

311

ALS H388

Grand Hotel
Eastbourne
Nov 24 1890

My dear Foster

Her Majesty's sanction has been obtained.

The G.O.M. is not murdered – only 'fillipped with a three man beetle' as the fat knight has it.¹

Strong language is my aversion – especially about an adversary – but if I have not shown the G.O.M. to be a lying, ignorant, pretentious humbug, 'call me horse' – as again the fat knight saith.²

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ "fillip me with a three-man beetle", Falstaff, *Henry IV*, part 2, I. ii.

² 'I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse.' Falstaff to Prince Henry, *Henry IV*, part 1, II. iv.

312

Huxley Papers 121:59

[n.d.]

Rev. Sir

Have put you down for Toast the Retiring President.

In thanks

Ever thine

M. F.

313

ALS H389

Hodeslea
Eastbourne
Dec 1 1890

My dear Foster

I was very sorry to have to send you my telegram today – all the more as the proposal of G.G.S.' health was my own suggestion. But in the first place I got a little chill on Saturday & I thought a big fog was so almost certain in London as an accompaniment of the thaw – that I hesitated to face it.

However I do not think that would have stopped me had not a water pipe burst in my home & flooded the galley on Saturday night. Nothing could be done till today & I have had to go into the affair – luckily no great harm done – with builder & plumber today – and there is so much of the same thing going on in Eastbourne that I have had to wait here all the afternoon for workmen who have not turned up after all. If I cannot get hold of the fellow tomorrow we shall have to put off going in on Wednesday.

I hope the dinner will go off well my defection notwithstanding.

Ever yours very faithfully
T. H. Huxley

314

Huxley Papers 4:357

Shelford
Dec 2 90

My dear Huxley

Sorry to miss you – but you were quite right not to risk it. We had other gaps at dinner owing to Tithe's Bill¹ – Another Balfour to wit – but it went off very well, over 200 – & a good dinner. Lubbock took your toast – but had not much to say. The new President² did not make his appearance in the Reception Room till nearly seven pm so Rayleigh & I had to do all the receiving – but he made up by delivering after dinner long lectures about each

1890

of the medallists which bored every one – I rather think it was because he observed the barrenness of the Presidential address in the aft[ernoon] & thought he ought to try & make up. I think Stokey succeeded in saying less than ever – but he did not kill any Fellow prematurely.

Hope you are keeping all right.

Ever thine

M. Foster

I hear you are laying hands on Booth now – what a fine appetite for quarrelling you have.

Sulla Strada Ferrata.

P.S. Got yours after I had written above – heartfelt sympathy in your struggles with the plumber.

Have read the Booth letter – think it one of the best you ever wrote.³

M. F.

¹ The Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill had its second reading in the House of Commons on 1 December 1890.

² William Thomson (1824–1907), physicist, later Baron Kelvin of Largs, generally known as Lord Kelvin.

³ General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, had attracted widespread interest with the publication in October 1890 of *In darkest England*. The request for advice on a bequest to Booth's scheme had compelled Huxley to write a series of letters to *The Times*, see Desmond, *Huxley*, pp. 583–586. The letters are reprinted in 'Social diseases and worse remedies. Letters to the "Times" on Mr. Booth's scheme with a preface and introductory essay' (1891), *Collected essays*, vol. 9, pp. 188–334.

315

ALS H390

Hodeslea

Eastbourne

Dec 31 1890

My dear Foster

This comes wishing you two a very happy new year from us two.

At divers times I have asked you to let me know what Michael Junior would like for a house warming present – but to no effect – So there is nothing for it but to shy the inclosed little cheque at your head and ask you to send him anything you think to his mind with my blessing.

We are settling down & find the house [amenable] in every way – keeps us old folks warm even in this weather. But we have not ventured to go to London – though it has been a great disappointment to miss Christmas with them.

1890

However we have Joyce to console us – and a wonderful little woman she is.

Thank Heaven we have done with the S.A. at last – they will get a lot more money but the ‘boom’ for political and other ends, boned by Booth, Stead Co is busted up.¹

What Cunningham is it that made such an ass of himself in the Times the other day? Not the Zoologist Station man surely?²

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ Due to a disagreement with General Booth over the Social Reform wing of the Salvation Army, Commissioner Frank Smith, in charge of the department, resigned his office. See ‘The Salvation Army. A serious crisis’ *The Times*, Friday, Dec. 26, 1890, p. 5, issue 33205, col. B, and Frank Smith, ‘Commissioner Smith’s resignation’, *The Times*, Friday, Jan. 2, 1891, p. 5, issue 33211, col. D.

