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ALS H357

4 Marlborough Place
Abbey Road, N.W.
October 12 1887

My dear Foster

I am none the worse for the ice-cellar & shall be to the fore at the Δ Committee¹ tomorrow.

I will read the Report & sign it if need be – though there really must be some fresh arrangement.

Of course I have entire confidence in your judgement about the examination, but I have a mortal horror of putting my name to things I do not know of my own knowledge.

Did you read the three Bishops' sermons at Manchester?² They were what the *Deutsches* call "Epoche Machend".³ I have an article about them & incidentally [smashing] [that] d—d little amateur the [three illegible words] in the coming XIX century⁴ which may entertain you.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ The Delta Committee of the Royal Society was established to supervise the deep borings in the Nile Delta between 1883 and 1887.

² The Bishops of Carlisle, Bedford and Manchester preached three sermons in Manchester cathedral during the meeting for the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

³ Epoch-making; historical.

⁴ 'Science and the Bishops', *The Nineteenth Century*, Nov. 1887, **22**: 625–640, reprinted as 'An episcopal trilogy', *Collected essays*, vol. 5, pp. 126–157.

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ALS H358

4 M.P.
Oct 24 1887

My dear Foster

I am very glad to see the move on behalf of poor dear Parker – You will see that I have suggested one or two alterations & additions. I thought it would be stronger to put the

1887

absolute values of Parker's work rather than its use to me – Also it will be wise to refer to his medal & to refer to his sons.¹

I was to have gone to Hastings today to find a place where the wife could have a fortnight's change of air – but she had an attack of vomiting & purging last night and I doubt she will not be able to move tomorrow as we intended – Clark says there is nothing serious but I am anxious about her,

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ Parker was awarded the Royal Society's Royal Medal in 1866. He had four sons, two of which (Thomas Jeffrey Parker and William Newton Parker) held professorships in the biological sciences.

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ALS H359

11 Eversfield Place

Hastings

Oct 31 1887

My dear Foster

We have been here for the last week – and are likely to be here for some time – as my wife though mending is getting on but slowly & she will be as well out of London through beastly November. I shall be up on Thursday & return on Friday – but I do not want to be away longer as it is lonesome for the wife.

I quite agree to what you propose on Δ Committee, so I need not be there. Very glad to hear that the Council “very much applauded what we had done” & hope we shall get the £500.

1887

I don't believe a word in increasing whale fishery but scientifically the Antarctic Expd. would or might be very interesting & if the colonies will do their part, I think we ought to do ours.¹

You won't want me at that Comm^e either.

Hope to see you on Thursday.

Ever yours
T. H. Huxley

Hideous pen!

¹ The Royal Society appointed a committee to report on the Australian colonies' proposal of a joint Antarctic expedition to promote trade and scientific enquiry. The colonies would contribute £5,000 on condition that the home government would contribute the same. Although the Royal Society was in favour of the principle, the proposal was rejected by the Treasury on the grounds that a total of £10,000 was insufficient for real scientific investigation.

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ALS H360

11 Eversfield Place
Hastings
Nov 2 1887

My dear Foster

I find I shall not be able to get up to town tomorrow after all – My wife had an attack of haemorrhage from an abominable little vascular tumour last night – which alarmed me for a while & has quite thrown her back – Luckily I found a good doctor (Penhall¹ – do you know anything about him?) close by & the mischief is stopped for the present. I am sending for her maid here to nurse wife but I cannot leave her till there is no fear of a relapse.

We are in comfortable Quarters – with a good kindly landlady & if the weather will only be a little less stormy we shall be better here than in town.

Man is born to trouble as the sparks etc.² – but when you have come to my time of life you will say as I do – Lucky it is no worse.

Ever yours
T. H. Huxley

¹ John Thomas Penhall, FRCS (1833–1916), surgeon to the East Sussex Royal Infirmary.

² “Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward”, Job 5:7.

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ALS H361

11 Eversfield Place
Hastings
Nov 6 1887

My dear Foster

I did not go up on Friday after all the S.K. Council being adjourned.

I am very glad to hear that the £500 is granted & I will see to what is next to be done as soon as I can – Also I am very glad to find you don't want my valuable service on Council R.S. – I repented me of my offer when I thought how little I might be able to attend.

I think it is extremely improper for the President of the R.S. to accept a position as a party politician¹ – As a Unionist I should vote for him if I had a vote for Cambridge University – but for all that, I think it is most lamentable that the Presidency of the Society should be dragged into party mud.

When I was President I refused to take the Presidency of the Sunday League – because of the division of opinion on the subject – Now we are being connected with the Victoria Institute² & sucked into the slough of politics – Hereafter when we elect a President we shall have to take his politics into account.

My first impulse was to come to the Anniversary meeting & denounce the whole thing – but I doubt if I should do much good – so I shall hold my tongue.

