leave the subject alone. Early in 1834, when he had been in Egypt, he described to his parents how he had

...been building castles in the air, as it used to be my practise to do at home, about Parham, and I send you the idea which I had built long ago in my own mind, but as it is so much more stately than your own taste, I had never dared to talk of such a thing before, but seeing that you had stuck out a new dining room in the court yard, I think you will not be horror struck at the extent of my imagination in the same direction.

I have built, furnished and lit all the fires at Parham, and shut the curtains and made myself comfortable after dinner, in the new dining room, in my airy chateau, for about three years now, so I am quite at home there, and am convinced that it is one of the nicest old houses that ever was built upon a cloud,...

That the great house embodied all his romanticism Harriet Anne might have seen for herself. That it proclaimed her elder son's nobility -

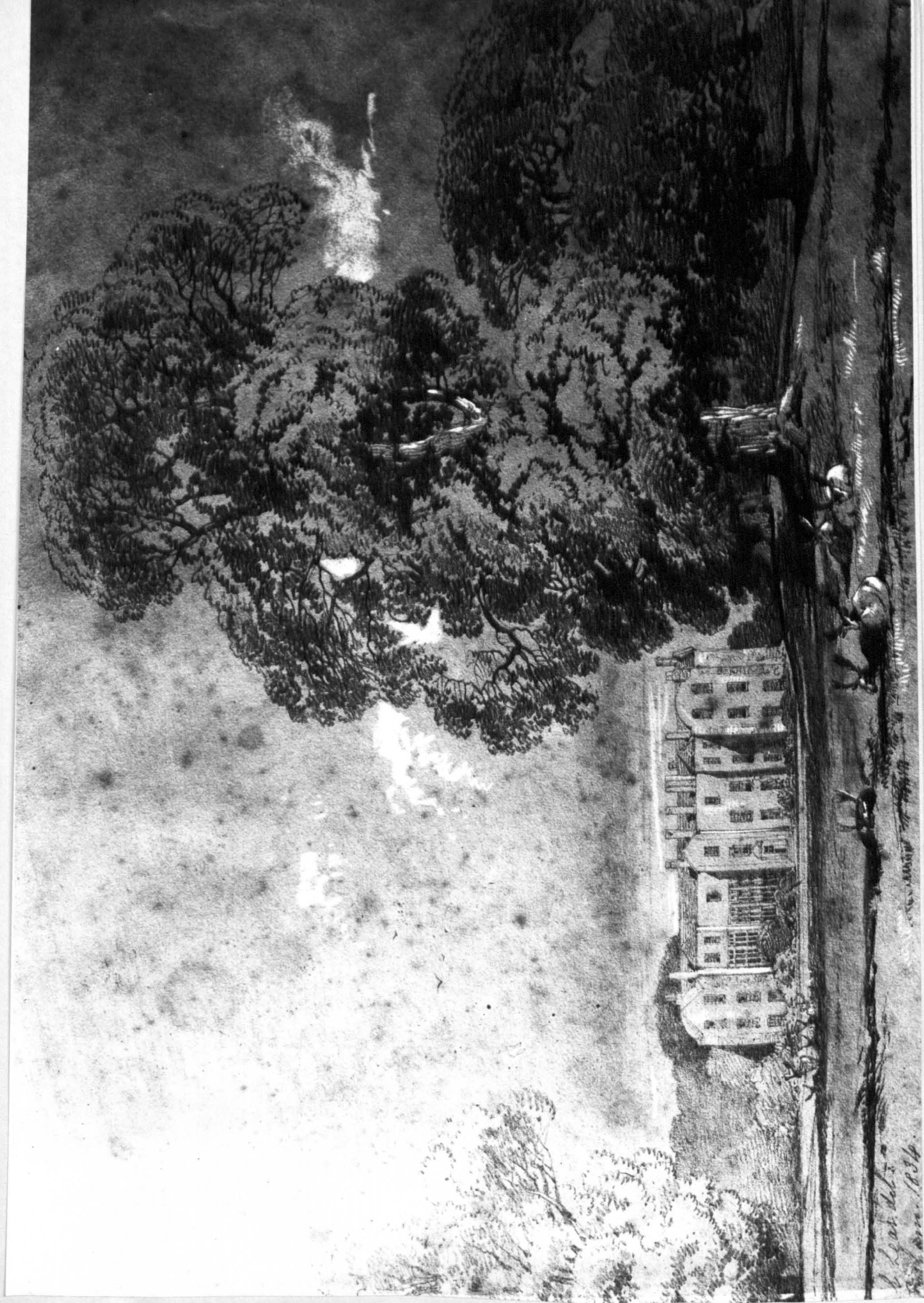
(7. cont'd.). postscript to a letter Curzon wrote from London to his parents at Hagley, 26 December 1834, his grandmother ('Snugest') told Harriet Anne: 'I think you may rely on his dear affectionate heart, for when I spoke to him of all you and dear great Bob had felt on Edward's allo[wance - MS. torn by seal] his eyes filled with tears; he thin[ks] it best to go to Parham tomorrow...'. P.P.

1. 'Do you think that you will go to Parum this year?' [High] Wycombe, 30 June 1818. P.P.(T)., X, 16.

2. Cairo, 4 February 1834. P.P.(T)., XIII, 133-35.

Plate VI. Parham in 1834, by Edward Lear.

Reproduced by permission of Lord Aldington.



and therefore natural superiority - may not have occurred to her, nor how much he longed to take possession of it, to do as he liked with it, to fill it with gimcracks and share it with a wife. At the time of Edward's marriage neither Curzon nor anybody else was to know that Edward and Amelia were to occupy Parham for three years, that it was to Edward, with the legal training he was to acquire, rather than to Curzon, that their father was going to turn for advice; and that Edward and not his elder brother was going to be given a power of attorney in the estate. Happily, these things lay in the future and Curzon's homecoming was celebrated with emotion and relief. 'Here is the dear Bobbinet,' gurgled his grandmother, '...looking browner than he used...'.¹ 'I thank God indeed', responded Harriet Anne,

that he is returned and well, and every thing we can wish. His dear father was so overcome almost, I mean so affected, as to be in tears and agitation over the letter, with joy and thankfulness, and he had had it a little while when I saw this... .²

Curzon's second tour of the Middle East took him out of the

1. Superscript, Curzon's letter of 26 December 1834. P.P.

2. 27 December 1834. P.P.(T)., XIII, 189.

country from June 1837 until September 1838,¹ but Parham was never far from his thoughts. 'I wish I had the telescope described in that authentic history The Arabian Nights,² he wrote to his parents from Pera, Constantinople,

that I might see what you are about every now and then, and make myself more certain of your prosperity. I should be glad to know how Parham is getting on, whether the windows are finished and how the furniture of my room looks.³

'I hope Edward and Mrs E. are well', he enquired in another, adding casually,

I suppose they are at Parham with you, pray tell me if you have got a nice house for them and how they are getting on. If Edward would write me a line some day I should be much obliged.⁴

Back in Malta in November 1837 he found two letters from his father, which had missed him on his way out to Constantinople in July,

...which told me you had engaged a house in London for Edward. I am very glad to hear it and hope he will now settle himself happily with his family.⁵

1. Falmouth, Gibraltar, Malta, Constantinople, Mount Athos, the Aegean, Malta, Egypt, Constantinople, Varna (since Stalin), the Danube, Vienna, Venice, Geneva, Paris. P.P.

2. 17 July 1837. P.P.

3. Ibid.

4. To his mother, Therapia, near Constantinople, 2 September 1837. P.P.

5. To his father, Malta, 13 November 1837. P.P.

This, almost certainly, was 17 Connaught Terrace,¹ off the Edgware Road, just north of the park. Curzon pursued his enquiries: '...I have been so amused', he wrote to his mother from Cairo,

with the account of the Queen's visit to the City... did Edward see it? I suppose he is in Town? Pray tell me how he gets on in his new house?²

Edward remained at Connaught Terrace until 1846, when he moved to Scarsdale House, Kensington, which he bought in 1854; but it was not the end of his influence at Parham. 'I wish I could see you living here,' he remarked to his elder brother, when he wrote to congratulate him on his marriage, 'but I fear the needful would be hardly sufficient.'³ Nor was he prepared to stand for any interference in the estate. At the time of Curzon's marriage, in 1850, his parents invited him to go over Parham with the agent, '...and see it all and be put in a way of managing it by and bye',⁴ but Edward intervened: '... he [Curzon] told me,' his Aunt Elizabeth protested to Curzon's father, that

...having a few idle days at Parham he started, and intended to be back there, to receive Mr Turner and consult him about your affairs there, but Edward having come to P. put a stop to his intentions till he heard again from you and his mother whether you wished it, for with his... power of

1. Information Greater London Record Office.

2. 20 December 1837. P.P.

3. 15 July 1850. P.P.(T)., XV, 113.

4. Harriet Anne to Curzon, Stoke Hall, 18 July 1850. P.P.(T).; XV, 117-18.

attorney Robert could not act... .¹

'I shall be very glad to get away from here,' Curzon wrote to Sneyd from Parham, in August 1867, 'for my mother and Scarsdale House are quite a terror to me.'²

Passing through Switzerland on his way home from his second Middle East tour in the summer of 1838, Curzon told his mother that he had ...been much tempted in big dogs, and should have liked to have brought home a whitey brown companion for Watch, but the aforesaid dogs being so large I do not know how to carry one of them. I hope you will give my best regards to Mr Watch, notwithstanding, and tell him I am coming back to play with him.³

In Paris he broke his journey to do some energetic sightseeing, '...the laquai de place being one of those tough, stout little men, that never give a thing up...';⁴ and on 18 September he was back in England.

He had already written to Sneyd, telling him to come to Parham to see the books and objects which would be arriving from abroad, after which he proposed to inspect Denton House;⁵ but illness delayed this part

1. [21 July 1850], P.P.(T)., XV, 119-20.

2. No. 392.

3. Geneva, 6 August. P.P.

4. To his mother, Paris, letter begun 30 August, finished 4 September, P.P.

5. No. 64, Venice, 15 July 1838.

of the programme and it was late in November before he eventually saw it. The house enchanted him. It was '...the snuggest and best done thing for the size that I have ever seen,' he told his father,

the house is full of old oak and china, and strange things, and is more like an antiquarian's house in a novel than anything one meets with in real life.¹

Others, like the fastidious Ralph Sneyd, shared his enthusiasm. He told Vincent that his brother had

...twisted a ruinous old squire's nest, six miles from Oxford, into the snuggest abode you can imagine - filled it with comforts and illuminated it like a missal with flowers and strawberries.²

Nor was he less impressed two years later. 'No dormouse' he declared,

'ever lined his cage with cotton wool more luxuriously.'

...the character he has stamped upon the place - of the snug retreat of a refined Old Bachelor - is perfect. No artist could have painted the subject, - Scott could not have described it with more picturesque truth. His well arranged library and his curious knick knackeries within - his well rak'd gravel and his roses and his strawberries without - all these things on the one hand, and my accumulating years on the other, portend the speedy extinction of our respectable House...³

1. Denton, 27 November. P.P.(T)., XIII, 277.

2. Keele, 24 June 1841. S.P.

3. Keele, 24 July 1843. S.P.

Vincent found it rather gloomy - 'autumnal' was the word he used - and he detected a flaw,

...a something, which is adverse to bachelorship; - a pining after sympathy and interchange of thoughts, to which sheer solitude is not akin; - I painted to him the necessity, for the completion even of his picturesque, that the flow of petticoats and ringlets should come in somewhere in his niches and recesses; that the shawl was wanted to break the line of the back of his sofa, - and the little appurtenances of female life to give his Nash's interior the charm of hourly animated, yet gentle existence, and I could perceive that his fancy, and his heart amply responded to such an improvement of his Combinations.

Denton House² is 'the Abbey' of the correspondence, where Sneyd - 'the Abbot of Denton', sometimes 'the Abbot' - entertained Curzon when the latter's family commitments and indifferent health allowed him to get there. On his first visit in 1838 he stayed until the New Year, when he

1. Queen's Remembrancer's Office, 25 July 1843. S.P.

2. The house is still there, not unrecognizably altered. It is described in the V.C.H., ed. Mary D. Lobel, V, 106. From a knowledge of its appearance in the second half of the nineteenth century (see Plate XV) it was not difficult to identify a small photograph which appeared in Country Life when the house was offered for sale in 1969. I am indebted to Messrs Strutt and Parker, 13 Hill Street, Berkeley Square, for kindly letting me have the sale particulars and further photographs which appeared at the time. Sneyd acquired the freehold in 1841, and later imported some medieval stonework, including the old east window from Brasenose College (see Plate XVI), removed 1844-45, which he set in the garden. Some thirty years later, when Sneyd came into the Keele estate, H.W. Hollis, the then agent at Keele, had difficulty selling Denton. The sum eventually realized, less charges, was £2,109. 5s. 7d. S.P., ledger 1869-74, 316.

rejoined his parents at Hagley; and he was back again in the summer. A little later he became seriously ill at Parham, and Sneyd hurried south to be with him. He had been 'much shocked' he told his brother,

...at a letter from him a month ago, from Parham, to say he had been at death's door, and was then only slowly recovering - He had had a violent inflammation of the bladder and was in the greatest danger for two days - Salivation and other desperate remedies had saved his life - I... found him indeed greatly reduced, and low and weak, but recovering steadily - He was able to dine with us, but I used to sit with him in his room - I stay'd there a week,...¹

'I am delighted to think of your coming', Curzon had written gratefully, for really the solitariness of my existance is unindureable, it is like living in a mad house, where you may or may not have observed, that the lunatics never converse with each other, and this is very unwholsome for the mind...²

A discouraging talk with his father, which he described to Sneyd - 'he can not understand the fact that I am in my thirtieth and not my thirteenth year'³ - did little to help, and before the end of November he left England to join De Tabley in Naples, remaining in Italy until August 1840. He went to Italy to recover his health rather than to escape

1. Denton, 16 November 1839. S.P.

2. No. 75, Parham, 12 October 1839.

3. No. 76, Parham, 6 November 1839.

from Parham, but the two were not unconnected. With the exception of a single passage in one of his letters home, which taken by itself might be regarded as a joke but which in the light of his remark to Sneyd becomes more significant,¹ there is nothing to suggest that when he left Parham relations with his parents were not as normal as they ever were. 'I came to your door before I went away at one o'clock on Thursday', he told them, 'but as you did not answer when I knocked, I would not wake you and went down stairs as quietly as I could.'² The anxiety (at the age of thirty) to please and the determination to put it on record are significant factors in an unhappy situation.

Difficulties arose as soon as he returned from Italy. Having looked forward to visiting Sneyd, he found instead that he was expected to remain at home, to entertain his parents' friends:

...There are people coming here with whom I have not an idea in common, but whom it is considered to be my duty to be bored with, as to bore them in return, which in this curious country appears to be the usual end of cultivating one's acquaintance;...³

and in October there was another difficulty. Each year about this time

1. 'Today I am thirty years old, so I can no longer consider myself as a young man but must hope every body as well as me will look up to me with the respect becoming my-years, and gravity;...' To his mother, Naples, 16 March 1840. P.P.

2. Paris, 2 December 1839. P.P.

3. No. 81, Parham, 12 August 1840.

his parents left Parham for Hagley, where they passed the winter. When Curzon returned from Italy he invited De Tabley to Parham, but the latter, being uncertain of his plans, delayed accepting. The date he finally proposed, which Curzon was too embarrassed to turn down, fell just after the time by which his parents would have left for Hagley; When Harriet Anne learned this she made no secret of her displeasure. Having already sacrificed his own plans to help entertain his parents' friends, Curzon was furious. 'How different people's notions are!' he protested to Sneyd, 'If I could not live at my family place, I should think myself very lucky if my son would do so, and should give him a pound to keep up the honor of the house, and think I had done a clever thing, too, in getting him to stay there.'¹

Possibly because his parents regarded him as a child these upheavals were shortlived, but their effect on Curzon's nerves can be judged from a letter to his parents which belongs to this period.² In it he begins by stating that he wished 'to produce that reciprocal confidence and harmony

1. No. 88.

2. Somebody has pencilled on the typescript transcription '[September 1840]'. There is no doubt that it belongs to the period 16 March 1840 - 16 March 1841, because Curzon refers to the fact that he is thirty; and in view of the cordial relations which he maintained with his parents while he was in Italy, it seems more likely that it belongs to the period after, rather than before August 1840. Not having seen the original I am unable to say whether this is a transcription of a draft (and therefore of something that his parents may never have seen - the point here is academic), or of a letter they actually received.

between myself and my parents, the want of which has been the cause of so much unhappiness to me.¹

I fear [he continued] I am of a very sensitive disposition and painfully alive to the humiliation of being never consulted upon any common point of mutual interest (for what can concern you that does not concern me?) or of being consulted as a matter of form, attended by an almost invariable rejection of whatever I may suggest...

You complain of the grandeur of my notions; in the first place I hardly think you know what my real notions are, on many subjects, for as you seldom hear all I have to say, I find my conversation sometimes leaves a totally different impression on your minds to that which I intended; and in the second place I am in such ignorance of the state of your affairs and of my future prospects, that I have no just data on which I can regulate my ideas. I am now thirty years old and there has been no difference in my treatment since I was fifteen. You may consider that I am unfit to be trusted, but others have put their trust in me,...

¹

After three months at home he told Sneyd he wished he could get out to China, but it was a year before he succeeded in obtaining even an inferior post at Constantinople.² He travelled out with the Ambassador³ in the winter of 1841-42, and in March 1843 found himself joint commissioner with Captain W.F. Williams⁴ at Erzurum, at the conference designed to end

1. P.P.(T)., XIV, 18-20.

2. As Private Secretary to Sir Stratford Canning, later Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe (1787-1880).

3. P.P. 67/18.

4. Later General Sir W.F. Williams, Bt. (1800-83).

border raiding between Persia and Turkey.¹ Erzurum had little to commend it, Curzon again fell ill, and there were other disadvantages:

...unfortunately there is no one here with whom I have any thoughts in common, and tho' they are all excellent good people, there is a great gulph between us from the difference of our habits and education,...

In a long letter written in June there is evidence of the loneliness and homesickness which sooner or later invariably affected him abroad, and he told Sneyd that he had begged his father

...to enquire whether it would not be possible to get me some place where I could be employed sufficiently in England to give me occupation, whereas all diplomacy must of course keep me abroad. I suppose my father took it for granted that I thought exactly the opposite to what I had said, but as I am one of those modest people who have a higher opinion of their own merits than any one else has, I fear I shall not be offered any place which I would take, either in England or any where else, therefore I shall do nothing,...

His cousin Lord Howe⁴ held office at Court, and hopeful of something similar,

1. England and Russia were invited to act as intermediaries in defining the border and drawing up a peace treaty. Curzon was selected to go when Capt. Williams fell ill, but on his recovery before the party set out, they went together. In the first instance the proceedings lasted until 1847, when a treaty was agreed, but a lengthy survey had to be undertaken between 1848 and 1852 before the terms of the treaty could be put into effect.

2. No. 106, Erzurum, 12 March 1843. 3. No. 107, Erzurum, 1-11 June 1843.

4. Formerly the Hon. Richard William Penn Curzon (1796-1870), Lord of the Bedchamber 1829-30; Lord Chamberlain to Queen Adelaide 1830-31, 1834-37, 1837-49.

Curzon had been irritated when his father appeared to have misunderstood:

'...you say I had better adhere to the diplomatic line which I have fallen into,' he had retorted,

but this is not my notion at all. I wish for some employment in England, not abroad, I have been abroad enough, and if I could I should like to be about the Court, for there I might become known and make useful acquaintances, which might lead to something else, for diplomacy does not suit my book by any means,...

I have quite money enough for my present state of life and I do not care to have any more, unless I could have enough to enable me to set up a house and marry, and become somebody in my own country...

I feel that I have got into a scrape here, for I have to suffer a good deal of humiliation in knocking under to people who, however worthy men they are, are not my equals, and tho' ashamed of it, I am annoyed at this in a land where every thing is ceremony,...

¹

As for a Court appointment, his father told him that he and Lord Howe had applied to Sir Robert Peel, only to be informed that he 'must give those situations to Parliamentary interest.' As for marriage, his father told him he should be most happy, 'provided the lady had sufficient fortune for both.'

²

Meanwhile the Armenian summer brought other things to think about.

'I had a long and most interesting letter from Curzon two or three days ago',

1. Erzurum, 28 May 1843. P.P.(T)., XIV, 56-57.

2. 4 July 1843. P.P.(T)., XIV, 62-63.

Walter Sneyd told his brother in July,

- He seems heartily tired of Erzeroom but has no idea when the conferences will conclude - He adds at the end, however, a fearful piece of news, which puts me in an agony - viz: that the Plague had broken out in certain villages a day's journey distant; and that the destroying angel seemed to be marching towards Erzeroom. Their hope is that the mountains may check or divert its progress - but he is evidently uneasy on the subject and describes the inhabitants of the city as being aghast at the news. He had written to Sir Stratford Canning to beg that the conference might be removed to Trebizond or Tabrutz - but there would be many difficulties in the way - God grant that his alarms may prove unnecessary - but it makes me very anxious on his account - At his desire I have carefully withheld this news from his family.¹

Whether the plague actually reached Erzurum is not known, but the horrors of such alarms coming on top of many meditated anxieties seem to have overtaxed Curzon's mental and physical powers, and on 1 October 1843 he collapsed. 'I felt perfectly well when we went to dinner,' he recalled in later years,

when suddenly it appeared to me that what I was eating was burning hot and had a strange, odd taste. I believe I got up and staggered across the room, but here my senses failed me and I remained insensible for twenty-seven days. An attack of brain-fever had come upon me like a blow, as sudden and

1. Grosvenor Hotel, [London], 25 July 1843. S.P.

Plate VII. Harriet Anne, 13th Baroness de la Zouche of Haryngworth,
artist unknown.

Photograph, reproduced by permission of Messrs B.T.

Batsford, of the original painting formerly at Parham.

Painting reproduced by permission of Lord Zouche.



... as I had lost them on the last day of this month. 1611.
No. 2000. This was his last letter to Speed from London, he wrote others
of later date to his family, viz. his letter to Mrs Elizabeth of 2 July,
of which the postscript is given in Appendix B.

overwhelming as a flash of lightning.¹

The last letter from Erzurum to survive is dated 18 June,² but news of his illness and subsequent progress was sent home, and in December Sneyd was able to write to his brother:

My dear R.

You will, I am sure, rejoice to hear that not only are the good accounts of Curzon confirm'd, but Lady de la Z. has received a few lines from himself - very shakily written - but still by his own hand - She kindly sent over to Blithfield on Wednesday morning to tell me of this - and I called at Hagley on my way here, and saw it - The letter was dated November 5th - and he says that, being advised to return to Europe as soon as possible, he shall

-
1. Armenia:..., 159. I am indebted to Professor A.W. Woodruff, Wellcome Professor of Clinical Tropical Medicine, University of London, for suggestions as to the possible nature of this illness. Professor Woodruff thought the account sounded '...most like an attack of organic cerebral disease such as subarachnoid haemorrhage', but did not rule out the possibilities of a stroke due to cerebral embolus, thrombosis or haemorrhage. Professor Woodruff believed it was '...conceivable though very unlikely that he had an attack of malaria and it is also possible that he had an hysterical fugue. However, information relating to his personality would be necessary before one can say whether the latter condition is one which is probable or only remotely probable.' Personal communication, 3 July 1970. Curzon's very precise recollection of the course of the earthquake which took place during the afternoon of the day he recovered consciousness (Armenia:..., 160-61), bears out his statement that 'I regained my senses and my faculties on the 27th, as suddenly as I had lost them on the 1st day of this month.' Ibid.
 2. No. 108. This was his last letter to Sneyd from Erzurum, he wrote others of later date to his family, e.g. his letter to Aunt Elizabeth of 2 July, of which the postscript is given in Appendix B.

hope to be in England in the spring - though he much regrets the non-accomplishment of the object of his mission to Erzeroum - You may guess with what happiness I now confidently look forward to seeing him again - and that before very long! Bob Curzon and Lady de la Z. arrived at Hagley on Saturday last and are much as usual. Very happy, of course, at the receipt of this letter.¹

Curzon left Erzurum on a litter on 27 December,² bearded and so emaciated that his nose was translucent 'if not transparent',³ and after a nightmarish journey over the snow-covered mountains, reached Trabzon on 10 January 1844. Although he was going home he had no illusions that the seriousness of his illness would change anything between himself and his parents. Before he left Venice, towards the end of April,⁴ he told Sneyd that there was

...nothing but worry and dust now to England, and no one to share my troubles, and then I feel like a ghost when I get home, an inhabitant of another world, who finds no sympathy in those he lives with, tho' they may be better people than himself. I feel somewhat uneasy on this account as

1. King's Bromley, 8 December [1843]. S.P.

2. Armenia:..., 165.

3. Ibid.

4. No. 110.

they say I may die, or at least have another attack upon the brain, if I am much vexed and bothered, however I hope I shall get stronger.¹

Usually his sense of humour sustained him. Sometime after he came home, in July 1844, he described to Sneyd how Parham was looking. 'My mother', he said,

has moved the furniture about ten times in the drawing room since I have been here, and each time it has struck me as miraculous how it could be made to look more seedy than before;...

Out of doors my father has played old goosberry with the trees. He has cut the heads off some and trimmed up others into poles; the ivy and honeysuckles and bramble bushes have been destroyed; it is all up with the wild roses...²

But frayed nerves left him perilously vulnerable to the strain of encirclement in a family which, emotionally, he had only partly outgrown:

...last night, for instance, my mother asked me divers questions which might have led to a pleasant chat, but my father answered every one of them, tho' he knew nothing about the matter. I tried to say something two or three times, but [my answer] was knocked on the head instantly. Now as I could not contradict my father, or hollow louder than him, I was forced to hold my peace, so my mother thought I was sulky and hated me for the same; just the same thing at breakfast again this morning...³

1. No. 110.

2. No. 112.

3. Ibid.

Travel abroad offered a respite and gained the admiration of friends. His parents worried while he was away and lost interest as soon as he was safely back, and each time he returned he found the situation more unbearable. Tension seems to have built up between them with the approach of autumn and the annual withdrawal into Staffordshire. In September 1844 the same situation developed which had confronted him four years earlier on his return from Italy. An outburst took place after his parents returned to Parham from a visit to the Brooke-Pechells at Castle Goring. Curzon actually made notes of the quarrel¹ and after brooding for nearly three weeks, wrote to his mother from Parham:

...if you and my father would only give yourselves the trouble to enquire what manner of man I am, and to treat me with that openness and sympathy which my character deserves, how happy we might have been together; and not only that, but I believe I might have been an honor to your family. Instead of this how different it has been, unable to bear the jealousy and mistrust with which I am treated at home, to the astonishment of all my friends, who know how little cause you have to suspect me;...²

The same thing happened a year later, after he had made up his mind to go to Italy with the De Tableys. 'I think of two evils,' he told his father, 'it is better to go with my friends abroad, than to stay idle and

1. 20 September 1844. P.P.(T)., XIV, 115-16.

2. 10 October 1844. P.P.(T)., XIV, 117.

doing nothing in England;...

...you know how I have always wished to live more at Parham and to consider that as my home, as all my things are there, and there I hope to be buried with my ancestors, if I ever live in England, but unfortunately you take my wish to live there as a desire to interfere with your authority, and if I suggest any thing or even venture an opinion, you consider that I am dictating to you. For this reason of late years I have always refrained from showing any interest in what is done there, and while my brother and his family have been there so many years, I have been turned adrift; for at Hagley I am not in the position of a country gentleman, and am not wealthy enough to have a house of my own, I have no place in the world,...¹

Italy was a disappointment. Curzon tried to persuade Sneyd to go with him,² but the latter had been short of money and had turned him down;³ and Curzon's own resources were insufficient to allow him to share in the amusements of his wealthy friends. Irked by this and bored, his mood turned into despair when letters arrived on his birthday from Edward and his mother telling him of his father's illness, and of the unhappy state of his affairs. Curzon welcomed the news that they were giving up 24 Upper Brook Street but was horrified to read that the farm and part of the garden at Parham were to be let. '...I am entirely sold,' he wrote to Sneyd, and feel that my home has been pulled from under me by the wonderful

1. Castle Goring, 7 November 1845. P.P.(T)., XIV, 162-63.

2. No. 135.

3. No. 136.

mismanagement and mutual distrust of my own family; if they did not intend to live there and make the best of it, what did they ever take it for? They have made a plague of what Providence gave us for our good, they have driven me away for nearly fifteen years, and now when I return to England it will be worse than ever...¹

There was '...no use in my telling all this to my father and mother,' he wrote on,

...it would be impossible to make them see that they should always have lived at Parham from the beginning, and that preventing their eldest son from living at the family place and settling in the land of his fathers, when the second son has made a bad match, is not the way to advance the consequence of their family. I have not answered my mother's letter yet, for I am puzzled what to say. I have no one but you, my dear old friend, to confide my sorrows to, so excuse it in consideration that it affords me some sort of releef to do so...²

In the event he wrote to his mother the same day, and perhaps as a result of having told Sneyd what he really thought, produced an almost misleadingly disinterested reply.

My dear Mother,

I received your letter some days ago and am very sorry to hear that my father has been so ill. I did not understand before I heard from Edward that he had had much the matter with him, and am now glad to hear that he has recovered his usual health and goes out riding about the country.

1. No. 139, Piazza di Spagna, Rome, 26 March 1846. It is interesting that Curzon reckoned his banishment from the year he came of age.

2. Ibid.

As for the rest of your letter, I am sorry to hear that my father's affairs are not in such good order as might be wished, but letting the house in Brook Street will be a good thing and will relieve him of an expence, and as you go so little into society I hope you will not feel the loss of it very much.

I wish, however, he had taken to live at Parham regularly, instead of Hagley. It is very natural he should like Hagley, where he was brought up in his youth, but you never can be of the consequence there that you might be at Parham, where the estate is greater and wants a great deal more looking after, particularly after Sir Robert Peel's late measures. At Hagley coal is cheaper, but in other respects, if you lived usually at Parham and got the farm and garden into more regular order, as well as the dairy, poultry and so on, I imagine living might be quite as cheap there as in Staffordshire.

The Hagley farm would let for more than that at Parham, I should think. The excellence of the living at Hagley depends very much on Smith, and if he was to die you would feel his loss. You would hardly find so good a bailiff again. Everyone would think it right and proper that you should let Hagley, but I fear letting the garden &c. at Parham will be looked at with surprize in Sussex. Certainly, if the air of Parham disagrees with my father, that is a sufficient reason for his not living there, tho' I thought he had intended to do so before I left England. However, I hope I shall find you both in good health when I come back...¹

Twice, briefly, he touched on the subject on his way home. He told his parents that an advertisement for the sale of livestock at Parham, shown him at Rome, had saddened him;² and nearer home he added: '...I am sorry

1. Rome, 26 March 1846. P.P.

2. Turin, 17 May 1846. P.P.

to say that I do not recover my spirits at all, but if your arrangements suit your views, I am glad that you are satisfied.¹ In Paris he wrote to Sneyd to tell him that he hoped to be in London on 18 June, when he would go to Hagley and afterwards return to Town,² unaware that on the same day his father was writing from Hagley, inviting him to assist in the management of Parham. He put it to Curzon that he was

...quite mistaken in supposing in all I have done you were never thought of, the contrary is the fact. The partiality you have for Parham was the principal reason why I laid out so much money upon it, which is the cause of the derangement of my finances. Parham house and place &c. have cost me considerably more than £30,000...³

In practice some years were to elapse before Curzon was in fact allowed to take an active part,⁴ but it was a gesture. And it was noticeable too that

1. Geneva, 27 or 28 (alteration by Curzon) May 1846. P.P.

2. No. 141.

3. Copy, by Harriet Anne, 14 June 1846. P.P.(T)., XIV, 167-68.

4. In a letter to his mother of 17 July 1850 (P.P.), he speaks of winding up the estate accounts at Parham; and in September 1853 he was in touch with his father about the mortgage. When Harriet Anne's father died his estate was mortgaged for £49,993. Each of the divisions of the estate was subsequently charged with £24,996. 10s. In 1853 Curzon's father contemplated a new loan of £26,000, to wipe out this debt, and told Curzon that in the new arrangement he intended to free the house and park, as well as certain other property. On 2 February 1854 Edward suggested to Curzon that they should become their parents' trustees: 'I have had a quiet talk with my mother this afternoon. I have told her decidedly that I will not stand by and look on while my father is,

before the end of the year there was another innovation. When his parents left for Hagley he stayed on at Parham, in spite of the coldness of the house in winter,¹ enjoying the company of his friends, taking less pleasure in entertaining neighbours, and feeling lonely and bored when the house was empty. 'I wish you was here now,' he told Sneyd, who was waiting until the coast was clear,

for I want some one to talk to, the paternal worrying is too much for me and affects my health, every thing is so dismal and disheartning under the present auspices, I long to go to bed and cry... .²

In between times his fingers itched

...to be making all sorts of little improvements, for the want of which the place looks so melancholy and forlorn, but my mother cannot abide change for the better or worse, or my father either, he has the bump of destruction and mending but not of creation, so I am affraid to act and am bored with doing nothing.³

(4. cont'd.). in plain English, cutting his own throat and ruining his family, and that I should write to you at once to join hand and heart with me...'. P.P.(T)., XVI, 35, 38, 51-53. Edward's motives may not have been altogether of the purest, as he was at this time trying to raise enough money to buy Scarsdale House, Kensington, and had hopes of borrowing on Parham, but his Aunt Elizabeth eventually found the money for him. Curzon got formal control over the expenditure at Parham in November 1857, by which time his father was under the impression that he already had it. P.P.(T)., XVII, 178.

1. A hot water heating system was installed in 1860.

2. No. 144, Parham, 7 October 1846.

3. No. 147, Parham, 23 February 1847.

Increasingly as the years went by Curzon wished himself married, '...you and I are getting dam' old,' he reminded Sneyd in September 1845, 'and unlikelier every day to be run away with by a lovely creature...';¹ but since the main obstacle - lack of money - seemed incapable of removal, it came as something of a coup de foudre when, in July 1850, he announced his engagement.

Emily Julia Wilmot-Horton was then twenty-eight. She was intelligent, much admired and an old friend of the family. 'You never did so wise a thing in your life,' Lord Bagot told Curzon when he heard the news, and from my heart I believe you might have gone round the world and never hit upon a more agreeable, pleasing, sensible and charming person in every way than Miss Horton. Indeed, indeed, it does my heart good to think of it.² Her mother's beauty had inspired Lord Byron.³ Her father, Sir Robert,

1. No. 134. 2. P.P.(T)., XV, 122.

3. 'She walks in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.'

Byron's second cousin, had been a public figure.¹ Measured in a straight line into Derbyshire, Catton Hall was about ten miles east of Hagley, but through King's Bromley it must have been nearer fifteen.

It seems likely that Curzon had known Emily for some time but evidently not well. He was lukewarm about a visit to Catton in January 1845,² but admitted that the 'Lady and Miss Horton' who visited Parham in July were 'very nice people'.³ Not altogether surprisingly there is a falling off of Curzon's correspondence with Sneyd before his marriage. Only one dated letter survives for 1850, written in February, in which a little evasively perhaps he declines an invitation to Keele, although he is going to Hagley.⁴ No inkling of his intention reached his parents before the second week in July, when he wrote and told them he was engaged.

It was a little abrupt, and alarmed but uncertain of the extent of the damage Curzon's father confined his reply to immediate issues.

Dear Robert,

Stoke Hall, 13 July 1850

Your mother and I were thunderstruck at the contents of your

-
1. He died in 1841. Formerly Wilmot, he assumed the name Wilmot-Horton in 1823 by royal licence, to comply with his father-in-law's will. Curzon invariably referred to his mother-in-law as Lady Horton.
 2. No. 118.
 3. No. 130. Of the two sisters, Anne Augusta married in 1830 Henry Tufnell, M.P.; Harriet Louisa died unmarried in 1831. Information Derbyshire County Record Office.
 4. No. 202. Later he decided to go. See p. xcvi, n.i.

letter from the Crewe station, and are surprised you should have taken such a step without mentioning your wishes to us beforehand. You know well how entirely it is out of our power to do any thing more for you as to income, it has indeed been a matter of difficulty to pay you your present allowance. I hope therefore that your choice, who is a charming person, may have sufficient fortune to enable you to live comfortably. Her fortune I can know nothing about, but [it] is desirable you should have a home of your own. Have you mentioned this engagement to your Aunt Elizabeth?

Our love and blessing,

Your affectionate father,

R. Curzon¹

The following Wednesday, 17 July, Lady Wilmot-Horton wrote to Curzon to congratulate him, and sent him a copy of a letter she had written to his mother. After describing Emily's financial situation,² she told Harriet Anne:

...At forty and twenty-eight they are at an age to enjoy the good things of this world, and they are both, I think, disposed to do so reasonably. We must do our best to assist them. It is natural, perhaps, that you should have been surprized at the sudden announcement. I fear there has not been de part et d'autre the habit of (what shall I call it?) open and unreserved communication. It is not for me to say why or wherefore - but to hope that it may no longer be the case, where interests and affections are so closely united and where there is so much good feeling on all sides, as I am convinced there is in

1. P.P.(T)., XV, 108.

2. £3,000 in funds and £6,000 at her mother's death, for which her mother proposed to give her £300 a year.

this case. It may sound absurd, but I believe you are both a little afraid of one another!

And now, having ventured so far, I will go one step further, on a point to which you once alluded to me. Your two sons and I have from several quarters, I must admit, heard opinions given (as people will talk of their neighbours' affairs) of partialities &c., &c., which I have always stoutly denied, but if you were really to do nothing in this case, after all that has been done in the other, I fear such reports would be confirmed and could not be contradicted.

I feel, my dear friend, that it will require all your good friendship to excuse me for speaking so plainly, and I feel sure that nothing unreasonable would be desired and that your son is worthy of being treated with perfect frankness and open-ness which would ensure the same from him.

Ever, my dear Lady de la Zouche,

Your affectionate,

A.B.W.H.¹

Emily had written to Curzon the previous day. She told him that her mother had heard from Harriet Anne, '...and I believe intends sending you her letter.'² Her mother was hopeful of a reasonable settlement. Emily herself was deeply in love.

...There has been a kind of spell upon me since that evening at Crewe, which has prevented my speaking to you as I could wish. I did not know that happiness was so overpowering a feeling and I had made myself so thoroughly

1. P.P.(T)., XV, 109-11.

2. P.P.(T)., XV, 114-15.

miserable by the fear that I had given all where there was no return - that the sudden change was more than my poor wits and nerves could stand. I read over and over that line in your letter, where you say you were "happy at Catton" and would fain think it true.

It grieves me much to hear of all the trouble you have had in your family, and it is so incomprehensible to me that they should treat you as they do.

I wish I could lie down and sleep until the post hour to-morrow, for I cannot but be most anxious for your next letter - I do not like either to feel that I am the cause of all this annoyance to you - lest you should owe me a grudge for it! However, so much that is wonderful has happened, that I cannot but trust and hope.

To-morrow I shall have your book [i.e. the 3^d edn.] . I think you would laugh at my folly if you knew all the interest I had in it - and the pains I took to conceal it when any one asked how I liked it - and whether I knew the Author - I could only get out, 'Oh, everybody likes it - the Author? Yes, I know him a little' - whilst every hour of the day I was labouring to patch up, with indifference, all the mischief that 'little acquaintance' had made in my peace of mind!

I am half frightened at writing all this nonsense to you and dare say no more. May God bless you, my dear Robert, and believe in the deep affection and devotion of her you asked to become your happy wife... ¹

1. P.P.(T)., XV, 114-15. The actual copy of Visits to Monasteries in the Levant to which Emily refers is in the possession of the Hon. Mrs Clive Pearson. It is inscribed by Curzon: 'This copy of the account of his Visits to The Monasteries of the Levant is presented, with its Author, to... Emily Wilmot Horton July, 1850.' In a letter to Curzon of 18 July, Emily explains that she scratched out the 'Miss' - '...It looks so much better and kinder without...'. P.P.(T)., XV, 125.

It is difficult to judge the extent to which the extraordinary relationship that existed between Curzon and his parents influenced his behaviour on this occasion. Even had things been normal his parents would have been entitled to surprise. In the circumstances and knowing them as he did, it is hard to believe that he could have expected a favourable reaction. But if triumph and pride betrayed him, his cloud-cuckooland sanguinity was shortlived. His father's letter had an unfortunately evocative ring - 'We had no suspicions of his intentions - were thunderstruck when made acquainted with it'¹ - which Curzon may well have recalled. Elation vanished in the shadow of parental censure, and at Stoke Hall² and 50 Berkeley Square³ the arrival of the post lost much of its attraction.

My dear Mother,

50 Berkley Square, 17 July 1850

I have seen your letter to Lady Horton and it gives me some sort of clue to account for my father's letter and your silence to me.

As for telling you or anyone who I was going to propose to, I should never have thought of such a thing, nor should I do so if I had to return to the events of last week, nor should I have mentioned the case to you if I had been refused. That would have been acting dishonorably towards

1. See p. lv above.

2. Near Newark, home of Admiral Sir Robert Bromley 3rd Bt. (1778-1857). The Admiral's father, Sir George Bromley (1753-1808) married, 8 January 1778, the Hon Hesther, daughter of Assheton, Viscount Curzon of Penn. Formerly Smith, Sir George assumed the surname Bromley in 1778.

3. Curzon's Aunt Elizabeth house. Information Greater London Record Office.

a lady, in my opinion, and I should not think of bringing forward her name under such circumstances.

I had wound up the accounts at Parham, Edward was gone away, and I had nothing to do till last Tuesday. Hearing that the Hortons were not coming to London, I wrote to propose to stay one night at Catton. My letter did not arrive in time and when I came to Catton I found they were gone away. I followed them, as you know. You can hardly expect anyone under the circumstances and hurry in which I was placed to write you a long circumstantial detail on the first moment of agitation and hurry; I expected to have received a kind letter of congratulation from you and my father on Monday, when I had intended to have gone down to Parham to meet Michael Turnor, for I expected that to have been the happiest moment of my life.

My father's letter and your silence have wasted the time and disarranged everything. I am willing to go to Parham now, if you wish me to do so, and will remain here for your answer.

If you did not know that I cared for Miss Horton it must have been only from your not taking any interest in what I said: I have often spoken to you about her. I once asked you to enquire what her fortune was, which you did not make out. I have heard you and my father praise her a hundred times, and Lady Horton is one of your oldest acquaintances and, I thought, friends.

If my father and you had written to me as I had expected, I should have told you this and anything else, before, in the fullness of my heart. I have received the kindest congratulations from both my aunts, from Edward, and every one without exception to whom I have mentioned my engagement, both friends and relations.

You may imagine how miserable my father and you have made me, but I hope on consideration you will perceive that there has been no cause of affront

either given or intended by me, and I trust that your kindness of heart and my father's good feeling will induce you to join with all others of my well wishers in endeavouring to promote the happiness of your eldest son, who remains,

Affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

P.S. I address this letter to you because it is written after a perusal of your letter to Lady Horton, but I trust my father will see it also, as it is an expression of my feelings to both my parents.¹

Harriet Anne left Curzon's father to answer:

Dear Robert,

Stoke Hall, 17 July 1850

In your letter to your mother, just received, you mention my very surprising letter: how so?

I was and am very much grieved and surprised you should have taken so important a step without mentioning your intentions to me or your mother beforehand. I have, as you know, expressed to you my wishes that you should marry, always repeating the necessity that the lady should have means to accomplish it with comfort and satisfaction to all parties, and enable you to uphold and perpetuate a family in wealth and respectability. You are thoroughly acquainted with the state of my affairs, having made them out yourself and shewn the very great difficulty I should have in making both ends meet. You therefore must have known how utterly impossible it was for me to do anything more for you than I now do. All I can do is to offer you a home at Parham, and

1. P.P.

Plate VIII. The Hon. Robert Curzon junior, engraving by W. Holl after
a drawing by George Richmond. (See also Appendix C).

Reproduced by permission of the National Portrait Gallery.



I shall always be happy to see and [blank] your wife at Hagley.

I am, my dear Robert,

Your affectionate father,

R. Curzon¹

Next day Curzon wrote separately to both parents.

My dearest Mother,

Berkley Square, 18 July 1850

You are under a mistake altogether as to any intention of concealing anything from you, as I have never done so in my life. When other persons are concerned, I feel differently, and I judged that it would not be right for me to enter into such particulars with you or my father, having clearly made out that you not only did not disapprove but that you liked and esteemed Miss Horton.

I am very sorry indeed that you should feel hurt at my not telling you beforehand, but I meant no unkindness and was very much disappointed that you did not seem as much pleased as I was when you heard from me. It never entered into my head that you would be offended at my not saying who I was going to propose to (having made out that you approved of the lady), till I saw your letter to Lady Horton the day before yesterday; and such a step would be so contrary to my feelings that I should die unmarried if I had thought I could not propose without declaring my intentions beforehand. The very notion of such a thing seems to me to be unnatural. And that you should take offence at this is to me a matter as much of surprize as grief. I am very sorry for it, but if I was to marry as many wives as Henry VIII I never could act otherwise than as

1. P.P.(T)., XV, 116.

I have done.

It is very kind of you to say that you will give me £100 a year. I should feel unhappy to take it from you if there was any possibility of arranging otherwise. I consider it as... .¹

My dear Father,

50 Berkley Square, 18 July 1850

I have told my mother why I have been surprized at your letter and her silence, on the occasion of my marriage with a lady of whom you approve. Why you said you was thunderstruck I could not conceive. I am exceedingly sorry that you should be grieved and surprized, but I feel that I could not have proceeded in any other way than the one I did, under the same circumstances.

I have never willfully offended you and have always bowed to your decision on all occasions. I have every desire [to] be dutifull towards you, and I believe I have always been so. I can only repeat that I regret that you feel offended at the manner in which I have proceeded in a matter so important to my own happiness - but according to my notions I could not have accomplished it at all in any other way.

Your difficulties I certainly know of, and very serious are they to my prospects, when there is a title to be supported in the family. I hope you will do what you can for me, indeed I have no doubt you will. I expected that Miss Horton had a larger fortune, for I was told her elder sister had £20,000 and I supposed she had the same. I was not informed about this on any authority and my first consideration was that you knew and liked her, and that she was the only person likely to get on well with you and my mother.

I think it would be best if we could have a small house in London, a home of our own we must have; you might give us some of the furniture

1. P.P. Letter incomplete.

out of Brook Street, which you would not feel, for that which cost you a good round sum will fetch next to nothing at a sale.

I could not go and live in my bachelor's room at Parham with a wife, nor would I take her there at all, except on a visit or for a short time, under present circumstances. It could not be a home to me unless it was mine, and that could not be the case in my mother's life time. I should not wish it to be so. It is her place and it is not only her privilege but it is her duty to live there; I wish you had always lived there, and then you would not have fallen into your present difficulties. The whole thing is now thrown away and is of no use or comfort to anybody in the world, while it is a heavy expence to keep up.

I have received a very kind and pleasing letter from Edward, which is a great gratification to me.

I hope you are quite well, as I hear you are, and I hope that you will see that the match your son has made is not likely to interfere with, but rather to increase your happiness as well as mine.

Your affectionate son,

R. Curzon

I now think of going to Catton for Saturday and Sunday, back here on Monday. Pray thank Sir Robert and Lady Bromley and Lizzy for their kind letter to me.¹

The outspokenness of Curzon's letter suggests the influence of two powerful allies, Lady Wilmot-Horton and Aunt Elizabeth, both of whom must have been fully aware that circumstances were in his favour. Like Emily, Curzon was

1. P.P.(T)., XV, 123-24.

popular.¹ As the elder son of a noble family he might have been expected to have been married before he was forty. And whether by accident or design, it was to his parents' disadvantage that news of this engagement was made public while they were guests at a country house, where they must have been warmly congratulated on the suitability of the match. Lady Wilmot-Horton had confidence in her daughter's prospect of happiness, and her letters to Curzon were encouraging: 'All will be quite right. I send you an improved bulletin from Stoke and hope you have had the same.'² Aunt Elizabeth had money and common sense as well as influence with her brother; and since Curzon was staying with her her sympathies were never in doubt. She could manage her brother as well as Lady Wilmot-Horton could manage Harriet Anne. Curzon's parents had very little choice.

My dearest Love,

Stoke [Hall], 18 July 1850

I do not at all wonder at any thing you might do or not do in a moment of agitation such as this, only cannot but always feel that you did not treat us on this occasion with that full confidence and affection such friends and parents expected - and so that was painful.

Now I unite with your father in wishing you very much to go to

1. For example, 'Curzon comes to us tomorrow - a very pleasant fellow - shrewd, quaint and travell'd - exceedingly good company.' Ralph Sneyd to Vincent, Keele, 22 February 1850. S.P.

2. Catton, 18 July 1850. P.P.(T)., XV, 121.

Parham, and go over /our/¹ property with M[i]ch[ael] Turnor as your father desired and hoped you would like to do - and see it all and be put in a way of managing it bye and bye - I hope I may depend upon your liking to do so? - I am sure it will be for all our good - and hope you will go.

As to all you say about dea[r] Em. Horton, I always loved her from the time she was born. You are quite right as to Lady Horton, who is one of my oldest friends and always kind and warmly affectionate to me, and both mother and daughter are, I think, delightful - there is no doubt of my opinion as to that - So I hope you have every prospect of happiness, if you can contrive to be content on smaller means than your father and I thought you required to be comfortable. You know I will do all possible to help you and hope you will like to live at least most of the year at Parham, where we can arrange the how and where, when we are all there together, D.V.

So I beg you not to be "miserable" any longer, but well and happy, and we will all be merry together, every where - I am very glad of the general approbation of our friends and relations of your prospects, God bless you and give you many and happy years.

Your father desires his love and blessing, with

Y[ou]r aff[ectionate] mother,
de la Z.

Pray give my love to Elizabeth. I am very glad she is pleased.²

Curzon replied:

My dear Parents,

I must write one letter to both, for I am absolutely bewildered with writing all day long.

1. Substituted for '...my...'

2. P.P., 44/2.

I have received your last letter, and what I have arranged is to go tomorrow, Saturday, to Catton, till Monday, when I return here, and go on Tuesday to Parham, from whence I must run up to Town as I can, for I have a good deal to do in London.

I am much obliged for your offer of part of Parham. I did not observe yesterday that you said we might inhabit the west side of the house, which is kind of you. If we may go there occasionally it would be very agreeable, and advantageous to your interests, but I think we must have a house in Town, if possible, I am so mixed up with people and things in London that I could not leave it, unless I left the country altogether or gave up society and all my interesting acquaintances and pursuits, which you could hardly wish me to do.

I wished to be married at Croxal, where so many Hortons and Curzons have been married before, but some of my friends here say it would be better to be married in London. If you would let us go to Parham for a fortnight afterwards, it would be agreeable to me, to show my wife the beauties of the old place.

Robert Phillimore¹ will be my trustee.

I cannot remember anything that I have to tell you, you must question me and I answer.

Aunt Elizabeth is pretty well today.

