

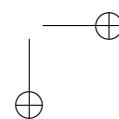
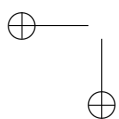
**The Love Letters**

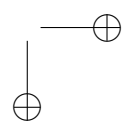
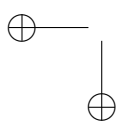
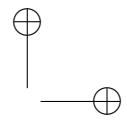
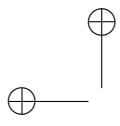
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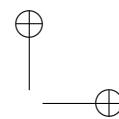
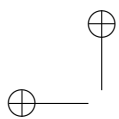
**Walter Bagehot**

and

**Eliza Wilson**







**The Love Letters**

of

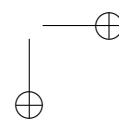
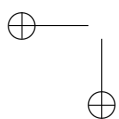
**Walter Bagehot**

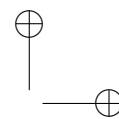
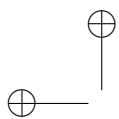
and

**Eliza Wilson**

*Edited by Their Sister  
Mrs. Russell Barrington*

*IWP*

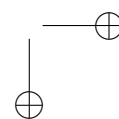
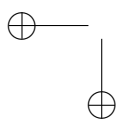




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## PREFACE

When my sister, Mrs. Walter Bagehot, begged me to write the life of her husband, she entrusted to me all his correspondence with her and others, including two locked boxes containing these love-letters I am now publishing, at the same time appointing me her literary executrix. Fifty-five years it is since my brother-in-law died at the age of fifty-one, and eleven years since the death of my sister.

Unreservedly she approved of my quoting in the 'Life' fragments of some of her husband's love-letters. I now, at this distance of time, assume sole responsibility for giving to the world all of them, written seventy-five years ago, and also those of my sister, by reason of their being unfettered revelations of their own inner selves, and consequently, I hope, of value.

Walter Bagehot has now indubitably found his place among the foremost and most original intellects of the nineteenth century. More and more is he generally quoted, with or without the source acknowledged, for truly do Walter's original thought-creations afford fertile soil wherein others can sow.



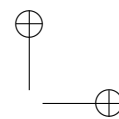
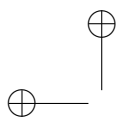


It is my firm belief that my sister would have found pride and contentment in the fact that, while a wide public already acknowledges the value of her husband's intellect, it should awaken likewise to an appreciation of the richness of his nature and the beauty of his character – the pure, ardent depth of affection, the sense of reality and the original humour, as so intimately displayed in these letters.

The versatility in Walter Bagehot's nature was indeed extraordinary. His letters to my sister, which he wrote during those weeks when he was absent even for a day, show how much his approaching marriage coloured his thoughts and filled his imagination. His love-letters are very real. Engrossed as they show he was in this strange, absorbing feeling that had come and taken possession of his life as its prominent reality, there is the quaint wonderment, the speculative, enquiring attitude of mind, which marvels at the entrancement as if it were all happening to someone else. By placing it and looking at it from outside his personal feelings, he tried to get a better, more real understanding of this being in love.

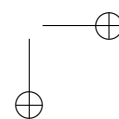
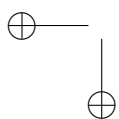
My sister, nine years older than myself, was as a second mother to me, and we were as intimate as I suppose it was possible to be with one another. I always admiringly recognised the beauty of her many lovable qualities, her unselfishness, her motherly kindness to me and her peaceful serenity, but these letters evince a power of analysing her feelings, now she had once found herself in this new and blissful existence in which her love for her future husband steeped her, with which I should not have credited her. It would appear somewhat that strong emotions were capable of unlocking to itself the deepest

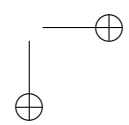
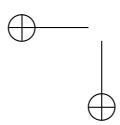
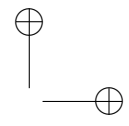
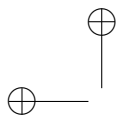




part of a nature which was hitherto lying dormant. In these letters, the noble aspirations and modest estimate of herself are very beautiful, and will have, I should hope, an elevating influence; in fact this whole correspondence has that rare quality which raises it to a higher level than merely emotional utterance.

EMILIE ISA BARRINGTON









## INTRODUCTION

It was on January 24th, 1857, that Walter Bagehot, then aged thirty-one, barrister, banker, essayist, rider to hounds, and co-editor with Richard Holt Hutton of the *National Review*, came into our life, and, as subsequent events record, had come to stay. My father was at that time Financial Secretary to the Treasury in Lord Palmerston's administration; likewise he was owner and director of the *Economist* newspaper, which he had founded in the year 1843 in order to further Free Trade principles as apart from the excesses of Radicalism.

Walter Bagehot's political opinions coincided entirely with those of my father, and he wrote suggesting that, certain letters he was writing on Banking should appear in the *Economist*. In answering this proposal, my father wrote that it would be better personally to discuss the matter, and therefore invited him to Claverton, our country home five miles from Bath. Hence his arrival on that Saturday afternoon. Our family consisted of six sisters, the elder three fully fledged and 'out,' three still in the schoolroom. My sister Eliza, the heroine of these letters, was the eldest, and I, to whom these letters have been confided, was the youngest – now in these latter





days, at the age of ninety-one, the only one who is left to record the happenings of that faraway home life.

We three of the schoolroom were wandering in the winter woods when we heard the sound of wheels and conjectured that merely a banker, the correct pronunciation of whose name we had not mastered, and whom we did not see till the next morning had arrived. Little did we then anticipate that ‘Mr Badget’ was to be so intimate an influence in all our future.

My father on the previous day had had an accident while riding; therefore the interview between him and the newly arrived visitor had to take place in his bedroom, and Walter Bagehot did not see my mother and elder sisters till he went down to dinner. There was a dinner party that evening of neighbours besides guests staying in the house. It was Eliza’s fate to be taken in to dinner by Walter. If it was not love at first sight, it was distinctly a keen interest at first sight, and the evening left him with a sensation new and moving, and with a pleasant expectancy of seeing her next morning. But he was disappointed. The rest of the sisterhood alone appeared at breakfast and they found him at once a fellow-creature, no mere guest bent on *Economist* business. We took in his appearance at once. He had a very fine skin, very white near where the hair started, and a high colour – what might be called a hectic colour – concentrated on the cheek-bones, as you often see it in the West Country. Such a colour is associated with soft winds and a moist air, cider-growing orchards and very green, wet grass. His eyelids were thin, and of singularly delicate texture, and the white of the eyeballs was a blue white. He would pace a room when talking, and as the ideas





framed themselves in words, he would throw his head back as some animals do when sniffing the air. The way he moved, his voice, everything about him was individual. To us Walter was ever *Walter*, and that meant something quite unlike anybody else.

As the day wore on my sister emerged from her seclusion and the ‘interest at first sight’ was satisfied and quickened, and when Walter Bagehot left next morning, Walter Bagehot had entered into a new phase of his life’s being. When was he to see her again?

Parliament met in February, and the family migrated to Hertford Street. My mother had told Walter that when he came to London she would be glad if he would pay us a call. He soon was in London – and he called: he was asked to dinner – and he dined – eagerly snatching every opportunity of again personally coming under the spell. My father found him an able and capable conversationalist on political and financial questions, and William Rathbone Greg, who generally at that time made our home his, found him equally sympathetic in conversing on literary subjects – therefore, apart from the romance that was brewing almost imperceptibly under their eyes, Walter Bagehot became a specially welcome guest.

The acquaintanceship was yet furthered when Easter was spent at Claverton, and Walter was invited to stay in the house, we of the schoolroom claiming him as a companion when he was free to be claimed. With the lynx eye for romance which young ladies of the schoolroom often possess, we were not long in noticing signs of that spell which our dear eldest sister was casting over our play-fellow.





The summer session beginning, the move was made back to Hertford Street, and Walter had to seek there the allurements that were now constantly absorbing him. More calls, more dinners – expeditions of which he contrived to be one, notably to the great ship ‘Agamemnon’ to see the cable launched on its journey across the Atlantic. At one dinner party where he was referred to in Ticknor’s journal as ‘a barrister whose name I did not catch,’ he revived his friendship of old Paris days with Madame Mohl of the distinguished salon.

But it was not till the autumn, after the return to Claverton, that real love-making began – walks on the terrace by moonlight, readings *tête-à-tête* of Walter’s specially favourite poems, and close attendance on Eliza and her donkey during those walks on the downs – those downs where Gainsborough painted – Eliza not being strong enough to go far on foot. On these occasions we would cannily watch Walter kicking the donkey in order to secure Eliza alone. On wet days there would be games of battledore in the picture gallery, Walter’s characteristic eyeglass floating about in the air on its black string as he ran hither and thither after the elusive shuttlecock. On every visit he seemed more and more to become one of us; yet the crisis, so eagerly awaited by us of the school-room, tarried!

A home tragedy overshadowed the lives of Walter Bagehot and his father. Notwithstanding this cloud brooding over him, causing a pitiful sadness for the mother for whom he felt so strong an affection, it could not extinguish the buoyant spring of his high spirits, or his keen enjoyment of life, physical as well as intellectual.





Nevertheless the tragedy made his home unlike those of others, his natural comrades.

One day, finding himself alone with my sister in the conservatory, he disclosed the fact that his mother was subject to attacks of a mental disorder. This disclosure he had felt it was necessary to make before finally risking the decision which would make, or mar, his happiness, and farther delay was not possible. My father and mother and sisters, Eliza and Sophie, were on the point of migrating to Edinburgh. These two sisters had been suffering much from headache and eye trouble, and a friend, Lady Kinnaird, had strongly urged them to try a treatment of rubbing by a Doctor Beveridge at Edinburgh, who had completely cured her of the like ailments: we therefore owe to the following of this advice the writing of these love-letters now published.

The Government had commissioned my father at that time to go to Edinburgh, to sift the rights and wrongs of a dispute which had been going on for years between the Royal Institute and the Academy of Scotland, so the time of my father's journey was chosen to coincide with that of my sisters, although his departure was temporarily postponed owing to the financial crisis. Two days before the departure north, via London, Walter asked my father's permission to propose to my sister. This having been given, he enticed her into the library and there put his happiness to the risk.

The disclosure he had felt it incumbent upon him to make before finally taking this risk, had not altered my sister's feeling towards him, but it had complicated somewhat her vision of the future, and having no rash tendencies, she wavered as to taking a definite step then





and there, and told Walter she would give him her answer in London. So it was on the seventh of November, at ten o'clock in the morning in the dining-room of 15 Hertford Street, that this answer was given, and Walter Bagehot and Eliza Wilson were betrothed. After breakfasting with my father and sisters, in a strange state of elation, Walter at once sought his friend of friends, Richard Hole Hutton, to acquaint him with his unbelievable happiness.

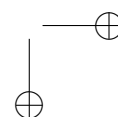
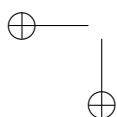
A wandering in Hamilton Gardens, a sitting together over the fire in the evening, gradually ratified the truth that his anxieties were at an end and his hopes realised.

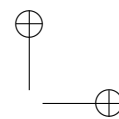
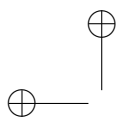
But the monetary affairs of the country were in a troublous condition, and Walter had to hasten back to the West, to the conditions there. Hence Eliza received Walter's first love-letter.

Walter returned on the 14th November and remained till the 17th, when during these days he was introduced to Foova, our old nurse, and he read to my sister Wordsworth's *Lord Clifford*, and the lovers had long talks over the fireside. On the day of the start for Edinburgh he was at Hertford Street by nine o'clock, and subsequently drove *tête-à-tête* with my sister to King's Cross.

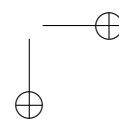
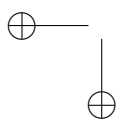
As the letters explain, Walter succeeded in making a short stay in Edinburgh. He was there on the important day, 16th December, my sister's twenty-fifth birthday. As a birthday offering he gave her Wordsworth's, Shelley's and Keats's poems in small volumes bound in red calf, and Eliza and he exchanged engagement rings.

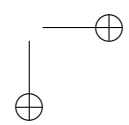
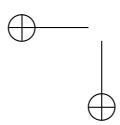
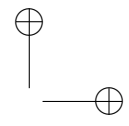
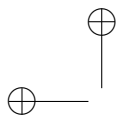
When Dr. Beveridge was supposed to have rubbed sufficiently, before returning south my father, mother and sisters paid a visit to Lord and Lady Kinnaird at Rossie Priory, and, subsequently, on arriving in Lon-



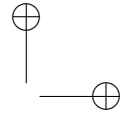
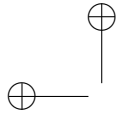


don, remained there while the trousseau was purchased. While there my sister went to the last of Lady Palmerston's parties, many, many of which she had attended previously.

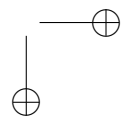
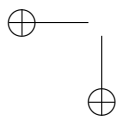


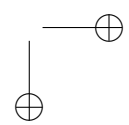
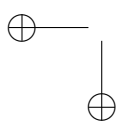
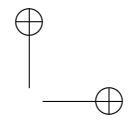
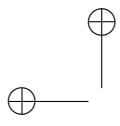






**The Love Letters**  
of  
**Walter Bagehot**  
and  
**Eliza Wilson**







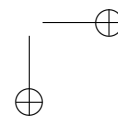
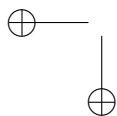
Langport,  
10th November, 1857

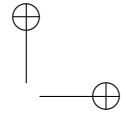
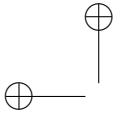
My Dear Eliza

I have just rushed down here from Bristol and it appears to me that I shall rebound again to London tomorrow. I rather fancy I shall have to stay some days there, as the panic is getting worse and requires watching, but I am not sure, for I have several things I ought to do here. At any rate I hope to see you again, before you go to Edinburgh, and that is something. I cannot be in a panic at all myself. I have never felt such happiness as for the two last days, ever since our first walk in the 'cemetery.' [Walter's name for Hamilton Gardens.] Before that it did not seem real, or that you would indeed take a share in my life, but since that I have a repose of affection quite new to me and such a rest from the burning pain of a man's love. I never felt before any happiness which was so intense and soothing. Could you not stay in London till Monday? I am almost sure of being there on Sunday. We might have some more walks. I do not quite believe in my happiness yet. One requires *detail* to make one believe anything so strange. I shall go back into mere incredulity again when you are gone, with the picture of you in my mind and no belief that you *can* care for me. When I go away, you become a haunting image – it is dreadful. *Do* stay if you can. I will try in every way to come, and I believe it will be possible. I write in haste, it is just post time, and I do not quite know if I am writing sense, but I *am* yours,

With the deepest and most unalterable love,

WALTER BAGEHOT





15 Hertford Street,  
Mayfair,  
11th November, 1857.

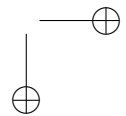
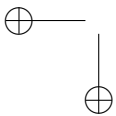
My dearest Walter,

I have such a wretched influenza cold that I can hardly see and can but scribble a very few lines to say how very pleased I am that you are coming back. I have felt ever since you left, but more especially since receiving your letter this morning, that we have not *talked* neatly enough considering that weeks must elapse before we can meet again. It is, as you say, *detail* is necessary before we can realise the relation we stand in to each other or feel real comfort in it. I see too that one must tell detail as well as hear it; at least, if I had told you more, it might not be so difficult to you to think I 'can care for you.'

I have thrown out a feeler for an extension of our stay here, but fear it will not do. I should so much have liked another Sunday. I have given up going to Wimbledon, my cold is too bad, and I would rather stay here now. If you arrive in time, come to dinner this evening at 8 (come as much before as you like), Papa expects you. If not, you will find me in to-morrow and I will look for you in the afternoon, when I hope we may get a long chat. I will do my best to be 'speak-to-able' alone. To-night Mama and Sophy go to the opera, so we might have some real talk. It has been less difficult to write than I expected. I shall not mind now calling you Walter nor myself

Your own,

ELIZA WILSON





Yeovil,  
18th November, 1857.

My dearest Eliza,

What do you think your father and myself did the moment you were gone? We went to see the antiquities of Halicarnassus! They are a set of odd legs, arms and bodies of great statues just arrived, and alleviated our feelings very much. It happened in this way. We drove past the British Museum on our way home, and Mr Wilson asked if I had seen the new reading room, and as I had not, he forthwith took me to see it. We were ushered in to old Panizzi, who was doing nothing in a fine armchair, and he proposed we should see the venerable fragments just arrived from Greece. I am not sure, however, that we appreciated them. I have an unfortunate prejudice in favour of statues in *one* piece, at least in not more than six pieces, and these are broken up very small indeed, and it is a controversy whose arm belongs to whose body – but I believe real lovers of art admire those perplexities. On the whole, however, we spent our time cheerfully, and in consequence the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a heap of Scotch bankers were kept half an hour waiting. Seriously, I felt pretty well although you were gone. I am so soothed by the last week, and can dwell so fondly and gently on the remembrance of it, that I cannot go wild yet as I was before. And it is such a rest – I believe too I am a little tired. The affections are always *fatiguing*. Then there is the panic which is wearing, and really a trifle anxious, and your father's conversation and what I guess from it lets me so into the interior of matters in which I am much interested that currency becomes

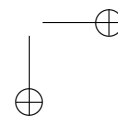
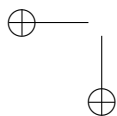




an excitement and altogether I am pleasingly tired, and though I think of you very much, about two minutes in three, it is *nicely* and mildly. I must brace myself more to my work in the morning, however, for it won't do to be always thinking of our drive to the station and the fireside in Hertford Street, though I have never felt such happiness as they give me, for I do not think you like me the worse for knowing me better and more really, and that is an enormous thing to feel, and I believe and try to believe it is so.

I retract utterly all that I said against Mr Moffatt. He gave us a *scrumptious* dinner. Capital wine and excellent food, though not quite in large pieces enough for me. I like to feel I am eating. We talked currency till half-past one, and then Mr Wilson and myself walked to Hertford Street and stood on the doorstep ever so long, talking of Michel Chevalier and the double standard in France. Mr Moffatt talks quite differently when *you* are not there. He is really a sensible man, acquainted with money, and he kept still and talked in a better voice when he was really interested in what he was saying. There were only five of us and a small party is always pleasanter. There is not so much competition for the food. Mr Lowe and the American banker were the others, the latter was instructive. Mr Lowe said he disapproved of subscriptions for widows. He thought they had better means of getting on than any one else, if they were proper persons to keep alive, which I mention to you as a characteristic expression of the real 'masculine element.'

I came down here by the evening express to see one of my parters in the Bank who lives here, named Batten, who would amuse you. He is 38, a bachelor, always





fancying he is ill of something, and looking so healthy. He is now in bed with a sore throat and I have not seen him – which I am glad of, though he is an intimate friend.

I hope you were not over-tired with the journey. Does the Doctor seem a human being? I hate him. He will try to keep you in Edinburgh under pretence of curing you.

*Do* write to me soon. I shall prey upon myself again, as I have done for so many weeks, unless you do. Do not think I feel lightly because I write rubbish in jests. I wish you could read the bottom of my heart. If you were here I would try and whisper to you how *fearful* what I feel for you is, but I could not do it on paper, and it would be glaring. I was so, I know, when I wrote to you before, and now you may think I am too light, but I really am,

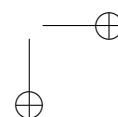
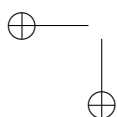
Yours with the most intense and unalterable affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT

*52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
20th November, 1857.*

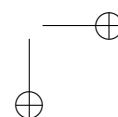
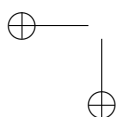
My dearest Walter,

Many thanks for your nice long letter, which I have just been enjoying on the sofa. Don't fancy I dislike what you call 'rubbish and jests.' *Au contraire*. I like them extremely and everything you write, because it is all your *real self*, the deep true nature underneath and above the bubbling foam that I feel so exhilarating. It makes me happy to hear that you can think mildly and gently about me now, for I should have felt this to be





real banishment if I thought you were as excited as you describe yourself to have felt lately. It was quite new to me, the idea of its being suffering to you, and I feel so thankful that those pleasant days last week have soothed you. It is delicious to think I *can* do anything to calm and soothe you, and I *can*, if giving you my whole heart will do it. I shall get impatient by-and-bye, I doubt not, and long to be at home again, but so far I have felt quite cheerful and have not *moped* for 5 minutes. My thoughts and recollections are too pleasant for that and buoy me up. I find myself singing – which you may not think a good sign, but it is. The two extremes of feeling make me sing, extreme worry and extreme pleasure. I suspect the first is only caused by my pride trying to make me fancy I am indifferent. The journey was by no means as trying as I expected, thanks probably to the utter idleness I indulged in. I did nothing but think, in fact hardly that. I let my mind float in delicious fancies, all stamped with the impress of one mind. We slept at York very comfortably, going to bed at 8 o'clock, when you were sitting down at Mr Moffatt's really hospitable table. We had a bevy of relations to talk to next day at Newcastle station, and among them the famous Aunt Julia, whom I think you will like. Of course I told her the *great fact*; immediately her face fell. She just asked, 'Is it Mr Campbell?' and then said, 'I am so sorry for Lord Decies – I did hope something might, etc.' This is a great friend of hers who lives near Newcastle and more than a year ago asked her 'to find him a wife.' Being a great match-maker, at least having all the qualities and more than enough taste for that kind of thing, she has been boring us ever since to come and stay with her







that we might make his acquaintance, though even *she* sometimes owned that she doubted if we would like him. She was plotting against me chiefly, I suppose, because I am the eldest, and I must own to the fact having added some zest to the pleasure of telling her I am engaged. He is an Irish peer and brother to the Duchess of Montrose whom Mr Greg was talking of the other day. He is a valetudinarian of about 45 and makes his guests breakfast at 7.30! You see I tell you all the *fun*!

We are comfortably lodged 'in a back street in Edinburgh,' and should be pretty quiet if it were not for a large school behind the house, where the children are *always* playing at the noisiest games or singing psalms. I am glad we came to this rubbing-doctor, for he has found out that Sophy's spine is wrong and of course *promises* to put it right. He says the disease is more acute in my head, but deeper-seated in Sophy. We have our necks rubbed by him for an hour every day. Papa writes that 'the crisis continues and widens,' and he cannot come till Monday. You are likely to be a true prophet, I fear. I forgot to say anything more to you about your mother's message, but I hope you have thanked her for me; please give her my 'respectful love,' if you think that the proper thing. I have been obliged to scribble so, for the post goes out here at 3, and I have but time to add that you *must* believe in the true and deep love of

ELIZA WILSON

I like your crest *so* much!





Langport,  
21st November, 1857.

My dearest Eliza,

I have just received your most *soothing* note, and I scribble a line in answer to it because there is no post to the north to-morrow. I am distracted now by other things, but unless I write at once you cannot hear from me till Tuesday morning, and I should not like you to think I would not write to you in answer to yours the moment I could. I was much amused at your account of your Aunt Julia. I *know* I shall like her. I am sure now the state of distraction in which I saw Mr Campbell at the club was owing to you – at least in some measure. I assure you he went as near to tearing his hair, as anyone can do on a club sofa. It was very stupid in me not to offer him any cheerful conversation, but the idea of his liking you, which I once believed, had quite passed away, but I have no doubt now that he retired to the said sofa, which is one of the softest, quietest and most enviable in London, on purpose to bemoan himself. I do not know about Lord Decies, but I am more cheerful than Mr C. As you seem never to have seen the noble Lord (which is immense luck for *me*), it is simply for you to consider whether being sister-in-law to a Duchess is worth getting up at half-past seven. I conscientiously believe *not*.

I have had an attorney with a worse voice than Mr Moffatt talking to me since I wrote this and he has dislocated my *ideas*, and it is impossible to have *any feeling* while you are talking to an attorney. It is like talking sense to a donkey, or gently stroking him with a switch according to the ladylike habit of Claverton. I am very sorry to hear the doctor thinks seriously of





your sister's complaint. I do not believe much in *your* being *ill*. I think you are jaded and have not been made enough of and want to have *rubbish* talked to you (as you seem to like it which is *odd*), but as you do like it, it is better than being rubbed. Is the physician a sensible man, out of physic? One can't judge of drugs, but of common sense one can, and all professional people should be judged by that test.

The paper says Mr Wilson is going to Devonport next week. He evidently did not intend going when I left town. He puts the worst on the crisis as an excuse. It is spreading and *widening*, but less intense at the focus in London.

It is utterly useless giving your message to my mother. Though I will do so. She believes you *must* mean to break off the engagement or you would *never* have gone to Edinburgh. I argue with her, but it produces no effect. I think she has an idea that it is in Iceland or some place north of the moon.

I thought of you all day yesterday under pretence of a day's hunt with very little sport. During the run your image waned but returned at the decease of the hare. There is no time for quiet reflection like the intervals of a hunt, and I was so happy. But not so much as I am now since I had your letter. Not that I have read it really, as I have not been home since I received it – it did not come till after ten and one comprehends nothing, only facts, in the middle of the day. And I shall read it by the fire over and over till I begin to get *wild*, and then I shall go and do something. It is very dangerous thinking of you continuously. I must let the idea go and come or it burns again into my nature as it used to. Thank you





for your letter. Do write again when your eyes will bear it. Yours with the truest affection,

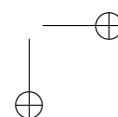
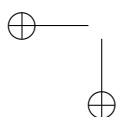
WALTER BAGEHOT

My best regards to your mother and sister.

*Herd's Hill,  
22nd November, 1857.*

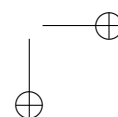
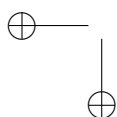
My dearest Eliza,

I fear you will think the answer I wrote yesterday to your most kind and *delicious* letter, was very superficial, but I wrote it at once while people were talking and bothering me. I have now read yours over and over more times than I should like to admit. I awoke in the middle of the night and immediately lit a candle to read it a few times again. It has given me more pleasure than I ever received from a letter, and infinitely more than I thought it possible I could receive from one. I fancy that it is not now an effort to you to write to me – at least it reads as if it was written without effort. Yet it tells me things which with your deep and reserved nature it must have cost you much to put on paper. I wish indeed I could feel worthy of your affection – my reason, if not my imagination, is getting to believe you when you whisper to me that I have it, but as somebody says in Miss Austen, ‘I do not at all mind having what is too good for me’; my delight is at times intense. You must not suppose because I tell you of the wild, burning pain which I have felt, and at times, though I am and *ought* to be much soothed, still feel, that my love for you has ever been mere suffering. Even at the worst there was a wild, delicious excitement





which I would not have lost for the world. At first, and before the feeling was very great it was simple pleasure to me to come to Claverton, and the charm of our early intellectual talks was very great, although of late, and particularly since the day in the conservatory, the feeling has been too eager not to have a good deal of pain in it, and the tension of mind has really been very great at times, still the time that I have known and loved you is immensely the happiest I have ever known. My spirits always make me cheerful in a superficial way, but they do not *satisfy*, and somehow life even before I was engaged to you was sweeter and gentler, and the jars and jangles of action lost their influence, and literature had a new value since *you* liked my writing, and everything has had a gloss upon it. Though I have come to Claverton the last few times with the notion that the gloss would go – that I should burst out and you would be tranquil and kind and considerate and *refuse* and I should never see you again. I had a vision of the thing which I keep by me. As it has *not* happened I am afraid this is egotistical – indeed I know it is – but I am not sure that egotism is bad in letters, and if I write to you I *must* write about what I feel for you. It is odd how completely our feelings change. No one can tell the effort it was to me to tell you I loved you – why I do not know, but it made me gasp for breath, and now it is absolutely pleasure to me to tell it to you and bore you with it in every form, and I should like to write it in big letters I LOVE YOU all across the page by way of emphasis. I know you will think me very childish, and be shaken in your early notion that I am intellectual, but I cannot help it. This is my state of mind.





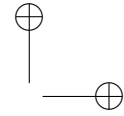
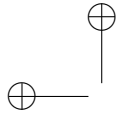
To change the subject, what is the particular advantage of being rubbed at *Edinburgh*? Since yesterday I have made careful enquiries and am assured that the English can rub. Why not be rubbed in Somersetshire? Let the doctor mark the place and have a patch put to show where and let an able-bodied party in the West of England rub on the *same* place and surely it will be as well? Does the man's touch do good to disease like the King's?

By incredible researches in an old box I have found the poem I mentioned to you. I wish I had not, for I thought it was better. I have not seen it for several years and it is not so good as I fancied – perhaps not good at all – but I think you may care to read it and you can't read it unless I send it and therefore I do send it. The young lady's name is Orithyia. The Greek legend is that she was carried away by the north wind. I have chosen to believe that she was in love with the north wind, but I am not aware that she ever declared her feelings explicitly in any document. By the way, you have. I have just read your letter in that light and I go about murmuring, 'I have made that dignified girl *commit* herself, I have, I have,' and then I vault over the sofa with exultation. Those are the feelings of the person you have connected yourself with. *Please* don't be offended at my rubbish. Sauciness is my particular line, I am always rude to everybody I respect. I could write to you of the deep and serious feelings which I hope you believe really are in my heart, but my pen jests of itself and always will.

Yours with the fondest and deepest love,

WALTER BAGEHOT



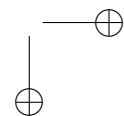
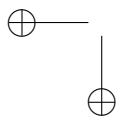


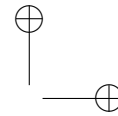
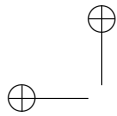
I hope the Doctor does not think there is anything seriously the matter with your sister. Do not let him do much to her. I am more afraid of remedies than diseases.

#### ORITHYIA

What am and where am I?  
Why do I leave the city of my youth,  
And the sweet streets where linger all I know,  
And the fair home where I have lived and loved?  
To mark how on Ilissus' gentle face,  
The eager north wind venteth his quick will,  
Or how the long-ribbed plane leaves vex the air,  
And how subtle and calm the light clouds hang  
In amorous poise upon the breath that wafts them?