I shall go up to town on Wednesday & probably stay over Thursday – any chance of seeing you? If so postcard to 4 M.P. My wife is better but very shaky.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

Wife sends her love to Mrs Foster & begs her if she sees Mrs Darwin to tell her she has been unable to write lately.

¹ Stokes was MP for Cambridge University from 1887 to 1891.

² From 1886 to 1903 Stokes was president of the Victoria Institute, a society established to reconcile Christian faith with advances in scientific knowledge.

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ALS H362

4 Marlborough Place
Abbey Road, N.W.
Nov. 12 1887

My dear Foster

Is there any of your young men able & willing to help the Mayor of Norwich.¹ I do not know whom to recommend.

I go back to Hastings this morning.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

¹ Frederick William Harmer (1835–1923), geologist, palaeontologist and meteorologist, mayor of Norwich, 1887–1888. See letter 246.

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ALS H363

11 Eversfield Place
Hastings
Nov. 14 1887

My dear Foster

Inclosed just received & studied. Hooker has hit the nail on the head & the only alteration I have to suggest in your draft is intended to emphasize his point. There need be no difficulty in circumnavigating the contention I'll [replace]. It would be a great point to get its limits fixed for some period – & lots of good observations might be obtained incidentally.

I do not see what you can do in the matter of Stokes M.P. But I have made up my mind as to what I will do; and I tell you privately so that your Secretarial self may be officially ignorant.

Lockyer has undertaken to adopt & publish in "Nature" a little document, the draft of which I have furnished to him¹. It is highly complementary to Stokes personally but puts the case against any M.P. holding the Presidency without blinking – and gives it to be understood that if Stokes does not see the matter in a proper light other steps will be taken.

1887

The best thing for him to do would be to announce his resignation on the ground of incompatibility with his Parliamentary duties.

I am rather inclined to keep the wife here through the winter – she is much weaker than I like and if we go back to London she will have a bronchitis attack or some other bedevilment. Penhall is a very careful man & appears to be up to the little operation that is required, and it will be much better for her to have it done in good air.

But I wish there was no such thing as anxiety. I stand it worse than ever.

Ever yours
T. H. Huxley

¹ (Joseph) Norman Lockyer (1836–1920), editor of *Nature*, published ‘M.P., P.R.S.’, *Nature*, 1887, **37**: 49–50.

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Huxley Papers 4:294

Shelford
Nov. 16 [1887]

My dear Huxley

Many thanks for proof – out of the multitude of my councillors I have I think now got the thing into shape.

I am very sorry to hear that Mrs Huxley is not making progress – from what you say there can I think be no doubt that she is better in Hastings & I hope you will stay there.

As to Stokey, I am on the whole rather sorry that the matter is to be stirred up in Nature. I think that if the thing is put before him, he will resign – I cannot act “off my own bat” in the matter, but would not mind being the spokesman of others, though not coveting the office – I shall talk to Evans & Rayleigh to morrow and try & form some plan. If he resigns who is to step into his shoes? You know I think Evans should but I doubt whether that is the view of all the Fellows.

Murray proposes Dec 22 for us to go over the Challenger estimates. Will that suit you? Please let me know.

Also will any time before Xmas suit you for a meeting of a Ctee – (Council, you, Hooker, Flower, Presidents of Linnean, Geological, Chem. & Astronom. Societies) to consider the whole subject of Govt. Grants.

Please look at enclosed. Lankester and others as well have written to me about the matter – they say he has already published in German, the heart of what we are about to publish – Moseley is ill or he was going to look over the matter of the monograph.¹ –

1887

Ought we to do anything, if so what. I am beginning to be inclined to think that in re Lankester v. Lendenfeld,² the former is not wholly in the wrong.

Ought you not to have one or other of “the girls” with you at Hastings?

Ever thine

M. Foster

¹ Robert von Lendenfeld, *A monograph of the horny sponges*, London, published for the Royal Society by Trübner, 1889.

² See letter 222.

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ALS H364

11 Eversfield Place

Hastings

Nov 18 1887

My dear Foster

The Lendenfeld business must certainly be looked into – I can hardly conceive that he should be such a fool as to try to palm off[f] already published matter on us. But we must get a copy of the German paper & settle that point.

As for thieving species that is what the “systematikes” accuse one another of doing & I doubt not are all justified in the mutual accusation.

I know nothing to prevent me from attending a Challenger meeting on Dec. 22 – and I will come whenever you wish for a meeting of the Govt. Grant Comm after the 30th when I mean to attend the Anniversary to see Hooker get the Copley – I am unfortunately bound to make a speech at Manchester about Technical Education on the 29th.¹ I suppose the “Nature” manifesto has appeared. I do not think there is anything in it to which Stokes can fairly take exception. He has not consulted the Society about his moves & he cannot expect us to consult him.

