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ALS H323

Science and Art Department
South Kensington
Jan. 29 1886

My dear Foster

I have not received your prospectus of an Authors' company so I can't say yea or nay. Won't there be time to talk over it on Thursday.

Mr Faunthorpe,¹ the Principal of Whitelands College has sent in a furious attack on us for the results of the examinations of his lambs – I think it will be necessary to direct their performances in detail.

If you could come here on Thursday evening we could go over the business together.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

I will go to the meeting of the Council of the [Assocn] for research if possible.

¹ Rev. John Pincher Faunthorpe (1839–1934), principal of Whitelands College, a teacher training college for women.

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Huxley Papers 4:269

Shelford
Jan. 30 [1886]

Reverend Sir

Do you see your way to entering Lankester in Athenaeum Books. I am quite prepared to second him.

At present his name is not down, so that the Ctee can't take cognisance of him. With all exaggeration of his fault, there can't amount to an exclusion from the Club, and of all the Biologists etc, he from scientific eminence has to my mind prior claims.

Ever thine

M. Foster

My dear mother is a little better & will I hope recover.

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ALS H324

4 Marlborough Place
Abbey Road, N.W.
Feb. 1. 1886

My dear Foster

The Athenaeum is a body the members of which rather pride themselves on being bound by the tradition of gentlemen and the proposing a new member rendering himself bail for the latter on that particular – Now I have done a good deal for Lankester as a man of science in my time, & I am prepared to do more – but I cannot reconcile it with my conscience to say that he has the remotest conception of what the word “gentleman” means – or that you are ever safe from his turning round upon you with the manners and the actions of a thorough cad.

I have just had an illustration of his peculiarities in this respect which perhaps has unduly sharpened my apprehension of them. I do not know whether you saw a ridiculous printed letter which he addressed to the Senate of the London University – However we discarded it & gave it the only answer it deserved. Meeting Lankester at the Royal Society afterwards he began to talk to me about it – but I stopped him – saying that I could not deal privately with a matter which had been before the Senate.

Then I got letter No 1, inclosed, which I answered – then No 2 which I did not answer, but laughed at with Dyer who seems to have spoken to Lankester about it. Then came No 3, which reminds me of the midshipman’s apology & shall leave this also unanswered.

It may be that I know nothing about the practical teaching of Biology but I don’t think it is exactly Lankester’s business to tell me so. I have no doubt he means no harm & would be very much surprised to hear that I think him grossly impertinent – but it is exactly that total absence of the instinct of good manners which seems to me to oblige a prudent man to hesitate to be responsible for him.

You will observe that Lankester’s ideal University is exactly that “Cooperative society of teachers & examiners” to which I referred in my address – the examinations are to be subordinated to the convenience of the teachers & chiefly to that of Prof Lankester!

I am very glad to hear your mother is better – the fine weather should bring her round.

Ever Yours

T. H. Huxley

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ALS H325

Casalini
 W. Bournemouth
 Feb. 19. 1886

My dear Foster

I inclose all your documents and some Advanced & Honours morphol. questions – Item notes on other questions.

I see they have printed my letter without the corrected proof I sent and “instructions” appears instead of the obvious “instruction” in the last paragraph. Luckily it doesn’t matter much – but I repent me of having written at all & opened up more controversy.

We have not seen the sun since Sunday & there is an evil wind enough to fill the bellies of all the wild asses in the universe – But I expect we are better off here than in London.

Ever Yours

T. H. H.

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ALS H326

Casalini
 W. Bournemouth
 Feb. 23. 1886

My dear Foster

I am not at all sure when I shall be back permanently in London. The “English Naples” at present is rather Florentine so far as a bitter cold East wind rather below than above 0°C goes but from all I hear it is a deal better than London and I am picking up in spite of it. I wish I were a Holothuria & could get on without my viscera. I should do splendidly then.

However I mean to be in London on Thursday 4th & Friday 5th March so if you can fix a meeting of the Committee for the 4th I am your man – On the 5th I have Council of the School at 2 o’clock – (stupid of me! I see by your letter that it is no good –) I have no doubt of being back by the end of March and therefore at Dispersion on 1st or 8th of April.