Your affectionate son,

R. Curzon²

More letters followed, mainly on the subject of money. Lady Wilmot-Horton increased the £300 a year she originally intended to settle

1. Robert Joseph Phillimore, later baronet, (1810-85). A contemporary of Curzon's at Christ Church, his mother was a niece of the first Lord Bagot.

2. P.P.

on her daughter, to £500, and was at one stage thinking of letting Catton to raise more.¹ Aunt Elizabeth was careful to mention the figure to her brother. She herself, she told him, proposed to give Curzon £1,000 'to set out' as well as £200 a year '...and only wish it were more';² if he could 'squeeze in' another £100 it would '...delight him gratefully to accept...'.³ Curzon senior agreed.⁴

The wedding was at Croxall on Tuesday, 27 August, and Sneyd was best man. Next day he sat down at Catton and wrote a long letter to Aunt Elizabeth.⁵ He told her about the guests, who included relatives of the bride,⁶ Curzon's parents, and his cousin Lord Howe; and he described the presents, and the journey to the church, past groups of country people '...in their holiday attire,...' A triumphal arch - one of several - was set over the wicket-gate

1. Emily to Curzon, 18 July 1850. P.P.(T)., XV, 125-26..

2. 'Sunday night' [21 July 1850]. P.P.(T)., XV, 119-20..

3. Ibid.

4. He agreed to give Curzon £600 a year, a figure which presumably represented his existing allowance plus the extra £100. With £100 from Harriet Anne they would have had £1,400 a year, plus Aunt Elizabeth's £1,000.

5. Catton, 28 August [1850]. P.P.(T)., XV, 171-73.. I am indebted to Miss Rosemary Courcier for typing a copy of this letter.

6. She was given away by her eldest brother, Sir Robert Wilmot. Another brother, the Rev. George Lewis Wilmot-Horton, conducted the service 'admirably'.

and a carpet of flowers covered the steep path up to the 'beautifully decorated' church. Here, amidst slabs and monuments remembering Curzons of Croxall and earlier Hortons who had intermarried there before, the seven bridesmaids in white muslin and cherry coloured sashes self-consciously acted out their parts, and Curzon and Emily, supported by Sneyd and Sir Robert, ranged themselves before the altar rail, conscious of the eyes, happy, hurt, reproachful, sympathetic and innocent resting upon them, '...and all - the bride included - went through the trying scene as well as possible...'¹ Back at Catton Lord Howe proposed the toast, and Curzon 'in a few words, but with the best possible taste', returned his thanks and expressed the hope that his wife '...would find herself as much beloved in the family which she had now enter'd, as she had ever been in her own...'.² 'Soon after one o' clock' they left for Parham, and as the guests began to leave the tenants and estate workers settled down, separately, to celebrate, and

...feasting and dancing and rustic music were the order of the day, and many toasts and loud huzzas in honor of the happy couple; and in the evening there was a servants' ball, which we all attended, and at which I danced. You may suppose that we were pretty well knock'd up and tired when we went to bed!

...Goodbye, dear Miss Curzon, I am sure you will be gratified to

1. Sneyd to Aunt Elizabeth, Catton, 28 August [1850]. P.P.(T)., XV, 171-73..

2. Ibid.

know how feelingly Robert has express'd to me his deep gratitude to you for your great kindness and sympathy towards him, which he says has alone enabled him to bear up against much worry and disappointment, and bring this marriage to a happy completion. Your affection is well bestowed! And, as I love him more dearly almost than anything else in the world, I must thank you myself on his account.¹

Sneyd stayed until Friday, when he went over to Blithfield. 'I heard yesterday of Walter,' Vincent wrote to Ralph Sneyd, at the marriage of "Monasteries": - He seems to have envied the bridegroom, but failed to appropriate a bridesmaid himself.²

Considering his means Sneyd managed surprisingly well. Between the time of his father's death and his own marriage in 1856, he had between £600 and £800 a year,³ supplemented by occasional legacies,⁴ and cheques

1. Sneyd to Aunt Elizabeth, Catton, 28 August [1850]. P.P.(T)., XV, 171-73.

2. Thornwood Lodge, Kensington, 1 September 1850. S.P.

3. Approximately half this came from interest on capital and the rest from his allowance. In a letter from Denton to his future father-in-law, 13 August [1856], he explained that his brother had promised another £200, which would give him £1,000 when he married. S.P.

4. When his father-in-law died, 22 October 1861, he inherited nearly £10,000. S.P.

from his brother. Yet he was constantly on the move, staying with friends who included the Duke of Hamilton; visiting London, when he sometimes stayed with his sisters in Eaton Square; or attending functions in Oxford.¹ Both before and after he married he went abroad a little, and over the years he built up an important collection of manuscripts and early printed books,² to say nothing of the antiques, including ivories and enamels, some of which went to the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom exhibition at Old Trafford, in 1857,³ to the Exposition Universelle at Paris, in 1867, and to the Leeds Exhibition of Works of Art, in 1868.⁴ He belonged to the Travellers' Club and to the exclusive Philobiblon Society, but not to the Roxburghe, and now and then retired to expensive Leamington or Buxton, or even Germany, in search of relief from sciatica or neuralgic pain. Rheumatism kept him in constant dread of what he once described as

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1. Once he was presented to the Duke, '...and felt exceptionally proud when he shook my hand.' Letter to Ralph Sneyd, Denton, 16 November 1839. S.P. There is nothing in the Sneyd Papers to indicate whether he ever came across Dodgson in later years, but it seems likely that he did, although Dodgson does not mention his name anywhere.
 2. The MSS. were reported by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in their Third Report (1872), 287-90. Among the literary material was a fragment of a twelfth century Tristan and Iseut and a thirteenth century Roman de la Table Ronde. Most of the MSS. were sold at Sotheby's in December 1903 for less than £3,500. The best books were sold in 1932 and brought in nearly £12,000. They included three volumes of sheets of the first edition of Johnson's Dictionary, 1755, corrected and annotated by Johnson, which made £3,250. S.P.
 3. Edward Curzon also contributed. Curzon himself at first decided not to (No. 266) and later (No. 270) appeared to change his mind, but he is not listed as a contributor in the printed catalogue.
 4. S.P.

the 'damp, dark, dirty and dead-leafy'¹ out-of-doors, and much as he liked the house he would have preferred a less damp situation than Denton.

...It is constant up hill work, trying to coax an old worm eaten place like this into order. - As fast as one gets one end into good condition, down goes the other! However, with all its faults it is a snug old place and I am fond of it - though I wish I could transport it elsewhere.²

Vincent had no doubt that he would one day marry. In the autumn of 1848, when staying at White Lodge as guest of the Duchess of Gloucester,³ he heard a rumour to this effect. 'No such luck, I assure you!' Sneyd had replied,

If there had been so interesting a fact to communicate, I should not have allow'd you to hear it from any one but myself but, alas! there's not a shadow of foundation for any such report! Who the Dickins can have so cruelly gull'd the royal ears at my expence! They should, at least, have imparted my partner's name - seeing that the hint might have been valuable to me! No, I return'd two days ago to my lonely Ash Parlour, after a long absence, in the same state of single blessedness (?) as when I left it! More's the pity. The wish still exists, as strong as ever - but, if there's truth in the proverb, I've little chance - for I'm afflicted with a faint heart and there's no one to buck me up - and the Fates run counter - and time wears on - and what can I do? - Bah! Let us change the subject.⁴

1. To Vincent, Denton, 23 October [1857]. S.P.

2. To the same, Denton, 25 October [1862]. S.P.

3. Letter to Ralph Sneyd, Court of Exchequer, 6 November 1848. S.P.

4. Denton, 12 November [1848]. S.P.

'Walter did not confide his marriage to me when he was here the other day', his brother had observed dryly on that occasion,

- As he was on his road for Scotland I presume my future sister-in-law comes from beyond the Tweed. I am amused by your entêtement about his marrying - He seems to me to be cut out for the snuggest of Old Bachelors.¹

When Walter eventually married his twenty-seven-year-old Irish cousin once removed, Henrietta Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Malone Sneyd, his elder brother was delighted to be proved wrong, even if the prospect of more Irish blood in the family seems to have had a limited appeal. 'You will believe that I speak truth', he assured Walter, when I say that my predominant feeling (though one or two of my prejudices may be rubbed) is pleasure to think that you are happy, and a deep, heartfelt, anxious hope that your happiness may be permanently secured.

You know how favourable an impression Henny and her sister always made upon me from our first acquaintance. I write a line to her by this post,...

'I saw Watty's intended some years ago,' Curzon senior told his sister, with some interest,

1. To Vincent, Keele, 14 November 1848. S.P.

2. Bath, 7 August 1856. S.P.

she promised to be a very handsome girl, and of a good size likely to make up for Watty's deficiency in that respect.¹

They were married at St Peter's, Eaton Square, on 14 October 1856, and were lent Strawberry Hill for their honeymoon.² Five children, including twins,³ were eventually born to them.

The Sneyds of Keele were proud of their descent and it would be naive to suppose that because Sneyd was in Holy Orders his attitude towards Christians of an inferior class differed in any way from that of his family. His description of a visit to Haddon in the summer of 1857 illustrates the point:

...we stopped that night at Bakewell... as we arrived there at four o' clock and the weather was beautiful, we order'd a late dinner and drove to Haddon, which we duly lionized - It is most picturesque and well worth seeing - the summer evening lights and shades were lovely - but the place was crowded with vulgar sight-seers, with whom we were driven on in troops - which bored us; and spoilt our pleasure in seeing what one would have greatly admired and enjoyed if seen in peace and quiet.⁴

1. P.P.(T)., XVI, 190.

2. Ralph Sneyd to Vincent, 18 Berkeley Square, 13 October 1856. S.P.

3. '...a son has been born to Walter. Why he was too diffident to come into the world alone, I cannot imagine. The girl, poor little thing, is very much de trop.' Ralph Sneyd to Vincent, Keele, 23 December 1863. S.P.

4. Letter to Ralph Sneyd, Buxton (20 or 27 August 1859). S.P.

With eighteen identified generations behind them it would have been surprising if the Sneyds had not been bound by inherited attitudes, and in spite of their superiority complex they were not really unkind. When Sneyd came into a life interest in Keele in July 1870, a few weeks after Curzon inherited Parham, his likeable nature remained unaffected by the acquisition of considerable wealth.¹ He died at 55 Portland Place, W., on 2 July 1888, less than a month short of his seventy-ninth birthday, and was buried at Keele three days later. His wife died at Portland Place, 10 February 1913.²

A fortnight after Curzon's wedding his parents arrived from Hagley, and he and Emily set out on the second stage of their honeymoon, which was to take them to Rome. Emily was '...utterly laid up, with almost continual sickness and faintness...' by the time they reached Florence, and continued in the same wretched state all the way to Rome; but there good apartments on the Piazza de Spagna, commanding '...a glorious view of the

1. 'I am not surprised to hear that you feel yourself very rich - Once, and once only, R[alph] spoke of affairs, and he then told me it had been a very propitious year and that the income paid in, amounted to £30,000.' - Charles B. Percy to Walter Sneyd, 8 August [1870]. S.P. Percy's information was, in fact, out of date. H.W. Hollis told Sneyd in a draft letter dated 28 July 1870 that, 'in round numbers', the income then was £37,500, and that allowing for fluctuations in the mineral royalties it could be expected to be between £35,000 and £45,000. Ibid.

2. Staffordshire Advertiser, 15 February 1913.

3. Curzon to both parents, (postmarked Florence, 13 November 1850). P.P.

Plate IX. Emily Julia and Curzon, writing alternate lines, to Harriet Anne, at the beginning of their honeymoon, August 1850. P.P.
Reproduced by permission of the Hon. Roger Frankland.

Perham

Monday 29th Augth.

My dear Lady de la Touche,

We arrived here late last night - from London not being able at first to get post horses at Horsham - We are very happy to find ourselves in this delightful old place from which we send our loves.

Your affec^{te} daughter & son
Emily & Robert Curzon.

P.S. Now another day.

whole of Rome,...'¹ raised her spirits, and in December she added an over-optimistic postscript for Harriet Anne to Curzon's letter home: 'I feel sure you will forgive my having been so bad a correspondent... Now - I trust to be better...'.² It was a trying situation. 'Emily still continues in a very sick and uncomfortable condition,' Curzon told his father, just over a week later,

but I think this last two days she is a little easier; today is her birthday, and I am very sorry she must pass great part of it in bed. I know hardly anybody at Rome, and feel rather lonely in consequence as I have no one to go about with me, and I am so well acquainted with the antiquities that I have nothing new to see... .³

During this visit he was received in audience by the Pope.⁴ The latter showed much interest in the star of the Lion and Sun of Persia, which Curzon selected to wear for the occasion,⁵ listened politely to Curzon's advice about putting glass doors to his bookcases in place of wooden ones, which concealed the gaps in the books,⁶ and accepted a copy of his Catalogue of the manuscripts at Parham,⁷ which, the author proudly told

1. Curzon to both parents, (letter received 12 December 1850). P.P.

2. Ibid. 3. Rome, 21 December 1850. P.P.

4. Pius IX (1846-78).

5. Curzon also held the Nishani-Iftikhar of Turkey.

6. 'A Short Account of some of the most celebrated Libraries of Italy', Philobiblon Society, Miscellanies I (1854), 34-35.

7. Catalogue of Materials for Writing, Early Writings on Tablets and Stones, Rolled and other Manuscripts and Oriental Manuscript Books, in the Library of the Honourable Robert Curzon, at Parham in the County of Sussex. (William Nicol, 1849, fifty copies).

his parents, '...I presented for the library of the Vatican...'.¹ At Curzon's request the Pope gave him a hand-written indulgence to take back to old Lady Newburgh,² and gave Curzon his blessing.

None too soon Curzon and Emily left Rome in March 1851 to begin the long journey back to England, visiting Venice on the way. By the beginning of May, owing to a change of plan dictated by rumours of bad conditions in the Simplon, they were no further than Bolzano,³ but after that they made good progress and were in Dover before the end of the month. After a quick visit to Hagley, Emily went to Catton, where her baby was born on 30 June.⁴

Between 1851 and 1858 Curzon and Emily lived at Parham in comparative peace. Neither looked forward with particular pleasure to the visits of Curzon's parents, nor, more significantly, did their friends - 'We are visiting Robert Curzon and his wife (the old people are, fortunately, not here)'⁵ - but the delight they took in the company of their infant son

1. Rome, 16 February 1851. P.P.

2. The Dowager Countess, widow of the 5th Earl. She died at Slindon in 1861, aged ninety-eight. The indulgence is now among the papers at Catton Hall.

3. Postscript by Emily to Harriet Anne, letter from Curzon to both parents, Cola, 4 May 1851. P.P.

4. According to Curzon (No. 203), and not 12 July, as given in the G.E.C., XII, 956. Robert Nathaniel Cecil Gèorgè, later 15th Baron Zouche, died 31 July 1914. He was known in the family as Robin.

5. The Rev. Walter Sneyd to Vincent, Parham, 4 September 1857. S.P. Curzon's servants shared their employer's feelings, since they suffered at least equal subjection at the hands of the parents' servants.

far outweighed the disadvantages of the partie carée in the Great Parlour, and in any case Curzon and Emily were not always there. For short periods during the season they took houses in London or stayed with Aunt Elizabeth; and they spent time visiting relatives and friends,¹ being careful that Hagley saw them as well as Catton, even if Scarsdale House may have received them less frequently. Periodically they went to the seaside, and they went to Paris in 1855. They were in Germany in the following year, but principally for Emily's health.

During this same period a number of events took place which were important to them. In 1852 Emily was presented at Court;² and in July 1853, when the Archaeological Society of Sussex invited the Archaeological Institute to meet at Chichester, Curzon, on behalf of the Institute, thanked the Mayor and Corporation for their hospitality. Next day, as President of the Section of Antiquities, he addressed the meeting on the subject of some of the more interesting items in the new museum.³ Curzon was one of

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1. It is not always clear when they are visiting together. Sneyd, after he married, often went off by himself, and one suspects that Curzon may have done the same, as he found moving a wife, her maid and the luggage something of a trial.
 2. 'Emily looked very well, she was all in white, her dress only came home in the morning; and as for me, having a new pair of continuations, I was able to sit down without any fear of their coming to bits, which I was not sure of in the other ones, they were so tight.' Curzon to his mother, -14 Charles Street, Grosvenor [sic] Square, 30 April 1852. P.P.
 3. Sussex Archaeological Collections, VII (1854), 'Proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute', 2, 21.

the original members of the Philobiblon Society and occasionally contributed papers for publication.¹ Until 1869, when he suffered a slight stroke which disfigured his face and made him shy of public appearances, he enjoyed the breakfasts and gave one himself in 1856. It had been 'remarkably successful', he told his parents,

my old books and other acquisitions were fully appreciated and it is remarkable for the likes of me to entertain such a party, and to have got and paid for so many objects which even princes are surprized at... Professor Faraday sent me, to look at, a bar of platinum and the largest ingot of aluminium existing in England. I never saw a piece of this wonderful metal before, and many of our guests saw it also for the first time, so it was an addition to the interest of the meeting...²

Recognition by the nineteen distinguished men of affairs who came to his breakfast, including the President of the Philobiblon Society, the Duke d'Aumale, the Belgian Minister, M. Van de Weyer, the Provost of Eton, Dr Hawtrey, and Mr John Murray, meant a great deal to Curzon, and Emily shared his obvious pleasure; but she was tired and unwell, and at the end of the month had been glad to get away to Parham to rest:

...I never was so rejoiced to leave London - not having felt at all up

1. 'The Book of the Prophet Moses and the History of the Prophet Moses', II, 1855-56; 'The History of Printing in China and Europe', VI, 1860-61; 'The Lord Mayor's Visit to Oxford, July, 1826', IX, 1865-66.

2. 7 Grafton Street, 17 May 1856. P.P.

Plate X. The Hon. Mrs Robert Curzon and Darea, by Alexander Glasgow.

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



to the going out night after night and all the worry and fatigue of the season. Still I am very glad Robert has been - and seen some of his friends and accomplished his Philobiblon breakfast.

With regard to myself - it is difficult to write on such matters. Dr L. found that there was inflammation - which by all I told him, he has no doubt has existed ever since little Robin's birth - and fully accounts for his having no brothers or sisters - as well as all the ill health I have had,...

¹

After undergoing treatment Emily was advised to go to Homburg, which accounted for their visit in July.

In the summer of 1858, for financial reasons, Curzon's parents gave up Hagley and came to live permanently at Parham. The arrangement lasted until the early autumn of 1859, when Curzon and Emily decided they could stand it no longer and Curzon began looking for a house in London. Before the end of the year he was negotiating for the purchase of 24 Arlington Street, and from March 1860 this was their London home. At the same time Emily became pregnant, and when the child² was born in November she was desperately ill.

The death of Curzon's father in his ninetieth year in May 1863 made little difference to the situation at Parham. As sole executor Curzon was responsible for raising and investing £20,000 from the Staffordshire

1. To her grandmother, Parham, 31 May [1856]. P.P.

2. Darea, succeeded to the barony on the death of her brother, 31 July 1914, died 7 April 1917.

property to provide an income for Edward.¹ This involved selling Hagley and paying off a mortgage of £12,500. By the time it was settled Curzon himself was left between £5,000 and £6,000, but he also inherited Ravenhill and a further £1,400 a year which came from Aunt Elizabeth.² Finding a buyer for Hagley proved to be the least difficult of his problems.

'Nobody has succeeded as yet,' he told Sneyd,

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.

...I think I have been more shocked at my mother's conduct than at my father's death...³

The extent of the damage to the family fortune exceeded his worst expectations. 'The sums my father and brother have got rid of are incredible,' he told Sneyd,

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

1. Will made 3 October 1862, proved 13 August 1863. ~~1863~~.

2. No. 340, 1 Cleveland Row, London, 26 May 1863.

3. Ibid.

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...¹

The strain of years of submission to such stupid and overbearing people, and the burden of Curzon's bitterness were too much for Emily. As the winter of 1865-66 set in Curzon began to feel uneasy on her account. They were together at Ravenhill in November, but Emily was too unwell to accept an invitation to Keele; and shortly before Christmas Curzon told Sneyd that her mother was taking her over to Chester for medical advice.² The diagnosis was an enlarged heart and disease of the kidneys, and fearing the worst Curzon '...imagined it was certain death...', but the doctors, probably trying to soften the blow, told him

...that now they can often get the better of this dreadful malady, and... that my dear wife is not in present danger. I hope it may please God to spare her, but she is ill and weak, and out of health. I shall be very

1. No. 341, Parham, 4 July 1863.

2. No. 369, Ravenhill, 14 December 1865.

glad to get safe back to London, where the best advice is at hand.¹

'Her health has always seemed so bad,' Sneyd's eldest sister Harriet remarked,

one was afraid there must be something very wrong... He would be so miserable if he lost her! And she would be such a loss to him and her children!²

Sneyd passed the news on to Keele:

...I send you the enclosed heart-breaking letter which I received this morning from poor Curzon (you can return it when you write) - I fear that it indicates a hopeless state of things - Poor fellow! My heart bleeds for him...³

Emily died at 24 Arlington Street on 11 March, and the funeral was at Parham. Afterwards Curzon withdrew into the emptiness of the shabby old house until the end of April, when Sneyd saw him in London. 'He is well in health', he told his brother,

- but sadly broken down and in a great state of indecision as to his future plans - I urged him not to be in a hurry to throw up Ravenhill - for I quite think that under present circumstances the best thing he could do would be to keep it as a piéd a terre. He never could bear to live at Parham while his mother lives - her petty jealousies make it intolerable to him. His little girl is there now - and he is gone down

1. No. 371, Parham, 12 January 1866.

2. To Sneyd, Eaton Square, 18 January [1866]. S.P.

3. Denton, 23 February [1866]. S.P.

today for Saturday and Sunday, but returns on Monday - Poor Lady Horton looks sadly aged and broken.¹

Apart from Darea there was now nothing to attract Curzon to Parham. The house depressed him, and although he still felt affection for his mother, she reserved her attention for Edward, and their liaison disturbed him. It was better in Arlington Street, where he could share his loss with Lady Wilmot-Horton. He quarrelled bitterly with Edward when, allowing his feelings to get the better of him, he wrote to Amelia and accused her of having, by her extravagance, worried his wife into her grave.² Edward replied that he had read the letter '...with mixed feelings of pity, contempt, pain and indignation.'³

Many people might have agreed with Harriet Sneyd when she said that she felt it was not in Curzon's nature '...to struggle and try to bear up...',⁴ but outwardly at least he recovered surprisingly quickly. For the sake of the children he had to suppress the despondency that threatened to overwhelm him, and for this reason, together with his apparently indestructible sense of humour and his collecting mania, he managed to pick up again.

1. Travellers' [Club], 27 April [1866]. S.P.

2. P.P., 23/20. Copy, in Curzon's hand, 12 May 1866.

3. Ibid., original, in Edward's hand, dated from Sergeants' Inn, 15 May 1866. A stamped envelope, addressed by Curzon to Edward at Scarsdale House, postmarked 18 May, makes up the third item under this reference. It has been endorsed by Curzon that it was returned unopened; the letter is missing. Within the week Curzon attempted to make a qualified withdrawal, through Robert Phillimore, but the overture was rejected. P.P. 62/108-110.

4. Letter to Sneyd, Eaton Square, 'Thursday' (probably 15 March 1866). S.P.

Nearly two years after Emily's death Curzon suffered a slight stroke. He was quite unaware that anything was wrong until he saw his reflection in the glass one morning,¹ and Sneyd, when he saw him, thought it nothing more than a coup de vent.² There was no recurrence, but nothing that the doctors recommended did the slightest good, and towards the end of May 1869 Sneyd had to admit that there was no improvement and that Curzon was going to try galvanism.³ The truth was that in spite of his cheerfulness Curzon was no longer in very good shape. He had lost most of his hair, his eyes bothered him, he suffered occasional violent fevers - probably the result of malaria - and his nerves, which had always been in a bad way, made him neurotic about the children's health. As he grew older - he was now fifty-nine - he became increasingly lonely, and the political and social changes dispirited him. In May 1869 he took Robin to Oxford to matriculate, and was horrified at the transformation of Christ Church. Whatever the defeat of the Canons had done for the better government of the House, the revised protocol turned his stomach:

1. 25 February 1869. Letter from Sneyd to his brother, Travellers' Club, 2 March 1869. S.P.

2. '...he is not at all ill - I see him daily - and he is dress'd and in the drawing room - and as cheerful as usual - His right eye and the left corner of his mouth were the parts affected - the latter necessarily slightly affects his speech - but his head is as clear as ever...'. Ibid.

3. Letter from Sneyd to his brother, Baginton [Rectory], 25 May [1869]. S.P.

...the dirty tutors dine at the high tables 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.¹

'...I feel like an old fly,' he concluded a letter to Sneyd, in April 1870, crawling up a window pane in the autumn of life, with little chance of carrying my old body to the top.²

Less than a week later, on the evening of Easter Sunday, 17 April, as Harriet Anne was coming into the Great Hall for evening prayers, she tripped and fell on the stone floor:

...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.³

Amelia Curzon and a nurse made her as comfortable as possible, but at eighty-two there was nothing they could do to restore her to health, and she died on 15 May. Curzon inherited Parham and the title, and the carriages, horses and dogs. Some of Harriet Anne's mother's silver, and most of what little money Harriet Anne still had went to Edward,⁴ whose influence was at an end, '...for now', said Curzon,

1. No. 418, Clarendon Hotel, [Oxford], 18 May 1869.

2. No. 443, Parham, 11 April 1870.

3. No. 444, Parham, 23 April 1870.

4. Will proved under £4,000, 3 September 1870.

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.¹

One of the disadvantages of being a peer,² Curzon found, was that the Conservatives expected him to vote in debates, and long speeches and leaking gas lamps in the House of Lords proved a considerable strain.³ At Parham he could be at ease, and pottering there he was conscious that if Emily had lived he would have been happy for almost the first time in his life. 'I am employed in putting back all the things which my parents turned out, when they came here in 1858,' he told Sneyd,

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.⁴

He began rebuilding in 1871. In the last week of February he told Sneyd that he was going to Parham to meet Salvin,⁵ but before long he was complaining that Salvin did not answer his letters,⁶ and that he supposed him to be '...better employed somewhere else...'.⁷ From this and subsequent

1. No. 445, Parham, 19 May 1870.

2. He dropped the 'de la' used by Harriet Anne and called himself Zouche. As he held the title for a comparatively short time and is better known by his family name, I have continued to refer to him as Curzon.

3. No. 447, Parham, 21 June 1870. 4. Ibid.

5. No. 467, 24 Arlington Street, 24 February 1871.

6. No. 469, Parham, 3 April 1871. 7. Ibid.

remarks -

...I find that my presence is very necessary at Parham, as an architect, for Salvin does not pay any attention to the voice of my complaint, and I am obliged to do everything myself...¹

...at present I am my own architect, builder and decorator, and cannot get away at all...²

- it seems doubtful whether Salvin played a significant part. The letters to Sneyd confirm that Curzon reconstructed an earlier³ gatehouse which now forms the central feature of Fountain Court, opposite the north side of the house, but it proclaims this for itself.⁴ He was also responsible for important alterations to the house, and the skill with which these were carried out suggests that his comments to Sneyd ought not to be taken too literally. He replaced the Georgian sashes in each of the flanking wings of the south front with bays of mullioned windows matching the original windows of the Great Hall. On the west flank this was part of his reconstruction of the Great Parlour, which involved doubling its height, creating what he considered to be

1. No. 470, 24 Arlington Street, 30 May 1871.

2. No. 478, Parham, 1 November 1871.

3. See No. 129.

4. '...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...'. No. 478, Parham, 1 November 1871.

...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.¹

The corresponding bay on the east flank lit a new dining-room, also of double height,

...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.²

He found afterwards that it had been a mistake making the dining-room ceiling so high, because the effect of the frieze he designed³ was lost. By putting back floors where Curzon had removed them, the original height of the Great Parlour and the dining-room has since been restored, and this accounts for the division of both bays of mullioned windows. Curzon also took down the wall between what were in his time the old drawing-room and the library, rooms which were formerly a winter parlour and a buttery,⁴ creating the beautiful South Library, a long, low room, with sashed windows looking towards the distant skyline of the Downs. The two gables with dormer

1. No. 478, Parham, 1 November 1871.

2. Ibid. See Plate XI .

3. Part of this is now preserved in the private museum in the gatehouse.

4. It goes without saying that I have been heavily dependent on information supplied by the owners, and on Christopher Hussey's articles on the house (Country Life 1, 8 and 15 June 1951, republished by Country Life in booklet form for the Hon. Mrs Clive Pearson), for clarification of points relating to Curzon's alterations.

windows, also on the south front, belong to this period, but it is not known whether they are Curzon's work or that of his children. '...I think it would interest you,' he told Sneyd,

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,¹ and someone who does understand.²

He enjoyed it for a year before he fell ill for the last time. He knew it was serious and delayed telling Sneyd until after Christmas 1872. '...I do not so much fear death', he said, 'as some horrible suffering. At present I suffer very little, except with the mind.'³ By the end of April he had given up hope of recovery and told Sneyd that he no longer wished to live, but that he feared parting with his children, and the increasing pain of his condition. Sneyd visited him and sent him books, and their friend Sir Stephen Glynne, Gladstone's brother-in-law, saw him in June, when he 'found him more able to converse cheerfully' and had 'had more of his society' than he expected.⁴ There was a letter from Edward,⁵ and Sir Stephen again wrote to Sneyd, from

1. Hugh (Cholmondeley), Baron Delamere (1811-87).

2. No. 480, Parham, 25 January 1873.

3. No. 501, Parham, 4 February 1873.

4. To the Rev. Walter Sneyd, Hawarden Castle, 21 July 1873. S.P.

5. See Appendix D.

Plate XI . Parham, the south front, showing on the right the unbroken length of the mullioned windows of Curzon's dining-room.

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



Bath, on 24 July:

Poor Zouche's state grieves me extremely. I have just heard from Mrs Anson¹ an account entirely agreeing with what you said - He is evidently worse, weaker and more suffering. One must indeed feel thankful to be spared such trials of bodily pain and sickness, but it is great grief and sorrow to see one's best friends in so hopeless and distressing a condition.²

He died on Sunday, 2 August, and was buried in the family vault at Parham.

Curzon's reputation rested on the importance of the manuscripts he brought home from the Middle East and on the success of Visits to Monasteries in the Levant. Descriptions of his Greek manuscripts are to be found in the British Museum Catalogue.³ These included a New Testament, parts of the New Testament, Psalters and other mainly liturgical works, the earliest dating from the early tenth century. They were brought to England at a time when

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1. Probably Curzon's wife's niece, Augusta Theresa, widow of the Rev. Arthur Henry Anson, son of the Dean of Chester, and daughter of Emily's sister, Anne Augusta, married 1830 Henry Tufnell, M.P.
 2. S.P.
 3. British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts, 1916-1920 (1933), 54-143, Additional Manuscripts 39583-39671, the Parham Manuscripts. Included with this group are some manuscripts collected by Curzon before and after he went to the Middle East. The rest of his manuscripts are to be found in Oriental MSS. 8729-8855. They were all deposited in the Museum by Robin

studies in New Testament criticism were receiving great impetus from the work of men like Henry Tattam, the Coptic scholar, Professor Samuel Lee of Cambridge, William Cureton of the British Museum, Syriac scholar, a servitor at Christ Church in Curzon's time, and Frederick Scrivener, the first edition of whose Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament appeared in 1861. Possibly inspired by Curzon's success, Tattam went to the Middle East himself between 1838 and 1839, and followed Curzon's footsteps to the convent of St Mary Deipara, in the desert valley of Nitria, in Egypt, where he was able to secure some of the manuscripts which Curzon had been forced to leave behind, including the incomplete but still the oldest dated vellum codex in the British Museum, the quarto volume of A.D. 411, which Curzon, to his subsequent disgust, had failed to recognize.¹ Tattam, Cureton and Scrivener all at one time or another worked on parts of Curzon's manuscripts, as did Hermann von Soden and the American, C.R. Gregory, in later years, and some facsimiles of parts of them were published by the New Palaeographical Society.²

Other more colourful, luckier, more scholarly or linguistically more gifted men had travelled in the Middle East and Asia Minor before Curzon,

(3. cont'd.). after Curzon's death. Under the terms of Darea's will they became the property of the Museum.

1. It was recognized by Lee. Quarterly Review, vol. 77, 42-43; A.N.L. Munby, Phillipps Studies No.3, The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the Year 1840, (1954), 131. Tattam published an account of his journey in 1841.
2. Add. MS. 39585, Parham MS. III (5), New Palaeographical Society, Facsimiles of Ancient Manuscripts, etc., First Series (London, 1903-12), pl. 178;

notably Claudius James Rich, George Cecil Renouard, William Richard Hamilton, Lord Byron's companion John Cam Hobhouse, and Alexander Kinglake, to say nothing of the women, of whom the eccentric Lady Hester Stanhope must be the best known. Hamilton,¹ who had been Lord Elgin's secretary at the embassy in Constantinople forty years before Curzon's time, had had not only the good fortune to intercept the Rosetta Stone before it left Egypt, but had made himself famous by translating the Greek part of its trilingual inscription. William John Bankes had obtained manuscripts from the monks of St Catherine's monastery in the mountains of Sinai, fifteen years before Curzon left it, empty-handed,² and had given Curzon lessons in the manners of the Egyptians before Curzon left England.³ Lord Prudhoe, who succeeded to the Dukedom of Northumberland in 1847, had visited the Nitrian monasteries and obtained manuscripts for Tattam in 1828. It was not, therefore, as if Curzon had done anything either new or outstandingly noteworthy: what endeared Visits to Monasteries in the Levant to the reading Victorian public was his bibliomania, which was seen, not altogether mistakenly, as evidence of his dedication to

(2. cont'd.). Add. Ms. 39591, Parham MS. IX, *ibid.*, Series II (London, 1913, 1932), pl. 79; Add. MS. 39597, Parham MS. XV, *ibid.*, pl. 119.

1. Uncle to Curzon and Sneyd's friend, William Kerr Hamilton.

2. No. 24, Cairo, March 1834.

3. No. 19, Library of the House of Commons, 12 July [1832]. Curzon was not, of course, the last visitor to St Catherine's. Constantin Tischendorf was there in 1844, 1853 and 1859, and it was on the latter occasion that he first saw the Codex Sinaiticus, and others were there after him.

the advancement of biblical knowledge; and in a person as young, well bred and modest the impression was irresistible. 'Few of his years have been greater travellers,' said The Quarterly Review, 'and there is not one foreign word used in his volume when an English one was at his service.'¹ 'To the scholar at least, and to the biblical scholar in particular,' The Gentleman's Magazine assured its readers,

this short but singularly curious narrative will be of great interest; and when we recollect that an ancient manuscript, one written in uncial letters, MAY be even a thousand years older than the earliest printed book existing, we can form some estimate of the value, and have a grateful sense of the zeal, activity, and even courage, which sometimes exposed the traveller to real perils, and which bore up with firmness and good humour against repeated disappointments. We do not indeed know to whom else we are indebted for so large and valuable an addition to our early manuscripts of the Gospels in the original language, and of other portions of the sacred text; and we also have been in no small degree gratified by much fuller and more complete descriptions of those monastic abodes from which they were drawn, than we before possessed.²

The Quarterly considered the chapters on Palestine to be '...among the best in the volume.'³ In their issue of December 1845 they had expressed the hope that one day Curzon would make public his adventures,⁴ and the reception

1. Vol. 84, No. 168, 499.

2. Vol. 187, Pt. II (Vol. 32, New Series), 3-4.

3. Vol. 84, No. 168, 476.

4. In a review of work by Lee and Cureton, for which Curzon supplied a long

they gave Visits to Monasteries in the Levant, in thirty-nine generally well-informed pages, may have impressed even Curzon's parents.

Mr Curzon, a young gentleman of rank - heir indeed to a peerage - had left Oxford with the usual tastes and habits of his contemporaries, as well as with a rare and praiseworthy love and affection for the darkest recesses of the Bodleian, and such a filial reverence for its antique gems of calligraphy and typography as must have satisfied the warmest wishes of Dr Bliss.^[1] He had kept a healthy appetite for the ordinary comforts and pleasures of prosperous youth, and evidently enters into all innocent varieties of sport and fun with a fearless zest. He would not be a worthy Roxburgher if he did not, among his other scientific developments, include a cognoscent appreciation of eatables and drinkables - the 'portly eidolon' of Dibdin^[2] would frown! Nor - haunting as he does with such gusto the dim and flinty corridors of Oriental coenobites, poring morning after morning over unciated and miniaturized parchments, and in the evening hobnobbing (rosoglio to wit) with holy recluse Agoumenoi of Meteora or Athos (within which last entire peninsula of piety no female creature is known to have ventured for ages, except only one cat and certain fleas) - does our 'Milordos Inglesis' conceal his having retained in one corner a decorous but genial devotion to the cowl-eschewed charms. We should be inclined to form a very favourable notion of our author's whole character and disposition: but not to trespass further on what may seem hardly lawful.

(4. cont'd.) description of his visit to the Natron Lakes. The Quarterly Review, vol. 77, No. 153, 52-55.

[1]. Dr Philip Bliss (1787-1857), Fellow of St John's College, Oxford, and Keeper of the Archives, 1826-57.

[2]. Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776-1847), bibliographer, founder of the Roxburghe Club, 17 June 1812.

ground, we think all his readers will feel how gracefully the literary and antiquarian enthusiasm that prompted and gives importance and dignity to his wanderings is set off by the artless unchecked juvenility of spirit which he carries everywhere with him in his social intercourse, and the fresh hearty enjoyment he has in the beauties of external nature.

The greatest and rarest merit of the book is the total absence of all conceits and affectations. We have seldom read one that had less the air of being written for effect. Nobody can put a volume of light sketches from a tour for missals and triptics on a level with such a masterly record of gallant enterprise and exciting discovery as Mr Layard's; [1] but it will, we are confident, take a good place and keep it. No book could well be less like Eothen - in spirit, in substance, in temper, in style, they are each other's antipodes; but we hazard little in prophesying that Mr Curzon's work will be more popular than any other recent set of Oriental descriptions, except Mr Kinglake's; and however that remarkable writer may claim the superiority in wit, point, and artistical finish, we should not be surprised if the respectable oddity of Mr Curzon's objects and fancies, with the happier cast of his general sentiments and reflections, should be sufficient to win fully equal acceptance for the Visits to the Monasteries of the Levant.

When an author of such promise publishes his first book, we consider it our duty to adhere, or rather to revert, to the old style of reviewal, and allow our readers the opportunity of judging him for themselves from as copious extracts as we can well afford.

No one will pretend to compare on the whole the monasteries of the East with those of the West - the influence of the former, whether

[1]. Later Sir Henry Austen Layard (1817-94), excavator of Nineveh. Curzon's commonplace book (see under Acknowledgments, n.1) confirms that he met Curzon in Constantinople in 1842.

we look to religion, to literature, to science, to art, or to the political arrangements of society, has been very inferior to that which all historians recognise in the other case. But still the Eastern monasteries deserve more attention than has fallen to their share - and to trace them from their origin to the present time would be a task worthy of no ordinary talents. Should Mr Curzon possess, in addition to the many excellent qualities he has already given proof of, the fixity of purpose and resolution to devote his leisure to this task, he might, we do not doubt, earn for his name a permanent station in a high department of historical research...¹

The book failed to attract The Edinburgh Review but others besides Miss Wilmot-Horton admired the author. Ruskin considered it '...the most delightful book of travels I ever opened...';² and Bucknall Estcourt, now in his seventies, told Harriet Anne that her son's

...work is universally admitted to be most interesting and is on every table that one approaches: it must be very gratifying to you to see that all his labours and your sufferings have resulted in his peculiar distinction.³

Ralph Sneyd, usually sparing in his good opinions,⁴ thought Curzon

...original, with a great deal of cleverness, - some humour - and much

1. The Quarterly Review, Vol. 84, No. 168, 462-63.

2. The Stones of Venice (Library Edition, 1913), IX, 35, n.3.

3. Letter from 82 Eaton Place, 2 July 1849. P.P.

4. '...we seem to have drawn something worse than a blank in the lottery of hereditary succession...'. Journal, Siena, 19 June 1839. S.P.

caractère, [he] has travelled far and lived a good deal in the East, the habits of which seem to have a strong attraction for him.¹

Certainly they furnished him with a storehouse of the sort of morbid and unlikely data which seem to have fascinated Victorian men of the world:

...I have seen dead bodies floating about in that part of the sea,² where I first became acquainted with the fact that the corpse of a woman floats upon its back, while that of a man floats upon its face.³

But by comparison with Visits to Monasteries in the Levant Armenia was a failure. '...Mr Curzon', it was remarked in The Gentleman's Magazine, authorises us to expect a far more valuable volume than his own.

We are glad to look forward to this: for Mr Curzon's book, though lively and clever, is rather disappointing. The tone is flashy, and the survey superficial. It is not a matter of congratulation when a writer gets the habit of dealing with great crimes and abominable criminals jestingly. Imperceptibly, perhaps, Mr Curzon has fallen into this, from a residence among specimens of humanity, combining just that amount of barbarism, with some of the accidents of civilization which tickle the risible faculties of a merry-hearted man. But jesting on such monsters as one hears of in these pages is, to say the least, in bad taste.⁴

1. Diary, 19 February 1845. S.P.

2. The Bosphorus..

3. Armenia: a Year at Erzeroom, and on the Frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Persia (John Murray, 1854), 1-2.

4. Vol. XLI, 500.

There were no other travel books. After he came back from Erzurum in 1844 Curzon never again went further abroad than Italy, and there were times when he felt disinclined even for that. Before leaving for Naples in the autumn of 1845 he told Sneyd that he would prefer

...to sit upon my fundament and crack nuts across the fire in my own room, instead of rampaging about the world like the wandering Jew.¹

But it was better to journey than to arrive.

1. No. 136, Parham, 28 September [1845].

THE LETTERS

1831 - 1834

In this early period Curzon's high spirits are much in evidence, but an ear for dialogue and fondness for visual effects are discernible over and above the poetastering. In some cases he has arranged his text with obvious care, there are experiments with different kinds of writing, and sketches have been used to heighten the effect. In one of the more striking examples the salutation has been written in a cabalistic script two and a half inches high (Fig. 1).¹

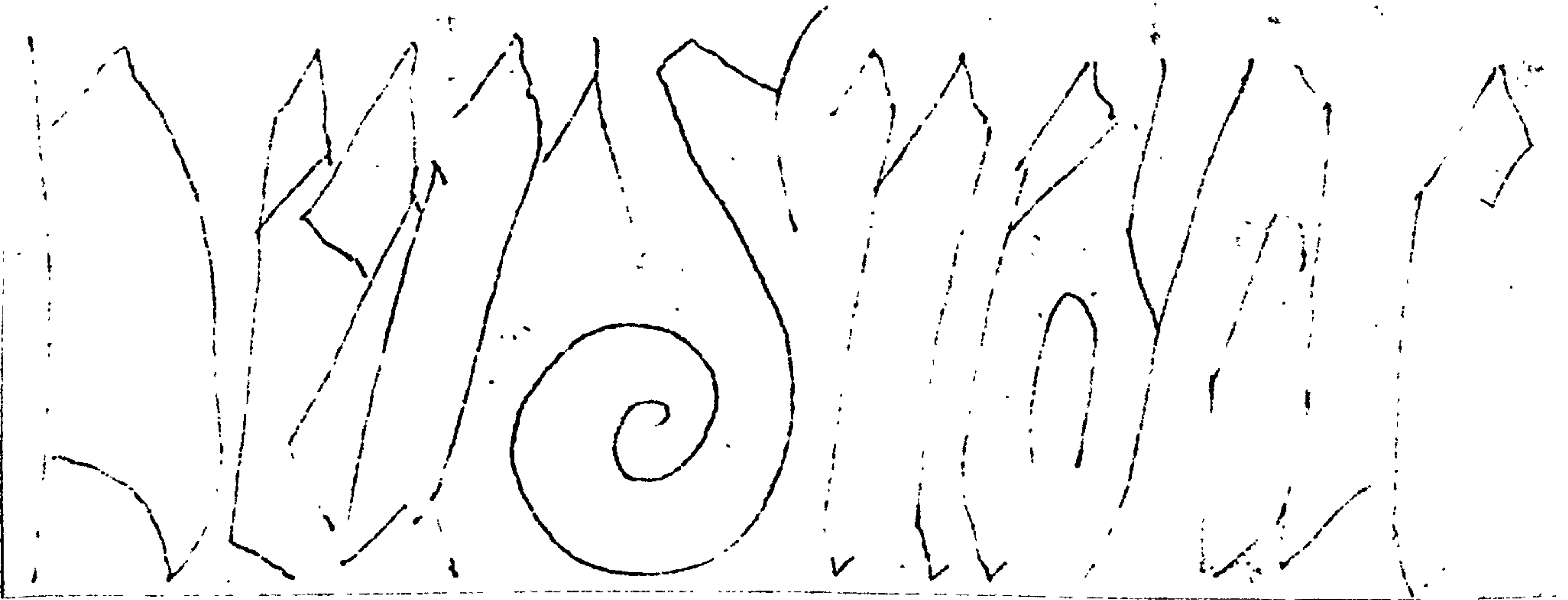


Fig. 1.

1. No. 5, watermarked 'Gater 1830', belonging possibly to May 1832. Curzon repeated the effect in a different style in No. 48.

There follow sixteen lines of a form of mirror-writing (Fig.2),
 in which individual capitals, written normally, spell the words
 backwards from right to left:

YAS.I.LLAHS.TAHW
 .N.I.L.S.E.B.O.T.I.C.E.P.X.E.I
 .E.H.T.F.O.D.O.O.G.E.H.T.R.O.F
 .S.A.Y.A.D.O.T.Y.R.T.N.V.O.C
 .M.R.O.F.E.R.A.E.B.O.T.S.I.E.R.E.H.T
 .F.O.E.S.V.O.H.E.H.T.T.A.B.O.M
 .G.N.I.O.G.E.R.A.O.H.W.S.N.O.M.M.O.C
 .M.O.R.F.E.V.O.Y.N.A.T.N.E.Y.E.R.P.O.T
 .O.H.W.E.S.V.O.H.E.H.T.O.T.N.I.S.N.I.O.G
 .S.I.H.T.T.A.H.T.E.T.O.V.T.O.N.L.L.I.W
 .E.B.LLAHS.THEMAILRA9
 .E.S.O.P.P.Y.S.I.O.S.L.A.V.T.E.P.R.E.9
 .R.E.H.T.O.N.A.E.V.A.H.O.T.E.R.A.E.W
 .H.C.I.H.W.T.N.E.M.A.I.L.R.A.P.P.M.Y.R
 .E.T.A.I.R.P.O.R.P.P.A.Y.R.E.V.E.B.L.L.I.W

Fig.2.

The passage is completed with a colophon (Fig. 3):

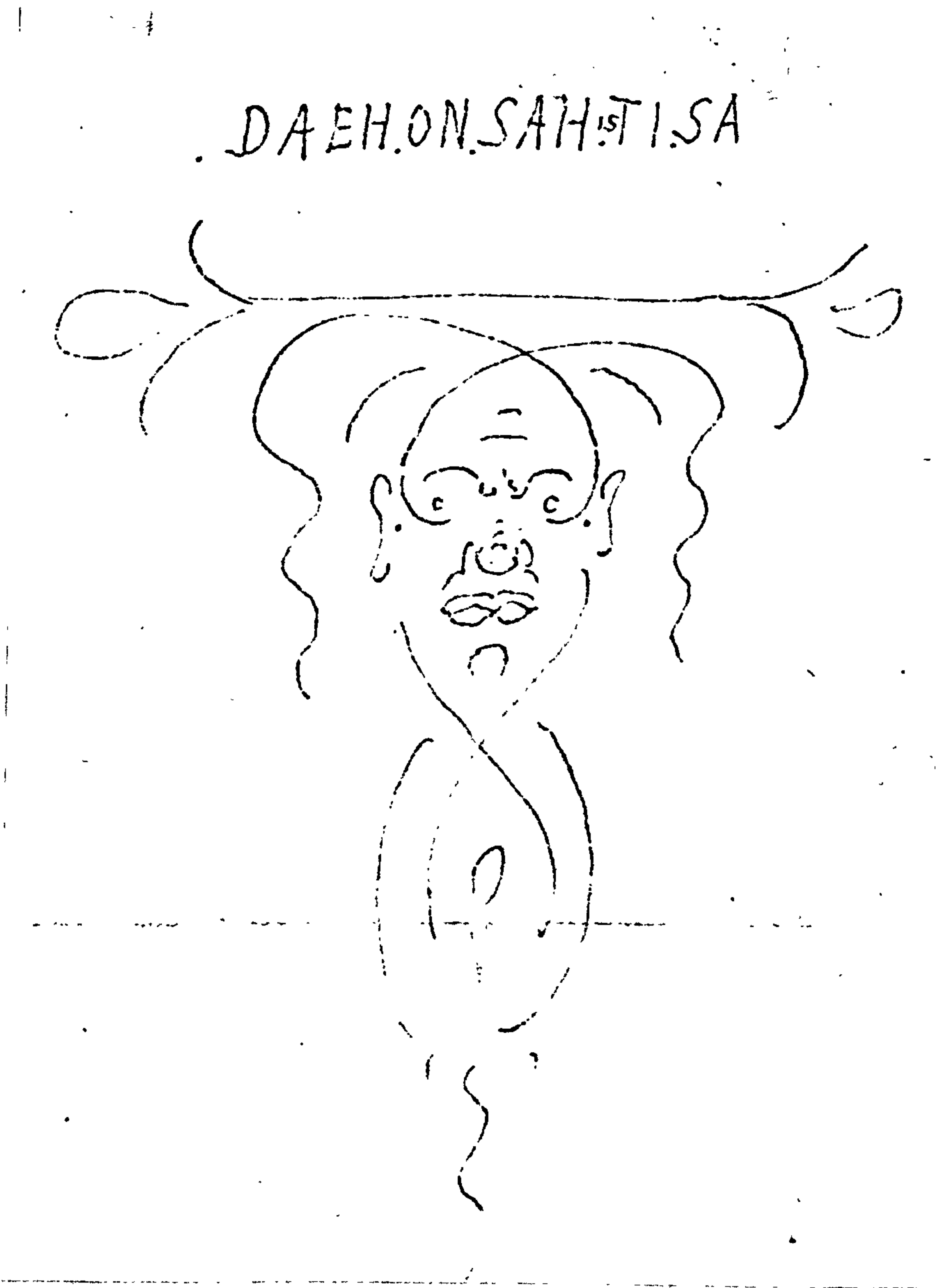


Fig. 3.