I do not think it would have been at all fair to ask you to kill the cat. If Stokes had not taken your hint it would have made your relations with him very difficult – and a private requisition on behalf of the Fellows who disapprove of the MPship of the President – to him would have been hardly justifiable. If we addressed anybody we must have addressed the Council and that step may follow unless he states his intention of resigning.

The proper & dignified thing for him to do would be for him to resign either at once or at such period as may be convenient to the Society.

As for a successor, you know how well I think of Evans personally – but I doubt if his nomination would satisfy the Fellows to whom I think ample time should be given to make their choice.

1887

I had no notion of making more than two or three weeks' stay here so took these rooms subject to vacating them for some regular customers.

We move tomorrow to 85 Marina St Leonards – on Monday the operation is to be performed under ether with the *écraseur*.² Penhall says my wife will very soon be about again & I was anxious to get it done so that I could leave her for a few days to go to Manchester.

She has her maid & factotum here with her, & that is better than either of the girls (who wanted to come) because she is one of those people who would more likely to try to do things for her children, than let them attend on her – Ruth her maid – who is a superior sort of girl – very kind & attentive – she has no such scruples & can be kept reasonably quiet. I shall try to keep her here over the bad part of the winter. But whether I shall succeed is another matter!

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ 'Address on behalf of the National Association for the Promotion of Technical Education' (1887), *Collected essays*, vol. 3, pp. 427–451.

² A medical instrument used to cut through the base of a tumour during surgery.

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Huxley Papers 4:296

Shelford

Nov 20 [1887]

Dear Huxley

I am very glad to hear that the operation is coming off – it is the only real way to deal with these things – & I hope by the time this reaches you, it will be all over.

I am very sorry you are going to Manchester – why the d—! can't you keep quiet?

I find the Fellows are divided as to the Stokes question – some quite agreeing with "Mr Lockyer's views as expressed in *Nature*"! and others thinking that it does not matter. So far I find it is the conservatives who think it a pity to have raised the question – a fact which in a way is a good illustration of the soundness of your position. The old gentleman has made no sign – He came to see me yesterday to talk over other things but said not a word about "it" – he was very chippy – & yet he must have "looked on" *Nature*. I am relieved to find that you do not propose to raise a storm at the anniversary meeting – I quite feel that your idea of addressing the Council is the right one and I guess "you'll have to do it." That old gentleman is obstinate & stiff necked beyond all expression, when he gets fixed – & I rather think he has got fixed – I fancy at the bottom of his heart (or mind, don't know which is the correct psychology) he regards the article in *Nature* as

1887

an attack on his Religion and on his conservative opinions & that it is his duty not to give in!!!

I have fixed Challenger Ctee Dec 22. At 11 am – it must be in morning since we have Council in aft.

On the 30th, between lunch & Council at 3 or 3.30, you, Evans & I must look into the Lendenfeld business – will it be desirable to summon him?

We have a little man here [illegible] Bidder¹ (son of Q.C.) who has been working on histology, physiology of sponges etc. at Naples, under Dohrn – & he says you cant accept L's statement about histology etc.

If you want anything else about the 30th – it should I think be Delta – that is more pressing than the Gov Grant business.

The Parker letters (both) have gone in – I hope we shall hear something soon.

Ever thine

M. Foster

P.S. From rumours which have reached me I fear poor Moseley's illness has run on in mania – he is said to have three nurses.

L has sent some photo plates. I told Rix to send them to you just to look at. You can't of course do much with them, since there is no description etc. – but I only want you to form a general opinion as to their adequacy in point. – send them back to Rix.

¹ George Parker Bidder (1863–1953), marine biologist.

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ALS H366

85 Marina

St Leonards

[20 November 1887]

My dear Foster

We are in great troubles. My poor child, Marian, has just died from pneumonia in France, whither she had been moved, a week ago to be under Charcot's care.¹ Charcot thought he might be able to do something for her. For myself, I have been without hope for months past & I have little doubt that the final ending of the poor child's case is the best that could be hoped for.

1887

That, however, does not mend mothers much & my wife is heartbroken at this shipwreck of a life that started as fairly as ever we could wish.

I am bound to go to Manchester as I am chief speaker unfortunately and they fixed the day to visit to suit my convenience – one of the girls will be here in my absence – But under the circumstances I must get back as soon as I can & I shall not attend the Anniversary.

Will you find some opportunity of explaining matter to Stokes? My absence might be misunderstood.

Ever yours very kindly

T. H. Huxley

¹ Huxley's daughter Marian had suffered from severe mental illness and was invited to Paris by Jean-Martin Charcot for treatment. See Desmond, *Huxley*, pp. 557–558.

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ALS H367

85 Marina
St Leonards
[21 November 1887]

My dear Foster

My poor wife is thoroughly upset by yesterday's intelligence, that Penhall thought it better to postpone the operation until after my return.