I do remember me that in my youth  
I strayed, where in Acropolis the hills  
Regard Eubœa, and the sweet air was hushed,  
The distant waves Æolian music made,  
The very hills were faint as the next world,  
And all things murmuréd. Yet there was nought.  
But all at once the breeze began to murmur  
'Orithyia,' and the calm hills remurmured  
'Orithyia,' and the fair waves re-echoed  
'Orithyia,' and in their hollow throat  
The caves half muttered 'Orithyia';  
Yet there was nothing save too deep calm,  
An over fulness and a weight in air.  
Since then I have not loved what maidens love:  
To me the winding dance, the hasteful words,  
The gentle music and the gentler home,  
The tranquil evening and the pleasant morn,  
The flexile fancies and the talk of friends,  
The converse low and sweet in evening time,  
The taskless work and busy rest were nought,  
Nor all the homely harmony of life.  
Nor them that fain would love me could I love,



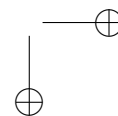
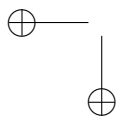


For ever unto me mine own heart seemed  
Too awful to be spent on things of earth,  
But walked I sole and consecrate, as doth  
The moon in heaven. Yet were there longings strange,  
Such as with lispng tongues of half-formed waves  
The tranquil sea doth utter in its musing,  
Longings for one immortal whom I knew  
And yet knew not. And so in sooth *was* all.  
Now I awake. The dream of this world ends,  
A thickening cloud o'ershadows all the world,  
A wind is in the air: – for I am called.  
At once a sudden thrill shakes earth and heaven  
For He who rules the awful air doth call me.  
Boreas, I come, come, I pant and pause,  
I faint, press on, and pause; for what am I  
That He who rules the awful air should love me?  
Yet He hath called me twice and now again –  
My shaking eyes turn dim; my breath beats thick;  
And all my breast is filled with subtle love –  
Boreas, I come, I come.

*52 Albany Street,  
23rd Nov., 1857.*

My dearest Walter,

I was delighted to see your handwriting yesterday, and quite surprised, for I did not think the post could be so quick between two places so far distant as Langport and this. But I suppose our letters go by Carlisle and not through London. I did not write to you yesterday because my eyes would only have been equal to a short note. They were so well the two first days I was here that I presumed upon it and made them very weak again by writing too much on Friday. It was not my letter to you that did the harm, but because I had not felt any







bad effects from writing that in the morning, I wrote two letters, one very long, in the evening by gaslight (you know people use nothing but gas here and do not even keep candlesticks, so that one has no escape from it – it is purer however than in England). The long letter was to Mme Mohl. She is the only person I have announced our engagement to *myself*, but she takes such an interest in my small self that I felt I should like to tell her the great fact and that she would like to hear some romantic details from myself. She is such a good, kind creature I am glad you knew her before – it is rather curious that she was a *mutual* friend.

Your letters are a great resource, and will, I believe, keep me from moping, but it is desperately dull, I must own. You see we are three *eyeless* people, at least as far as reading is concerned, and are not very talkative; we should have Julia or Emy to make a noise! We are going to try and improve our state by importing a piano, and to-day two cousins take possession of some rooms in this house, and if one of them is willing to devote her voice to us, we shall get novels for the evenings. Under the circumstances, however, it is an immense thing to have pleasant thoughts. I think Mr Beveridge might have rubbed away till Doomsday without doing me any good, if I had still the weight on my heart that was there a month ago, and all this spare time to think about it. We must not complain of the Edinburgh trip, for it has served a purpose no one would have dreamed of by letting us *understand* each other.

The doctor is a sensible man. I will not explain his theory now, as it would be too long on paper and you would probably only *laugh* at it, but it is quite compre-





hensible and his *cures* are more so still. I will give you one instance: – a gentleman fell over the banisters into the hall of his house from the height of three stories and was made almost blind (in fact quite blind, except being just able to grope about) from an injury to the upper part of his spine caused by the fall. *Fifty* years later he fell into Mr B.'s hands and *eighteen* months' rubbing completely restored his sight. Of course he won't keep me 12 months. I have told him I cannot stay beyond the four weeks and I do not intend to. I shall probably have to return alone, however, for he thinks Sophy cannot be put right under two or three months.

Papa is not going to Devonport. His constituents want him to, but he says if he can leave town, he will come to us. However, he doubts that he can and we have about given him up. He has four bills on the anvil for the meeting of Parliament, besides the work caused by the crisis. I am glad you feel currency to be an excitement. It must be such a comfort to take a real interest in one's business. Besides, I can say with your clergyman friend: 'You cannot expect a person in my position to think it a bad thing.' My father's *daughter* ought to be able to appreciate its value, though of course your literary writings will interest me more. I have a strong feeling too that you will distinguish yourself on 'Money' somehow or other; I don't mean by making much of it – I care far less about that than about people knowing that you understand it. I fancy we have both a little ambition of the *right* kind; do you think so?

I am glad you have been hunting. You wanted it after the *fatigue* of affection and the worry of the crisis, and I am not afraid of your brisk horse doing what Gracy





did for me. She even could not do that now. I have remembered something *à propos* of hunting. Mr Upton Smith keeps, or is going to keep, harriers, and he is only a short distance from Bristol. They may be of use to you. I don't like the idea of your giving up anything you are fond of or that is good for mind or body.

Susan goes home in a day or two, so Julia and the others will go to Weymouth at the end of the week. I have lost the end of Macaulay and am going to lose a month of Gibbon by being in this stupid place, besides all the novels, in the evening. But the great loss is the delightful Sundays we should have had! However, I *will* be home for Christmas! and we shall have a very pleasant one.

We have had a call from Mrs Moncrieff which we are going to return to-day, so perhaps we may have a little outing which would be a great relief to the monotony of our present life. We are also going to find out the Croftons, Capt. C.'s brother and his wife. He is the colonel in command of the artillery here. We have seen but little of the city yet. We have walked up and down Princes Street, looked into the shop windows and admired the glorious old town, so dark and irregular, and the wonderful Castle, which took me quite by surprise. There is something so grand in the steep, moss-covered rock which it crowns. I have not yet seen the other side of it, but it must surely be utterly impregnable on this side. We have been on Calton Hill, and of course, being 'unprotected females,' fell into the hands of a professional guide, who told us the number of feet every crag and tower is above the sea – such profitable lore!





I have not seen your essays announced. Tell me where they are advertised. Don't hurry to send your poem, but please don't forget it.

I am sorry your mother won't believe in me, but I suppose time will convince her that I am trustworthy. I suppose you have explained that this Edinburgh trip was a certainty *before* you took the step. I hope you will keep this long rigmarole to read in the evening, for you have better things to do at the Bank. I like to hear that you have braced yourself to your morning work, for I should not like to think by and bye that you associated me in your mind with unsatisfactory work.

Mama and Sophy send their kindest regards. Julia tells me I am being utterly spoiled! I believe it is true, but it is so pleasant to love and be loved.

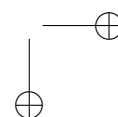
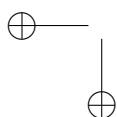
Yours with the deepest affection,

ELIZA WILSON

*Langport,  
25th November, 1857.*

My dearest Eliza,

I have only a moment to thank you for your long letter which I received yesterday. I hope your eyes are not worse, but the handwriting of your last looked as if you did not look at it when you wrote it – at least I fancied so – and I have nothing from you to-day, which makes me apprehensive. *Don't* hurt them in writing to me on any account. I could not bear to see your handwriting if I thought it hurt you to write it. I hope I was not *rude* when I wrote to you last. I wrote it late at night





when my spirits are sometimes excessive, but I hope, *dearest*, you will *believe* I did not *mean* anything. I do not like this about gaslight and you may depend upon it the horrid dullness you describe is exactly what you ought not to have. What is life worth relieved only by a piano? Did you see the gentleman who fell over the stairs, or is he a myth arising 'from the consciousness' of the medical profession?

If you must not come home by yourself, why not come home with Susan? I do not believe in patent rubbing. Anybody can rub. Perhaps Scotch hands are larger, but I doubt that being an advantage. What does your sister Julia mean by your being spoilt? It is all rubbish. You want to be made much of, and be murmured to, and you go away to a back street by a boys' school and hope to be comforted by a *piano* and the wife of a Lord Advocate! I am afraid I *am* likely to be spoilt by your letters. I read them over and over till I get so vain, but then I assure you I am quite nervous at other times at the confidence you give me and the awful trust your happiness is.

Yours in haste, but with the deepest affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT





*52 Albany Street,  
26th Nov., 1857.*

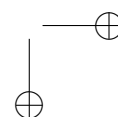
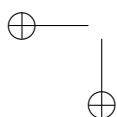
My dearest Walter,

I cannot do much more than answer your note of this morning by a very few lines, for I am more like my late Claverton self to-day than I have been since that Tuesday, except last Saturday and Sunday, when the gaslight had half-killed my eyes. However, don't think I am not improving on this account – one can't get well in a straight line – there must be a few zigzags, and it is an immense thing that what was the rule is now the exception. I used to feel my brain and eyes and whole being like this and worse for six days out of seven. I overwalked myself this morning, that is all, and I shall be quite well to-morrow. To prove it, I shall then write you a full letter. I was going to do so to-day, but I should not know how to say all I had to tell you, and my eyes would be ruined for a week. I am surprised to find how little effort it costs me now to write to you, I did not think I could fall into it so quickly. Now and then a faint shadow of alarm crosses my mind at what I have done and said and written, but it does not last, for I feel that I have told you nothing that you have not in some sort a right to know, at any rate, that to tell you less of my real feelings would be a very inadequate return for your deep affection, and I do feel more and more every day how truly I return it.

Please let me know when you get this, for it is going by the second post.

Yours with the deepest affection,

ELIZA WILSON





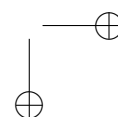
I thought you very saucy but not rude. I rather like the former, it is piquant, and I feel you will never be the latter to me. I think though that my being a little sensitive is not a bad thing, as it may save the one from degenerating into the other in you.

*52 Albany Street,  
21st [27th] Nov., 1857.*

My dearest Walter,

I am very sorry I can only write you another hurried note, for I have not yet got rid of my headache, and have not yet been downstairs, 3 o'clock. It is my own fault, for I would get up yesterday and go to the doctor's directly after breakfast (our hour is at 10) when I ought to have stayed quietly at home and upstairs. But don't be alarmed, *dear* Walter, it is getting better and only proves that I ought to be here. Do get reconciled to the idea of my staying, for I could not bear to have to stay upstairs now when you come to Claverton, it would be too hard.

I have a feeling that you are very busy and perhaps a good deal worried about the crisis. I hope not really much. Your hurried note and my having nothing since make me think so. Don't be afraid to tell me anything of that kind. Remember *you* have put it into my head that I have a *soothing* mission, if any mission at all. I have got up to write this and I must not send more, but I was determined you should have a few lines to-morrow, for I know you will think of me on your *idling* day and I could not let you fancy I was neglecting you. I know you will write to-morrow and I hope you always will when you





can on Sundays. Everyone, but especially men, are more themselves on that day; you have no Bank to jar you and one can always go deeper into oneself when one has not been thinking of one's worldly affairs during the day. Your last Sunday letter was delightful and so cheering. You may use note-paper in the week, but do send me a large sheet on Sundays.

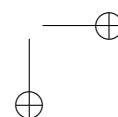
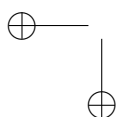
With the fondest affection, your own

ELIZA WILSON

*Claverton,  
20th November, 1857.*

My dearest Eliza,

I came over here yesterday. Everything seems in its usual channel. The only event which has occurred is that your sister Emilie *dined* yesterday, and naturally insisted that Jetty should dine in public also, which Mr Wilson forbade and this cast a momentary shade on life, but it is gone now. I think I have distinguished myself about 'money.' I wrote a letter in the *Economist*, *four* columns of leader type. Everything was postponed to it, an article of Mr Wilsons!!, one of Hutton's, no end of your sister's literature, and something else. Your father seemed to like it and Greg said 'Better than any of your literary things, Bagehot,' which is paying a compliment and spoiling it rather. I came here to talk 'Crisis and Currency' for an article in the next number of the *National*. I feel I should like much more to have a reputation about these subjects because you would like it. Of course I should have always liked it somewhat but reputation is not my strongest







temptation. I think it a very healthy and proper object of desire. The wish to be estimated at your value is nearly as important for good in a character as the wish to be estimated at *more* than your value is for evil, but I am not exceedingly prone to it myself. I am afraid I covet ‘*power*’ influence over people’s wills, faculties and conduct more in proportion than I can quite defend. I think this a very good thing too in many ways, but I do not quite approve the intensity with which I feel it. Until I knew you it was certainly the strongest feeling I had ever known. Now it certainly is not, but it is stronger than is good for my happiness or my goodness.

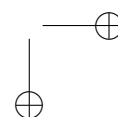
It *seems* very strange to me to be here without you, though I have a constant feeling that you are disappeared upstairs, but it has been pleasant and soothing to me. I cannot help contrasting my present feelings with what I felt the *last* time I was here. I awoke early this morning and thought over the difference. I was then so agitated that I hardly knew what I was doing. The state of mental *interjection* – half wish and half (I hope) prayer – in which I passed two or three hours on *that* morning, no one can imagine. I could not have fancied anything like it at all, and though I am at times *restless* now, it is nothing in comparison, and I came down to breakfast, *very* late of course, so happy. I am learning up the externals of the place again. I have been so *absorbed* when I have been here lately that I have taken no notice of them and I have forgotten about your sisters. They are a *little* shy, I fancy, and puzzled at a new sort of connection, but of course it is most pleasant, and it is delicious to hear your name mentioned and references to you constantly and insensibly made.





I do not agree that your being sensitive, which you are, is a check on my appearing rude – on the contrary I fear. You have a certain *shy* dignity which is inexpressibly attractive to me, but my admiration naturally, and I think healthily, takes the form of sauciness, jokes and all manner of rubbish. I could not go on with you for a moment without it. I could not express myself, and I could not be with *you* without trying to express myself, as I am, and we really know each other better and are *closer* to one another's *real* hearts by it. I never feel the slightest notion of being, or having been, rude to you when rightly interpreted, but late at night I sometimes scratch down things very roughly, and I feared they might *seem* what they were not intended to be. I feel every time I write to you more and more the wish to see you again and talk *real words* to you. The pen spoils everything, especially to a restless being like me. I am not used to this sore of feeling and it is dreadfully exciting. I do not think this quite right and I fear you would like me better if I were calmer, but I feel I *must* tell you the truth.

There is a *rumour* here of Mr Beveridge having told Mr Wilson that *he* did not intend you should be at home at Christmas. I hope you won't give in to him at all – at least unless you were feeling that he was doing you real good. I mean good you could feel – of course he would say he was doing you good. I own I fear the monotony of the life will do you more harm than the rubbing good, but I know I am a sceptic on *science* especially. I hope you believe I would not hurry you away on any account, if your staying would save you one headache, but I cannot persuade myself it would. If it were not for the crisis I should run up to Edinburgh and see how you *really* are,





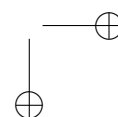
but I can't very well go away just now though everything is quieter, and I suppose the lodging is populous for its size and you would not be 'speak-to-able' if I had been able to come, so I must not regret it. I must go and talk currency.

Ever yours with the fondest and I believe unselfish affection,

WATER BAGEHOT

Excuse the scrawl I send you – such a pen as this is. My *best* regards to your mother and sister.

I wrote this yesterday but I thought I would not send it till I had your *full* letter, and then would add something in reply to it, but it has not appeared and your sisters say you are not well. I told your father the dismalness of the life you lead was much more likely to do you harm than the remedies good, and he seemed to agree. Greg says Mr Beveridge's theory is 'Bosh.' I have just had such a nice talk with your sister Julia about you – not *shy* at all.





*52 Albany Street,  
1st December, 1857.*

My dearest Walter,

Many, many thanks for your delightful letter that I have been reading again and again for the last hour. I thought you would write to me at Claverton as soon as I learnt you were going there, and am not sorry you had not received the wretched note I scribbled on Saturday before you did so. My wits were so little about me when I wrote it that I believe I misdated it, which may have puzzled you a little. I have got over the weary state I was then in and am quite myself again. I must thank you again for to-day's letter; it is a real Sunday one, so deep and unreserved and makes me feel that I can indeed see into your mind. But do you know that while that causes a thrill of delight in me, it also fills me with a feeling of awe at even partially understanding such a mind and being what I am to such a heart. Affection like ours is awful and gives such new significance to life – at least to me it does. It seems such a power in life, instead of the mere episode I fancied it to be. I cannot say that the feeling is different to what I imagined it, except in being infinitely more intense, but its effect upon life, even to its furthest horizon, seems *startlingly* strong. I feel our existence through time and even eternity bound together in a manner I could not have imagined. It is such a comfort to me to be able to write to you unreservedly, which I can *quite* do now, and I am getting on with your *name* as fast as you could wish. I find myself holding your letters fast and murmuring over them with the superlative adjective.





Do not think of coming here at present, but if I should be kept over Christmas and if you should then have to come to Liverpool, I am not sure that I should not ask you whether you would mind coming the additional distance to see me. If you did, we could be as much together as courtesy to the rest of the party would allow; our apartments offer every facility to my being 'speak-to-able.' The rumour you heard at Claverton is true, I am sorry to say, but at the same time Mr Beveridge owns that he is getting on quicker than he expected and is, I really believe, doing what he can to expedite my cure. I am to have two hours a day as soon as I can bear it, which is a rare mark of favour. He can rub me hardly and therefore get quickly over the ground, owing to my naturally 'very strong constitution'; I am much more 'fibrous,' he says, than Sophy. What made him doubt the time being insufficient was his finding so much more to do upon examining further. Besides the injury, or whatever one may call it, in my neck that causes my head and eye aches, he declares that I must have injured my spine more than 10 years ago, and I really believe him for I have felt what he says are its results for nearly that time.

I should think it very kind of you if you will not say much about my health at home. Active old ladies are so apt to set young people's ailments down to 'fancy or affectation,' that I should really like to be well before seeing your mother. I am so afraid she may think me a *poule mouillée*, if nothing more morally weak.

We are going out to dinner to-day, and I am glad of it, for I shall see your triumph on 'Money' in the *Economist* at Mr Wylie's house. He is the gentleman whom I would





not talk to when you were my neighbour on the other side the evening you sat between Ida Mohl and me. I will talk to him to-night if he praises 'A Banker's' letter! Don't think I *overrate* reputation. I do not think I do, though I believe I might more easily overrate it than many other things, or rather not 'reputation' so much as 'mind,' which I would wish it to be founded on. I would have it *genuine* mind too, and I think I can distinguish what is genuine.

I am so glad you went to Claverton. I knew it would be a treat to the '*délaissés*' there and I thought too you would like it when you got there. You may suppose I was there too a good deal in spirit on Sunday, knowing how the party was composed. I very much wanted you to see my sisters, it seemed keeping them long in suspense to wait till Christmas.

I can report decided improvement in our life and consequently in our spirits. If you knew what it is to have a sister who plays Beethoven, you would understand that piano can be a solace and a stimulant in life, and if you knew the thoughts it sets floating in, you would think it 'all right.' Besides the piano, we have a good-natured cousin who reads us novels aloud. We have read the whole of *Mansfield Park* and begun *Zanoni*. At the close of the former we came upon your quotation of the other day. It is Fanny whom Miss Austen supposes to be 'too good' for Edward, but the cases are not parallel, for Fanny was a perfect young lady, while your choice is not, I fear. However, I will fain be content with myself since you are so, and I begin to believe in the philosophy of not liking what is '*too* wise or good For human nature's daily food.'





I do not know if I have been writing sense, for I am very tired now and have been interrupted by a call. Mama sends best regards and tells me to say she has been scolding at the number of pages I have been writing.

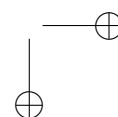
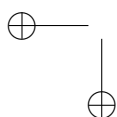
Yours with the truest and most heartfelt affection,

ELIZA WILSON

*Herd's Hill,  
1st December, 1857.*

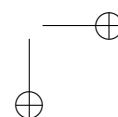
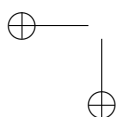
My dearest Eliza,

I did not get your most soothing note written on the 27th I fancy (21st you state) till this morning. There is no post from the north to this metropolis on Sundays, and it did not therefore arrive till Monday, and as I was at Bristol I did not get it till this morning. I am so obliged for it. Your words have a peculiar effect on me, different from anything I have ever known before. They have long had it in speaking. I quite remember being unable to get the tones of your voice out of my head from the very first (I have in my head at this moment *exactly* how you desired me to write down my name that you might be able to spell it), and your letters are beginning to have somewhat of the same effect – though I acknowledge that I prefer your voice. These letters are terrible things when one wants to express feelings and shades of feeling. You make me feel what you are feeling, at least it is delicious to me to fancy so, but I never shall be able to make you know what I feel until I can see you and murmur it gently, and I will try and do it very gently, in your ear.





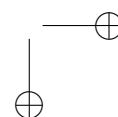
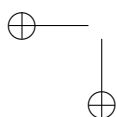
I am not *now* busy at all about the crisis. I had an accumulation of work when I first returned from London, but that is now cleared off, and the crisis when the house is once put in order makes less to do than usual. All sensible people in business try to do as little as they can – they do not ask bankers to lend them so much, and bankers try to lend as little as they properly can, so that there is much less actually doing. On the other hand there is of course to all thinking people some anxiety. All banking rests on credit, and credit is rather a superstition. At any rate it is adopted not from distinct evidence but from habit, usage and local custom, and when there is panic floating in the air no one ought to feel so comfortable as usual. There is *nothing* whatever in our own business specially to make me anxious. On the contrary I believe few similar concerns would look so well if examined and I am not in any real sense anxious – still it is not pleasant to live upon opinion just when all business opinion is disturbed. Your father foretells a very rapid revival, and I think he is right, though perhaps some more banks may go first. You have *occasionally* heard him speak of Sir R. Peel's Act. One effect of this, though not foreseen by him, is to keep up a number of little banks in all parts of the country which would naturally merge in larger banks, and some of these cannot be very strong. I have no suspicion of any particular one in this neighbourhood, still I fear some will go somewhere, and when any bank goes the minds of men are disturbed and they are apt not to bear in mind with accuracy which bank it is. So that on the whole, though there is no worry exactly, thinking people cannot be without serious reflection. I think I should warn you that in







practical things I have rather an anxious disposition. I am cheerful but not sanguine. I can make the best of anything, but I have a difficulty in expecting that the future will be very good. The most successful men of action rather over-estimate their chances of success in action. I cannot do this at all. I have always to work on the bare, cold probability. My energy is fair, and my spirits very good, but this difficulty of intellect I have always had. If you *will* soothe me in this it will be almost too great happiness, though you are a little anxious naturally too, still we will have headaches in life together, and that will be to me *immense*. Talking of headaches, I cannot be reconciled to your staying in Edinburgh. I am rather learned in head-complaints, from my own experience. My impression is that they are half in the mind, and that cheerful, easy excitement is better for them than anything else, and you are quite out of the way of that. I wish I could come and see you, though that would not be nearly as good as your coming back to Claverton, to your own place, and I want to talk to you about our plans which it would frighten you to write. Still, it would be good for you, and you must *learn* to *listen* to that sort of thing, and it would be a novelty, and I would speak it very softly and soothe your brain when it is warm. And I *hope* that I am not wrong in feeling that the more you see me, the more you will be able to trust me, and if you could once rely on me instinctively, it would make life easier and you would be better from that. Perhaps this is vanity, yet I think not. At any rate it is the natural inevitable feeling of a man towards the woman he loves, and whatever it may be worth you must take it from *my heart*.





I quite feel that I have written to you very hurriedly of late. The post is in fault, I get your letters at half-past ten and the post goes at three to the north, so that they must be answered, if answered by the return of the post, at once and in the noise. I am writing this in the evening when at any rate I am more myself, which you have been *foolish* enough to like. It is what I call one of my best evenings. I have come from Bristol and slept all the way in the train and am usually rather well after it. One cannot often get an hour and a half's thorough sleep between one's day and one's evening.

Though my business is not excessive or behindhand, my literature is both, and you are much to blame about it. All the soft relaxing time that I used to give to literature insensibly goes to meditating on *one* face, and requires *such* an effort to turn my mind away from it. It does not affect me in action – rather the contrary. All action seems more important, because life is more worth having and serious, but in meditation it does, and I read your letters over and over when I ought to be correcting the proofs of my Essays. They have not been advertised yet, the proofs you see are delayed. Besides this I am to write a letter in the *Economist* – a short one, the *Crédit Mobilier* for the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' and a crisis article for the *National*; so my mind is mortgaged. Mr Wilson muttered that my letter in the *Economist* last week was written in a 'business style,' which from *him* I consider great praise. He likes me, which is a great point.

Wednesday morning. I have just received your long letter written yesterday and when I have really read it I will thank you for it, but it seems too *delicious* to dwell on in public and business places. Don't hurt your eyes





ever by writing to me though I half *live* on what you send me.

Yours with the deepest and fondest love,

WALTER BAGEHOT

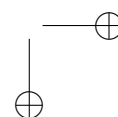
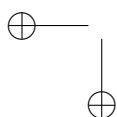
Thank you again and again for your letter.

What do you think of my Verses? You are not obliged to like them. They entirely expressed my *past* self. I read them as if another person had written them. Do they seem to you like mine?

*Herd's Hill,  
4th December, 1857.*

My dearest, *dearest* Eliza,

I do not know really what to say on paper in answer to your last letter. It is nothing to *me* to be unreserved – indeed it is an *impulse* to me to pour out all my feelings to you now, and tell you everything you would like to know – but with you it must be different. I own I hoped you might some day feel towards me somewhat like what you tell me, but I could not have dared to hope you felt anything like it now. I too have long felt *my* soul bound to yours for *eternity*, but I should not have liked to say it to you lest it might frighten you, and you might think me exaggerated, or excited, but ever since for a moment you laid your head on my shoulder in the library at Claverton, I have found myself inexpressibly bound to you. It passed in my mind that I was yours for time and beyond time. Before that I felt wild, eager passion and in some sort deep affection, but there was nothing so consecrated, so soft and eternal as there is about my love





for you now. Is there not a verse in the Bible, ‘My *soul* loves thee and what shall I say?’ It is some odd end of a chapter somewhere, and it expresses what I mean and my difficulty too in saying it. I could not have dreamed that you could as yet feel for me anything at all like the same intense eternal bond that I feel myself. I had a nervous idea too that there was something about me too secular and jesting to admit of your feeling it, and it is *awful* happiness – almost too awful and chastening to be happiness – to hear that you *think* you feel it. I know your deep and constant nature and all that it implies. I hope you won’t mind my writing to you in this way or let it *alarm* you. I do not mean anything you would dislike though the words may be in fault. I fear if I were to tell you how often I have had *tears* in my eyes over your last letter and how often I have kissed it (perhaps that is rude) you would think me the most *absurd* person, but if you knew how firm and stoical I am commonly thought, and how indifferent to everything at all like this, you would not quite abjure me. Knowing you not only ‘gives a new significance to life,’ but has made a revolution in my whole being somehow. I must whisper these things to you: it is in vain to try to write them.

Everything seems very quiet – I really think in about a week I could run up to Edinburgh, even if you are cured by Christmas, which you *must* be. I have *no* faith in Mr Beveridge, but some faith in your faith in him. All these head diseases are somewhat in the mind, at least I found it so, and if you believe he is doing you good he will do you good, but the great thing is that you should be *happy*, and I should like to do something to make you so, and *try* to, and if it were not for the panic





I certainly would, and I am inclined to think that has passed away. I am owed a holiday for I have not been out of the business regions for fifteen months, except two days at Manchester. What do you think of this? Mr Wilson said you *should all* be at home at Christmas, but I don't know about his ideas of futurity. My mother sends her *kindest* love – you need not be the least afraid of her not liking you. It is no compliment, but she is so delighted at my being engaged in the abstract, that she has hardly room for any other idea, only she thinks I ought at once to go to Edinburgh. I am afraid I could scarcely convince her that headaches are situated in the neck, but anything less than that I am sure I could. I am amused at your thinking 'Fanny' in Mansfield Park perfect. You see she decidedly fell in love a long while before she was requested to do so. *She* did not ride away her best feelings. I however prefer people in real life – at least some people. They are more 'fibrous' and have a much greater nature. Fanny is charming but not enough for a man's whole nature. I admire your talking about 'my choice.' Young ladies should not let their hair fly in the wind – that was the original beginning. Seriously, it is not right to talk so. I feel my whole being drawn towards you, not by my own will, but in some other and *inexpressible* way – as *I* believe by a power greater than either of us.

Yours *Dearest*  
For ever,

WALTER BAGEHOT

I am glad you are getting to learn my name. All the best part of my feelings are associated with yours and





many of the others are too. You won't quite get rid of 'Mr Bagehot' till you take to 'Walter'?

*52 Albany Street,  
4th December, 1857.*

My dearest Walter,

Very many thanks for giving me one of your 'best evenings,' for you sent me such a delightful letter, full of expressions that go to the bottom of my heart. You *do* express what you feel, at least you make me think I know really how you are feeling. Letters are not conversations, but they are a very precious substitute when the latter are impossible. I think the separation weighs lighter on me than on you. I have always heard that women's imagination is a greater substitute, or perhaps a greater reality, than men's, and besides, your being, as you say, rather 'restless,' men are, and it is right they should be, more impatient than we. To be patient is the only way in which we can be brave. But for all that, I do long from my heart to see you and be able to talk again, and twenty times a day something occurs to me to tell you which I forget before I am able to write. I wish I could do more to make you feel this parting less – I would write every day if I dared, and have now given up *all* other letter-writing in order to keep all the eyes I have for *you*. I can't tell you how I appreciate your gentleness and consideration. I should very much prefer your *whispering* your ideas and wishes for the future to me, but if there is anything you would like me to know soon, I *will* brace my mind to think of it and even to write you what I think. I am very glad now that you told me what you





wished about the spring, for though I do not see my way clear, it does not look so impossible as I thought at first, and it has given a kind of definiteness to what before appeared nothing but vagueness. When Papa in urging me to take time to consider well what I was doing, said: ‘You will leave a very happy home,’ the idea appeared to me quite irrelevant to the subject, or so distant at least that if he had said: ‘You will have to leave home when you die,’ it could not have seemed more so.