The last two-thirds of the last page are filled with six sketches (Fig. 4), one larger than the rest:

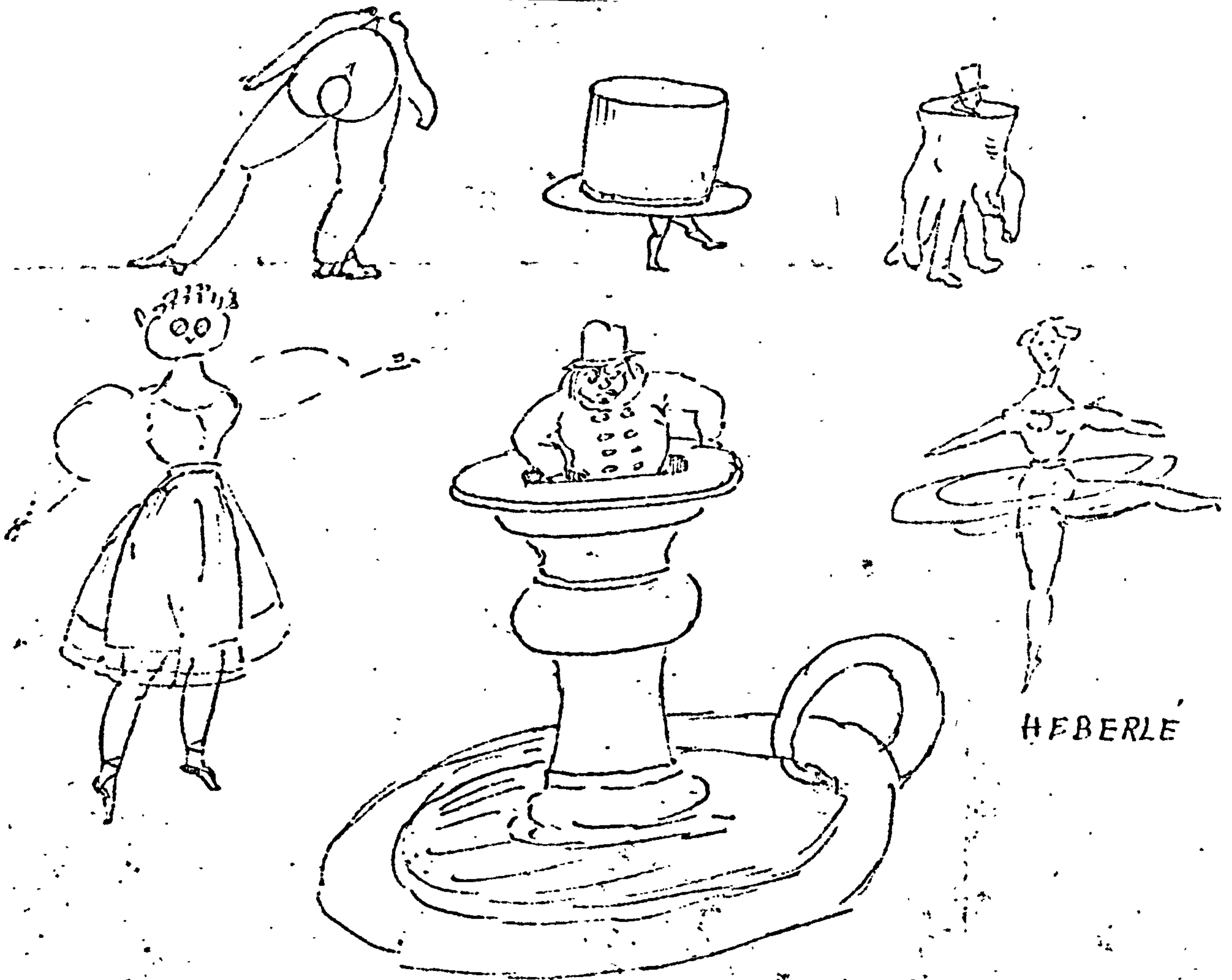


Fig.4.

Curzon appears to have begun in the middle of the lower half of the page, with a sketch of himself waist-deep in a candlestick, perhaps associating his tiredness - 'I am more stupid than usual today...' - with bedtime. He may then have worked his way clock-wise round the

remaining space, beginning to the left of the candlestick. Here he drew a ballerina, gesturing towards him. Above her he drew a man bending down, suggesting the rump which, he tells Sneyd, they are to have for a parliament. Next came a hat and a glove, each going for a walk, indicating his plans for the following day. Finally, below and to the right of the candlestick, he drew the ballerina Heberlé, pirouetting, scantily dressed.¹

Not all Curzon's effects are visual. His text is enlivened with noises - they are scarcely quotations - in Greek, Latin, Italian and French; and one of his most intriguing effects is the use of the word 'nts'. This occurs in connection with expressions of pleasure as well as displeasure, suggesting a significant sound rather than some esoteric meaning, representing perhaps a characteristic mannerism that was familiar to Sneyd as well as to himself. In a letter to Sneyd of 23

1. I am indebted to Dr Ruth Murphy, Senior Lecturer in French, University of Keele, for searching in the Bibliothèque Nationale and in the library of the Opera for information on this dancer, but with very little success. According to Ferdinando Reyna, A Concise History of Ballet (English edition, Thames and Hudson, 1965), 103, Coralli dedicated a ballet, La Statue de Vénus to her. She was dancing in Fidelio, which opened at the King's Theatre, 18 May 1832, which is possibly when Curzon saw her, perhaps with Thackeray, who was seeing quite a lot of Curzon at this time and who mentions meeting Heberlé and another dancer, Brugnoti, backstage. In his diary Thackeray dates this encounter Saturday, 18 May, but Saturday was in fact the 19th. Gordon N. Ray, The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray (London, O.U.P.), I (1945), 202.

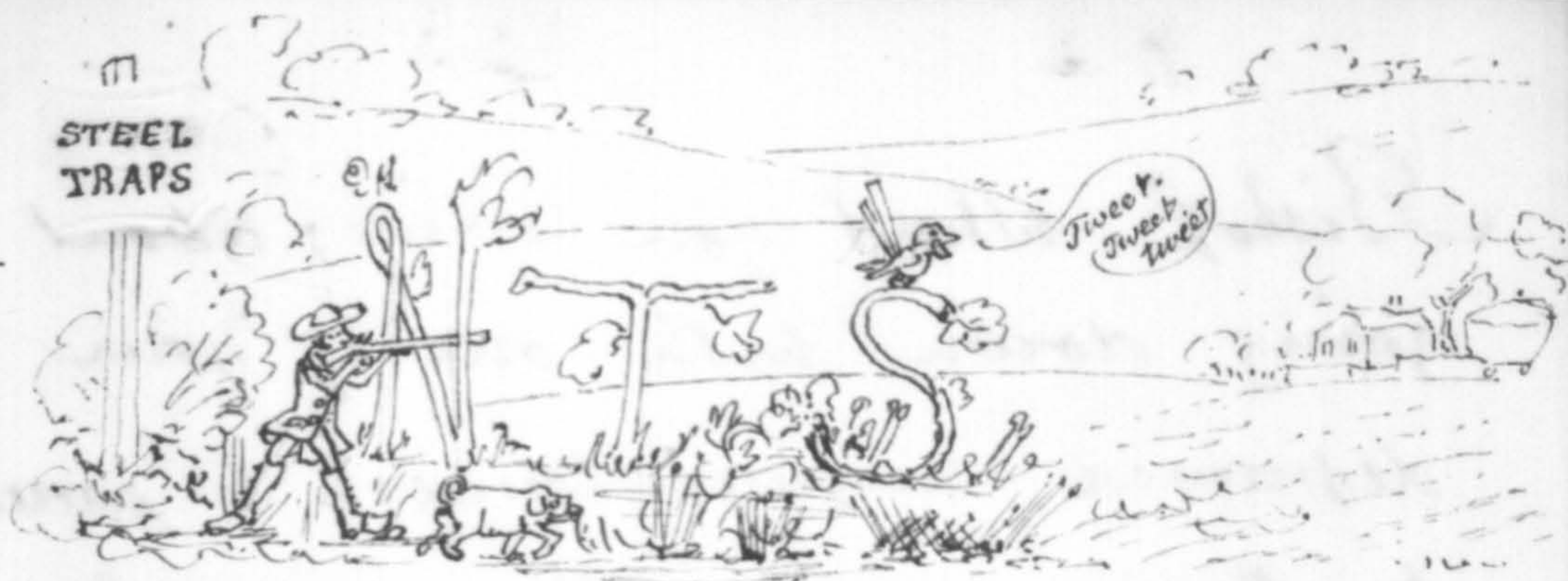
November 1836 Curzon writes: '...my father looked at it through his eye glass and said 'Ha! Nts! Very ugly...'.¹ That the word had importance in the symbolism of their friendship is evident from the prominence Curzon gives it in his decoration of the undated letter reproduced in Plate XII.

For ten months after July 1832 Curzon and Sneyd were together on the continent, and the earliest letter from Curzon to survive after they separated was written in Cairo, in September 1833, making a break in the series of fourteen months. For this period, up to Curzon's return to England, Christmas 1834, nine letters have been given in full (including one in facsimile), with extracts from a further six.

-oOo-

1. No. 52.

Plate XII. The manufacturer's emboss (concealed by the notice
'STEEL TRAPS') has been incorporated in the decoration
of the central feature, the word 'NTS'. No. 201, enlarged.



well, that'll do very well; cause
I ain't going up to Town till
Monday of 9th. most likely; my
Parents flit on Friday, not before;
I want a day here to see what I
do want; Sunday is a dies non,
consekens, Monday I calculate
I shall tile up to Town (ἐἰς
τὴν μετροπόλιν, I wonder who the
mother of Pauline was, by cause
that must be what the heathen
greek must mean, or must have
meant before Screechius told us what
his opinion was on the subject
but this is in a parenthesis) now
what will you give me to
let you off and not tell the

1. Franked letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells, Market Street, Herts., the house the Sneyds leased from the Sebrights of nearby Beechwood. Curzon's date completed from the frank, supplied by his father,¹ and from the internal evidence of the postscript.

Dear Sneyd,

24 [Upper] Brook Street, 21 March [1831]

Do you know what you are liable to, writing with green ink?
 - George 2d, cap. 1, sec. 2, page 10. I am glad you are coming to Town, though you ought to have been here a week ago to meet Drummond.²

Sneyd, Sneyd,

Indeed and indeed,

'Tis a terrible life

That we poor fellows lead.

Sitting at home in an easy chair,
 When you wish to be out in the sunny air,
 Arrangin[g] your books again and again,
 Lookin[g] out of the window to see it rain.

No, no,

The winds will blow,

And this horrid weather

Will never go.

I have a ship on the wild North Sea,
 She is bringing my goods from Germany,

1. The signature used is to be seen on another of Curzon senior's free covers in the Sneyd Papers, dated 27 April 1826, consisting of an (illegibly) extended version ('R[?] Curzon') of his more usual 'R Curzon', found in his letters to his family.

2. Not identified.

But the wind still blows to the west to day
 So the Dradem is still kept away.

Friday, so called from Friga, the Venus of the Danes, is the day on which you, Oh Sneyd, will walk about the vast Metropolis with me..We will grub, yea we will poke into book shops many, and stalls innumerable, or if that does not suit your fastidious mind, we will go to Payne and Foss¹ at once and invest our incomes in a folio.

I've been roaming,
 I've been roaming,
 In full many a narrow street;
 And I'm coming,
 A[n]d I'm coming,
 With the dust upon my feet.
 I've been grubbing,
 I've been grubbing,
 In many a stall and m[an]y a stand;
 And I'm coming,
 And I'm coming,
 With a quarto in my [h]and.
 It's on vellum,
 It's on vellum,
 Wood cut borders printed round;
 And I'll sellum,
 And I'll sellum,
 If a buyer can be found.

1. Bookseller in Pall Mall.

It's a prayer book,
 It's a prayer book,
Horae à l'usage de Rome;
 And I've got it,
 And I've got it,
 On my table snug at home.

Will you come and see me on Friday, before two o'clock? I hope you will be able to read all this nonsense from

Your 'tickler Friend,
 R. Curzon

P.S. I cam[e] of age a few nights ago in my sleep and wonderfull to say do not find any difference in my personal [...] ¹ the only thing [I] have [g]ot by it is, that I may now have a lodging in his Majesty's Bench, all for nothing, free, gratis, into the bargain, which I could not have had before Wednesday.

1. MS. imperfect, half a line lost.

2. Extract, franked letter beginning with a sonnet, addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells. Curzon's address and date taken from the frank.

[Petworth, 5 October 1831]

When the last spring I came to Keel, and found
 Old Hospitality on English ground,
 I wonder'd: and (Great Sydney) did prefer
 My Sneyde superiour to thy Kalandar.
 All things are neat, and jovial plenty keepes
 Continual Festivals by years, not weekes:
 He good decai'd House keeping doth revive,
 And doth preserve our English fame alive.
 So lived our worthy Ancestours, and so
 May you till you the oldest Man may grow
 Within the Land; and ripe for Heaven go hence,
 Bemoned as far as known, Poets th'expence
 Of time and paper both may save that day,
 The Poor your lasting'st epitaph will say.

How are you?

Verbum non amplius.

Curzon...

3. Franked letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.
Curzon's address and date taken from the frank.

[London, 8 October 1831]

I am affraid I cannot come to you yet, I am here only for a day or two - I have got some more old books, inter alios

Constitutiones Ecclesiae Anglicanae, Wynkin de Worde, Westminster, 1496 - this would do for Paget.¹

Three grammars by W. de Worde, which have specimens of all his woodcuts, &c.

1. Sneyd's cousin, Francis Edward Paget (1806-82), sometime chaplain to his uncle Bishop Bagot, and Rector of Elford, Staffs., 1835-82.

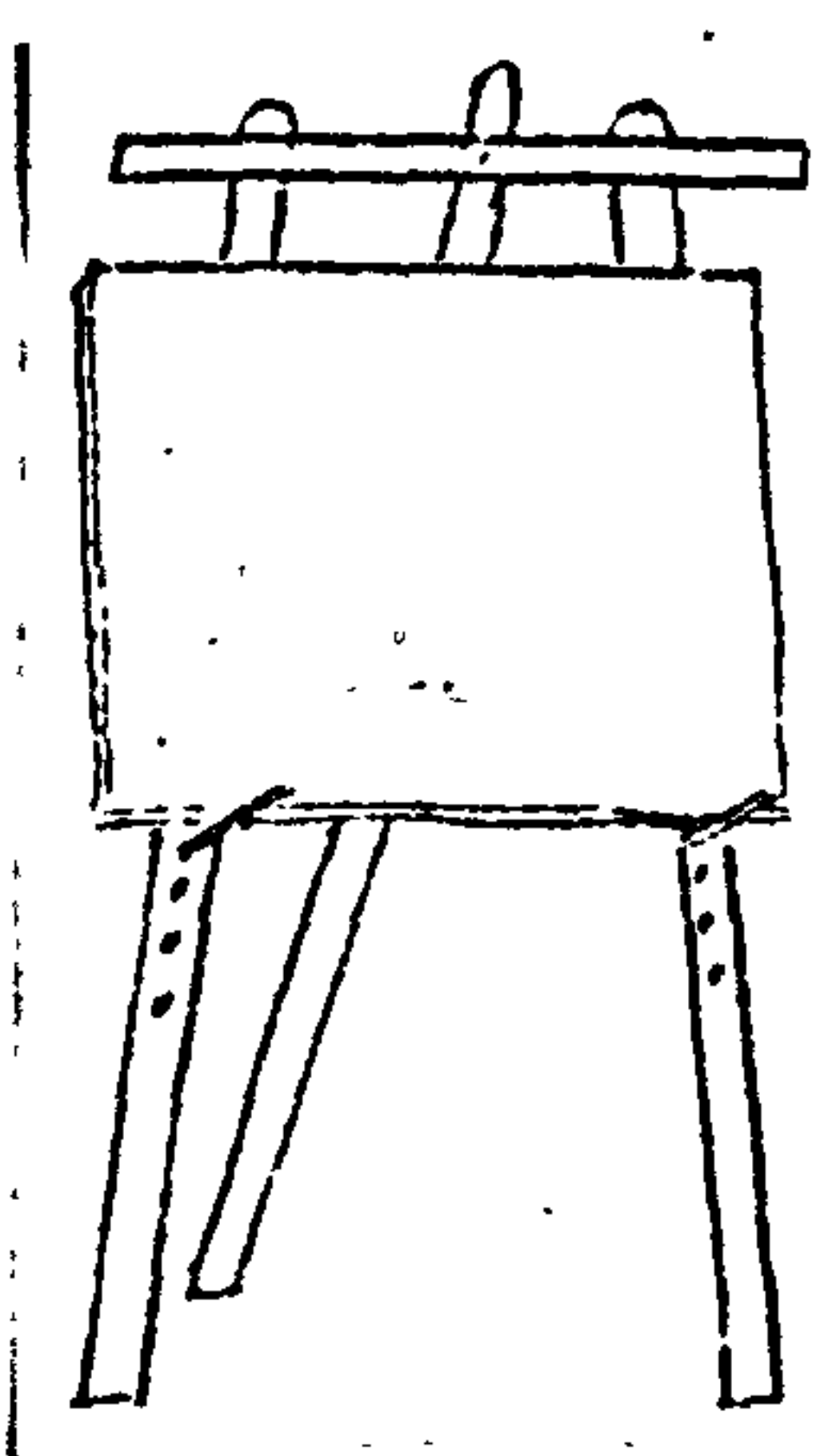
6. Extract, no address or date. Watermark 'G & R Turner 1831'.

...I am sorry to say that Valturius De re militari has quarrelled with my Golden Legende, which is very disagreeable, as I shall be obliged to put them on separate shelves; and would you believe it! I found that horrid little duodecimo Contes de Cholières lying with the Estrif de Vertu.¹ This is really too bad, but I hope nothing will come of it, though for such books I thought it very scandalous indeed...

1. Lestrif de Vertu et Fortune, now Additional MS. 39658, late 15th cent., bound in Curzon's favourite red velvet.

8. Extract, franked letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Guy's Cliffe, War., home of the Hon. Charles Bertie Percy. Curzon's address and date taken from the frank.

[London, 6 February 1832]



¹ on the Table in a silver dish,
 After the soup appears the dainty fish,
 And then the patties, then a glass of wine,
 When these are eat, then we begin to dine,
 For fish, soup, patties, and a glass or so,
 By epecures are counted naught, you know:
 So have I written letters by the score,
 Yet not contented, still you ask for more,
 And see my numerous letters in the light

Of oysters, just to give an appetite;
 But I suppose you have not yet recieved
 My last stout letter, which I had believed,
 Might to your mind have given some relief -
 And stayed your stomach, like a round of Beef.
 A good substantial matter of fact letter,
 Fit for a mind to dine upon, if better
 Can not be got, Better you seldom see,
 Than those which travel, between you and me.
 I've often thought our letters must make fun,
 Among the other letters, as they run
 Backwards and forwards, as they ride or sail,

1. ? Dabs (from daubs), see the last line of this extract.

Packed in the Packet, or the Royal Mail;
 Thus to another letter yours might say,
 'Well - ? Mr Curzon - how - are - you today?'
 'Sir, pretty well, I thank you, but how came
 You, Sir, to call me by my proper name?'
 'Oh Sir, I know that writing very well,
 And if I did not, any fool can tell
 Your name; your name and residence, I see,
 You are a Frank Sir, - February three.'
 'Gad! - so I am, I had forgot indeed,
 Sir, may I ask your name?! - 'I'm Mr Sneyd!...'

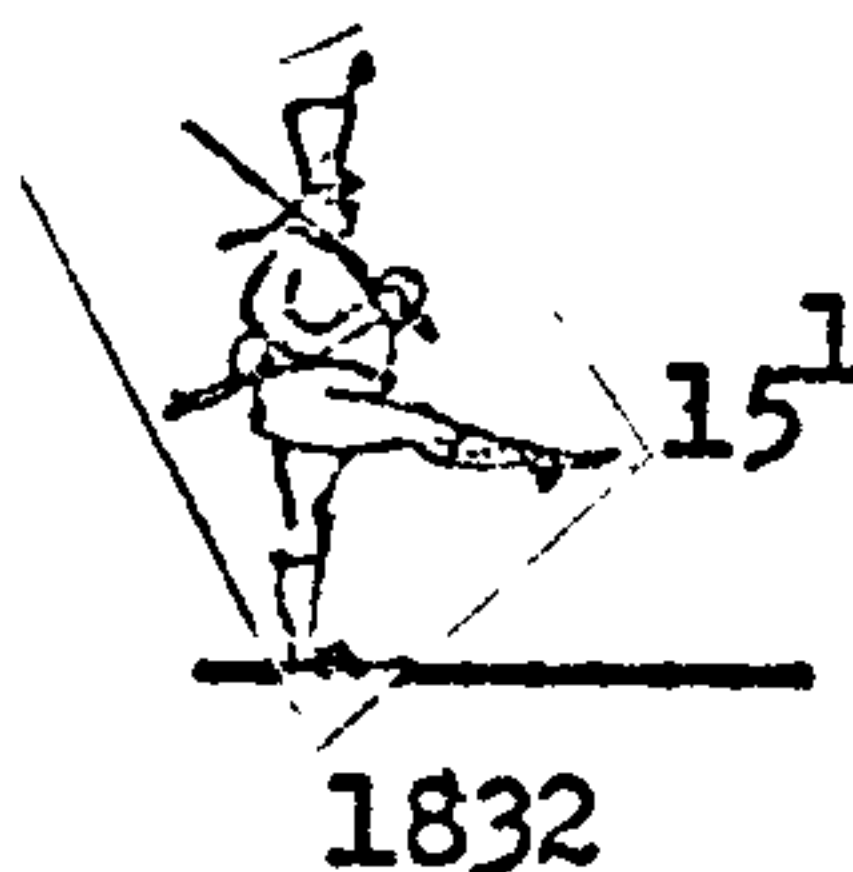
...Just at that moment there was heard the twang
 Of a ti[n] Horn, then came the rushing clang
 Of Horses' hoofs, announcing the approach
 Of his most Gracious Majesty's Mail coach,
 And this midst noise, and hustle, and confusion,
 Brought all the literary talk to a conclusion;
 'Now Mrs Potts, look sharp, a glass of Sherry!'
 'Not such bad Ale, Sir, mighty nate Sir, werry;'
 'Mind them 'ere Osses now, what are you arter?
 And bring the Lady here some gin and water!'
 'Guard! Any room inside?' 'Inside, Sir? No!
 Yes, Sir, there is tho', how far do you go?'
 'He goes [to] London, coachman. Good bye Dick,
 Get in my dear, I hope you won't be sick.'

'All right? Hallo, a parcel, hallo, stop!'
'Stop a bit coachman, won't ye take a drop
Of ale or gin?' 'I don't mind if I do,
I looks towards you, Buggins, here's to you.
Now gentlemen, all right?' The letter's in,
The Mail starts swiftly, and away they spin.
Thus as one letter is obliged to stay
Bagged, while another swiftly darts away,
So some men fixed in misery remain,
While some the pleasures of existance gain.
Some are to splended Palaces consigned,
And some in loathsome prisons are confined.
Some pass a life of woe, and some of Glory,
But man is grass; and so here ends my story.

Well then, on Friday I expect to see
My fellow dabbler in antiquity,...

9. No address.

THURSDAY



2

My dear



Warm the bed and get me a scrubbing brush and five pails of hot water, as I shall be very dirty after the journey; and get the green poney cleaned and give him some beans, and don't forget the Fowle, and above all things the bread sauce, and make yourself as comfortable as you can. I'll come if I can bot if I can't, I can't, you know, so in the mean time I beg you to believe me,

Sincerely yours,

Ah Gurzon

-
1. Pictorial pun. The 15 March 1832 was a Thursday.
 2. The armorial device of the Sneyds, a snead or sned, the shaft of a scythe, and fleur-de-lis charge.

10. Franked letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.
Curzon's address and date taken from the frank.

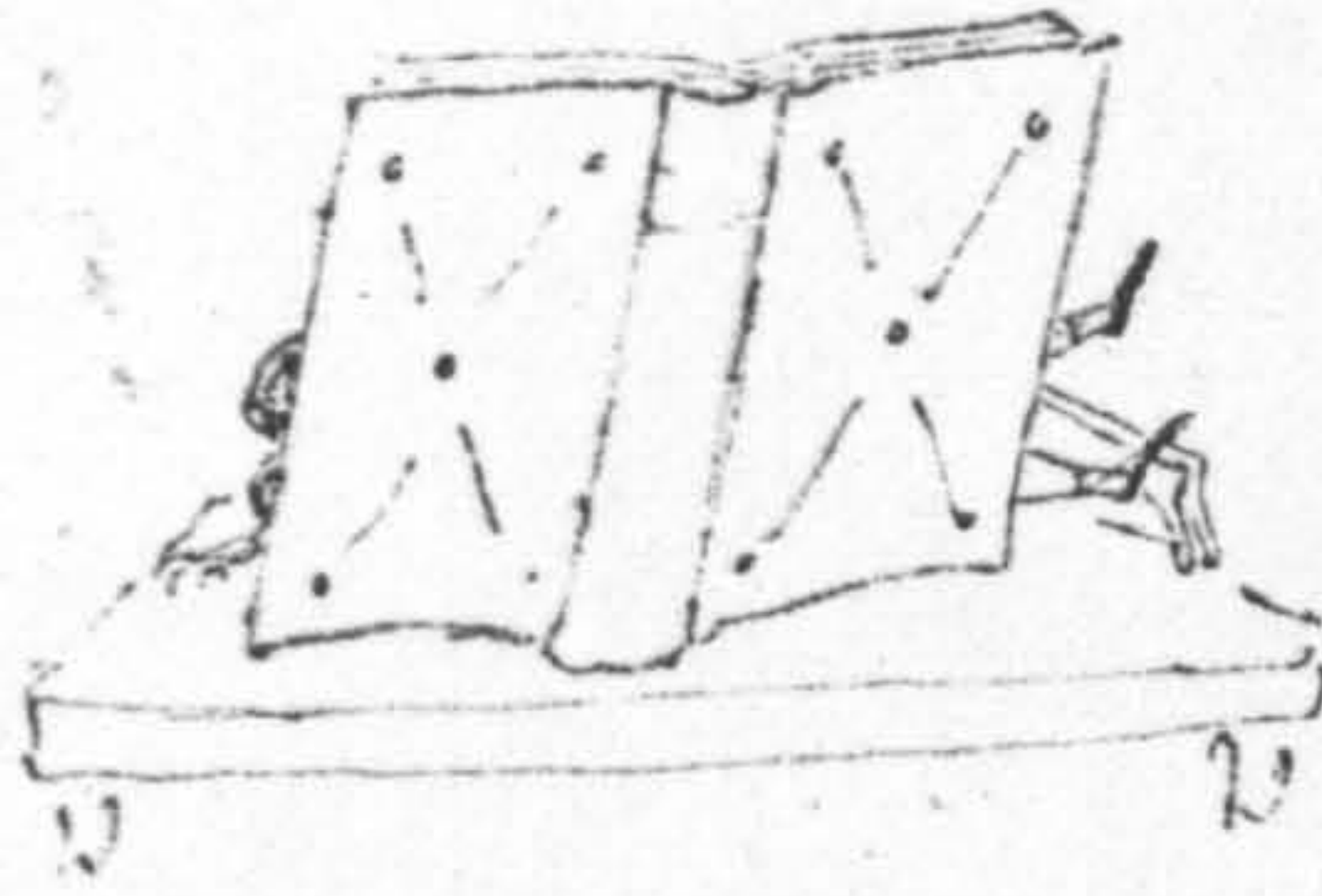
[London, 19 March 1832]

Dear Sneyd,

I can not come, by Gar, it won't do. I have a meeting
of the new Political Club¹ to attend, and some other things to
do, so I must put it off till another day.



1. The Carlton.



Dear Sneyd

man is grass,
and cannot do
the things which
he thinketh good,
unless he findeth
it possible so to
do, I suppose you
understand, but
if you do not, why
then I'll tell you,
you see that I
can not come to
see you at all,
at present alas!
alas! alas! alas!
Oh. Oh. Oh
I leave town on
Monday and am
taken to Hagley
by De Tabley, so
I can not stop,
but I shall come
back in a few
weeks when I
hope to see you
again, I have
purchased books.
VIZ.

- 1 Boethacii, casus Principium
MS translated into English
by Lydgate. Large Folio
written partly on Paper and
partly on vellum see XV
about 1410 not later.
- 2 Liber Esther. a roll in
Hebrew. on vellum very
interesting indeed - M.S.
- 3 Biblia Germanica
Ed Prin. Faust & Schaffer
no date. it is the first
book printed by them &
the one for which he
was taken up, as a magi-
cian. Folio. circa 1460.
- 4 Treatise on wind. printed
on vellum 8vo. this was
written by Fox. it is very
well printed. no date.
- 5 Diurnale S^{ti} Vincentii
printed on vellum 2 vols
12 mo. 1483.
- 6 Coutumes de Sens. folio
printed on vellum. by
Galliot du Pré. 1539.
- 7 Clementis Constitutiones
printed on vellum, by Faust
& Schaffer very fine copy
illuminated. 1471.

crecit
mea
Biblio
-theca,
habeo
nunc
quosdam
libros
sacros
videre



15. By hand. Sealed with the seal of the Library of the House of Commons.

Sir,

King's Bench, 14 May 1832

His Majesty has directed me to send you an offer of the Premiership, which H.M. hopes you will not refuse, as in the present state of affairs we are aff[raid] that without your assistance and the well known powers of your mind, we [s]hall have the greatest difficulty in proceeding with the affairs of this country. Every one in England excepting yourself has refused office, and I have the pleasure of sending his Majesty's bill for 2/6d as a proof of the regard which he feels for your person and an instance of the certainty of his future support of your administration.

Sir, I have the honor to be very humbly

Yours to command,

J. Cobbet

18. Franked letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.
Curzon's address and date taken from the frank.

My dear Sn[e]ydulus,

[London, 10 July 1832]

[A]s you asked me to send you word what you ought to get to take with you on our journey to foreign parts, I will tell you what you can not easily get abroad, so then you may choose for yourself what you will take. In Germany, particularly the south, you will have great difficulty in getting good oysters, so perhaps a barrel or so would be a good thing to have. Unless you have a liking for lice and other varment, you had better take a box of mercurial ointment with you to Sicily; and if you come [w]ith me to the East it would be perhaps as well to get yourself circumsized in England, and to have your head shaved smooth before you go. The following articles will be usefull in most countries:

Phosphorous box	Journal book
Telescope	Writing box and ink
Compass	Worsted stockings or socks to walk in
Knife and fork and spoon	Waterproof carpet bags
Drinking cup	<u>Tea</u>
Soap	A cap to travel in
Air cushion	<u>Cash</u>
Flannel weastcoats	
Pills, sticking plaister &c.	
Bramah's pens	

If I get your passport at the Foreign Office you will have to pay two or three guineas, I believe, and you are content with Europe

I should think any other passport would do as well. I will ask about it on Monday and tell you.

We must go by Ostend. I will take places for the 21st. We set off from Brook Street at half past ten on Saturday morning, the packet starts at twelve from the Tower. You had better come here when you come to Town on the 17th or 18th, and then we shall set off conveniently together. I have made very successfull enquiries about our journey in the Tyrol, by which we shall see the Splugen and every thing else worth seeing. It is too long to write now, so I will tell you all about it afterwards.

Yours sincerely,

R. Curzon

19. Extract, franked letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.
Curzon's date completed from the frank.

Dear Sneyd,

Library, House of Commons, 12 July [1832],

$\frac{1}{4}$ to 1

I have got a direction to a servant, who seems to be a Frenchman, Monsieur Le Vieux by name, however I know nothing about him. Ossory¹ got the direction, so if you like to make any enquiries you had better send me word and I will see him. I should think it would be better to take² a man abroad, for he would then be probably less of a rascal and more unsophisticated, besides having to take him over the Hoshun. You would be very likely to get a quiet sort of man at Cologne.

Is there any thing I can get for you here as I must go on the 21st and do not want to have to wait for any thing that may not be ready. I do not know that you will want any thing which you can not get in a day - nts.

I have introduced myself to Mr Bankes³ and am going to take a lesson in the manners of the Egyptians tomorrow, at twelve: what a capital way of getting money it would be to sell one's friend or servant when one was convenient in the East. You had much better come with me as I should think you must be worth a pound, without your breeches.

I have learnt a good deal as touching Switzerland and the Tyrol from sitch as have been there in former days. Ossory set off for Sicily this evening at eight. He stops two days at Palermo and then comes back

1. John (Butler), Earl of Ossory (1825-38), later Marquess of Ormonde.

2. i.e. engage.

3. W.J. Bankes, M.P., friend of Byron, traveller, d. 1855.

without stopping. What a pleasant expedition...

20. Extract, franked letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells. Curzon's date ('Sunday') completed from the frank.

Dear Sneyd,

[24 Upper Brook Street, 15 July 1832]

I have caught him. He will just do for a domestic for you. He is not much bigger than you and not so old, and his name is HALLEN MORITZ, a German. He speaks English, German, French and Italian, and only asks £6 per month - and would very likely take less per year. I am going to make enquiries about him as to his character &c., and when you come here you may see what you think of him.

Bi Gar! fffff! Why don't you write to me you horrid ----- .

Tell me when you are coming to London and whether you will come here to 24 Upper Brook Street, and whether I shall get you your passport for nothing or £3. 10. Eh?

Write, you krittur, to yours very sincerely,

R. Curzon...

23. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street, readdressed to 'Chislhurst', Market Street, Herts. 'Not known at Hertford'. 'Try Hampshire'. Readdressed 'Chilster', Hants., readdressed 'Hereford'. 'Not known at Hereford try again London'.

My dear Little Parson, Cairo, [August - September 1833]¹

[Sketch]²

For I suppose that now you may be called 'Reverend' and are to be seen walking gravely with a shovel hat and a square bottomed coat, after the fashion of those who aspire to a fat living or a bishopric in the Church of England.³

I am just come from the house of the Patriarch of Mount Sinai, with whom I smoked a pipe in a friendly way and enquired tenderly after his Greek MS[S]., but the good priest appeared not to be very far gone in the learning, for he produced a tumble down edition of Diodorus Siculus, printed by Stephens,⁴ by way of an antient MS., and I could not make him understand what I wanted at all, notwithstanding that I had two interpreters who could not either of them read Greek.

Well, my dear Sneyd, I am, thank God, alive as yet, though for the last week I have been, like Mobe, melting away, not from grief but heat. Only think of the thermometer standing all day at "101"; and then no one who has not felt it can have any idea of the hot wind which

1. End of the letter dated 21 September, but Curzon writes at one point that '...it is no[w] the 28th...'.
 2. Pyramid, palms and a cluster of buildings, with minaret and dome.
 3. Curzon is unaware that Sneyd has gained time before his ordination.
 4. Or Estienne, a family prominent in printing in France and Switzerland in the 16th and 17th centuries. Henry Estienne published an edition of Diodorus in 1559. Elizabeth Armstrong, Robert Estienne Royal Printer (1954), 235, n.5.

blows across the desert like a cloud of fire. Even the birds, when this wind blows, sit drooping on the ruins, with their mouths open, gasping for a mouthfull of fresh air. There was a poor old crow who sits near my window, who croaks testily on a fine day and makes me happy, for his noise puts me in mind of the rooks at home, but whenever the hot wind came on he put his head between his legs and hung down his wings so [sketch], by which you may suppose the state of deliquium in which I have been. Now it is not so hot and I am very comfortable.

I have got some horses which are lent to me by the Pasha. They have magnificent saddles of silver gilt, and bridles which ring from the little tassels of gold which hang over the horse's head.

I myself am clothed in a long petticoat of striped silk, with a shawl round my waist and a pair of drawers of most prodigious extent underneath. Then I have another dress of black cloth, which looks so hot that I have never had the courage to wear it, though the evil time approaches when I shall be harnessed to a sword and be obliged to bid adieu to short jackets and tight breeches.

As touching the Nile, you must know that it is not much of a river, seeing that it is not wider than the Thames, and even more muddy. It has not risen this year so much as usual, which is a great calamity and will probably cause the starvation of half the poor people who cultivate its banks. From this cause the weather has been unusually hot and the crop of Indian corn, on which the poor principally depend, is likely to fail entirely throughout the land of Egypt. The bank of the

canal into the /town/¹ is usually cut betw[een] the 10th and the 15th of this month, but it is now the 28th and it wants three feet of the height to which it must arrive before the bank can be cut, and nine feet more of water are required to do any good to the country.

The quantity of strange, outlandish birds which are seen on the Nile are very amusing. Pelicans abound, and as for storks, cranes, ducks and other water birds they are more common than sparrows in England. The first view of the Pyramids is very striking, they stand up in the desert quite alone and look like the work of enchantments which you read of in The Arabian Nights. They look too large and majestic to be the work of such little animals as men. I have not been up to them yet, for the sun has too much power in the middle of the day, and though I have been here a f[or]tnight I have hardly seen any of the lions of the place. The weather is now cooling every day, a sign that the Nile is rising, so I hope soon to be able to moove about a little more and to begin my voyage into Upper Egypt.

The town of Cairo is a most extra ordinary place. There are no streets but only a collection of narrow [p]assages, which are none of them strait for more than [a] hundred yards. Half the town consists of ruins, for when a house tumbles down nobody takes the trouble to repair it, but they only say 'God is great!' and move off somewhere else. Crowds of people are walking and riding about, and when I go out I have grooms who hit every body without mercy with their st[ick]s to make [room] for my horse to pass. When I take a ride it is quite a little procession: first comes the Janissary, a functionary with a long silver

1. Substituted in pencil for '...the Lake Moeris...'

stick, on horseback, with a slave on foot by his side. Then I come with my horse covered with gold, and a slave on each side of me, who help me on and off the horse and keep the vulgar pedestrians out of the way. Then comes Mahomet Abdunah, my Lord High Understrapper and chief dragoman or interpreter. He is clothed in a long sattin gown and a red garment over it, he is on horseback, with a red velved saddle embroidered with gold, and has a slave who runs by his stirrup. Whenever Palmer goes out his horse has a silver gilt saddle like mine, and two slaves to run by his side. When I go to see a great man I sit down near him, cross legged, on the divan, and have to smoke a pipe about seven feet long, with a fine mouth-piece of amber. The interpreters sit on the ground before us, but not cross legged, they kneel down and hide their feet with the end of their gown, which is a sign of showing their respect, as you may see in Haji Baba¹ or The Arabian Nights.

Pray tell Bagot (Charles) that Damascus blades are to be got much better in England than here, where a fine one is not to be found. They come from Persia and Chorassan, but the fine ones do not ever reach Egypt, though they may possibly be found at Constantinople. It is the same with respect to horses. I have not seen one here half so good as my own in England. They are bred in Yemen and never leave their own country, excepting that they are bought by an Englishman, or sent as presents to the Turkish grandees.

I have hardly seen any antiquities yet, so I cannot tell you any thing about them. Have you got any more old books, and can you tell me whether my box of curiosities has arrived safe from Rome? I have had a letter from De Tabley, who was living very happily at

1. J.J. Morier, The Adventures of Haji Baba, of Ispahan (1824). The 1895 edition published by Macmillan & Co. has an interesting introduction by George Nathaniel Curzon, later 1st Marquess of Kedleston.

Naples, but am rather disappointed at not hearing anything from Cholmondely. I hope I shall have a line from you: you must write directly you receive this if you write at all, as a letter is about two months getting here, supposing [i]t ever arrives at all.

I am very much pleased with Palmer, who is a very good natured, kind hearted fellow. However, he is very much out of his element here, in a country where the Leicestershire hounds are never talked of, and where there is no such thing as a coach. It has been a curious subject of wonder to me how it is possible for any body of education to care about nothing but dogs and horses, as it happens that I never lived with any body of that taste before.

I am very much shocked to hear the account in the papers of Mr Bankes,¹ I hope it is not true. How do the ministers get on? This country is much more in my line than any other place in which I have been, and it is astounding how soon I felt at home and became accustomed to the manners of the East. However, I do not the less look forward to my return to England, where I hope we shall have many a quiet ride together in the country lanes, where Dr Sneyd D.D. may talk over old times with his old friend,

R. Curzon

P.S. Palmer sends his best remembrances and wishes to know how you made your mustacios grow so finely - I have just heard from England

1. It was reported in The Times, 25 July 1833, that a prosecution was pending against him and a private of the Coldstream, '...for an alleged misdemeanour of a certain nature...' said to have been committed in the churchyard of St Margaret's, Westminster.

that you have arrived safely at home, with the big box and all the wonders of your collection, so I hope you are enjoying yourself with them. Pray tell Charles Bagot I am very much obliged to him for the sword he has given me, and hope I shall be lucky enough to find him one in return. Good bye - I am going to Nubia the day after tomorrow.

24. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street.

Cairo, [...] ¹March 1834

...I am going across the desert again in a few days to Jer[usale]m, wh[er]e I hope to be at Easter, if with my usual luck I [do not] arrive the day after the ceremonies are ov[er]. Palmer [is an exce]llent companion and is always happy to go any where, [? even if] he does not care for antiquities. However, he did no[t] go to Mount Sinai and I was delighted to see him again at Cairo in a pair of crimson boots reaching up to his knees, with a prodigious pair of brass spurs, engines hitherto unknown among the Arabs, who use the sharp edge of the stirrup for the same purpose, as I will show [you] when we meet again, for my saddle and bridle being made of silver gilt, [I shall send] them to England [? and] show my friends a specimen of the splendid manners of the East.

I am affraid I shall think every thing very shabby when I go home again. Here I am a prince, and at home I am not so independant as one of my own servants in Egypt. In the desert my carpet is spread and I sit crosslegged upon the ground while every thing is got ready in my tent, and then all the Arabs /lay their hands/² upon their heads till I go in and eat my dinner of dates and cheese, and no one thinks of doing any thing without asking my permission first. At my house here at Cairo my word is law, and any offender is bastinadoed immediately.

1. MS. imperfect, day of the month lost.

2. Substituted for '...make me a...'

When I go to England the saddle of silver must be exchanged for an Ak kab,¹ the cashmere shawl for an "ankecher", and the obedient multitude of servants for a single John, who tells you it is not his business to do this, that and the other; and my own dignity gives way to 'Bob! Halloa!', 'Get out of that!', 'Do as I choose!', 'Run! Make haste! Ring the bell!' &c., &c., so that if it was not for the love of home and my father and friends, this is by far a better country than England for those who like to have their own way and do as they choose.

There was a man impaled here today, I do not know what for; and a railway is to be made from Cairo to Suez, a work of great importance to the trade of India.

I recieved your letter today and am much obliged for the same. How would it be if you was to write me another to Constantinople? I wish I was going to dine with you at Gooche's parsonage. Mind you don't forget the shovel 'at, and stick a nosegay under Beau's² ear when you come to fetch me in the gig. Peace be with you,

Your affectionate friend,

[Two smudges]

N.B. Those two blotches are innefectual attempts at my Arabic signature, for no Arab writes his name. My signature is Abdahu Nicherf.

Curzon

1. ? Hackney cab, see No. 136^A.

2. The name could equally be 'Bean'.

25. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street, readdressed to Baginton Parsonage, Coventry. First fourteen lines in mock square capitals, initial decorated with a sketch of a Greek library.

Dear Sneyd,

[Letter received in London 20 September 1834]

For as much as it came to pass that I have recieved an epistle from your reverence, I feel it incumbent on myself to return you an answer thereunto, and as a pledge or token of the same this prologus incipit feliciter.

O Sneyd, your letter has been travelling ever since November, and now the earth is green and the trees do spring and burgeon, and ten months have elapsed since you wrote that pleasant epistle. How many things have happned since that time to both of us which we have not heard of from each other. You are a Parson, as I take it, and have preached sermons no doubt containing excellent advice and both usefull and entertaining to your admiring parishioners.

'My bretheren, you must be aware that we have been told by the Holy Scriptures that we must obey the commandments, and that we should live during the time we remain on the surface of this sublimary earth in the practise of every virtue and goodness; that if we make this the business of our lives we shall hereafter be rewarded with eternal bliss; but on the contrary, my bretheren, if we live in sin and the comission of all kind of wickedness, we shall go to the devil to a certainty and pass the remainder of our days, that is to say my bretheren, our existence, in unremitted agony for the sins we were guilty of below. You must be aware, therefore, that virtue is better than vice, and not only that my bretheren, but also that vice is not so good as virtue, and therefore I recommend you to be good and to give up the comission

of sin, for otherwise I can tell you from the very best authority that there is no chance for you hereafter, but you will assuredly be damned.'

Well how do you like the trade? Do you think it is a good thing to wear a gown and to eat tythe pigs and preach such excellent sermons as that which I have written to you above? I wish you all kind of success and happiness in the Parsonage and hope you will rise in dignity and fatness till you become a bishop and sit in full blown dignity on the red bench in the House of Lords.

Well Mister, that's what you are doing, so now we will turn over the page and see what my dear friend Robert Curzon is about. He is sailing on the sea, even that which was called the Aegean in antient days, but not being contented with so short a name they have now called it the Archipelago. It is full of islands, as you know, but they are mostly ugly, barren rocks, and inhabited by a sort of animals called Greeks, which are a sort of wild beast, having no mixture of good in his composition, and being of no use to themselves or to any other people in the creation. The men are beautifull and the women, as is usual in the Levant, more ugly than monkeys, notwithstanding Lord Byron and all other poets have said to the contrary.

My dear Sneyd you have heard of St John and ought to know, as you are a parson, where he wrote the Apocalipse. Well I went there, the island contains manuscripts of unknown age and value, heaps of them are there, and nobody in these parts knows or cares any thing about them. I have been saying to myself, 'Lay up treasures on the earth, buy manuscripts in abundance, make yourself happy in your mind for here

at last you will be satiated and will bring home tomes which shall be the envy and wonder of all such as delight in books' - when alas, they would not let us land, or at least kept us down upon the shore and would not let us go up into the island for fear of plague, which they said we might, could, would or should have got on board; so with a heavy heart I went into the ship again and set sail for the place where St John wrote the Gospel.¹ There there are now no books or any thing else worth seeing, excepting a most beautifull old mosque made of white marble, and carved and ornamented like Milan Cathedral. The splendid Temple of Diana is no longer to be seen, and as for Alexander the Coppersmith nobody knew anything about him, so I have no doubt that he has removed to another place, as I also was glad to do, and set out again in the good ship for Schio.

This was, before it was destroyed by the Turks, a perfect paradise, and even now is one of the prettiest places I ever saw. I rode for nearly two hours under the shade of cypress and fig trees, through the gardens surrounding the ruins of little ornamented country houses, where the clusters of vines, pomegranites and little Zante grapes almost conceal the marble columns which were formerly placed for their support. Every thing here is lovely and beautifull to a degree, all is marble and fruit and flowers, and in the shade you see the stately old Turks smoking their long pipes on a Smyrna carpet. It almost made me expect to see Taglioni and a train of attendant ballerini skip out from a bower, and spin round to the music of the orchestra, for it all looks like the scenery of an opera or a melodrama. Also, O Sneyd, I saw a pretty girl, I may say a very pretty girl, which compleated the beauty of the landscape, and then I set sail again and am now some where near Smyrna, where I hope to arrive

1. Patmos.

in course of time. The plague has been there, but it is over now, tho' I hear it is still raging at Constantinople.

Why did not you tell me where this library¹ is in Italy, that I might go and look at it? Pray write to me at Venice and tell me where it is, because as the price of it is only £700 and I am the proprietor of 700 piasters [- 1 piaster is 3d -] of course I shall buy it. There is no need of my telling you that I am ruined because I suppose you might have guessed that without my saying any thing about it, so there is not much chance of my buying anything that you [wish]ed to get. I have got a book, however, even an old book, yea exceeding old, and brown to a degree, with a nail on one side and a strap on the other, which enclose a MS. of the Gospels on vellum, in Greek; and Palmer stole a little tome of the same kind from me, videlicet the Psalms, which he intends to throw at your feet (or head) when ever you may meet him again.

Smyrna - The plague has stopped here but is very bad at Constantinople, so I do not know where to go, but hope I shall get home safe at last. Remember me to all friends. I hear Bagot Episcopides² is here, i.e. at Vourla. Perhaps I shall see him if his ship comes near this place.

Oh Sneyd, keep it continually in your remembrance that I am very affectionately yours,

R. Curzon

Lord Ingestre³ was here, but he is gone to Alexandria, which I

1. Possibly the Canonici MSS., see p. xlix, n.2.

2. Probably Henry ('Harry') Bagot, R.N. (1810-77), son of Bishop Bagot, but possibly his elder brother, Edward (1808-74).

3. Henry John (Chetwynd-Talbot), succeeded in 1856 as Earl of Shrewsbury and Earl of Waterford (1803-68).

am sorry to hear, for though I could not expect him to be of any use to me in a vehicular point of view, I should have been glad to have heard his news from England.

Smyrna is famous for pretty women but they do very odd things. They wear European gowns with Turkish trousers under them, and sit down à la Turque, which has an odd effect in a gown. They also ask you into their bed room, without meaning any thing wrong; and I was astonished at seeing a lady pull up her petticoats to alter the strings of her trousers round her waist - oh laur! The gentlemen never eat figs and dance at balls with cigars in their mouths. I am returning to the detestable tight breeches and bandages of my use, it being like the butterfly becoming again a chrisalis instead o[f] going the other way according to the laws of nature.

Palmer's best respects.

Plate XIII. The Rev. Walter Sneyd.

From a photograph among the Sneyd Papers,
dated 1861.



1835 - 1838

Abroad, Curzon found himself treated as a person of consequence: at home he was expected to dance attendance on his parents. Family friends who, like some of the Bagots, had themselves been abroad, may have been interested in his adventures; and his account of the riot in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre¹ should have held its own even at his father's table, but Curzon complained that nobody cared, and spent much of his time alone in his room. In October 1835 he visited Abbotsford, and in December 1836 was expecting to meet Sir Thomas Phillipps for the first time. If that meeting took place² it seems likely that Curzon would have described it to Sneyd, but no letter survives. At the end of May 1837 he set out on his second journey to the Middle East and returned in September 1838.

For this period fourteen letters have been given in full, with extracts from a further twelve.

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1. Easter 1834, described in Visits to Monasteries in the Levant.
 2. Curzon's comments in No. 56 rather suggest that it did.

31. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Baginton, Coventry, readdressed to the Rev. John Sneyd,¹ Elford, Lichfield.

My dear Sneyd,

Hagley, 24 March 1835

Avete libri antichi? Avez vous des manuscrits? Have you heard any more about those precious tomes that are to come in two ships from Italy, because I want to come and look at them and talk black letter with you? My brains are getting musty from the absence of all conversations respecting old books...

...nobody here cares a bit for old MSS. or oriental adventures, so I dream to myself all day of the glorious things I have seen and hope to see some day or other, and think how nice it must have been in the fifteenth century to wear a murrey coloured gown and read Sir Tristan [de] Leonois seated on a carved throne in an old Gothic room, with the sun streaming on the illuminated pages of the book through the rare ymagerie of the mullioned window. Can't you fancy it, with a horn at the end of your toe half a foot long, and the trees all burgeoning and the [b]irds carroling outside? Whereas now we [? have] only new novels to read and the trees grow but I never saw one regularly burgeon in my life; and as for the carroling of the birdis one hears nothing but the twittering of sparrows all the year round, but when I come and stay with you we will go back a century or two, and ride Palfreys and Destriers, in spite of the people calling them by the vulgar modern names of poneys and hacks...