You cannot be more sorry than I am that I am going to Manchester – but I am not proud of chalking up “no popery” & running away – for all Evans' and your chaff – & having done a good deal to stir up the Technical Education business & the formation of the Association, I cannot leave them in the lurch when they urgently ask for my services.

Your remark is a shrewd comment on the inevitable tendency of a political Presidency – of course we shall have against us all the political people who are looking to the Presidency & all the [gullion]. But those who think with me are quite sufficiently strong to make our Grévy¹ think twice about holding on. I shall be very sorry if the thing has to come to an open declaration of war – but with the only living Ex-President² & a strong batch of Fellows of one mind I think we shall be a match for even Stokes' tenacity – a quality of which I had considerable experience when he and I were colleagues in the Commission.

As I wrote to you yesterday I cannot put in a public appearance on the 30th – but if you could fix the meeting with Evans in re Lendenfeld in the fore noon so as to let me get

1887

down here by afternoon train I would attend it. I will look at the plates when I go home on Saturday – But I do not see what I can say about them without text & without evidence as to what has been published already – [word obscured] it would be desirable for Lendenfeld to attend.

The Delta business must wait till after the 30th. I have no heart for anything just now.
Ever yours
T. H. Huxley

¹ François Paul Jules Grévy (1807–1891), president of France from 1879 who accepted a second term in office in 1885 but was forced to resign in 1887 due to a scandal over the sale of decorations of the Légion d'Honneur by his son-in-law.

² Both Huxley and Hooker were living ex-presidents at this time.

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Huxley Papers 4:298

Tuesday
Nov 20 [1887]¹

My dear Huxley

We all feel very much for you, at the sad news in your two letters received together this morning – what a bright future the poor girl seemed to have before a few years ago, and now – ah well perhaps it is as well that all is now over – but all the same it must be a bitter pang to lose her.

I will take care to say a few words to Stokey as to your absence. I will fix any time am on Wednes. you like for Lendenfeld – unless you fix otherwise we will put it at 12 am.

Other things can of course wait. I am corresponding with Harmer of Norwich² about his Mayorial Lectures – so you can consider that off your hands.

Let me know if I can do anything else – Mrs Foster is I believe writing to Mrs Huxley.

Ever thine

M. Foster

P.S. Lendenfeld can easily wait – if you would rather put it off.

¹ Although Foster dates this to 20 November, it is probably 21 or 22.

² See letter 239.

1887

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ALS H365

85 Marina,
St Leonards
Nov 23 1887

My dear Foster

I see I have made a stupid blunder – I forgot that I had to get back from Manchester on the morning of the 30th. So if Lendenfeld business really does not press I wish it might wait. I shall probably be in town in the following week.

I forget whether in the notice of Hooker's work you showed me there was any allusion made to that remarkable account of the Diatoms in Antarctic ice – to which I once drew special attention but Heaven knows where?¹

Dyer perhaps may recollect all about the account in the *Flora Antarctica*,² if I mistake not. I have always looked upon Hooker's insight into the importance of these things & their skeletons as a remarkable piece of inquiry – anticipative of subsequent deep sea work.

Best thanks for taking so much trouble about Harmer. Pray tell him if ever you write that I have not answered his letter only because I awaited your reply. He may think my silence uncivil.

My wife is better but still very weak.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ Huxley quoted Hooker at length in his 'On some of the results of the expedition of H.M.S. Challenger', *The Contemporary Review*, March 1875, 25: 639–660; *Collected essays*, vol. 8, pp. 69–109.

² J. D. Hooker, *The botany of the Antarctic voyage of H.M. discovery ships Erebus and Terror in the years 1839–1843 I. Flora Antarctica*, London, 1844–1847.

Huxley Papers 4:302

Shelford
Cambs
Dec 1. 87

My dear Huxley

I was very glad to learn from Donnelly yesterday that you got through the Technical Education comfortably. I was too busy yesterday to read the paper & so cannot criticize your deliverance.

The R.S. meeting went off quietly – a very large meeting 70 or 80, a good many of whom came I fancy to back up the President, in case of any difficulty – As I think I have already told you I am pretty confident that the majority of the Fellows are not on the Lords' side.

Poor Stokey's address was a miserable business¹ – in fact to my mind disgraceful – I offered to do what I used to do for Spottiswoode, write him something on biological matters – & the biological medal – but he would do it all himself – He asked me to look over the medals statements which were bare plagiarisms from statements put in by the proposers – I tried to improve them a little – but I could only do a little.

The dinner, in spite of a lot of big-wigs failing at the last moment, went off very well – large even if not select company – Dear old Hooker made a charming speech – most delightful – personal recollections of what botany was in his youth – The various orators touched, some successfully – others with less success, on the burning question of the M.P. Stokes M.P. said not a word.

We both join (that is wife & self) in best wishes for Mrs Huxley, who must be feeling your sad loss acutely under her present circumstances. We shall be glad to hear that the little surgical matter has in due time all been settled quietly.