I don’t think we shall do much good on the Committee. I am well acquainted with Stokes’ viscosity and as President, one cannot take effectual measures with him. However I will do my best to help.

1886

That Dilke Business is the biggest scandal of my time. I suppose that Mrs Crawford must be hermaphrodite & have “adulterated” herself – as the law says she is guilty but mentions no other party.¹

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke (1843–1911), writer and politician, had been conducting an intermittent affair with Mrs Virginia Crawford. Her husband, seeking a divorce, took action through the court without Dilke or Mrs Crawford giving evidence with a verdict that Mrs Crawford had committed adultery with Dilke but not vice versa.

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ALS H327

4 Marlborough Place

April 2 1886

My dear Foster

Lady Monkswell’s¹ serious illness upset Collier’s plan of coming down to me at Bournemouth & so the wife went to Gloucester & I came here for good. I shall be very glad to see you on Monday morning any time you like – I shall not go out before lunch.

I hope there are no more complications with the Honorary Secretary² for some things have come to my knowledge which have brought me “within measurable distance” of the end of my patience.

The fellow is an irredeemable cad.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

¹ Lady Isabella Monkswell, wife of Robert Porrett Collier, first Baron Monkswell and mother of John Collier. She died on 10 April 1886.

² Lankester was honorary secretary of the Marine Biological Association from 1884 until 1890.

Huxley Papers 4: 271

Shelford
Ap. 3 [1886]

My dear Huxley

I have managed to get hold of a bad cold, – and Mrs Foster has persuaded me to give up coming up to-morrow – So I must scribble a few lines instead. What I wanted to talk about was not so much Lankester as the rest of the Council of the M.B.A.¹ from what I hear I gather that there is a good deal of excitement among them, and that they think you are rather hard upon them. They acknowledge that your influence is deservedly greater than that of all the rest of them put together – and, I would add that they are helpless as against you – but they would like to have an opportunity of stating their views when these do not coincide with your own – For instance several of them appear to think that it would be desirable that scientific officers or officers – (not administrators but advisers) should be permanently attached to the new Department – this I remember rightly our talk [*sic*] is not your view. But from what you said in your letter to Trueman Wood,² you seem to think it may be considered.

Now these younger people do not want Mundella³ to think that all men of science are opposed to such a permanent official being set up.

Then again they have worked very hard over this Marine Biol. Assoc. Business & they naturally want its importance recognised.

It is rather risky work writing all this – but what I mean is – that it would be very grievous if you & the younger men cease to work together & get at all divided – You can't be expected to give up any of your convictions or views – but may I, as an old friend ask you to meet them as far as you can, so that they may all continue to follow your lead.

As to the M.B.A.– it seems to me out of place for that body in any way to offer any suggestions as to the organization of the new Fishery department – and if the introduction into the letter of the words “scientific officers etc” seems to you to mean this, I understand your objecting to it – but I do hope that you will be able to find out some words, which you can accept and which will satisfy the younger people.

I hope you will understand my purpose in writing this – any divergence between you and the younger people (putting Lankester on one side) seems to be so much to be deplored, that I want to do my best to stop it at the outset – Don't write any answer – we can talk the matter over when we meet. You will I hope be at Council on the 8th.

Ever thine
M. Foster

¹ Marine Biological Association.

² Henry Trueman Wood (1845–1929), secretary of the Society of Arts.

³ Anthony John Mundella (1825–1897), politician, President of the Board of Trade 1886, and 1892–1895.

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ALS H328

4 Marlborough Place
N.W.
April 5 1886

My dear Foster

Mrs Foster is quite right in looking sharp after your cold – which is very generous of me to say as I am down in the mouth – a mere [chilling] in the liver – and should have been cheered by a chat.

I am very glad to know what our younger friends are thinking about – I made up my mind to some such result of the action I have thought it necessary to take – But I have no ambition to lead and no desire to drive them and if we can't agree the best way will be to go our ways separately.