I am very glad I elicited the little self-analysis in your last letter, for I had not felt before the distinctive characteristics of one part of our minds. *I* am not anxious in the sense in which *you* are; anxious is not the word for what I am. I have languid spirits and am distrustful of self, but I am decidedly sanguine; I always expect things to turn out well, they think at home too much so. When once I have made up my mind to do a thing, I am able to throw energy into it, but I have a sad habit of feeling ‘*cui bono*’ in little things, though I am much improved of late, probably because my spirits have improved, and no one buoys up my spirits like you, so I begin to think I may be to a certain extent a prop to you, and it is delicious to fancy so. I feel I shall probably learn quickly to ‘rely instinctively’ on you. I believe my *mind* had begun to lean a little on yours even before I knew your feelings, and the rest will follow. I remember thinking somewhat vaguely (sill I have no doubt of it) about some theological points: – ‘if *that* happens, *he* will see me right, and if not it will be time enough to think it out for myself by and bye.’

I believe my real nature is very womanly, I mean that I love to lean on a stronger nature, though I may appear





to be somewhat independent on the surface. I *can* stand alone if I must, but it makes my heart heavy to have to do it. Zeno has invented a word for me which she means as a term of reproach and weakness – she calls me a ‘womanite.’\*

I am very unreasonable to expect you to think it right in me to stay here when I have told you little but what the doctor himself says. We heard of him from a cured patient, Lady Kinnaird. Hers was a case quite similar to mine but much worse, and it had been going on for nearly 20 years. Of late she had a perpetual headache, it never left her and she was often in such a state that she could see no one but her husband and could hardly speak even to him. I have asked Papa to try and find Lord K.’s letter to him and will send it you. Mr B. says I must get worse and worse as long as the cause is there, and you do not know the worry, to say nothing of the anxiety, of having an invalid wife. I would not try you in that way if *any* earthly means could prevent it. I will not ask you to be as sanguine as I am about this system, but let me give it a fair trial. Besides, Mama is bent on my doing so and to quote yourself: ‘I must not begin by neglecting my other duties.’ I think too it is easier to bear a separation now than it would be later on. I feel at least as if the more I see of you, the more I shall wish to be with you. I shall know better next week whether it is working good; he told us we should find it very trying by the end of the second week, and after that, begin to be relieved. It is very exhausting, I was half-dead all day yesterday, but as remedies go, it is not a painful one.

\*From *Shirley*.







I remembered my remissness as soon as my letter had left the other day. It originated in my being engrossed by the letter I had just had from you. I *do* like your verses very much, and almost know them by heart. There are beautiful thoughts and images in them. I always knew there was a good deal of poetry in you, but did not know whether you had the artistic power necessary to give expression to it. I think they are more yourself than you think. One's past never goes as much as one thinks, it merges into one's present self.

I would rather wait a day for your letters if you can write them in the evening. I like the short ones, but I love the full, deep ones. I must try and write shorter ones, but oftener. The long ones try my eyes and I might be able to write oftener if I could stop, but it is difficult when I am writing to you. I wanted to begin a letter last night from the most feminine motive I have caught in myself for an age. I had on exactly the same toilette, and for the first time since, as the night we played at Beg-of-my-neighbour. Sophy wishes me to tell you that a gentleman who has been lately married told her yesterday he would not go through it again for the *world!*

Ever with the deepest affection, your own

ELIZA WILSON





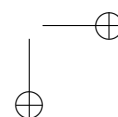
Langport,  
7th December, 1857.

My dearest Eliza,

I *hope* I have disappointed you by not being able to write yesterday, but I had a bad headache all the morning, and in the evening I really was obliged to correct some of the proof sheets of my essays. The printers besiege me for the type. You will appreciate the compliment that I would rather be writing to you than correcting *proof sheets*!

I do not quite like the idea of your giving up all other letter writing to write to me. I am afraid your sisters will think me a monopolist and be angry with me. Your letters are so much more to me than they can be to any one else that I perhaps have a claim to hear a good deal the *oftenest*, but I feel I should wish you to write to Claverton sometimes. However I intend, unless you forbid it, to come to Edinburgh at the end of the week, and I won't occupy your *eyes* then. I am glad in some sense of this separation (though my restless nature suffers under it), a great deal because we have got into the *habit* of writing to one another and you write me *such* letters without pain to yourself and are not discontented with mine. I write to you without the slightest effort, but the moment the letter is gone I get anxious and fancy I have said something you might not quite like, and I am vexed at not being there when you read, to explain it and clear away the least shadow of annoyance from you.

I hope you do not for a moment think that if there is the slightest chance of your being better by remaining under Mr B.'s hands, I should hurry you away. I will own to you that never having known you quite well,





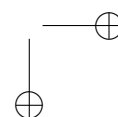
my *imagination* does not attach the importance to your getting well that for *your* sake it should. I am so used to the idea of your being delicate. But if there is any real probability of his benefiting you, I hope you do not think I should allow my feelings to induce me to press you to come away. I should fancy I had caused every headache you had afterwards. At the same time I own I am nervous about his remedies. I had no notion they were fatiguing. I am afraid of his exhausting your general health and strength, and that is what I look to for your recovery. I am afraid Lord Kinnaird's letter would not entirely convert me. There are *lucky* hits in all systems. The point is the proportion of cures to failures, which one *never* knows. You won't think me a hardened sceptic?

I was *much* amused at your notion of the indefinite distance of what of course I wish to bring nearer and nearer. You can't expect me 'in my position' to take that view of it. Still, though I may try to move *you* on, I won't in the least *hurry* you (not if I can help it, that is, because one is not quite a free agent in this state of mind). I have nothing I need write to you, and I would rather say it. *Entre nous*, however, one of my reasons for wishing to be away next week is that I am making some propositions to my partners in the Bank which would facilitate my living near Bristol, and it is only proper that I should not be present when they are discussed.

Don't write me a long letter, to tire your eyes, but send me a little note to say how you are and about my coming.

Ever dearest and yours with the utmost affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT





52 Albany Street,  
7th December, 1857.

My own dearest Walter,

I retract utterly what I said about short letters. I love *all* yours, long or short, and perhaps there is even an additional feeling about those to write which you have snatched a moment from the turmoil of business. It is so thoughtful of you not to let me be disappointed on the days when I expect to hear from you, though you are not able to write as you like. I felt all this on Saturday when I opened your *dear* little note that made me so happy by telling me that I had made *you* so. I had just been seeing Sophy and my cousin to the station (to go and spend the day at Portobello), and had been thinking over that morning four weeks before during my solitary walk home (we have been betrothed a month to-day – are we not old *fiancés?*), and of course I glanced eagerly at the hall table to see if your handwriting were visible as I entered. But if that made me happy, you may judge what I felt yesterday; I cannot express it, but your words filled my whole mind, were my ‘church’ and *everything*, for my head was bad and I was obliged to keep quiet. I understood quite what you mean by ‘its being too much happiness’ – I am too *solemnly* happy to be glad, and I should perhaps be better if it would sit lightly on my spirit.

What do I say to your scheme? That it would give me very great joy if you could manage it conveniently. It would cheer me exceedingly, as our delightful London week did. It was the cheering effect of your influence there that made my spirits so unwontedly elastic when I left and made you think my first letter ‘rather gay.’ I





could not write like that now, though I am very happy in the thought that never leaves me, I may almost say, night or day. Of course the possibility of your coming has set my imagination at work as to all we should do and say during the time you would be here (I *may* be home at Christmas but my impression is that I shall not). It would be a delightful opportunity of learning a new way of taking holidays and at the same time getting through work that must be beginning to be oppressive as the month gets on, though perhaps you have done more of it than I suppose. We are obliged to hurry over breakfast as we have to be at Mr Beveridge's at 10, and are so tired after his manipulation that I am not good for much before luncheon at 1. So you might get capital working mornings for your 'National' and 'Encyclopædia' articles, and Mr Greg's experience is that literary work is never so easily or so well done as between breakfast and lunch. We would go out afterwards, as is our custom here, and you and I would get long chats before dinner, and perhaps, during the evening too.

It is a programme that I should enjoy putting into practice from my heart. If you come in about a week, you would be here on my birthday, Wednesday the 16th. If you could manage it, it would be delicious to get the Sunday. We would have a real Sunday talk to begin with, and then you would cheer me with your jests and nonsense, the more nonsense the better as far as I am concerned, and I think you like to talk what you call 'rubbish' to me. Do you know, I feel quite joyous at the bare possibility of having you here. But you must do what is right about it. You must not expect to find a great difference in me owing to Mr Beveridge yet (though





I shall be as well as I was in London when I have the same cause for being so), but Lady Kinnaird's brother says 'he has made the Fanny of former days of the old woman that came to him.' But that was after 3 months; still she was far worse than I am.

Please be sure to thank your mother for her very kind message. I am sure I shall like her and your father very much, and it is an immense thing for me that they have taken to the fact of a daughter so kindly. They will not have to get over an idea, a disagreeable one I mean, before beginning to like me. Do not be afraid to write what you like. I can bear everything you have said as yet, for you are revolutionising my mind somehow, and the deeper what you say is, the more real my feelings about you seem. Why should it be *rude* to kiss my letters *now*? Would you like to hear that I have done the same? If so, I will own to it; if not, suppose I have retracted my words.

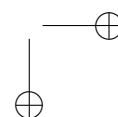
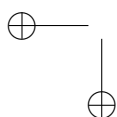
Dearest Walter, ever your own

ELIZA WILSON

*52 Albany Street,  
8th December, 1857.*

My dearest Walter,

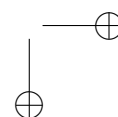
I was not disappointed yesterday at not hearing from you, because I did not expect it, but I had even more than you would have wished of that feeling this morning, for the post was late. I have always received your Sunday letters on Tuesday and have got to feel quite certain of having one when I come home from Mr Beveridge on





those mornings. I cannot tell you how my heart sank within me when I found none to-day, the tears were nearer flowing than they have been for an age; still I did not give way, but I felt *so* wretched! I did not think it was your fault – I felt you must have written, but fancied your letter was lost. I was so happy when it arrived.

*Forbid* your coming here! How could I? I could bear the separation very fairly while it seemed necessary, but now that the idea of seeing you so soon has taken hold of my mind, it would be a dreadful wrench to give it up. Mama too will be very pleased to see you. She is most kind and seems to understand completely what *we* want. I talked to her last night about the chance of your coming and she forthwith entered upon the practical means of enjoying the visit. She said: ‘You shall have the drawing-room in the mornings and the dining-room in the afternoons for your talks; establish it so from the first and then you will not be interfered with.’ Shall she secure you a room at a hotel when you have fixed the day? There is a very good one within five minutes’ walk from here, in St. Andrew’s Square. I should not wonder if you find Aunt Julia here. She wants to come for a few days during our stay and I think I shall tell her you are coming. I know she would like to see you and I have learnt by experience that the larger the party, the more we can be alone. We shall be able to be selfish with a better conscience if we know it is not making the others very dull. Aunt Julia is very lively and has a good deal the same effect in a house as our Julia. When you have decided the details of your Journey, please let me know exactly when we may expect you.





I have not entirely given up writing to Claverton, indeed I wrote them a *very* long letter the day after I told you I had done so. But I had not written for a full week and Julia had told me to give it up (*she* thinks I should only attend to you now) some days before, so I had done so then. I had a good deal to tell her, however, so Saturday being a holiday from Mr B. and I having written to you the day before, I scribbled a very full letter. I shall write to them occasionally, but you know Mama and Sophy write the news.

I had the same nervous feeling you describe all last evening about the letter I sent yesterday. I have such a stupid way of expressing myself sometimes, that afterwards I recollect it may be understood in a way quite different to what I meant it to be. Words are very faulty, and I ran great risk by writing. Altogether I am not a careful person, probably because my organ of caution is very small! But I daresay you are sceptical on phrenology! Don't be afraid that I know much about that or any other science. Mr Beveridge told me the fact. To return to words. I believe we need not be alarmed about misunderstanding each other, for I have noticed how exactly I know what you mean when others might think you intended something else. My sisters have sometimes thought you saucy when I did not at all, and I have set them right as to your meaning. So I will hope you have the same real insight into my mind.

I wish I could send you neater letters, but what with trying not to look much and to write fast, they get untidy and smudged, like a school-girl's. When I really get my eyes to be like other people's I will write you *clean*, proper letters, if my caution bump will let me!







I am pretty well, thanks. A frost has set in and that is bracing. Sophy is really improving steadily under Mr Beveridge.

With such heartfelt delight at the prospect of seeing you, and the deepest love, your own

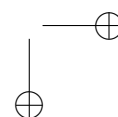
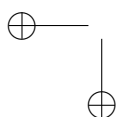
ELIZA WILSON

*Langport,  
9th December, 1857.*

My dearest Eliza,

I hope to be really with you on Sunday. I mean to run up to town by the afternoon express, stay there Friday and get down to Edinburgh on Saturday evening. How delicious to think I shall see you in three days. Especially during the last few days I seem to wear out my mind with *intense* thinking about you. I had no idea love brought that absorbing, overtasking reflection, but to me it has done so.

I quite knew you would get the letter I wrote on Monday as soon as if I had written it on Sunday. We have no post to the north on Sundays, but I hoped you would be disappointed at only having a little scratched down while other people were talking instead of a real Sunday. I fancy there is a superficial cheerfulness about it which shows when it was knocked off. I could not have believed without your telling me that you could like my letters as you do. How you can apologise for yours I cannot think. They make my whole frame thrill with delight, my eyes fill with tears and I pick out the softest words to keep, and you cannot tell my state of





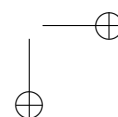
mind. I used to think I had a great deal of composure, but you have broken it down entirely. I cannot venture to do more than look at your letters except when I am quite alone. I get so absorbed in them and might not be master of myself. I am sure we have an instinctive knowledge of one another – if you understand my letters. They must require real instinct. I know I knew a great deal about you and your essential character, before you knew exactly what my name was. What nonsense it is about love being blind. It sees *so* distinctly or does not each mind overhear the other? After I have gone away from you I have passed many aching moments trying to overhear what you must have thought of what I said to you. I felt this so much about the scene between us in the conservatory.

I am immensely obliged to Mrs Wilson for her kindness. Will you give my *best* regards to her? She may depend on my acting on it. We will have such *afternoons* and sometimes we will play ‘Beg-of-my-neighbour’ in the evening. You cannot *tell* how splendid you looked when we did so last or how often I have thought of you as you then seemed. It was the only single minute when you gave me the least encouragement. It *was* a shame to be so *very* rigid.

I was interrupted yesterday and could not write more nor can I now. I shall come to breakfast on Sunday and may I come a *little* before?

Yours with the intensest affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT





*Langport,*  
*9th December, 1857.*

My dearest Eliza,

I *will* come to Edinburgh by Sunday if I possibly can. You do not *see* any huge hotel near Albany St. If I come I *must* be near you, and of course if I take an hotel on speculation, it will be a long way away and then I shall have to pack my bag again, and the truest affection cannot be expected to take a man through *that*.

*Many* thanks for your letter of yesterday, though I have not really read it yet. My literary work is *awfully* behind-hand. I do nothing but *pet* my mind with reading your letters.

Yours most affectionately,

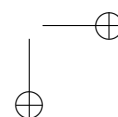
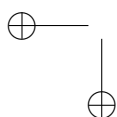
WALTER BAGEHOT

Excuse this scrawl.

*Liverpool,*  
*31st December, 1857.*

My dearest, dearest Eliza,

I carefully did all I could yesterday in order to have a little quiet time to write to you this morning. Whenever I have an instant of my own I quietly relapse into the pleasantest thoughts – thinking of you and our many pleasant days at Edinburgh. In some ways I feel this separation more than the last and in others not so much. Your *image* is not nearly so *haunting* and painful to me as it used to be. I used to feel as if I must *rush* and see you, but on the other hand my affection for you seems so much more a part of my natural and permanent self and





is so insensibly mixed up with every idea in my head and every feeling in my heart that I feel the daily want of your society *infinitely* more. I have been moving about as yet and the first ideas which occur to me are delightful recollections, but I am afraid that when I get home and am settled down and find that they are *only* recollections I shall get very impatient. The principal feeling I have now towards you is a kind of gratitude for your affection. I am afraid my imagination is beginning to take in *really* the idea that you *can* care for me, and the *gratitude* I feel to you for it is one of the most calm, gentle and delicious feelings which I have ever experienced. I am sure I never did anything to deserve such a blessing and I wish I could feel more worthy of it.

You would be amused at the way I spent last evening. I refused several invitations to dinner (when one comes to a place of this sort for a day or so, one is a prey to such invitations, for all your acquaintances think they must ask you), and went out to *tea* with a very ugly little attorney and rather a noisy wife who are old friends of mine in the very smallest and stupidest house in this worst of places. You may infer that these attractive people are special friends of mine, as I relinquished 'food' for them. I have known both of them a long time and they are both very intelligent people, and have minds and can *speak* and *understand*, which is a very rare thing in Liverpool. I have a natural gravitation towards odd people in singular quarters of the world. I sat up very late talking theology and politics with this attractive couple.

You will be glad to hear that I have recovered my powers of conversation. I am afraid you will be beginning





to think me *quite a stupid* companion, but my tendency with you is simply to be with you and let my mind float on the delicious idea that you are mine, and as for talking to any one else when you are present, every word seems a wrench, and all my mind is dislocated by the bore of turning its thoughts away from you towards anything else whatever. If I had stayed much longer in Edinburgh (I began to write Albany St.), I believe I should have become *dumb*. I found however on my arrival here that I could speak as usual and I make people laugh, and they say 'how happy you look,' and I am happy in a sense, only I feel I shall soon have a wearing and vexing pain at being separated from what is most dear to me upon earth.

It seems scarcely possible that to-morrow is the first New Year's Day on which we shall have thought of each other. You now fill my whole thoughts and colour all one's future, and have done so for many months in various shades of pain and pleasure, anxiety and delight, that I can hardly fancy what my mind was before you took possession of it. I have a vague notion that there used to be a great blank and a dreary sense of feelings for which there was no object and seemed likely to be none. I little fancied last January what I should stumble upon in the course of it. May God bless us both, my Dearest, this new year and all years to come. I think my love for you has made me more spiritual and better than I was before. I am sure it ought to have, considering what you are. *Do* love me *always* and *always*, for I *must* love you. That feeling at least, as I believe, God has made unchangeable. May *He* bless you now and always.





Yours with the most devoted undying affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT

I shall get home to-morrow evening. I go to Birmingham by the five o'clock express. My best regards to your circle.

Will you tell Mr Wilson that I find commercial Liverpool *inconceivably* dejected. I fancy you do not *now* object to giving him messages from me; but if you had rather not, *do* not.

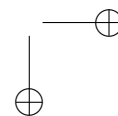
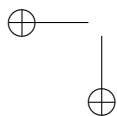
I hope this letter is intelligible. It is written at [the] coffee-room table, where a year or two ago I used to write letters of business without end. I did not then think ever to have written this.

*52 Albany Street,  
1st January, 1858.*

My own dearest Walter,

Very many thanks for your delightful New Year's gift – the letter I have just received. You *shall* have one from me as soon as possible, for I long to offer you my New Year's wishes, the echo of your own, my dearly beloved Walter, viz. God's blessing on us both in this new year and evermore. I little thought this day last year what He had in store for me before its close, what He was going to give me in *you*, for your love is precious to me, more precious than I can tell you, and the thankfulness I feel towards Him who has so ordained it is the best proof that I really and truly feel it to be so.

You must please excuse a hasty scrawl written lying in *the* armchair in the dining-room, for two Hawick uncles,





those I like, have come into town for New Year's Day, and we have had a long walk together which has tired me, and they have just announced the third uncle, who is in the drawing-room!

I take up my pen for the third time, and fear that the interruptions have made my thoughts very disjointed. To return to the contrast between this New Year and the last, I am conscious of a feeling akin to what you describe, of a consciousness then of depths in my heart that had not been reached, of a power of affection which had as yet lain dormant, but I dared not dwell upon it for fear it were not fated I should meet the soul that could take possession of those depths. We should indeed be thankful that our souls have joined, dear Walter, and I think, indeed am sure, we are so. We shall always love to support each other, and I feel confident, be as happy as it is good for anyone to be on earth, and that may be *very* happy, for God is very good.

I will try and write a longer letter on Sunday. Please tell me if you have a first post on Sundays in case I should lose the first post here on Friday, which I have run the risk of doing to-day. Please give my best and kindest wishes for the New Year to your father and mother, and believe me with undying affection your own loving

ELIZA WILSON





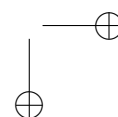
52 Albany Street,  
3rd January, 1858.

My dearest Walter,

I thought I should have a little note this morning and I was not disappointed. It is best to send only notes of acknowledgment from your place of business and to reserve your large sheets for Sunday and evenings. At any rate I shall be quite content if you do so. I am so grieved to hear that being at home brings back the old wearing pain. I agree that it ought not to do so, but I also know that it is very difficult to make 'ought' have any effect on our feelings; they are so different to our actions and one has so much less control over them. But, if you *can* keep the calm and gentle feelings about me uppermost, do, *dearest*, for besides that they are better and happier for *you*, I like better to think of them than of the wilder ones. I miss you too, Walter dear, very much, though the rather busier life which Papa's presence causes gives me less time to think about it than the last time we parted; but I have had two evenings alone, as there were invitations to dinner and I got Sophy to go, as I did not feel quite up to going out.

I think I have got hold of the true theory about imagination, and fancy we are both right about it; I think men's imagination is more vehement than ours, but that we can rest more on ours and it is therefore stronger in one sense. My experience seems to show that yours is stronger in the ordinary sense but that mine is a support to me; it allows me to think so calmly and trustingly about you.

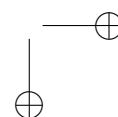
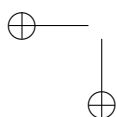
I was amused at your *tea-drinking* with the odd little attorney and his *lady*, or I suppose you would say *wife*, for







I take it for granted she is ugly too. I am glad you have a *penchant* for ‘characters,’ for I have taken a certain liking for *odd* people ever since I have known the Mohls, and they are so rare in what is called ‘good society,’ that one’s feeling is seldom gratified. I like to hear also that you sometimes talk theology with your intimates, for I have heard so little real conversation on it, though I enjoy listening to such discussions very much. There is a great deal that women can only learn that way because we have not the background of the logical reading that men get when they care for that subject, and we cannot therefore discuss such matters. I am a good listener, I can promise you, indeed I have always preferred listening to talking, so you will not find me ‘burying myself in my book when anything interesting is under discussion’ like certain little ‘blue and pink girls.’ I am pleased to hear that you can talk and laugh as usual now you have got among other people. We seem to go through the same stages, but not always at the same time; I had my ‘dumb fit’ in London. You were not so stupid to the others here as I was there, but I noticed that the fit was on you. I wonder when the two lives will fairly blend, I mean the power of feeling towards each other exactly the same before people as when we are alone, and that of treating other people as if our love were absent. I doubt if it can come to that before Easter, and fancy it is what people learn last in these affairs. I gave your message to Papa without much hesitation, but without your name, thinking that superfluous. But I had to bring it out, for he asked most innocently from whom at Liverpool I had heard. Obtuseness on these subjects is a Wilson failing,





I believe; my cousin says she might be engaged under her father's eyes without his seeing it.

I send you the *Statesman* in which you are mentioned at page 280. It is rather curious that *I* should send you the first criticism on your literary performances with your name. Does it mean that I care a wee bit more about reputation than you, which I believe is the case? I have cut it out, for I want you to send it me back, please. It has a certain balm for me, though they only use the word 'tolerable,' and I shall keep it. The paper seems stupid, at least, 'not to justify its existence,' like your commonplace young ladies. I showed Papa the two articles on himself, which he glanced through and said there was not much in them. The article in question was not his, he thinks it was by Mr Hodgskin, and the *Statesman* believes in it but *he* does not.

Let me end where I began, dearest Walter, and tell you what pleasant, gentle thoughts I have about you. There is one more reason why I am happier than after our last separation, viz. that these pleasant feelings extend to the future. It had no part, or hardly any, in my thoughts before, I only dwelt on the past or present. Besides the genuine happiness it gave us both, your Edinburgh visit was a 'splendid dodge.' I can dwell now with such pure happiness on the *gentle* life we shall lead, if we are spared to realise the wishes of our hearts. A calm, gentle life with the possibility of going into the outer world when we want some kinds of intellectual pleasure is what suits both our natures best, the former the rule and the latter the exception.

I have all kinds of messages from my family. You don't know what a favourite you are. However, I don't talk





much about you, and never introduce the subject, for I still feel a shyness about it, though less than I did.

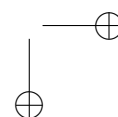
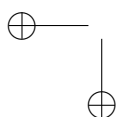
Adieu, dearest Walter, think of me *always* as your own devoted and most deeply attached,

ELIZA WILSON

*Herd's Hill,  
4th January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I think I ought most certainly to have sent you a note of acknowledgment of your long and most welcome letter this morning. As it was Sunday yesterday you will expect me to have written then, but I was troubled with my relations whom I had not seen much of so long, and to-day I literally could not read your letter before three o'clock when the post to Edinburgh goes out. I can only read your letters by myself. I open them and see if there is any matter of fact in them requiring an answer, and reserve them till I can have some quiet minutes to let their contents settle into my *heart*. I have now done so with this, Dearest, and it has been a great comfort to me. I am afraid I plague you with my wild and wearing feelings. I assure you at times I have the gentlest and happiest and (I think) best feelings about you which I have ever had. The harsh and evil spirit only troubles me at times, dear Eliza, I own it sometimes troubles me a good deal, but on the whole I have much sweeter and nicer feelings in my mind than in all life before. I have no doubt they would have been much greater and





much nicer if you had adopted Mme Mohl's most sensible suggestion about 1857, but now in 1858 it appears hopeless to urge *that*. I beg to suggest as an addition to your theory of the imagination, that there is probably some difference in the feelings excited by different objects. Pretty women with beautiful expressions naturally cause great excitement. Long, awkward currency people do not. I think this external diversity is the cause of our different feelings and not a difference in our fanciful faculties. I believe however that as a general remark it is true that women's imaginations are steadier and calmer than men's. A man's imagination is – at least mine is – a seizure. Certain expressions of countenance take hold of my mind and whirl it about. I fancy your feelings are gentle and continual. It seems odd that in writing to you I should *venture* to assume in so many words that you have any feelings about me at all, but you are so kind to me, Dearest, and of course the kinder you are the more I shall presume upon it.

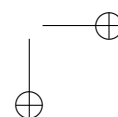
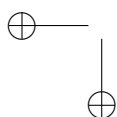
Really something must be done about a house. The practicality of my relatives is something *awful* to bear. Having never seen you, and having no other topic to let loose their minds upon, they have taken up this, and they make suggestions to me, and state difficulties. They evidently do not feel any confidence in the matter and until they can see a definite enclosure of wall they will never embody their ideas. I knew the French thought '*on se marie pour avoir une maison,*' but I never knew how ingrained the theory was in Somersetshire.

I assure you I still like to talk theology very much when I am started, but I am lazy and quiescent in all intellectual conversation. I like talking and do talk a





great deal somehow, still I require a stimulus, a *nudge* in my elegant native dialect, from without or I do not begin. I am afraid however you give me credit for more digested and elaborated ideas on the subject than I really have. The faith of young men is rather *tentative*. Some points of course are very fixed, but a good many are wavering, are rather tendencies than conclusions. I have perhaps an unusual degree of this myself. From my father and mother being of different – I am afraid I might say – *opposite* sentiments on many points, I was never taught any scheme of doctrine as an absolute certainty in the way most people are. What I have made out is a good deal my own doing, and naturally it seems to require testing more than an hereditary belief would. I have always had an indistinct feeling that my inner life has been too harsh and vacant, to give me an abiding hold of some parts of religion. At any rate the outline wants deepening and the colours softening. You never know the intellectual consequences of a new moral experience. It is a new premiss and may combine with any one of your previous results. Women arrive more easily at their conclusions on these subjects because their spiritual experience is gentler and more continuous, less of a seizure in fact, as I said just now. They are often therefore puzzled at the way men go to and fro, apparently settling a conclusion to-day and unsettling it to-morrow, and think it is aimless wandering and that nothing is being gained. But it is not so. A new spiritual consciousness naturally recalls the mind to consideration; and if sometimes it brings us back to old opinions and teaches us that our *last* opinions are not so well-founded as we thought them, yet the ‘old’ opinion is really a new one because based





on and cleared up by a new spirit, perhaps from God, and it is necessary for thinking men at each stage to think out the *data* they have, although they know those data may change to-morrow. If they did not do so, they would not know how to appreciate each change or be sure of its effects – the mind would become confusion. ‘On a sudden’ I am become metaphysical I fear, but you must take an interest in the ‘masculine element’ and care about the state of mind. I am very glad I decided on reprinting my essays for your sake, because they will help you to understand my mind better than anything else. You may consider the book in the nature of a ‘love-letter.’ It never would have been put together, but from a floating idea that perhaps you might read it and perhaps you might like me better for it. We shall see.

In this point of view it is *very* appropriate that *you* should send me the first printed notice of the book.