1. Sneyd's uncle, died 1835.

32. No address.

My dear Parson,

Kedleston, '3 or 5' April 1835¹

I have been staying in a place which would please you so much by reason of the exceeding great old fashioned glory thereof that I cannot refrain from giving you some account of the place and people of Keddlestone.

The house, you know, is magnificent, and the pictures very fine, with several old views of the exploits of Louis XIV, with guns firing, gentlemen bowing and ships sailing contrary ways as hard as they can go, the flags straining all their nerves to fly hard enough, and the King on a white horse, covered all over with ostrich feathers, caprioling for no reason at all in the foreground. It made me laugh ready to kill myself when I saw this picture,² it was so deliciously pompous, by which I got into a huge scrape, for they did not take the allusion, and Conte de Meynard³ said 'Ah, it was comme ça, in that mannere [sic] they did hunt the stag with the King, but it is all over now, c'est tout finis!' He is just like Hase⁴ only older and taller, but a most

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1. What Curzon has written is 'Keddlestone. April 3. or 5 (or so) 1835'.
 2. Louis XIV reviewing his fleet at Dunkirk, by Henry van Minderhout (1632-96). The picture is still at Kedleston and was recently restored and cleaned. I am indebted to Viscount Scarsdale for identifying this reference and for telling me about the picture.
 3. Possibly a relative or friend of the second Baron Scarsdale's second wife, Felicité Anne Josèphe, daughter of Francois Josèphe Des Watines of Hesdin, France.
 4. Possibly Karl Benedikt Hase (1780-1864), Professor of Greek palaeography at Paris.

courtly gentleman, and his son the Visconte has his hair brushed up to a point so neatly that it looks like the father of all camel's hair pencils on the top of his head.

There are some pictures of my ancestors which are the ne plus ultra of [?] 1750.¹ My great grandfather² in a wig like a waterfall, with a long silk robe with folds in it like a storm at sea, and his wife³ as a nymph in a hoop, and the young lord stark naked, presenting a prodigious nosegay to his father, who is so stately that he looks strait out of his wig and does not seem to care about any thing but his own stateliness.

The best thing of all is the old butler, who is as great a man as any of the family. When the mob from Derby⁴ came to attack the house, he made a grand speech to the tennants, who were assembled to defend it, but when the news arrived that the mob were on the road he disappeared. Every body thought he had hid himself or run away, and were wondering what was become of him, when he made his appearance in the great hall, in a complete suit of antient uniform, which he had found in some old box, and said he would die at his post for the defence of the place and the honour of the family. He is very testy, however, and has a way of winking his eye which puzzled me at first, for I thought he was aware of a joke that every body else did not observe, so I laughed, out of kindness to him, when he winked his eye twice again, very hard, so I

1. Figure altered, probably originally written as 1720.

2. Sir Nathaniel Curzon, Bt., (1675-1758).

3. Mary, daughter and co-heir of Sir Ralph Assheton, Bt., of Middleton, Lancs.

4. Probably during the agitation for parliamentary reform, in October 1831, when Chaddesden Hall and Markeaton Hall, both near Derby, were attacked. Information Nottinghamshire County Record Office.

felt like an ass for having laughed, and found he only did it for a reason he had and that there was no joke implied at all.

Lord Scarsdale¹ is a nice little old gentleman and says civil things slowly, so when you answer him it is like acting a play and making set speeches at each other, and bowing at intervals in the middle of the room. All the rest of the Curzons speak English, French, Italian or Dutch ad libitum, and every thing goes on like one of the little courts in Germany, so that it is great sport to me for a short time.

As for the library it is just what I expected, Baskervilles² without end. Folio editions of English books so big that no one could read them, except one of my ancestors in damask coats, who probably sat bolt upright and spouted Pope's Homer out of a tome a yard long, and then shut it up with a bang, to show every body how they could read epic poems.

As I have only written all this as a sort of safety valve to let out some of the condensed pomp which I have imbibed, I am afraid you will hardly get safely to the end of it, but you must imagine me waving my cocked hat at the end of a long strait walk as I see you in black sattin breeches and a cloud of wig at the other, with ladies swinging under a tree, and plenty of lambs and sheperdesses in the distance.

The time is approaching when I am to come and ruralise with you, and take rides under the trees and build castles in the air. I suppose you heard of my brother's having a daughter some time ago,³ so that I

1. Nathaniel (Curzon), 2nd Baron Scarsdale (1751-1837).

2. John Baskerville, printer (1706-75).

3. No trace of this child is to be found in the parish register of Parham, nor in the family pedigrees.

am an uncle, which sounds venerable and respectable. They are obliged to put a new roof to Parham, by which more pounds are to escape from my father's pocket, but he is still determined not to make any more sitting rooms so that the house will not be any better in an agreeable point of view, however much it may be in reality improved.

I have heard nothing of my big box from Malta, which puts me rather in a stew. I wish I had seen you at Elford¹ the other day, but as I hope to do so soon (i.e. directly after Easter, on the Monday if possible), I must in the mean time, with sentiments of profound admiration and respect, beg you to lay me by in an embroidered corner of your memory, as,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

1. Probably Sneyd's uncle's rectory, near Tamworth, but possibly Elford Hall, near Croxall, Staffs.

34. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Baginton, Coventry.

[24 Upper] Brook Street, 20 May 1835

...I am dead bored and wish my self back in the desert, or any where else, where I could not see any delightfully agreeable people, or go to charming parties, or have any duties to perform, &c. However, I dined at Lambeth the other day, which was more in my line and certainly is the handsomest thing of the kind which I have seen any where.

I have been collating some of my MSS. and am surprised to find the text so very different from that in our version...¹ capital sport for a book worm, but it takes off much of one's pleasure to keep it all to oneself, as no one here cares a pin how it is, and every body goes to sleep if I talk about any of my adventures abroad. I have made great friends with the big old book of the Gospels, who is very glad to be read and lets me turn over his pages and make notes of their contents with the greatest good nature; but the little superannuated tome... is as testy and pragmatical as any old gentleman in England, he will never let me find the passage I am looking for, and if I leave him for a moment when I have found what I wish to collate, he gives a sort of crackling short cough and shuts up again as tight as wax, with an elastic spring quite surprizing in one of his years, so that it is hardly possible to get any conversation out of him...

1. Of St. John viii. 7 and 8.

36. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

24 Upper Brook Street, 5 June 1835

Now for a letter to my friend the Passon, say I, but then what am I to tell him, for the people in London talk of nothing but politics, of which he will see better accounts in the news paper than I can give him in an epistle like this - six lines got over.

Well things go on as usual and I have been reading old books, and talking of the same to all such persons as are willing to hear any news thereof, but one day, having nothing to do all the morning, I thought it would be just the time to unroll one of those precio[u]s papyri which I brought from Egypt. Taking therefore one which appeared to be either Coptic, or in old uncial Greek, I steamed him and stewed him into a proper degree of softness, and laying him out on a long board, which I put for the purpose all across the room, to the infinite wonder of Mrs Crabbe¹ and others, I proceeded gently to undo his outside coat, and eagerly peeped inside to see what forgotten author I should restore to the admiring world. There I saw two or three lines of such writing as Homer may have written with a reed when he was writing copies for the little boys at Scio. Great was my delight. Gradually, as I pulled and poked at the old MS. more stately letters came in sight, till at last on giving a tug somewhat stronger than the others, with my face squeezed up into a point with the fear of doing just exactly what immediately happened, the whole papyrus with a slight rustle fell into a hundred pieces in my hands. Oh you should have seen the prodigious length to which the muscles of my face relaxed at that inauspicious moment. 'Alas,' said I to myself, 'this venerable tome, which for above two thousand years has continued in all the freshness of its original state, and has

1. Servant.

survived through all the troubles and tumults of the world, while empires have risen and have passed away, that it should be its fate to be destroyed at last by one of its best friends and one of its most enthusiastic admirers, even by a lubberly English antiquarian like myself.' Having with an exceeding stout sigh and a deep groan delivered myself of this sentiment, I turned over the fragments of the -

(G - d - all balls, parties and such things! Here, while I was writing sixteen miles an hour about things that interest you and me, and was quite got out of modern days, among the forgotten customs of Greece and Egypt, all the doors open and in comes every body to bore me about the Caledonian Ball and to im[p]ress upon me the absolute necessity of bothering some patroness of Almack's for a set of tickets, against my will, whereby [I] fall equally in the estimation of the said lady and myself, and find my pleasure damped both for the present and the future. Of course, if I ever did wish to go to any party in particular, it would be out of the question altogether and totally impossible. Now here comes somebody else, whom I shall knock down to a certainty, seeing that I am worked up in to a dangerous passion and exceeding great rage: 'Man, Sir, Mr Jones of Charing Cross, small account left unpaid, six shillings.' - 'D - the six shillings! Tell him to go to the devil, and that I don't owe it, and won't pay it, and that he makes bad instruments and is the most detestable of all opticians!' Grrrrrr - all this in a parenthesis).

- On looking at the papyrus again my mind was much relieved by the discovery that other hands had been the cause of its present state of ruin, it was a sham one, made up of small pieces [by the Arabs] to cheat the Milordi Inglesi, in which excellent endeavour they had this

time perfectly succeeded - but what they must have destroyed to make up a roll of more imposing appearance is enough to make your blood run cold. A Greek MS. of greater antiquity than Mr Banks's Homer, a Coptic ditto, and a 'Greek' MS. in a more modern hand, have been broken up by these barbarians for the sake of a few piasters, which if left in their original state would be worth one hundred times their weight in gold. I send you some small pieces just to show you what it must have been, and the forlorn state to which it is reduced at present, so there ends my history.

38. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Baginton, Coventry.

London, 15 June 1835

...Did I tell you that I went to the British Museum (I think not). I had a very satisfactory rummage there among the MSS., and saw a thing or two which might be acceptable to you or me, but to my great delight and surprize saw no MS. of the same date so well written and illuminated as two or three of my own Greek ones; and recieved great glory from a nice round little Librarian, who was pleased to have somebody to talk to, and wondered how so small a person as myself could have gone so great a distance after an old book. In fact I felt a kind of hero or knight errant in the cause, when I was trotting over the plains of Jericho with a big book under my arm, and I believe the Librarian thought so too, for his ideas of bibliographical researches did not extend further than the Vatican and the Ambrosian Library at Milan. Do you remember an Arabic manuscript which I showed you? Well, it is no end of curious and I have lent it to a wise man, who is translating the same for his amusement during the vacation, amazing sport for him, but I am very glad to find that there are one or two other people who appreciate an old MS. besides you and me, for I was beginning to think that we had it all to ourselves...

When shall you be able to come to Parham? Will you fix a time as soon as you can? I have not been well but am now recovered as far as the body is concerned; as to the mind, every thing at home is so melancholy that I really hardly know how to bear it, and wish myself back in Egypt with all my heart. I shall certainly go abroad again [a]s soon as I can, not that I have any inclination for travelling about but I am sure I should not live long without some active employment to

dispell the gloomy [tho]ughts of the various failures in my prospects of affairs at ho[m]e when I am [b]y myself.

[I] din[ed] with Miss Wynne¹ yesterday. Miss Shipley² is to be married on the 21st and is then going to Jerusalem. I expect she will be caught by some of the Arabs and sold as a Circassian to some old Turk, if she does not mind. If I was Capt. Rowley I should think twice before I too[k s]o dangerous a comodity as a pretty young wife a[?mong] the Mahometans. They are not the people to say 'By your leave' when they wish to get possession of any thing they like...

My brother is here for a few days but he has so much to do all day among his own affairs that I hardly see him, as I generally dine out. I sometimes think seriously of writing a book by way of something to do, as touching the various libraries abroad, which reminds me that Dr Dibdin's living is sequestered,³ so I heard at least, but hope it is not true as he is sure to set a subscription on foot among book collectors to get him out of his difficulties.

I think I have nothing more to say so I may as well stop. All my people are pretty well. Lord Bagot leaves Town today. They say Lord Craven is to marry Emily Grimstone.⁴ There is a new Panorama⁵ of Thebes,

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1. Henrietta Charlotte, only daughter of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 5th Bt. (1772-1840), married Sir Hugh Williams in 1843. She was Miss Shipley's cousin, and died in 1878.
 2. Charlotte, daughter of Lt.-Col. Shipley and niece of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, Bt., married Capt. Richard Thomas Rowley (1812-87), Scots Guards.
 3. This seems to have been a rumour. Dibdin held St Mary's, Bryanston Square, from 1824 until his death in 1847.
 4. William, Earl of Craven (1809-66) married 5 September 1835 Emily Mary, second daughter of James Walter (Grimston), Earl of Verulam.
 5. Burford's Panorama, in Leicester Square.

which is very fairly done and gives a good notion of the immense size of the ruined buildings. I wish you safe through your ordination and am,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

40. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.

My dear Sneyd,

Hagley, 3 October 1835

I have been to Scotland and what is more I am come back again, bringing with me a huge load of travelled information. First I found that the people of that country are very religious, seeing that they put people into the stocks if they do not go to church. The dogs also, on the borders, are a grave and demure race, and all go to church with their masters, and bark at the preacher if he hits the pulpit cusheon too hard. Altogether the Scotch form, or deformity, of worship is the most seedy I ever saw, and they have played the deuce with all the fine old churches at Edinburg. This is one of the finest towns I ever saw. Nothing can be more strait and smart than the new town and nothing more picturesque than the old one. The Advocates' and the College libraries contain tomes, that is to say volumes, in great plenty, among which is Guttemberg's Bible and the Croniclis of Scotland, and many other old books printed upon vellum, and sundry MSS., but none of fearfull antiquity, though I saw several in the gentlemen's houses where I was staying which greatly excited my cupidity.

At Dunse¹ Castle they pulled out an old box for my amusement and gave it up to my examination. The first thing that came out of it was an original parchment of the Solemn League and Covenant, which made so much noise in its day, some antient collars and jewels, which I can not describe here, some implements of magic, and some little old missals belonging to the family. One of them had some notes in it of the year 1424, which were very curious, and some verses to the praise of some of the saints, of the same date, by one of the devout ladies of the Hay family. I flatter myself that I excited some interest about them in the

1. Or Duns Castle, co. Berwick., seat of William Hay (1788-1876), elder brother of Robert (1799-1863), the Egyptologist and friend of Curzon's, great-grandsons of the 1st Earl Tweeddale.

minds of their owners, who did not know what they were, and were surprized to hear so much of their own great grandfathers from a stranger. So they were all put into the old box again, there to remain for ever and a day, till some antiquary routs them out again.

You would like to see Abbotsford, it is cram full of curiosities, something like Swaby's shop,¹ but the books are not curious, being chiefly of the quaint literature of the seventeenth century, and a heap of ghost stories, old ballads and anecdotes, stupid enough in themselves, but which have been the delight of the whole world when polished up, repaired and beautified by Sir W. Scott. In a turret there they have hung up his old coat, sword and trousers, which made me laugh at first, but afterwards I thought it a good, kind hearted idea. The breeches will be very curious in a hundred years, and in these days people who, like me, have such a boundless admiration for their late wearer, will be glad to have seen any thing so nearly allied to the great man as his nether garments. It is like seeing the skin of the lion or the tooth of a whale who has swallowed all the little fish and spit them out again in the form of lumps of amber, the small fry having only become precious after they were digested by the leviathan. The curiosities are like the books, they are dirty old things but have most of them some quaint legend attached to them, in which all their interest consists. Of this nature are Rob Roy's gun and purse, Hofer's rifle,² and a very old hat which has been worn by the mayors of — from generation [to] generation on the day of their inauguration, a custom which must have conferred a dignity of appearance to the said mayor equal to that of a little boy who is crowned with the chamber pot at school. It is a very bad hat of Charles

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1. ? Robert Swaby, turner, 2 Mortimer Market, Tottenham Court Road.
 2. Edgar Johnson, Sir Walter Scott The Great Unknown (1970), II, 889, describes it as a blunderbuss, given to Hofer by Sir Humphry Davy.

/I^{t's}/^l time, with a steeple crown of a fine stone colour, and had a wid[e] brim till some rats took liberties with it, and concealed a good part of it by devouring the same. There was also a very old candlestick and some things given by the laird of Mac Nab, who was a famous hard joker in his day. He wrote a letter to George the 4th, who saw him afterwards and told him it was all spelt wrong, so the laird said 'Wha could spell with sic a pen as I had to write with?' - an excellent excuse which I beg you to take in my case for all the stops &c. which you say I am in the habit of leaving out.

My tour in the north was a very agreeable one. I now know the people on the borders better than I do those of Staffordshire, where I always feel as if I had a kettle tied to my tail. They make capital things to eat in Scotland and I heard some good songs, which I have been shouting to myself all day till I got within sight of Litchfield Cathedral. By the by, Durham is the finest thing that ever was seen, it beats York in a canter, and of the books there I will treat in another epistle, my dear little parson.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

1. Substituted for '...2d's...'

41. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 14 King Street, St James's Square, London.

Hagley, 20 October 1835

...I purpose going to Tabley¹ on Saturday, if you will come with me, and to go to Sir Stephen's² on the 2d of November, and also to Cholmondeley's some day or other, if he asks me to do so.

They are going to act The Rivals at Tabley, which I think a d----d bore, both to see and to perform. A play at a country house, in my opinion, should be a pretty little thing like a French play, or a bit of an opera, full of fun, music and dresses and blank verse and so on, pretty, you know, without any trouble in it, as one's wife ought to be, that's what I think Sir, and confound it, Sir, I hope you don't mean to differ from me, not that I wish to bias any man's opinions, but if you don't agree with me I'll call you a ----- and knock you down afterwards, according to the receipt of that excellent, kind hearted little fellow, D'O Connel Esq., M.P., whom the Devil presarve, as they say in Ireland.

I shall expect you here on Thursday [22d], eh? And in the mean time, if you chew three spiders and two slugs with a bit of fat bacon before breakfast every morning, it will be sure to give you an encrease of appetite, always supposing that it does not make you sick. This you may add to your antient receipts and believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

R. Curzon

1. Tabley House, near Knutsford, Chesh.

2. Probably Sir Stephen Glynne's, Hawarden Castle, Flintshire.

44. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.

Hagley, 24 February 1836

Well, you small proprietor of large tones, may be it's you that has got a book or so, is it? More sport for you! I hain't ever so much to say, that is not hever so much because I have not been doing hever so much lately.

The other day I went to see Charles Bagot made into a parson.¹ It did not seem to hurt him much, tho' the operation took nearly five hours. I should have thought you might have made an archbishop in half the time.

I should like to have seen Sir Thomas Philips² tho', and for nothing, as you did. Pray make me a picture of him as well as you can remember and send it me. Did he look at all illuminated, any thing in the Jarry³ stile, or was he more of a Byzantine complexion? That is your true cut for a bibliomaniac, he should be a little, short, wizened old fellow, testy rather, with an old fashioned coat like one of my oldest Greek MSS. I do not like my own looks at all, and I think you only do when you have got your episcopal stick and galoshes, which bring you a little nearer to what your outer man should be. We shall get better as we grow older tho', I hope, and when ever I am established as a country gentleman, if that ever happens, I hope to become a patern, both in manners, language and appearance, of a real honest -

1. Probably Charles Walter Bagot (see p. 1, n. 2).

2. Sir Thomas Phillipps Bt., (1792-1872), collector of manuscripts and books. Curzon in his letter surrounds the name with little lines, to give it lustre.

3. Nicolas Jarry, celebrated French penman, born at Paris circa 1615. One Jarry of Curzon's, now Additional MS. 39642, is Office de la Vierge, 1659, a tiny volume measuring approx. 3" x 2", still in the red velvet bag Curzon provided for it.

what shall I say - man.¹ Well, Sneyd, I con is rir railroads looks uppards, but what is that to me? I hate railroads, I hear so much of them and only wish I could get into a steam coach and simmer back into the ---th century, when they wrote billet doux in longo bardic characters.

But now as to Sir T. Phillips, why did not you rush at him and shake him by the hand, and with tears in your eyes tell him how glad you was of the opportunity of rendering homage to the great autocrat of forgotten literature? I should like to have seen him enter the room, how Mr Evans² must have bobbed his head! How Payne and Foss³ [m]ust have made their best joint bow in partnership, and old Thorpe⁴ swung himself twice round at least, I have no doubt, when he made way to the greatest collector of the day! By the soul of Caxton, what a fine sight it must have been to see him walk out of the auction room when the sale⁵ was over, with all the greatest men of the place bearing illuminated romances and grim folios of the 10th century to his carriage at the door! How all vellum rolls must expand at his approach and what a flutter the leaves of a Julio Clovio⁶ must make at his

1. Reading uncertain, word smudged.

2. Edward Evans, bookseller.

3. They arranged the sales of the manuscripts and books of Richard Heber (1773-1833).

4. Thomas Thorpe, bookseller.

5. Part of Heber's collection was sold by Evans 10-19 February 1836, at 93 Pall Mall. A.N.L. Munby, Phillipps Studies No. 3. The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the Year 1840, (1954), 75-76.

6. Julio (or Giulio) Clovio, miniaturist (1498-1578).

approach. Surely it is a glorious thing to be the first man of one's line, from the Duke of Wellington who commands the world to the cock who crows on the dunghill of which he is the acknowledged lord.

There endeth this lytl tretis, in which I pray you to believe me,

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon...

46. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.

24 Upper Brook Street, 13 May 1836

...I was much pleased with the sentences passed upon my MSS. by Sir Frederick Madden,¹ who is a young man with large whiskers and a smart stick and a waistcoat, and does not look half so much of a bibliomaniac as you do, but notwithstanding his appearance he is uncommon sly and knows more about the matter than any one whom I have seen except Angelo Maji² perhaps...

What sort of a face has that Miss Fenwick?³ Does she really know any thing about the matter or has she only imbibed some of the atmosphere of Sir Thomas Phillips' neighbourhood? I hope he is not really ruined: he must send his books to Sotherby's to help the Sneyd sale.⁴

I think you have done very right to get rid of as many old tomes as possible. Pray send me word about the sale when it has taken place.

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1. At this time Assistant Keeper, but shortly afterwards Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum (1801-73).
 2. Cardinal Angelo Mai (1782-1854), Librarian of the Vatican.
 3. Possibly Anne, daughter of Addison Fenwick of Bishop Wearmouth, co. Durham, or her sister Elizabeth Jane. Sir Thomas Phillipps's youngest daughter, Katherine, married 4 July 1848 the Rev. John Edward Addison Fenwick.
 4. Part of the Canonici material (see p. xlix, n. 2), sold at Sotheby's 25 June 1836. Catalogue, S.P.

I should like to know how many pounds yo[u] get for the four hundred and forty inestimable literary treasures lately imported from the continent, in fine old Venetian bindings, neat, rare, leetle wormed, otherwise uncommon fine copies, as old Thorpe would say...

47. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 84 West Street, Brighton.

Dear Sneyd,¹

[24] Upper Brook Street, 9 August 1836

Five tumblers a day certainly ought to kill or cure any parson in his majesty's dominions, I should think seven would be enough to settle the Archbishop himself, if that dignitary could be prevailed upon to drink so much water for any earthly reason. Why, Sneyd, you certainly have got the [? worst]² bibliomania that I have known some time, but I did not think you so far gone on other subjects as to suppose you would go on the top of the coach to Brighton, and not only lodge over a baker's oven in the dog days but swallow /150/³ glasses of cold water per month besides, with the vain hope of getting anything but the hydrophobia at the end of it. If you come to Parham we will give you a bed under the pump, and then you shall have as much water as you like, all for nothing, free, gratis, into the bargain; and you shall have five chamber pots all to yourself, for I should think less would not do for you. After swallowing all that cold water you must be in a desperate state if it does not come out again in two or three days. I suppose you must be practising for the see of Bath and Wells, and that is why you will not take th[e] living in Hertfordshire, which I he[ard] [...s]⁴ is to have, however may St Swy[th]in protect you till we next meet, which I hope may be soon.

Yours very considerably,

[sketch].⁵

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1. Capital 'D' formed with a scythe and fleurs-de-lis, 'WS' monogram beginning the name Sneyd.
 2. Word omitted.
 3. Substituted for '...380...'
 4. Name lost, MS. imperfect.
 5. Five tumblers, the coat of arms of Curzon, a barrel and a watering-can.

You had better come to Parham before September, because it will be warmer and [a] better time for riding, seeing that I intend to shoot desperately this year, and make a great noise with my fowling iron, just to make sure whether it is not ever so pleasant to strap about all day after a dog and a bird in a stubble field, a fact of which I have had certain doubts, which I should like to clear up i[n] my own mind, for a rason I have. I will write to you from Parham, when I get there, seeing [t]hat it would be d[ifficu]lt to do so before.

[Sketch].¹

1. Mock notarial mark incorporating the date.

48. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 84 West Street, Brighton.

SNEYD,¹

Parham, 28 August 1836

It rains, which puts me in mind of water, and that of you, for the which reason, Oh disciple of the renowned merglip,² [I]³ do take up my pen and sit me down to indite you an epistle; the only difficulty is to know what I am to write about, as I have no news to tell you and am writing in good large letters, as you see, merely to fill up the page, that you may not have it to say to my enemy that I did not send you a letter of a proper length. Ye shall know that my room has on the lower part of it a floor of boards, and on the floor an oil cloth, and on the oil cloth a Turkey carpet, and on the carpet an arm chair, and on the arm chair a cusheon, and on the cusheon is seated no less a person than myself. Before me is a glass book case, wherein are curiosities and tomes, behind me is a bookcase full of tomes, about the room are sundry other tomes and images and pots and sitch; but it is only in a half naked state as yet, sundry strong men being continually hammering to make divers things to put in it, most of which will, I hope, be finished by the time you come here, when I shall be delighted to introduce you to a den where I trust you will sit many a day in future times. As I have only admitted in my glass case my MSS. and printed books of the most ghastly rarity, the tomes look very few, and to those who do not take the allusion, a trifle seedy, the most valuable and pleasant to me being of a peculiarly grim aspect. Every one I have showed them to has said 'Nts!' and then

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1. Name written in letters 2½" high across the width of the page.
 2. What can he mean? The word has enough Latin in it to encourage one to suspect a word for a bathing resort, possibly of Greek origin, or, more obviously, French. Backwards it spells 'pilgrem', equally abstruse. The reading of the original is clear.
 3. Omitted.

has immediately gone to the curiosity cupboard, which shines much more as I have put most of my gold and silver things together in a row, to look peert. Altogether I think my room will be a very curious place when finished, and very comfortable.

You will be glad to hear that I have heard from Mr Baulte,¹ who says he will send me my box of jewelry. The two little books in it will be a great help to the collection of glory, in the way of tomes. I am going to have frames made for the papyri and hang them round the top of the wall, like a frieze, so that I shall be quite su[r]rounded with MSS. of every age, fr[om] the time of Moses to the days of Jarry the Great,² Emperor of all Quill Drivers, a situation much to be desired by all bibliomaniacs.

All I want is some one with a congenial spirit, who would care for an old book, or a picture, or a quaint old thing of any sort, for I am terribly lonely, as my father and mother never talk about any thing but my brother's marriage or some disagreeable family concern or other, till I am sometime[s] almost ready to hang myself. Therefore I shall look forward very much to your arrival on the 7th and hope you will stay a good while, as it would be quite a charity in my case.

The evangelistarium is as well as can be expected at his time of life. He will be about six hundred years old on his next birth day, and will be very glad to see you again, believe me,

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. Reading possibly doubtful, not identified.

2. See p. 55, n. 3 above.

50. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 84 West Street, Brighton.
Curzon's address and date taken from the postmark.

My dear Sneyd,

[Petworth, 2 September 1836]

Ivtire tu natula recubans sub regmine postchay,

which means get into a coach and come,

attamen inventus, ille recepit cum,

that is, we shall not let you go very soon when we have caught you,

rare avis in terris,

there are very few partridges,

hoc labor hic opus est,

it is very hard work shooting them, but my father says he hopes you will bring your gun and your cordroy breeches, as we are in great want of a desperate sportsman to supply the house with game.

I am glad you are enjoying yourself at Brighton, can't say it would be much in my line. I do not delight in white gloves, neither am I pleased in the occupation of my best coat. Rura amen sylvasq[ue] inglorius, that is I like going about in a shooting coat on the outside of a horse, or on my ten toes, fowling at the deer and other birds, and peeping at the old churches and what are called remains, for a rason I have.

I am going to have a scavo with the Parson of Wigonholt, who doth suppose that there is a Roman villa or a station for soldiers in a field near there,¹ for he has found sundry broken pots there, one of which is very curious indeed, and he is going to give it me, so I should think he must be a vertuous and excellent man, and a worthy upholder of the Church of England.

1. The villa itself is in the hamlet of Lickfold. According to P.J. Martin, 'Some Recollections of Part of the "Stane Street Causeway" in its passage through West Sussex' (Sussex Archaeological Collections..., XI (1859), 139-140: 'Some specimens of pottery found there are now at Parham House,...' A description of an excavation carried out by S.E. Winbolt 1929-30, appeared in The Times, 1 February 1930.

Toosdy then I shall []¹ you.

My father will be very happy to see the hoss. I am sorry we shall not be able to give him a bedroom up stairs, as there are workmen in the house, and hope he will put up with a chamber on the ground floor, where we will make him as comfortable as we can under existing circumstances.

R.C.²

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1. The word omitted appears to be 'expects'. What Curzon has put is a cross (or 'X') surrounded by dots (or specks).
 2. Initials decorated.

51. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.

My dear Sneyd,

26 October 1836

I am in London inhaling fog and mist, for a reason I have, for I have been to Portsmouth, not only to see The Blue Posts¹ and the dock yard, but also to accompany Elliot² on board his ship.³ He is now fairly off after waiting for the wind and Lord Elphinstone, who neither of them could make up their minds to be in the way for the last fortnight. You may imagine the splendor of the ship he is in when I tell you that it cost £56,000, though it is only three hundred tons burthen. I[t] certainly is the smartest thing in the floating line I ever saw, and I dare say I should feel as peart as a canary bird in a gold cage if I was on board of her for six months, in the middle of the sea...

The other day my box of curiosities from Geneva turned up, wherat I am much pleased, and at last the frames for my papyri are finished, and the Parson of Pulborough has given me sundry old Roman and British pots, which were found near Parham, which are uncommon grim in appearance but very curious notwithstanding. I have also got a pig, made of lead, with a Roman emperor's name on it, by which I guess he liked bacon. This is not only curious but heavy, and ugly too, so it has several recommendations to an antiquary like me...

1. Coaching inn in Broad Street, mentioned in Frederick Marryat's Peter Simple, first published 1834. The inn was burned down 7 May 1870. Information Portsmouth Central Library.

2. Later Sir Walter Elliot (1803-87), at this time Private Secretary to his cousin, John (Elphinstone), 13th Baron Elphinstone (1807-60), Governor of Madras and Bombay. According to Alexander John Arbuthnot, who contributed the notice on Elliot in the D.N.B. (reprint 1937-38, VI, 680-82), Elliot was with Curzon in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Easter 1834, when the riot occurred. Curzon confirms meeting Elliot in Jerusalem, in his commonplace book. W-H.P.

3. The Prince Regent yacht, a present from King William IV to the Imam of

(3. cont'd.). Muscat. Its presence at Portsmouth is noted in The Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, 24 October 1836. Facsimile supplied by the Portsmouth Central Library.

52. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.

Parham, 23 November 1836

...I am affraid it will be sometime before I shall be able to leave this place, as my mother has been unwell, and though she is now better she does not think she shall be able to move very soon. I must stay here till she is recovered, so tell me your plans, that I may make a problem as to the chances of our meeting at Cheverels or elsewhere, for as Parham is to London, so is Cheverels to Staffordshire, you understand, which is perhaps one reason why so many coaches run through Market Street, though I ascribe the prevalence of fog in London to a different cause altogether, which I will expound to you when we meet.

I was in a terrible fidget at your last letter about the reliquary in the shop near Rodd's,¹ for it sounds like the jewel of my heart, even the great chest which I covet for my pleasaunce, and I am sorry I did not see it when I was in Town. I should certainly have sold all I possessed if it came up to [the]² picture I have drawn of it in my imagination, only I am affraid I should have been sold 'myself' when my father looked at it through his eye glass and said 'Ha! Nts! Very ugly, what did you give for that hideous old trunk, eh?' Why did not you buy it, because when one has a pound it is one's duty to spend it for the benefit of the community, and besides you know a box is always useful, that is when one has any thing to put in it?

I think I told you before how I am become famous as a collector of curiosities here. A certain man gave me a little wooden box the other

1. Thomas Rodd's bookshop was in Great Newport Street, his brother Horatio's print shop was in Little Newport Street, in Soho.

2. Word omitted.

day, that is dam' old but not beautiful, which as it is now before me I have written you word of, from want of a better subject to discourse upon. It was the poor box in a church of our's, near Chichester, and was chained to the church for fear any one should steal it, but as nobody put any thing in it for the last three or four hundred years it was voted useless and therefore given to me, as the receiver general of all useless old absurdities, for I accept every thing on principle for fear somebody should give me something worth having by mistake, an event much to be looked forward to from the exceeding rarity thereof.

We have been much afflicted by the death of Mr Dugdale.¹ I am very sorry for him, he was a kind friend to me and Merevale was the o[nl]y place belonging to my relations that I always returned to with pleasure. The [feeling at his] funeral was very gratifying, the people of Atherstone shut up their shops and sixty men [on horseback] who had nothing to do with him beyond the respect they bore to his memory, followed his body to the gates of the park and then went home, not wishing to intrude upon the grief of his family by accompanying the coffin to his chapel, where he was buried. If I had not been a miserable devil that nobody cares for, I would have gone to my uncle's funeral myself, for I respected him, though I fear no one cares whether I did or not. Peace be with him.

I have nothing to tell you, for as the male part of the family live each in their own room, and the females sleep sixteen hours per diem, there is not much going on here. They have stuck up poles, with flags on the top of them, to mark out a railway which is to go through the parsonage at Wiggonholt, and we have had notice of an other which

1. Dugdale Stratford Dugdale, of Merevale Hall, War., formerly M.P. for the northern division of the county. His first wife was the Hon. Charlotte, daughter of Viscount Curzon. He died 5 November 1836.

is to pass through Hagley. This is for the public, that unseen author of all the abuses carried on in this our busy little country, which seems to me to be going to the devil entirely from its own great cleverness and genius; and with this sentiment I remain,

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

53. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.

Parham, 30 November 1836

...We have had an incontinent hard wind here, which blew down one hundred and five of the greatest elms &cc. in the park on Monday, an irreparable loss for there were no finer trees in England. Some of them were one hundred feet high, and to see these enormous giants waving their arms in the storm and at last torn up and dashed to pieces by the fury of the tempest, was one of [the]¹ grandes scenes I ever witnessed. Perhaps fifty more trees, averaging from fifteen to twenty-two feet in circumference round the trunk, were snapped in half like twigs. The crash they made as they were rent asunder was as loud as a battery of cannons, and yet even this tremendous uproar was sometimes drowned by the howling of the wind, so you may imagine it was a stately specimen of a hurricane and a magnificent and awful sight, though the distruction it has made has sadly injured this unlucky old place.

I hope you are all well. The post is going off and I am,

Yours affectio[nate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. Word omitted.

54. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Baginton,
Coventry, readdressed to the Rev. Archer Clive's, Solihull.

Oxford, 17 December 1836

...I have just got - what do you think? I dare say you may have seen it, or an engraving of it, viz. the font of St Peter's Church. I bought it and no end of monuments this morning from the church wardens, with a whole covey of cherubims, nosegays &c. of different kinds of marble, and have made a bargain with a certain man to pack them up and send them to Parham. The font represents Adam and Eve and the tree of knowledge, and the counterpoise to the lid, which lifts up, is made of a cherubim, who dangles at the end of a string half way up to the ceiling [sketch]. The age of it is not known but it is a very quaint old thing and well known to antiquarians, so that I am sorry they have sold it, even though I have bought it and hope it may remain for many generations in the chapel at home...

...On Monday I am going to Sir T. Phillips's. I am in a great stew as I do not know whether he is at home or not, or what manner of man that redoubted bibliomaniac is likely to be. I shall then go to Worcester and so on to Hagley, where I hope you will come soon and stay some time.

I have been much pleased with my visit here and I have found a good many old friends. I am just going to dinner in the Common Room,¹ where these snug fellows eat in cold weather, and I am,

Yours affectionately,

Wynkyn de Worde²

1. Curzon was staying at Merton College, as guest of Walter Kerr Hamilton, who had been elected to an open fellowship in 1832.

2. Mock archaic signature.

56. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Cheverells.

Carissime,

London, [14]¹ April 1837

I am sorry to hear that the living near Oxford would not do, but I think I have heard of another which (if you set about it) will fit you like a glove. The name of the place is Buckden,² near Broadway, two miles from Sir T. Phillipps. The parsonage is very early; in it is a hall which goes up to the roof, and the whole thing full of mullioned windows. The curate is a relation of Sir Thomas's, and he wishes to exchange. He is to have the rectory on the death of the present incumbent, who is eighty years old, and Sir T. Phillipps said as much as that if you could manage it with the curate, he would /present/³ you to the living. This sounds to me so exactly the thing for you that I recommend your enquiring about it. If you was to go to Middle Hill you would be very well recieved, but if that does not suit you I will write about it, if you will tell me what to say. The country about there is beautiful and full of old houses. It is four miles fr[o]m Camden but there are two or three other villiages even more curious than that at a very short distance. Pray do not be idle about this, for if the old rector dies your chance would be lost. It would be much better if you would go and pay Sir Phillipps a visit, for he is the patron. The Liber Ecclesiasticus will tell you about the value, I believe it is about three hundred a year.

I came here yesterday, my people come up in about a week. London

1. Curzon has written 'Friday[,] April 17, 1837'. In 1837 17 April fell on a Monday. The postmark shows that the date should have been 14 April.

2. A slip for Buckland.

3. Substituted for '...make sure of the...'.

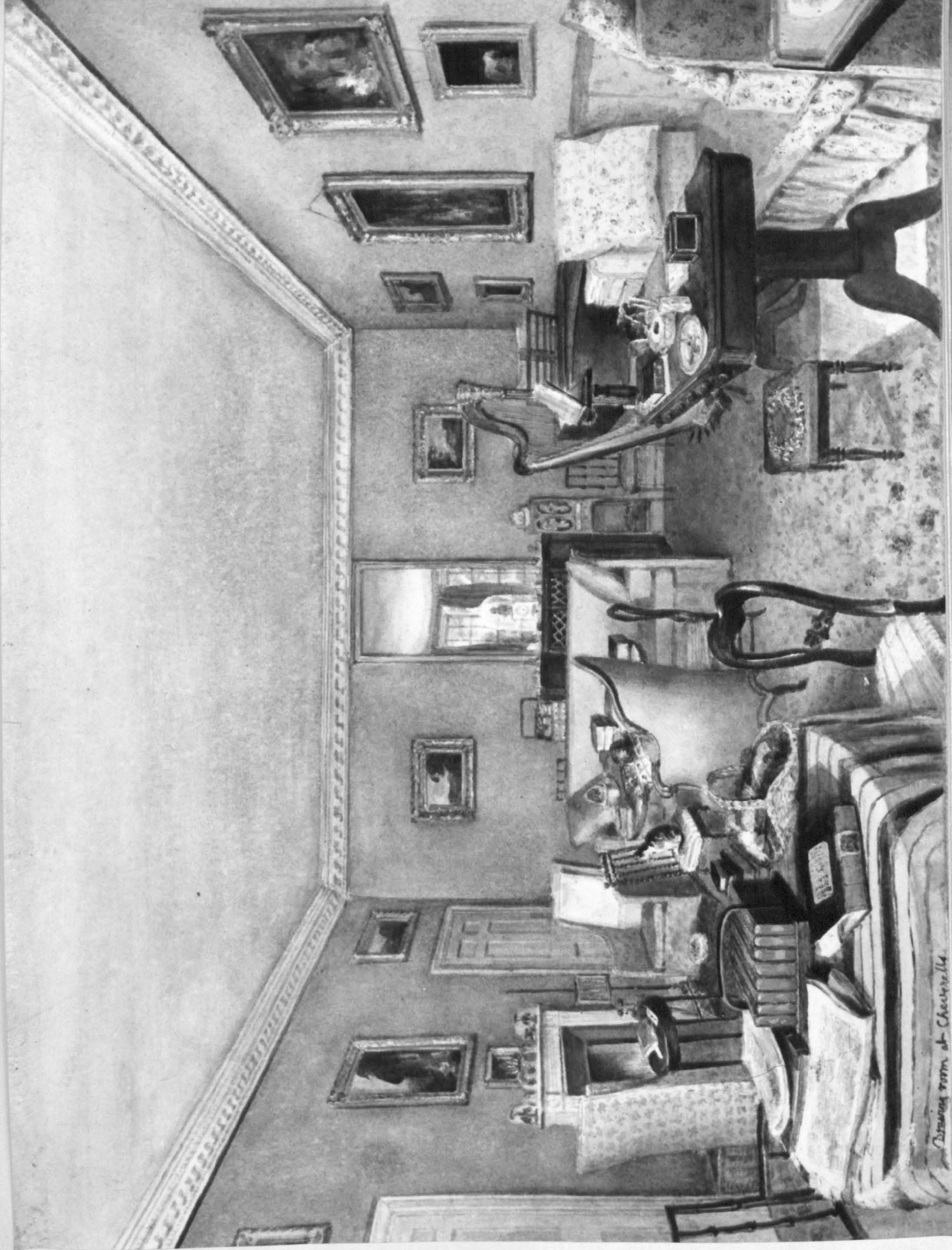
is more abominable than usual, every body looks as if they had the gripes. Write me an answer and tell me what you think about it.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

Plate XIV. The drawing room at Cheverells, where a number of Curzon's letters to Sneyd would have been read.

From an original water-colour by Sneyd's sister, Charlotte Augusta Sneyd (1800-82), among the Sneyd Papers.



Dining room at Chesham

58. By hand.

My dear Sneyd,

14 May 1837

I wrote you an absurd epistle the other day about books, which was all nonsense,¹ so I am writing to you again to tell you how much I appreciate your kind feelings towards me and how sorry I am to go and leave you and all my other good friends behind. I am still bent on starting at the end of this month, and am going right away for Constantinople by sea, always supposing I do not stop by the way at Gibraltar, Malta or any other place. I suppose I shall be back in the spring, but not before, as I know by experience what a failure it is to come back from a warm climate in winter. I go in a very independant way, without any servant or any quantity of bagage, as I intend to set up à la Turque when I know enough of the language to ask for what I want. I am in some hopes of a solemn missive from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Patriarch of the Greek Church, asking him to let me into the monasteries and to [let me] look over the old books in an authoritative manner, which is the only thing that can be of any use to me.

I hope you will be well and merry when I see you next, but I will write to you again before I am off.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

1. Two days before (No. 57) Curzon had written to Sneyd pretending to express his appreciation of Sneyd's generosity in letting him select six books at Messrs Payne & Foss, at Sneyd's expense. Curzon listed them with the catalogue reference numbers, 'for fear of any mistake in the bill...', and told Sneyd he was having them bound at Garrard's, also at his expense.

60. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd '&c - &c', evidently included in a packet, probably sent to Curzon's parents.

My dear Sneyd, British Embassy, Constantinople, 23 August 1837

First of all I must ask you about your health, which here in the neighbourhood of plague and pestilence I feel to be of more consequence even than the momentous affairs which will form the subject of the remainder of my letter. How are you? I hope Jephson¹ has done you good, and that you now enjoy yourself more in this world than you have done for years before.

I am just returned from Mount Athos, where I went, as you must well know, in search of a tome, and I have to congratulate myself on my escape from all the pirates, banditti, plague and storms of that inaccessible neighbourhood. I have visited all the twenty monasteries and thoroughly ransacked every library on the peninsula, and from the differences I have found between the account given by Dr Carlyle² many years ago, [and what I saw myself,] I have reason to think that I am the only person, certainly the only Englishman, who ever really knew what these far famed libraries contained. To tell you as much as possible in a small space, I must inform you [that in]stead of thirteen thousand MSS., which I expected to find,³ there are little more than three thousand altogether; and that excepting one uncial Gospels, three ditto evangelistaria, one evangelistarium in gold letters, not uncial, a very antient MS. of the Gospels, with one or two words in each line, two illuminated MSS. and about ten more,

1. Henry Jephson M.D., of Leamington (1798-1878).

2. Probably Joseph Dacre Carlyle (1759-1804), Professor of Arabic at Cambridge 1795-1804, an account of whose Greek MSS. appeared in 1823.

3. See Dr Munby's Phillipps Studies No. 3. The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the Year 1840 (Cambridge University Press, 1954), Appendix B, 172.

there are no books left of extraordinary value in any of the monasteries. No MS. of the classics on vellum is to be seen, and the twelve or thirteen on paper are not of great antiquity or even fine MSS.

Nothing can exceed the picturesque beauty of the country in the peninsula of Mount Athos, overhanging rocks of marble peep out of forests of evergreens and oak and plane trees of a size unknown in England. The trees at Parham sink into insignificance [sic] when compared with these, and above all the great peak of the mountain towers up into the sky in utter disregard of the threat of Alexander's architect,¹ who would have had some trouble in carving out a solid rock of about five thousand feet in height. Of my success with the manuscripts you will judge from the catalogue I enclose... .²

I must say I think my good fortune has been extraordinary. I got all these books out of four monasteries,³ the rest are under an oath not to sell anything, and from three out of the four I brought away all that was of any value. In the fourth the only remaining book of any

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1. Dinocrates, a Macedonian, who at their first meeting, boasted to Alexander that he had already '...shaped Mount Athos into the figure of the statue of a man [Alexander], in whose left hand I have shown the ramparts of a very extensive city; in his right a bowl to receive the water of all the rivers which are in that mountain.' Vitruvius on Architecture..., translated by Frank Granger, Bk. II, Preface (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931), 73-74. Information Mr A.L.F. Rivet, Reader in Romano-British Studies, University of Keele.
 2. Missing. Curzon told his mother that he had stayed three weeks on Mount Athos and brought back twenty-two books. Letter from Therapia, 2 September 1837. P.P.
 3. Five, according to the British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts, 1916-1920 (1933), 54-143, on the authority of Curzon's inscriptions, viz.: Caracalla, Docheiariou, St Paul, Simopetra and Xenophou. It was from Xenophou that he bought the Gospels which he believed to be in the hand of the Emperor Alexius III Comnenus, and which he states in a note on the fly-leaf to have been formerly in the possession of the monastery of Pantokratoros. This is now Add. MS. 39603.

consequence is a good copy of the Gospels, which they would not part with, so that if I was to go again I should not be able to increase my store, nor I fear would any body else, as the fine MSS. I mentioned above are not to be got by fair means. The day before I left Mt. Athos twenty-four pirates were taken by the soldiers of the Pasha of Salonica, in the Gulph of Contessa. They were, there is hardly any doubt, lying in wait for me, as the arrival of a Milordos was so extraordinary a circumstance that all the world talked of nothing but his riches, and the weight of his luggage, little imagining it was all full of books. How sold they would have been if they had caught me, but my loss would have been irreparable; thank God I have got back safely and I hope shall talk over my adventures some day with you, over these goodly tomes. They cost me altogether about £45 and I take their value to be about £1,000... .

They know more about books at Constantinople than I expected, and ask £30 for books worth £50, which is a good deal in these times. However, if I could find enough I would buy them all and have a sale in London, of the worst, till I got enough to pay for the rest, only I should be ruined in the mean time, which would be unpleasant.

26 August

I have been to Pera, which you are to know is that part of Constantinople inhabited by the Franks, to see a parcel of MSS. which an Armenian has been collecting for me... but... the man puts on his prices at a shot, thinking the English are made of gold, so he will loose a good sum of money, and I a number of curious books... .

Do you know whether Thorpe has got Sir Harry Mainwaring's

library?¹ Has he kept the Caxtons for me, as he promised to do?...

1 September

Yesterday I caught a tome in the Abyssinian language, which professes to be the Book of Enoch, a great treasure if that turns out to be the case. It is in very good condition but smells rather strong of the bugs, who have taken up their lodgings in the wooden binding...

7 September

The post is going tomorrow, so I must conclude my letter and wish you good bye for the present. Remembe[r me] to De Tabley and Cholmondeley and Ben Phillimore,² if you see them, and believe me,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

Write to the British Consulate, Alexandria, and tell me all about it, [a]nd [...] ³ tell me how my brother is going on. I am anxious about him and hope he will be settled happily at last.

-
1. Sir Henry Mainwaring, 1st Bt. (1782-1860). This was the library at Peover, near Knutsford, Chesh., referred to in A.N.L. Munby's Phillipps Studies No.4. The Formation of the Phillipps Library from 1841 to 1872 (Cambridge University Press, 1956), Appendix A, 187.
 2. Sir Robert Phillimore (see No. 91 below).
 3. Ms. imperfect, line lost.

62. Extract, no address.

[Begun at Thebes, finished near Siout,
15 February 1838]

...I have been reading an old letter of yours over again just now, which I do every now and then, to put me in mind of pleasant things in England, and to keep the small hope alive in my own breast of living happily there some day, and looking back with a shake of the head to the many years of wandering and discontent of my youth, when I sit over the fire and see something which brings back old days to my mind. I have been thinking that if I do not find you established somewhere in a house of your own, with or without a wife, next June, when I hope to be in England, I shall call you a maniac in more things than old books. How much longer do you intend to waste you[r] existence in paying visits in the country, and walking about in a new coat in London, without any earthly object in view? I would rather go and preach sermons to the makers of pottery in Staffordshire, at your horrible parsonage there, than live on year after year doing nothing at all. It is the want of something in which I can take an interest which has made me stupid and unhappy, and I am sure that if you had a house to pull about, and a wife to look pleased when you came home, you would be infinitely more comfortable than you are now; and besides if the said wife did not bore me horridly I should be in the habit of coming to eat roast fowls with you, every now and then, when the blue devils oppressed me, or when I had caught a new old tone and wanted to show you my last play thing.

Now take my advice, if I was in your situation I should do what I advise you. You have quite money enough to give you the snug little place which would suit your ideas, and to keep you warm and cosey in

it for the rest of your days, and if you do not mind you will awake some night when you are ill and going to die, and you will say to yourself 'What have I been doing all this time? How snug I might have been? How I might have enjoyed my life, instead of putting off everything from day to day and from year to year, till I am old and stiff and crabbed, and can not enjoy anything, confound it! Just let me live over again and I will not loose my time as I did before.' But then death will say 'Really, Sir, I am very sorry that you did not think of this before, for really my time is so much occupied that I must beg you to follow me as soon as it is convenient to you, for I have got several visits to do today and I can not with any show of good manners keep the other gentlemen waiting.' So saying he will knock you on the head with his arrow, and all your tomes in the big box will be sold by auction for the benefit of your discolsolate relations, who being clothed in new black coats entirely out of respect to your memory, will discuss your merits over an old bottle or so of the wine that pbor dear parson was so fond of, and there be an end of you and the old books into the bargain.