I took a very strong line about Lankester's action and made much harder terms for him than I should have done for anyone else – simply because I do not trust him and it may be needful hereafter to have a clear record in black & white of what has taken place – But although some further evidence of his dirty ways had come before me just before I wrote to you and made me angry I am going to ignore all that and work with him officially as well as I can.

There is no doubt that I was imperative about this matter. It seemed to me needful to be so – but very possibly I might have done my [spiriting] more gently – and I am sorry if anybody except the culprit was annoyed. As regards the letter to be written to Mundella – I was very unwilling to modify it at all – but it really would not do as it reached me. I mean from the point of view of common sense and official propriety – So far as my intention went, my proposed alteration did not affect the substance of the letter – However we shall discuss all this today at the Council meeting – whither I shall go as mild as any sucking dove.

Unless the proposition to attach a scientific officer or officers as advisers to the Fishery Department came up at the last meeting of the Council – it is not before us. There is nothing about it in the letter. It is only assumed there will be scientific officers in the administration staff – The question of performance is one to which I do not attach any great importance – I am quite open to correction on that point as my letter to Truman [*sic*] Wood shows.

My objection is to the creation of a scientific official or body of officials who shall be under no scientific contract – whose functions are utterly undefined and who may therefore launch out into anything under cover of investigating fish & fisheries and whose director or directors may therefore use the resources at their disposal as a means of influence which it's very desirable should not be enacted either in science or in administration.

If the proposal were to establish a Fishery Council on the plan of the Meteorological Council, I should look at it quite differently.

1886

Heaven forbid that I should restrain anybody from expressing any opinion in the world – But it is so obvious to me that not one of our friends, has the smallest notion of what administration in Fishery questions means, or of the danger of creating a scientific Frankenstein in that which he is clamouring for, that I suppose I have been over anxious to prevent mischief & seemed domineering.

Well I shall mend my ways. I must be getting to be an old savage if you think it risky to write anything to me.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

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ALS H261

Wells Hotel
Ilkley, Yorkshire
April 24 1886

My dear Foster

I told Howes¹ when he got his promotion that he would have to give all his energies to that business & that I should not nominate him again for Examiner – so he does not expect anything.

I have just received the official letter stating that seven are to be appointed. If you will send me your list I will sign it & send it on.

I expect to be here for a week or two, perhaps longer. I was beginning to get wrong before we left Bournemouth and went steadily down after our return to London – so that I had to call in Hames² a very shrewd fellow who attends my daughter Marian. I was struck with the way he arranged my wife's care also. Last Monday he told me that more physicking was no good & that I had better be off here & see what exercise & the fresh air of the moors could do for me. So here I came & mean to give the plan a fair trial.

I do a minimum of ten miles per diem without fatigue and as I eat, drink & sleep well there ought to be nothing the matter with me. Why under these circumstances I should never feel honestly cheerful or have any other desire than that of running away & hiding myself I don't know – no explanation is to be found even in Foster Physiology! The only thing my demon can't stand is sharp walking and I will give him a dose of that remedy when once I get into trim.

Ever yours

T H Huxley

¹ On Huxley's retirement, Howes succeeded to his zoological duties.

² George Henry Hames, FRCS (d.1909), general practitioner in the West End of London.

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ALS H329

Wells Hotel

Ilkley

Ap. 28. 1886

My dear Foster

The list of the seven is signed & sent on.

I have been improving here wonderfully in the last few days – yesterday I walked to Bolton Abbey, the Strid etc and back which is a matter of sixteen miles without being particularly tired, though the afternoon was as hot as midsummer.

It is the old story – a case of candle snuff – some infernal compound that won't get burnt up without more oxygenation than is to be had under ordinary conditions – I ought to add, however, that nature is being aided by small doses of cascara¹ which seems to suit me very well.

The curious thing is that my poor child Marian, seems to have inherited this accursed diathesis from me and her bad fits seem to be associated with excess of uric acid. The melancholic condition has wholly disappeared and she mended so much some weeks ago that we all got sanguine about a speedy recovery – But recently she has gone very much back – it is heart breaking work.