I am afraid I am callous, possibly proud, and do not care for mere general reputation. Of course it would be a pleasure if it should come, but it is a thing which no sane man ought to make necessary to his happiness, or think of but as a temporary luxury, even if it should come to him. First-rate fame, the fame of great productive artists, is a matter of ultimate certainty, but no other fame is. Posterity cannot take up little people, there are so many of them. *Reputation* must be acquired at the moment and, the circumstances of the moment are matters of accident. In my case I have had a good deal of newspaper praise for these essays – at least some of them – when they first came out, and I must expect very little more. Besides I know they will be abused and by whom, and if one puts aside the unfavourable criticisms





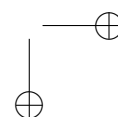
in newspapers carelessly, one has scarcely a right to set much store by the favourable ones. I do care however a good deal for some kinds of reputation. In proof of which I send you a letter we received in the course of the *National Review* operations from Matthew Arnold. We wrote to him to ask him to write on Béranger. And I keep his answer, which is *wholly* unprecedented with me. It gave me a good deal of pleasure, as he is rather a severe judge of poetical criticism, and I will *give* it to *you*.

I wrote all but the last few lines of this last evening at home, and I had a sample of my future existence by coming to Bristol in the *coldest* morning by the eight o'clock train from home. I wish Providence had never invented *frost* – it freezes my intellect always and I do nothing but warm myself. People are talking all round me and I must not write any more.

Yours with the *deepest* affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT

I hope all this is intelligible. It was written late last night, and I woke myself up by writing it and devoted a good deal of time to thinking of you in the night when I should have been asleep.





[Enclosed was the following letter from Matthew Arnold:

*Wharfeside, Otley,  
Yorkshire, 27 October, 1856.*

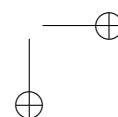
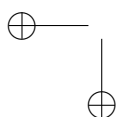
My dear Sir,

I beg to thank you most warmly for your flattering proposals; I assure you the subject tempts me so much that the rate of remuneration would weigh very little with me in deciding whether to try it or not: but the real truth is I am so much occupied that I feel I could not do justice either to your Review or to myself by any article which I could produce for you under my present circumstances. I am therefore compelled gratefully to decline this offer from you as I have declined similar offers from others; but perhaps you will allow me to say that I have been so much interested by your Review that it is with unusual reluctance that I forego the opportunity which you kindly extend to me of contributing to it. It was only a day or two ago that I read the article on Shelley in the last number; that article and one or two others (in which I imagine that I trace the same hand) seem to me to be of the very first quality, showing not talent only, but a concern for the *simple truth* which is rare in English literature as it is in English politics and English religion – whatever zeal, vanity and ability may be exhibited by the performers in each of these three spheres.

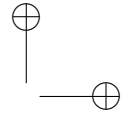
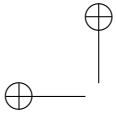
Believe me, my dear Sir, in much haste,  
Your faithful and obliged servant,

M. ARNOLD

R. H. Hutton, Esq.]



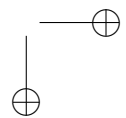
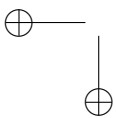




*52 Albany Street,  
7th January, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

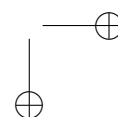
Very many thanks for your delightful long letter, which though I expected it a day sooner was worth the delay. I did not mind much not getting it on Tuesday, for when the post arrived and it was not forthcoming, I took it into my head that you had had to rush off to Bristol on Monday morning. I should have answered it yesterday, but my eyes were too weak and they are not quite right yet, which with a lying position must account for this scrawl. But you must not suppose my peepers are really worse; they are weak because they were so well that I read for more than an hour the night before last, thus using up my newly acquired stock of strength rashly, as Mr Greg says I always do. I must tell you, dear Walter, that though you are gone, I am very much better and that is saying a great deal, you know. I have not felt so strong as this week since I first took to being weak and have not had one *crab* headache (I have quite adopted your apt simile) since you left. I have had small, stupefying headaches, but they have always left me before night, a thing unprecedented since I first knew what a headache meant at eleven years old. Our *oracle* says they will go away gradually and I begin to believe they are doing so. Papa, Mama and Sophy dined out last night and met the gentleman who was blind fifty years and was cured by Mr Beveridge. He fully confirms all Mr B. said and speaks in the strongest terms of what he has done for him. He is a Mr Erskine, one of the Earl of Mar's family and a theological writer of some eminence. I think you will agree with us that it is satisfactory to have seen





and heard the man himself. We are going to spend the Beveridge holidays this week, viz. from to-morrow till Monday with the Kinnairds at Rossie Priory. If you can without inconvenience write me a note to-morrow, do, dear Walter, and I shall get it on Sunday. I will try and write from there.

I am sorry I cannot give your relatives myself to talk over instead of boring you with their notions of our future home. My family is quite as practical, and my sisters have been riding on the Keynsham road to find us a house and the Hales tell them there is one to let a mile our side of Keynsham, but that would be a long way from Bristol. Emy writes that 'my house will certainly be a Columbine Villa or an Aspect Cottage or a Honneysuckle Hall,' which they think very appropriate, for I am always teased about 'pottering after small flowers.' The *National* has reached me and I am much obliged for your thoughtfulness, dearest. It looks a very full number with several valuable articles. I have found the advertisement. Still more thanks for the gift enclosed in your letter, which gave me immense pleasure and will always be precious to me. I think you *are* proud, and proud in the right way. I believe it is not new to me and that I always knew you were so, and that I sympathised with the feeling, for I have a good deal of it myself. I like what you say about reputation very much and think it quite true and right, but have thought less upon the subject than you. Probably the more I think of it, the less I shall care for commonplace praise. Like you, I know too much *how* and by *whom* newspaper criticisms are got up, one may say in some cases, manufactured, to think much of them either way. Mr Arnold's two expressions,





‘a concern for the simple truth’ and ‘very first quality,’ are worth miles of newspaper articles.

I am sorry to say that dilatory jeweller has not yet finished your ring, but I shall call again to-day about it.

I hope to write a longer letter on Sunday, especially if I have a few lines meanwhile. But I must not try to bribe you, because you are quite right not to write when you are busy at the Bank.

With true and unvarying affection, I am, dearest Walter, your devoted

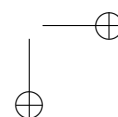
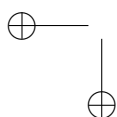
ELIZA WILSON

I find our engagement is spreading in ‘fashionable circles.’ My family went to a smart dinner party last night at a cousin of Sir Wm. Molesworth’s, and she had heard of it by letter from his sister, Mrs Ford. I suspect Mr Moffat is our herald in London society.

*Langport,*  
*8th January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I have only a moment to answer your most kind note, for I am obliged to rush off to London by the train which will take this letter. I am glad beyond measure to hear you are better. I think it is my going away, just as Mr Beveridge’s patients are benefited principally after they leave him. I wish you would soon adopt that course. Is it not Lady Kinnaird whom he cured afterwards by words of magic at a great distance? You should inquire into it now you are staying with her. I am quite ready to believe in him if he will cure you in *Somersetshire*. I am





afraid there is a difficulty as to the trains at Keynsham. I should have to leave Bristol, if I returned by train, either at 3 p.m. which would be too early or at six which would be too late. I should be free about half-past four or a little before, which is just the wrong time. Living there would involve my being fetched in the carriage. I haven't 'parties' at work to discover dwellings.

Please write to me when your eyes are well enough to the Queen's Hotel. I shall probably be in London till Wednesday next. I will write from thence as I shall have but little to do and I will see the interior of Mr Greg's mansion, as you desired.

I am glad you like M. Arnold's letter. I am reading his new tragedy which is clever, but too much 'high art,' and not addressed enough to the common feelings and minds of ordinary people. I used to tell Clough he believed legibility to be a defect and I am sure the high art criticism and practice tend steadily in that direction. Possibly my essay being a trifle dull was the reason M. Arnold liked it. I will send you from London an ornate copy of my essays suppose they will be out next month.

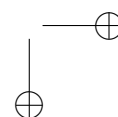
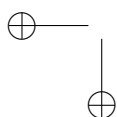
Yours most affectionately but in utter haste,

WALTER BAGEHOT

*Rossie Priory,  
Perth,  
10th January, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

I was most agreeably surprised by finding your letter when I went down to lunch yesterday; I am going to





answer it while everyone else is at church and I am quite quiet. We came here on Friday by the central railway so that we passed through some beautiful country, particularly about the Bridge of Allan, and from Perth to this place. I daresay you remember the Kinnout hills, for they are very striking. We are in the valley of the Tay which we see due south about four miles off, and beyond are the Fifeshire hills which one could watch all day, their tints are so beautiful and vary so constantly. You know I have never been in Scotland before and it is a great treat to see this scenery. I hope you will believe I associate you with pleasant thoughts and feelings, for beautiful scenery always brings you to my mind now, which I think is very good proof of it. I should like so much to go through the Highlands with you some day, dear Walter.

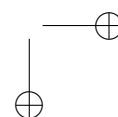
Rosie is a sweet place and the Kinnairds are charming people, he a very active, pleasant man, an improving landlord who farms 1,000 acres himself by way of model-farming, and Lady Kinnaird a sweet woman, so pretty! You know I have a taste for feminine beauty, and it is a little more severe than yours, for which reason you will never get me to believe what you have been pleased to take into your head about your *fiancée*, though I have not the shadow of an objection to your thinking it, dearest – quite the contrary indeed. I really think Lady K. looks younger than I do though she has been married twenty years. I believe being good keeps people young and pretty, and I remember your agreeing with me when I expressed the belief long ago. Lady K. is an example of it. She and her husband are also a proof of two people being as fond, if not fonder, of and as much to each other





twenty years after marriage as they were at the time of their union. It is just as it should be, no doubt, in well-assorted unions. I think about these things now and am delighted to find how many I know. Happy marriages are not uncommon, whatever you used to think, dear Walter, and perhaps may still think, though if you do, I thoroughly believe you think ours will be an exception.

Of course Mr Beveridge is a very common object of conversation here and all we hear is most satisfactory. Lady K. has not had a bad headache since she left him, two months ago, although she is very active and takes no particular care of herself. But the first time she was under him (for four months last winter) she felt no benefit during the time, and left him convinced it was all *nonsense*; however, within a short time she began to improve, gradually, but so steadily that when she went to London she brought her daughter out and went through the London season without being hurt at all, whereas it would have killed her the year before. She has brought a rubber with her whom she is going to keep two months longer. The woman will then go to London and be available there, so there is a chance of getting something done in future without coming 300 miles. Still everyone says that will only do after you are partially cured, so we must have a little more patience, *dear* Walter. He wants to keep me till the middle of February, but I think of telling him once for all that I cannot stay beyond the first week and that he must do the best he can in that time and leave the rest. I dare not give him less, because that is little less than 3 weeks and there are some bones he can only do himself, that he will not trust his assistants with.





We are invited to the State ball in honour of the royal marriage on the 20th, but I do not think any of us will be able to go, unless it be Papa, and he hates going alone. He will not be in Scotland much more than another week. The rubbing has been very effectual in his case.

Many thanks for remembering my luxurious fancy, dear Walter: I shall be very pleased to have my ornate copy of your essays. If you will leave it at the Treasury under cover to Papa, it will come in his bag. Good binding is apt to be hurt if sent by post. Please write my name in the book, which I will consider as a 'love-letter,' as you desire. I shall study it very carefully as soon as I can and hope I shall learn a good deal about you, dearest, in its pages. I am fully persuaded people put far more of their real selves into their writing than into anything else they do, and I don't see how they can help it. I do take great interest in *one* specimen of the masculine element, and do hope I shall really understand you, dearest Walter, though I own I sometimes get a little nervous on account of my not being sure whether I can see all the sides of your mind, and whether my not having had brothers may not be a misfortune after all. We have talked a great deal upon intellectual topics, but they have never been difficult ones. But I will hope on, for a sympathising heart must be of more value in a wife than a powerful intellect. Indeed I am doing altogether what you wished, viz. drifting on in the hope, and I may say the belief, that all will come right.

I was sorry to hear of the uncomfortable specimen of your future life, but I hope it won't be all freezing. Physical frost is not very common in Somerset, and at any rate we will have no moral frost. You know I am





not going to marry 'for an establishment,' as they say, and though I like pretty places I could not be unhappy with you in an ugly one. Still I am thankful we need not live in a *row*, for I fancy we should never feel so really by ourselves as in the country. I hope this is intelligible, but my hand is rather shaky to-day and my eyes not strong. I have always felt them weak the first few days I have been in the country, even before they took to being permanently so. It's the greater amount of light they feel, and Edinburgh, or at any rate Albany Street, is not very light.

Julia is very pleased at Mr Hutton's marriage, and says she hopes he will look less melancholy now, poor man. I should like you to congratulate him for me now I may be supposed to know it.

Mama sends her kindest regards, she always asks how you are when I get a letter. Adieu, dearly beloved Walter, and believe me

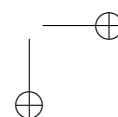
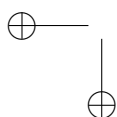
Yours for ever,

ELIZA WILSON

*London,*  
*11th January [1858].*

My dearest Eliza,

I am very sorry I did not write to you yesterday, but in spite of your telling me I was not to expect to hear till Thursday, I foolishly fancied that being in *London* I might hear, and be inspirited to write by a letter. It is very difficult to write thirty-six hours before a letter will go. I *thought* of you all day of course. I do so long







to *see* you again. It seems quite ages since I left you at Edinburgh. I am afraid you will think me very impatient and perhaps I am so. But you must take the creature as he is, and I love you so much, and as it seems to me so much more every day I live, that I cannot long be happy out of your sight, and not having heard from you since Friday I am quite *restless*. I know this is wrong and I assure you I struggle against it – still at times such feelings will have their way. Men's love, as *I* know, is not by any means a peaceful thing, and it makes all active things seem harsh and all amusing ones stupid, so life is and *must* be not at all cheerful without you, my DEAREST.

I am going to dine and sleep at Greg's on Wednesday. He is very well. I saw him at the custom house. He had a mild happiness as if he was confiscating goods.

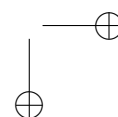
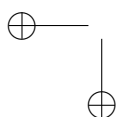
Yours with the deepest, *deepest* love,

WALTER BAGEHOT

*Monday*  
*[11th January, 1858]*

My dearest Eliza,

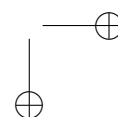
It is very late – at least nearly twelve – but your tyrannical influence over me compels me to begin a letter to you, as it is possible I may be hurried to-morrow. I hope it will not have such a bad consequence to me as the last letter I wrote to you late at night. This was before I went to Bristol to-morrow week, and in returning, being tired, I went to sleep and did not hear them call out the Durston station and was carried on





some five and twenty miles to Wellington. There was no train back to Langport, so I was obliged to sleep there. It is a wretched little country town, and the best inn had no coffee-room and it was fearful to have a fire lighted for me in an unused private room, so I went into the commercial room and read M. Arnold's tragedy in that congenial spot. I did not mind this, but I did mind having to start at eight the next morning to go home, especially as the sluggish mind of Wellington could not be aroused to give me any breakfast. You see this is *your* fault. If I had not sat up so late, I should not have slept so soundly. I *always* said you never knew what complications in life were due to the affections. 'There was no end to that sort of thing.' I have undergone Mr Wylie and the commercial creatures of Wellington for your sake, and really you should be grateful.

I have been reading *The Three Clerks*, in scraps, here and there when I could catch hold of the volumes. It is not nearly so clever as *Barchester Towers* on the whole, and is very unorthodoxically written, or rather I fear it is written on the Commercial method, whole dissertations and irrelevant reflections being inserted to make up three volumes. Still there are some very clever things. There is a dignified young lady with whom a young gentleman named Norman is on the point of succeeding, but he commits the *fatal* error of being respectful to her, keeping a large distance with awe and respect, whereas a rude young gentleman named Tudor goes in and cheerfully succeeds. I never felt so distinctly the extreme danger into which I had fallen from the naturally reverential nature of my disposition. It is really a wonder that I escaped. There is a very nice girl of sixteen *not* the





least dignified, who falls in love with a not very steady young gentleman, and then wastes away and goes to Torquay because he has debts, etc. I have always liked to read about women suffering – that is young women. They stand up in ballrooms and irritate you with a petty futile happiness which is most offensive, and besides they inflict at *times* such endless pain that it is right they should suffer in their turn. Possibly it may not be the same people who inflict the suffering that endure it, but in a large universe like this we must not expect a very exact nicety, and which ‘blue and pink girl’ suffers does not much matter, you will agree with me. I daresay the fates in dispensing justice did not know them apart. *I* never could at all.

The crisis is all over and everybody has too much money. It is really a very ridiculous world. The last few times I have been here everybody was on their knees asking for money, now you have nearly to go on your knees to ask people to take it. Neither of these two extremes is very pleasant. Being besought is not unagreeable intrinsically, but when a man is very earnest for money, you begin to suspect he is ‘in difficulties’ and ought not to have it, and in the other case it seems demeaning the majesty of money to ask – or beseech – human beings to take it. You look at a hard-eyed billbroker and think what is this man created for, if *not* to take money. Still the present state of things has the advantage that there is no tension of mind in managing your business while it lasts. You need not follow a man with your eyes when he takes away your money and think ‘Will he ever pay me?’ – I own I like the sensation of safety.





If you read anything in the last *National* read George Sand. It will amuse you. One of Hutton's million *female* correspondents wrote to him that it 'was altogether noble,' which he does not much like, and is afraid he has not pared down the article enough. When you know a thing was a compromise it is amusing to hear it called 'noble,' as if it was a great outpouring of the mind. I am sorry to say my article on the crisis is rather 'jolly' in style, like a man going very quick over very rough stones. The 'Crédit Mobilier' reads however very fairly and quite *solemn*. I think I must leave this sentimental scene of action – I am writing at the Club – and go to bed, or *something* may happen to me in the morning. Unless I have sleep I have *no* faculties.

Tuesday afternoon. I have now received your *long* letter, *Dearest*, for which a hundred thanks. But it is most wretched and miserable to hear you mean to stay in Scotland till February. I had almost begun to believe I should see you soon. It may be elevating to be engaged to a young lady in a much higher latitude, but it is not at all pleasant. I was beginning to believe in Mr Beveridge but now he has extended his time I entirely relapse. Your last letter said you felt really better, which seemed in his favour, but this one asking for more time is conclusive. I daresay the blind man of fifty years' standing never improved, as long as he was rubbed, and that it is the *not* being rubbed which cured him, as you say was the case with Lady Kinnaird. As I foresaw, I have been a good deal hurried to-day and cannot *really* answer your letter, *Dearest*, but I will at once the moment I can. You cannot tell the pleasure you give me by going into details about the future – *our* future. It shows you realise to yourself





partially what you are doing and can bear the thoughts of it. Do drift on, Dearest, quietly and gently. I cannot do much to make you happy either now or hereafter, but you have my whole heart and mind, and this compels me whether I will or no, to do what I can, and I think mere affection goes a great way and teaches even the rudest person much. I am very nervous at times about your overrating me intellectually, but I get over it. I do not mind being thought too well of. It is all nonsense about Lady K. or any woman who has been married twenty years being so pretty as you are, Dearest – utter rubbish – I have a very severe taste in beauty. They say at home I never allow any one to be pretty. You had better believe what I tell you and not set up foolish notions of your own. The masculine element is the best judge of this. As the last message I gave you for Mr Wilson was so well received I wish you would tell him, ‘The billbrokers and the London and Westminster Bank *won't* have money to-day.’

Please give my most kind regards to Mrs Wilson and your sister, and believe me, Dearest, yours with the most devoted love,

WALTER BAGEHOT

I think I shall go home on Thursday.





52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
12th January, 1858.

My dearest Walter,

You will have received my Rossie letter ere this and I trust it may have done something towards lulling the impatient spirit that has been haunting you. I am quite grieved to hear how it bothers you, and if I did not think it would conduce to your future comfort for me to get well, I should blame myself for being a torment and throw up the whole thing and go home with Papa. As it is, Mr Beveridge will only have the pleasure (?) of rubbing me for a fortnight after this week. I hope, and I think, I shall be able to give you the exact date of our departure from this windy metropolis in my next letter (we had two days cold last week, but ever since the west wind has been *blawing* us away just as it did when you were here). It is not virtue, but nature, that makes me calmer than you, dear Walter, but I will own that I am getting very impatient too. I had four hours in the train to think yesterday, besides all my resting-time, and the consequence of all that meditation is that I want to see you again very much. It is quite the longest fortnight I remember, the one since you left – so long, in fact, that I had to count by the day of the month the other day to assure myself that to-day really only ends the fortnight; I thought it must be three weeks, a least.

I want you to answer me a question in your next letter. Is there any clergyman amongst your relations and friends whom you would like to tie the knot for us? If not, my family wish to ask my Yorkshire uncle to do it. We do not care about it, if there is anyone you would





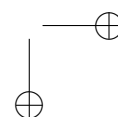
particularly like. He is not an Archbishop nor has he white hair, but as I can't have the grand cathedral I wished for, I will waive my desire for the Archbishop too, unless you will build me a cathedral. *Unkind* Walter not to comply with so reasonable a wish. However, Mr Thorp is very tall and has *grey* hair, so I will try and fancy him *imposing* enough to be able to marry one.

I shall invite his eldest daughter, rather a favourite cousin of ours, to come with him, but do not yet know whether there will be a place for her among the bridesmaids. When you have time to devote to such a subject, I want you to think whom and how many of those damsels you are going to supply me with. I suppose one or two of your cousins would like to help to immolate you on the hymeneal altar after all you have told them on the subject. It will be great fun for them.

I am expecting your ring every minute as Cuningham promised to send it before post time. If it do not come, however, you will probably find it at Langport when you get home. Shall I send the seal too, or keep it till we meet? At any rate, I will not send it by the same post, for if both should be lost, the model will be gone. I have seen the ring (before it was engraved) and like the way they have managed the hair and inscription.

We had such a beautiful journey yesterday, for all the hills were covered with snow. It is something to have seen Scotch scenery in snow, for as one would never have *chosen* this time of year for a pleasure tour, one might never have another opportunity.

Mama sends her kind regards and I daresay Sophy would have thought of doing the same had she not been





cross at my writing to you instead of Claverton, which however I am going to do now.

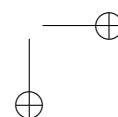
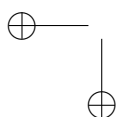
Yours with the deepest and truest love,

ELIZA WILSON

*51 Lombard Street,  
14th January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

Many thanks for your most kind note which I received this morning and which gave me such a pleasant breakfast. All the 'hymeneal arrangements' are quite in your hands. I insist on *your* being married *yourself* – on this point I shall be firm, but as to the rest you may be quite despotic. That is all I want in life. I have no clerical friend whom I at all care to ask to marry us. I have only one *very* intimate one at all now and he lives in Rutlandshire which is a good way from Claverton, and he is not nearly so episcopal looking as you describe your Uncle to be. I have only *one* cousin I care to ask, if may, to be your bridesmaid. Her name is Mary Watson Bagehot. She is a very nice girl, nearly twenty, fresh and simple, and even your *severe* taste will, I think, allow her to be pretty. She will never, never justify her existence by extreme loquacity, but I think you will like her. Might I ask her now? It would look *practical* to my relatives. They will think you are a Scotch myth, as you seem so irremovable from Edinburgh. I admit that I am very restless at times, and shall be till you return, but do not let that influence your judgment, *dearest*, the least. If I thought it would save you *one* headache, I would bear







any amount of restlessness and be *glad* to do so. I think the Beveridge-mania is a form of intoxication – from the name you would expect that it would be – and not compatible with temporary sanity. Still I would wish you to apply all such reason as your overflowing partiality may have left you and to decide on staying quite irrespectively of *my* wishing you to come back. Of course I *do* wish it, as soon as you think it reasonable and right; but I do not at all wish you to act in opposition to your judgment. Even with the ‘blue and pink girls’ I have always said that they should not be expected even on marriage, still less on Betrothal, to abdicate such rationality as an extreme inquiry might discover them to possess. And as I shall ever want all your mind to assist me in life I have the greatest interest in allowing it to be quite unfettered now. People’s minds are generally injured by acting contrary to their real and true judgment.

I am very glad you *can* think of me in beautiful scenery. I do not quite see the connection of ideas. Still I am very glad there is a connection. I have never seen Perthshire, as I went from Aberdeen to Edinburgh by the packet, being in a hurry. I like the Scotch scenery very much, it is such *rough*, simple beauty. Possibly Perthshire may be more cultivated, but in the parts I have seen the elements of beauty are the simplest imaginable. Heather, rude hills and rough stones, and yet with the deep colours which pass over them, the fascination is very great. The air seems loaded. You cannot draw a deep breath and it seems as if you were living on confectionery – a little sickening and not quite natural. And in mountainous scenery, *real* Swiss mountains, there is too much agonizing sublimity, too much snow and such *very* sharp peaks,





and you are not quite happy that way. I own I really love best rough *hill* scenery like Scotland and the south part of North Wales, where there is vigour enough to arouse and elate you, and yet not enough sublimity to pain you. I could not live in a mountainous country, I mean really snowy sharp mountains, or on a lake of over-sensuous beauty like Rydal Water, but if I had my choice I would live in a country of wild hills and soft lakes where there was real power in the landscape and loveliness too, and not a frightening, inhuman amount of either.

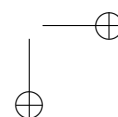
‘I note what you say’ – this is the business formula – respecting the architecture of our house and will attend to it. I have no information yet worth having. As soon as Mr Wilson comes down to Claverton I shall take my father over there to call on him. I do not think he would quite like to stay a Sunday, as Mr Wilson kindly asked him: it is quite out of his way, as he never goes anywhere scarcely, and as *you* are not there, I do not care to persuade him, but he will come and call on Mr Wilson *at once*, and stay two or three hours and see the place and your sisters and it will be less formal. I am writing this in the City, which is a congenial spot for writing to you. Still people must write when they can, and I am sorry to say leave off when they must, for I must go and try to lend money.

Ever, my *own* Dearest, yours with the *tenderest* and deepest love,

WALTER BAGEHOT

We *will* see the Highlands together sometime, *Dearest*.

My best regards to all your circle, I am afraid your sister does not take that interest in the ‘masculine element’





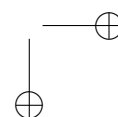
which a young lady ought. Canine worship may be more tranquil, but it is much less interesting.

You won't be at home on the anniversary of our first meeting, wretched, *wretched* girl.

*52 Albany Street  
Edinburgh,  
14th January, 1858.*

My *very* dearest Walter,

I am going to call you good whether you will or not, for I have had letters *three* days running and you fully deserve the epithet. You don't know the pleasure they give me, but I *will* tell you. I should have answered your pleasant, chatty club-letter yesterday (how *odd* it seems to get letters from a *club!*), but Mr Beveridge had given me a bad headache by *crushing* some bones (he was in a humour to be severe for he did the same to my cousin and then told the assistant 'to *grind* them now') but they were the *last* that had to be done, and I shall only have to put up with quiet rubbing for the rest of the time. It was the bones that make my eyes weak and I would suffer worse things than a bad headache to make them strong again. The Beveridge mania may be an intoxication, my dear punster, but it does not seem to my mind unreasonable that if you irritate the nerves of your head in removing the incrustation that causes the headaches, you must not expect to lose them *during* the process. When you are rubbed for other things, you do get better as you go on, of which Sophy is a proof. And though I have a good many stupid little headaches, I have very few bad ones, and I have been so accustomed





to the latter that I care but little for the former kind. I *am* a 'wretched girl,' I own, not to be home by the anniversary of our first meeting, and I am truly grieved it cannot be, *dearest*. I should have liked to have put on the same dress I had on that night, which happens to be extant, and sat myself on the red sofa to receive you. *You* should have had the old doctor's place then, and though I might have looked 'tall,' I could not have talked '*de haut en bas*.'

I meant it was *good* news when I told you we should leave this early in Feby, for Mr Beveridge had said a day or two after you left that he could not let us go before the middle of the month. I would not tell you so at the time for I did not see the use of worrying you and thought it better to let the time slip on. However, now we have taken the matter into our own hands and he has consented and the day is fixed. Poor Sophy is even included in the release, much to our delight, owing to the possibility of having a rubber in London. We leave this on Saturday, the 30th inst., and after paying some visits en route, expect to reach London on the following Saturday and Claverton the one after, 13th Feb. I expected to have gone to town in Feb. or March to do some necessary business, but now the simplest plan is to spend a week there on our road, and the apparent delay will not be one in fact, as I should never have got my family to let me shop so expeditiously if we had gone to town on purpose; besides by that means I shall be quiet at C. for the remainder of my 'freedom,' and you can come *every* Saturday you like till you carry me off. Perhaps we may meet a little sooner, for according to your usual habits you will be *about* due in London





by the 7th, and if you have business *about* that time, I *think* you would make it fit into that week if you could. By all means ask your cousin to be my bridesmaid as soon as you like. I wish to be thought a human being, not a myth, and your relatives have as yet had no proof that I am anything else. I am very sorry for it, but can it be helped, dear Walter? Give Miss Mary my love if that will help to convince her that I am mortal. You see your classical tastes and your contempt of young ladies are likely to give them doubts about my reality; they must think me a nymph at the least, and I must take the consequences of the connection I have formed.