L A V S D E O

Here endethe ye homylie. Amen...

64. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street.

I M P R E S S V M V E N E T I I S

- D I E. X V. I V L I I

M D C C C X X V I I I

Can't say that I have just any thing particular to say - at all - don't think any event has happened, has it, to write about? Now, let me see - hm, Monday, went after a tome, Tuesday, went after a tome, Wednesday, hunted a codex, Thursday, struggled with a bookseller, Friday, went after a tome, Saturday - however, a letter is to be written, notwithstanding, and therefore quid faciam infelix which means here begins ye epistle.

Be it known unto thee, most learned Sneyd, that Henry MacVicar,¹ that is an American, and I, which am of the English nation, crept slowly along the road from V[i]enna to Venice, on which journey we saw little to interest any one. The old towns of Udine, Conegliano and Treviso being less curious than I expected. Venice, Bella Venizia, remains as beautiful and as sorrowful as ever, that even four years have made a difference. The magnificent old palaces seem to me to be hastening to decay, the Custom House is propped up with beams, and even the Europa is grown fusty and lazy, and the waiters seem to have got even older coats than they had when I was here before. Books are not to be got. The little old priest is retired into a Franciscan monastery and the old libraries that I have rummaged contain only the most ghastly rubbish. Every body is asleep, and nothing is to be accomplished here except one could wait here some months for the

1. Not identified.

dozy proprietor of some old palace to awake and show you the treasures he possesses. You may remember San Quirico, the dealer in curiosities? I have ruined myself clean at his shop and have bought some old shields and armour for the hall at Parham, which have the rare merit of being beautiful as well as curious. One of them is said to have belonged to Raffael and to be copied in his picture of St George, at Paris; another, to have belonged to the Emperor Barbarossa, both of them legends one may doubt, but still the [shields] are none the worse for the tradition. I have also got two reliquaries, one Byzantine, from Aquileia, the other of the 15th century, of silver gilt, after this fashion [sketch], the two little things with domes are of cristal, the rest is one of those quaint pieces of gothic workmanship which it requires the hand of Albert Durer to draw, and which you may see in some pictures of the early maste[rs]. It is about a foot high and very dirty, but when it is cleaned it will be a beautiful thing. I have no doubt the tracery and shape of the foot is particularly graceful, tho' I am affraid you will not find i[t] out by looking at this sketch. The other is a grim sort of cup, set with niellos and coarse stones. I will not trust myself to draw it, it is of the thirteenth or twelfth century, much of the same taste, or want of taste, as the old figure of the Virgin at Parham. I have almost enough of these works of the Dark Ages to furnish the sacristy of a Norman church, but they are fit companions for the old books of the same date, and very curious in England, where few such things exist.

You gave me great pleasure in telling me of the arrival of the box of MSS. from Constantinople. I hope the other two boxes of prettier things arrived also, as I hear nothing of them.

I hope to be in London by the 1st of September. Now you must come to Parham in October, by which time I hope the books will be

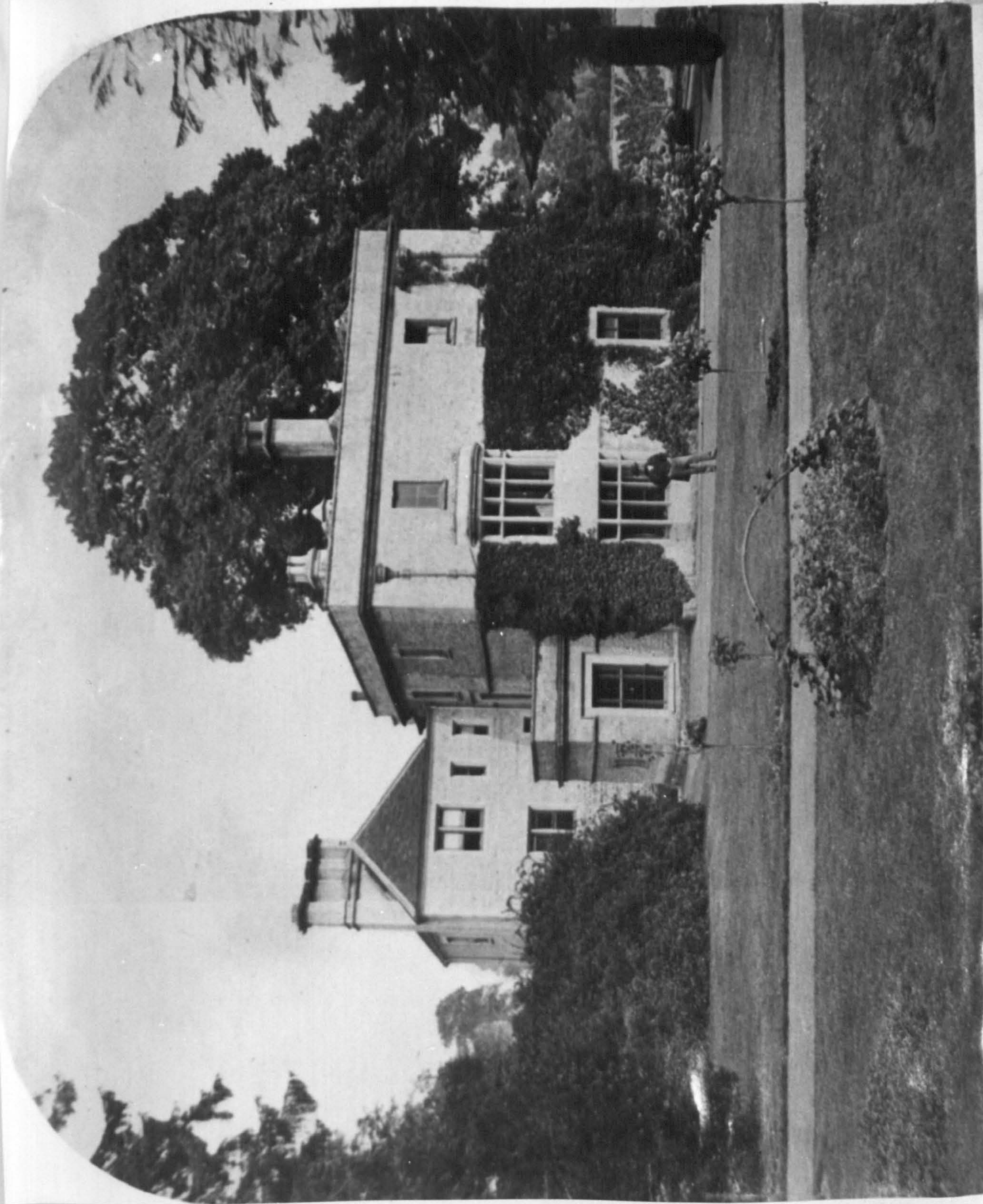
arranged, and we will take long rides in the lanes and talk over our affairs together, and about that time big boxes may be expected to arrive from various countries, full of strange things for us to pore over. After that I will go and see your new house, for you must have got one by that time, only don't get a bran new one with a garden in front, or I will never speak to you again. Good bye mine antient friend.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

Plate XV. '...a ruinous old squire's nest, six miles from Oxford,...

From a photograph among the Sneyd Papers, undated.



Denton, Texas - Bradford Hill - W. Lloyd in foreground

1839 - 1841

After his return to England in September 1838 Curzon fell ill and was forced to postpone his inspection of Denton House. He confided to Sneyd the difficulties of his relationship with his father, and in November 1839 resolved to go to Italy, but the visit was not an unqualified success. Sneyd, too, had his difficulties when the death of his landlord raised doubts about the future of his lease, and poor health compelled him to go to Germany. By October 1841 Curzon, bored with nothing to do, had obtained an appointment as Private Secretary to Sir Stratford Canning, with whom he left for Constantinople in November.

For this period eight letters have been given in full, with extracts from a further seven.

65. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 19 September 1838

I arrived yesterday, on board of a Pschay from Brighton, via Dieppe and Rouen, and am now writing to you just a[s] if nothing had happened. I read your letter to my mother and am delighted to find I shall meet you again so soon. Felix ille qui procul negotiis, therefore I ought to be very glad of the absence of all breeches and coats in my wardrobe, but as in these so called countries one must wear them, I am going to London on Monday. I intend staying there till Thursday, and then we will come back together, eh?

Don't look too hard at the old books, that I may have the pleasure of displaying my eloquence to you on the subject of bibliomania. I hear the papyri and Coptic and Egyptian MSS. are also arrived. Look at them superficially and write by return of post to tell me how they are; and tell me no end about yourself, my dear old croney, for nothing agrees with me so well as the sight of your hand writing, except the view of your right worthy countenance.

Vale, fare thee well till Monday. Tell Mrs Crabbe to [ge]t us a snug dinner [o]n that auspicious day, and we will shake each other by the hand, and help each other to another piece of fowl, and talk over old times, and make ourselves snug, and hope that by the blessing of Providence this may be the first of many pleasant days we may pass together.

Thine,

R. Curzon

66. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Denton House. ~~London.~~

My dear Sneyd,

[24 Upper] Brook Street, 8 November 1838

I was going to write to you today even if I had not recieved your respected missive, but I am sorry to say I have at present no idea when I shall be able to insconce myself in your hospitable snugery. I have been something seedy of late, and last night I had a hot and cold fit of the ague, a fact which does not give me a very agreable prospect for the winter, and of course I do not like to leave my doctor at present. It makes me laugh to think how cleverly my evil genius has sold me in getting me into this gloomy old hole at this time of the year, and knocking me over just as I intended to go away.

Cholmondeley is better and hopes soon to be able to leave London. I have nothing to tell you pertickler. I generally sit behind a thundering old tome of a morning and spell Greek contractions, for a reason I have. Every body who has seen my books has found out something more curious in them. Mr Cureton¹ discovered an apocryphal book in the middle of an Arabic MS., that I knew nothing of; he is translating it.² It treateth of the conversation between God and Moses, while he was on the summit of Mt. Sinai; and he has also picked out a little scandalous story about K. Solomon and the wife [o]f Jesus the son of Shirach.

It is getting dark, so for the present I conclude. When I know what is to happen to me I will write again. Give your faowls chesnuds and believe me,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

1. The Rev. William Cureton (1808-64), Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts, British Museum.

2. Formerly British Museum Add. MSS. 39670, Parham MS. LXXXVIII, later

(2. cont'd.). Or. MS. 8734, published by Curzon (with acknowledgments) as 'The Book of the Prophet Moses', Philobiblon Society, Miscellanies, II (1855-56).

67. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Denton House.
 Curzon's date completed from the postmark.

My dear Sneyd,

London, 10 November [1838]

Many thanks for your letter, what a kind hearted fellow you are. I have just seen the doctor and he says he thinks I may leave Town in about a week, when I hope to see you flourishing in the Aedes Dentoniana. Pray do not come to London, I am as stupid as a dozen of owls, yea even a baker's dozen, and I have the society of Phillimore and Cholmondeley, who are good enough to come and sit with me continually, and with the help of old and new books I get on very well in the day time; while at night I have the agreeable pastime of counting the hours as they are knocked off on the various chapel bells. What a dismal thing a bran new London chapel is, bell and all. There is nothing interesting belonging to it, while the old chimes of the Oxford churches put me in mind of all the good old monks and fat ecclesiastics, who have talked dog Latin and eat capons for conscience's sake. I long to be among them once again, and to rummage the Bodleian, and look at the Euclid, which is the only book with an older date than one of mine.

By the by, how could one get possession of anything belonging to All Souls? I want some fly leaves in a MS. they have got, to add to a collection of early fragments which I am going to bind up. Do you think they would take a fipunnote for them, or a grand binding for the dirty old book they belong to, or a ream of whitey brown for the new W. Closets which I hear they have made, or any other sweetmeat? How is this to be accomplished?

I shall be charmed to meet Ed. Bagot on Wednesday, or any other day when he may [c]all, and only hope I shall soon be about to thank

you in person for your goodwill towards,

Your affectionate friend,

R. Curzon

De Tabley is settled in a newly built palace at Genoa, and is as usual as pleased as punch. Poor Harris¹ has been spitting blood and is gone to Peaux, in the Pyranees, for his health. Will Leicester² flourishes in Canada and says he is well and happy. I calculate it is pretty cold there now.

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1. Possibly George Francis Robert (Harris), 3rd Baron Harris (1810-72), a contemporary of Curzon's at Oxford, who lived at Pau for some time. He and Charles John (Canning), 2nd Viscount and 1st Earl Canning (1812-62), another of Curzon's Oxford contemporaries, were both friends of Curzon's.
 2. ? William Henry Leicester (1813-45), younger son of the 1st Baron De Tabley and brother of George Fleming (Leicester afterwards Warren). He was an army officer.

69. No address. ~~1838~~

My dear Squire,

[? 1838]

How are your taters getting on? I hope you are now settling down into a regular good sort of a chap, as knows what a pig ought to be, but as you unfortunately are a parson I should recommend you not to wear your white cords too full, or to button your knees quite in front as yet.

Have you got a little hole bored through your front tooth, to spit through? If not, get it done quietly somewhere else, for as I said before, as you are a parson and do live so near that hotbed of old fashioned notions, Oxford, you must humbug the dons a little at first.

Take my advice, do not set up as a spanking roarer just yet, but comfort yourself that the fancy know you for a sly dog that can twist a cock's neck before he crows, and shoes his horse backwards when out on business. However, though we know you for a good 'un, you may trust me, but at the same time you may just as well send us a fifty punote and then we won't think any more about that £100 reward in the papers. Good bye you old rogue, I'll say nothing.

Yours at present,

Swinkey Jim

[Sketch]¹

1. Figure suspended by a wavy line used to fill up the remainder of the page.

73. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Longbridge Deverill, Wilts.

24 Upper Brook Street, 22 June 1839

...I dare say Long Leat is a very fine thing, and should not wonder if the prospect from the windows was beautiful and extensive, though in both these respects [i]t can not be compared to the view I have no[w] before me. The beautiful evenness of the grounds spre[ad] out before my eyes resembles a [rather large] sheet of whitey br[own] paper, sprinkled with the brownest sugar, terminate[d] only by browner buildings, through one window of which I have a view of a brown horse's bottom. In the distance, to the left a beautiful damsel clothed in brown is washing a whitish pair of stockings. There is a thundering black cat sitting under a blacker tree, looking at a nearly black sparrow, which is yperched on a twig as black as ebony. This charming a harmony of colours is kept up to the other senses, for my ears are charmed with the mewling of a hogany organ,¹ that a brown boy is grinding in the rain, and I myself am only just awakened from a brown study, having been staring at the beautiful leaden hue of six penny worth of sky, or rather cloud, which I may see if I look out of the top pane of my window, and thinking first of one thing, then of many things together, and then for a long while of nothing in particular, till I came to the conclusion that no oriental clime, no western country, nor any of the kingdoms of the south can boast of a landscape so entirely to be painted with sepia and Indian inks; and in short I defy the world in general to produce a view exactly resembling this. Don't talk to me of Long Leat, or Stour Head, or any other verdant park, I am not a cow to be humbugged with green fields, or a donkey to stand between two bundles of hay. What do I care for

1. Surely a small barrel-organ supported by a wooden (or mahogany) leg, but I have been unable to find another instance of this usage.

hay? I would not eat a whisp o[f] it for a pound, [? so] why should you crow over me about the country.

You ought to be delighted that al[l] your things have been spoiled, for you have now a good excuse to come here again, and enjoy the pastimes of the city. I shall tear myself from all these pleasures on Wednesday or Thursday and hope to find some strawberries at Parham...

Pray thank Lord and Lady C. Thynne¹ for me. I am very much obliged for their invitation, and should like to come and see them very much, and hope to do so some day, but when I do not know, for I leave Parham for Wales, and fear that I shall go abroad again in the autumn, that being one shade better than doing quite nothing here.

For the present fare thee well. I am going to send for Thorpe's man to pack my books for their last journey for some time, at least, as I trust they will have a long rest after their travels, on the shelves at Parham.

I am, as I have told you before,

Yours aff[ectionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. Lord Charles Thynne, seventh son of the Marquess of Bath, Vicar of Longbridge Deverill 1837-52, married Sneyd's cousin, Harriet Frances, daughter of Bishop Bagot. He later became a Roman Catholic.

76. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Denton Hall,

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 6 November 1839

As you are good enough to take so much interest in my affairs, I am going to bore you with a talk about one of my greatest enemies, that is ;ycleped myself.

I held a palaver with my father the other day, which unfortunately for both of us, ended in nothing. He was sorry that I did not take to country affairs, and yet could not see that his way of life, and his not staying here in the winter, were the reasons of my not doing so. Tho' I told him so, in as many words, he can not understand the fact that I am in my thirtieth and not my thirteenth year. I see that his odd habits and prejudices prevent his seeing any thing except through the medium of some preconcieved idea, which changes its aspect altogether. He is such a good, kind hearted man, and means so well to every one, that I could not find it in my heart to tell him that his excentricities and want of firmness, when any thing of consequence was to be done, or let alone, have been the cause of my brother's marriage, and my unhappiness and unsettled ways both of body and mind; it is a curious matter of natural history how so good a heart can be united to such a pragmatrical head. My father would give me the coat off his back, and then work himself up into a fury if I did not put it on in a way which pleased him. I have only to hope that in course of time he may become more like other people, and that he will allow me if I live, to be some comfort to him in his old age.

In the mean time, seeing that I can not do any good in my present position, I shall give up all thoughts of getting on in England, and

am going to pass the winter at Naples, with De Tabley, this year, and shall probably go somewhere else next winter, ad infinitum. I set out about the 20th, more or less, so I fear I shall not see you again till after Easter. Is there anything I can do for you out there? I think of going by Paris and Genoa, and then by sea, but I shall not stop more than a day or two anywhere on the road. I want to get the journey over, as that is likely to be a cold amusement at this time of the year.

Since writing the above I have recieved your letter, which offers a great contrast to the one I am writing to you. You seem to be uncommonly snug, certainly, and will, I have no doubt, pass the winter with great coziness and tranquility. The greenhouse will be a great addition to the luxuries of Denton. I shall expect to see a paper from you in The Horticultural Magazine, detailing the wonders of the celebrated Snugwarmium Sneydianum, a rare plant only to be found in absolute perfection at Denton Hall. Do not you think a greenhouse should be green outside, in opposition to white? I opine that it looks pleasanter when of a verdant aspect, them's my opinions...

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

77. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Denton Hall.

My dear Sneyd,

24 Upper Brook Street, 27 November 1839

Tonight I take my departure by the packet to Boulogne, where I hope to arrive by two o'clock p.m. tomorrow, winds and waves permitting. There I am to hire a carriage, which will take me through Paris to Chalons, from whence I simmer to Naples.

I saw the Bishop the other day, during his migration to Canterbury, looking as peert as a grub. He certainly is as handsome a high priest as one may wish to [se]e. Mr Parker¹ is coming to see you, he has undergone the operation of lithotrity and is now doing pretty well. Will you be so good as to tell Count Mortara² how much obliged [I am] for his letters of introduction which he sent me? I do not write to him because I have nothing interesting to tell him, and I do not think it is worth while troubling him with a letter to Oxford, when I have only to thank him for his kindness. He seems to be a very nice fellow...

-
1. Possibly Thomas Lister Parker (1779-1858), of Browsholme Hall, Yorks., art critic and antiquary, described in an obituary preserved by Curzon in Houghton b MS. Eng. 1129 as Hereditary Bowbearer of the Forest of Bowland.
 2. Alessandro Mortara, book-collector, some time Grand Chamberlain to the Duke of Lucca and close friend of Dr Henry Wellesley (1791-1866), some time Rector of Woodmancote (a parish about ten miles east of Parham), through whom he may have been known to Sneyd. Mortara died in Florence 14 June 1855. I am indebted to Dr Cecil Clough for this information.

78. Extract, letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street, readdressed to Denton,

[Begun at Naples 2 March, finished at Rome 8 April 1840]

Well, old gentleman, how are you off for cold? Are your teeth chattering and your fingers tingling, while you try to look for the sun through the damp fog and yellow gloom of your demense at Denton? Verily, if you are, you have nothing to do but to turn round and lean over the fire, and draw the curtains and be snug, which is unfortunately not to be done in this genial clime. The days are warm enough but the evenings are as chilly as the grave, and as I have no fireplace in my room you may imagine that there are times when I think of your cosy red room, and the bread sauce, and the negus with the orange marmalade therein, and of the ditty which is chaunted by the kettle as it sits purring on the hob, while you are sitting thinking of nothing in particular in the deepest recesses of the arm chair by its side. After all, there is nothing like a good English house inside, and as I am bored to death all day here, I am not so much delighted with the outside of the house and the fine climate as the English profess themselves to be.

De Tabley delights in paying visits and riding on the Strada Nuova, which is being interpreted "the Perks", and is [all]¹ that is nauseous to me. I have no companion in the morning and have to go and see the lions by myself. As there is hardly any thing to see, I find that neither my mind or body are much improved by a residence at Naples.

1. Word omitted.

One thing I have seen, tho' you cannot imagine the difficulty I had to obtain permission to look at this most beautifull thing, viz. the missal of Alexander Farnese illuminated by Julio Clovio, and here followeth the description of it. It is an octavo as big as a novel only thinner, being $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long [$4\frac{1}{2}$] wide and 1 thick, including the binding. This is of silver gilt of glorious design and execution, probably by Celleni. The writing is in small italics with a large margin left round it. Most of the leaves have marginal illuminations in the style of the Raffael arabesques. The miniatures are 4 inches high and $2\frac{1}{2}$ wide, surrounded with architectural borders in gold, with figures in their natural colours in nitches - jewels &c. These appear like Michael Angelo's designs and are always two together, face to face, as you have often seen in Italian missals. The miniatures [about 30 in number] are mostly copies of Raffael's pictures, and in this respect as well as from their careful finishing, they are more beautiful than any other Julio Clovios I have ever seen. The book altogether is perhaps the most perfect, and the most splendid volume in existance, as it is as clean and good as new, and if it was not wrong to covet and desire other men['s] goods I had rather have it in my library,...

N.B. I have just found this letter in my writing box, while I thought it had been in England I do not know how long, and have been abusing you to your brother here at Rome because you have not answered this epistle. I find all my friends are enraged with me for not writing, tho' they never think of doing so themselves, except in answer to my lucubrations.

1. In 1546. This Cardinal Farnese (1534-89) was grandson of Pope Paul III (1534-49).

De Tabley came here with me. We stayed a day at the great monastery of Monte Casino, which is a superb establishment. De T. is now gone back to Naples and is to meet me again at Genoa after the Holy Week. I have a very handsome lodging, No. 509, near our old house in the Corso, but much better. Every thing looks just as it used to do...

Pray write me a line to Genoa. I hope to be in London by the end of May. Do manage to come and give me a good visit at Parham early in the year. I wish I was there now, looking at the old trees, which I prefer to all the palaces of Rome, tho' I know I shall wish myself at Jericho when I have been a month in England...

79. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street, readdressed to Denton, readdressed to Cheverells.

My dear Sneyd,

Genoa, 12 May 1840

Verily I was grieved with the catalogue of troubles which clouded the pages of your letter, poor old fellow, I think I can see you as testy as a hedgehog, peeping at the orange puffs out of your arm chair. I wish I had been there to comfort you, entirely setting aside all thoughts of the bread sauce and so on, which I would have concealed from your eyes by devouring the same.

I do not know what to think about your difficulties with the house and perks at Denton, that is a horrible affair. What business had your landlord to go and die in that cool sort of way, without considering the inconvenience he might put you to? Lucky for him that I have not sufficient galvanic knowledge to bring him back again and give you a good long lease of your house. I wish you was safe at Wiggonholt or that I could give you a set of rooms at Parham, with an oak to sport when it pleased you so to do. I hope to hear of some arrangement of your affairs when I return to England, an event to which I look forward with pain, tho' I shall be glad to see you and other kind friends and relations again; but it grieves me to think of the idleness and vexation in which I shall pass my solitary time, and the shyness and gloom which will come over me once more when I set my foot upon my native land. Still, I have a hankering to get back, for which I cannot account, and feel almost sorry that I have accepted a very old invitation from De Tabley to go to Bondo for a week or two, where he will pass the summer. This will keep me away till the latter end of June probably, when I think I shall arrive in London from Rotterdam.

I left Rome on the 7th [May] and go to Turin on the 13th, Milan

17th, Chiavenna 25th, where I would ask you to write, if I knew how you was to direct to such an out of the way place.

This is a glorious city but more stupid than even Naples. All the people here are marquesses and very rich, all the Neapolitans are dukes and very poor, and go about in hackney coaches, whereas they walk here, the streets being as narrow as those of Venice. Yesterday I went into a church and heard a duet between a great organ and a triangle, which grieved me but pleased the congregation.

You cannot think how different it is travelling without a servant, which is my case at present, for the first time. It does not answer at all; you pay equally and get nothing, for nobody cares for you and you see the bad side of every thing, tho' they are very good people here and I know the country, so it is all the same to me. I believe nothing to be worse for a young gentleman's education who comes abroad for the first time, than to fall into bad society, which he cannot avoid at table d'hôtes &c., and where you hear nothing but English and are taken for a Roman Catholic if you do not abuse the Pope, and set down for a fool if [you] express any admiration for anything beautiful or venerable, which is different from what we have at home.

I have got no MSS., not one. Curiosities are becoming very, very rare all over Europe. At Rome they ask twice as mu[ch] as the things are worth in London, and have few good things after all. In a few more years there will be nothing left till the great Denton sale replenishes the market again.

I am in a hurry now and cannot write any more, so good bye. I

am sorry that the stupidity of this letter should form an addition to your miseries, and hope the next will be more amusing.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

Tho' I have no books I have found some curiously rusty iron. It comes from the Church of St Irene, which was made into an armoury when the Turks took Constan[tino]ple. I have Christian armour of the earliest form and quaint Saracenic pieces of defence, such as I never saw before.

Item, I have forty yards or so of old coarse lace for a bed and curtains, made up in an old fashioned way with red silk, all which would be very quaint if properly put up, and fills another thundering big box, which I hope we shall unpack towards the /end/¹ of June.

1. Substituted for '...middle...'

80. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at Denton Hall.
Curzon's date ('Thursday') completed from the postmark.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, [6 August 1840]

How are you, and how is yourself and all your affairs, and why did you leave London three days before I came there, and when are you coming here, and how are we to meet &c., cc., cc., and what have you done about your house? Tell me all about[it].¹

Mrs Crabbe told me you had a pain in your posterities, how is that? And somebody else told me you had been eating good things at my Lord Westminster's,² but I believe he lied unto me, for your brother was the man who concealed the dinner by devouring the same.

I came to the Custom House on Sunday and here yesterday evening, having come from the fair land of Italy in ten days, per Rhine, leaving the De Tableys in high prosperity. All my curiosities have stuck somewhere and are not yet to be heard of in England, except one or two grim things which I brought with me. An ivory tankard of the twelfth century is ugly enough to please you, I think. Do come and see it, I long to have a good shake of your venerable fist again.

Write to me and believe me,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

1. Word omitted.

2. Robert (Grosvenor), Marquess of Westminster, died at Eaton Hall, 1845.

81. No address, no salutation.

Parham, 12 August 1840

Poor unfortunate old fellow! Well I really am very particularly sorry to receive so bad an account of you, and wish I could do anything to make you better, even to putting on your blister for a month, if it would do you any good.

I was going to see you and comfort you, for a day or two, and talk of pleasant improbabilities with you for a season, but they would not let me go, There are people coming here with whom I have not an idea in common, but whom it is considered to be my duty to be bored with, as to bore them in return, which in this curious country appears to be the usual end of cultivating one's acquaintance; I wish people could understand that the only use of what is commonly called society is to pass one's time agreeably, by living with pleasant folks -

Well, your case has excited great commiseration here, and I hope you really are not so bad as your letter would lead one to think. You will be glad to show your house to your brother, and your sister must be a great comfort to you. Pray remember me kindly to both of them. I will come and see you as soon as I can, but I do not know when that is likely to be. I wish you could have had the living of Amberley and have lived in the old castle. The parson died the other day and is gone, I hope, to even a prettier place.

When I am in rather a better humour I will write you rather a better epistle. Pray get well for your friends' sakes.

Yours most affect[ionate]ly,

R.C.

N.B. Can't find any paper.¹

1. What Curzon has used is really note-paper, measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ ".

85. No address.

Parham, 27 September 1840

Why, you unconcionable parson, how am I to write an amusing letter when I have nothing amusing to write about, and am not amused myself? Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? It is raining cats and dogs, nothing particular has come to pass, and I am sitting alone in my own room, looking at the deer and other ravenous beasts in waterproof coats outside.

I wish you was here, for I enjoy a good rainy day with a friend on the other side of the fire, and I have many astoundingly interesting things to tell you, which have been bottled up in my head for I do not know how long, by reason of nobody caring to hear them here.

By the by, the other day I had a rummage in the old library at Petworth, at the top of the house, over¹ the chapel. I found an imperfect Caxton's chronicle, item, ten or twelve dusty MSS., one Chaucer, fine enough, and a vol. as touching ye soule, with illuminations representing several illfavoured soules in peculiar circumstances, an English MS. from a monastery at Warwick. The Northumberland household book is not there but in the possession of, or penes as the Latin hath it, the Duke of Northumberland. Verily there is much glory at Petworth, great spoil for the enemy, and pleasant things of various descriptions, among which I class the lady of the house² and her daughter also, and the roe bucks in the woods. Verily I wish Petworth belonged to me and nobody the worse, because then I would give a party to you and we would fare sumtuously every day, and you

1. Reading uncertain, possibly 'once'.

2. Mrs George Wyndham, daughter of the Rev. William Blunt, of Crabbet, Sussex. Her husband was the eldest of the 3rd Earl of Egremont's three illegitimate sons. He was later created Baron Leconfield. They had four daughters, all unmarried at the time of this visit.

should have a magnum of physic, a pill as big as a cricket ball, and a band of music in the watercloset whenever you felt inclined that way; and we would have seven elders reading out of seven chroniclis continually, till we went to sleep and dreamt of all that was agreeable till breakfast time on the morrow; and all men should feel interested in the account published by authority in all the newspapers, that we had each eat a leg and a wing and a bit of the breast of a remarkably fine fowl, bred by Crammer & Squelch, of Fatters Alley, Birdcage Walk, London, and that we had not gone out in a poney phaeton on Tuesday, with three grooms in yellow liveries turned up with pink, as we read in the disgusting papers of a filthy contemporary journal, but that the Rev. W. Sneyd did eat mutton on Friday (two slices) from our correspondent - Globe.

I heard from De Tabley a few days ago, he has not met with Canning¹ yet, so he cannot fix his plans, and consequently I have not nailed mine down yet. I think perhaps I shall go to Paris for a week presently, before the horrible cold weather sets in, but I have not settled anything or done anything, or feel as if I should do anything of very great consequence or utility just at present. In fact the Duke and the Pope and Louis Phillipe have not written to me lately, so perhaps we shall not astonish the world hever so much this winter, but if the Thames should suddenly ignite you will guess the author of that phaenomenon.

Well, how are you getting on? An American would ask after the welfare of your western side. How thrives the plaster? When shall you get away from Denton? Come here if you can, and we won't take the wasps' nest till the first rainy night after your arrival. I hope

1. ? Charles John, 2nd Viscount and 1st Earl Canning, M.P., mentioned on p. 90, n. 1 above.

your sister is well, pray commend me to her and believe me,

Your aff[ectionate] friend,

R. Curzon

P.S. What a bore greasy paper is.

P.S. No.2. Many thanks for the canticles.

87. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 20 October 1840

Well, I do not know that I have anything very exceedingly particular to say, except that I wish your western side required no blister.

By the by, can you find out for me where the story is relating to certain knights, about the tenth century, sallying out of a town to attack the enemy, when, being in some danger of getting beat, their wives came upon the wall and pulled up their petticoats and screamed out to the men of war that they should never see them in that situation again if they did not gain the victory. Upon this the poor husbands returned to the charge, defeated their foes, and I suppose pulled up all their wives' petticoats when they came home, but this the historian doth not relate. I cannot remember where I read this tale,¹ which forms the subject of a bas releef on the ivory cup I told you of. I got it for very little by reason of the facetiae thereon, but I have sent it to Garrard to put some waxen petticoats to the ladies, which will make it all decent and proper. The costume of the knights is not unlike those in the Temple Church.

I have also got an iron left hand of the fifteenth century. The fingers bend so as to hold the bridle, it belonged to some knight who had lost his arm. I have nothing else to tell you of in the way of curiosities, except armour, which you do not care about...

1. Can Curzon have been thinking of the *Lysistrata* (412 B.C.)? In the comedy the Athenian women seize the Acropolis and deny themselves to their husbands and lovers to stop them fighting, so that they can have more of their company. The known manuscripts and early editions are discussed, with collations, by B.B. Rogers, The Lysistrata of Aristophanes... (London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1911), Appendix, 209-47. I am indebted to Dr W. Williams, Lecturer in Classics, University of Keele, for this suggestion.

88. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 27 October 1840

It is with great pain that I hear the sad news of the calamity which has taken place in the Bishop's family. I hope Charles and Louis¹ are better, pray send me a line and tell me, for I am anxious to hear how they are getting on. I trust the fever has not seized upon any others of the party, it seems to have been a sudden blow, was it not, for I had not heard that poor Fanny Bagot² was unwell...?

How are you yourself? I hope you have received some benefit from your excursion to Leamington, and that you will be looking brisk when I see you again.

I expect De Tabley here on Thursday and am now alone, as my father and mother went to London this morning. I was a good deal sold about a week ago at finding that my mother was exceedingly annoyed at my staying here even two or three days by myself. It was then too late to put De Tabley off, or I would not have taken the liberty of <...>³ staying here. How different people's notions are! If I could not live at my family place, I should think myself very lucky if my son would do so, and should give him a pound to keep up the honor of the house, and think I had done a clever thing, too, in getting him to stay there.

1. The Rev. Louis Francis Bagot, Rector of Leigh, Staffs., died 1870.

2. Frances-Caroline, second daughter of Bishop Bagot, died at her brother Charles's rectory, Castle Rising, 19 October 1840, aged twenty-one.

3. Single word struck out.

When shall you be back again at Denton? I hope to pay you a visit during the winter, for I have made up my mind at last to seek in other lands that happiness which is denied me in my own, that is if nothing turns up before I have paid my debts and settled my worldly affairs, which I intend doing before I go. I wish I could get a place in the Chinese expedition.¹ The worst of it is that having been brought up to [n]o profession I am not good for anything in particular. I wish you would come and set up an old book shop with me, in some out of the way corner of the earth, where the Milordi Inglese would stumble on us by accident, and wonder at the strange tomes they found, and think £100 nothing for some of our treasures.

I dreamt last night that you and I were at Mount Athos, and that we quarrelled terribly about two old MSS. we found there. You swore one of them was not about medicine: and I swore it was, and so awoke. Hoping we may never quarrel about medicine or any thing else, I remain,

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

Pray send me a line to Brook St., I expect to be there on Saturday, and go to Tabley the next week.

1. The Chinese government's efforts to stop the opium traffic, in which British merchants were involved, and the British government's disinclination to recognize the seriousness of the effect of this on relations between the two countries, led to an outbreak of actual hostilities in January 1840.

91. No address.

Hagley, 18 March 1841

Incept Plōgus

Well, O Parson, so you have at length awoke to the fact of the unhealthiness of Denton. I always told you so, it lies so very low, and I hope you may have the good luck to find some other mansion on a gravelly soil, that will give you a bracing appetite, and let you off from all lumbaginous concretions. There is an old house half way between Elford and Litchfield that would be just the thing. It cuts out Garsington Hall hollow, and is in Staffordshire and among all your old friends and acquaintances. (Parenthesis, how like my father's hand I am writing with this pen, I believe it will write no other). It is full of bay windows and gable ends, and a certain old Miss Diet - I do not know how her name is spelt¹ - lives there only occasionally and would, I dare say, let you have it for a con-si-der-ation.

You had better not put lumps of caustic on your bottom, because one hole is enough in that region of the corporeal economy, and I don't see how you or your friends would recieve any benefit from two. Key² is a great man in his line. I have the highest respect and opinion for his talents, and have seen him cut great gashes in his patients, such as made me almost scream to witness. I am at a loss to know which Bagot can have told you he was the only man in the whole world to go to. I believe he is the first operating surgeon that we have. German baths are good things for those with whom they agree, but they are not in

1. Probably Dyott, the family seat was Freeford Hall, Lichfield.

2. Charles Aston Key, born 1793, appointed full Surgeon at Guy's Hospital in 1824. He pioneered a new technique in the operation of lithotomy and was the first operating surgeon at Guy's to use anaesthesia. He died in the cholera epidemic of 1849.

my line, tho' I dare say you would enjoy the society of Baden, with all its counts from Germany, and marquesses from Italy, and so on, but the scamps, w---s and swindlers from every quarter of the globe who /congregate/¹ in those places, bore me to extinction. You never know who you have got hold of, till he or she has got fast hold of you. Better go to Rome or Naples, or make a tour wherever you like best, and I am sure the enjoyment of the bright sky and employment for the mind, and change of air will do any one good who has any imagination, as you have.

My health rises and falls with ten days' pleasure or vexation, and I suppose these things have some effect on most people, unless they are entire and absolute old logs, and if you forget to be annoyed with your complaint perhaps it may forget to annoy you, post equitem sedit atra cura, there is one disease that will follow you in all lands. I wish that place was known where his power ceases to be felt, the steamers going there would find no lack of passengers. I believe the only thing is to take a small garret at The Patience Arms, till the coach to that utopia passes by.

I have been at Elford, I like Mrs Howard² very much. What a good heart she has, what a good thing a good heart is, I wonder why, for Mrs Howard's goodness neither has or will do me any good, and does not signify to me at all, for it is hardly in her power to do me any harm, and yet I love her for her goodness and it would be a pleasure to me to see her good face again. Perhaps this may be part of the happiness that awaits those who have the luck to get there, in a better world; it is a totally unselfish feeling, and as I have an

1. Substituted for '...associate with...'

2. Mrs Greville Howard, only daughter of Richard Bagot (1733-1819), married, 1807, the Hon. Fulke Greville Upton, who assumed the name Howard. He died in 1846, she died in 1877.

instinctive feeling of regard for a person in whom good predominates, even while I am good for nothing, how much greater <...>¹ happiness must that being feel, whose mind is pure itself, and who can look upon another whose nature reigns in the perfection of benevolence. On the other hand, tho' one may be totally independant there is someth[in]g repulsive and unpleasant in a selfish or ill natured mind, but I do not understand why this is, to me at least, for thank God I am very independant as far as society is concerned, and still, tho' I am no respecter of persons and care deuced little who people are, I find myself pleased with some and displeased with others when I think of them, even tho' I did not know them well and those I admired were by no means the cleverest or most amusing people in the room, finis. ('Deo gracias', quoth Sneyd). Here endeth ye rigmarole.

Revennons à nos moutons! Where do you think of going? I can not ask you to come abroad with me, because if I go I go to the antipodes, and you would not ~~like to~~put a mat round your middle, and shave your head, and paint yourself black, to be in fashion at Timbuctoo, tho' there be those at Timbuctoo who think themselves as fine when they have stuck a feather in their tail as some of us do with the same ornament on our heads.

What shall you do with the fair Basketfull?² A divorce is difficult to get and you can never send away the sepulchral John,³ he wouldn't go if you told him. What is to be done? I suppose you will say with Alfred, whom the gods call Alexis, the Bishop has not told me, therefore how can I decide.

1. Single word struck out.

2. Elsewhere referred to as Mrs Baskerville, a servant.

3. Presumably also a servant.

I hope you may stumble on an old house somewhere, and think you had better come here and look at the house I mentioned at the beginning of this treatise.

I have been to Milford¹ since I was at Elford, and caught two eels there with a spear, howdunsever² the butler caught twenty-seven - a beast - while Gooch and I were perspiring in the criminal court at the assizes at Stafford.³ I saw John Phillimore,⁴ Robert, i.e. Ben, is getting on very well and has made a pound or two, of which I am very glad and hope he may make another to keep them company. I saw your brother at Elford, he was rather seedy and went away on Sunday, and on Monday Paget⁵ did his best to pull down the church. We upset the pinnacles and the weathercock in fine style. He says he is going to repair it, but that remains to be seen. He is a fine priest, but he might take several lessons from our great uncle at Merton, with advantage. He says 'I' and 'my', two words which I hate in sermons, whereas Bushel,⁶ with all the fervour of his zeal, always speaks as if he was but the instrument through which his master's words were given, ~~and not the giver of those words himself.~~ - I should like to see No. 99⁷ of the Oxford tracts. If it really is Popish they must have let some

1. Milford Hall, Baswich, near Stafford, home of Richard Byrd Levett, a contemporary of Curzon's at Christ Church. Levett's mother was a Bagot.

2. Cf. 'howdumsever' in No. 161 and 'howsonedever' in No. 162.

3. Which Gooch this is, and what he and Curzon were doing is not apparent from the reports of the Lent Assizes printed in The Staffordshire Advertiser. They were not on the Grand Jury.

4. Presumably John George Phillimore (1775-1855), elder brother of Sir Robert.

5. See No. 3, n.1.

6. I am unable to account for either 'our great uncle at Merton' or the soubriquet 'Bushel', but the person referred to seems

booby into their society, for I think his Holiness the Pope must heartily condemn Newman and Pusey as the greatest opponents to his sway, of any who have arisen in these days.

Vale,

R. Curzon

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- (6. cont'd.). almost certainly to have been Curzon's old friend Walter Kerr Hamilton, later Bishop of Salisbury (see p. xlvi, n. 3 above). In No. 94 (not selected) Curzon remarks: 'I am sorry to hear that Bushel Hamilton is going to leave Merton, he will be a great loss there...', letter from 24 Upper Brook Street, 12 May (watermark 1840, year probably 1841, when Hamilton became a canon of Salisbury). Hamilton had a reputation for 'fervour'.
7. A slip seems more likely than a joke. Tract XC, the last of Tracts for the Times, appeared 27 February 1841 and contained an interpretation of the Thirty-Nine Articles by John Henry Newman, later Cardinal (1801-90). Its contention that the Articles did not oppose the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church created enormous indignation and controversy, confirming erroneous but understandably strong suspicions that the Oxford Movement was hostile to the Reformation.

93. Extract, no address.

24 Upper Brook Street, [finished
5 May 1841]

...My father was nearly killed by a cab yesterday, which ran against him while he was looking at something else, in South Molton Street, but happily he got off with a bruise on his chest, which the doctors do not consider as alarming, so I hope he will not feel it much. I am often alarmed about him for he never looks before him and is always thinking of something else, so that he is always having narrow escapes. Perhaps this is the best, after all, for a cautious man like me generally gets killed outright when he thinks he has made sure there is no danger, for a false calculation is more useless than want of thought...

...My brother is going to be a brewer, so I shall have the satisfaction of seeing 'Brown, Curzon & Daniel & Co.', 'entire XXX'. He expects to get £1,000 a year by this, which I hope may be the case, but the affair is as yet in the vat of time.

I am enjoying the prospect of the back yard behind the house, which looks, I think, full as brown as it used to do, and am happy in being able to afford amusement to several laundry maids who look into my window all day, during the intervals between ironing and folding up shirts and pocket handkerchiefs.

Last Sunday the Clerk of the Parish took a rise out of me by making me hold a plate at the door of St Mark's Chapel, so another Christian and I stood on each side of the door for all the people to stare at after service, like Gog and Magog at Guild Hall. It was quite

a caution to look at us.

...I, or rather my mother, for she gave me £10 for the purpose, bought six pieces of painted glass yesterday... of the brown muddy style of the fourteenth century in France, coarsely done but genuine old glass. One or two are knights in armour, one is a portrait of K. John of France [sketch] and most likely the others are meant for particular people. I mean them for the chapel at Parham... I consider this a great acquisition, considering the price, and having got them through Willement¹ I had an agreeable rout in his warehouse into the bargain. He is a man after my own heart, he is so thoroughly saturated with good taste, and genius in his line. I always feel as if I was talking to Albert Durer or some other "famowse conynge wight" when I speak to him...

1. Thomas Willement (1736-1871), artist in stained glass.

98. No address.

O thou Sneyd,

Parham, 30 September 1841

I have been waiting I don't know how long to hear what you have been about, charged up to the muzzle with epistolary communications which I knew not where to send. I wish you could come here for a while, that we might have a talk concerning divers matters, and if you was to bring that small tooth comb with you, it would add to my pleasure in recieving you. That must be atrociously precious, painfully curious as I may say. I suppose it is really a large tusk comb, for I never saw an antedeluvian small tooth, they being mostly good stout scratching engines that I have had the fortune to see.

De Tabley left this place this morning, and Mr [Parker]¹ is at this moment quilldriving up stairs. I have only just returned from Wynnstay² &cc., and got a letter from Palmer this morning, asking me to come to Wanlip, to be godfather to his son, so I must be off again, which is inconvenient for I have got a cold and no cash, and am tired of wandering about, and wish I could sit upon my nether end for the rest of my days. I start on Monday, so write me a letter to Brook Street and tell me what your plans are for the winter. I should be glad if I knew what mine were.

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1. Name accidentally omitted at the beginning of a new page, but Curzon refers to the possibility of his visit in a letter of 9 August, and the last paragraph of this letter appears to confirm it.
 2. Near Wrexham, Denbighshire, home of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn Bt., M.P. (1820-85).

Mr Parker has got a proof of Nash's print of the Hall here.¹ Unluckily, it is not a very successful one, nor are Shaw's² prints of my reliquaries very excellent portraits of them. You should show him your wonderful curiosities, I dare say he would like to draw some of them. Good bye, write to

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. John Nash (1808-78), water-colour painter and draughtsman.
2. Henry Shaw (1800-73), draughtsman and engraver.

to Parham at all, now is your time. My parents leave it at the end of the month, and I shall go to the antipodes the month after, for I have neither money or spirits to enjoy the restless pleasures of visiting my acquaintances for seven months, at the rate of three or four days per house.

I have nothing to show you that you do not know, except a glass case full of all my little curiosities. I saw a bhul table with draws in it all round, i.e. on both sides, for it is oblong, which my soul desires. It is very cheap for £35, and very rare, as those sort of tables are generally made to stand against the wall, and have a raw back; whereas this one has bhul on all its four sides, so perhaps I shall say to myself 'What's the odds? Vogue la galère!' and get it tomorrow morning, before I go back, if my courage does not fail me, and then I shall have that to show you too.

I had a happy meeting with Ormonde¹ today, but am sorry he is not going to be married, for it was reported in the higher circles that he was about to lead the lovely and accomplished (I don't know who) to the hymeneal altar. When will these reports prove true in our case, Oh Sneyd? When will your little Sneydlings gambol on your verdant lawns? And when will the Curzonides become the focus for the admiration of an exulting world? Alas, pounds or the want of pounds form the obstacles to many a fair scheme, 'Sine Cerere et Baccho fugit Venus!' but 'Sine auro neque Ceres aut Bacchus atque Venus adsunt!', quoth Cornelius Agrippa or some other gentleman who was equally likely to know all about it. But as the candles and my wits have now just arrived at an equal degree of dullness, I shall treat you with no

1. John (Butler), Marquess of Ormonde (1808-54), married 1843
Frances Jane, daughter of General the Hon. Sir Edward Paget.

99. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

[London, 8 October 1841]¹

What a singular pleasant thing a pound is, and what remarkably agreeable company pounds are in the plural number, in a general point of view. I have been going about all day with Holford,² to Garrard's, Stour & Mortimer's,³ Hertz,⁴ Buchannan,⁵ Baldock,⁶ &cc., and how civil they all were, and what astounding things we saw, and what incredible prices they asked the rich man; it made me sigh when I got home, to think how worthy I was of all these things, and how entirely they are out of my power to possess. After all, what common place things the things are, in England, in comparison with the pleasant gewgaws of Italy and even France; and the prices are so ridiculously large in proportion to the merit of the objects, and how very poor the taste of the artificers of England is: they cannot get beyond old oak, and Louis XIV. And what a lot of things Cellini must have made, if you believe the shop keepers.

Well now, as touching your big box. I want to see it hugely, but I cannot do so just now, and on the other hand, if you intend coming

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1. See the last line of this letter.
 2. Robert Stayner Holford (1808-92), builder (1852-54) of Dorchester House, Park Lane, where he gathered his pictures and books.
 3. Storr & Mortimer (later Hunt & Roskell's), jewellers to H.M., 156 New Bond Street.
 4. Bram Hertz, sculptor and jeweller, 11 Great Marlborough Street.
 5. James Buchanan, gold and silver caster, 4 Roquet Court, Fleet St.
 6. Robert Baldock, bookseller, 85 High Holborn.

more lucrubrations tonight, and so thyne old friend Robert Curzon wisheth thee all good luck and prosperity, henceforth and for evermore, from this time present, being near 12 o'clock A.M. on Saturday, Oct. 8, 1841.¹

.VALE.

1. Had it been Saturday it would have been the 9th.

100. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

[London], 26¹ October 1841

I don't exactly see by your letter when you are coming to the great metropolis. Let me recommend Monday as a good day for the purpose, as I shall be here then for three or four days, previous to my embarkation for the other end of the world, seeing that I have been appointed Private Secretary to the Ambassador at Constantinople. This is not quite settled yet, because Lord Aberdeen² will not give himself the trouble of writing the necessary official letters, but I suppose it will be concluded in a day or two. I fear this place is rather infra dig, but still I must be glad of any plausible looking appointment, as I have not been brought up in the trade, and any thing is preferable to the idleness and discontent of my present life.

I wish I could have got to Denton, and I am sorry you could not manage to pay me a visit at Parham. I should have liked to have shown you all the marvelous things I have got since you was there last, and also to see the wonders you have brought from beyond the seas. I have had a long talk about you with the Dutchess of Hamilton,³ who I think is certainly smitten. You should go and see her in Scotland next summer, and admire the grim things at Edinboro' and Northumberland. I have had some pressing invitations to those regions, and should have liked to have made a northern tour with you, if the fates had not decreed otherwise.

De Tabley and Mr Parker are here, my father and mother come up on

1. Altered in pencil from 27 October.

2. George (Gordon, afterwards Hamilton-Gordon), Viscount Gordon of Aberdeen (1784-1860), at this time Foreign Secretary.

3. Susan Euphemia, daughter of William Beckford of Fonthill Gifford, (1786-1859), married the 10th Duke 26 April 1810.

Saturday for a few days, on their way to Hagley. I was very glad to hear from my father this morning, that he was pleased with my appointment. He says he hopes I shall rise to the top of the profession, so do not, I, for that would take some time as well as some luck, and I had rather live in peace as an English gentleman than hold all the embassies at once. I do not wish to stay out there for ever, and as I never have had any piece of good fortune I suppose I never shall have a chance of making myself famous either in this or any other line.