² Joseph Thomas Cunningham (1859–1935), a fisheries naturalist for the Marine Biological Association’s laboratory at Plymouth (see letter 377), had written a letter to *The Times* dissenting from Huxley’s arguments and conclusions regarding General Booth and the struggle for existence. ‘Letter to the Editor’, *The Times*, Friday, Dec. 26, 1890, p. 5, issue 33205, col. D.

316

ALS H391

Hodeslea

Eastbourne

Jan 10 1891

My dear Foster

I have nothing to suggest about the Report – which is very clear & will be useful to all. I trust it does not mean that there is going to be any more alteration at present – the door of entrance will not need to be held open any wider this century.

I am trying to bring the Booth business to an end so far as I am concerned – but it’s like getting a wolf by the ears – you can’t let him go exactly when you like.

But the result is quite worth the trouble. Booth, Stead, Tillet, Manning & Co. have their little game spoilt for the present.

You can’t imagine the quantity of letters I get from the Salvation Army subordinates thanking me – and telling me all sorts of stories in strict confidence – the poor devils are frightened out of their lives by headquarters spies – Some beg me not to reply as their letters are opened.

1891

I knew that Saints were not bad hands at lying before; but these Booth people beat Banagher.

Then there is that little red Duke¹ awaits skinning, & I believe the G.O.M. is to be upon me! Oh for a quiet life.

Ever yours faithfully

T. H. Huxley

¹ The Duke of Argyll had published 'Professor Huxley on the warpath', *The Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1891, **29**: 1–33.

317

Huxley Papers 4:359

Shelford
Cambs
Feb 10 91

Dear Huxley

The Padrone of the Hotel at Maloja has offered my boy the post of Doctor there – Tucker is useless & they mean to get rid of him. He offers rooms & pension free.

I suppose you would advise his accepting it – for your opinion of the Hotel is favourable and he ought, while there to pick up some coppers & get known to people. I have advised him to accept.

I hope you are enjoying the milder weather. Best wishes to all.

Ever thine

M. Foster

You see you have had an injurious effect on Stanley, leading him to give his jewels to B!!¹

¹ A short news item in *The Times* stated that Henry M. Stanley had announced that he intended to donate the gifts from the sovereigns of Europe, amounting in value to around \$500,000, to General Booth. *The Times*, Feb. 10, 1891, p. 5, issue 33244, col. D. The following day *The Times* stated that Stanley indeed had made this statement but had intended it as a joke. *The Times*, Feb. 11, 1891, p. 5, issue 33245, col. D. See following letter.

318

ALS H392

Hodeslea
Eastbourne
Feb 11 1891

My dear Foster

I do not think Michael j[nr.], could do better. The people were dying to get rid of Tucker who is simply an ass – and he will have excellent chances.

[Walther], the manager & his wife are very good people & he struck me as a particularly able man. In fact I used to chaff him as the Bismarck of that region. If you think it will be of any service I will write to him about Michael at once – Do you know where he is? For I suppose the Hotel has been shut up all the winter.

I should like well enough to have gone to Maloja again this summer – but I am afraid of the long journey for my wife – and we shall probably content ourselves with Cornwall which she has never seen.

We have got through the winter very well – though I find I am very sensitive to chills and must mind my Ps and Qs. Just now we have Leonard's wife & boy¹ with us – so that with Joyce into the bargain – our little home is very cheery.

Boo! You look at your newspaper today & you will see that Stanley's gift is all a flam! Thank the Gods I have done with the Booth business now I have only to dispatch the G.O.M. (who has been lying hard as usual) & the red Duke and finally retire from controversy of which I am sick.²

Ever yours
T. H. Huxley

¹ Leonard's wife Julia (née Arnold) and Huxley's grandson Julian.

² Huxley published 'Illustrations of Mr. Gladstone's controversial method', *The Nineteenth Century*, March 1891, 29: 455–467.

319

ALS H393

Hodeslea
Eastbourne
April 19 1891

My dear Foster

Here are the regulations & welcomes. They arrived yesterday.