I hope you will not be horrified, but I *must* have as many bridesmaids as the Princess Royal, for having a nucleus of five sisters to begin with, there would be room for no one else if I did not have eight. If you really don't care to send me more than one cousin, I shall invite Emma Thorp, my cousin, and Edith Greg – not on her own account, but by way of a delicate attention to her father, who among second causes is the *first* of the whole affair, since he introduced you at Claverton. We intend it shall be a *pretty* wedding and that there shall be some *fun* for my sisters and the guests and were half thinking of a dance in the afternoon, like a London déjeuner, with which *we* should have nothing to do of course. I am beginning *really* to put these things together in my mind, and not only think but talk of them (is not that practical?). I am rather surprised at myself and find that there is a good deal of *fun* in it, and that there is another great benefit caused by *detail* besides fun, and that is, that one forgets to be nervous about it. I do think this an immense thing, and intend trying to keep





it up when I go home by being as busy as a bee about all the small matters connected with the marriage – for you can't deny, though you would not own here, dearest, that it *is* a dreadful ordeal. I feel I should have been capable of throwing it all up at the last minute if in an evil hour I had let myself be engaged to anyone to whom I was not really *deeply* attached. But there is no fear of any such catastrophe now, Walter dear, of which you feel quite convinced, I am sure. Don't tease your father to come to Claverton to stay if he would prefer calling only. I will give you due notice of Papa's arrival there. He is still here and will be for some days longer. I am able at length to send your ring and hope you will like it in every respect. I should be glad to hear of its safe arrival. I daresay you will tell me about your visit to Wimbledon yesterday. I have a note to-day from Mr Greg saying that as you were going 'by my orders on a visit of inspection to spy out the nakedness of the land, the ladies were all greatly alarmed.' I want to know if your *lady* taste allows Maggy Greg to be pretty. I daresay Mr Greg's daughter did not tell you much of her mind as she is very shy, but I think she will grow into something good.

Best regards from Mama and Sophy; the latter is so pleased at the prospect of having a finger in my trousseau purchases, poor child, instead of being left here. Adieu, dearest Walter,

Your own loving

ELIZA WILSON





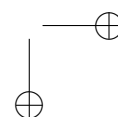
*Lombard Street,  
14th January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I had a pleasant evening at Wimbledon last night. The only defect was that Mr Greg had gone into captivity to an over-fascinating woman, a Mrs C—. She has been a professional beauty and appeared in a nocturnal sort of silk robe surmounted by a red head-dress. She has taken to the mind on the waning of her exterior charms and is a friend of Tennyson's, and talks of 'sweet ideas' and 'hard facts.' Greg went into utter captivity to her and she seems a lion in the Putney suburb. I came up with Clough in the train and asked him if he knew her, and he made an excruciating face and said 'I believe there is a *woman*.' Her husband was an influential member of council at Calcutta, a much better sort of creature with white hair. I liked Miss Greg the aged very much. There is a homely narrowness about her which is pleasant. She has not overcivilized away her character.

Miss Greg Junior was at home, and several other young ladies, but nothing appeared to hold on them very much. FitzJames Stephen was there. He came out from Bayswater and went *back!!* He was pleasant; he is angular and has a rather aggressive development of conscience, but he talks sense and is agreeable. Greg of course was most genial himself. He seemed quite shocked at your remaining so long in the North. I had to *argue* on your side with him. There was virtue.

I liked his house very well but I think we can do as well in Somersetshire, with the advantage of the *real* country. Real fields and quiet, I think, are set-offs against many architectural defects. I own I have a hatred to suburbs.





I like to be either at the focus or the untouched natural exterior. I go home to-morrow (Friday) – let me hear from you, my own *Dearest*, as soon as your eyes will let you, but *don't* hurt them for me.

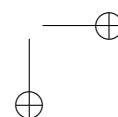
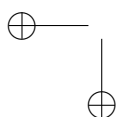
Ever dearest, *dearest* Eliza,  
Yours with the deepest love,

WALTER BAGEHOT

*52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
16th January, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

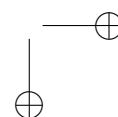
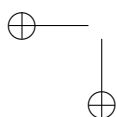
I am going to use Friday's second post as you cannot otherwise hear from me on Sunday. But I can only send you a note or I should ruin these wretched eyes of mine, for you know Friday is a *severe* day with our tyrant, and I am tired. You will find my long letter at home tonight and I hope it will give you pleasant thoughts to rest your mind upon after your fatiguing day, for I suppose you stopped at Bristol on your way. Many thanks for your *nice* note of this morning and the details of your Wimbledon expedition. I daresay Somerset will turn up as good a house as Mr Greg's after due search is made and have quite the same feeling as you about *real* country. I don't know anything about the neighbourhood of Bristol, but about us even the farmhouses have stone mullions, etc. (which are so pretty when they get old and crumbled), and I suppose the former is somewhat similar. A small Hinton Abbey would be perfection! Do you remember our scamper round it, *dear* Walter. I did







not think that day that I should be writing to you now, for I had not gone into that kind of detail at all then in my mind. I know of the ‘charming’ Mrs C—; she is a new friend of Mr Greg’s within the last few months and he has told me of her. I was amused at your description of this lady. Are you not somewhat hyper-critical about women, dear? They must not be stupid; they must not talk and they must not be silent, and whatever else they are or are not, they *must* be pretty! I shall begin to fancy I must be a wonderful ‘*juste milieu*’ in everything to be right in your eyes, and I shall be getting vain in spite of myself. You are quite right to like Miss Greg; she is exactly what you say and a most worthy, good woman. I wish I could like her because it is despicable not to. I used to like her exceedingly and my judgment still does, but I have given it up from a very *petty* but with me most powerful motive, and that is that she does not like me. She used to like us in our early days but she thinks us *fast* now, that is Julia and me, for she does not know the others. Now I am going to prove to you that Julia has a much *larger* nature than I – she can like people that don’t like her and thinks they have a right to form a bad opinion of her if they choose. I *cannot* feel anything for people who don’t care for me a *little*, and if I know they *dislike* it, it gives me quite a *disagreeable* feeling towards them. I believe Miss Greg prefers me of us two and yet I like her less than Julia. You see you have fallen in love with a small-hearted, narrow-minded being! At any rate she is candid one, however, to let you into secrets that are disadvantageous! She must think your affection *inébranlable*, not to be afraid of disclosing her weaknesses.





We are going over Holyrood to-morrow with the man at the head of the public works here. You shall know if any more signs of Rizzio have come to light. Adieu, *dearest* Walter, and believe me ever your own trusting and devoted

ELIZA WILSON

*Langport,*  
*16th January, 1858.*

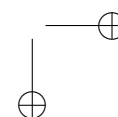
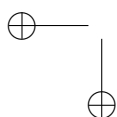
My dearest Eliza,

Somebody had a fancy for my ring, for your dear letter containing it was delayed a day at the post-office and only arrived here this morning. I do not know how to thank you for it, Dearest. It is *inestimably* precious to me. I must not however write to you now to thank you for it, *my own* (there is impertinence), for I only came home last night, and there is a natural accumulation of petty sundries, but I will write to you on Sunday (to-morrow). I am glad you like my letters from London. Since Edinburgh I can write *chat* to you and I could not before.

It shall go very hard if I am not in London the first Saturday you are there.

Yours, my *dearest* Eliza,  
With the deepest thanks,

WALTER BAGEHOT





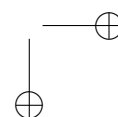
52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
17th January, 1858.

My dearest Walter,

I am glad to hear the ring was only stopped, not lost, on the road and that you are pleased to have it. It makes a very nice-sized seal. I think our first trial of *taste* is very successful! I get no end of compliments on the beauty of my ring, the lovely one you gave me. I hope you are not going to put off writing to me till *late* to-night and run the risk of repeating the Wellington *tragedy* or doing any as uncomfortable. I consider it really tragic to have to start by the train without breakfast – most *wretched* indeed, and the best way to prove I *am* grateful for devotion that leads to such discomfort is to tell you that when you write *late* I would rather you wrote *short*. I know the consequences of want of sleep too well to like the responsibility of making you lose it.

I cannot tell you how pleasant it is to me to feel sure of leaving this place within a reasonable time, to see daylight as it were, instead of drifting on in uncertainty as we were doing. I now begin to count the weeks and even days. We shall have but one more Sunday here! I trust, *dearest* Walter, that the *certainty* of our meeting at a known time will go a good way towards keeping your mind in peace. It has done much to raise my spirits, I assure you.

I am making great progress in one kind of courage: – I actually *read* your message to Papa the other day. He had not seen even the outside of one of your letters before. We had been joking a good deal about *practical* matters, which made it easier. He talked of *letting* us Claverton at





£25 a month, and our hiring the Westbury furniture at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., but thought as I am a 'favourite daughter,' he would strike off the half per cent. He says it is rash to talk of things he has got, because it leads him into making so many presents. He was mentioning a new importation of *claret* last night and forthwith promised me 6 dozen of it! I am very glad to be able to talk about such things. I did a *most* practical thing the other day – I enquired the price of some *salt-cellars*. Mama thereupon wanted me to buy some candlesticks, but I could not go that far. I am only at the collecting-of-information stage and can't do like the German lady I told you of.

Julia has sent me Mr Hutton's note to her in which he mentions his approaching marriage. It is characteristically naïve, for he says 'she is not very clever nor in any way very striking, I think, but' etc. It is odd that Miss Roscoe is an *Eliza* too. Mr Hutton wanted, or at least asked, Julia to write for your next number, but she cannot be busy at literary work the last few weeks I am at home, and he seemed to expect she would decline on that ground, which she has done. Have you fixed on your subject, dear Walter? I am glad to hear your 'Crédit Mobilier' article reads so well; it is a great satisfaction for a thing that has *bothered* one to turn out well, for one feels the wear and tear of mind were not in vain and need not be regretted. They are reading the *Three Clerks* at home and give the same opinion that you do. I do not agree that you ran any risk of meeting Mr Norman's fate by the 'naturally reverential nature of your disposition,' my dear Walter. Quite the contrary, I think, for I believe one of the things I *particularly* liked was your *not* saying the saucy things to *me* that you sometimes tossed at





my sisters. I may like respect overmuch – I don't know – but I could never understand affection without it. I do not agree on another point, but that may be from 'esprit de corps'! I don't *like* to read of women suffering and always felt angry with lady novelists who laid bare 'wounded hearts' (men don't know if they are writing what is true or not and may be excused for guessing); it seemed to me they were betraying their sex. But joking apart, I don't think the majority of female writers give their female characters as much control over their feelings as well-conditioned women exercise. Of course there are over-sentimental people among women and *perhaps* a good many of them – but not more surely than there are absurd men, Miss Brontë made me feel quite savage and I could not bear the idea of men reading her books.

Have you heard of your friend of the 'good hair,' Mr Wilkinson's book? There was a review of it in last week's *Spectator*. Can there be anything in his strange revelations? Many thanks for arguing on my side with Mr Greg.

*Trust me, dearest,* to come as soon as my judgment approves, for I am anxious to see you. Ever your own, with deepest and tender love,

ELIZA WILSON





Langport,  
17th January, 1858.

My dearest Eliza,

I do not admit at all that marriage should in any sense be an ordeal to you. It is *nothing* to what you have gone through in engaging yourself. I can understand that thoughtless young ladies, or young ladies who obey their parents or who marry for an establishment should find the process rather formidable, but not why *you* should. I shall always be very rude, and treat you very ill and have a very small house, but that is nothing. Our lives are joined by the most solemn engagement (nothing can bind *my* heart and soul to you more closely than they are bound now), and all which now remains is the external ratification of it. I do not deny that this is solemn also, and I can admit that you may be nervous, and feeling leaving home a *wrench*, but an ordeal used to hurt horribly. People put their arms into hot water, and took up hot ploughshares, – boiling water, and red-hot ploughshares – and I will to the last argue that these are worse than nuptials. I own, however, that I am not afraid of your drawing back, unless you change your views of me. By a miraculous advantage, I think, your judgment is in my favour and you are sure to act on your judgment. The only question, is whether I can *delude* your judgment for a sufficient time, and I shall try. Seriously do not be anxious or too serious, but find a little fun in the detail and above all believe that living with a person whose whole soul and nature are yours will not be so very terrible.

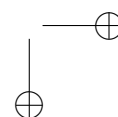
I am writing to you on Sunday evening, which is the time I like to write to you best, because I feel the quietest





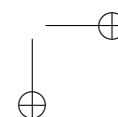
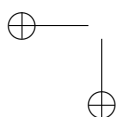
and descend the most into my *real* self, where my *love* is strongest and deepest. So you know I always have a fancy at such times that our love makes us somehow alone together in the world. We seem to have a deep life together apart from all other people on earth, and which we cannot show, explain or impart to them. At least my affection seems to isolate me in the deepest moments from all others, and it makes me speak with my whole heart and soul to you and you only. And perhaps this isolation is one reason why deep love makes one feel – at least in some moments – so religious. All the distracting world seems to be gone and we seem to be alone together in the sight of God. I have often felt a sensation of solitude in great scenes of nature or in some deep summer day when the sky seems so lonely and so pure, but I never felt before, even in thought, alone in the presence of God with another human being, and I cannot help feeling this, *Dearest*, with you whenever I have time, and my real heart is not crushed by the details of life and my intense love can take the view that is most natural to it. From this I suppose it comes that there is a kind of consecration in my feelings towards you quite different from anything which I have ever fancied or experienced in the least degree before. You *must* not mind my writing to you in this way, my *own* Dearest, for I must in a letter to you say what is in my heart or say nothing at all. I must speak *out* my heart if I speak at all. It is my nature.

Many thanks for your dear note by Friday's second post. It was so kind and thoughtful of you to send it me. I get my letters before I get up on Sundays and I lay awake a long time thinking whether I should hear from





you but hardly daring to hope for anything so kind, as I had a long letter from you still unanswered. I admire your defending the ‘charming’ Mrs C—. I am sure you would not like her. You must not expect me to believe in the universal perfection of ladies. Some I will always maintain to be utter humbugs. Mrs C— is. I assure you she is not clever. She pays attention to clever men; she *strokes* their minds soothingly and ingeniously, but that is all. She has been very pretty and you know my *strong* preference for pretty people, and you ought to know my *intense* love for one thing, deep mind. What can Miss Greg mean by calling *you* fast? I suspect Mr Greg has been praising you, and she finds it necessary to find some fault. However, she looks as if she was capable of great prejudices. These narrow, natural people are. I understand what she means by saying your sister Julia is fast – not that she is, but an undiscerning person might take her effervescence for velocity. But how any human being placed in your circumstances can be so unfast (I do not mean slow but *unfast*) as you are is a daily marvel to me and shows the most beautiful, serious nature. Allow me to point [out to] you that [it] is more hopeful for young ladies to expect strong affection from young gentlemen than from old maids. Of course an aged female affection is more interesting and valuable, but you can’t get it. Young men would never get on if they had such rivals with their fiancées as Miss Greg. I like very much that you are to have Greg’s daughter for one of your bridesmaids. You might tell him sometimes how grateful I am to him for bringing me to Claverton. I never should be able to get it out, if I saw him daily all my life.







I am very glad the incrustation on the bones of the neck which is clever enough to appear in the eyes has been removed, nobody could be happy with such a subtle clever thing about them. I am also rejoiced that there is to be a rubber in London, that if you retain your affectionate sentiment for this alleviation, you may obtain it within rational limits. If you are right and headaches can be cured in this way, friction will become ubiquitous, small boys at every comer (like the shoe cleaners) will call out, 'Rub your neck, Sir, rub your neck,' and all the world will be rubbed.

I quite approve of your sisters having a dance after our wedding. They will then be anxious to push you out, as they cannot commence till you are gone, and I shall bear you away with greater facility. Don't you think you should go away from the Church? You will never get up the hill without the donkey, which might look odd at the head of the bridesmaids; only I rather make a point of the wedding breakfast. With my habits it would be painful to miss the *meal*, so I advise being original and having breakfast *first* and driving off on the lower road from the Church. I suppose this won't be allowed. I have been at a wedding where the bride and bridegroom had a separate breakfast by themselves, but can you be quite sure of having good food at such a moment of confusion? I think it is a risk, and that it is better to *pretend* to be social and appear openly. You don't know how pleasant it is to think that you can think of the details of the crisis. You shall 'go smash' exactly as you like. Surely that is freedom.

By the interest and talk that are spent on your trousseau you seem to be likely to have apparel now which will





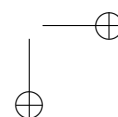
be enough till the end of your life. I approve of this, as I shall *save* by it. Let me advise enduring materials (canvas, I am assured, wears well), at any rate, if that is not ladylike, which I am too ignorant to be quite sure of, something which will stand the wear and tear of life. It would be pitiable to be found in old age with only gossamer gowns (What is gossamer?). I must go to bed now, as it is past one in the morning, and I have to hunt. I have not been out since I returned from Edinburgh, and the duties of our life must be done. You must not think because I write cheerfully that I do not feel an immense deal your staying away (though it may be right) and being so far and for so long a time away from you. I do feel dreadfully restless at times, but still I am very happy when I read your letters, for they are such a comfort to me and are so kind, and I treasure up every word of them in my heart. I wish I could tell you how much I love you, but that is impossible – it will take a lifetime to show it to you.

Ever with the deepest and fondest love,  
Your own,

WALTER BAGEHOT

I am going to Bristol on Tuesday and shall stay some days and look for a house myself. Thoroughly.

My ring is much admired. *So* many thanks for it, my own Dearest.





52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
20th January, 1858.

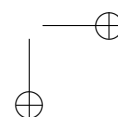
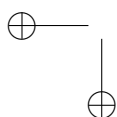
My dearest Walter,

I am glad you did not give me credit for sufficient *nouse* (is that the way to spell it, for I never saw it written before?) to suppose that I should not write to Langport when you are at Bristol, nor for memory enough to remember your address there (though you sent it to Papa the day you were telegraphed for to Claverton), since the consequence has been my getting a note this morning. I don't mind its being nothing but a hurried *smudge* under the circumstances. I am afraid that you will think that a letter has gone to Langport in answer to your *delicious*, long Sunday one, but it is not so, for I could not write yesterday, as I did not come down till luncheon, having a bad headache, and we were all the afternoon at Holyrood, and I was obliged to write to Claverton by the second post. I like your Sunday-evening letters *best* too, my dearest, *dearest* Walter, for you do go deepest into your *heart* then and it is intense happiness to me to read what it dictates to you. I not only 'don't mind,' but I *love* to hear what you find there, for nothing proves to me so well how different a relationship we have to each other than to any other human being, than the being *able* to express our *deep* feelings to each other. Not only could I never before express my real mind *wholly* to any one, but it made me feel shy to listen to other people's feelings and I avoided it whenever I could. *Now* it is genuine pleasure to me to read and hear of your deep feelings and no effort to write of mine to you. I understand the feeling of 'isolation together' that you





have; it was something very like it that made me tell you I could and did feel *eternally* bound to you and that our spirits will never part. It is easier to me to think it of the future than the present – I mean the being alone together in the presence of God, but it is the one feeling I *hope* to have when we are married, and I think I shall, for it is the natural feeling to have in making such solemn vows. If I can feel so, it will banish all nervousness. I am going to try and be very brave after your lecture about red-hot ploughshares and not be afraid of the *ordeal*, but I think I must ask you to wear a bright yellow coat, or some costume as conspicuous, so as to divert part of the attention from me, for the bride always gets a very unfair amount of the public curiosity and interest, and I am sure it is only because she wears a *white* dress and the poor bridegroom only a *black* one. Our French friend says that men never look like anything but crows in this modern costume. Now if you will be original on our wedding-day, I will ensure your being looked at and I shall be a great gainer thereby. It will be in character since it is considered original in you to marry at all. In thinking about my bridesmaids I quite forgot, such is my ignorance, that it is considered proper to have as many young gentlemen to help the bridegroom as damsels for the bride (or more truly to have as many black crows as coloured ones); whom are you going to bring? I cannot think of more than two gentlemen for my eight bridesmaids and am not quite sure of them. That is one consequence of having no brothers. Who will be your ‘best man’? Your cousin? Please count how many you can muster of people you would like to ask. I must not ask my cousin nor Edith Greg till this point is





cleared up. If Mr Hutton's marriage is after ours, would you like to ask him? I have no intention of using my donkey that day, my dear Walter, nor I hope of looking *ridiculous* in any way. And perhaps you don't know that bridesmaids in white satin shoes cannot be asked to walk up the hill any more than the bride; so the ladies, I fancy, will drive to the church and the 'crows' will walk. By a road you don't know of we can drive up to *our* door of the church very well. I think we must do the thing 'selon les régles' and not try to be original about the breakfast. It will secure *your* having a good meal, as you suggest, and you will want that kind of support to enable you to carry away such a weight as a wife, and one that weighs nine stones too!

There is a great deal of smoke from very little fire in the matter of my trousseau. The talk, and there is plenty of that, comes from the novelty of the subject, from the fact that I have five sisters and from the circumstances of our being separated and it is something to write about. I have really done almost nothing but bought two simple gowns here. I shall do nearly all the rest the week we are in town. But I assure you it is not of the huge dimensions you imagine nor has the durable canvas you suggest been thought of. Still I won't have any *gossamer*! That is the fine threads some insect weaves in the night and that you see between the leaves and branches on sunny mornings, and is not a word in a lady's wardrobe vocabulary. Gentlemen being in general ignorant of the latter, have recourse to figures of speech in talking of ladies' dress and believe imagine ball-dresses to be made of gossamer. If you are in town when we are there, I shall consult your taste about colours, however, as you know





something about them if you do not about stuffs. I think you have guessed something near the truth about Miss Greg's prejudice against us (I will call it so now I am getting so vain!). I am sure she thought it very absurd and unwarranted, if not wrong, in Mr Greg to like us so well, and she meant her censure of us as a gentle rebuke to him. It is very amusing to see how, notwithstanding his grey hair, she cannot forget that she was a woman when he was a small boy, and taught him his ABC; she really considers him somewhat in that light still and feels bound to take care of his mind and morals as well as his physique. She looks upon him as a wild young horse that nothing but time and incessant drawing in will curb.

I will tell you the truth about Rizzio's blood, as we went over Holyrood with the great official and are now in the secret. It *used* to be touched up every now and then, but in these truthful days they won't do that, and the consequence is that in two or three years it will have disappeared. *Felice* Orsini is here and was seen the day of the attempt upon Louis Napoleon's life, so *he* is not the man who has been arrested. This of course comes from our *oracle*.

Papa leaves us to-morrow and will probably go to Claverton on Saturday, but I will tell you about that when it is more certain. I must not write more as I am going to make some calls with Mama, but I will copy a passage from a letter from Sir C. Lewis to Papa which has given me *immense* pleasure and will I think give you some. As Papa said when I told him of 'the man going very quick over rough stones': 'people who understand the subject look to the matter, not the style.' I don't





think the latter had struck him as being jerky. He is going to tell Sir C. Lewis whose the article is.

Adieu, my very *dearest* Walter,  
Yours ever with truest affection,

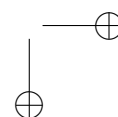
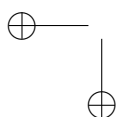
ELIZA WILSON

*Extract.* 'I have read several articles on the money crisis, in reviews – all bad, except one in the *National Review*.'

*Bristol,*  
*20th January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

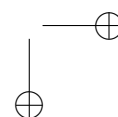
I fear I have lost a letter or may have by my stupidity in not telling you where to direct to me. It was very characteristic, I remembered at night, the moment I had put away my writing, and thought I would correct it in the morning, and in the morning there was such a racket before I went out hunting that I did not even read over my letter to you and I daresay it was very undecipherable in some places. The complications which the affections introduce into life have shown themselves now in a new form. Owing to my being away at Edinburgh my horse has become so fat as to be utterly lazy, and walked into a great ditch on Monday with me. It was of a kind rather peculiar to Somersetshire, there being scarcely a bottom and the so-called 'water' being a solution of peat mud. The consequence was that though I jumped out with some rapidity, I got my hunting boots filled with water, and had to ride in them all day. Owing to this I have a stupid cold, not a very bad one, but still a cold of the





sort which makes one's head *hot* (I wish you would ask Mr Beveridge if he can explain why a cold should make your brain hot and sore – the orthodox allopathic fail quite – begin an unintelligible 'Ah you see'!!) and I am a little miserable in consequence. I wish you to observe this is entirely the result of the intense nature of our best affections. *If* I had not rushed away to Edinburgh to see you, I should have ridden my horse and he would have been thin and active. 'The course of true love never did run smooth' – in this I could have been contented with its running *thin*, but even that modification I could not obtain.

What was the price of 'salt-cellars'? I own, contrary to my instincts, that you showed a discretion in not purchasing the candlestick. I learnt from the Liverpool people their wholesome reluctance to be 'under cash advance.' I quite approve of hiring the Westbury furniture, and I do not care what rate of interest it is stipulated we should pay. These things are nominal. Scarcely anyone likes to sue his son-in-law, and a conspicuous person in public life (like Mr Wilson) would like least of all. Persons whose names are well known do not like to be brought before the multitude in such a way. So *we* need not pay and we should *have* the furniture to ourselves. This is *real* practicality. If however you should have scruples (you know your conscience is morbid) about this straightforward and plain course, I empower you to offer to Mr Wilson to pay for the upholstery whatever he may *now* be making of it. I am sure he would not wish to gain by a family transaction.







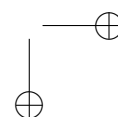
I has been very wet all the morning and I have not seen any houses, but I have a list of four. Two at Brislington which are described to me as follows:

Gotley Lodge. Residence with about 8 acres of land, cottage and orchard. The house contains 3 sitting-rooms and 8 bedrooms of good proportions, servants' offices with garden, coach-house and stabling. Rent £120, £90 without the land (and *I* rather object to territory). 2. A compact residence. Rent £40, which I think would scarcely be good enough for a damsel from Claverton.

There are also two at Clevedon.

1. Excellent residence in this desirable locality, new and handsomely furnished in the best style, comprising entrance hall and vestibule, dining-room 16 ft. by 14 ft., drawing room 22 ft. by 16 ft.; Library 20 ft. by 11 ft., conservatory 22 ft. by 13 ft.; 5 bed-rooms, dressing-room with water brought in; Kitchen and offices, coal and wine cellars etc. Large *Aviary*; Apiary with hives (what an addition to a domestic circle) complete; capital Kitchen and flower gardens with long range of lights and plants, together about an acre. Rent for a term  $3\frac{1}{2}$  guineas a week. I believe they would take £150 for a *period*, which is not extreme as the house is furnished.

2. A most scrumptious mansion built as a summer residence by Sir Arthur Elton, called Bella Vista from its magnificent view. To be vacant in April, but too good for us I fear. Rent said to be £250 per annum as the furniture and whole *entourage* are *perfect*. Brislington is about two miles from the Bristol station and is, I believe, 'pretty pretty,' but I scarcely know it. If I have been there, of which I am scarcely sure, it must be years ago. Houses do not seem very plenty. I cannot yet hear of





the one your sister mentioned near Keynsham. The only one I hear of there is *in* the village, which as it is half a town you would not like, and Keynsham is far for a drive, and the trains are unsuitable for my occupations. So far as I can yet see, the choice will [be] between the first I mentioned at Brislington and the first at Clevedon. The description of Bella Vista is ravishing but I fear its utility is only in showing what we are not rich enough to have. Brislington is a nice drive and Clevedon very convenient for popping about the line. The rail journey from Claverton is longer to Clevedon, but on the other hand at Brislington there would be considerable land carriage both ways. I am *now* going to ride to Brislington. What a letter of business. You are drifting into *reality* you see.

Ever Dearest,  
Yours with the deepest affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT





*Bristol,*  
*21st January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I can't write to you to-day in answer to your dear long letter. Houses and banking together are too much for any mind. I was much pleased with Sir C. Lewis's remark, *more* at your being pleased with it. The *Times* says Mr J. Wilson, M.P., Mrs J. Wilson, Misses Wilson (two) were at the State Ball last night. You have not stolen to town without telling me or did you obey Her Majesty's summons by *telegraph*?

Yours in the greatest haste,

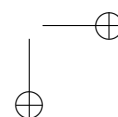
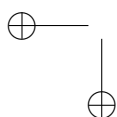
WALTER BAGEHOT

I go home to-morrow (Friday). I will write to-night if I can. My cold is better.

*52 Albany Street,*  
*Edinburgh,*  
*22nd January, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

You must and shall have a letter *to-morrow* and you ought to have a very long one, the longest you have ever had, but that it is unfortunately Friday and my tyrant has been putting my eyes on the rack of his awfully strong fingers – for it is the anniversary of our first meeting. I feel very penitential and ready to repeat as many 'mea culpas' as you like for not being at Claverton so that you might go there instead of going home to-day. There is no doubt about my being correct as to the date, for the 28th which we thought was the day was a Wednesday and





therefore could not be it, and Julia mentions it and has no doubt found it in her diary. You did not think this day year that you would ever care to see my handwriting and I thought as little that I should now be deep in a correspondence with the ‘young gentleman out of Miss Austen’s novels.’ I thank God, *dearest*, that we are not where we were then. When one thinks of those days, it seems strange to have so much experience now and to have been so ignorant then. There is no doubt that affection teaches more about the mind and the heart (at least of one human being) than anything else.

I am very glad to hear your cold is better. I cannot accept the whole responsibility of it, for I have had nothing to do with your not hunting for the last three weeks (I wish I had!), and according to your own account, you often leave your horse to itself for a fortnight, which was the time you spent here. However, I hope you will starve him into better condition, for riding a whole day with boots full of water must be very wretched. It is of no use recommending *gruel*, I know, to the ‘party’ I am writing to, but I think I will send you some globules for the fun of the thing. They are the right kind for a cold in the head (Mercurius) so you will get no harm at any rate, if you deign to swallow such insignificant little things. Your organ of Alimentiveness will protest against their size. If you do me the favour of taking them, don’t do so all at once; it would no doubt save trouble, but you cannot expect them to do any good. You must take 3 every 2 or 3 hours, whenever you think of it. Take them as sweet meats, for they are made of sugar. I have obeyed orders and requested the oracle to give me the rationale of colds, which he explained thus: ‘Everything





in nature except water contracts with cold and expands with heat; the human body is no exception, and when cold takes hold of it the concentration of the vessels stops the flow of the blood and so on and makes it *feverish*. So you are cold without and hot within.' Does that sound rational?