I dare say you are uncommon snug at Denton just now. We are beginning to sneeze here in Town, and the air feels like a half frozen charnel house, all which is probably very pleasant for those who like precicely this kind of weather, but which suiteth not the temperament of your loving gossip,

R. Curzon

1841 - 1845

This period includes Curzon's short tour of duty in the diplomatic service, 1841-44, the more important part of which (1843-44) was spent at Erzurum. Curzon's share in the negotiations was evidently not negligible, because Sir Stratford Canning at one time thought it would bring him a knighthood,¹ but this was never forthcoming. Erzurum proved to be an unhappy experience for Curzon, the isolation of the place, jealousy between the negotiators, bad food, and above all the extent to which he allowed his subalternity to prey on his mind, brought out the worst in him and resulted eventually in complete collapse. After being invalided home he became increasingly sensitive to his domestic bondage and to the charged atmosphere produced in any house shared with his parents, and he envied Sneyd both his freedom and Denton's impregnable calm. Realizing that he could escape only by joining forces with Sneyd, or by getting married, Curzon tried first to persuade Sneyd to take Wiggonholt, but the offer was wisely declined. Toying half-heartedly with thoughts of the alternative, Curzon left for Italy in

1. 'By the way Reshid [Pasha] has promised me a nishan for Curzon, and if I can get him a "Lion and Sun" from Persia, I do not see what should keep him from being knighted and sporting "Sir Robert" till he gets his peerage in the course of nature...'. Stanley Lane-Poole, The Life of the Rt. Hon. Stratford Canning (Longman, Green, & Co., 1888), II, 155, quoting a letter to Lady Canning, 6 February 1846.

October 1845 and returned in the following June.

For this period twelve letters have been given in full with extracts from a further nine.

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101. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Trieste, 16 December 1841

My peregrinations by land are for the present finished, and now I am to set out again upon the vomit compelling element, for I believe the forty-fifth time. The Cyclops steamer, which I see out of the Prince Metternich Hotel, appears to be a fine large vessel, and as I never was on board a war steamer before, this voyage will have something new in it, and I hope the sickness will not be increased in proportion to the size of the ship, for if it does I have to look forward to a thundering emetic.

Now as touching my journey on the mother earth, I have very little to relate, for I have travelled so continually along the road and dawdled so eternally when I got to the city, that I have seen hardly anything. The country by Gratz is beautiful, all wooded mountains and pleasant valleys, with every now and then a ruined castle to give an interest to the scene. This is the only part of Austria which I have not seen, and tho' very habitable and agreeable it is not to be compared to Saltsburg or to many parts of the Tyrol.

Next door to me in this hotel is the Prince Bishop of that beautiful old place.¹ He is also a prince by birth, being a brother of that notorious adulterer P. Schwartzenberg. He is about my age and seems to be a gentlemanlike man. Only think, what a position! That is just what I should like to be, or rather to have been, in the old time. Fancy, what a jolly life! If one was ambitious one would become Pope by bribing the cardinals, or if that would not do I should screw my

1. Prince Friedrich von Schwarzenberg (1809-85), Archbishop of Salzburg, brother of Prince Felix (1800-52).

diocese till I got money enough to build a great cathedral and a hospital, and so on, and do ostentatious acts of beneficence, and become St Robert of Saltzberg, the patron of all such as were very snug and liked pleasant things, a place which is at present vacant in the calendar; and when it is filled up you and I will go in an amazing easy coach, and burn two candles at his shrine for the benefit of our souls' comfort, and also in the hopes that he may inspire us with ideas which may be of service to our bodies in this wicked world.

There is a smell here, not to call it by another name, that puts me in mind of Venice. I wish I was going there, but I fear Sir S. Caning will not do so, tho' I hear that the officers of the ship wish it very much. Perhaps I may have a glimpse of Pola and Spalatro, but unluckily no Englishman really cares in his heart to see these things, as I do, or at least very few of them; they only go to say that they have seen them and not from any real pleasure that they take in studying a work of art.

I was lucky at Vienna in buying certain articles, of which one has the rare merit of being useful; for there is in Egypt one Basileas Bey, a mighty man among the Copts, and Private Secretary to the Pasha, who lent me a boat and for whom I had ordered a watch set with diamonds as a present. But I find it has never been sent and I have purchased a sword, with the scabbard sumptuously ornamented with turquoises, which I will lay at his feet instead. The other things are ornaments in the old Cellini style. They are worn by the magnates of Hungary and appear to be of the sixteenth century or thereabouts. One or two of them are very handsome things.

17 December.

The last thing that has happened is that we had put off our departure from this place. We were to have gone yesterday, and last night the Chief Engineer of the Cyclops, who had got drunk, as is supposed, in company of some Jews and the people of an Austrian steamer here, tumbled off the quay with his hands in his pockets into the water, and his funeral is now passing under the windows. They say he is a great loss to the ship, poor fellow, his death must have been very easy for he was not five minutes in the water and must have been drowned immediately.

I hope you are going on well in health and prospects. Pray remember me to all my friends and believe me,

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

103. No address.

My loving Gossip,

(Pera) British Embassy,
Constantinople, 26 February 1842

Whereas the tretise which accompanies this note was to have enveloped a certain little cornet of pink sattin which it mentions in its pages, but as I have not a convenient opportunity of sending the foresaid cornet without squashing and thereby spoiling it, I send you the history of it alone, trusting the time may come when I may present you with this relic of the days when Miss Timoni flourished in all the bloom of her virginity.¹

But however that may be, I won't write to you again till you have told me all about yourself and Denton, and the wonders of the great Ark which floated over from beyond the seas when I was on the other side of them myself. I heard about your festivities at Blithfield. Pray remember me kindly to My Lord and Miss Bagot² and all of them, and convey my congratulations to the High Priest that worshipeth in Cuddesden (<...>³ on the marriage of his son.⁴ You know I always stood up for that scion of the Bagotian house and now I hope more strongly that he may live in honour and prosperity and die in peace. Remember me to him also.

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1. In a letter from the British embassy dated 9 February, Curzon gives a long account of a Greek wedding, at which he was given the cornet or scarf.
 2. By his first wife Lord Bagot had a daughter who died in 1801. By his second wife he had three more daughters, Louisa-Frances, who died in 1829; Agnes, who married in 1828 John Newton Lane of King's Bromley Manor; and Eleanor, who was born in 1814, to whom this refers.
 3. Single word struck out.
 4. Edward, Bishop Bagot's eldest son (1808-74) married, 15 January 1842, Matilda, daughter of Henry Perkins of Hanworth Park.

I wish I could show you the Bezestein at Constantinople. Mr Maule,¹ one of my bretheren here, bought a lordly dish about two foot across, of fine old china beautifully painted, for about one pounds five, there, two days ago, and there are divers other matters there which one may get for nothing, and something else into the bargain.

Now write to me, for I thirst for a history of all your acts and deeds. They are much more interesting to me out here than any accounts I can send you of a foreign land, about which you know so much already. Fare thee well,

Yours Affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. See p.i, n.2.

104. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street,
readdressed to Denton,

My dear Sneyd,

Pera, 25 April 1842

Verily it was with great pleasure and content that I recieved your letter the day before yesterday. I was beginning to think you as well as the rest of my friends a set of very cool correspondents, for I have heard from none of them for the last six months, more or less, so that your letter was quite a revival of old recollections.

I am sorry to hear you have been so ill, tho' I feel some envy, tho' without any hatred or malice, at the account of your snug prospect of sitting in the [Ash] Parlour¹ in the fine summer time, surrounded by all the various wonders which the great Ark contained, while the blue bottles and butterflies are fluttering about outside. Oh that I had a house big enough to hold you and me during the winter, where we might talk Anglo Saxon of a dull day, and where none of your new fangled people and ideas could possibly get beyond the kitchen and larder; and where we might expect a solemn visit from Shirley, with news of his late most glorious majesty King Charles the Martyr. Here it is all different from such notions, we have the inconvenience without the splendour of the Barbaric East. I expect I shall not be able to stand it very long, tho' I do not know where to go if I leave this old rattletrap of a city, for I am more tormented with seeing every thing going on wrong, according to my notions, at home, than I am here, shut up in a dark hole in the midst of so glorious a place and such people as we have here, Oh Sneyd, very good in their way but so totally out [of] my line that I feel quite alone. The population of

1. One of the panelled rooms at Denton, dating from 'about 1700',
V.C.H., V, 106.

Constantinople is divided into two classes, the clever rogues and the good stupid dupes. There is no one $\langle \dots \rangle^1$ or very, very few who have any entertaining knowledge, and the conversation is either of dull politics or most poor twaddle before the ladies, and very stale smut at other times. Old things and quaint persuits such as you and I follow with such zest being altogether set aside $\langle \dots \rangle^2$, so that if ever I do so far commit myself as \lceil to \rceil talk about Byzantine matters, I am wondered at and supposed to be partially deranged. Nevertheless last Tuesday, I think it was, I was sitting in a room at the Seraglio, near the mint, talking through an interpreter with a certain man who belongs to the jeweler of the crown. He showed me the jewels of the Sultan, which he was putting in order for Saturday the 23^d of April, the feast of the birthday of Mohammed the Prophet. Some of these are splendid things and worth unheard of sums. He has one diamond this $[\text{sketch}]^3$ size and about thirty others so big $[\text{sketch}]^4$. I have drawn both these rather under si[ze]. On questioning my friend the jeweler about what there was in an old building near there, called the Old Treasury, he told me there was a great chair of gold, set with precious stones, which weighed ten cantars, item, various incomprehensible old things that belonged to the Christian emperors, ITEM, sundry Greek MSS., large dirty old tomes which nobody cared about and wherof numbers had been burned a few months ago because their room was wanted. He said also that there is a room full of old Greek MSS. in the Church of St Irene, close to where I was sitting, and that these are more numerous

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1. Possibly two words struck out.
 2. Single word struck out.
 3. An oval outline $1\frac{1}{4}" \times 1\frac{3}{4}"$.
 4. A circle of $\frac{3}{4}"$ radius.

than those in the Treasury. Here is a discovery, no one has ever got at this before. The libraries of some of the Byzantine emperors then really do exist, and what may they not contain? We know how fond they were of histories and poetry. I see visions of lost authors and entire Livies, and the works of Tacitus and Manetho, and all sorts of folios laying open their painted and gilded pages to my view. I went straight to the Ambassador and begged him to write incontinently to Riza Pasha, the Great Chamberlain, for leave to rummage [in] the Treasury and the Church of St Irene, that I might at least know whether these awful volumes were worth asking for, for the nation, but alas he sees the consequence of this discovery. If the books are really as precious as they most probably are, such an acquisition would gain equal credit for the <...>¹ person who should procure them, as that of the Elgin marbles did for Lord Elgin, or as the MSS. in London did for Sir Robert Cotton, so he wants to do this himself and will take his own time about it, and tho' I have no doubt he would allow me fair play in mentioning my name in conjunction with these books, yet the affair does not proceed, and I am in an agony lest some one else should step in and get possession of them; or that some one who does not understand the matter should look them over, and tell me coolly that the books are of no value. I must beg you to say nothing about this till you hear from me again, as I shall try all I can to gain my point of examining t[he] MSS. as soon as possible. And if this is not allowed I will write to the Archbishop of Canterbury and every body else who is supposed to protect old books, to preach a crusade against the Turks, and write articles in all the newspapers in England on the subject, till we get a sight of these long hidden tomes.

1. Possibly two words struck out.

When you write to me again pray tell me how De Tabley and Cholmondeley & cccc. are getting on, for tho' I will not write to them again if they do not chose to answer my letters, yet I am not the less desirous to hear of their welfare, and hope all my friends and gossips are going on well in their respective ways.

As touching dressing gowns, how the deuce am I to know what sort of a garment William Bagot has? Nobody wears wadded robes here, except the Circassions, who have an odd sort of frock coats, with eight places for holding cartridges on the breast. I sent to the bazaar this morning to enquire what there was to be found, and I am to hear the result tomorrow, and as Sir J. MacNeil,¹ the Persian envoy, is expected here in a few days, on his way home, perha[ps] I may be able to send you something by him, as Ambassadors pay no duty at the Custom House in England, a great consideration to the reciever as well as the sender of presents from the East.

You cannot think how much it takes off from the pleasure of having any thing to do with an embassy when one knows all that is going on but are not allowed to mention anything. The whole point of news consists in the divulging it, as the knowing what other people are about is of no advantage to onesself, like scientific or mechanical knowledge, and therefore becomes only a load of profitless trash when it may not be told as an important fact to a wondering audience.

Well I have nothing more to say just now, so fare thee well and only tha[nk] God that you are snug and contented at ho[me] and in a different case from,

1. Sir John McNeill M.D. (1795-1883).

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

[Endorsed]: 16 May 1842

We have no letter alas!

Pray let us know the news

- Y^{rs} de la Z.

105. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

Buyukdere, 24 September 1842

I have just read your most welcome letter, and incontinently proceed to answer the same. How very snug you seem to be in your chamber of dais at Denton, would that I was with you, in the arm chair opposite, in the midst of a warm discussion of the merits of the surprizing gimcrack on the table by our side.

You tell me you have made alterations in the manner described, but as I am not in the secret pray send me a plan, and a picture, and so on, and initiate me into the mysteries of the Dentonian architecture. De Tabley wrote to me at the time, that you was going to bid for a reliquary of so rare and extraordinary a nature that nobody had found out that it was curious at all, and you accordingly hoped to get it for a few thousand pounds or so, and bear it away from the ignorant multitude in triumph to your treasury, near which they have built the town of Oxford. I suppose when we are all dead, people will consider the departed wonders of Strawberry Hill as naught in comparison with your famous residence, and will bring ladders secretly and pay no end of cash to the gardner to be allowed to peep over the wall; and somebody who has somehow got into the house will write a book and make his fortune by describing the astounding uniqueness of every thing he did, or did not, see. Much do I wish that I was the man, or that I had a little grim old tower somewhere of my own, where I might put all my marvelous collections in a row, with a picture in the Van Ecyk style of Pater Gualterus le Sneyd, with a thundering ring on his finger, pointing at nothing in particular in the foreground, which should

hang over the carved ebony cabinet on the left handside of the fireplace, between the ostensorium you wot of, and the conjuring wand of the late Cornelius Agrippa of incredible memory, that I had from the African magician, both of which should stand on the top of the said cabinet, opposite the painted window, which has such a fine view of the ivy bush. There would I dwell in peace, far from Manchester and Constantinople and such like noisy places; and as for my wife, if I was blessed with such a commodity, she should be warranted to let me ride my own hobby as I chose, and to admire any wonderful quaint thing which I bought so uncommonly cheap, and to think it was all right and proper that I should do so, and should never let the things be moved in the priest's room, because Mr Sneyd likes to have it in that way. But years roll on and these things do not come to pass, tho' there is no reason why they should not, except that my worthy family and I do not understand each other. However, God is great, and as things will not change there is no use talking about the matter.

Now, as to Constantinople, the other day Sir S. had another audience with the Sultan, who recieved us in a seedy little room, as usual, without any state or any appearance of royalty, except that he had a diamond as big as a watch in an ornament round his neck, and a fly flapper with a diamond handle worth £1,000 by his side. He allowed us to go and walk about his palace, where there was nothing half so nice as Denton Hall, the foresaid house being made of wood, only in one room there was a glass case full of arms mounted in diamonds, emeralds and pearls, worth I do not know what.

We are now listening to the cannons firing for the birth of Prince Abdel Hamid, who entered this world on the 22^d of this month.

Now the 20th of September is a wonderfully fortunate day to be born in, according to the Turks, so the Sultan Validé (the Sultan's mother) went to her son's harem and [had] all the Sultan's wives that were nearly ready to produce, well shaken, in the hopes of a prince making his appearance on the lucky day, when he would have been the wonder of his age, and would have conquered all the world. Now he will be only like other princes, and the salutes fired in his honor for seven days will cost the country £70,000: much good may it do him. No other event of importance has occurred lately, except that I have sent a box towards England this morning, which contains a Persian dressing gown for you. It is wadded, but I doubt whether you will like it, for it is a coat of many colours, much the fashion at Tabreez but not of a parsonic complexion at all, so you [may] present it to some one of your acquaintance if you can not take upon yourself to wear it.

I hope to pay you a visit sometime in the spring, please God, for tho' I see no use in returning to England beyond the pleasure of seeing my friends and relations, yet I find there is still less profit in staying here. I think sometimes of going homewards by Spain, or by Venice, but have not made up my mind...

Now if you possibly can bring yourself to write me a letter soon I shall be very glad to hear all about you and your Dentonian arrangements. Pray remember me to the Bishop and all his priests and lay followers, and lastly, believe me,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

106. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Erzeroom, 12 March 1843

In vain do I answer the two hundred and three letters you have written me during the last year and a half by return of post, and in vain have I written you other epistles. I can get no answer, and I want to know how you are going on, what you have done at Denton Hall, and divers other matters respecting you and yours, to keep me in the knowledge of what has come to pass among our friends for the last "hever so long". De Tabley and Phillimore are the only ones of my friends who ever write to me. As for the Hon. Hugh,¹ I suppose his thoughts are so much occupied with the affairs of the nation that he has not had leasure to think of his absent friends for above a year, proving the truth of the old proverb 'out of sight out of mind'.

I am now in a thoroughly original place. Erzeroom is quite different to any thing I have seen before. It is more dirty, more squalid, more tumble down and more covered with snow and ice than any city I ever dreamt² of, except the good town of Spitz Bergen, or some of the charming cities of the blue noses in the N. of Canada. Oriental dresses and manners seem quite out of place in a country 7,000 feet above the level of the sea. I am perched up in the air, you see, about half as high again as the top of Snowdon. Certainly we have fine air but nothing else fine in the place, tough cocks and sheep form our only fare, the bread is hardly good to eat, and I who am just recovering

1. The Hon. Hugh Cholmondeley, later Lord Delamere, M.P. for Montgomery Borough 1841-47.

2. Altered from 'dreampt'.

from a fever which threatened to carry me off even to a more distant place, find the greatest difficulty in getting any thing to eat which is not too repulsive to look at for a weak stomach. I have been very nearly leaving you and the old books behind, O Sneyd, and that without making any will, so in case I should never get back to England I hereby bequeath all my manuscripts and books printed before 1525 to you, for your benefit and disport. However, I hope it will please God to let me return safely some day, for none of my family are worthy of Parham and the things contained in it, and I should like to brush it up and carry into effect some of my schemes there before I die. I cannot tell how long I shall be here, for we have been oppressed with various calamities. Captain Williams, my colleague, has been very ill; the Persian plenipotentiary is dying at Tabreez; I have had a narrow escape; and the Turkish plenipo is dead. I have therefore to wait till another great Turk and Persian can be caught and sent here, over the mountains and snow and precipices, at the risk of their lives, for the journey from Trebizond resembles the roads across the Alps before the roads were made, and that from six to ten days in length; while the road to Persia, tho' better, is so strong of Koordish robbers as to make [the] journey almost too exciting for gentlemen of weak nerves. A few of these worthies have been caught by the Pasha of this place, and they are to undergo the operation of hanging today or tomorrow, or some day soon, when the Pasha is in an executive humour.

The house here would interest you. The rooms are mostly fitted up with paneling in triangular and octagon compartments, the cielings the same, with a good deal of carving in the old Saracenic style, and all this gilt and illuminated with brilliant colours. It produces a rich and quaint effect. Capt. Williams and I have got a house in this

style, but I am still at the Consulate, w[h]ere I have been for a month, too ill to move. The Pasha gives us this house, he has given us horses too, but I have not been able to ride mine yet, but I hope to do so in a few days now. The six or seven Franks resident here have been wonderfully kind to me. People whom I have never seen send me daily little luxuries which are not to be bought here, and do all they can for me in every way, like good Samaritans. Unfortunately there is no one here with whom I have any thoughts in common, and tho' they are all excellent good people, there is a great gulph between us from the difference of our habits and education, and I feel consequently somewhat lonely in this cold, out of the way place. Even at Constantinople there was no one except Sir S. and Lady Canning whom I could feel to be of the same genus as myself. I like all the attachés exceedingly, but they had none of them been at a university, except two youths who are learning Turkish and who must have been at colleges of the remotest kind. It is wonderful what a difference this makes. It never happened to me before to be thrown into the company of people whose ideas were so different from my own, and those of the society in which one lives in England, and yet this difference is so slight that it is difficult to say in what it consists, only in one moment you perceive that your friend is of a caste which is altogether separate from yours.

Now pray write me an entertaining letter. Send it to the British Embassy, Constantinople, as no one knows where Erzeroom is. Perhaps you do not know yourself? If you don't write I will choke you with a papyrus when I get back, so look out, lest evil overtake you, and believe me,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

P.S. Tell me all about Sir Charles Bagot, how is he?¹

1. Died 19 May 1843.

107. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

Erzeroom, 1 June 1843

I wish you would write a few more letters to your old friend in this out of the way place. I have just received one from you, from Cheverels, which makes me wish to be back, looking at all the quaint old jimcracks which you have put in goodly order at Denton. Your letters are great sources of pleasure to me, for I am always in a fright when I receive one from home. My father cannot help telling me something I do not like to hear, and this place is bad enough without any dismal thoughts added to it. My last letter from home said my father was anxious I should go on with my diplomatic career, was glad I wished to do so. This was in answer to my begging him to enquire whether it would not be possible to get me some place where I could be employed sufficiently in England to give me occupation, whereas all diplomacy must of course keep me abroad. I suppose my father took it for granted that I thought exactly the opposite to what I had said, but as I am one of those modest people who have a higher opinion of their own merits than any one else has, I fear I shall not be offered any place which I would take either in England or any where else, therefore I shall do nothing, more majcrum, and henceforth for ever hold my peace.

How amazingly snug the brown room must be with all the things about it, and the red room that is to be, next door - where are you going to dine then? Where are those famous roast fowls to be eaten, slowly and solemnly, with the adjunct of bread sauce and roasted taters? I suppose in the Hash Parlour? As Johnny Gilpin quoth, 'May I be there to see!' Here the roast fowls are all cocks of the toughest kind, and tho' I am now on the site of the terrestrial paradise,¹ there are no fruits of any

1. Curzon refers to the Armenian tradition, that Erzurum is the site of the Garden of Eden, in Armenia, 122-25.

<...>¹ [sort] and fig leaves are totally unknown. I wish eating apples would get me out of it, the greenest codling would not frighten me from the trial of it, if I thought I had a chance...

(Here comes a Persian with six hundred turquoises each glued to the end of a little stick, in six bundles, 100 piasters a bundle; I have taken one faggot). Turquoises put me in mind of blue eyes, and blue eyes put me in mind of black eyes, and black eyes bring before my mind that pretty little Minnie² who is going or gone to be married to Dawney.³ This makes me feel that time flies on rapid wings. Minnie, I thought, was a child not a woman, and I cannot imagine the little bird (ladies are always birds in Arabic), with her long soft hair, as she used to stand demurely by Lady Harriet, going to be married and to be mistress of a house. It makes me feel very old indeed. Good luck to her, may her days be fortunate. Nevertheless, I should have endowed my person in a new blue swallow tail, with brass buttons, canary bird waistcoat and white continuations made to bend at the knee, and⁴ have put the awful question to Emily,⁵ her elder sister, if I had been on the look out for a pleasant damsel for me to worship and cherish according to law, that is if my heart would not let me get safely out of the Palace of Cuddesden without committing myself to so awful an extent. Verily, Oh my friend, I feel very desirous of having a wife

1. Single word struck out.

2. Mary Isabel, youngest of Bishop Bagot's four daughters. The Hon. Vicary Gibbs (G.E.C. IV, 454, n. (a)) described her as 'very handsome'.

3. William Henry Dawney, later Viscount Downe (1812-57), married Mary Isabel 25 July 1843. According to the Hon. Vicary Gibbs (op. cit.) it was a condition of the marriage that he should build three churches.

4. Word (?) unintentionally struck out.

5. Emily Mary, married 25 June 1850, the Hon. and Rev. George Thomas

every now and then, and I look wistfully at all the young ladies I see and I do not wonder at people who are less cautious and reasoning than your old crony being taken short, and uniting themselves sometimes suddenly in those stringent bonds from whence there is no escape, particularly when they have not seen any ladies (that is, ladies, not women) for a long time; for whereas in the estimation of thy servant woman is mightily inferior to mankind, on the other hand a virtuous, kind hearted, well bred lady is a superior creature to most men; and, as such, is much to be wished for by those who appreciate kindness and refinement and civilization, and find pleasure in the society of those endowed with qualities so rare in the land of Armenia. The devil of it is that the foresaid ladies are often such dreadful bores, keenly alive to the absurdities of their lords and masters. They do not see that incivility and selfishness from them is tolerated, not from any respect for the ladies, but because in England all are slaves to custom and conventional habit, and therefore you must show equal assiduity for a fool whom you despise as for the being whose beauty you admire and whose pure and high minded sentiments you adore. I should think that in these days of the march of intellect these customs will not continue very long. Young men take refuge in the clubs very much even now, and begin to find out that a quiet evening with one's friends is better than the flurry and trouble of ¹ [going out to be] bullied and snubbed by fine ladies whom the idleness of our ancestors has placed in a false position, where their good qualities are obscured by the trouble they occasion, till at last the great rich men go and marry foreigners or country girls, and the beauties of Almack's fade away in maiden

(5. cont'd.). Orlando Bridgeman, second son of the Earl of Bradford.
She died 13 December 1853.

1. Word (?) unintentionally struck out.

meditation fancy free, or else those who have not clever mothers with smart drawing rooms in Grosvenor Square fall into the hands of the Spinksesses and Smiths, whose vanity is satiated by the glory of producing Lady Betty Spinks at the Foolsleton Hunt Ball.

All this, however, has nothing to do with the marriage in question or with any thing else that I know of, except the fact that I am sitting opposite the fire at Erzeroom in a grim old room, with my only companion the Colonel¹ fast asleep in a chair on the other side of the table; and that my thoughts have wandered far from hence, and that Mr Redhouse our secretary² is gone to fetch his wife³ here from Trebizond, whereas he will be disappointed poor man, when he gets there, for a letter has crossed him on the road, which tells me that the wife aforesaid will not be able to come away from Constantinople, so I suppose he will soon bump back again without her, over the ravines and precipices between this place and the Black Sea. He would not have been able to have gone away, but that we are come to a standstill in our negotiations from the instructions to all parties from their governments being nothing to the purpose of the affairs to be transacted, and we are waiting for letters from the four corners of the earth to give us leave to do that which we could do of ourselves, if we were not prevented instead of assisted by the wisdom of our superiors, the ministers of our respective countries. Perhaps the expected answers may arrive, perhaps we may get on very well and have the pleasure of establishing a permanent peace between two great

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1. Possibly a nickname, or possibly a slip for the Captain, i.e. Williams, with whom Curzon appears (No. 106) to have shared his accommodation. In his preface to Armenia (p. v) Curzon refers to him as Col. Williams, but by the time the book was published (1854) this would have been correct. Possibly even the Russian, Col. Dainese.
 2. Later Sir James William Redhouse (1811-92).
 3. Jane Carruthers, daughter of Thomas Slade, of Liverpool.

nations - but again perhaps not, and I have had such a fright that I will not be caught again, six weeks from England, in a political capacity without full powers to do what I think best when I understand the question, in a case which should never have been undertaken if the government was not able to carry it through and did not think it expedient to do so, after committing themselves in a sort of mock heroic demonstration. I do not enter into particulars as we must not tell out of school, and indeed as yet nothing is settled, but I give vent to my feelings of dread that I may be held up to derision for faults which are none of mine; and that I may be instrumental in clenching a war in the East, and making England ridiculous, and playing the game of Russia, when my own opinions and desires are exactly opposite to all this, tho' alas no one will care for the opinions of such a poor powerless little beast as me.

I see more and more what a fine thing it is to be the son of a rich man, and to have powerful relations in our native land who will support you and lend you a hand for the honor of the family. I have relations powerful enough, but they never have done anything for me and I hardly know them to speak to; or else they treat me as a poor relation, by which it comes to pass that I would rather be jiggered, tho' I don't know what that means, than go beyond the bounds of stiff civility to any of them. Tho' if I was their superior I should labour and work hard to advance their interests, not from any particular love for them but that my family might become of too much consequence to be slighted by the government, and that I might have my share of the honor and glory of old England. Long may she prosper, whether I gain or lose, and if now or ever it is in my power to add to her strength

or her renown, I shall not put it in the balance that I am to be passed over and perhaps laughed at when the loaves and fishes are dealt out. I wish I had had a better chance, for tho' it happens often enough, yet it is not very often that I meet with any one whose superiority I am compelled to acknowledge in my secret heart, and therefore I think that if I had had a good opportunity I might possibly have done some little good in my generation, as well as others, but it is almost too late to begin now and I should want more than common equal fortune to satisfy me. I want a little piece of reall good fortune, more than I could expect, to take off the depression from my mind and put me in good spirits with myself and all the world. It is very disagreeable to see how selfish one is and how naturally it comes to talk or write about oneself, almost without intending to do so, therefore I shall end this long story with the good old song,

Since the worse will not be better,
And we cannot mend the matter,
We will say no more about it
Mrs John Prevost.¹

11 June.

Ten days have passed away and here I am still, waiting for letters from the Ambassador to tell me what to do, or rather to say how far I may go;...

Well, Oh Sneyd, I do not know how long I might have gone [on]²

1. Not identified.

2. Word omitted.

writing nonsense to you, for want of something else to say, but news arrived - ill news flies apace - the plague has broken out in the villiages about the town of Moosh, about thirty-six hours' walk from hence. We are all aghast, one hundred and twenty are already dead in one villiage, Deus in ajutorium nostrum intende! Mixed up as I am with the Turkish and Persian ministers and their innumerable servants, I cannot hope to keep up quarantine, and if the plague comes here what can we do? I have written to beg that the conferences may be moved to Tabreez or Trebizond, but I fear there is so much jealousy between the grandees that whatever one proposes the other will refuse to do. It is not come yet to Erzeroom, but the sword of the destroyer was unsheathed at Diarbekir, and his march is in this direction. Do not tell this to my people, perhaps I should not have told you. I will write again next week to tell you more about it, and begging you to excuse this curious, long, stupid letter, which I have only written for occupation, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

108. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Erzeroom, 18 June 1843

As I said last week I would write again to tell you about the plague, I do so. The plague is not yet got to Moush but is killing the people of Diarbekir and the intermediate villiages. I hope measures will be taken to stop its approach. It has, I hear, always some difficulty in getting up to the mountainous regions of Erzeroom.

The negotiations go on very slowly or rather are now at a standstill, and I fear it will be two or three months before they are concluded, till when I can not get away with any credit. I shall be very glad to get back to Christendom.

Good bye for the present. Remember me to Mr Wellesley¹ and to all friends.

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

1. Probably Henry Wellesley (see No. 77, n. 2 above), by this time Vice-Principal of New Inn Hall, later Principal.

112. Extract, no address.

Parham, [3 or 10] July 1844¹

...Here it is just the contrary [to Denton], I see it again after a long absence, and it strikes me all the more that it is rare to see a place with more capabilities, or one which would be more enjoyable if it was properly arranged, good points brought out, defects amended or concealed, and so on. Now it seems to me quite remarkable that people can throw away their advantages, or not understand them, to the degree which has been done here. The rooms are very good rooms in their nature, the bed rooms particularly, but anything so deuced uncomfortable and uncouth as they all are, except my own chamber, I have never seen in my travels, no not even in the countries beyond the Black Sea. In those countries the rooms are very bad, but they are made the best of; here they are very good, but made the worst of. My mother has moved the furniture about ten times in the drawing room since I have been here, and each time it has struck me as miraculous how it could be made to look more seedy than before; I am beginning to take an interest in these manoeuvres, for I do not know how it will be possible now to make a more dismal array of unlucky sofas and tables. Nevertheless, I feel a noble confidence that next time they are moved they will be more in the way and more uncomfortable than ever...

Out of doors my father has played old goosberry with the trees. He has cut the heads off some and trimmed up others into poles; the ivy and honeysuckles and bramble bushes have been destroyed; it is all up with the wild roses and such like useless weeds. The old keeper came to me with tears in his eyes, to say that there were no hopes of game, for the covers have been cleaned out, and the farmers allowed to cut down and sell all the underwood on their farms, so the pheasants have no where to go,

1. What Curzon has written is 'July 6. I think[,] however it is certainly Wednesday'. 6 July 1844 fell on a Saturday.

if they do not choose to take lodgings in Prospect Place, or some other bran new whitewashed row.

Except the steward and the keeper, I believe every body here wishes me at the devil, for tho' I never hold up their enormities, or even say anything except 'How dye do' to any of them, they all change colour when I appear, and look sold...

Mr and Mrs Ed. come on Friday. I wish you was coming, for never did any body feel more like a fish out of water than I do. When I passed through London I saw Fergusson,¹ who stethoscoped me, gave me some acids, told me [I]² was in the state of an over worked post horse and that I must have rest of body and mind, and then I should feel some improvement in three months. He seems a sensible man and I am going up to see him again on Monday, for more advice. Now rest of body I can have, but not rest of mind. My father and mother are all day long doing things which make me hot in the face and make my heart beat. This is bad for me just now, my nerves are affected already, last night, for instance, my mother asked me divers questions which might have led to a pleasant chat, but my father answered every one of them, tho' he knew nothing about the matter. I tried to say something two or three times, but [my answer¹ was knocked on the head instantly. Now as I could not contradict my father, or hollow louder than him, I was forced to hold my peace, so my mother thought I was sulky and hated me for the same; just the same thing at breakfast again this morning, this makes my pulse run like a mill stream, which is destruction to me; but when people are under the influence of nervous irritability and not under the influence of reason,

1. Possibly Robert Ferguson (1799-1865), friend of Sir Walter Scott, physician-accoucheur to Queen Victoria.

2. 'is' in the original.

what is to be done? You might as well tell the clock not to tick or the pendulum not to swing, it will do so till it stops. Every body is so nervous here that the maids all blush like geraniums if you look at them. This is a bore, too, and I am getting back to shyness again from seeing every body else so shy, tho' I had quite got out of the habit of being shy, for years. Now I think I have told you all about that; what a stupid failure it all is.

Watch is blind and deaf but he follows me like my shadow, poor old dog. He is so deaf that he cannot hear me call him and I am obliged to go up to him and touch him, to make him understand. The great event is that my closet is being papered, for the reception of all the reliquaries. You cannot think how well they look all in confusion on my table. It looks like the spoils of Byzantium, when the good old Doge took the half, and the quarter, and the two-eighths of every thing he could lay hands upon, as we read in history. Such a rich and racy mass of old dirty gold and silver and jewels never was seen in England since the Reformation. They look so much more numerous and imposing when lying about in confusion, with a great piece of Persian embroidery, than they do when arranged neatly in a row, as they will be, I hope, tomorrow. The cupboard promises to be "hever so fine" and a singular lot of grim things there are to put in it. I think I have more than you have, which is certainly a great consolation in these bad times. What is more, some of them really are interesting things, such as would cause me to respect any one else who should be the owner of such astounding treasures, and take my hat off to him, as a great dean or canon at the least, in the chapter of antiquities, for it requires considerable knowledge of by gone times to know and appreciate the particular grimness, and unaccountable rarity, of these matters, and to gather from all parts of the world a selection of such Ould antient chattellis

as those which the closet is doomed to hold...

113. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 26 August 1844

Mr [blank] the parson of Wiggonholt is dangerously ill at Brighton, likely to die they say. Now if he does, will you take the living? My father and mother, you know, promised it to you years ago, so now take the matter into consideration. On the one hand you have bought Denton Perks and you are the squire thereof, &c., on the other hand if you take Wiggonholt it is a prettier spot, there is an increase of £. s. d. and what is of much more consequence, you have an opportunity of doing your duty in the parsonic line on easier terms than any clergyman who has taken Orders.

To me it would be a great thing if you was at Wiggonholt, for our future prospects as well as for the nearer ones. If you was there I should take a very serious thought as to the notion of setting up my tabernacle there with you, for tho' I will never come here again by myself under present circumstances, yet if I lived there with you we might get on very snug together, and make acquaintance with the neighbours, whom I cannot even speak to here. I suspect there are divers good people hereabouts who would be well worth knowing, and you and I could make a mighty pleasant place of Wiggonholt, and give them a Fowle with the right sauce on an occasion.

I write you this as soon as I have heard of Mr Cooper (that is his name), his illness; that you may put off the works on the other side of the road for a season, if you think fit, while Mr Cooper and you make up your minds as to the pro and con of this affair.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

120. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Eaton,¹ 31 January 1845

Well, what's the odds, the 17th will do for me just as well as the 10th to go to Keel, and as for the rest we will hold sweet converse thereupon when we meet at Hagley.

I do not envy your brother his trip to Brighton, what can he be going there for at this time of year? He will meet a sciatica at every corner and the lumbago on the chain pier.

I have been looking at a thundering big ox, who eats turnips like nothing, and I also have seen a surprizing cow, who evidently makes but slight use of the bidet. Touchstone and Bees wing, two famous racers, I have also admired; and cocked my hat on one side and put my hands in my pockets on the occasion, in the real dammy style, so that I imagine the stud groom thinks I know a thing or two about spavins, splints and sand cracks. The sumptuous pieces of plate which Touchstone wins every year are much in my line, and in that point of view I like racing very much. We were told in a loud voice before all the ladies that the said Touchstone was limited to forty mares, at £40 a piece. Then my father would ask what a building was in the stable yard, and nearly broke the door down in trying to get in, when a man in the distance shouted out, 'Why, them's the privy!' so we were sold again, and I ran away and came up stairs to write you this, before I dress for the dinner of stewed pounds, and diamonds à la financière, which comes off at seven o'clock.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. Eaton Hall, Cheshire.

122. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

London, 8 April [1845]

This comes hopping that it meats you well as it leve's me - see "Complete Letter Writer".

Does the drinking of water render the right hand of man unable to hold a pen? Or is the air of Bath unfavorable to the setting down of ideas and sentiments on paper? Or has the consciousness of dry rot at Denton Abbey taken away from you all care for the things of this world and for the unhappy inhabitants thereof? Truly, you are bipes implumé, as the book of logic defines that animal which is known as the mammalis bimane by other pedants, so now take up your pen, and write, and don't be a beast of any sort any more but tell me all about it.

I have been here a week, considerably bored with a cold and smoke and solitude, for I cannot get about as I could in the days when I was young. I wish you was here for a bit, before the hegira of my respected parents from the regions of the north, for we might be very cozy together and do our Wardour Street, and dine at the Club occasionally. I am going to Finchley for Sunday, to Salvin's, after the manner of all such as were born within the sound of Bow Bell, and today I dine with Shirley to meet his wife for the first time,¹ and also Albert Way,²

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1. Evelyn Philip Shirley (1812-82), antiquary (see p. xxx, n. 2), married 4 August 1842 Mary Clara Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Sir Edmund Hungerford Lechmere, Bt.
 2. (1805-74), antiquary, Fellow and Director (1842-46) of the Society of Antiquaries.

the notorious antiquary, who has kicked up "sitch a row" with the Archaeological Society.¹

I have purchased Willement's monumen[t]s inédits for £10,000 and sent it to be bound and shall, I imagine, start for Australia when the bill comes.² I was ill and sick at Baginton and Guy's Cliffe, and must have bored them. What a beautiful place Guy's Cliffe is, and good people.

Now write, so that you may not be abused in a savage manner by,

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

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1. i.e. the Archaeological Association, or, to give it its full title, 'The British Archaeological Association for the Encouragement and Prosecution of Researches into the Arts and Monuments of the Early Middle Ages'. Way had been one of the five Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries who had joined in its foundation in 1843, '...out of dissatisfaction with the exclusiveness and lethargy of the Antiquaries;...' (Joan Evans, A History of the Society of Antiquaries (1956), 227) and to provide for the interest in English medieval studies, particularly in the provinces. (The Sussex Archaeological Society, of which Way was an early Vice-President, was founded in 1846). The quarrel to which Curzon refers, over the form in which the Association's proceedings should be published, is described by Dr Evans in 'The Royal Archaeological Institute: a retrospect', The Archaeological Journal, vol. cvi (1949), 1-11. The quarrel split the Association in two, Way's faction, in 1846, calling themselves 'The Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland'. In 1866 they were allowed to use the title 'Royal'. The two halves have remained separate ever since.
 2. Not entirely a joke. Curzon actually did buy some of Willement's drawings (see No. 136A below).

123. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

London, 16 April 1845

I am very glad to hear of your brother's kindness towards you, which really comes at a most critical moment; I am much obliged to him, for your sake. He had better send you some of his parqué flooring to put in your rooms, but now that you are about it you must take care not to stop up the ventilating holes in the walls, for it was your preventing the free circulation of air beneath the floors which caused the dry rot; and it may occur again if you do not keep this in mind. What a dismal thing an old book would be with the dry rot in his boards, I do not think I ever saw one in that predicament, but dry rot or none, I envy you your cosy retreat to country quarters, and wish I could manage to have a week with you, till better weather comes on in Town, and will write you a missive on Saturday or Monday to that effect, when I have shaken hands with my parents and aunt, who come to Town on Friday; and the people are now making a noise about the house, making every thing look unsnug and vulgar and staring. Soon all my nice things must go into the cupboard, and they will get out the old bits of cracked pottery of various sets for my father's breakfast, and stick out the seedy little things in my mother's room, and put the chairs in the wrong places in the drawing room. Indeed, there is a large silver inkstand without any ink in it, put on a solid rosewood table, ready, not for writing however, but because it is right that it should be there. It will be ever so gawky when it is all done.

On Saturday I went to Finchley, Mr Salvin's, to meet Mr Parker, who went to Southampton yesterday. I came back on Monday, in true cockney fashion, but it is a very pleasant thing to do, nevertheless. De Tabley

comes to Town the 23d, for two days, to consult doctors about My Lady, poor thing, I hope she is not getting into bad health, she will not take sufficient care of herself. Cholmondeley is going to make a speech tonight, for the Maynooth grant.¹

Item, I have made acquaintance with Albert Way, what a desperate antiquary he is! I was pleased to hear him, Mr Holmes² and Shirley talk of old things so seriously, as if they were matters of the deepest importance. There is no playing at antiquities with them.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

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1. Sir Robert Peel's bill, embodying the proposal to increase the grant to the College, raised an outcry in and outside the House of Commons.
 2. Probably John Holmes (1800-54), Assistant Keeper, British Museum, 1850 until his death. It was he who supplied the list of Venetian ambassadors printed with Charlotte Sneyd's translation of one of her brother's Canonici MSS., published by the Camden Society in 1847.

125. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

London, 22 April 1845

Many thanks for your kind letter. How cozy it all sounds, you and the fowl and the Ash Parlour. Unluckily for me I cannot come on Thursday as I have no hopes of being well enough by that time. I was burning and trembling all last night, and am now waiting for the next installment of calomel from Mr Higham.¹ The worst of it is that I am so weak from leaving off my other tonic medicine that I can hardly squeak, and should be no fun to you in your much envied Abbey. As soon as I know when I am likely to be able to stir I will write to you again, and if you are not going out to dinner or any where else, I hope I may get a view of you and the carpenters some of these days.

London is horrid; this cold east wind and muggy sun between them make a climate fit for the condemned, every thing is covered with dirt and fustiness. De profundis clamavi, from this dismal hole have I cried unto thee, and in the hopes that I may soon be able to play a more cheerful tune, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

R. Curzon

P.S. If your finger is not very bad, pray write to me, as letters from one's friends are consolatory, like rays from a brighter - perks. If you come up, come tomorrow, and you may go to Wardour Street in

1. No chemist of this name is listed in the Post Office London Directory for this period.

my brougham, and if I can we [may] go back to Denton together.

126. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

London, 26 April 1845

That was a sad job about the tree, certainly, treemenduous, but it is not the farmers of Oxfordshire only who are rapacious, ill conditioned lubbers, for all other farmers of all other counties which I have visited are equally disagreeable screws, with the fewest possible exceptions. Their own labourers are often much more kind hearted, well meaning louts, but farmers, shop keepers and people of the middle class of life are the worst, as well as the most numerous, of mankind; or if not the most numerous, the most obtrusive, narrow minded, selfish, full of envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness. They are those who make the world unhappy, and as there are fewer of them in uncivilized countries, there is less of the commonplace everyday bore and annoyance of life than in our more beworkhoused, pettifogging state of society.

As for me I do not say it as a joke but as a wise saw and an opinion which I am not ashamed of, that the good old times were better times than these, when the Lord Prior of Jorvaulx rode slowly down the glade, with a train of monks and retainers and men at arms. Each one of these was happier than the corresponding men are now; When the almoner at the castle gate doled forth his alms, the poor were thankful for them, and when the bishop blessed the people they felt that they were blessed. Now, the poor man says 'D - you, feed me, or I'll bring an action against you!' And as for the blessing of a bishop, priest or deacon, that is now considered such utter gammon that nobody thinks of such a thing. It was a much pleasanter state of things when one

believed that every thing was all right and that the superiors knew better than you, and governed wisely and solemnly for your good, for then your faith made you contented, you had no cares except for your own little matters, and you did not trouble yourself with what did not concern you. Farmers did not cut down trees and make gaps in fences to spite their land lords, nor refuse tithes to the parson. They had not found out that he was a pampered hypocrite, or that the squire was a rapacious tyrant who ground down the poor and fed on dainties torn from the bowels of the [starving] poor. This is what you get by a free constitution and popular government - Austria for me, them's my opinions. You may prefer freedom and newspapers and water gruel; I prefer despotism and ignorance and turtle soup! Hurra...

Well, I'm coming on Monday and hope to find you in good humour and entirely free from the mulligrubs, and please the pigs we will have a cozy time of it and then come back together.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

129. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

24 Upper Brook Street, 15 July 1845

I do not very distinctly understand what my father thought about Denton Perks. He says that if you had thirty acres more you might turn those roads, that the house at Cuddesden might be made a very good one, but that you much wanted a housekeeper's room.

[Curzon has here inserted eight lines from Sneyd's letter]:

...he didn't care about the things in our line. I shew'd him my most astounding rarities and he didn't care a hang! But he took an intense interest in the servants' necessaries, the scullery, coal-hole, &c.!...

[Curzon continues]:

He does not mention the famous ruins of the Abbey,¹ but says it is very well done altogether. I only came from Parham yesterday. Today I go to Sion,² tomorrow for two or three days to Montreal,³ and then back to Parham again. I got up today very well, but breakfast was such a damper to my spirits that I am now as melancholy as a gibbed cat, an animal, according to tradition, of a very dismal nature; I wonder if they have one at the Zoological...

At Parham they are getting up some famous small accounts for my father, digging no end of holes and filling them up again; and they have built a regular red brick canal bridge with a slanting arch, which

1. See p. lxix, n. 2, and Plate XVI .

2. Presumably Syon House, Isleworth, Middlesex, property of the Duke of Northumberland.

3. Near Sevenoaks, Kent, property of Lord Amherst.

Plate XVI . The main feature of the "Abbey ruins", the east window from the chapel of Brasenose College, well established in the garden at Denton.

From a photograph among the Sneyd Papers, undated.



I would give £10 to any one to remove out of my sight; and the farm buildings at Spring Head are something like frightful and as big as Denton twice over, being about 150 feet by 100 square, if not more, and hever so high - I never seed sitch a go.

At twelve today I am going to sign a paper to give my father power to spend £400 which he is to get for a bit of land which the railway goes through, instead of its being put into the settlements; of course I cannot refuse, but it is just throwing [£]400 into the fire, while it would pay for the bay windows on the south front and [help] the wall and gatehouse across the court, which I want to have done at Parham.

Cholmondeley and I were very snug there in my room, it was most comfortable of an evening, when Watch was not very flatulent. It is miraculous the quantity of chattels there are there, when one looks them over, and how they are crammed into holes and corners and are not seen.

I think you cannot have so many roses as we had, I never saw so many, and the fern is higher than was ever known by the oldest inhabitant of the parish. To be sure, how howling dull London is when one returns to it from the smiling fields and the merry green wood. However, tomorrow I am going back again, under the auspices of Cock Hussey,¹ who knows how to get through the dangers and difficulties incident to a journey in those unknown regions of Kent, to which I am about to enter.

Half past three. As it has been raining cats and dogs I do not know how it will do for Sion, whereat there should be a sumptuous

1. Edward Hussey (1807-94), of Scotney Castle, near Lamberhurst, Kent, a contemporary of Curzon's at Christ Church. A photograph of Hussey at a fairly advanced age, surrounded by his family, is published in Gordon Winter's A Country Camera 1844-1914 (1966), 29.

170. No address.

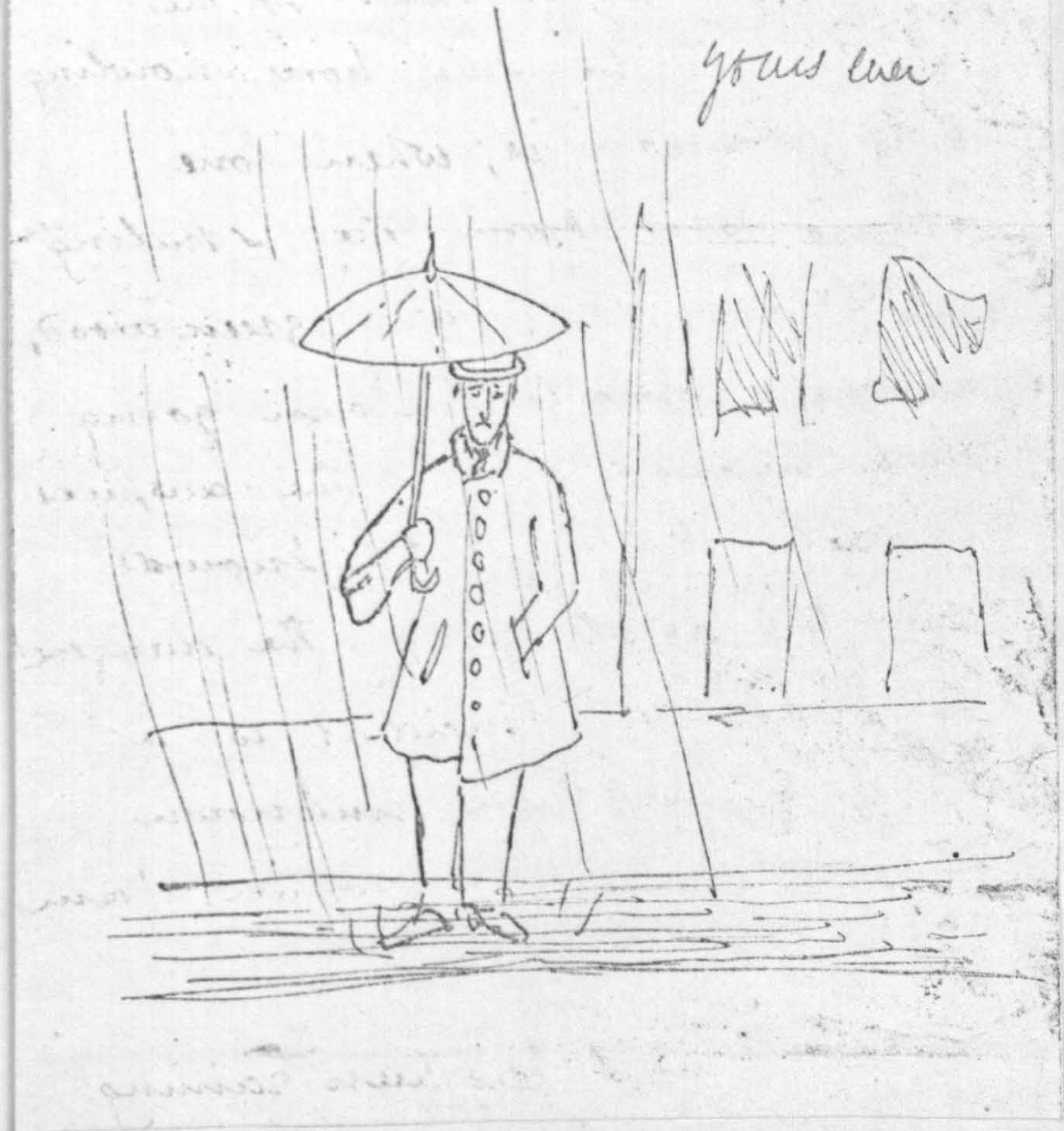
scrimmage if the day is fine.