You said you should be up again this next week – if so could you have a Lendenfeld interview either on the Thursday (any time save during the meeting of the Society) or on Friday morning. If so I will tell Evans & get L. summoned.

What a very funny person Mr Wilberforce² is – I apprehend he is like his ancestor a classical scholar – but he seems to think that vapalo means “I beat” not “I am beaten” as most critics maintain.

Ever thine
M. Foster

¹ G. G. Stokes, 'President's address' in 'Anniversary meeting', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, 1887–1888, 43: 185–195.

² R. G. Wilberforce, son of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, had written to *The Times* regarding Huxley's "misquotation" in his article 'Science and the Bishops', *The Nineteenth Century*, Nov. 1887, 22: 625–640. 'Professor Huxley and the life and letters of C. Darwin', *The Times*, Nov. 29, 1887, p. 10, issue 32242, col. D. Huxley replied on 1 December.

1887

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ALS H368

85 Marina
St Leonards
Dec. 1 1887

My dear Foster

Let me have a line to say what happened or did not happen yesterday.

I have just written the letter of which the draft is inclosed (I hope you will be able to read it) to Stokes. I hate doing things in the dark & could not stand it any longer. I went to Manchester on Tuesday, spoke for 50 minutes in a hot crowded room & returned to London that evening – I am glad I resisted the strong temptation to shirk the business. Manchester has gone solid for technical education & if the idiotic London papers instead of giving half a dozen lines of my speech had mentioned the solid contributions to the work announced at the meeting, they would have enabled you to understand its importance.

I am very glad to see the “Times” article about Hooker¹ and the rest. Wish they were sounder about the M.P. – I suppose the meagreness of the address even including the address to the Medallists (something quite new so far as I recollect) is the expression of the formula

P.R.S.

M.P.

The wife is decidedly better. I have the moral satisfaction of having got through a hard bit of work & am none the worse physically – rather the better for having to pull myself together.

Ever yours very faithfully

T. H. Huxley

Please return the draft.

¹ ‘The Royal Society’, *The Times*, Thursday, Dec. 1, 1887, p. 8, issue 32244, col. A.

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Huxley Papers 4:305

Shelford
 Cambs
 Dec. 2. 87

My dear Huxley

Our letters crossed. Your letter to Stokes is I think the right thing. I am very curious to know what reply he will make. I have no criticism to make, unless it be to say that I could not join with you in your willingness to serve under him & support him in the chair though I am glad you say this for I am sure that at the bottom of his heart he is very distinctly jealous of you – somewhat in Mr Casaubon's manner.¹ I am more & more convinced of his unfitness to be President – it will take some time to repair the damage he will have done before he gives up.

I don't know whether I told you of Trotter² of Trinity – he has cardiac disease & pneumonia – & I fear will not last long – it is very sad for me.

Ever thine
 M. Foster

¹ A reference to Edward Casaubon in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–72).

² Coutts Trotter (see letter 73, note 1) was one of Foster's main allies at Trinity College, Cambridge.

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ALS H369

85 Marina
 St Leonards
 Dec 3 1887

My dear Foster

I have had a very pleasant straight forward reply from Stokes. It has not entered his imagination that the Council or the Society had the least right to an opinion about his course of action! I shall be in town next week & shall have a talk with Hooker as to further action. I am delighted to hear the dinner went off so well – Hooker makes a capital speech when he is in his mettle.

I could attend a meeting any time on Thursday so fix your hour & let me know.

1887

The operation was performed on Friday morning – and everything has gone well with my wife.

For me it has been the hardest trial I have had as she was two hours getting rid of the effects of the ether & all that time her cries for our poor dead girl were terrible. She knew my voice & characteristically enough said at intervals “How bad for you, dear – I am so sorry” but I am rejoiced to say that she remembers nothing of the whole episode – she thinks I was knocked up only by my anxiety about the operation. The ether seemed just like a fog which gradually lightened – at first only the one or two intensely lighted spots of the mind shone through it – & then by degrees the others came into view – habitual self control last.

Pray tell Mrs Foster with our love that she’s going on very well.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

Capital letter of Dyer’s.¹

¹Perhaps he is referring to William Thistleton-Dyer’s letter to Huxley of 27 November 1887 about the Stokes controversy at the Royal Society (Huxley Papers 27:209).

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Huxley Papers 4:300

Shelford

Sunday

[4 Dec 1887]

My dear Huxley

My worst fears are realized – my dear friend Trotter died this morning. It is very very dreadful for me – I can’t attend any Lendenfeld business we must put that off for the present.

Stokes has spoken to me at last – he is wonderfully simple minded & my anger towards him is gone – but he won’t give way – & I hope he won’t now contact the Society.

Ever thine

M. Foster

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ALS H370

85 Marina
 St Leonards
 Dec 6 1887

My dear Foster

I am truly grieved to hear of poor Trotter's death. I know how severe a blow it will be to you – Well, you have friends left & those hearty. Not that that is much good when one is grieving.