I think we are vying with each other which shall be the more practical. You have the best of it now, for you have had more trouble about the houses than I had about the salt-cellars (they were pretty little silver-plated things at 12/6 each – your meritorious curiosity deserves encouragement, so I give the figures); your description of the said houses I consider a feat in business letter-writing. I suppose the first at B and the first at C are the likely ones and I am curious to know the impression produced on your mind by the former when you saw it. The want of detail in the description sounds like 'out of repair' whereas the very large amount of it in the latter makes one suspect it may be *jimcracky*, which I know is of all things your greatest horror. An 'Aviary, apiary and long range of lights' all comprised within the acre suggests something like those dolls' houses in some of the London suburbs. However, we shall know all in time. Though we must not have Sir A. Elton's house I should like to see it. One gets ideas etc. in scrumptious houses and it will probably be of that middle size which one can copy, whereas Claverton is too big for a model. It will be great fun to make a house-hunting party from C. We will do it when we get home, and that pleasant time is not far distant now, *dearest* Walter. Papa went to town yesterday and may perhaps go to Claverton to-morrow, but if so he will return on Monday, so this





is not the week for your father's visit. Papa goes to Devonport on Thursday and back to C. the following Saturday. We have not stolen to London for the Queen's Ball, but a careful reading of the *Times* would show that the 'following is the list of those who were honored by invitations.' Hence the appearance of our names.

We find that it would be inconvenient to take Hawick on our road home, so are going there to-morrow morning for the Beveridge holidays and Annie and little Mary will remain there. Do not address to me there, however, as we shall be back to luncheon on Monday. I will try and write to you from thence on Sunday, but you cannot get my letter till Tuesday.

Don't send your Essays to the Treasury now, please, dear Walter, but give them me yourself when we meet.

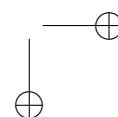
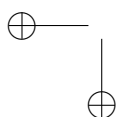
I may now be counted among Mr Hutton's *million* of lady-correspondents for I wrote to him for Papa yesterday for the first time and of course took the opportunity to congratulate him. Have you heard when his marriage takes place? I ought not to write more *really, dearest* Walter, but believe me always and always your *true* loving

ELIZA WILSON

*Bristol,*  
*22nd January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

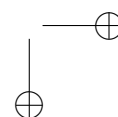
The fates as yet [are] by no means favourable to my Mansion-chase. Brislington is utter rubbish. It is a pretty place in itself but the house calling itself 'Gorley





Lodge' is a deplorable establishment, no view, mean and dejected aspect, small rooms, the shape and nearly the size of babies' coffins, and a forlorn garden in which no one valuing their spirits could walk. I fear the 'compact residence' won't do, but I am not quite sure I saw the right one. I cannot hear of anything on the Bath side, indeed I think it would be scarcely possible to live far on that side, the trains for Keynsham are so few and ill-arranged. There is no convenience for people living in that direction; everyone lives on the other side of Bristol for the convenience of sea air.

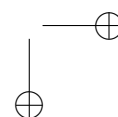
I have also been to Clevedon, where I saw the exterior of Bella Vista, which really has a magnificent view, and is at the top of a hill with air enough to brace you as much as even your Oracle would recommend. Mrs Wilson I think knows Weston-Super-Mare, and this Clevedon air is exactly as *eager*, and Bella Vista has the additional advantage of being at the top of a hill. The country about Clevedon is most *beautiful*. The colour of the sea is not quite so pure and blue as the mid-ocean but you cannot have everything. The house looks large but there is not much land about it. It is in a kind of Italian style, and I believe is capitally furnished. Sir Arthur Elton is a man of taste, and a 'party' of taste who has seen this upholstery says that it is good. The house, however, seems larger than we want and Sir Arthur has extravagant ideas of its value, estimating it doubtless by what it cost him. I shall however have his agent sounded to-day and hear what the truth is, but I fear it is too good. The other house I mentioned is not good enough. The rooms are too small a good deal. It has good views of the sea, but is nearish the road. The furniture not very





special though not horrid, except a lot of ornaments etc. in the drawing-room which are hateful. It is furnished on the principle of never allowing any place to be vacant on which anything, no matter how useless, *could* be put. It is not mean, but it is 'petty.' It would not do for any time, though possibly we might 'run in out of the rain' for a time till something else turned up. By waiting a little we might get something very likely. I could not see the inside of Bella Vista, and not the other very thoroughly as the retreating forces had not evacuated the camp. There is no stable at all at this place, so we should have to hire in addition. I will see if I can hear anything more before the post goes, about Bella Vista, and add it.

I should leave the 'crowd' for our wedding till the last. I have no doubt I can import five or six if necessary though I have not quite fixed whom. I will be bound to produce *four*. I should ask the bridesmaids to leave the rest to the suggestions of the epoch. There will be this point, however, that if you import men from a distance, they must do something in the afternoon, for you cannot turn persons who have deserved well of their country by locomotion adrift in the forenoon. It is not respectful. I have not so many bachelor friends as formerly; most of my friends are now married, and of course I should not like to introduce you to persons who acted in *such* a manner. I rather think I might ask my friend Quain, the lawyer I read with. He is nearly 40, I fear, and wears a wig, and if he came he would array himself in apparel which would *detract* attention from either of *us*, but he would contribute to the effervescence of the day. As he was educated at Göttingen he would be quite at home in







a German colony like Claverton, and he is very clever in his way, making heaps of money on the Northern circuit, and sure to be a judge if he lives. As it is Easter I daresay he could leave town, only as he comes a hundred miles, I should like, if it could be negotiated, that they should ask him to stay a day or two afterwards. I do not think he knows anyone in the West and it is a pull to come a hundred miles for one day. Mr Wilson would like him, I think, he talks *business* well, and he would pay his reckoning in amusement. Will your family want to be quiet and weep after your departure? No doubt they will, but need they all weep at *once*? Why not have a weeping chamber, like the little praying chambers in Edinburgh? And your sisters might stand '*en queue*' and go in one after another and weep *there*.

Since I wrote this I have sent a friend to Sir A. Elton's agent. They would take £220 furnished and £120 unfurnished, and would be glad *evidently* to sell the furniture at a *valuation*. Mr Boyd, the present tenant, is not likely, the agent apprehends, to remain, but it would be necessary to offer it to him in the first instance before commencing another negotiation. Would you live there without a carriage the *first* year at any rate? I think we could afford a brougham afterwards, but one would like to expand and not contract. You could hire when you went out to dinner. Clevedon is a very quiet place where it would not be possible to see very much society if we were intensely enterprising. Taxes £25 a year at most. Mr Boyd has it till April only. We might get a little abatement on these terms no doubt. *I* should not want a carriage at all. The railway is within a quarter of a mile. I believe I could get a season, a yearly ticket





between Langport and Bristol for £25, most of which I should charge to the bank. There would be a gain in this as compared with living three or four miles out of Bristol, which would involve *two* horses. All the really beautiful parts of Clevedon are within a walk and you could have a *donkey*. There is a common near.

Clevedon is somewhat more than an hour from Bath, I think, all stoppages included. I think this might do, as it is not possible to live within a moderate drive of Claverton. Consider all this, *Dearest*, and let me hear from you. I am just going to Langport. Do not be alarmed and break off the engagement at the imminence of a *house*.

Ever my own (!!)

Dearest yours with the fondest and tenderest love;

WALTER BAGEHOT

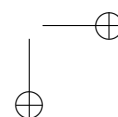
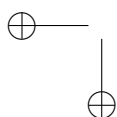
My *best* regards to Mrs Wilson and your sister. What would the former think of Bella Vista and Clevedon?

You *must* not be angry, but I am so afraid of kissing your ring in public. You said I might kiss your letters in Private. I suppose your ring is not *ruder*, but suppose I did it in the bank? I am quite equal to it in a state of meditation. Dearest, *Dearest*, I do so wish I could see you.

*Langport,*  
*24th January, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I would have written to you yesterday, though it would only have been a hurried smudge, if you had been right





in your dates and it really was the anniversary of my first Sunday at Claverton. But your sister's diary, though always correct in other cases, is wrong in this one. As you say the 28th was on a Wednesday, consequently the 22nd (when you wrote to me it was the 22nd) was last year on a Thursday and that could not have been the day I saw you first. I find by a memorandum of my own that I came home to attend a meeting on Monday the 26th. Saturday therefore was the 24th and this is the anniversary of it. I am very glad, however, you thought otherwise as I had a letter from you in consequence.

If you are glad we are not where we were then what must *I* be? The last year, in spite of a good deal of *wildness*, has been such a happy [one], life has had a spirit and a sweetness which it never had before. If you have led a *harsh* life all your days, it seems quite strangely happy to have gentle thoughts, or to have any hold on a mind so deep and yet so sweet as yours. I think you would be even amused at the degree to which you colour all my present thoughts and feelings. Do you know I often smile at them myself? I go over the most trivial points of my '*entourage*' quite instinctively with your mind and the perpetual question, 'What will *Eliza* think of it?' And if I am cheerful (notwithstanding your absence which is *dreadful* to-day) in the present and happy in the thought of the future and past, I scarcely *dare* be as happy in the anticipation of the future as I should be if I let my mind dwell on it. You let me talk to you so freely and naturally that I am beginning *really* to hope you will bear with me in life. You will find many of my faults and deficiencies very vexing, I fear, Dearest, but you must bear with them *now*. I am sure I feel for





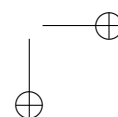
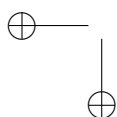
you the deepest affection which I could feel for any one. The whole of my real deep soul seems yours, and I think you *value* this, and that it will go some way to make you happy and be a compensation to you for my many failings. I have never felt, I think, so unworthy of you as now, when I feel surest of your caring for me, and able to write it to you without any fear of my seeming to be rude to you. I am very proud naturally, and nothing has ever really humbled me before. All my million deficiencies and failings constantly rise up before me, and make me feel that I have asked you for what you should not have given me. This would make me very wretched, but I feel a reliance that you will endure all these in life, for the sake of the intense and deep love which I must ever feel for you. Now with our new experience I think I comprehend a little how you can do it, which at first seemed utterly incomprehensible and hopeless to me. I have not, I know, a *good* mind, but I have, I think, a firm and true one, at least as far as you are concerned, and in its real depths. The expression which seems to express what I feel in contrast with last year is the phrase of the Bible, if one might use it, 'a new heart.' I did not use to think I could have such feelings.

It looks here quite setting in for one of the same sort of days that my first Sunday at Claverton was, the same day in last year, when I wandered into the library in the cold (there was no fire) and looked at Mr Vivian's works drearily. I did not *quite* imagine what [would] happen to me in that same room, my own Dearest, though I believe I was not occupied in fact so much with the books as with wondering 'what *could* have become of that girl.' It was very strange, and your sudden reappearance without any





warning, looking quite well and scrumptious, was equally so, and quite took away any notion that you could have been ill. It seems to me quite right you should fall into the dominion of a doctor like Mr Beveridge, after the profoundly dignified expression which was the first I saw on your face while you were talking to the Claverton physician. It quite expressed, ‘*As you exist, I ought to bear with you a little while.*’ I am quite glad you never looked at me like *that*, though you put your arm in mine when I took you in to dinner in a way which seemed to say, ‘Well, I *must* touch it, but I won’t touch it *much.*’ You observe I must have thought you *very* striking then, or it would not have been like me to pay so much attention to your manner, and I do not mind telling you in perfect confidence, that I did think you *very* striking. And I was pleased at your laughing (or smiling) at two or three things I said to your sister. I could not talk to you for a little, not knowing the *text*. How you would have started if it had been whispered to you, ‘This time next year that man with *that* tuft of hair will be writing a description of this moment to you, and you will read it, and you won’t mind.’ I think you would have retreated upstairs at once and not again appeared till I was gone. ‘At any rate I won’t see him *now,*’ would have been the feeling. I am *quite* sure I have thought of you every day in the past year, *Dearest*, and it is such a pleasure to think that I *may* think of you *always* this year and every year. I think it is *remarkable* to be able to say that I have thought of you every day since I saw you first. There was some advantage in the strangeness of my first visit. You see it was fated. Let us believe, my dearest, dearest Eliza, that it was ordained and bless





God for it. I am sure I do on my own account, and I wish I could feel more worthy of you – indeed, indeed I do.

I quite understand your feeling that lady-novelists gave their heroines less self-control than they should. *You* have a very strong will. I have always the feeling that you could ‘gather up your feelings and pass on,’ as Martineau says of someone, but *please*, please don’t or you will kill me, and now I have put it down on the paper and it stares me in the face. I am quite angry with myself for having done so. Still I am vain enough to think that it would be a wrench (especially after the salt-cellars) to you to achieve this now. *I* never believed the view Miss Brontë gives of young ladies. My sentiment ‘girls is tough’ is a far truer creed. By habit, social necessity and possibly by nature women are not nearly so easily susceptible as men are, though when they have taken ideas into their heads, I can imagine there being a difficulty in removing them. There is an *adhesiveness* about them (as the phrenologists call it) when they have begun to cling. Ask Mr Beveridge if you have much *adhesiveness*. There is such a bump. Oysters have not got it, which is odd, though your oracle will explain it, I have no question, with unhesitating plausibility.

As you are going to Hawick *now*, will you not be in London sooner? I am jealous of Newcastle. There is that Irish Lord, of course, with a large house and *no* tuft of hair. I suppose it would be too far for you to ask him to your wedding, but do you not think it would be a delicate and only proper attention to Mr Campbell after so many years of silent adoration? There is a character in Scott’s *Heart of Midlothian*, the laird of Dumbiedikes, which is made for that man’s history.





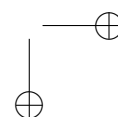
I am going to write on the Waverley Novels in the next *National*. I would not do anything requiring great reading, because I know I should not read very much. My book is not out yet. I have not ordered *your* copy yet, because till I see the book, I am not clear what binding I should wish, but I have desired a copy to be sent to Mr Wilson to Albany Street and another to Claverton. You will get it immediately, I hope.

My father *is* going to Claverton next Saturday and Sunday. Mr Wilson asked him and he seemed not to dislike it on the whole, and so it is arranged. It is clearly the best plan. Only I do so wish you were at home. Can you understand that I want to mix up our worlds a little?

I do not quite know when Hutton is to be married. I should like to ask him to *our* wedding if he is still in a *presentable* state. He mentioned in a note to me that he had heard from *you* and seemed much pleased about it. He will send you back a panegyric on *me*. He is the greatest puff to his friends that ever was. He has produced an article on me in the *Economist* – on the *National* in form, but really on me – which is quite touching in its eloquence.

Yours ever, my own Dearest, with affection that seems the growth of *hundred* years,

WALTER BAGEHOT





52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
25th January, 1858.

My dearest Walter,

I could not write to you yesterday at Hawick as I owed the whole day to my relatives in so short a visit, but I did not mind as I knew you would get a letter written to-day as soon, and that I should have time to write as we got home to lunch. But allow me to call your attention to the novelty of my being able to write after spending 23 hours in the railway. Even a fortnight ago it would have tried my head very much. I am in high spirits at the way my head is behaving; it has been almost entirely free during this trip, though of course I talked two whole days and was always surrounded by half a dozen youths and children and went to church yesterday. The latter was the only thing that hurt my head in the least and it was quite counteracted by *dinner*! I shall be so pleased if the sequel proves our unwilling stay here to have been right, as I have believed it all along. My firm conviction is that as soon as we leave I shall *rebound* and be *quite well*, and I judge by my feelings during the last two Beveridge holidays. The sacrifice has not been in vain for *either* of us, I believe, though I suppose I must not think you farsighted enough to believe *now* that if a year hence I could not read to you when you have a headache etc. you would think it a *bore*. I am not going to expend my new strength rashly, however, and have set my face steadily against celebrating the royal wedding by attending the public ball to-night, and Mama has done ditto for herself, so Sophy is going with the Moncrieffs. But I forget to add to the account of the last few days' fatigue that I







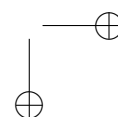
went to Jullien's concert (he had Grisi with him here) on Friday night and it was very *noisy*, but notwithstanding I was 'all right' next morning.

We had a very pleasant visit to Hawick and fine weather, and the country looked very pretty and must be extremely so in summer. We spent Saturday afternoon and dined with Annie's Papa, and went out to Orchards, my eldest uncle's house about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in the country, towards evening, where we remained till this morning. The little country parish church we went to yesterday was the first Dr Chalmers had. The service in these Scotch churches is exactly similar to the German, but I don't like it so well as I did in my teens.

The guns are firing now for the Princess Royal's marriage, which is all over, I suppose. What a boy and girl pair they are compared with us!

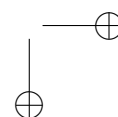
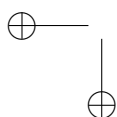
There is but one thing I feel inclined to envy in her wedding, and that is the one *you* probably would think the most objectionable part, *dear* Walter, viz. the music. It seems to me that fine music would really hide all the people (it is the living creatures looking on that are the most *nervous* thing about it), but then to me it is like voices in the air while to *you* it is only noise.

Many thanks for your letter that was forwarded to me yesterday. Each one now makes me marvel more and more at the businesslike way in which you have set to work in your first household trial. I believe that whatever the older generation may think, we are very practical people. I am quite amused at your thinking at once of baiting Sir A. Elton's agent. It is quite proper, but I have never courage to do it, so admire those who have. I believe that you are like Papa after all, *dearest*, and will





end in having the *best* house that can be got. I own that I doubt its being very extravagant to take Bella Vista if you buy the furniture. I believe it will cost much less in proportion to do so than to furnish afresh. At any rate you know better what you are about in paying a round sum than in the longer process of buying each article separately, which is to a certain extent working in the dark as far as expense is concerned. Mama likes the idea of Bella Vista very much as our side of Bath is impossible, or next to it (for you *must* consult your daily convenience first and most, *dearest*), but her advice is not to buy at once, but to hire for a year with the stipulation that there is to be a deduction then if you buy. This is a common plan and a wise one for one never knows the defects of a house till one has lived in it. As you would not want a carriage at Clevedon, I should not at all mind being without one for a time, though I should *not* use the common, dear. If there is no station-work, it would be exclusively an 'article de luxe' and I will keep my love of driving in abeyance for a time. With a nice garden that will not be so difficult and a *good* house permanently would be quite worth the sacrifice. I own I like a good-looking house and the view you mention is very attractive. You know a bigger house need not involve more domestic expenditure because we should shut up some rooms and then we might expand as you suggest, if we liked, without moving, which would be a comfort. Don't you think there is something more comfortable and peaceful in the idea of a permanent home than in that of one that would only do for a time, 'to take shelter from the rain,' as you say? What with the saving in horses, in railway journeys, etc., I think there





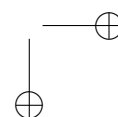
is no doubt you can afford the good house. There is one thing too in our favour, if we indulge in this extravagance. As neither of us cares about expensive living, you can afford a higher rent than some people. I would rather buy a fine view than dear wines, would not you? I am so curious to see this house, and hope no one will step in before us, but that is not very likely, I suppose, as the agent will consider himself bound to let you have the refusal of it after Mr Boyd.

What praying chambers in Edinburgh did you allude to, profane Walter, in suggesting that my sisters should have a weeping one? Allow me to remind you that it would be a bad omen for *you*, if they were *glad* to lose me! I should like your amusing barrister friend to come to the wedding. But we will have all that discussed by word of mouth and meanwhile I will invite the bridesmaids.

Your essays have come, dear Walter, and many thanks for them, though I am not sure that it is *my* copy, as it was addressed to Papa and came by post. I rather hope not as the corners have got slightly injured on the road. It is a good volume and very well got up. Mama is going to set to work upon it. The print is so good it might have been made for my eyes. As they 'talk the papers' at Langport, I must correct an error I wrote to you. The Orsini in Paris is Felice; there is another one here.

I have a very pretty note from Mr Hutton about his Eliza! Only five more visits to London Street, and then en route for the South! I shall be so glad to see you, dearest, dearest Walter. Ever your own, with deepest and fondest love,

ELIZA WILSON





*52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
27th January, 1858,*

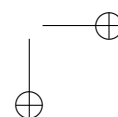
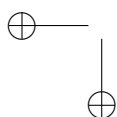
My *own* dearest Walter,

A thousand thanks from the bottom of my heart for your *dear* anniversary letter. We are both right about the date but I must have expressed myself confusedly the other day. I knew I was not writing on the anniversary of our first meeting, but did so on the Friday that you might hear from me on the Saturday, which though only the 23rd, was the anniversary of the day of the week, and as there is a great difference between Saturday and Sunday, I liked to think of the first dinner on the proper evening. There was something very strange about your first visit – I do not think we ever had another guest at Claverton whom even Papa had never seen, and it was odd that you happened to take *me* in to dinner. I am confident about its having been ordained and *do* bless God for my *dearest* Walter. I remember the details of that first evening almost as well as you (which is striking too), and thinking at dinner that you were very amusing and sensible, particularly in the sense of anti-humbug. I remember you laughed a good deal near the piano at Gen. Jervaise's stories and we looked at each other once or twice, and as it were, laughed together. *Now* we shall laugh together all our lives and weep too, for we must expect rain as well as sunshine, but I feel as if we shall have a good deal of the latter, and that we can bear the former better *together*. Affection like ours is such a power for buoying one up through life that I feel quite cheerful about the future and *believe* we shall float very peacefully over life's waves. Do not be alarmed about my



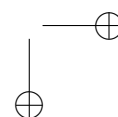
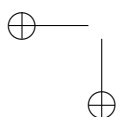


discovering defects in you which I do not know of yet, for you will make similar and perhaps worse discoveries in me, and I cannot afford to lose your affection now, dear Walter, so it must make no difference in mine. Affection is such a help in making one 'bear and forbear' that I really do not dread our faults interfering with our happiness more than is right as a reminder. I suppose neither of us is really *good* – I know I am not and that there are very bad things in my nature, but I seriously believe that we are both conscientious and will always try to do the *right* thing, and that we shall insensibly help each other in this. I am beginning to think one is rewarded in life for being conscientious, or rather God helps those who try to help themselves to do right, and I believe that the simple circumstances of a life *together* will make many things easy which are an effort now. As one example, let me remind you how good a happy life is for the temper. I am sure you are right about the 'little blue and pink girls' being their husbands' punishment as well as pleasure. I know many people whose characters are a constant rebuke to each other without their feeling the annoyance they cause, and yet it is very good for them and trains them, but the process is painful. It is even painful to see and is quite enough to give one such feelings as you had, and I also to a certain degree, against marriage altogether. But I firmly believe, *dearest*, and pray I may be right, that our minds will have a peace-giving, comforting effect upon each other, and that we shall help each other by sympathy and support, and not by an *immoderate* amount of opposite qualities, which I have sometimes seen in people who are linked together, and which makes them worry each other so much.





I understand Martineau's expression perfectly, and by the best of teachers, experience for it is exactly what I did when I could not get rid quietly of the hold something I told you of had taken upon my imagination – mind, my imagination *only*, for my whole nature was far from being in captivity that time. I 'gathered up my feelings and passed on,' and really one day very nearly uprooted the growth of two years; of course it required a strong effort of will. I do not regret it now, both because it proved to me that my will *is* strong if I will only use it for right and that I know better how to judge of my present feelings, by having a standard of comparison. I doubt if any moral experience is thrown away. I was very much annoyed and humbled at the time (it is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years ago), and thought it was a punishment for my pride and want of charity to other girls. I began life with the wish and intention (there was the mistake and I had to learn my weakness) to be so pure-minded, as never to like anyone but the *one* I should marry, if I married, and if not, *no one*. You think it would be a wrench to me *now* if anything were to come between us, and I am glad you do because it shows you do now realise my feelings about you, which if somewhat younger than yours, have grown very quickly. I believe, dearest Walter, that I may safely say you have my whole heart and that it would break if we parted. But that cannot be, at least by any earthly instrument, and God is good and does not put feelings like these in the heart to dash them away again. Believe in my constancy, dearest Walter, if you want further conviction, from the fact of my organ of Adhesiveness being very strong. Of course I acted upon your suggestion and asked the great man of London Street.





I am so glad your father goes with you to Claverton and so wish I were going to be there. Please tell him so.

I *too* wish to mix up our worlds.

*Please don't* kiss your ring in public if you can possibly help it. If you will promise to try, I will tell you that you had as nearly as could be a kiss from me in kissing it, for thinking you might perhaps do so, I put it to my lips the last thing before shutting it up in its little box.

Mama is waiting for me to go out to luncheon. I will send you a letter on Friday to find at C. when you get there. Ever, *dearest* Walter, your very own

ELIZA WILSON

*Langport,  
29th January, 1858.*

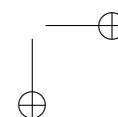
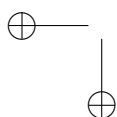
My dearest Eliza,

I am again not able to write to you. This week there is always a great bother in the Bank, as here is a declaration of dividends, which involves making up all the accounts and all the partners meet. Having a cold I have been much bored this year. I do not know that I shall be able to write to you to-morrow, as it involves knowing your address, but you shall hear from me at Claverton at the farthest. It seems very odd that my father should be going there now it comes to the point.

Yours with the deepest affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT

When will you get to town?





*52 Albany Street,  
Edinburgh,  
29th January, 1858.*

My *dearest* Walter,

I was *very* sorry to hear how wretched you are. I thought you must be ill, for only that or something very unusually pressing would, I fancied, keep you from writing from Sunday to Thursday.

I hope your cold will be better before you reach Claverton, but if it requires nursing *please* ask for Susan and she will do all that is comfortable for you. I am *delighted* to be able to report a steadfast adherence to our plans. We have paid our last visit and said good-bye to the doctor and can now devote all the energy of mind that he has left us to the details of our home-journey. We leave Edinburgh to-morrow at 2 and shall be at Newcastle at 7, where we shall remain, I am *sorry* to say, till Thursday. We wished to go to Yorkshire on Wednesday, so as to be in London on Friday, but my aunt has asked us to postpone our visit till Thursday. Does your business look as if it *could* require a visit to London? I have got the idea of your being there into my head and do so hope it may happen. If you go, I think you will try to give us the Sunday, so in that case we shall really meet at the earliest possible moment. I shall be at Claverton a good deal in spirit the next two days. I am very pleased your father is going. They seem to be going to have a lively party, so I hope even so quiet a person as you describe him to be may find some fun in the visit. Still there are not the exact elements I should have preferred, particularly if Mr Moffat goes, which I rather hope he may not do.







There is no harm in Lord Granard that I know of, beyond a most inordinate love of self-indulgence, but I daresay not worse than in most young Irish noblemen. I sent Mr Hutton's note to Julia and told her to give it to you to read, as I thought you might like to read it.

Can you account for the following phenomenon? In November, during the crisis, my eldest uncle heard of my engagement from Mr Wigan, an old Quaker gentleman in Edinburgh. Papa knows and called on another old gentleman of the same name and a relation, who was not the source of the information. My uncle's informant evidently knew of it because you are going to marry me, not *vice versa*.

I think I told you I enjoyed our Hawick visit very much. Altogether I think, dearest Walter, that I am more capable of enjoying life, that it is pleasanter *now*, though I make an exception of parties, which are still greater bores than they were. You see you do cheer me even when you are not with me by having given me such pleasant things to think of and such happy feelings, for I shall always maintain that 'I love my love *because* my love loves me'! Nor that that would be enough to justify it in every case, but I verily believe that providing one's judgment approves, that is the best reason for affection. Though I don't mind talking to people, I can't tell you what a comfort it is to me to leave off, and how instantaneously I relapse into the pleasantest thoughts about us. You undoubtedly form the background of my mind and it is useless to overlook the fact, and I think you like to know it and so I tell you. I do not know if other people write as we do, for I never saw any love-letters, except some very silly ones years ago from





and to a married cousin, but it must be right to express ourselves 'freely and naturally.' The ease with which I do it seems to me a proof that it is right and I never mind writing the whole of what I think, which I always did formerly to everyone else. What is odd too is that I don't care to appear better in any respect than I am (perhaps from an instinctive feeling that it is no use as we shall know each other so well as to be certain of being found out!), or even to write tidier or cleaner letters (I think I send you worse writing than to anyone,\* except my sisters) than is natural to me, and I *could* not try to write you a clever letter.

I am so glad this separation is drawing to a close, it will be delightful to meet often. I think that when I see you as much as I hope to do, I shall feel happier about the marriage itself, not that I do not generally have cheerful and pleasant feelings about it, but every now and then I get a nervous feeling about it which makes me feel quite *faint* – a real physical faintness; it must be the utter novelty of the thing, the 'leap in the dark,' as you call it. Don't be afraid, however, of my fainting at the *real* wedding; it is not my nature (I only twice in my life *half-fainted*), and the detail will save me. But I shall be glad to begin to work at the detail to lose the feeling.

Will you tell Julia the details of your house-hunt, dear Walter? knowing you were going to Claverton, I have told her you would go into it and it spared me writing so much. Your eyes will be alleviated by finding them out of mourning.

\*NOTE: – The writing is *always* good and legible – Transcriber.





I shall have a letter from you to-morrow, I doubt not, to while away the time of the journey (you always get the silent time that we spend in the railway, however long, the journey!). On Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, please address me at Mrs Jobling's, Barras Bridge, Newcastle-on-Tyne. On Wednesday at the Rev. Wm. Thorp's, Misson Vicarage, nr. Bawtry, Yorkshire, and after that at 12 Upper Belgrave Street where I do hope we may meet. I must close my last letter from Edinburgh, we might say the first volume of our correspondence, for my ebony box is quite fall now, and I think your pocket book-case hardly closes. It has made a new era in life, dearest Walter, the beginning, let us hope, of a better era to both of us.