Yours ever,

S[REVWS/Mm AC]/129

scrimmage if the day is fine

yours ever



Courtesy, afterwards Earl of Devon, he was...
Duchess, and later Christ Church.

130. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 27 July 1845

I have received a letter from Lord Courtenay,¹ who wishes to renew his acquaintance with me, as you told me in Town, and I have written to tell him about Trebizend, and about the shield of his ancestor here at Parham. Now if he is enough of an antiquarian to appreciate so curious a relic of his family, he ought to wish to see this shield, I think, for if he had so fine a thing connected with one of my ancestors I would traverse half Europe to have a look at it, and give all my ready money and my other trousers too, to get possession of it, but you see I do not remember enough of Courtenay to know what he thinks of such matters, and whether he would face my father and mother for the sake of seeing it. If he cares sufficiently about such things and appreciates the merits of old family gimcracks, I would give him this shield, whenever I am rich enough to get some more armour to replace it. Unluckily, at present that does not seem to be a likely event, for fine armour costs too dear for my pocket at Mr Pratt's,² and one does not pick up an astounding bargain every day. Now tell me how deep Lord Courtenay is sunk in the mire of antiquarian pursuits, and whether he has much enthusiasm or a little, or none, for things relating to the history of his house.

Well, I am delighted with Penshurst, barring the dismal improvements of my lord De Lisle, the hall is magnificent, but Knowl,³ that is a place; by the soul of Methuselah, that is a quaint old place, something like curious and full of such superb old things. Furniture and looking

1. William Reginald Courtenay (1807-88), styled (1835-59) Lord Courtenay, afterwards Earl of Devon. He was at Westminster with Sneyd, and later Christ Church.

2. Messrs S. & T. Pratt, importers of antique furniture and armour. 47 New Bond Street.

3. i.e. Knowle.

glass frames, of richly worked silver, of the time of James the first; and dogs and sconces innumerable, and tapestry and cloth of gold, and embroidery without end. There is a carpet there with the arms of my family, or rather of Curzon of Croxhall, of the time of Mary or Elizabeth, a beautiful thing in excellent preservation. Cock Hussey helped me to copy my pedigree. Lord Amherst¹ said he was surprized that my parents, when they werethere, took no interest in it, for he thought they would mouse over it as I did. What a good fellow Hussey is, to take so much trouble for me. But what I admired there most of all was the barn. I never saw such a barn, worthy of the Cardinal who built it, who thought more of his belly and his sumpter mules than he did of his soul, for the chapel is a very small one, half a dozen such might play at leap frog in the barn. There are five hundred and thirty pictures, but not many good ones, but there is a Raphael, in a bad light, which may be a Raphael, a portrait of himself, and a Perugino which is by the master of that name. The portrait of Mary Curzon I do not think can be of her. She must have been a great person, the most respected lady of her day, for tho' she had been governess to the children of Charles 1st, she was looked up to by Oliver Cromwell, and is the only woman on record, in the history of England, who was buried in Westminster Abbey at the public expence.² As Lady Delaware has the old plate and jewels, I understand, I should like to know whether she has any relics of this old lady; Lord Amherst says very likely she has.

1. William Pitt (Amherst), Baron Amherst of Montreal, born 1773, died at Knole, 1857.

2. She was the daughter of Sir George Curzon, of Croxall, and wife of Edward (Sackville), Earl of Dorset. Her funeral did take place in Westminster Abbey (3 September 1645) but she was actually buried in the Sackville Chapel at Withyham, in Sussex.

I came here on Wednesday, Lady and Miss Horton are here - very nice people; only one cannot be snug here. We went to Amberley¹ yesterday. I wish I had it to set up my tabernacle in, like an owl in an ivy bush, for I am quite weary of life under present circumstances.

I do not think I have any more to tell you, except that a great army of water wag tails come and sit upon the rail before my windows, so I suppose they are holding council as to their travels to foreign parts, and settling what they shall put into their carpet bags, and looking out their best feathers for display before the dickey birds of other climes whom they are going to see; that is, as far as the hens are concerned, for there is a valorous cock water wag tail here who don't seem to care about such trifles, and winks his eyes one at a time, as if he knew a thing or two, and I dare say he does, for he seems to be a downright jolly bird, and so, a good passage to him.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. Presumably Amberley Castle, at this time leased from the Bishop of Chichester by the Rev. Leveson Venables Vernon Harcourt, son of the Archbishop of York.

133. No address.

Y[ou]r Reverence,

Parham, 7 September 1845

I think you are about right concerning damp beds, and steaming ordinaries, and no end of cash to pay for howling discomfort, at the meeting of Ye Oulde Auncient Faders Antiquaries of this londe.¹ Howbeit, I go up to Town tomorrow for two nights, to see the doctor and look about and speculate on the nobodies now in London.

Poor Lord Verulam² is, I fear, dying. He cannot put his legs to the ground, they are so much inflamed, but a letter which came yesterday, from Lady Clarendon,³ said he had rallied a little within the last day or two, or else they thought he was going, some days ago. I did not think he was so bad as all that when he was here, tho' he was very low about himself, which is a bad sign. He looked at Toby and said, 'Ah, you're got old and fat: I wonder which will last longest, you or I?' I was rather struck with this but laughed it off at the time, little thinking the poor old peer was in such bad case. My father feels it much, he was his old friend and stood up for him. Except Mr Estcourt he has now no other friend left and he will be grieved at this loss.

Last Friday he came into my room, and of his own accord began to tell me more of his affairs than he ever told me before, by which I find that I am done for; every thing almost will go to my mother at his death. I cannot write you any particulars, but it appears to me that I am in a fix altogether, as far as I can make out at present. I fear I cannot

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1. The Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute, held at Winchester, 9-15 September. Curzon and Evelyn Philip Shirley were among the five Vice-Presidents of the Committee for Early and Medieval Antiquities.
 2. James Walter (Grimston), created Viscount Grimston and Earl of Verulam 1815, died 17 November 1845.
 3. Lord Verulam's daughter, married the Earl of Clarendon in 1839.

come to Denton now but will write again in course of time, when I can see my way a little more. The church bell is ringing, it is a sweltering hot day and I must be getting ready for church.

Ever yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

134. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 11 September 1845

Nothing like keeping up a brisk correspondence, now with respect to marriage in general and Lord Howe's in particular, with Miss Gore, the Maid of Honor,¹ what do you think of it? I think it is hardly fair that he should have two wives, while I have not even one. Now the other day I heard say that there was a certain damsel who was not evily disposed towards you, littera scripta manet, so I won't say who or what the foresaid lady is, but if you will come here I will tell you more about it, and you may perchance go away again, only to make your hymenaal preparations before you go to the "halter" with your amiable and accomplished bride. Now really you should not neglect any chance, my dear Sneyd; you and I are getting dam' old, and unlikelier every day to be run away with by a lovely creature. I must tell you that the lady in question is only suspected to have said that she thought you would be a charming person to live with, &c. Still, as I said before, I think you should not let a chance go by.

How do the Dentonic peaches prosper? Ours ain't ripe, and have mulligrubious qualities. They make famous jam, as I told my mother, so there is not to be any, because that would be wicked, or extravagant, or something else that is wrong and not to be done. At Erzeroom we used it up pretty considerable sharp, I guess, and there was an unaccountable small few of it left in the pot when I looked in it last. My American phraseology proceeds from a letter I have got from Mexico, which relates how excellent a taste appertains to a New York ham boiled in pulque - do you know what a pulque is, because if you don't, it's the juice of

1. To Queen Adelaide, the Queen Consort. She was Anne (1817-77), daughter of Admiral Sir John Gore. She married Lord Howe 9 October 1845.

the agave, or big aloe when he is going to flower, and is a very fashionable beverage at Itzcuintapetzotli and thereabouts...

135. Extract, no address, no date.

...I am thinking of going to Paris for a bit and then on to Naples for the winter, and then back again. I don't at all see why you shouldn't come too, you know two cost very little more than one in travelling, and the only travelling there is, is from Paris or Orleans to Chalons, from whence the steamers on the rivers carry one smoothly and pleasantly along. The south of France is after your own heart, all sunshine and carillons and songs, and the Palace of the Popes at Avignon a glorious old Gothic place, I think you have not been there. Then you steam along the coast all the way to Naples, staying a day or two every where if you like, to see Nice, Genoa, Pisa, Florence and so on, and all our old friends will be at Naples this year. You may do all this for about £300, which you would spend in Wardour Street and flys if you stayed in England, and did not stay at Denton Perks, according to your usual plan. I have, however, not difinitively arranged my own plans yet but should like you to bear all this in mind. I must go somewhere or other, and as far as you are concerned you may never have another occasion of joining so many agreeable people at the most beautiful place in the world, and shirking the dismal howling winter into the bargain...

136. Extract, no address.

Parham, 28 September [1845]

...I am very sorry you haven't got any cash and won't come to Naples, because as two negatives make an affirmative perhaps as I have nothing in the way of monied affairs except debts, we might by joining stock make one wealthy and plethoric Milordo Inglese, by the time we had done our Paris and tasted of the emetic of the rolling sea in the Mediterraneanian.

I go with rather a heavy heart, but I don't know what else to do. My friends whom I shall meet there are so much more rich and prosperous than me that they are not companions, as I cannot swagger about with them in a carrotz every day, and would undoubtedly sell my shadow to any gentleman who would give me a shady perks in exchange. I do not feel up to an expedition, and want to sit upon my fundament and crack nuts across the fire in my own room, instead of rampaging about the world like the wandering Jew.

I wish you lived at Wiggonholt, for the more I see of this neighbourhood the more I like it, it is better than Staffordshire altogether. I have been again to Lady Newburgh's, it really does one good to see such a set of kind hearted people as there are there. The old lady, tho' superlatively frivolous, is such a good old body, so utterly guileless that it is a pleasure to observe her; and every thing there is so peert and smart and full dressed that the contrast to the dismal discomfort of Parham is very great. I came from thence¹

1. Slindon Park, north-east of Chichester, Sussex.

yesterday and went to a state luncheon at Mrs Huskisson's¹ on my way.

Today [Sunday] we had the sacrament, during which my father played so many antics that it has given me a fit of the blue devils. Poor old Watch is very bad and cannot last long; and on Friday the tea boy upset one of the coach horses on which he was riding in the stable yard and broke [both the bones of] his leg in two places. The fool of a country doctor has frightened the poor lad by telling him he thought he should have been obliged to cut his leg off. He was in capital spirits before this but is now nervous and frightened, the worst thing in the world in such cases...

I do not know when I shall start abroad for I want to know something of De Tabley's plans, which he persists in not telling me, tho' I want to know exceedingly.

My aunt has given the famous pearl necklace to Lord Howe for his bride, which rather surprizes me, I confess. She is coming to Town about the 15 of October, about which time I shall perhaps go there. I do not know how you and I are to meet, for I despair of getting down to Denton. I shall have too much upon my hands before I leave England when I am in Town.

I have got two pictures stuck up here instead of the enamels, the Giovanni Bellini and Giotto. They look very well, one on each side of the MS. book case. I wish I could think I should ever live here to look at them. If you should know of any one who wants to get rid of three or four or five hundred pounds, pray tell him I will take it off his hands,

1. William Huskisson's (1770-1830) widow. Eartham House is a little north of Slindon.

and would not stick at [£]1,000 to please him, in these hard times. What an astounding fine thing a "fortun" is. Last week I finished making a catalogue of my old [100] writings and oriental [160] MSS., and when I look back upon the astonishing labour and difficulty, and no small nous withal, which has been required to get together only 260 old books, and scraps of vellum and papyrus, during a space of nearly ten years, I see what a fine thing it must be, to be able just to get twice as much in one day by sending a draft for no end of cash to Messrs Payne and Bohn &cc., all this trouble being equivalent to three lines on half a sheet of paper - so, I'll take the cash, Plutus for ever, he shall have my vote, a plumper for Plutus, hurra!

Yours ever,

R. CURZON

136^A. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 5 October [1845]

Dull are you? Dismal weather, eh, shouldn't wonder, tho' I'l back the Parham dismals against yours any day, rain or shine. I have been to Southampton, where Mrs Weld, the Cardinal's¹ brother's wife, lent me a book of Catholic martyrs, the other side of the question from what we are used to read. Then I went up to London, to get in my bills, and I feel billious in consequence. What an expansive quality these kind of memoranda do possess. Then I went to Bain's,² and as my Willement's monumen[t]s inédits was not perfect I sent it back and got Pistolesi³ on the pleasant things in the Vatican, instead. This is a great acquisition, but as my shelves began to overflow last year, I don't know where I shall put so many big folios out of the way. This copy is sumptuously bound in red morocco. Then I went to the play, whereof the chief point was evedently the great display of young ladies' legs in pink tights, and I had some provender at the Club, and walked about till I was tired to death, and ackcabbed till all my shillings were gone, and came back by the railway and lost my ticket, so I had to pay again for my carelessness. I was very peert when I got here, but was soon knocked over with the little bores and shames and vexations which instantly twitted me and poked my good humour away, so I pulled down the hood of gloom over my eyes, and wrapped myself in despondency, as

1. Cardinal Thomas Weld (1773-1837). The Cardinal had eight brothers, of whom this reference could be to one of three.

2. James Bain, bookseller, 1 Haymarket.

3. Erasmo Pistolesi, Il Vaticano descritto ed illustrato..., published in eight volumes, Rome, 1829-38.

in a garment, and I said 'Behold, the garden of my soul is overgrown with sorrow and mortification hath increased therein like a noisome weed.'

It shows how the power of evil predominates in this world, for one person by giving way to a few little tricks and want of judgement, torments all those who depend upon him, while it requires a considerable deal of trouble and determination to make any body cheerful and happy. You may have a good house, and place, and dinner, and clothes, and horses and pounds, and all manner of good things, but the contrariness of one mind will render the whole of no avail. It takes one hundred years to build the city but a spark of fire will burn it down in a few hours.

Well now, we turn over a new page. I send you what I know of my own plans, but as they depend on various circumstances I can not be certain exactly as to a few days' time and will write again and tell you when I certainly do go to Town. De Tabley is to be there on the 20th, for two days, so I should like to be there then and leave England soon after, in which case I should most probably be in Town that week, the 20^[th] being Monday as I see. Couldn't you come jist as far as Paris? Eh? Why not? I suppose it is the same spirit of contradiction which makes me look forward with discomfort to the idea of going abroad again, but I do not know what else to do. De Tabley's going to Naples makes me go there, for it is a great thing to have such a good hearted friend to talk to, but it is a dismal business travelling alone, and when I get to Naples it is not a place that I like. It is a charming residence for smart ladies who have nothing to pay, and drive in smart carriages at their lord's expence, but for any one who is not rich it is a bore, for there is no other way of passing your time except in an expensive style

of peertness, and going into society in a fine weastcoat and white gloves. At Rome there is plenty of interest and amusement, and expence is not a necessity there, as it is at Naples. The fact is it was all very well for King Solomon to ask for wisdom, he being already King and seated on a throne of gold, but if he had been little Dick Solomon of our alley in the slums of Jerusalem, he would have found his wisdom of mighty little use or disport without a pound to buy wise books withal; and he never would have had a love like a sealed fountain if he had had no talents of gold as well as talents of learning, for the ladies don't care for poor wiseacres, tho' they may discourse for hours about the hyssop that groweth upon the wall.

Now in my opinion (no offence to King Solomon) the first and chiefest thing in this world is good health and spirits; next come riches; and then, *longo intervallo*, wisdom, for a little of that will go a great way if you have plenty of No. 1 and No. 2. Adam and Eve were as merry as grigs before they took to eating the fruit of that unhappy tree of knowledge, misery came in with wisdom, then came fig leaves, then came tailors' bills and hard worked milliners, and so on...

Well, I hope I shall see you in London. Write again, because you are the only person I have to speak to here. I am glad my brother took the allusion of Denton Perks. His own house is very nice, and pretty. He is going, I hear, to get a larger one. I hope he can afford it, but it seems a rash act with his children growing up. They must go to school some day and cost more than they did. However, I know nothing of his affairs, except that they have turned out much better for him than mine have for me. He is a good natured fellow and I wish him well.

What a horrid thing this is of the Eclair.¹ Walter Estcourt, the Captain, was an old schoolfellow of mine, poor fellow. He is the third of our contemporaries that has gone within this three months. All about the slave trade is very fine theory but bad practise, as we see by this and many other tragedies.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. Steam sloop, arrived at Portsmouth 28 September, from anti-slavery duties off West Africa. An outbreak of fever, described by The Times (30 September) as 'something between the yellow and the black', caused many deaths among the crew, including that of her Captain, Commander W.G. Bucknall Estcourt, son of Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt.

138. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Naples, 22 February 1846

I observe that tho' my friends abuse me for not writing to them, yet they never think of writing to me first, for the only letters I ever get are always answers to my own. Well, here I have been for six weeks nearly, and soon I suppose I must be off, for the Empress of Russia has taken the whole of this hotel for some of her suite, and I and the other seedy people now living therein are turned out into the street. There are no good rooms to be had any where, and the dearness of every thing is quite alarming to those who do not roll in riches.

The great event which has taken [place]¹ here is a Tournament, at Caserta. One took place last Sunday and the other the Sunday before. It was rather a fine si[g]ht, the King and above one hundred and fifty men in armour on horseback, besides other men in Middle Age, or rather theatrical costumes, with the multitude of spectators, in front of the enormous Palace of Caserta, made a fine display. The worst of it was that these brave knights did not fight but only capered about, like the people at Astley's², tho' many managed to tumble off their horses during their chivalrous manoeuvres.

I am very much bored here, and lonely, for the De Tableys are living in a distant and inaccessible place on the top of a hill, ycleped Pizzo Flacone. I dine out, to be sure, occasionally, but in the morning there is nothing to do, for there is nothing to see at Naples. The people I hate, they are such beggars and extortioners that I am ruined, tho' I practise the greatest economy and have denied myself the

1. Word omitted.

2. Astley's Amphitheatre, opened in London in 1770 by Philip Astley (1742-1814) of Newcastle-under-Lyme, featuring exhibitions of horsemanship.

1846 - 1850

Curzon's visit to Italy was a failure and the period that followed, up to the time of his marriage, was one of considerable frustration. Curzon was knowledgeable about early printed books and had a nose for manuscripts, which put him on at least equal terms with older collectors like Sir Thomas Phillipps, who had paid him the compliment in 1837 of proposing that he should become his son-in-law;¹ but he lacked the scholarship to do anything with the manuscripts he acquired, beyond making them available to those who were better equipped, and he was too light-hearted about antiquities in general, or simply too light-hearted by nature to be on more than polite terms with serious-minded antiquaries like Albert Way. In spite of this levity he felt compelled to do something, which distinguishes him from the merely idle rich, and he began putting together material for Visits to Monasteries in the Levant. Few books can have taken shape in less auspicious circumstances, but when in May 1847 he showed John Murray what he had done the reaction was favourable, and only Curzon's want of application prevented the book's appearance at Christmas.

For this period eighteen letters have been given in full with extracts from a further five.

-oOo-

1. A.N.L. Munby, Phillipps Studies No. 3.. The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the Year 1840 (1954), 134.

antichità which is necessary to my existence. I have, however, got a new blotting book, which as you see blots the paper beautifully. I have heard from Palmer, who is at Rome, where I think I shall be going about the beginning of March, so write me a letter there, poste restante, and tell me what you are about.

I hear Charles Bagot is going to be married to Miss Chester,¹ I wish them joy; and Col. Charles² is made Private Secretary to Lord Haddington.³ I suppose he will have nothing to do, or else I wonder at his taking a place of £150 a year, with the risk of being made to eat dirt by his superior. Is there no expectation of his marriage taking place soon?

Really, Sneyd, you and I must think what we are about, time passes and we become older bachelors every day. I would give any thing for a wife, if I had anything to give, but when one can hardly scrape on alone how is one to pay for a wife, who is the most expensive of all things? How much more lucky common people are in that respect; they can marry any body they like but we cannot, without no end of thought and trouble and botheration.

I look forward with much pleasure to going to Rome, where there are many people whom I know, tho' as for that matter I know no end of people here, only I never see them till the evening. I have been much struck with the little change there is among my male acquaintance. Four or five years seems to have made no difference in them, while the ladies are all grown into old women, or else so much altered in appearance as to be quite different to what they were. They are all horridly ugly except the

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1. Mary, daughter of Lt.-Gen. Sir John Chester, married the Rev. Charles Walter Bagot, son of Bishop Bagot, 18 February 1846.
 2. Col. Charles Bagot, Grenadier Guards (1808-81), eldest son of Sir Charles Bagot (see p. 1, n. 2).
 3. Thomas (Hamilton), Earl of Haddington (1780-1858), at this time Lord Privy Seal.

English, without one exception. Lady Brabazon¹ is here, her little boy² is the most beautiful child I ever saw. Lord B. has four horses of his own, with which he travels about all over Italy, a very good plan, I think, and very economical, if your own groom does not cheat you too much. Baillie & Knudson still give the best of dinners and their rooms are the most comfortable in Naples. Their old butler still gives you plenty of wine, tho' none of it is so old as him. The Duke de Rivas,³ whom I knew one hundred years ago as an exile at Gibraltar, has been Prime Minister of Spain and is Ambassador here. He is a very remarkable man, who in despite of circumstances has always made his way. At one time, when his great estates were confiscated, he wrote plays and lived on what he got for them; he is now writing a history of Masaniello.⁴ Both Prince Cimitile⁵ and Mr Craven⁶ have collections of handbills &c. relating to that revolution,⁷ like yours; and Mr Temple⁸ has a contemporary portrait of him, in which he is represented as a good looking, dark haired man, quite different from the one in the museum here, which is only a portrait of one of his friends, but not of him.

Yours ever,

R. Curzon

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1. Harriot (1811-98), daughter of Sir Richard Brooke Bt., married in 1837 William (Brabazon), later 11th Earl of Meath.
 2. Reginald, second surviving son (1841-1929).
 3. Ángel de Saavedra y Ramirez de Baquedano, Duke de Rivas (1791-1865).
 4. Tomaso Aniello (1620-47), Neapolitan hero.
 5. Not identified.
 6. Keppel Richard Craven (1779-1851), an authority on Naples, son of the 6th Baron Craven.
 7. Of 1647.
 8. Later Sir William Temple (1788-1856), son of Viscount Palmerston, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Naples, 1832-56.

139. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

20 Piazza di Spagna, Rome, 26 March 1846

I got your letter of the 24 of March, tho' it is dated Jan. 5, so what it has been about all this time I do not know. However I was most glad to receive it and to hear all you had been about, and to think of your various occupations since we parted.

I arrived at Rome with De Tabley and Mr Walker his tutor, a very good fellow, on the 6 of March, a rainy Friday in Lent. Close to Rome we overtook the guillotine, which had been making a tour in the provinces. I suppose altogether it was, we all agreed, under evil auspices that we made our entrance to the eternal city. De T. went back to Naples in a week, all very prosperous, and I found many people whom I knew, Count Miniscalchi¹ and Palmer particularly, who were most kind and friendly to me. Palmer got me an excellent lodging, which he once had, near the steps in the Piazza di Spagna, showed me all the shops and took so much trouble to be useful to me that I was quite touched with his friendliness and goodness.

On the 16th I got to be thirty-six years old. I have for many years considered this as an unlucky day, and so I got two letters, one from my

1. Of ancient Veronese lineage, Miniscalchi was well known to a number of English families including the Percys and the Granvilles. John Ruskin's wife, on first meeting the Count and Countess in Venice in 1850, told her brother George that she and her friend Charlotte Ker '...could hardly take our eyes off the Count, he was so handsome... He speaks English with great eloquence and understands it thoroughly.' Mary Lutyens, Effie in Venice. Unpublished Letters of Mrs John Ruskin... (1965), 113. Miniscalchi was '...celebrated as an Arabic scholar...', op. cit., 112. There is a photograph of him in one of the albums at Catton Hall.

brother, which came the day before, and one from my mother, which grievously tormented me and vexed me. My father had been very ill, which I did not know before, and he has, it seems, made such a mess of his affairs without confiding in any body that this, I suppose, had made him ill. My brother went to Hagley, and my father, tho' he did not trust him any more than he does me, told him something which he very rightmindedly wrote to me, however. It seems he intends to live at Hagley and let the house in Town and the farm at Parham. I am glad he lets the house in Town and wish he had done so years ago, but as Parham is the family property I wish he would live there and give up Hagley. If he would either look properly after the farm and garden there, or let me or somebody else do so, he might live there as cheaply as at Hagley and the interests of the family might be benefited, but unluckily it is only in theory that he cares for his family. My father and mother, my aunt and brother are four separate people, none having the same interests; I am a fifth, and none of us can act together. My father and my aunt wish to live at Hagley, and I think my mother likes it too, for tho' she likes to talk about Parham, yet when she is there it is too much for her. My brother will go there whenever he likes and is there now perhaps; but I am entirely sold and feel that my home has been pulled from under me by the wonderful mismanagement and mutual distrust of my own family. If they did not intend to live there and make the best of it, what did they ever take it for? They have made a plague of what Providence gave us for our good, they have driven me away for nearly fifteen years, and now when I return to England it will be worse than ever. Hagley is not a bad place but they live there so dismally, there is no occupation there, we are of no account in the parish, and all my things being in Sussex I am much grieved at not living there and enjoying what God wished to give me for my good. But there is no use in my telling all this to my father and mother, it would be impossible to make them see that they should always have lived at Parham

from the beginning, and that preventing their eldest son from living at the family place and settling in the land of his fathers, when the second son has made a bad match, is not the way to advance the consequence of their family. I have not answered my mother's letter yet, for I am puzzled what to say. I have no one but you, my dear old friend, to confide my sorrows to, so excuse it in consideration that it affords me some sort of releef to do so, tho' I know it is of no use.

Well now, two days ago Miniscalchi, who is a wondrous learned man in the grimmest line of wisdom, got me leave to rummage in the libraries of the Propaganda and the Vatican. Here I found a bibliomaniac who has three hundred MSS. and a long beard. He is called the Cavaliere di Rossi¹ and married the Duke of Lucca's sister,² and ceases not to grub among the manuscripts of the Pope. What astounding things there are! Above fifty uncial MSS., and as for illuminations they are as common as possible, from the fourth century downwards. A Greek roll, hever so long, of pictures as touching the Book of Joshua, is one of the most curious things. The writing is of the eleventh century, but the pictures seem of the fifth or sixth century, to which more modern descriptions have been added. Their oldest Syriac MSS. is [sic] A.D. 526, so Monsignor Molza³ told me, but the oldest I could find was 549, whereas the oldest in the [British] Museum is A.D. 411, I think. Their MS. of the Book of Enoch is a modern transcript; their finest Bulgarian MSS. not so fine as my second best; Hebrew - nothing astoundingly astonishing, the oldest penteteuch I saw was A.D. 969. They have only one book in Samaritan and two others in Hebrew, but in the Samaritan character. Altogether I was put in great conceit with my own books. I have several finer of their kind than any in the Vatican, but it is in old Latin tomes that they beat all the world

1, 2. Giovanni Francesco, second husband of Marie-Louise Charlotte (1802-57), sister of Charles Louis (1799-1883), Duke of Lucca (1824-47).

3. Not identified.

- three Virgils and a Terrence of the fourth century, astounding palimpsests, and above all the perfection of writing and illumination in no end of gorgeous volumes, in which Ghirlandaio,¹ [?] Girolamo dei libri,² Julio Clovio &c., &c., &c., have exhausted their efforts to embellish the most sumptuous books in existence. There are besides about thirty Latin papyri, as old and as illegible as one could wish, and books bound in niellos and chased gold and tabernacle work to your heart's content.

Only imagine that Mr Denistoun of that ilk³ has bought for forty scudi a missal illuminated by Pietro Perugino and Julio Clovio; and one Mr Gibson would not buy it because the jewels were out of their settings on the binding, and one page was cut out!!! It was, it seems, the missal of the Albani family;⁴ the Pope heard of it and forbid its being sent away, but Denistoun of that ilk was wiser in his generation than his Holiness the Pope and he sent it away quietly, and you and I and the Pope may consider ourselves sold for the rest of our days. As for Mr Benjamin Gibson,⁵ it was his ignorance that prompted him, but conceive, what a failure to have missed such an extraordinary tome, if one could have sold one's other breeches and all one's goods for £8. 10. 0., which is about what was given for it by Denistoun of Denistoun, who, I imagine, knows what is what.

As for me I have economised with all my might and got nothing but two old Greek helmets at Naples, but notwithstanding I have not cash enough, and do not know how I shall manage when I go back to England, owing £100 there as

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1. Or Domenico Bigordi, 'the garland-maker' (1449-94).
 2. The reading of Curzon's spelling of the Christian name is uncertain. The name is usually found in the form Girolamo dai Libri (1474-c.1555).
 3. James Dennistoun of Dennistoun, Renfrewshire and Edinburgh (1803-55), an authority on Italian works of art.
 4. Originally refugees from the 16th century Turkish invasion of Albania. They produced cardinals (one of whom became Pope Clement XI, see p. 193, n. 5 below), connoisseurs and diplomats, and built the Villa Albani.
 5. Not identified.

I do. I wish you was here, that we might prowl about together. I went to see the place where you was robbed, but I did not find any of your genuine effects there. Yesterday I was taken by Lady Duff Gordon¹ and her two daughters to Grotta Ferrata, and coming back we ran against a little cart, which so enraged the driver thereof that he threw stones at our coachman, and screamed like a madman with rage. At last he got upon the box of our carriage and tore the coachman's shirt off his back. Luckily we met some soldiers, to whom the coachman gave this worthy, who was swearing he would murder the coachman aforesaid on the first convenient opportunity. A few days ago they cut a man's head off who had murdered another for the sake of twenty baiocchi or two Pauls, about ten pence.

Douglas² is here, but I do not see anything of him. Lord Ward³ is the great man of the year. He gives parties but I don't know him and do not want to go to parties if I did (barring dinner). I went to the Rospigliosi⁴ party two days ago, where it was very hot and dull, but I saw no end of live cardinals in various stages of perspiration; and a silver shell standing on a dragon, which stood on a tortoise. It is said to be the work of Cellini, but there is no proof of it, nevertheless it is a pleasing chattel. Item, an old pianoforte or spinnet, the inside of the lid painted by Albano,⁵ and numerous little green boys on a gold ground all round the outside of it, painted by Nicolo Poussin.⁶

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1. Lucie (1811-69), wife of Sir Alexander Cornwall Duff Gordon Bt. (1811-72).
 2. William Alexander Anthony Archibald (Hamilton), 11th Duke of Hamilton (1811-63), styled (1819-52) Marquess of Douglas.
 3. William (Ward), Baron Ward of Birmingham, later Earl of Dudley (1817-85).
 4. The poet Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) described the pavillion in the gardens of the Rospigliosi Palace as 'the prettiest I ever saw,' Italian Journal, edited J.R. Hale (Faber and Faber, 1956), 211. Information Dr Cecil Clough. Giulio Rospigliosi was Pope Clement IX (1667-69).
 5. Francesco Albani (1578-1660).
 6. (1594-1665).

Old Chiaveri¹ stood me out that I was the brother of the Curtzion who was here before, because that one had been killed somewhere, which he knew from authority, so there could be no doubt of it. Shneid, Shnade, Shnoid - ah, he remembered him! Got more money now, he heard, not married yet, shall not marry at all now - no. Shneed - yez, eugh! This was your brother, I imagine; you he did not remember, for you had not got no more monies, which is the great point of interest in Chiaveri's estimation. Lady Susan Percy² is here, in the Percies' rooms in the Casa Margarita, where I cannot find her at home. Old Mills³ is paralytic and has sold his villa, as I hear, to Percy Burrel (de Wodeland?)⁴, who has made this addition to his name and turned Roman Catholic, and wears a hat of peculiar construction for a reason he has. I saw him in a carriage yesterday, with four kindred spirits all in remarkable hats, perhaps they have turned Roman Catholics too, and I wish the Pope joy of 'em. If he makes them cardinals they may sport still quaint hats, only then five in a coach would be too much of a good thing.

I fear the tone of young men's society is going down, from what I see. They all walk about Rome in wide awake hats and shooting coats. Almost every night I am awoken by the screams and shouts of some drunken Englishman. The Hunt gave a dinner some time ago, at which the wine drunk was at the rate of seven bottles a head; and when Douglas, who was the president, proposed the health of the Pope, one of the Roman princes, whose name I have forgot, begged it should not be drunk, as it was a profanation to mention

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1. ? The Chevalier Luigi Chiaveri mentioned by Sir William Gell in his Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott's Residence in Italy, 1832, ed. James C. Corson (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1957), 25: 'The Chevalier Luigi Chiaveri took him [Scott] to the place...'
 2. Susannah-Elizabeth (1782-1847), third daughter of Algernon (Percy), 1st Earl Beverley (1750-1830).
 3. Probably one of the two brothers, Charles, 1st Bt. (1792-1872), or Francis (1793-1854), third and fourth sons of William Mills of Bistern, Hants.

his name in such an orgy. All this is a failure and such doings bring disgrace upon the name of England in the eyes of the more civilized people of the south, who may give us some lessons in the arts of peace, though we may beat them in war, and steel, and steam.

Pray write me another letter, for it does me good to hear of you. Write to Rome if you write directly, and I may get your letter before I go, and believe me,

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

4. (1812-76), heir of Sir Charles Merrick Burrell, 3rd Bt. (1775-1862), of Knepp Castle, near Shoreham, Sussex. Percy married (1856) Curzon's cousin, Henrietta Katherine, daughter of Sir George Brooke-Pechell (see p. xxxiii, n. 5 above). Wodeland appears to have been a family name. Percy was succeeded by his brother, Walter Wyndham Burrell (1814-86), one of whose sister's sons (b. 1890) was called Roger Wodeland Burrell.

140. Letter addressed to Walter Sneyd at 24 Upper Brook Street, readdressed to Denton.

My dear Sneyd,

Turin, 15 May 1846

I do not know whether you have ever been at Turin, but if you have not, know that a more uninteresting place existeth not in the fair land of Italy. I have been here three days and it has done nothing but rain; twice have I been to the king's armoury, and once to the Egyptian museum, and to a horrid bad play; moreover I have dined out, and now have been looking out of the window for diversion, and there I see the pitiless rain spattering on the tin roofs of the four hackney coaches, with their poor old patient horses, which stand with hanging ears, before the windows of the inn. High do the drabby maids hold up their petticoats as they pick their way across the great desert which is called Piazza del Castello, holding up huge umberellas, red and rose coloured and yellow. The great event is when they relieve guard and enconce a new saturated sentry into the damp sentry box, from which they have plucked forth the old one. An omnibus, too, is an object of astounding interest, and I felt for the passengers when a lady who had been walking probably for some time in the rain was shouldered in by the streaming cad. She must have been as pleasant a companion as a wet biddy sponge to the unfortunate gentlemen who thought they had secured a dry passage in the bowels of the omnibus.

At Mr Abercrombie's (the minister)¹ I met young De Salis,² the eldest son of Count Peter, the head of the family, which is much looked up to in these regions, for next to St Carlo Boromeo there is no saint more

1. Ralph, later 2nd Baron Dunfermline (1803-68), British Minister at Turin 1840-51.

2. John Francis William (b. 1825), attaché to the British legation in Turin.

venerated hereabouts than St Frances [sic] de Salis. The young Count is a good natured, light haired fellow, a regular Swiss boy, tall and large limbed, not the least like Lady De Tabley.

I am travelling with Robert Hay, who has several acquaintances here and I believe likes this dismal place for that reason. I dined with a friend of his yesterday, Count D'Aplie,¹ an old diplomate, who I found had been a great friend of Aunt Bromley,² and told me how he dined one day in Berkley Square when Lord MtEdgeCombe³ tripped himself up in the edge of the carpet and so ingeniously contrived to break his leg.

I do not yet know how we are to get across the Alps, the season being too early. I do not know what fate drags me to England, for I shall be tormented when I get there; but I have not got money enough to travel about, and the vexatious letters from home make me restless, and from unpleasant thoughts all my hair is coming off, so you may expect to see me bald when we next meet.

May 16 - rain - May 17 d[itt]o. No church here tho' it is Sunday, so I went to see the King⁴ go to church instead, whereby I was much edified. Yesterday Prince Borghese⁵ went by, today we hear he was stopped on Mt. Cenis by an avalanche of rocks and stones, and was

1. Not identified.

2. The Hon. Hesther Curzon (see p. xci, n. 2 above).

3. Presumably Ernest Augustus (Edgcumbe), 3rd Earl of Mount Edgcumbe (1797-1861) but possibly his father, whom he succeeded in 1839.

4. Turin was a provincial capital within the kingdom of Sardinia until 1860. It was ruled by the House of Savoy, represented at this time by Charles Albert, Prince of Carignano, King of Sardinia 1831-49.

5. Marc-Antoine Jean-Baptiste Alexandre Jules, Prince Borghese (1814-86), married in 1835 a daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.

obliged to go back to Susa, which complicates our plans. I suppose he will get all the people to clear the road, and perhaps we may get by, but this letter will be handed across the fallen rocks by lines of men, for the mail cannot pass, and in this way the bags were forwarded last night, the French mail and the Piemontese each returning with the mails which they received from the other, in this way.

Write me a line to Paris and tell me what you are about. I go to Berkley Square in London and look forward to paying you [continued inside the flap of the envelope] a visit at Denton in the summer, and doing a bit of Wardour St. in June. I sometimes think I shall then go to Venice, for want of anything better to do, for the thoughts of Hagley, with nobody to speak to, keep me awake at nights. I will write from Geneva or Paris.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

141. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Hôtel du Rhin, Place Vendôme, Paris,

14 June 1846

I was charmed to see your letter, and to hear that the flowers do spring and burgeon at Denton Abbey. I was, moreover, placed in a state of painful curiosity by the hint of the astounding and unique curiosity, in the purchase of which you have spent all your remaining fortune. Luckily we are recommen[de]d in holy writ to buy surprizing chattels, or else it might seem wild and extravagant to do so when we are not overburthened with cash; but you know "a certain man who sold all that he had, and purchaced a pearl of great price" was praised for his cuteness in so doing; so you and I and other holi faders and heremites no doubt are practising a virtuous action when we sell our other trousers to a Jew, and go and buy a volume of great price with the proceeds. This is a great consolation under the circumstances, and I hope my having often got no end of suchlike pearls will get me a character for prudent.excellence and steady respectability.

I am sorry to say I have got next to nothing this time, divil a book, not a mere reliquary, only some very small scrapings in the antiquity line, so I fear I shall have nothing to hold up before the vast relic you speak of, which has caused such a perturbation in my mind. I hope to be in Town on Thursday, boilers and wind permitting: shall you be there? Pray leave word at Berkley Square where you are &c - &c - &c. I propose then to go to Hagley on the 22^d, back again on the 27th and then do a little London, swagger down Pallmall and so on. I am glad to leave Paris for I am lonely here and have done my Hôtel de Cluny and Quai Voltaire, and it is too hot and sweltersome to

walk about.

I wish you could see my room, it is a perfect specimen of 1810, the great double doors all looking glass, classical gilt furniture. and red velvet cushions, and three large looking glasses on the walls; hever such a clock and chandelier of bronze, it is peert to a degree, albeit a horrid bad inn.

Yours ever,

R. Curzon

142. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

50 Berkley Square, 15 July 1846

I will come to you on Tuesday the 21st if that suits your Reverence, and stay till the Monday following, so let me have an answer at your inconvenience, i.e. by return of post, seeing that my aunt¹ is going to Richmond and I am asked a[nd] had rather go to Th'abby instead. Them's my sentiments.

Yours ever,

R. Curzon

Lord Elgin² is come back very fat and aged, and De Tabley is here very flourishing.

1. Not identified.

2. James (Bruce), 8th Earl of Elgin (1811-63), from Jamaica.

144. Extract, no address.

Parham, 7 October 1846

My dear WS,¹

...Well - Nts - Why, I am going to stay here till my parents go, which is I believe at the end of the month, then I go to Town for two or three days to buy some Harvey sauce and other condiments, then I come back again, and then I poke the fire and wait for you, and send Giovanni² up stairs to tell you dinner is ready and will be getting cold if you don't make haste. I have got a man and a little pshay and two ponies, by the help of which I want to lionize the wonders of the neighbourhood with you. I wish you was here now, for I want some one to talk to, the paternal worrying is too much for me and affects my health, every thing is so dismal and disheartning under the present auspices I long to go to bed and cry. Mr Parker was here some time and I was dismayed at his going away so soon. Things are much better here when there is somebody whom my father knows well staying in the house. Poor old T.L.P. could not stand it at all. His eyes used to fill with tears when he had tried six times to talk to somebody else in vain, and there was no fish for dinner besides. I have a great love for him, he is so well bred, tho' he is provoking too in his way.

I saw De Tabley in Town for a day, and went to the play with him to see The Magic Horn³ The story or plot of this drama seems to have been accidentally left out, but it does just as well, as the point of it

1. Initials decorated, see Plate II.

2. Servant.

3. The Illustrated London News, no. 226, vol. ix (29 August 1846), 139, described it as a 'fairy extravaganza' by Charles Dance (1794-1863). It opened at The Lyceum, 24 August 1846.

consists in the peertness of Miss Fairbrother¹ and Mrs Keely², as well as in the multitude of damsels in pink tights. De T. was just the same as ever, we had no end of expensive dishes at dinner at the Travellers', and he would walk home after the play (tho' it rained like the deuce), for the lark of the thing, to see the people in the Strand, the carriage going home empty. How full of life and youth and 'conviviality' he is...

As soon as I know when my people depart I will send you word. Could you not meet me in London, and then we could mouse about there for a while and then come on here? That sounds plausible I think - eh?

I have made a great revolution in my room, banished the great divan and got a new arm chair (only he ain't come yet), and made some wonderful new arrangements among the gimcracks that stand about, have a new book case for large folios, and if it ain't cram full and not half the folios aforesaid will go in - here's a business. Six great cases of books came down this year and they are all safe in the shelves, which don't look quite so full as they did before. This has always been a matter of marvel to me, arrangement is a "grete wisdom"...

The Pechells come here tomorrow, and then for the next few days we have dinners of neighbours and shall have to play at company, to my howling dismay. Would that I could get off somehow, alas, alas! The worst is that if I met the same people anywhere else I should like it very much,

1. Spelled Farebrother by the reviewer (op. cit.), whose only comment about her was that she was unable to '...make a great deal of Roshana, except an appearance, magnificently dressed.'

2. Mary Ann (née Goward, ?1805-1899), wife of the actor Robert Keeley (1793-1869). He and his daughter also appeared.

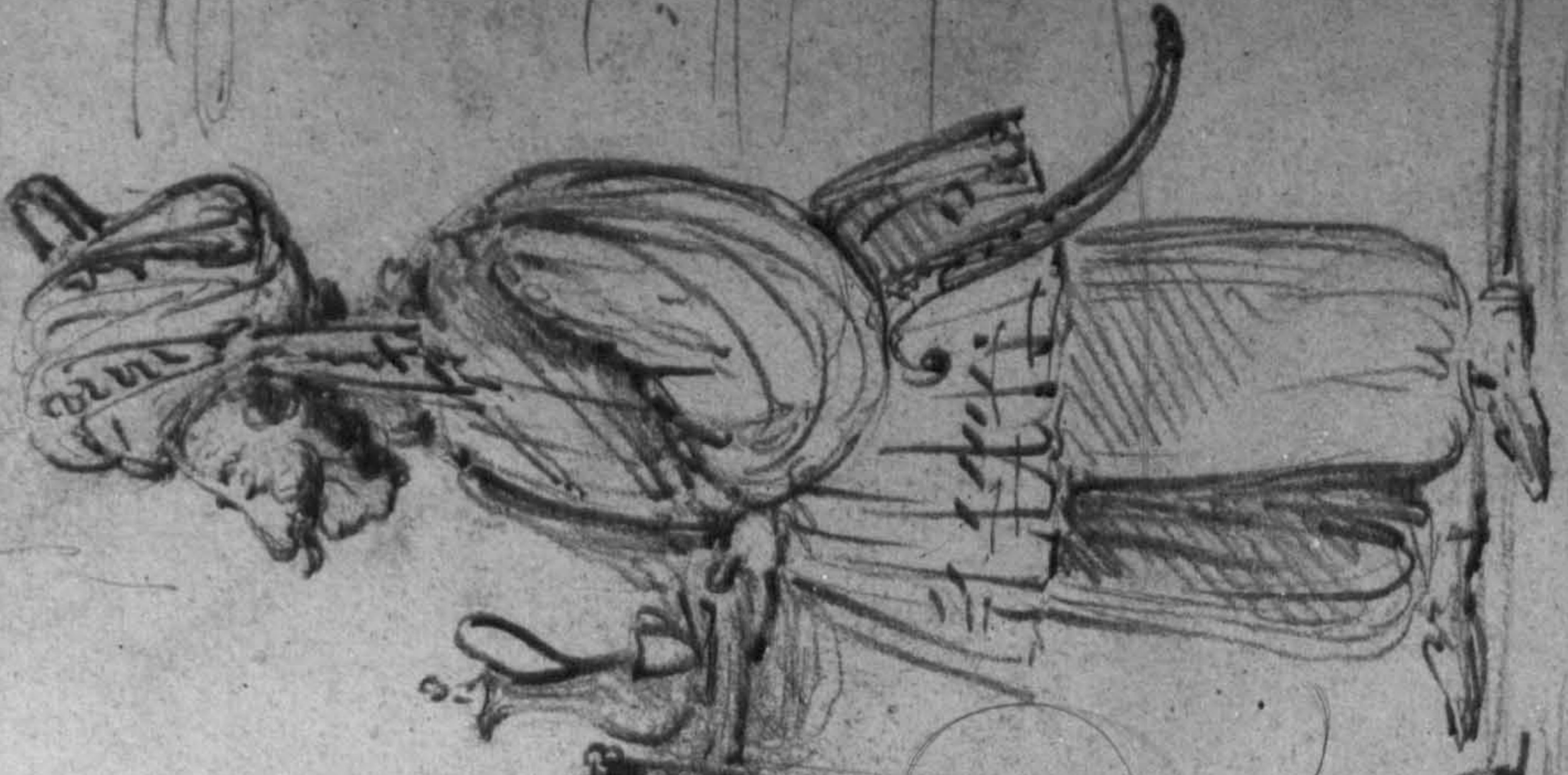
for they are good people all, but under present circumstances it is peine forte et dure to me, and that of a kind which I cannot at all stand up against - botheration and tribulation and irritation, and all sorts of other 'ations, kereikês!! What a stew I shall be in! Would that I might retire to the Abbey of St Wilfred and drink pump water for nine days instead.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

Plate XVII. Sneyd and Curzon, attended by Curzon's servant, probably William Fuller.

From an original drawing in pencil, undated, among the Sneyd Papers.



Williams.



Curzon



J.

145. Extract, no address.

Parham, 8 January 1847

My dear Sneyd,

Here I am back again and very glad I felt when I arrived to be again in peace and idleness at home, if this is to be called home, tho' it is not precisely my notion of that place.

Well the first things I found barring the bills were two invitations to Dale Park and Arundel, where I am going before the 15th, when everybody goes up to parliament, and then I suppose I shall be left to my own deserts. What do you think they asked me to Montreal for? - for the Sevenoaks Ball - Creikes!! Wasn't I sold, one day we went to Knowl and there I caught such a horrid bad cold that I could no go to the ball after all, but it was a frightful catastrophe altogether, very terrible, certainly - and now they ask me to these other places for the public ball at the inn at Arundel, howbeit - a particular engagement prevents the great pleasure which I should have otherwise &ccc....

How strange it is that people should go on asking other people to go to a public ball, for pleasure, and society. It is very charming for pretty girls, to show their pretty gowns, and pretty feet, and pretty shoulders, and to be flattered and caressed, but what the fun of it can be to an unfortunate old he man, who is not standing for the bourough, not for any of the pretty girls aforesaid, I cannot conceive. I do not even see what the fallacy is, that is, what it is that is considered, or pretended to be, pleasant in it - what the joke is? I do not take the allusion evedently, and don't like the cold, and the wet, and the waiter's elbow in my eye, and the sludge in my left shoe, and the hot swelter, and the curious perfume. It may be pretty well for a Duke because everybody gets out of his way

and makes him a bow and says 'Yes yer grace. I perfectly agree with you, your grace. Yes your blessed worship. Take a chair your gracious lordship, which will your grace be pleased to take?' That is all very well, in a small way, tho' even that is not in my line; but when a very fat man treads on my toe, and somebody else shoves me in the ribs, and another shouts out 'Get out of the way you little wretch, and make room for the waiter with the negus' - 'Mrs Fitzozer an other glass - doo!' - 'Why lawk, Mr Towzer, law, how can yer', then I do not see the fun of it, I give it up; I may be an ass, and a very great ass, only I'm not that sort of ass, and I'd rather go somewhere else instead, whether other asses do bray to another tune, for I don't follow score in that... .

146. Extract, no address.

Parham, 23 January. 1847

You want to know how it was at Albert Way's, well I'll tell you how it was. I went to the Reigate station¹ and there I got into a fly, Giovanni also got inside.

'How far is it to whaddyecallem?' says I.

'Yes sir?' says he.

'Why, to Mr Albert Way's.'

'Oh yes, sir - why four mile.'

'Ah', says I, so away we went, rattling, swinging and gingling till we got to a kingdom where many posts were stuck into the ground.

'Numero settanta due!' said Giovanni.

'Nts!' says I.

'Numero cinquanta tre!'

'Nts!' says I.

'What is those leetle poses?' says Giovanni.

'Why, those are the numbers of lots for building leases, which are stuck into the ground here to show that my Lady Warwick² wants to let land for building houses hereabouts, on her estate of Gatton.'

'Who'll take 'em?' says Giovanni, 'I wouldn't live here for a pound!'

'Don't know,' says I, 'cannot say, praps somebody will.'

'Ah!' says he.

'Nts!' says I.

1. For Wonham Manor.

2. Sarah (1786-1851), daughter of the 2nd Earl of Mexborough and widow of the 3rd Baron Monson, married 1816 Henry Richard (Greville), 3rd Earl Brooke of Warwick Castle and Earl of Warwick, died 1853.

'What an odd house - che casa curiosa!'