Stokes is the most wonderful innocent I ever met with – I could no more be angry with him than I could with one of my grandchildren. He is really sublime and as obstinate as three pigs withall.

I telegraphed to you just now. I have Council at S.K. at 2 P.M. on Friday but nothing in the morning.

Wife going on very well.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

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ALS H371

85 Marina
 St Leonards
 Dec 12 1887

My dear Foster

The Lendenfeld is "childlike & bland"; and his allusion to the Society which can hardly say it stands above all parties (rather out of place considering M.P. President) is touching.

But it seems to me that the effect of putting no name after species will be to lead a great many people to note v. Lendenfeld on their creatures and the "avoidance of the delicate question" tends rather to shove the responsibility on the Society's shoulders.

I am [two illegible words] of opinion that as v. L. is taking, admittedly, an unusual course – he must take the whole responsibility of it on his own shoulders in the Preface¹ – no need of a long rigmarole deduction of his procedure from first principles – just a statement of the briefest kind, as in the "Annals".

1887

The other points I leave to you to settle.

My wife is getting better though not about yet. She asks you to tell Mrs Foster that she will write to her soon.

Ever yours very kindly
T. H. Huxley

¹ Of his monograph; see letter 241.

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Huxley Papers 4:308

Shelford

Jan. 11. 88

Reverend Sir

Your memo. seems to me excellent except the last sentence – which to my mind non sequitur. Your argument would be all right if it ended with the statement that the college might give title M.D. (with some affix to distinguish it such as M.D. Coll) to any one who passed their examination – & that is what would really meet the difficulty. What they do propose is to make a medical academy out of their Colleges – and to acquire for themselves the power of making academical distinctions in medicine. I don't think that such a step is likely to promote medical progress – but to do the reverse.

If it is right, (and seeing the present uses of the word doctor, it seems to me right & reasonable) that every one who has acquired knowledge & skill enough to be allowed to slay the public should also be allowed to call himself Doctor – why don't the colleges ask for this?

Instead of this they want all the make believe of Bachelors etc. If a “superior” examination is wanted, let it be arranged by some body where the clerical element is kept sweet by some layman (like yourself). Let the Univ. Lond. knock a hole in its monstrous Matriculation exams & generally mend its ways.

Ever thine
M. Foster

I can't be at M.B.A. tomorrow – but I hope Evans will keep all straight.
Give me back the enclosed on Thursday? Oh sweet child!

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Life and Letters, vol. 2, pp. 189–190

4 Marlborough Place

Jan 11 1888

My dear Foster

I send back the “Heathen Deutscherees” (whose ways are dark) letter lest I forget it to-morrow.¹ Meanwhile perpend these two things:

1. United Colleges propose to give just as good an examination and require as much qualification as the Scotch Universities. Why then give their degree a distinguishing mark?

2. “Academical distinctions” in medicine are all humbug. You are making a medical technical school at Cambridge – and quite right too. The United Colleges, if they do their business properly, will confer just as much, or as little “academical distinction” as Cambridge by their degree.

3. The Fellowship of the College of Surgeons is in every sense as much an “academical distinction” as the Masterships in Surgery or Doctorate of Medicine of the Scotch and English Universities.

4. You may as well cry for the moon as ask my colleagues in the Senate to meddle seriously with the Matriculation. They are possessed by the devil that cries continually, “There is only the Liberal education, and Greek and Latin are his prophets.”

¹This is presumably a reference to von Lendenfeld’s manuscript.

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Huxley Papers 4:310

The Royal Society

Burlington House, London, W.

[Jan 88]

My dear Huxley

I hear you are off to Bournemouth, so I hope you are really better – & are profiting by the fresh air & sea. If so perhaps I may bother you with the enclosed. I propose you & Hooker agree to send this letter to Murray – I have thought it better not to write with the official Sir to begin with – perhaps that may come later.

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If you approve of it, will you please send it to Hooker, The Camp Sunningdale – & ask him to return it to me. I will then send it off.

I am not sure of your address at Bournemouth so I do not enclose the letter from Treasury but if you would like to see this I will send it to you.

Our best regards to Mrs Huxley – I hope she is none the worse now for your bout. Take care of yourself & don't bother about this if it is irksome.

Ever thine

M. Foster

I have spoken to Judd¹ about Delta – he is thinking about it.

¹ John Wesley Judd (1840–1916), professor of geology at the Royal School of Mines.

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Huxley Papers 4:312

Shelford

Cambs

Feb.11. 88

Dear Huxley

I am sorry you don't give a better account of yourself – but you must not be disheartened – In spite of the mild weather this is not the best time for getting better – & Bournemouth with all its virtues is not quite Arolla.