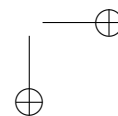
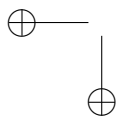
Ever, my own *dearest* Walter, yours with the deepest attachment,

ELIZA WILSON

*Claverton,  
31st January, 1858.*

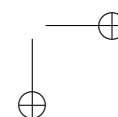
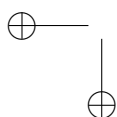
My dearest Eliza,

I am afraid you will think my cold a myth, for your sisters say I am quite well and I am very nearly. I spring up again almost in a moment from any little illness, and on Friday I was glad to feel I was getting better, as I wished to be vigorous and have my wits about me for this visit, as my father was to be here. We have escaped Mr Moffatt I am most rejoiced to say. We have a Mr Pulsford whom you of course know, and who electrified the breakfast table with 'It is all very well, I daresay, to



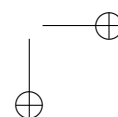
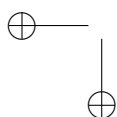


talk about a future state, but it is very difficult to get up much interest in it, and it don't influence people's actions.' A long constituent named Woolcombe or some such name is the only other person. I think my father is puzzled at so much going on and so many voices in a house, but I have not spoken to him yet. It seems to me so strange to see him here, and not to see *you* here. It was very strange too to have a letter from you here. I am in the same room I was in the morning I lay awake so long before I first spoke to you, and the moment Hine appeared, I immediately asked him if there were any letters, and when one occurred some time afterwards I read it with such deep and earnest pleasure. I hope you were not vexed with me for not writing, my *own Dearest* – I really was quite knocked up and bothered for a day or two, and writing to you is an impulse and a delight to me quite different from any other kind of writing, and you may be quite sure I shall write all I can, and whenever I can. I love to pour out my whole heart to you, and this is almost a necessity to real affection like ours. It is such pleasure to me to feel that you can *really* write to me what you think, and the delight I have in every word you send me, and the number of times I read it, and the way I treasure it up in my heart you cannot imagine. I could *never* have believed it of myself the first time I came into this room (I was here on my first visit) and now it seems a part of my inmost nature. I wish you to cultivate the feeling that you may care about me because I *love* you, for however unworthy of you in other respects, as I know I am, in this I feel really strong. I have not a light nature, and all its force and deepest springs of power are attracted towards you, and fixed intensely upon you





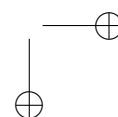
in every mood of my mind. There is scarcely a thought which I do not refer to you. All practical things now must have a direct relation to you (there is boldness), and I test all deep speculative ones by an instinctive reference to your deep nature. I never saw any love-letters in real life scarcely, but I am sure it is natural for those who stand in the relation we do to pour out our hearts to each other quite simply and as the words come. I believe what seem to others very silly love letters often do this to the parties concerned, though there is no meaning in the words to themselves or to others. To be able to express deep feeling rationally and yet adequately is a very rare gift, and it is better to utter it irrationally and at the risk of ridicule than not to utter it at all. I am sure you won't complain of my letters being neat and elaborate. I feel you would know they were not thorough letters of mine if they were so – they would be uncharacteristic. Yours are very like you, so expressive of your deep nature and strong distinct mind. We are neither of us morbidly neat people, though you are neat enough, while I am lax to a foolish and idle extent, but I think we have the essential points clearly in our minds, and do not lose the *thread* of life. When I am with you I fancy I could persuade you – or half persuade you – not to be *nervous* about the wedding. That kind of physical faintness I think requires the physical support of a man's arm, something to lean on and to be sure of as a support and stay, such as it is, in life. I shall try this at any rate, *Dearest*, soon, for I am *wild* to see you now the distance is diminished and the time is more definite. I think the detail will help you in a way you do not expect. It will not be a leap in the dark, when the surrounding circumstances





are more clear to your fancy than they can be as yet. A woman's fancy requires, I think, the support of detail more than a man's, certainly more than such a mind as mine. When I know the real action, the accessories seem nothing to me, more than to a higher and more delicately fashioned mind they would do. A sensitive mind requires to know the little things it is going amongst, and I do not want you not to feel *serious*, because it would be unnatural for you to feel otherwise on so great a step and in placing so much confidence in such a person as I am. Still, *if* your judgment approves, you ought not to feel more than serious, and *unless* your judgment approves I shall come to the fate of your excellent shell-collector, or shell-arranger, for I have no hope of your marrying me unless your whole mind is satisfied you are doing right – you would give up at the last moment. But I *hope* now that you are satisfied with me up to the present time, and you have really seen more, far more of my real self than I have ever shown to another human being or could ever show, you *will* care about me in spite of my many great and deep faults. I may *hurry* you along as an antidote to nervous faintness, but not in any way so as to mislead your judgment. Indeed I could not if I would, and I *hope* I would not if I could even for the very greatest of earthly ends.

I am afraid business will *not* bring me to London this week but I shall steal up on the Saturday to see you, if nothing prevent me, and nothing shall prevent me, for I cannot bear these separations, and I *must* rush up the moment you are within reach. I am afraid I shall have to be at home, however, on the Tuesday following.





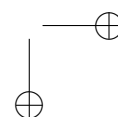
Everybody here is very well though there is a floating uninvested tendency to cold. We have been a walk to the view over Bath where we went in the caricature walk and returned the way we went when Greg took away the donkey. I thought a good deal of both walks, as you may fancy. I will *not* come here any more without you; it is pleasant in a sense and I like it, but I am haunted by *you* and feel like *two* people.

I think the phenomenon you mention is to be explained thus. I have a fair cousin, a female philanthropist of 36 (she wrote me a note on my engagement too affectionate to be sent to *you*), and this cousin has a Quaker friend named Wigan from whom the tale was possibly derived.

I send you a note my cousin Mary has written to you. I do not know what is in it. I suppose she is grateful for being your bridesmaid.

Yours, my *dearest*, dearest Eliza, with the deepest and truest affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT





*Barras Bridge,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne,  
1st February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

As our journey eastward, though bringing us really nearer home, involves a two days' post to Langport, I must not wait till I get your Claverton letter if you are to hear from me before Thursday. I am glad the 'last week of Jan.' is over, as I have no doubt I shall now get my usual number of letters again. I missed them very much last week, though I would not for the world you should have added to the double bother of work and a cold. I hope the latter is better, dear Walter, and am anxious to get your letter of yesterday to know how you are as well as for the pleasure I always anticipate in reading your epistles, especially the long ones, which I know this one will be.

Saturday was a mild day so we had a comfortable journey, and I assure you we were delighted to bid adieu to Edinburgh, and although the old town and the castle looked very beautiful when we took our last look at them from the station, there was no wish to linger a single hour more in their view. We had not been here much more than an hour when the Irish peer made his appearance. He had not been invited, but when he comes to Newcastle (his place is 15 miles off) he is very much in the habit of coming in an unceremonious way to Aunt Julia's in the evening, and he knew she expected us that day and I suppose had come into town on purpose. He was here again last night and is coming to-morrow, having gone home to-day. But don't be in the least alarmed, though he is somewhat better than I expected, a trifle younger-







looking and much less of the valetudinarian. But it would not have done, had I been fancy-free, at least I don't think I should have liked it. He reminds me of Col. Caulfield, the husband of Miss Somerville I told you about (the young lady who was so much occupied with her bridesmaids' dresses); they have both spent half their lives roving about the Continent, know next to nothing about books, but a good deal about life, and have picked up a good deal by mixing with all classes in all kinds of countries. He is a great talker, though he does not give out many ideas and is an inveterate *smoker*. He talks with a little of the Northumberland burr and expresses himself in a rather un-English way. Of course he is at home in several foreign languages and I was amused last night at his sitting down on the sofa by me with, as it seemed, the deliberate intention of 'putting me through my paces,' for he divided a conversation of a quarter of an hour into three equal parts of French, German and Italian, and informed me at the end of the trial that I had the true native accent in German, but that I betrayed my English nativity in the others, and I daresay he is correct, for I have been taken for a German by Germans but never for a French girl.

Aunt Julia is as pretty and lively as ever and her house very cosy. She is much pleased at being invited to our wedding and will be sure to come. She is very anxious to see you and is sure she will be 'charmed with you,' which opinion is founded on your article on Béranger which I sent her. I am going to leave her your essays and have pointed out the one on Shelley to her as being particularly *metaphysical*, so she will be deep in it soon no doubt, for she has a notion she likes metaphysics and





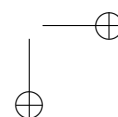
reads Emerson, etc., and picks out all the books from the philosophical library that seem to treat of the 'nature of the soul,' whether their authors were ever heard of or not. We have small dinner-parties of relations every day, so as to see all branches of the family in these parts, and to-morrow are to go into the country to lunch with the cousin who married her uncle-in-law, and see a small bit of humanity six weeks old, called their 'son-and-heir.'

I have got the *Economist* with Mr Hutton's article of you, which is *splendid*. He is a friend worth having.

You have a pleasant subject for the *National* and one you are sure to do well, as you only have to give expression to the notions you have taken 20 years to digest. It is another reason for putting my family through a course of Sir Walter in the evenings when we get home, which I already intended doing, by way of preparing myself for your mother's examination. Luckily it will not be 'competitive,' or I am afraid I should not have a good chance of becoming her daughter.

I had another reason for writing to-day which I should not have left for the fag end of my letter. You will get it on your birthday, *dearest* Walter, and you *must* hear from me on that day. Many, many happy returns of it, my *own* dearest, and may I be able to wish them to you by word of mouth next time. God grant we may both know then by experience that it is a blessed thing to be first and best in another's heart.

Aunt Julia has just been in the room and desires me to give you her kind compliments. She is very much afraid I have been over-estimating her beauty, etc. to you and says you are sure to be disappointed in her for she is 'getting an old woman.' She is nearly 40!





As I am not modest enough to hide my few good works, I must tell you that I went to the upholsterer's again before leaving Scotland and got the name of their agent in London, in case we should want any of those pretty curtains which are quite the cheapest I have ever seen.

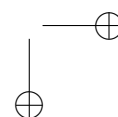
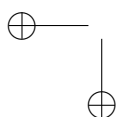
I hope I am right in sending this to Langport and that you will really get it on your birthday. Yours for ever, dearest, dearest Walter, with unalterable affection,

ELIZA WILSON

*Claverton,  
1st February, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I am still here, it is six o'clock on Monday. My father went this morning but Mr Wilson seemed to wish me to stay, and here I am. I go to-morrow by the same train which takes him to Devonport. My father seemed to approve of the place, and asked most anxiously if you were like your sister Julia. He thought her very *pretty* and so agreeable. I politely assured him that I did not think you were much like any of your sisters. I feel much more naturalized here than the last time and your sisters have got used to my position and understand how to talk to me. The last time they were a trifle shy, as the relationship was unprecedented. I have quite lose the silent fit which I had at Edinburgh and could talk and laugh as much as I used to do when I came here. What I always like so much here is the mixture of chaff and sense – chaff and currency one might say. I get tired either of sense or nonsense if I am kept very continuously





to either, and like my mind to undulate between the two as it likes best. There are some sporting people coming to dinner who will, I much fear, bring neither sense nor nonsense, but the heavy matter which is compounded of both. I am very absent here and your sisters caught me talking to myself, which I very often do, but it is only the absence of mind for which you are responsible, the selfish conversation is a very old habit. I think so much about you because every detail of life suggests your image in some relation, and I am inclined to dwell on it, and let the rest of things go their own way. You occupy an immensity more than the background of my mind, I can most truly say to you. The difficulty is to find ideas which you are not mixed up with. Especially here every single thing reminds me of you, and I am a trifle *distract* in consequence.

There are reviews of my Essays in the *Press* and the *Spectator*, the latter only a short notice, as they say its contents will be fresh in people's minds, which is a compliment as implying that one is read and remembered. The *Press* says I am 'childish and indescribably trivial.' This is *fame*, you observe, that enlightened appreciation for which authors long. I am much afraid Hutton will out-Herod Herod about me in the *Economist*. I can't say I think my book will begin a new era at all, though the covers are very good and the type is so too. Please tell me the train by which you will arrive in London, probably I may come up from the West about the same time and may like to track you on the way. I long to see you more and more every hour of the day, and the nearer the time seems to come the more nervous I feel as to something preventing it and the oftener I count the





hours. I hope we may *never* be separated for so long a time again, my *own* love, in all our lives. If that is so, perhaps it may be good for me to have learnt what pain a separation from you is to me. If I had never known it, I should have not been able to realize any such feeling. I know I used to call such feelings morbid, but hey are not, my Dearest, I now know. You are most connected with all the best of my mind, and every feeling that is associated with you I know to be very good. Not only have you given me pleasant thoughts but such good and sacred thoughts. The gong is going. Ever my dearest and dearest love,

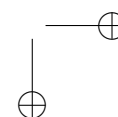
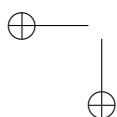
Yours with all my heart,

WALTER BAGEHOT

*Langport,*  
*2nd February, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

You did our post injustice in supposing it would take two days to bring me your letter. Instead of my receiving it to-morrow which is my birthday, I received it to-day. It has given me the greatest pleasure, because *you* remembered when my birthday was, and do not shrink from thinking that you will think of me on many more of my birthdays. I write to you to-night because I fear I shall be engaged to-morrow, and I must thank you for your letter the first moment I can. It will be such a different birthday to me from any other which I have ever known. My whole future seems so utterly changed from what it was last year that I am half confused and





stunned at my own happiness, and at my own feelings. That I could ever have for anyone the passionate, intense love which I now have for you, would have seemed quite incredible to me then. I had passed such a rigid and firm life that I could not have fancied myself capable of being changed at once and so soon. May God bless you, my dearest, dearest Eliza, now and evermore. You know you must always be the front thing in my mind, and I will try and believe, though it seems scarcely possible, that I am, or shall be some time or other, such in yours.

I do not fear the proximity of the Irish peer as much as perhaps I ought. He appears to be making a very strong attack, and will probably be at your feet when you receive this, but I do not think you would like to be picked up by a nobleman looking out for a wife. If he was the most agreeable person in the world, it would go a long way against him. And you would not *long* like a migratory being; their minds are scattered and unsettled, and their information though often very great is 'scrappy,' and not reduced into shape or summed up in their minds, or reduced to a defined principle, nor is it capable of being applied in life to any definite action. I feel that I am not worthy of you more and more every day, but I cannot persuade myself you will agree to become Lady Decies at this visit to Newcastle. You have too serious a mind for the wife of a vagabond man of the world. You are too good for the trade, and would require to be fallen in love with and not simply *liked*, which is all, I fancy, you would get.

I am much obliged by your Aunt Julia's compliments, and will you please express my extreme gratitude to her for them; as I have done my very best to thwart





her favourite scheme it is very kind of her not to hate me entirely. I am afraid I cannot repent, or promise amendment in *this*, but I will do anything else that may be pleasing to her.

I left Claverton this morning. We had a very amusing time, though as I wrote to you I was very *distract*, and woke up quite suddenly in the middle of conversations. Mr Pulsford was great game, and whatever your sisters may say I believe they were not sorry to hear masculine voices in the house and have something going on again. They aver that they much prefer their months of stillness, but I do not think the sentiment deep-rooted. Ill-founded ones seldom are, and that is the only reason I am nervous about your regard. Your sister Julia seemed to have headaches, due I fear to the cook and administration. Still she was cheerful. The others were quite well. Mr Wilson was nearly late for his constituents at Devonport in consequence of the *snow* – or rather in consequence of the coachman having taken the horses into Bath to be roughed; of course they did not return until the very last moment. I told him he would be detained among his constituents for a week or so by the snow, at which he shuddered, but unfortunately for my prediction, there was no snow much further than Bristol. The moment you get between the two channels the air is much milder.

*3rd Feb.* I am a little disappointed as I hoped to have a letter *again*. I suppose you will think it is impossible to satisfy *me*; I hope you have received the two letters I wrote you at Claverton. Your sisters were going to send you two notices of my essays. I consider the *Spectator* ought to have done more for me when I wrote my article on Macaulay. They made out I was the ablest of the





two. They might as well have revived that wise line of argument.

Yours with the deepest affection,

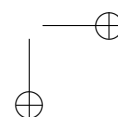
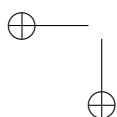
WALTER BAGEHOT

*Newcastle-on-Tyne,  
3rd February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

Many thanks for your two delicious letters from Claverton, which have given me so much pleasure, but which I fear I cannot adequately answer, for what with the cold and the fatigue of writing indispensable things for nearly two hours I am quite done up and my head is in a complete whirl and contains hardly one idea! Besides which I have hardly got over a bad headache I had all yesterday, the effect of 67 hours of relations and *gas* the nights before.

However, if you are to hear from me at all, I must write to-day and I shall have a time-table before I close my letter and be able to tell you the train we get to London by on Saturday. I hope you will not be later than the afternoon express, so that you may dine with us. If you *could* manage to come by the train that gets to London at 4, we might have a talk before dinner. I shall be so glad to see you, my *dearest, dearest* Walter, and feel so happy that these separations are at an end. It will be nearly 6 weeks since I saw you – a longer parting than the previous one. That visit of yours was a delightful break, it would have been wretched without it. Now it is nearly over, I wonder at my courage in determining







to stay in Edinburgh while it was needful. I must have had a strong instinct that I wanted putting right. When one has been physically wretched for a long time, one longs so to get well, and I feel so different now. I am not sorry to be obliged to be occupied with the detail and personnel of our *entourage* this week, for the longing to see you becomes almost a painful feeling when I have time to dwell on it – the sensation of *too much* happiness that made me stop a minute at the door before I could go in to see you when you came to Edinburgh.

I am so glad your father was pleased with his visit to C. My sisters' letters are full of his 'kind and benignant appearance.' Julia says he seems the 'kindest of men.' This is delightful to me to hear, you may imagine.

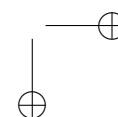
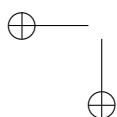
I went over my newly married cousin's house yesterday. It was quite odd to do so with 'an eye to business.' It is very nice and in good taste, I should not wish anything better. Aunt Julia is going to try and find out what has been spent on it. The trouble it has given, however, makes me think we shall be lucky if we can get the furniture of Bella Vista, supposing you take it. The ease will more than compensate for not choosing our own things, providing they are in fair taste.

My cousin said if she had to be married again she would not travel. They went to Paris, and the excitement and sight-seeing made her quit ill.

Excuse more, dearest, for I am so tired, *A Samedi!*  
Yours ever with the most devoted affection,

ELIZA WILSON

I remembered your Birthday the moment I woke this morning. God bless you, my own Walter, I can't answer





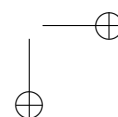
your cousin's pretty note to-day, but I *will*. Let me find a note at Upper Belgrave St. *please*, saying when I may expect you. *Au revoir!*

*Misson Vicarage,  
near Bawtry,  
Yorkshire,  
5th February, 1838.*

My dearest Walter,

I received your letter soon after we arrived here yesterday and send you a hundred thanks for it. I am very glad to hear you go to town to-night, for otherwise we should have had no real talk to-morrow, for I found by a reference to Bradshaw that there was no train you were likely to use that would arrive before six, and Papa is of course in town, so you will have currency after dinner instead of *me*. If you like to have a chat with me before dinner come about 5 (our train arrives at 4 at King's Cross). I may be tired and dull, but I should like to talk to you, however stupid I am, or rather be talked to by you, my very *dearest* Walter. Now I am going to see you so soon, I cannot quite realise it, it seems rather like a dream.

We had a dreadfully fatiguing journey yesterday, for Bawtry is a very small station and the only train that stops at it obliged us to get up at six! and we were six hours on the road and got here very fagged. Altogether I have been a good deal knocked about this week and am somewhat fagged and shall be glad to be quiet at home again. To-morrow's journey will be less trying, as the





express stops by signal to take up passengers for London, so we need not leave Misson till 11.

You must excuse a long letter to-day, Walter dear, because I must not spend much time writing the only day we are here, and I have been obliged to write to Papa and to Lady Elphinstone, who has sent a brooch for me to Claverton. I am awakening to the agreeable fact that brides get presents, which did not strike me for a long time. I have picked up five on my road home. My sisters are so grateful for your good-nature. They tell us you stayed two hours longer than you wished to because you knew they did not like being left alone with Mr Palsford. It was very kind of you, *dearest*. You know I told you you would make a delightful brother.

As I am 'going a journey' I think I will blow you something.

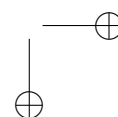
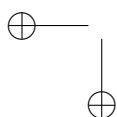
Ever, my own Walter, yours with the truest affection,

ELIZA WILSON

*Langport,*  
*9th February, 1838.*

My dearest, dearest Eliza,

I am in a great hurry and shall scarcely know what I write, but I *will* send you just a line to say how happy the recollections of this little visit to London make me. You are really so much better and you have not given me up in consequence. I have always been quite afraid, and *very* rationally, of your getting better because you might say that your mind having resumed its vigour, you could not really 'recognise the arrangement' as business





people would phrase it, but now I *begin* to hope that even although you get well you will still say you care about me a *little*. I love you more intensely but more happily than I have ever done. I felt rest from care and bustle *so* much when we were *alone* together, more than in Edinburgh, because I was then away for a holiday and it was new to have such *heavenly* happenings in the midst of one's ordinary life. May God bless you, my own dearest; you cannot by any possibility imagine the intensity of the happiness which you give, and it is of a higher kind too altogether than any other which I have ever known.

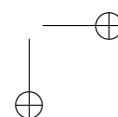
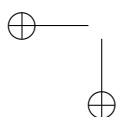
I have been interrupted and hardly know if I am writing grammar or sense. Probably I am not, but I think you will understand me.

I got down in perfect safety, and slept the whole way and no more than the whole way. I could not sleep so exceedingly well the rest of the night, but I had such happy thoughts that I did not care, and I was quite rested in the morning and in a very different state from that in which I was on the *Conservatory* day when I came down by the very same train.

I direct this to Greg's. I suppose you would not give him a message from me, but I should like him to have my kind regards. I *hated* him on Monday, he was so much in the way and was so cheerful and self-satisfied about it – but I really admire and like him. What sort of person is Mrs Greg?

Ever my own dearest,  
Yours with the deepest affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT





It was dreadful to me to go without a *real* parting from you.

*12 Upper Belgrave Street,  
9th February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

I wish I had asked for you to send me a note to-day saying how you got home, but I have a notion you will do so notwithstanding my forgetfulness. I hope you have not caught cold from the journey; you must have reached your destination at the time Papa got home, for he did not come from the House till 2. Not that we saw him then, however, for we were so tired that we went upstairs before 9.

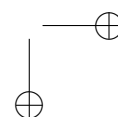
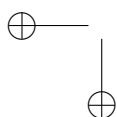
I was so sorry I could not say good-bye alone, *dearest* Walter, but this time we shall not be separated for long, thank God. I feel parting more each time, and I think never had so heavy a heart after it as last night. There is perhaps good in this as it will make me like more and more the idea of no good-byes in the future.

I am going to Wimbledon to-night as you heard. I go alone on Mrs Greg's account. It will be rather strange to see a person who has been like an interesting myth for so many years. Mr Greg said she would like to see me.

Mama has gone into the city with Papa in a Hansom at my suggestion, on a carpet expedition, and Sophy is waiting for me to go and shop and pay some calls. I hope I shall get a note to-morrow, my own dear Walter.

Ever your *truest* love,

ELIZA WILSON





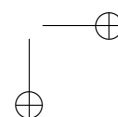
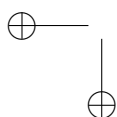
Please make an N.B. to-morrow of the colour of hangings in the sitting-room at Bella Vista.

We have your library copy of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Shall we sent it to Mudie's, and shall we say from whom it comes?

*Wimbledon,*  
*10th February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

I can only write a few lines to say I cannot really answer your nice though hurried letter. It was very thoughtful of you to send it *here*; I thought you would write yesterday, but did not expect to get your letter till I got home. You don't know how happy you make me by telling me I can make *you* happy. It is a wonderful thing, but a most blessed one that simply being together should have such an effect upon both of us. I *do* wish I should see you on Sunday, but that will not be. As I am staying, I shall go to Lady Palmerston's party and shall rather like doing so (though I would not have given up the Sunday for a great deal more than that); there is a *certain* love of formality in my mind and I shall go to this party as a formal parting with the 'great world.' It will cost me nothing to bid it farewell, fear not, *dearest, dearest* Walter, for the charms it had for me were always superficial in the extreme. I have been reading the review in the *Saturday Review* again and don't think it so unkind as at first. Mr Lowe walked home with Papa from the House on Tuesday, and asked if I were married yet and if my Mr Bagehot were any relation to the one who has published some essays. He was going to read them.





I am going to drive back this afternoon with Mr Greg. He told me Mrs Greg's beauty was all gone and she certainly bears no trace of it, and is a simple, quite ordinary-looking lady of near 50. But she is very intelligent, and so gentle in her voice and manner that it is impossible to believe she has been mad.

I shall be so glad to have done with London, for this shopping is tiring and the fatigue has made my eyes very weak to-day.

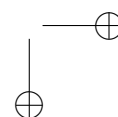
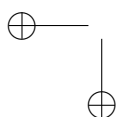
Adieu, my own *dearest* Walter,  
Yours for ever,

ELIZA WILSON

*Langport,*  
*11th February, 1858.*

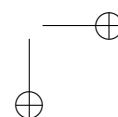
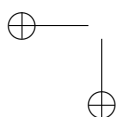
My dearest Eliza,

I want to take Bella Vista. I am sure it will quite do for us, if you will do without a carriage for a little while. The house is very scrumptious, looking outside in the Italian style of architecture, and stands in, or rather on the edge of a fir wood belonging to Sir A. Elton which looks as if it belonged to Bella Vista also, but does not. I rather feared it might and was nervous about engaging a *forest*, but we should have nothing to do with it and the view is really lovely, and so are the walks in almost every direction and the beauties are quite near. Although Clevedon, which is a *little* watering-place stuck on to a very little old village, is near, you are quite in the country as much as at Claverton. Inside the rooms are *small*, and an immense number of them,





in fact it is a *minced* house, and it would not do for persons who wished to give enormous entertainments, but everything is most gentlemanly – or ladylike if *you* wish it. The whole air is most admirable. You could live there and do heaps of things which would destroy your reputation with the world in a less imposing place. It was evidently built for Sir Arthur's own use, with a number of little rooms to accommodate a large family for a time, just a few months, but as he has a home within a mile, and not too much money, he has reconsidered this item of expense. This is not unimportant, as people of a really large establishment would not like so small a house really – though it looks quite large, and there being fewer competitors we may get [it] for a less rent. I should certainly *not* take it furnished. The furniture does not seem at all particularly expensive – there is only one four-post bed in the place. I hate four-post beds – though it is very good in point of taste. As there were people there one could not examine it very minutely, and the only arrangement one could make would be that when the present tenant left, we would look at and take either the whole or a part as might seem desirable. I daresay we could get it cheapish in this way, but as we need not excessively furnish half the little rooms I do not care much about it, though I was pleased with the effect of what I saw; and I shall never be of much use in the *detail*. There is a half tower at the top of the house from which the view is really wonderful. I am so sure you would like it and that [it] is far more suitable to us on the whole than anything we could ever hope to find elsewhere, that I would [not] mind taking it on my own responsibility. As you might not like such a curt step, I







shall do nothing if I can help till you come down, but I shall not let it slip. I fancy £120 would get it, but the agent is not authorized to say less than £150. It would be a very inexpensive place to keep up, and *you* must invent petty economies to make up any extra rent. You can do anything *there*, as a *gentleman* can wear very cheap clothes. It looks so well. Would [you] go over on Wednesday and look at it? there being another man (and a very civil creature) in possession he would require notice. I hope you will really come down on Monday. If I may I will come up Monday evening. I shall be on the line somewhere, and go in to Bristol on Tuesday and we might go to Bella Vista on Wednesday. I wish you would *manage* this.

I am not so *very* afraid of Lady Palmerston's party. These things may do as an addition to life and be very pleasant, but are no substitute for *life* itself. However, I warn you that you will be infinitely more charming in *general* society when you are married. You suppress yourself lest you might be said, thought or fancied to *flirt*. When you are relieved from this (according to my *profound* vision) everybody will say how much you are improved. But this is only true in the notion of your marrying a person you *really* and *deeply* care for, otherwise you would be weary and harassed and ill. You have too much soul to be satisfied with the surface of life, though if your soul is satisfied too, you would like the grand *shine* on the surface of life much more than you fancy. It is amusing that I should explain to you the charms of the world. It is horribly against my own interest, but I have a certain abstract love of truth which is much in the way. So please take a formal farewell of





the world and think how much, as I have explained, you *would* have liked it. But *do, do* give it up, otherwise Dearest I do not think I could soon have a happy instant again. I am in a great hurry to-day again. To-morrow I am going to hunt (it is likely to be a horribly cold wind) and dine nine miles off, the greatest bore as there is an hour and a half between hunting and dinner, and one's eyes are red and one's face quite stiff, and one's mind stupid.

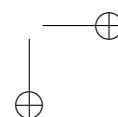
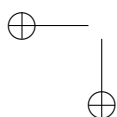
Ever my own Dearest yours with my *whole* heart,

WALTER BAGEHOT

*12 Upper Belgrave Street,  
12th February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

By all means take Bella Vista without waiting for me to see it. I am sure to like it; I think I should like anything *you* liked so well as you do this, and it would be a pity to send up the rent by giving the widow-myth time to come into existence. Besides, I am sorry, very sorry, to say, *dearest*, that there is no chance for poor me seeing it on Wednesday nor you on Monday. I have done all my shopping, at least so nearly all that I have been able to engage to go and lunch at Richmond with Mrs Carr to-morrow (which visit I am going to turn to domestic purposes by enquiries about servants for us), and was urging and begging Mama to get done her business by Monday and began to think last night I should perhaps succeed. But, alas, the London fog or some wicked fairy has poisoned her and she is in bed to-day, and the loss





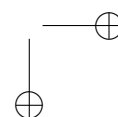
of a day is irreparable, except by tacking on another at the end. So now I shall consider we are very lucky if we get off on Tuesday and I shall do all I can to attain this end. I am so sorry, Walter *dear*.

Papa and Mama are charmed with the account of Bella Vista and think I may be of signal service to the family by taking in any members of it who want sea-air. Do you know I cannot yet believe, or *feel* rather, that I may live for years at Bella Vista; it seems as if I were going for a visit, a longish one, but still a few months only. I can fancy *us together* for years, but not in any particular locality.