I want to be back & doing something and yet have a notion that I should be wiser if I stopped here a few weeks & burnt up my rubbish effectually. A good deal will depend upon whether I can get my wife to join me or not – she has had a world of worry lately.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

¹ *Cascara sagrada* (sacred bark), a natural mild laxative made from the reddish-brown bark of a tree (*Rhamnus purshiana*) of the buckthorn family native to the Pacific coast of North America.

ALS H330

4 Marlborough Place
Abbey Road, N.W.
May 3. 1886

My dear Foster

I cannot find Hughes¹ letter & fancy I must have destroyed it. So I cannot satisfy Newton² as to the exact terms of his question.

But I am quite clear that my answer was not meant to recommend any particular course for Cambridge – when I know nothing about the special circumstances of the case – but referred to what I should like to do if I had carte blanche.

It is as plain as the nose on one's face (mine is said to be very plain) that Zoological & Botanical collections should illustrate 1) morphology 2) geographical distribution 3) geological succession.

It is also obvious to me that the morphological series ought to contain examples of all the extinct types in their proper places. But I think it will be no less plain to any one who has had anything to do with Geology & Palaeontology that the great mass of fossils, is to be most conveniently arranged stratigraphically. The Jermyn St Museum affords an example of the stratigraphical arrangement.

I do not know that there is anywhere a collection arranged according to Provinces of geographical distribution – It would be a great credit to Cambridge to set the example of having one.

If I had a free hand in Cambridge or anywhere else I should build a museum, open to the public, & containing three strictly limited & selected collections; one morphologically, one geographically, & one stratigraphically arranged: and B. a series of annexes arranged for storage and working purposes – to contain the material which is of no use to any but specialists. I am convinced that this is the only plan by which the wants of ordinary people can be supplied efficiently – while ample room is afforded for additions to any extent, without large expense in building.

On the present plan or no plan – museums are built at great cost & in a few years are choked for want of room.

If you have the opportunity I wish you would explain, that I gave no opinion as to what might or might not be expedient under present circumstances at Cambridge – I do not want to seem meddlesome.

Ever yours very faithfully
T. H. Huxley

Don't forget Cayley.³

N.B. As my meaning seems to have been misunderstood – I wish, if you have the chance, you would make it clear that I do not want three brick & mortar museums – but one public museum – containing a threefold collection of typical forms – a biological Trinity in Unity in fact – G. the morphology, G. the distribution & G. the palaeontology in fact – & these three one.

It might conciliate the clerics if you adopted this illustration – but as your own, mind. I should not like them to think me capable of it.

¹ Thomas McKenny Hughes (1832–1917), professor of geology at Cambridge. The new museum, named after Hughes' predecessor as professor of geology at Cambridge, Adam Sedgwick (1785–1873), did not actually open until 1904.

² Alfred Newton (1829–1907), professor of zoology and comparative anatomy at Cambridge and chairman of the Special Board for Biology and Geology.

³ Arthur Cayley (1821–1895), Sadleirian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge.

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ALS H331

Wells House
Ilkley
Yorkshire
May 17. 1886

My dear Foster

I am ashamed of myself for not going to town to attend the Gov. Grant Committee & Council – but I find I had better stay here till the end of the month when I must return for a while anyhow. I have improved very much here and so long as I take heaps of exercise & a dose of cascara every day, I have nothing to complain of beyond a fit of the blue devils when I wake in the morning.

But I don't want to do any manner of work still less any manner of play, such as is going on in London at this time of year and I think I am wise to keep out of it as long as I can.

I wish I knew what is the matter with me – I feel always just on the edge of becoming an absurd old hypochondriac & as if it only wanted a touch to send me over.

I send a series of notes & comments on the application which are at the [illegible] of the Committee if they care to hear them.

1886

The weather here has been bitterly cold (snow to wit) & stormy lately but with sunshiny gleams in between.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

I see the Department wants the Honours papers looked at soon. If you will send them down here when you have read them – I will take a look at them if it is needful to see them before the end of the month.

Item recollect I draw no pay as examiner now.

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ALS H332

Wells House

Ilkley

May 27 1886

My dear Foster

I inclose the draft of your letter to the Treasury with a slight alteration suggested. It is really monstrous that the Treasury should go behind the back of the Committee.