Don't let me or anyone else tempt you to come up for business – and don't answer any letters unless you wish to. You may like to hear how we got on with Murray, for I was obliged, owing to a dig in the ribs from the Treasury, to hurry up a meeting of Ctee yesterday.¹ Murray has prepared a new estimate bringing things down to his original estimate – asking for 1700 only which is the balance left by deducting all that has been spent & last year's estimate, from the original estimate of 26,271. – But he does this, not by culling down any of the memoirs – except his own on Deep Sea Deposits. On his original scheme he Murray, was to do this with Renard² – the honorarium was considerable – & the expenses heavy – He now proposes to issue a short memoir only stating facts & giving Renard's work – but nothing more – and to publish at his own risk & profit a general account with conclusions, discussions etc. This he proposes to do at his own time & in his own way, and thus to allow the Challenger staff to be discharged early as soon as other memoirs are finished – By this discharge of staff & shutting up shop, together with the saving of his own honorarium and of the expenses of publishing the volume he is able to keep down his estimate. In my letter to Treasury I have simply stated these facts, without giving any opinions of the Ctee – but I imagine that we shall be asked to give our

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opinion, and one would like to know what you think about it. – If you do not clearly understand the position from this brief statement I can send Murray's report to you to look at. He Murray himself I believe would prefer that these reduced estimates should be accepted and that he should be allowed to publish his account of the Deep Sea Deposits off his own bat. The thing wants looking at all round – but I am rather inclined to think that the best plan is to let him do it.

Welby³ has asked Evans whether the Govt ought to make any public recognition of Murray's services as Editor of the Reports – Evans in a cowardly fashion told him to ask me. What do you say? I am inclined to tell Welby that if the Govt. wish to honour Murray at Murray's own expense, they had better give him a sum of money – but if they want to do it at the expense of the nation they had better Knight him or make him C.B. But perhaps he won't see the force of this paradox.

I fancy Evans in writing to you is going to ask you about Spirula⁴ – all I have to say is don't let it bother you. Take what course concerning it which comes easiest to you.

I hope the bed of vegetable fossils is behaving properly & that you are getting some fine specimens. Mind you let me know if you come on the imprint of an Iris!!!

Mrs Foster sends her love to Mrs Huxley & I am as ever

Ever thine

M. Foster

¹ For the *Challenger* expedition see Introduction.

² Alphonse François Renard (1842–1903), Belgian geologist and petrographer, who with Murray did research on the rock specimens and oceanic deposits from the *Challenger* expedition.

³ See letter 211, note 2.

⁴ Huxley was writing the memoir on *spirula* for the *Challenger* reports. Because of ill health, he handed the work over to Paul Pelseneer in 1893 and the memoir was published under joint authorship: T. H. Huxley and Paul Pelseneer, 'Report on the specimen of the Genus *Spirula* collected by H.M.S. Challenger', in *Report on the scientific results of the voyage of H.M.S. Challenger during the years 1872–76*, vol. 32, pt. 83, Zoology, London, printed for H.M.S.O., 1895.

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Life and Letters, vol. 2, pp. 190–191

Bournemouth

Feb 14 1888

My dear Foster

No doubt the Treasury will jump at any proposition which relieves them from further expense – but I cannot say I like the notion of leaving some of the most important results of the *Challenger* voyage to be published elsewhere than in the official record . . .

Evans made a deft allusion to *Spirula*, like a powder between two dabs of jam. At present I have no moral sense, but it may awake as the days get longer.

I have been reading the *Origin* slowly again for the *n*th time, with the view of picking out the essentials of the argument, for the obituary notice. Nothing entertains me more than to hear people call it easy reading.¹

Exposition was not Darwin's *forte* – and his English is sometimes wonderful. But there is a marvellous dumb sagacity about him – like that of a sort of miraculous dog – and he gets to the truth by ways as dark as those of the Heathen Chinee [*sic*].

I am getting quite sick of all the “paper philosophers,” as old Galileo called them, who are trying to stand upon Darwin's shoulders and look bigger than he, when in point of real knowledge they are not fit to black his shoes. It is just as well I am collapsed or I believe I should break out with a final “Für Darwin.”

I will think of you when I get as far as the fossils. At present I am poking over *P. sylvestris* and *P. pinnata* in the intervals of weariness.

My wife joins me in love to you both. –

Ever yours very faithfully

T. H. Huxley

Snow and cold winds here. Hope you are as badly off at Cambridge.

¹ Huxley wrote Darwin's obituary for the Royal Society. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, 1888, **44**: i–xxviii. *Collected essays*, vol. 2, pp. 253–302.

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Huxley Papers 4:316

Shelford

Feb. 19 [1888]

Dear Huxley

Though your letter to me was not too cheerful, some one I forget who, gave a better & I hope a later account. If you progress at all in this dreadful weather, you may be very thankful.

Though in my letter to Treasury I carefully avoided stating any opinion as to question of adopting Murray's suggestion, in order that the Treasury might definitely ask our opinion, we have heard as yet nothing from them.