'So it is - what a quaint edifice!'

'Si signore, veramente singolare.'

'All abroad upon the common, too.'

'Ah, si.'

'Nts!' says I, 'what a chimney!'

'Si signore.'

Now we are going to be upset - powder and turf! What a sharp corner!'

'Coachman!'

'Postiglione! Dove andate?'

'You're driving into a sawpit!'

'No I ain't, this here's the road to Albert Way's - I knows him!'

'Who, Albert Way?'

'No, the road.'

'Ah well, take care of the pond!'

'Lord, sir, I knows him!'

'Who?'

'Why, bless ye, the pond to be sure - it ain't a biggun neither.'

'No - only take care!'

'On course, sir, I shall, on course.'

So it began to snow, and at last we got to a back gate by a kitchen garden; and then we got through a gate in a paling; and then we got to the hall door, and then we got to a hall, and then into a sort of library, and therein I made my bow to Albert Way.

Now Albert Way /is/¹ a man stiff and upright, but good natured withal, with an intelligent pale face, thin in body and active in mind,

1. Substituted for '...was...'

and with a mighty head of hair, and two dogs, whereof one is ecleped Tiri, after a certain old dog in a monument somewhere, and the other dog is called by some other name unknown in blackletter days. Then, on his chimney piece were certain candlesticks, brass, common enough only Gothic, certainly, 15th century.

'Curious,' quoth I.

'Maedeval,' quoth Albert Way.

'Ah!' says I.

'Yes, oh yes, medieval,' and so we entered into discourse; and I spake of the 12th century, and the 8th century, and the 15th century; and he discoursed of maedeval chattels, messuages and tenements; and of ouches we spake, and of ostensoria, and of rood lofts; and of old tombs, quoth I; and of maedeval effegies, quoth he; and of tapestry, and as we discoursed of tapestry and waxed hot and warm in the discussion, and had differences, and begged each other's pardon; and each knew best, and so on, in came Mrs Way.¹ And then spake I civilities, and I thought, 'Behold! A good thing is a woman, a female not maedival, that is a good thing; would that my own collection contained one, for it is desirable that even antiquaries should be provided with one of that sort of curiosity, one which no man understands, and that give men much trouble but yet that all men care to have.'

Well, dinner - pretty good, evening cosy over the fire in his room. Mrs Way made tea, more majorum, I looked at some beautiful drawings of Way's, quite in my line. He knew all sorts of things that I knew, cared for armour, didn't care a hang for Caxton, cared for old jewelry, but more for the binding of an Irish manuscript, the Donagh, or the shrine of St Beeswax than for the most glorious works of Cellini, or

1. Formerly the Hon. Emmeline Stanley, daughter of Lord Stanley of Alderley. Way married her 30 April 1844.

Albert Durer, or any other foreigneering fellow whatsoever.

Next day, Sunday, went to church. On our way there, by a most pretty walk, met the gardner's wife coming back - had been accustomed to sit in the front row in the gallery - could not demean herself by sitting in the back row - was above that - would never go to church again. Religion be blowed! No notion of that sort of thing! Then I communed with myself and I said, 'Behold! Of what religion is that woman? She is of the religion of the front bench evedently, but of what other sect she is I do not understand - vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas! Howbeit, am I better than her? Alas, who knows, alas!' and so we got to church.

And how the church is spoilt! The altar cut off altogether, the pews nose high, galleries of various calibres, sacriligiously Anglicised. What a failure, and such a nice old church if they could have left it alone. Then such a pretty walk back, lots of luncheon - could hardly keep awake in the evening service, desperate work! Never sleep in church on principle! Dear, dear, what hard work it was, one eye shut involuntarily - had to blow my nose and move about I don't know how often. However, I did not go to sleep, the others did, and I felt as drunk as an owl afterwards and would have given any money for a nap, but it would not do.

When we came out of church it rained and an old woman in a cottage lent us umberellas, and we got home. Then we had a tolerable dinner, not bad, not good, then an agreable evening with my very intelligent and gentlemanlike host. Then, unluckily, Tiri would make advances to Flora or Pincherina, and was turned out and got in again and was still more galant, and was turned out again; and I looked at the cieling, and up

the chimney and in various directions, and that horrid Tiri would not behave, but at last he was finally turned out, and so we discoursed, and then we went to bed.

And on Monday morning Way took me in his brougham to Reigate, and on the road I said, seeing a surprizing edifice, 'Whose house is that?' 'The Revd. Mr Cotton's, Chaplain of Newgate. He has a curious collection of the ropes which have held up certain celebrated but unfortunate bretheren to the admiration of the British public. That is his house.'

And then said Albert Way, 'Do you know about those little porcelain lions sitting on pedestals [sketch], that are found in the Irish bogs, and which are supposed to have been the seals of the aborigines, in the very old time before they were bogged?' 'I do not,' said I. I never heard tell of such lions, did you?

We were just in time for the train. We passed a horrid accident near Stoa's Nest station, carriages smashed, road torn up, rails broken.- nobody killed, they said: no fault of yours that they were not, I thought, and so to London, pleased with Albert Way. Mighty wise is he in maedieval matters, tho' he sees them all in a newfangled light, in an aeological point of view, and does not collect old things...

148. No address.

Parham, 9 March [1847]

My dear Sneyd,

- Blow the pen - it is after dinner and being Lent I thought I would have only bread besides fish, so I had sweet bread, roasted, and capital good it was; and the room is hot, I think, and your last letter is locked up in the dispatch box, and I have left the key upstairs and I can't go and get it because there is a gale of wind in the hall, so I must try and remember what it was about.

(Orange pekoe tea is good, this is in a parenthesis). Well, you say you are thinking whether you shall begin to consider about packing up your carpet bag, not to mention the portmanteau, and the other few trunks and things and passels, and then you think of coming up to Town, and if you wear lavender gloves and a black coat you trust people will think you are a dean, or a rural dean, or at any rate a canon or a gun of some sort appertaining to the church militant - all is vanity. You will go to Shirley's. He was so good as to say he would take me in too, if you came to his house, but pray tell him if you have occasion that I have a domicile in Berkley Square, but that I will dine with him as often as he likes to ask me, if you and I are in Town together.

Now it happens that by some extraordinary coincidence that I have spent all my cash. That comes of housekeeping, so I cannot go away from hence till after the 25 of March, which is one of the quarter days (would there were more of them), then I shall go up to Town to see after my brougham and squander my money in paying bills, so what do you say, spose you come up on the 29th and I will come and help you, only that is in

the holy week. Perhaps it would be better if you was to come on the Monday after Easter - Monday, April 5, how would that suit you, and then we might knock heads together and consider what we might do? You have been mighty snug, I dare say, and Hussey and Knox¹ &c. have been with you - well I have been very snug too, only lonely. I want a wife or two and am always thinking of the lovely and accomplished Miss ---, and the hymeneal halter and the murrain among the pounds. It is a sort of diarrhea that my purse has got and he is very bad I must say, so thin and fallen away that his mother, Lady Tippem, would hardly know him again. Oh dear, I wish I was a gentleman with a house and a wife, and a cook and a ballance at the banker's. I am getting old and seedy and I feel the want of these little conveniences every day more and more. I have not been doing much since I wrote last. I have written a deal more humbug about antient libraries and bibliographical gammon, and I have used up all the paper and sent for more, and I suppose all my wisdom will make a thin pamphlet when it is done.

At Knepp Castle² I saw a curious portrait of Sir Robert Cotton, with his famous MS. of the Book of Genesis which was afterwards burnt,³ in his hand. I was much edified with this curious picture, of which I send you a rude sketch [missing], with two still more rude designs [missing] for portraits of Pannizi⁴ and myself. I think that is the style in which you and I should descend to posterity.

Old Lady Newburgh is always asking me to luncheon, and I have a great regard for that antient Countess, yet it is a deuce of a way off and I am

1. Not identified.

2, 3. Knepp Castle, near Shoreham, Sussex, home of the Burrells. The original picture, by Cornelius Johnson for Sir Simon D'Ewes, is in the British Museum, but there are several versions. The Cottonian Library was seriously damaged in the fire at Ashburnham House in October 1731.

4. Sir Anthony Panizzi (1797-1879), Principal Librarian, British Museum.

hard put to it sometimes.

The body of poor Lord Bernard Howard¹ arrived at Arundel on Saturday and was laid out in the chapel at 12 o'clock at night. A poor old servant who was much attached to him desired to sit up to watch the coffin, and whether it was the cold or the excitement or what, the poor old man died the next day, which is an increase of the mournful tragedy. This is a report only, here, so it may perhaps be untrue, as much country news is. I hope it may be so.

On /Friday/² last I climbed up a tree for a rason I had, and when I got to the top it was a hollow tree, with the upper part blown off. What should I find sitting there but a fine large fox. I was very-civil to him for fear he should take me for a goose and give me a bite, so after looking at each other for a season the fox scrambled down the inside of the tree, and getting out of a hole at the bottom departed in peace, leaving me at the top of the tree "in exceeding grete mervayle".

Then I went on a day to Amberley, to call upon Mr Clarkson, the parson, and what should he do but give me a little figure of Sir John de Wantele, which he has had done in brass, painted and inlaid in a piece of black marble, a copy of the enameled brass in his church.³ It is big enough for a paper weight, not correctly done and consequently cannot stand with the things on my table, which are good works of art, but it must have cost no end of pounds and I am in dismay at having to accept it, for I could not get off anyhow. Perhaps you remember his talking about it

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1. Lord Bernard Thomas Fitzalan Howard, youngest son of the Duke of Norfolk, died in Egypt 21 December 1846, aged twenty.
 2. Substituted for '...Saturday...'
 3. Wantele died in 1424. His effigy is described in 'The Buildings of England' series, Ian Nairn and Niklaus Pevsner Sussex (1965), 80, as '...much more vivid and forceful than most surviving C15 examples.'

when you was here, this is what it is to be an antiquarian. Morton¹ is always bringing me some old piece of rubbish. He brought me a rusty iron tobacco box lately, with the inscription 'Jos Fardee, Crewshole, 1751', with two verdegrease farthings in it, which are "antient coins". What a sell, isn't it? What is one to do? What do I care about Crewshole? These excellent people do not understand the difference between the Venus de Medecis and Queen Anne, and thin[k] any thing old has charms for such daft idiots as they consider us antiquarians to be. All this displays a profound ignorance of what is beautiful and interesting or suggestive among works of art, which is the disgrace of what is called a civilized country. The worst of it is that one never gets any thing really good or fine by these accidents. Somehow if anything curious is found in the neighbourhood it is always sold, or the doctor gets it, or somebody else, but it never hardly is preserved by those who would appreciate it.

Well, Sneyd, write, write, to your loving gossip,

R. CURZON

149. No address.

Parham, 19 March [1847]

Clock slow - seven fifty-eight. Salt fish, Lent, gale of wind, equinox, thin breeches &c. Ah, Sneyd, Sneyd, tempus fugit cito pede and I can't make any good use of him, or take him by the fire-lock [sic], to do any good. You should have made him in the guise of a barber shaving my head, in the picter,¹ that would have been more like the truth.

Well, I'm full of troubles. I've overdrawn the banker [£]88. 14. 1d - the 1d be ---d, but I did not think it was so much, so that is a fix. Then Tummas the groom is not a going to tie up little faggots to make a blaze on my fire, cos he's a coachman and won't demean hisself, so he must go with his pride somewhere else, and that is another fix. And I fear I have found out some practises among the people here, which are not very honest, but I don't know for sure, and perhaps should not be supported if I was to "bust my biler" so I hardly know how to act, and that also is a fix. And the big dog is very ill and that is a bore for him, however that is his look out; I hope he won't die, for I fear he won't leave me anything if he does. Then there is the new brougham to pay for, and its me that is swept clean, that is a portentious fix. Then I rayther think that I am smitten with a lovely damsel, only I'm not sure that I am, and I'm not sure that she is with me, only one thing I am sure of, which is that it would not be a good match, res est solliciti plena timoris amor, this is a singular great fix. Then your plans don't suit me. I cannot come away from hence just now for divers reasons. I do not expect to be in Town till the 10th more or less, as I am asked to Petworth for the 7th, and you'll be at

1. This particular drawing, together with four others, all birthday greetings drawn by Sneyd, is preserved in Houghton b MS Eng. 1129.

the nethermost end of the earth by that time. I wish you would come here for a bit, from Town, for I cannot manage to come up to you. Sir Stephen Glynne¹ went away yesterday. Yas - he is older than us, so who is affeared? Lord Leicester² married at seventy-four, I believe,³ and had a son. The fact is that we are in the flower of our youth, gay young dogs to swagger down the street anywhere, so as you say 'Vogue la galère!'

I received your sister Charlotte's book yesterday, which she was good enough to send me, it is a very entertaining little tome.⁴ I wonder how she scraped together so many notes, whereof some are exceedingly curious. How fine Henry, Earl of Stafford must have looked in his 'payre of hosen of lether, the brech of scarlet, and guarded with the same.' Item, are the coverlets of your beds at the Abbey of dogswain or hopharlot, which? For it seems they should be of one or the other. I should like to go to Keel with you, and to Blithfield too, and do our London afterwards; why did you make such an early excursion, for I can't come.

Thyne as evere,

R. Curzon

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1. Sir Stephen Richard Glynne (1807-74), died unmarried.
 2. Thomas William (Coke), Viscount Coke and Earl of Leicester of Holkham (1754-1842).
 3. He married his second wife, a nineteen-year-old goddaughter, in 1822, when he was 'nearly 70'. G.E.C., VII, 563, n. c.
 4. A Relation, or rather a True Account, of the Island of England... about the Year 1500, translated from the Italian, with notes, by Charlotte Augusta Sneyd, published by the Camden Society (1847), with an appendix giving an inventory in the possession of Lord Bagot of the wardrobe, etc. of the Earl of Stafford.

150. No address.

Parham, 21 March [1847]

21	S 5 SUNDAY IN LENT - Spring begins	r 6 4	5	morn.
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That's what the almaniac says so I suppose he's right, and the rooks are a cawing like, - like, - rooks.

I have got your second epistle and send this in hopes of its making its appearance on your breakfast table at Cox's Hotel;¹ tho' why you set out on your travels so early I cannot conceive, for tho' the weather has been fineish for two days, of course it will snow and freeze in two days more and then you'll wish you was on the hob again at Denton Abbey.

If your brother is in Town could you not bring him here for two or three days? It is the worst time of the year, certainly, for seeing a new country, but perhaps I may be gone later and he said he should like to look at the place. As for your plans they are disgusting and not to be permitted. What business have you to go a rampaging about the town in this way, I should like to know, forsooth, while I am stuck up here like an owl in an ivy bush; and I want to be in Staffordshire when you are there, only Strumpet & Co. won't let me - worse luck.

I want to see that number of the Revue Archeologique which has the account of Mount Athos, and should be much obliged if you would get it in London and send it me on Monday or Tuesday, if you can, and I will pay you for it when we meet, or give you a post obit on the death of the Pope. I am writing out a description of Mt Athos from my notes, and that book would be a great help to me just now. I have written what would amount to

1. William Cox, 55 Jermyn Street.

eighty-one pages octavo about it, and have only just concluded the first monastery and there are twenty-one, but I don't intend to go on at that rate by reason of the trouble.

I think I told you I had been staying at Castle Goring. Miss Pechell¹ is gone mad as bad as you about pedigrees and is always routing out somebody's great uncle that married a Gibson, and begs me to look in the old heraldic books here anent cote armuris.

Tom will make fagotts, and brought in four when it came to the point - what bores servants are, that is English servants, for I have no doubt Giovanni would not be above doing any thing to make himself useful at a pinch.

I am rather seedy and bored, dread going to Hagley and Rugeley church. How would it be if I turned Quaker, because then I need not go? I see no pleasant prospect in the horizon.

What a scrimmage Miss Lola Montes² is making in the world, what a furious dog's wife she must be, she would dance in a ballet without drawers once before, to the admiration of the fiddlers, who played out of tune for want of looking at the notes. I wonder how she has got hold of that old King,³ and

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1. The elder, presumably, of the Brooke-Pechells' as yet unmarried daughters, Henrietta Katherine (see p. 194, n. 4 above). Her sister married, 24 September 1857, Sir Alfred Plantagenet Frederick Somerset, only son of Lord John Somerset.
 2. Lola Montez, stage name of Eliza Rosanna Gilbert, otherwise Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert, dancer (1818-61). The Annual Register for 1861 (p. 470), whilst describing her as 'the most notorious Paphian in Europe', gave her credit, as did G.C. Boase (D.N.B., VII, 1211), for less widely appreciated qualities.
 3. Ludwig Carl Augustus, King of Bavaria (1825-48), who appears (op. cit.) to have seen Lola dancing in Munich in 1847, conferred on her the title of Baronne de Rosenthal and Comtesse de Lansfeld, and she became virtual ruler of Bavaria until the revolution in the following year.

now you see the newspapers hold her up as a protestant heroine. That's what you call liberal feeling, what a fine thing party is - non tali auxilio &c., - see Latin grammar.

From thy loving gossip,

R. Curzon

Nts/ Fish, fowl (roast), grass of the sparrow, scalloped eysters, pudd'n, and don't forget the bread sauce what ever you do - it was too thin last time.

152. No address.

Parham, Easter Sunday [4 April 1847]

My dear Sneyd,

I cannot come a touralizing with you for various excellent and cogent reasons. Later the De Tableys will arrive and I should like to be moving northwards when they are there. Even if I was to get Izaac ben Mordecai to start me northwards I could not pass by Hagley with a flying visit, so it's no use. It is your fault for setting out in the snow and hail, and it sarves you right losing your pockmantle, for not waiting till I could come too. I should have liked to have seen you walking about St James' Street with Trelawney.¹ I hope he had his lady with him to complete the edification of your clerical friends who were looking out of the window of the O & C Club.

I am going on Wednesday to Petworth. Perhaps I shall go to London next week but I do not know. It is very dull here, certainly, but I am glad to have had the power of looking about me a little, for if I had not been here this winter I should never have known anything of Sussex matters, and I appreciate the quiet and relief from all the bores which one is compelled to do by other people. I have employed myself with writing an opusculum which has swelled to a vast bulk, considering my dislike to quill driving. When I go to Town I shall try and get somebody to read it and see whether it is worth printing. It contains (1) a lyttel tretyse on writing, (2) history of curious out of the way libraries, (3) catalogue of my own oriental books and old stories &c., (4) adventures and history

1. Possibly Shelley and Byron's colourful friend, Edward John Trelawny (1792-1881).

of Mount Athos, (5) ditto, Holy Land, and there should be a (6) and (7) of Albania, and the Coptic monasteries in Egypt and Africa. There are about three hundred quarto printed pages, written; I wish I knew who could look it over for me - and who would give me £100,000 for it afterwards.

Prince Polignac¹ is dead: now how can I convey a remembrance to Lady Newburgh that she was to leave me the shrine of St Beeswax if that "lamented nobleman" should not be in condition to receive it? You see, it would be a failure if I was not to have it and it went through forgetfulness to somebody who did not care.

Well, if I havn't forgot to have lamb for dinner! What a pomp and vanity the Pope has been at today. I went to the ceremonies of Wigonholt, which were not ever so pompous, nor Parham either. No more salt fish, eh? It does not agree with me, I think it must have been that. Roast fowl today, hope it will be tender. I wish I was not going to Petworth it is so much trouble, and I cannot hunt or do what the others do, by reason of my seediness.

Yours ever,

R. Curzon

1. Prince Jules de Polignac, died at St Germain, near Paris, 29 March. French Ambassador to London 1823-29, his single-minded devotion to the cause of restoring the power of the Church in France precipitated the downfall of Charles X, in the revolution of 1830. Exactly what it was Lady Newburgh intended to leave him or Curzon is not very clear.

153. Extract, no address.

Parham, Low Sunday [11 April 1847]

Fog, rain and squelch, nts. Well - you are at Keel ain't you? Ah - hope you are snug. However, I hope your brother will lick you for going there without me, them's my sentiments -

explicit plogus

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 Custalorum¹ 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 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. See note on the Duke of Richmond, below.

I had a long talk with the Duke of Richmond,¹ who I did not know before. He is a shrewd, hard headed man, very active. He evidently takes pleasure in Quarter Sessions, farmer's meetings and so on, that is in being the chief and president of these assemblies, which is a very different thing from being a gent at the same table. He says the common people have great confidence in the aristocracy and landed gentry, whom they have been accustomed to see among them, and of whose characters they are shrewd observers. They trust these gentlemen and believe they receive justice at their hands, but they rebel against the decisions of paid magistrates whose motives they suspect.

The moral of this is that the tranquility of the nation depends very much upon the country gentlemen, who reside among their tenantry on their estates, and if they are bullied and impoverished by the law and government, and driven from their antient halls, the country will probably be demoralised and become as ungovernable and worthless as miserable Ireland, when we should fall under the hands of the spoiler, or whoever chose to invade our democratic island...

Mr Stace Dickens² has asked me to come to Coolhurst, his house near Horsham, tomorrow, so I am going for two nights. He is a man who knows artists, and married Lord Northampton's sister,³ and has fine buttons to his waistcoat...

-
1. Charles (Lennox, afterwards Gordon-Lennox), Duke of Richmond (1791-1860), Lord Lieutenant of Sussex and Custos Rotulorum 1835-60.
 - 2, 3. Charles Scrase Dickins, married in 1829 Lady Frances Elizabeth, sister of Spencer Joshua Alwyne (Compton), 2nd Marquess of Northampton.

[P.S.] I think of going to Town, Friday. Alex Hope,¹ Lady Mildred² and Mr Butterfield,³ who makes chalices and Puseyite gimcracks, &c. are coming here on Thursday, to lunch and see my reliquaries, from Brighton.

-
- 1, 2. Alexander James Beresford Hope (afterwards Beresford-Hope, 1820-87), M.P., known for his interest in Church affairs, including ecclesiastical architecture. He married in 1842 Lady Mildred Arabella Charlotte Henrietta Cecil (1822-81), eldest daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Salisbury.
 3. William Butterfield (1814-1900), architect, re-built St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, for Alexander Hope, after the latter purchased it in 1844 to establish a college for missionary clergy.

154. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 14 April [1847]

I have been so much edified with my visit to Coolhurst that I must tell you all about it, you never saw any thing so peert as it is. It is a small, new quasi Elizabethan house, rooms about thirty feet long, but there must be a great number of small bedrooms, for we were fourteen people in the house, all of the Northampton family, and Alford,¹ who married Lady Mary Anne Compton, who draws like the dickens "hever" so well, and paints, and is very agreeable besides, as all the others were. But what I want to expound to you is the history of the innumerable pretty things which abounded in every direction, nothing old, hardly, but in the old style, Elizabethan and Renaissance, Dresden china, and bronze images, and Sevre, and nicely bound books, but so smart and light and cheerful that I felt like an owl in the daylight coming from these shabby old rooms. The library, all fitted up with new carved oak and velvet curtains, has windows at the side looking into a flowergarden, and one at the end opening into a conservatory so full of beautiful flowers that it looked like midsummer. This with the smartly dressed ladies all painting and drawing, and the men bringing in things which they had turned, or drawings of their own, formed a scene which I have often imagined but have never seen before, of a set of people of refined taste making use of their time. They took the allusion and knew about everything almost, and when they did not know they did not pretend to, a trait which I admire the more from the remembrance of how long a discipline I had with myself before I could own my stupidity or ignorance when I heard some thing which I did not comprehend.

1. John, Viscount Alford (1812-51), eldest son of the 1st Earl of Brownlow, married 10 February 1841 Marianne (or Marian or Mary Anne, found variously spelled), daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Northampton. She died in 1888.

In short I came to the conclusion that Lord Northampton, who was the father of all these, could not be such a fool as some people thought him, altho' he is president of the Royal Society.¹ How I wish I could live in this way, there would be some satisfaction then in being alive. I should think Mr Dickens was not a rich man; it is not great wealth which is necessary, so much as taste and tact to make things nice, for Coolhurst is a small place, with a fine piece of water in a deepish valley, but every thing was made the most of. The furniture was the great forte of Mr Dickens, I imagine, for that was undeniably pretty and comfortable, and it only wanted to be an old house instead of a new one to make it just the sort of thing that you and I would like to have, so if you should happen to meet with an heiress who has precicely that sort of thing, just tell her that she will find the perfection of all earthly excellency in the person of

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. 1838-48.

155. Extract, no address.

My dear Sneyd,

50 Berkley Square, 8 May [1847]

'Oh the merrie month of May' - what gammon that is, as if it was not pitch dark, rain at intervals, and the streets like quagmires of black squelch, and so Cock Hussey and I are going to the British Museum for a bit of solemn diversion applicable to the times and season.

Well, Reverend Abbot, I was glad to see your fair autograph again, savoring sweetly of violets from some warm corner in the Abbey garden; and I am so particularly edified with one interesting remark in your letter that I send it you back, to ask whether the information in it is to be considered authentic or not, before I proceed to publish it to the world in London.

I have been here ten days or so, dining mightily and drinking champagne steadily most days. The Hon. Cholmondeley is here but has not been to see me. He has got Holford's stall at the opera, a good thing to have just now, as a stall is [£]6. 6. 0. a night to hear Jenny Lind,¹ Holford being out with the yeomanry.

You ain't going to be married are you, because I wish I was, tho' nobody has proposed to do me that favor, but time passes, there is no time to be lost, tho' I do not see how this object is to be accomplished.

I wrote no end of MS., I think I told you, during Lent, at Parham, and I took it the other day to Mr Murray,² and he says he will publish it at

1. Jenny Lind (1820-87) made her first public appearance in London at Her Majesty's on 5 May, playing Alice in Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera Robert le Diable.

2. John Murray III (1808-1892).

Xmas, 1,000 copies, and give me half the profits, only he makes an ugly condition which spoils it all, and that is that I must write 200 pages more, what he has got now being only 350. Now the very notion of writing 200 pages is enough to frighten one out of one's wits. I cannot well write anything here, and when I go back to Parham my people will be there - then I shall be in a state of dismal botheration and too stupid and perplexed to write my own name in a pleasant way. Now I want you to read some of the wisdom which I have written, to see what you think of it. You come up the end of this month, do you? You had better come sooner, because they say parliament will be up next month and then London will go out of Town...

157. Extract, no address.

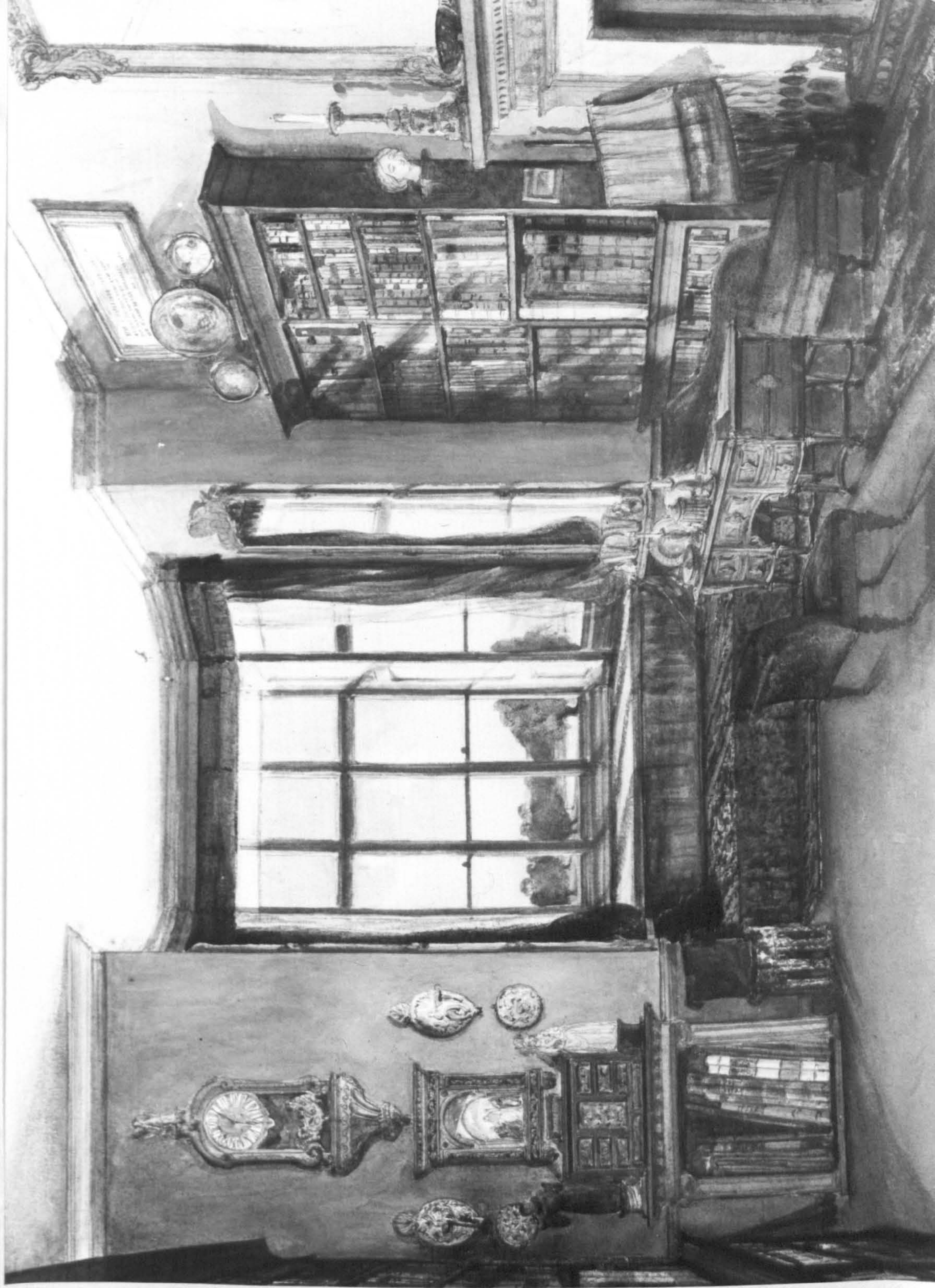
Parham, 13 September 1847

...I wish you would propose to some young lady for me, who would go to Italy or Spain for the winter. I think I shall advertise: 'Wanted - a comely damsel, with good temper. N.B. None who are too fat for a travelling carriage need apply.' I wish they had sent me instead of Lord Minto¹ as Ambassador to the Pope, only I should not like it to be a secret mission but to travel all the way in the Lord Mayor's coach, with a star as big as a plate on my coat, and my wife by my side with a fan in one hand and a nosegay in the other and a pocket handkerchief in the other...

1. Gilbert (Elliot-Murray- Kynynmound), Earl of Minto (1782-1859), Lord Privy Seal in Lord John Russell's cabinet, the latter being Lord Minto's son-in-law. According to the G.E.C., VIII, 714, n. d, his '...mission to the new Pope Pius IX [was] to strengthen his supposed leaning towards reforms.'

Plate XVIII. Curzon's room at Parham. Water-colour by Emily Julia Wilmot-Horton, at Catton.

Reproduced by permission of Mr D.W.H. Neilson.



159. No address.

Parham, 12 October 1847

My dear Sneyd,

You seem to have been doing all manner of wonderful things, and rampaging about the Queen's dominions lustily since I heard last from you. Well, touralising is a pleasant thing in fine weather, and I should like to have seen some of the places which you describe. I fear you did not go to the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, nor did you make a pilgrimage to Abbotsford or Holy Island, as you aughted to have done; nevertheless you have seen a thing or two, and Temple Newsham must be a fine thing, I have always understood it was, but what use do they make of the great room? That must be a sumptuous chamber, one hundred and ten [feet] long and forty wide: is it well furnished, or is it a barn?

I wish you had proposed for me to the nicest of the Miss Bosanquets,¹ as I told you to do, for the French education suits my notions for ladies, tho' it is detestable for men. I have been to Castle Goring, Arundel and Petworth, and am going to see my old schoolfellow, Sir W. Knighton² on the 14th. What a superb thing Petworth is, to be sure. How it savours of antient cash, and dignity. It is far beyond any other place that I have seen, in the extent of its pictures, horses, pheasants and strong ale drinking johns. The head cellerer of the beer cellars, which are antient Gothic crypts, is a model of a cellerer. He is ten feet round at least, and has three chins and a face like an apple. I take it the servants

1. The Bosanquets were a Huguenot family with property in Essex and Monmouthshire. Samuel Bosanquet (1768-1843) had five daughters, of whom two were unmarried at this time, Eleanor Laetitia and Anna Maria Nelly.

2. William-Wellesley Knighton, 2nd Bart., born 1811, Charterhouse and Christ Church, succeeded his father, Sir William Knighton, in 1836.

thrive there wonderfully. I don't know how many cooks there are, and there is the father of all kettles simmering on a fire made on purpose to fit his fundament, which sent forth an odour such as made Sancho's mouth water at the rich Comacho's wedding. Altogether, it is a very princely thing indeed.

You met Robert Hay, you say; I should be glad to see him. Did you enquire what his plans were? I know it is my duty to marry, and God knows my wish too, but what can be done without a pound and no prospects perhaps in life, for no man, woman or child could live here under present circumstances without wishing to be at Jericho or further. It is a sad life of vexati[on] and absurdity that I lead, and I can [no]¹ more help myself than a blessed babby. If I had money I would go away, and get well and calm and happy, but as I have not, what the deuce can be done? Why have not you, who have an Abbey to fall back upon, brought a lay sister to cheer your autumnal evenings, and sit on the sofa opposite your arm chair, on the other side of the fire? However, there is no use talking - what is to be, is to be, there is but one thingumy, and whats-his name is his prophet;² as Mrs Domby's mama says

What can't be cured
Must be endured.³

&c., &c., one must scrape up all the old saws for consolation.

I hope you will come down here before you finally shut up for the winter, some time in November. My people, I imagine, will be off early in that month. I wish I was going to Italy this afternoon, but I ain't,

1. Word omitted.

2, 3. "'...there is no What's-his-name but Thingummy, and What-you-may-call-it is his prophet!'" - the Hon. Mrs Skewton, Dombey and Son ('The New Oxford Illustrated Dickens', O.U.P., reprint 1953), ch. xxvii, 383. "'...what can't be cured must be endocured...'" is Captain Cuttle. Ibid., ch. xxxii, 466-67. The last number of Dombey and Son appeared in April 1848.

by reason of the pounds aforesaid, woe is me.

My brother has been here, I was glad to see him again, he is a kind hearted fellow, If he was not so cock sure of everything and so certain he always knew best and that every body else was an ass, I think we could get on very well together. He has certainly managed better than I have for he has a comfortable home and I am in purgatory before my time. My father, I am sorry to say, is very rheumatic and cannot walk hardly without a stick. I think this place does not agree with him, and wish he would go, as he can do no good here and he is, I think, nearly as much bored as I am, only he does not so clearly see why.

I am going to London next week for two or three days, is there any chance of meeting you on your return from your travels? I believe De Tabley will be at Mivart's.¹ I shall be in Berkley Square about the 19[th] or 20[th]. It is a piping hot day, the sun too warm to be pleasant out of the shade, whereas usually at this time of the year it is as cold as charity. I've nothing new to tell you.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. In Brook Street, later Claridge's.

161. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 6 November 1847

I have just received your letter and sit down to answer it as you see without loss of time. Yes, Pounds are decidedly fine things and I have such a respect for them that if a colony of them would come and settle in my pocket I would treat them with the greatest distinction, and spell their name with a capital P whenever I had occasion to write it. I am perfectly aware too that a wife is, as you say, the only thing to save my life, but what saith the prophet - sine Cerere et Baccho fugit Venus, which means that without pounds and shillings you can't have a wife.

I wrote to Denton the other day, sending you a copy of the immortal work which contains the history of the perilous adventure of the purple falcon, for which little joke I have had to pay [£]22. 11. 10.¹ the 10d be dem'd, howdumsever the [£]22. 11. 0. is a serious consideration to a poor author, as I suppose all writers of romances were, for most of mine are dated from Grub Street, "dwelling neare the lower pumpe", which does not sound like the abode of a mighty poundholder.

Let me see, have I written to you since I went to see Sir W. Knighton and all his fine pictures and drawings? It was very curious to compare notes of our passed lives, since we used to be constantly together, that having been in such remote times that we have seen but little of each other since I became friends with you. I suppose there really must have been some mammoths and ictheosauri still extant at that time, and I am

1. The Lay of The Purple Falcon; a metrical Romance now first printed from the original Manuscript, in the possession of the Hon. Robert

sorry I did not take more notice of them in the days of my youth.

I shall be in London on Wednesday and return here on Saturday. I wish you would come here then, as I cannot go and see you just now. The servants are in a frenzy of packing, hollowing and running about, as my parents go to Brook St. on Tuesday, so pray send or call there, and say where you are to be found in London. Remember me kindly to your aunt, and to George Gooch¹ if he is there.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

What a mistake your brother continues to make in spending his money outside of his house, for that is the proper employment after the rooms are ready inside.

(1. cont'd.). Curzon (London: Printed by William Nicol, Shakespeare Press, Pall Mall, 1847). The existence of three versions or stages in the development of this parody raises issues outside the scope of the present work. Suffice it to say that the British Museum's identification of the pseudonyms Reginaldus, Episcopus C. and Robert the Rhymer (General Catalogue of Printed Books (Photolithographic edn., vol. 47 (1966), 260, and vol. 200 (1963 [sic]), 187), and Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts 1916-1920 (1933), 141), is correct. Heber, however, died at Trichinopoly 3 April 1826, when Curzon was sixteen. His widow published his version, 'The Boke of the purple faucon' in The Life of Reginald Heber, D.D. Lord Bishop of Calcutta (John Murray, 1830), I, 340-45. The manuscript in Curzon's possession, now Additional MS. 39669, may be called the second version. The text is in an unusually fine 19th cent. reproduction of a late 15th cent. hand. Some minor details of some of the drawings may be Curzon's, but the general standard of the drawings is higher, and some are incomplete. Exactly who worked up Heber's version and had it written so elaborately on coarse skin, and illustrated, remains to be established. It was probably Curzon, but all that can be said with certainty is that Curzon published a development of Heber's version under the slightly altered title, which may be called the third version. Curzon's copy of this version is at Parham, printed on vellum.

1. Major George Gooch, son of the Rev. William Gooch (1798-1876).

162. No address.

Parham, Stirup Sunday [21 November] 1847

Well, Mr S., P.P.P.¹ is a resolute dog and I hope he'll succeed and get a misses to his heart's content, tho' I should think the Post Office, Richmond, was a bad cover for such game. I have sent the advertisement to my aunt in London. I only wish I was a going to be married to a lovely heiress on Tuesday next, and the best tights coming home on Monday night, and the new carriage in the coach house all ready to start. However, in the mean time I am very seedy and weak, tired to death with any thing or nothing, I suppose it is the change of the weather, howsomedever it's a failure.

Sir W. Knighton has been here and I have been to Castle Goring, where I met Mr Thellusson,² who is to have the pounds. He seems a very nice fellow, draws, pianners and shoots well, so I hope the world will be all smooth to him.

Well, what's the news at Parham - why, not ever so much. Yesterday I eat so much anchovy and hot toast that I couldn't manage the pudding. Today there's twelve eysthers, fish, hare, maccaroni done as they have it in Italy, in contradistinction to à l'Itallienne pudding. Now I find it an excellent plan to decant the Champagne. My friends wouldn't drink it last year, so I'll even drink it myself this year, and uncommon good it is,

1. Not identified.

2. Under the terms of the will of Peter Thellusson (1737-97) the bulk of his property was to be accumulated during the lives of all his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons alive at the time of his death, and on the death of the last survivor the property was to be divided between the three eldest male descendants then living, in tail male. On the death of Charles Thellusson, the last grandson, in 1856, the estate was divided between Frederick William Brook Thellusson, 5th Lord Rendlesham, born 1849, and Charles Sabine Augustus Thellusson, born 1822, to whom Curzon is referring. An Act of 1800 made such wills illegal. G.E.C., X, 765-66. n. b.

certainly it cost no end of cash, perhaps that's the reason. We have planted truffles after a crafty device; I hope they'll prosper. The truffle hounds met here one day, unluckily I was not here and had not a run and did not see the sport.

I have bought an Arab stallion of Sir S[?tratford] Canning for £25. He cost about [£]150 or more, but he ain't worth any thing I think. He came from Erzeroom, that is why I got him, but I wish I hadn't because I do not know what to do with a grand cock horse in my small way, and the pounds are a consideration, worse luck. Write again and I'll do as much for you.

Yours ever,

Mister Cuzzins

163. No address.

Well Mister,

Parham, 10 December 1847

Let me see - well, I went up to London to see the doctor.

'How are you now?' says he.

'Middling,' says I.

'Tongue,' says he, 'O, symptoms? - Ah!'

'Nts.'

'Why, you'r just like a girl!'

'Ah, so pretty,' says I.

'No, that ain't it,' says he, 'so seedy and nervous, your brain fever has shaken you, tremendous.'

'Nts,' says I, 'worse luck!'

'You must take this here for three months,' says he.

'Pleasant,' says I.

'Not so nasty,' says he, 'rayther pleasant.'

'Is that all?' says I.

'Nts,' says he.

'Peawnd,' says I.

'Thank yer,' says he.

'Morning,' says I.

So there was an end of that, barring he said 'I think your going to have the influenza.'

'No I ain't,' says I.

'Well, if you do, take -z̄ ^{oojjj} 4jjj, vi pulvis - sumend, nauseausosus, bis die [scribble].'

Only concerning the influenza, that was gammon, it was my general

seediness.

Dined at The Travellers' - sprats, eat forty-nine - capital. Last time I eat any was in the North Sea, when I toasted one on a fork and the ship cat came and scratched my hand because he could not abide the smell on a hungry stomach. Half a roast fowl, dewoured him considerable - (glass of sherry) - note, bread sauce bad - (glass of claret) - caviare, cold butter and hot toast - (glass of claret) - small piece of bread - (glass of claret) - very small piece of bread, brown - (glass of claret) - toothpick - (glass of claret). 'Waitherer - bil!' 'Yessir!' - 9s. Went to the Royal, Grand, Imperial Casino¹ - sat in a gallery to see the gents dance - saw the gents dance, and women in cloaks and bonnets, sweltering warm, very proper, tho' all + + + s, I suppose. Met a relation of your's there, an amateur, who knew the ways of the place and winks his eye at the pink ribbon - sad rogue, I warrant. Went to bed, didn't sleep hever so well, do you think it could have been the sprats? Only forty-nine, couldn't have been them - thought of

Little Jack Sprat

Who could eat no fat,

And his brother could eat no lean,

But with one and the other

Jack and his brother

They licked all their platters clean

- see Shakespeare.

Willis,² Covent Garden - all I wanted sold, to the wax chandler in the Haymarket, a great light among bibliomaniacs. Got Ovid 1480 - neat rare -

1. Not identified.

2. George Willis, bookseller, Piazza, Covent Garden.

Cicero, de Officiis, in German, full of delightfull wood cuts, one of the nicest old books (1531) I ever saw - twelve shillings: I would give £12 any day for it, if I was rich. Smith,¹ Lisle St., print seller:

'Have you got any Albert Durers?'

'Yess sir, a few.'

'Augh, let me look at 'em. I only want eleven or twelve as I have most of the rest. Have you &c. - &c. - &c.?''

'No, sir; very rare now, very.'

'Well,' says I, 'here's this one, which I have not got, a very [?] fair² one - not a very rare one, is it?'

'Why, sir, rayther.'

'Well I'll take it: how much is it?'

'£5. 5. 0.'

'Creikes!' says I, 'How much?'

'Fipund five,' says he, 'The Prodigal Son is [£]8. 8. 0. Shall I send that too?' quoth he.

'No thank yer;' says I.

So I swaggered out of the shop, plus Les Armoiries du Coq minus [£]5. 5. 0. - quite unexpected. My Albert Durers must be worth hundreds at that rate, that is some consolation. I found a little round print here the other day - Le Jugement de Paris - among my rubbish: it is worth from [£]10. 10. 0. to [£]20. 0. 0. It is one and a half inches in diameter.

Came down here in the railway, with a deaf elder, and a fat young woman, pretty, with jet black hair. She would talk to me - deaf gent

1. William and George Smith, 24 Lisle Street, Princess Street, Leicester Square.

2. Word overwritten.

could not hear - told me she lived three years at Dieppe, what's the odds thought I, shammed going to sleep.

'Have you been at Paris?' said she.

'Nts,' says I.

'Nice place Paris, very. Are you going to Brighton?' says she.

'No I ain't, are you?'

'Yes,' says she. 'I like Brighton, it's so gay.'

'Very,' says I, 'only rayther bleak.'

'So you ain't going to stop at Brighton?' says she.

'No,' says I.

'There are such nice drives,' saith the black damsel, and - lawk here's the tunnel &c. &c. &c. Believe the elder pretended to be deaf, and wasn't, and we should have become very great friends if he had not been there, an old - However I bade an affectionate adieu to the lady with the black ringlets, and simmered on to Worthing, and so trotted here.

Capital good dinner, only could not eat half the dishes, and the candelabrum of my invention looking very well; three of the branches taken out, three left, and one candle in the middle, the effect very good. My room snug, warm and comfortable, the great Nuremberg Chronicle looking very fat in the back, dare say he has made friends with the Caxtons, and gets on with Vindel¹in de Spire and feels at home here, but now it is getting on for 10 o'clock and I am tired with the journey, and therefore with my best comendacions I wish you heartily good night.

1. Variously Wendelin, Vindel¹inus, etc., of Speier, Spire, Spira, etc., brother of Johannes de Speier, d. 1470, first known printer in Venice, succeeded his brother.

Yours ever affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon¹

1. Written large enough to fill the remaining two inches of the page.

164. No address.

My dear Sneyd,

Parham, 10 January 1848

When I received your letter from Denton Rectory never was anyone more flabbergasted than I was, for seeing a scythe and a split crow together on the seal, I thought you had been and gone and married a spread eagle, and told me nothing about it; however, when I looked again I saw how it was and got over my shock.

I have been to Arundel, from whence I was obliged to run away in a hurry by reason of the influenza, which I have had ever since, tho' luckily not badly. It came on last Tuesday and I have not been out since, except just to run across to church; as I am pretty snug indoors I do not care much for going out.

That is a horrible and ghastly scrape you have got into about the dinner, certainly, I think you had better hang yourself (leave me the manuscripts), for I don't see any other way out of it, unless you take a subscription list with you every time you are asked, and get a pound out of him; he won't ask you very often if you do that, at least I wouldn't, and human natur is human natur, as an antient author observes.¹

I hear Sir Stephen Glynne has got into trouble about his iron works. How does your brother get on? Rich people never are unlucky, so I dare say he will sail through the difficult times without a check. I was struck with the superiority of those who have cash over those who have none, at Arundel, in the case of Abercorn,² who swaggers about in the broad ribbon

1. Exactly what Sneyd's predicament was is not known.

2. James (Hamilton), 2nd Marquess of Abercorn and 1st Duke (1811-85), K.G. 1844.

of the garter, which was given him because he had so many good things before, whereas because I have nothing I am not allowed to wear the orders I have gained at the risk of my life. Cash makes all the difference. Don't talk to me about virtue and talent and so on; a pound is the thing to get a man on in the world, so you may send me as many as you like, by return of post.

When I get better I am going to London for a while, on my way to Staffordshire, for I think it is dutiful to go and see my parents, tho' they won't speak to me when I get there. Perhaps I shall go to Tabley afterwards. I suppose you have done touralizing at present, indeed this is the season for sticking to the hob and the fire side.

I expect a big camelia tree today from Dorking but he ain't come yet, tho' it is beginning to get dark. W. Grey¹ walked over to luncheon from Dale Park, nine miles; I wish I could do that. He has gone back on foot, just now.

1. Dale Park, near Arundel. This W. Grey was a visitor and has not been identified.

169. No address.

Parham, 17 October 1848

Well Mr S. what are you doing? Where have you been, how are you off for soap &c., &c., &c. Why don't you write and tell me all about it, for as you are touralizing and ruralizing it is impossible for me to know how to direct to you; and having not the most distant notion of your whereabouts, I send this to the Abbey, to be forwarded to you, whether you are in England or Scotland or Berwick upon Tweed.

I have been going on very much as usual, doing nothing in particular and paying visits in the neighbourhood and bills in London. I came back this morning from Lady Newburgh's, the old lady at eighty-six is as brisk as a bee, and has had her house full of company as usuall all the year. The other day she asked two ladies from Bognor to dinner, who made a great sensation among the Romans staying in the house. We all expected two old ladies, when instead they turned out to be two pretty



women, the least in the world décoltées, in this style, and who were not in the least shy, so they had it all their own way, and the gentlemen were charmed and delighted; all but the priest, who took his departure early in the evening. He evedently could not stand the white shoulders and bright eyes of the fair dames, and has had to eat dried peas and bread and water ever since.

Robert Hay has been here, and Evelyn Shirley, who is now at Brighton with his wife and children. Phillimore also came, some time ago, and brought Mrs P. I wish you would come, if you are any where hereabouts, while we are in

Sussex. My parents go away the first week in November; I do not know what I shall do for the winter, I am sorry to say I have nothing pleasant to look forward to. I suppose I shall go to Staffordshire after a while, so now write and tell me what you have been about.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

171. No address, no salutation.

Hagley, 20 December 1848

Why, you see, I can't come and walk about the streets today, because I engaged to luncheon here, and grouse is cheerful victuals such as my soul loveth.

Have you got Queen Elizabeth's autograph or has another fortunate individual shouted more loudly, and sported more cash than you did at the sale?

I arrived yesterday and am horridly depressed and ready to cry, it is so shocking dismal to be sure. What ever I have said to my mother, my father has answered. This morning all the doors wide open and no breakfast till lord knows when, and nothing but worry and botheration till I long to throw every thing at every body, and then run away, and hide myself any where where I can be let alone. I wish you would come here. I am going away for a while towards the middle of Jan[ua]ry, why can't you do Christmas at Blithfield?

Thomas Turnor¹ must have made a mistake, and given you the £6. 11. 1.^d instead of me, so send me the 6. 11. and keep the 1d for your trouble - that will just do.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon

1. Possibly one of the Turnors who were the Curzons' solicitors in Storrington.

175. No address.

Hagley March 16. 1849.



Curzon to Sneyd, on Curzon's thirty-ninth birthday. Signature added by Sneyd.

202. No address.

Metropolis, 12 February, 1850

My dear Sneyd,

Now as touching Keele, I fear it will not suit my plans to be going there just now; I would rather do so later in the year, if your brother and you are there. I do not leave Town till Friday or Saturday, and cannot start off immediately from Hagley, but must remain there for a while. I hope you will come and pay a visit before Easter, when I shall be off again to Town. Those whose taste inclines them to delight in wind and rain and mud will be much pleased with London just now, those commodities being in great abundance.

My brother and family leave Hagley today. My father says he is not going to Parham this year, which is a great grief to me, indeed my people never take a step which is not disadvantageous to my interest, as well as to their own; they make a deplorable business of it altogether.

I have purchased a tome printed on silk - neat, rare, five shillings - an astounding bargain. Then a gent has promised me a MS. but he has not sent it yet.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,

R. Curzon