I am very glad that you have got Sedgwick in.¹

We are returning to town tomorrow – I have been picking up again lately and no doubt the air & exercise here have been more service to me than anything else. If I could get rid of the necessity of taking a [“painkiller persuader”] every day I should be physically quite right; and the blue devils worry me far less than they did. If there were any herd of swine here I might cast them out altogether but I expect they would no [*sic*] go into black faced sheep.

I am disposed to stop not more than ten days or a fortnight in London but to come back here & bring some work with me – In fact I do not know that I should return yet if it were not that I do not wish to miss our usual visit to Balliol, and that my Spanish daughter is coming home for a few months² – By the way, I daresay she & her husband would like to go to the concert again. If Rix will send me four tickets I will fill them up properly as there may be one or two other people I shall think of when I get back.

The [“Clowes”³ Paper” (Squares tied in bundles with string?) had better go to my house.

I am overwhelmed at being taken at my word about scientific federation. "Something will transpire" as old Gutzlaff said when he flogged plaintiff, defendant, and witnesses in an obscure case.

Ever yours
T. H. Huxley

I have had an invitation from Lankester to sign "without committing myself to details" an approbation of his grand scheme – a stupendous array of names appear thus committed to the "principle of the Bill." I prefer to be the Hartington of the situation.

¹ Adam Sedgwick (1854–1913), zoologist, lecturer in animal morphology at Cambridge, was elected FRS in 1886.

² Huxley's son-in-law Alfred Eckersley was building a railway across southern Spain.

³ Possibly the printers William Clowes Ltd.

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ALS H333

Wells House
Ilkley
June 21. 1886

My dear Foster

A letter from Carpenter¹ on the same topic as that to you (which I return herewith) reached me yesterday – I doubt not that what he says is quite correct and that there is very little chance of his filling a house at Eton – The whole system of paying the Eton masters by the profits of the boarding houses they keep is detestable to my mind – but any attempt to alter it would be futile – For Eton's sake I shall be very sorry if Carpenter leaves it – but I have sometimes doubted whether he is quite the man to make his way there – Goodness is more apparent in him than tact – I shall write him a testimonial.

I think your plan of dealing with the Honours man is good, I was doubtful about him.

Donnelly wrote to me in a state of mind about the preparation of plucks – & spoke of doing away with the compulsories. I objected strongly – as I look upon them as essential to fairness in an examination conducted as ours is.

By the way, I told him that I thought I had much better cease to appear as examiner – In case of a row, it would be officially awkward for me to have to say I had read none of the physiological papers.

I am sorry to miss the council on Thursday – as a vote might be useful in the publications scheme. I do not think that either the President or your Co. Sec. want any alteration made – I have nothing further to suggest.

1886

I have been picking up here again excellently though the weather (except one day) has been very cold & unsummer like.

It is not improbable we may go to Harrogate for the wife to do the baths (she is in London just now but I expect her here in a day or two) & later on to Switzerland with the girls but our plans are rather chaotic at present.

Ever yours very truly

T. H. Huxley

¹ Philip Herbert Carpenter (see letter 119, note 3) was assistant master at Eton College where Huxley was a governor.

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ALS H334

Prince of Wales Hotel
Harrogate
Yorkshire
June 30 1886

My dear Foster

I have just posted the Egyptian letter to [Evans] expressing a strong hope that we may somehow get the money to reach the bottom somewhere. If we do not do that our expenditure up to this time will be, not exactly wasted, but of much less value than otherwise. I do not see why we should not get money from the Gov. Grant – we have spent our own freely enough.

We have migrated here from Ilkley in order that my wife may go through a course of the waters. There were difficulties in the way of our getting to Kissingen and I thought it would not be so hot. However, it is hot enough in all conscience.

We should be in town for a few days at the end of July & then go on to Switzerland with the girls.

I am glad to hear there is hope still about the publication business.

Ever yours very faithfully,

T. H. Huxley

Very glad to see Lubbock's excellent letter to you – I am in hopes that the Great Old Mischief maker will be beaten.