Unless they do ask our opinion, we cannot interfere can we? My own view is rather that perhaps it is as well that as Murray proposes, the record of facts should form part of the official record and that Murray's own conclusions & views should not form part. If we hear from Treasury I will of course let you know at once – otherwise I suppose you agree that we don't stir.

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Even you I fear did not understand my paradox about Murray's C. B.

I am now making up the questions for S.K. Do you want to see any of them – or would you rather not. I shall have them all done in a day or two – & I can send you any you like – all of them if you please.

Evans has brought out a suggestion for corresponding members R.S. since the affiliation sticks fast.

I will send you his memo.

Ever thine

M. Foster

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Life and Letters, vol. 2, p. 191

Bournemouth

Feb 21 1888

My dear Foster

We have had nothing but frost and snow here lately, and at present half a gale of the bitterest north-easter I have felt since we were at Florence is raging.

I believe I am getting better, as I have noticed that at a particular stage of my convalescence from any sort of illness I pass through a condition in which things in general appear damnable and I myself an entire failure. If that is a sign of returning health you may look upon my restoration as certain.

If it is only Murray's speculations he wants to publish separately, I should say by all means let him. But the facts, whether advanced by him or other people, ought all to be in the official record. I agree we can't stir.

I scented the "goak." How confoundedly proud you are of it. In former days I have been known to joke myself.

I will look after the questions if you like. In my present state of mind I shall be a capital critic – on Dizzy's views of critics . . .¹

Ever yours

T. H. H.

¹ Possibly a reference to Disraeli's quip that critics are the "men who have failed in literature and art", *Lothair*, ch. 35.

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Huxley Papers 4:318

Shelford, Cambs

Feb. 28. 88

Dear Huxley

Many thanks for questions – all gone in this morning. Enclosed is another job.

Brady¹ seemed to be the only available man on the Council to keep in the Lendenfeld job – so I have had him put on Ctee – I have got him to go over the proof, which I know [*sic*] send to you with his remarks. Please let me know what you think – my own view is that we had better not to interfere with L's style – but only take care there is no absolute nonsense & no injustice – Brady seems to think that Dendy² is not fairly treated.

For goodness sake don't think of coming up so long as this dreadful weather lasts – do keep quite quiet with the pines. I am very glad you approve of Evans' scheme generally – we must do something & this is something. I don't understand Hooker's obstinacy at all.

Oh that mild airs & bright sun would come. Still I am very flourishing.

Ever thine

M. Foster

P. S. I send the proofs separately by book post.

¹ Henry Bowman Brady (1835–1891), naturalist and pharmacist.

² Arthur Dendy (1865–1925), zoologist.

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Huxley Papers 4:320

Shelford

March 10 [1888]

My dear Huxley

I hope this blessed change is suiting you & that you are going ahead like a house on fire.

As to this wretched Lendenfeld. I dont think we need go to Council unless he kicks – I have written to tell him his stuff must be castrated – I have got Brady to use the knife, &

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the amended version will reach you in type on Tuesday or Wednesday. Please make any amendments which seem good to you & send it back to me – I shall then send this to v. L. & tell him “this is what ought to appear.” If he objects I will take the whole matter to Council.

Strachey¹ has today has just finished his last of four lectures on geography – it was really very charming – the most complete evolutionary & “materialistic” views uttered by what seemed to be the very mildest old gentleman – it was delightful – but as I told him if he had attempted to do that 20 years ago the priests of Baal would have risen up & stoned him. As it is I don’t know but what he had put the extinguisher on geography as a University study.

Ever thine

M. Foster

¹ Probably Sir Richard Strachey (1817–1908), president of the Royal Geographical Society, 1888–1890.

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Huxley Papers 4:322

Shelford

March 19. 88

Reverend Sir

Brady spoke to me about v. L. and the Brit. Assoc. rules. I told him that you had come to the conclusion that we had better let v. L. have his own way, but that he was to say distinctly that it was his own way. Brady seemed still to hanker after the B. A. rules, so I told him to put his views on paper and here they are. I hope it won’t bore you to read them – & say as briefly as possible what you think – for myself I don’t see how we can make him trim up his whole work to the B. A. – If what he has said or is going to say is not sufficient – we can put an official R.S. preface to the work stating that though undertaking to publish the work we are not responsible for the details of the contents – & that on the B. A. we thought it best to let the author have his own way etc. etc. However read what Brady says & let me know your decision – don’t write a treatise.

How I loathe this v. L. – it was a black day when we put the R.S. hand to his beastly plough.

There is only one thing I hate more & that is the EAST WIND. I am hoping & praying that we have got it all to ourselves here & that you are having balmy breezes – with us it is simply awful – if you have only a fraction of what we have got I still pity you – Keep out of it as much as you can.

Ever thine

M. Foster