I had an hour's chat with Mr Conway Shipley this morning and was congratulated 'on the happy event' a little shyly. It is rather a shy thing to do, but the Shipleys always do things that are expected, and are sometimes more thoughtful than one expects and use the regular old-fashioned expressions. He is very pleasant and just the same as ever (I had not seen him for a year and a half), and we were quite as friendly and chatty as formerly. But he is only pleasant; I always *thought* I liked a more *earnest* life than he leads and I *know* it now that I know someone *well* who does lead an earnest one. He is on his road to Paris to spend two or three months in a French family 'to improve his French'! Thus doing at 30 or more what you had got over at 24!

I think I know better now that I never had more than a pleasant kind of chatting friendship for him, though my imagination rather exaggerated it to my mind.

Thanks for your interesting explanation of the charms of the world, in which I fully believe, because I can prove it by feeling that I have liked it better since it could





give me nothing, I mean since I have learned to turn to you for real life. The world always seemed more of a shadow than a substance, though I knew that some people do find real substance in it and therefore it is folly and affectation or morbidness to call it all hollow. But I feel more every day that I have got what my *soul* wanted, a deep, earnest nature to rest upon, and I bless God for it, my own *dearest* Walter. It is real life, I feel, that is going to take, I may say that has taken, the place of the dreary, aching sense of no satisfaction in the world and the half-successful but wearying attempt at self-support.

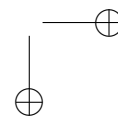
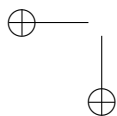
With the fondest affection, ever your own,

ELIZA WILSON

*12 Upper Belgrave Street,  
13th February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

I could not write to you by the first post to-day as I have been at Richmond, but am going to use the second post, as I have a notion you may get my letter early on Monday morning and I know you are sure to get it some time on Monday, whereas as I never heard you mention an afternoon post at Langport you might not hear till Tuesday if I waited till to-morrow. I might write through the Treasury to-morrow were there not two weighty reasons against it, viz. that I do not suppose Papa will be going there, and that if he were, I do not think I could screw up courage enough to give him the





letter. I should fancy that the mere holding it would let him know what was inside.

It seems almost like the beginning of an old London season, a season of my old kind, I mean, for Papa has just started in his Court dress for the Speaker's dinner (I have begun my letter while waiting for high *tea*), and I am to fetch him at a quarter past 10 to go together to Lady Palmerston's. And yet there is a great difference between this and every preceding February, a difference I find every hour of the day and which made me think of you and the future all the time I have been resting since I came in, whereas the party only crossed my mind once. Mrs Carr has been telling me that she wished me very much to marry and thought it would be very good for me by giving me less excitement of one kind and more of another, in fact, less of the *world* and more spoiling. She thinks young ladies' lives are pointless after a certain time, and now I know what a deep affection and intense interest in one beloved object are, I agree with her.

I have been frightening myself with studying Mr Hutton's 'estimate' of your mind in last week's *Economist* and getting back some of my old feeling of not being clever enough for you. This nervousness is very uncomfortable and I would fain hope very unnecessary, for I never feel anything of the kind when I am with you; indeed, I never seemed to feel so instinctively what was meant in talking to any one as to you, and this I remember from the very first, – but when I sit down to *read* what your mind really is, I get frightened.

Still it cannot be necessary for me to have read Greek philosophy, etc. for you to continue to like to talk to me through life, and I certainly have understood all you





have told me upon that class of subjects as yet. I believe in you, *dearest* Walter, and that, I think, helps me to feel what you mean, to ‘overhear your mind,’ to use your own expression, Notwithstanding all your culture, I think you have a *strong, simple* mind, and I fancy mine is somewhat the same in a different, a feminine way. At least I know my affection for you is a strong, simple feeling and that must be rather a good test.

I have a notion that our strength lies very much in this simplicity of feeling. ‘All at once I have become metaphysical,’ Julia would say; its odd and it is your doing, my *dearest* Walter. But to be practical, I grieve to say that Mama has been in bed again all day and that I fear there is now little prospect of our getting away before Wednesday. It is *very* trying, but it cannot be helped; one thing it teaches me, and that is to look forward with pleasure to the time when I shall be able to do what *you* like by simply willing it. I ought not to write more, for the candle-light tries my eyes. Besides which it is time to dress for this party. I hope you will write to-morrow, since we are not to be together at Claverton as we hoped.

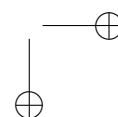
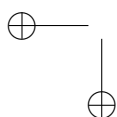
Believe me, my own *dearest* Walter, ever yours with my whole heart,

ELIZA WILSON

*Langport,*  
*14th February, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I think you might have sent me a Valentine. I could not send you one, you observe, as there is no post to London on Saturdays. It was most unfeeling. I am so





glad to have a grievance and I shall try and make you *expiate* it when I see you.

I do hope you will come on Tuesday. Probably my father may be in Bristol on Wednesday, and I would get him to come over and see you for an hour in the middle of the day. I wish you would tell Mrs Wilson this. She might think something of it, and it might fix her. I shall come (if I may) on the Tuesday evening, but I am afraid she would not think much of that. Please give her my kind regards and say that I *hope* she will come down if she can without boring herself.

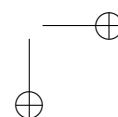
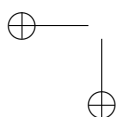
Do you know I felt *astonished* at myself as I was going over Bella Vista and inclined to fancy it was a dream. I used to be very subject to a kind of doubt as to the *reality* of life, and I still sometimes feel it, and it struck me with a kind of blow, as I was wandering in the little rooms, and I do not know the colour of the hangings (I had not received your injunction when I was there) in consequence. Your image however seemed very real, I had seen you so lately, and as soon as *it* came to me, I came to myself. The agent persists in asking £150 but will submit an offer of less. I have not quite made up my mind what to offer him. I think one ought to get it for £130 at farthest, and that seems a good deal to start on for *young* people. I am sure you will like it, and my judgment is quite in its favour; it seems so suitable and gentlemanly. Even a young lady fresh from Lady Palmerston's could live there, I assure you.

I am *not* jealous of your 'hour's pleasant chat' with Mr Shipley. I begin to be afraid my never being jealous will make me seem indifferent, but though I have a very anxious and distrustful judgment, I never have suspicions





beyond my judgment, and notwithstanding I think you told me Mr S. was very handsome, I believe I should be better suited to you than he would have been. I fear you overrate my earnestness, but I have a spring and elasticity in my nature which will be very good for you. You would not have been happy with a person of idle habits, however good otherwise. Some of your father's tastes have descended to you, and you could not have borne a *pottering* husband. Besides I maintain that people in practical life have better, at least more *disciplined* tempers. Nobody in real action ever has quite their own way, and therefore they understand how to concede a trifle or two at times and don't know they are doing it, whereas idle people who have only themselves to consult, can hardly give up any point, or if they do make such a merit of it as to be even more provoking than their refusal. If you want arguments for marrying me, I assure you I will write any number, quite an article on the subject. I assure you [you] require someone with settled tastes and pursuits which you can understand. These *vagabonds* would never do for you after a year or so. I could explain this to you at great length. I have picked up a stiff neck which I am nursing by the fire instead of going to church, and have been thinking over last Sunday and hoping that next Sunday we may again be together. I cannot *now* bear, my own Dearest, to be long separated from you. I did not know till I had seen you again in London, how much I had been bearing. I think last Sunday afternoon was the happiest time of my life. I begin to comprehend now that one may have an intense, *absorbing* and yet a *happy* passion. I have been feeling a little *wild* the last day or two, but I know







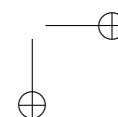
that this is wrong, and struggle against it. I hope I may soon see you, and you will *charm* it away. I did not depend on seeing you on Monday, I own. People seldom finish things on Saturday if they can stay over Monday. Man is a procrastinating animal in the extreme. Please let me have a line *here* to say whether you will be at Claverton on Tuesday or not. I shall get it before I start. I hope you enjoyed Lady Palmerston's. Its all nonsense or morbidness, as you say, to call the world *all* hollow. It is an object of the greatest *intellectual* interest to those who have the mind and opportunity to study it. The mistake is to treat it as giving more than any intellectual interest ever can. The deepest part of the soul after a little revolts at anything merely intellectual. Such things seem trivial and unworthy when forced on us as substitutes for what is deeper.

May God bless you, my own Dearest, and may you indeed be able to bear with me in life. I love you too deeply to be able to endure the thought of your *not* being able to bear with me, but how I am ever to make myself worthy of you I don't know. I think I won't *try*, and then you will be a *victim*. The intensity of your conscience gives you a little tendency to be a victim and you will be very happy!!!

My own dearest love,  
Yours for ever,

WALTER BAGEHOT

I don't think I got my stiff neck by hunting, but I do not [know] where else it could have come from.





*12 Upper Belgrave Street,  
15th February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

You shall have a line from me as you desire, but I am sorry to say you will not see me to-morrow. Man is a procrastinating animal and the Wilson family nearly the most procrastinating group of the species I know when changing their *locale* is in question. I am really grieved to lose this opportunity of seeing your father and was very much inclined to rush down in the ladies' carriage on Wednesday morning for the express purpose, but Papa and Mama think it would not be respectful to your father to let him come a second time without the latter being at home, and they overruled me. Unfortunately Mama has been in her room three days with cold and headache and is therefore not ready (I concluded *my* shopping this morning) and would like to put off the journey till Saturday and send Sophy and me on Wednesday or Thursday. But we are trying to persuade her to go too on Thursday at latest, and she is sufficiently better to be able to be ready if she can make up her mind to go. Do you understand why I so much dreaded the idea of being delicate when married? I have seen so much of plans frustrated by illness, that I could not bear to inflict anything so *wearying* upon you, *dear* Walter; your kind heart will have enough to bear from my moral faults without the addition of physical failings; though if they will come, we must both bear them as patiently as we can, and that is, I suppose, the meaning of 'for better and for worse.' But I assure you I feel really most thankful at finding myself getting myself again. I have never known Mama so well as since you have known her, and I was





getting into her old way and worse, for her eyes were never wrong.

I shall always believe, if my present feelings last, that Mr Beveridge has saved me from worrying you and suffering myself for all my life.

I have been writing to your cousin, which I ought to have done long ago, but I thought I should let her know what the bridesmaids' dresses are to be, and so deferred it. But when it came to the point, I did not like writing about dresses to a young lady I had never seen, so I asked Mama to let me invite her to Claverton for a few days for Saturday week, and if you approve, please send her my note. I thought too it would be pleasanter to make acquaintance before the wedding, especially as you really think your mother cannot come, I should see none other of your lady-relatives. I cannot write more to-day, or you might not get it to-morrow, and besides they are all talking round me, Mr Greg having called to make an appointment to take me to-morrow to choose a Parian statuette as a wedding present. I will try and write to-morrow.

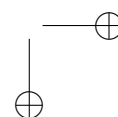
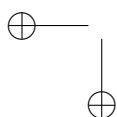
Believe me, my *dearest, dearest* Walter,  
Ever yours most affectionately,

ELIZA WILSON

*Bristol,*  
*16th February, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I received your two letters *together* this morning, and I was quite disheartened at the idea of not seeing you





to-day, and it seems such a contingency when one may see you. I feel as if I must rush on to London in the train, but I controlled this, as I had things to do here, and it might seem eccentric. I have not had so heavy a heart since we were engaged. I own I do not think this is right, but I do love you so, my own Dearest, and these continual puttings-off worry me beyond expression,

I am very glad if Mr Beveridge has really done you so much good, but I should not mind your being ill – I *always* fancy you a little delicate – if I were with you. What drives me wild is the constant hope of seeing you, and then the disappointment. It quite unsettles me, and I can hardly attend to anything at all, and when I do only by a *strong* effort. I do not know whether I shall hear from you in the morning, as you may write to Langport, though I hope you may write to me here. You see I cannot telegraph to you, as it would not be respectful; the laws regulating the society of *betrothed* persons were made before telegraphs, I suppose, and there is nothing about them in the code, and I fear it *would* horrify you. But if I do not hear I daresay I may run over to Claverton and inquire what they have heard.

I am much amused at the serious way in which you take Hutton's nonsense. His way of exaggerating the faculties of his friends is the most extraordinary I have ever known. He makes such very small geese into such immense swans. I will talk to you about our minds when I see you. This bank is not a place where one can write metaphysics, but I think you have really the most culture of the two, as I will prove to you, besides the deeper nature. The only thing I maintain is that I have a spring and energy in my mind which enables me to take





some hold of good subjects and makes it natural and inevitable that I should write on them. I do not think I write well, but I write, as I speak, in the way (I think) that is natural to me, and the only chance in literature as in life is to be yourself. If you try to be more you will be less. But do not you, my own Dearest, take up any extravagant notions of my abilities or you will be disappointed when you find out your mistake. Except from the depth and strength of my affection (which at times *alarms* me and *bewilders* me for minutes) I am not worthy of you at all, but I have a certain strength of heart on which you must rely now, for if you became dissatisfied with me, I am sure I do not know how I could bear my life.

I scarcely know if I am writing what can be understood or read, for I have been interrupted four or five times since I wrote the first page, but you will *overhear* what I do not express. I hope I may see you soon, my own Eliza. I cannot tell what may come to me otherwise.

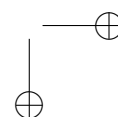
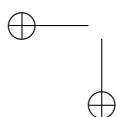
Ever yours with the intensest affection,

WALTER BAGEHOT

*12 Upper Belgrave Street,  
17th February, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

I have been so angry with myself all day for not writing yesterday. If I had had any idea how restless our delay made you I should have made a point of writing, had it been only three lines. I am so grieved at your feeling the disappointment so much and really most happy to be





able to say that we are going to adhere to the last plan I mentioned, that of going down with Mama to-morrow, Thursday. This is a great boon, you observe, her going too, because if you care to come before Saturday you can do so. They will *all* be glad to see you as soon as you like to come; and I need not say how truly rejoiced *I* should be to see you sooner than I have been daring to hope. I fancy that if you have to go to Bristol on Saturday, you might think it worth while to come to us on Friday. At any rate we shall be at Claverton to-morrow at 5. It was very trying for you, *dearest* Walter, to be disappointed on the very day we ought to have met, worse than for me, because I never thought it *certain* and knew on Monday morning that it could not be. But we are sure to meet this week, even if it be the last day of it, so try and be calm and tranquil-minded. I will do all I can to ‘charm’ away the restless spirit, my own *dearest* Walter – I always fancy that holding your forehead soothes it and I will try. I do not yet know *why* you like me, except that Providence put it into your head to do so, but am beginning to understand and to believe that by some unaccountable good fortune I do you good, and that you will be happier married. God grant it may be so!

I shall be so pleased to be at home again and for one more reason besides those that are natural and inevitable. It hardly seems proper to have been engaged more than three months without ever being within reach of your parents. I begin to wish to see them very much and to wish to have the introduction over.

I think I will content myself with this sheet to-day, for I have been shopping this morning and am tired, but if there should be any change in our plans, I will write





to-morrow. I will perhaps do so in any case, but if you do not hear on Friday morning, you may safely conclude we are at Claverton. I assure you I do not fear any further delay.

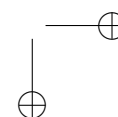
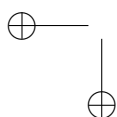
Mr Hutton is going to dine here to-day; at least Papa was going to see and invite him. I hope he will come. Does not the marriage seem really *awfully* near? I have taken your seal to-day to have a die made for the wedding-card envelopes and have made enquiries about wedding-cakes! It is a very sure matter after that. Don't fear my finching now, my dearest Walter, I could not for my own sake as well as yours. Believe me always and always,

Your truest and most devoted love,

ELIZA WILSON

Fragments dated from  
*51 Lombard Street*  
*24th February, 1858.*

1. I am amused at your finding a difficulty in writing to me at Claverton. Living in the sisterly world brings back all your old ideas and associations, and you have had no time at home as yet to get used to it. I quite feel as you do about general events. Real affection enters in to our background of thought and heart. I confess to not caring as I used to do about the change of administration. I used to care more than suited the principles I used to maintain. I had a theory that one ought to attend almost exclusively to affairs around one. I used to say 'I did not care how many wives the King of Siam had. I could not help him.' Still until quite lately I did care about





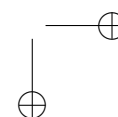
public matters an immense deal, and it seems to me quite strange that I do not do so more. I breakfasted with Mr Wilson this morning. He seemed to anticipate glory in opposition and to have a sensation of freedom in having to maintain only what it pleased him to maintain and to have no official etiquette to restrain him; but he will feel the non-arrival of the Treasury bag in a Long Vacation, if Lord Derby could live so long. I cannot dream that he will, still the political world is so strange that no case is ever desperate. If the opposition did anything *factious*, he might rise in popularity and dissolve.

2. *March*. I astonished a heap of people by saying with positiveness that the 21st of next month was on a Wednesday. I think about that day rather too much I fear for getting through my work on other days. I hope I shall have a line from you in the morning. You take up so *entirely* my imagination that my mind seems poor of all dodges and inventions about everything else.

*Claverton Manor House,  
16th March, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

One of my letters this morning was from your mother, the first that has been directed to me. I did not read it till after you had left and then found that it was meant for you and addressed to me in case you had left. I send it at once as she may ask you if I have done so. I understand the latter part of the letter by what you told me on Sunday about her having given up inviting people to the house.







I have been routing out my old desk and coming upon such odd memorials of Cologne and my school-day romance. I cannot find in my heart to throw them away, so I suppose they will remove to Clevedon with me. I do not suppose you wish me to bring only my new self, so I will keep the old 'muck,' as I daresay Julia would style it.

I am not going to Bath, nor can I write more, dearest Walter, for the same cause, viz. a bad headache, which had no business to come on this balmy spring day. You see you know the signs of my eyes better than myself. Perhaps I may not write to-morrow, as I am doing so to-day, that is, providing our Clevedon excursion comes off. I should like you to give your mother my love if she makes any enquiries about the letter, indeed whether or not. I enjoyed your last visit so much, dearest, dearest Walter, and I can safely say that I believe my mind is drifting in the direction you wish and quite as fast as it ought to. Also that your absence makes no difference in my feelings (it never did in my affection, but it would not have been unnatural if I had felt differently about the wedding) – they are more equable and sustained than I should have thought possible. *Adio, mio caro.*

With the deepest affection, your own true love,

ELIZA WILSON





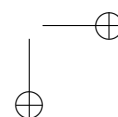
*Langport,*  
*16th March, 1858.*

My dearest Eliza,

I absolutely forbid your reading my mother's letters when your eyes are not very well. I am afraid there is nothing likely to be in them which will be worth giving you a headache. I am sorry that such is the case, but so it is. And they are difficult reading to a person who does not know her, and the circumstances of her life both present and past. *I* will be responsible to her for your not reading them, indeed she forgets all about them when they are once delivered to the post. Sometimes they revive but this is the general case. I mean to go to Clevedon if I can by the early train in the morning, and will have the place prepared for you before you arrive, and you will see me therefore not at the junction but at the Clevedon station itself. I am not quite sure, however, that I shall carry this out when the morning comes. I got a capital evening last night, but some of my relatives are coming to dinner to-day and I shall be a prey to them, which is a bore when one really wants the time. I enjoyed Claverton more than ever at my last visit because *you* seemed able without any effort to enter into all the arrangements about our wedding, and though you were, I fancied, a little anxious, yet when I am with you I feel my higher spirits give me an influence over you, and *I* like it. You cannot have an idea, my own dearest, of the happiness you can give, and it will take *years* to explain it to you.

Yours with the deepest affection and in great haste,

WALTER BAGEHOT





You must bring all the 'muck' to Clevedon. I shall so like to see it. I wish to appropriate you all, past and present.

*Claverton,  
23rd March, 1858.*

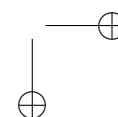
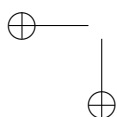
My dearest Walter,

Business first, so please send your cook here on Friday and request her to give you her address, which bring or send me as you like best. I am hoping to hear that you will appear to-morrow evening.

You will be sorry to hear that you will find an invalid in the house. Matilda broke her arm yesterday while riding on the down; at least, she was thrown off Fanny (who is a little too much for her and whom she does not usually ride) in galloping round a sharp corner near the gate. She was overbalanced and came off on the right side, falling on her arm. It is a simple fracture, but of course gives her a good deal of pain. The doctor wishes her to stay in bed for a week.

I am preparing for your advent by doing business and shall be ready whenever you come. Things are beginning to shape themselves and I think we shall be ready in every respect, though there is no doubt we ought to shop this week. What is of equal or more importance to my comfort, is that I believe in a month I shall be mentally ready. I feel a great difference in that since a few weeks ago. I want and *will* give myself willingly to you, my own dearest, dearest Walter, and be for ever and ever your true and devoted

ELIZA WILSON





Your aunt, Mrs Michel, is staying with Mary. Could you get the list of people who are to have wedding-cards from her? They ought to be printed soon.

*Claverton,  
24th March, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

I am not *very* sorry you cannot come to-night if you can steal both Friday and Saturday, for my head aches a good deal and I like to be 'springy' and well when you are here. I did not get up till near lunch-time and find that I do almost as much work (of the things that are busying my brain just now) when I appear to be idle. It makes the mind grow, as you say, or rather my experience is that things grow in it, spoons and forks and other necessaries spring up of a sudden like mushrooms, and they are preserved by my having a list and a pencil at hand. A curious coincidence struck me as I was lying this morning; our wedding day will be the very day *ten years later* that I started for Cologne, 21st April /48. That was undoubtedly a starting-point in my life and this will of course be a still greater one! I may feel more nervous about this one, but I am very sanguine about my new career being a happy one; that is if *you* are not disappointed after the event. Your pleasure in the anticipation of it does make me a little nervous, I own, though I do not think I feel so about whether it is right. I am sure I *really* love you, and that I cannot bear the idea of its *not* being – the latter so much that the possibility of the *not* does not enter my mind and I cannot put it there to test my affection.





I have an amusing letter from Mr Hutton approving, of the lamp and asking if you have much disrespect for bronzes or engravings! You have evidently made him quite afraid to mention such things and I shall be the go-between in matters not intellectual.

The remembrance of Cologne makes me wish to use the pretty German word while I can use tin their sense, so you must let me subscribe myself with the truest affection,

*Deine Dich innig liebende Braut*

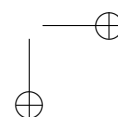
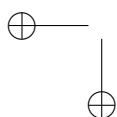
ELIZA WILSON

I am very sorry to hear of your mother being unwell and trust she is better to-day – please give her my love. Tilly is rather better, in less pain and good spirits.

*Claverton,  
7th April, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

Your neat little note shall have an answer as soon as the post will allow. My head obeys your wishes now, it seems, so I hope you will always wish it well, for ‘tolerable’ was precisely what it was this morning and that was very good behaviour considering how it ached when we parted and how much more when the ball-goers came home in the night. I nursed it, however, and only appeared to luncheon, so I did not say good-bye to your cousin. We have been walking with Papa in a torrent of rain this afternoon, but it was very refreshing. It is just what is wanted and will make this place look much





prettier for the wedding by bringing the foliage forward. I have been very sorry, however, all day for Mr and (now) Mrs Hutton. It is wretched for them. Papa said this afternoon that I had shown great perspicuity in not being married this week, as this would probably have been the day. I cannot but rejoice that it is not, but still do not for a moment wish it postponed beyond the fortnight. I will promise to be ready, and 'to try and wish for it.' I cannot be sure of being glad when the time comes, but I do think I shall not be sorry. When I am with you, I *really* feel that I may be glad.

Believe me, my own Walter, yours with the deepest, truest affection,

ELIZA WILSON

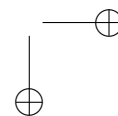
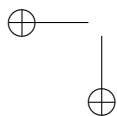
I have engaged Mrs Carr's maid of yesterday, so that is straight. It is a great comfort. I have just time to do what remains to be done without over-bothering myself. My love to your mother, please.

*Claverton,  
9th April, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

I enclose a letter that came for you this morning and also a note for your mother, which I think you had better give her, as she will then get it later in the day and there is more chance of her being well.

We had such a day in Bath after we parted yesterday we did not get home till 5, and then Julia had a dinner-party and a ball! She is alive and pretty well, however. You were right, for I did not get quite done,





having forgotten *our* housemaid and one or two things. The coachman ordered the carriages to be on view on Thursday morning. There is no Welsh guide to be got in Bath. They say Bristol would be a likely place to get one at, and Wales itself sure. We have been rehearsing the marriage ceremony with Mrs and the Miss Hales at the church this morning. The former is a kind, motherly person, who will take any trouble for one – very much nicer than her daughters. It has done me a world of good to see the place where the deed is to be done (I got frightened yesterday evening, from being tired, I dare say). I boldly declared I thought it less nervous work to be married than to be engaged, and they all agreed that it was quite right, because one's mind ought to be so fully made up when the marriage takes place that one *ought* not to be nervous. I believe this and feel quite happy generally, at times even joyous, especially when I think of your spirits, for you looked so happy on Sunday and it is so delicious to think I can make you feel so; still at times a tremulousness comes over my mind which is not compatible with its peace. I *will* try and keep this down, *dearest* Walter, and I do believe that the joyous feelings will predominate at the wedding. I think they are almost sure to if you look as happy as you did the other day.

Your tie is not approved of by the family congress for the occasion, though admired. It is believed you should have a lighter one and much smaller. They say what Mr Wood wears is the proper size. I think one like your lilac, but in blue, would look very well.

Please think of your list of friends for wedding-cards and bring it.





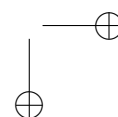
Adieu, my own dearest Walter. I never understood so well how much I love you as now that I am going to vow to love you *always*. You may trust to my not flinching. Your true and sincere

ELIZA WILSON

*Claverton,  
16th April, 1858.*

My dearest Walter,

It was stupid of me to have a headache last night when you came for the sake of *business* talk (it really was an excuse as it turned out), for a thing or two I ought to have told you quite slipped my memory. You will remember that we take possession of 'The Arches' on Tuesday, and that I engaged the cook for that day in order that she might take charge of the house, but, as you suggested, there ought to be a man to sleep in the house and that ought to be seen about at once. If you see the agent to-morrow, will you speak to him about it, or if not, write. Perhaps the gardener could sleep there. I think the cook will have to have some money advanced, as she will be on board wages until we reach *home* (now that I have written it, it looks strange to call Clevedon *home*, but I feel it is going to be true, and it does not make me very sad to think so), but that will do in a day or two, and I can write to her to go to you on Tuesday morning. The only other thing I need remind you of is to pay the call on your cousins to-morrow and tell them the breakfast is at 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ . The address is 9 Lansdown Crescent. My sisters are anxious to see if you will write the truth







about Mr Wood's collar-bone. If you do not write to-day 'Miss Wilson' has had her last letter from you. I really am surprised that I do not feel more sad at losing my name; of course I have a *little* feeling about it, but much less than I expected or than I had some time ago. Really I feel very happy on the whole and almost ready to go through the 'ordeal' of the wedding, which I will own is not so bad as 'ploughshares.' Adieu, my *dearest*, dearest Walter. I am glad you are coming to-morrow, for my courage depends a good deal on seeing you, a feeling that I can trust to your arm if it gives way.

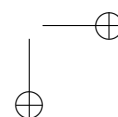
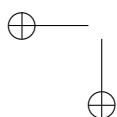
Yours with the truest affection,

ELIZA WILSON

[No more love-letters; they were together, and together preparing for the wedding and furnishing the home which was to be. Walter had begged Sir Arthur Elton to change the name of 'Bella Vista' to 'The Arches,' the house being built on arches.

The 21st of April was a day full of sunshine. The marriage took place in the small, ancient church of Claverton, the square family pew serving as a vestry; the breakfast with speeches following, flocks of guests ever arriving, the Hanoverian Band playing, and dancing on the lawn. Then the start in a chariot and a drive of many a full mile, the goal being Stourhead with its King Alfred's Tower.

To one absent at the feast, nevertheless ever present to Walter, at the stop to change horses were posted the lines:]





*‘Frome,  
written in the carriage.*

‘My dearest Mother,

‘*We* are married. Everything went off well, and my wife sends her love.

‘Yours with greatest affection,

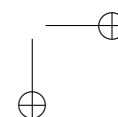
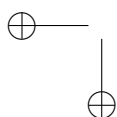
‘WALTER BAGEHOT’

‘And after,’ written two days after:

*Stourton,  
25rd April, 1858.*

My dearest Mother,

You will ere you receive this have heard some account of my wedding from somebody sent you a note in pencil from Frome to say that it had been achieved. I am scarcely an impartial judge, but it seemed to me a very bright affair and that not only the persons married but the others enjoyed themselves, which generally they do not. Nobody shed a single tear, Eliza was a most composed bride – a little anxious at the crisis, but very cheerful after it was over. Vincent Wood made a splendid ‘best man’ only that the multitude *would* think he was the bridegroom. Mary was much admired and all, the bridesmaids were very animated and nice. There was wonderful oration at the Breakfast. A Mr Moffatt (M.P. for Ashburton) proposed *our* health in a copious and eloquent manner, and spoke of the ‘hundreds of thousands’ who had read my writings, whom I myself should wish to see particularly. Sir William Topham proposed





the health of the bridesmaids in a very clever speech in a sort of Lord Palmerston style. He is a man about the Court, Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard and understands the 'touch and go' style of oratory rather well. My attention was rather, however, distracted from what he said by wondering that *that* man' should be speaking at my wedding. Few people seem so far off my beat. I believe the dance too after we went away was also successful, and the day was so gorgeous that I think it made people cheerful. Mind *will* tell especially in the weather. We had a delicious drive to this place and have done nothing but potter about it ever since. Eliza is a trifle tired by the crisis, but very well and seems able to endure futurity.

The post is going so I must leave off  
With best love to my father,  
Ever your affectionate Son,

WALTER BAGEHOT

I am your affectionate daughter,

ELIZA BAGEHOT

This is the first time I have signed my new name.