I believe I shall take to gardening if I live long enough – I have got so far as to take a lively interest in the condition of my shrubs which have been usefully heated by the long cold.

Ever yours very faithfully

T. H. Huxley

320

ALS H394

Hodeslea,
Eastbourne
May 12 1891

My dear Foster

I was very glad to hear from you. Pray don't get attempting to do anything before you are set up again.

I am in a ridiculous state of weakness – and bless my stars that I have nothing to do – I find it troublesome to do even that.

I wish ballooning had advanced so far as to take people to Maloja – for I do not think my wife ought to undertake such a journey & yet I believe the high air would do us both more good than anything else – the kidney business still worries her a good deal at times although on the whole she is wonderfully well.

1891

The University of London scheme appears to be coming to grief as I never doubted it would.

With our love

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

I think the devil has broken, look among our legislation – I knew Verney¹ & could not have conceived him capable of such unmitigated villainy – Happy to say De Cobain² is not an acquaintance.

¹ Captain Edmund Hope Verney (1838–1910), MP for North Buckinghamshire, was expelled from the House of Commons following his conviction of “conspiring to procure for corrupt and immoral purpose a girl of nineteen”.

² Edward Samuel Wesley de Cobain (1840–1908), Conservative MP for Belfast East, had absconded to the US after he was charged with gross indecency.

321

ALS H395

Hodeslea
Staveley Road
Eastbourne
Aug 1 1891

My dear Foster

Please read the inclosed and if you know of anybody suitable please send his name to Mr Thomas.

I have told him that I am out of the way of knowing & that you are physiologically omniscient – so don't belie the character!

A lovely clematis in full flower which I had spent hours in nailing up has just died suddenly. I am more inconsolable than Jonah! No cause of decease perceptible.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

322

ALS H396

Hodeslea
 Staveley Road
 Eastbourne
 Oct 3 1891

My dear Foster

I just opened my 'Times' with trepidation – as I expected that the 'powers of Doom' would be too many for you. Well it is no use to cry over spilt milk; and the next thing is to help on the reversal of the verdict which as the 'Times' wisely intimates has to come.

My fingers itched to reply to old Grimthorpe¹ but I thought I should probably do more harm than good – and moreover I am sick of seeing my name in print.

Is there nothing to be done in the way of organization? Illust Stokerius sent me his book – but I have not tackled it yet – In thanking him I congratulated him on getting out of Parliament – Really for so 'child like & bland' a party he has played his cards very well.²

I will see what can be done about putting him straight – but I rather want to confine myself to getting out the volume of collected essays promised to Macmillan.

You will have to come to London & set up physiology at the Royal College of Science. It is the only place in Great Britain in which scientific teaching is trammelled neither by parsons nor by litterateurs – I have always implored Donnelly to keep us clear of any connexion with a University of any kind sort or description – & I tried to instil the same lesson into the Doctors the other day. But the 'liberal education' cant is an obsession of too many of them.

Ever yours

T. H. H

¹ Possibly referring to a letter from Edmund Beckett, first Baron Grimthorpe (1816–1905), 'Tithes and teetotalism', *The Times*, Sept. 29, 1891, p. 10, issue 33442, col. E.

² Stokes was MP for Cambridge University from 1887–1891. *Natural theology: the Gifford Lectures*, London; Edinburgh, A. and C. Black, was published in 1891.

323

ALS H397

Athenaeum Club
Pall Mall
Oct 20 1891

My dear Foster

If I had known the nature of the proceedings at the College of Physicians yesterday I should have braved the tedium of listening to a lecture I could not hear in order to see you decorated. Clark had made a point of my going to the Dinner, and – worse luck – I had to “say a few words” after it with the result that I am entirely washed out to-day, and only able to send you the feeblest of congratulations.¹

Ever yours
T. H. Huxley

¹ Foster had been awarded the Baly Medal of the College of Physicians and was presented with it on the occasion of the Harveian Oration. Andrew Clark was the president of the College.

324

ALS H398

Hodeslea
Staveley Road
Eastbourne
Nov 17 1891

My dear Foster

I am in debt to the R.S. for poor dear old Busk’s obituary already – the which I have never been able to bring myself to do – by a sort of perversity which no well regulated mind (like yours) will comprehend. – It haunts me like a ghost; and if I add Wharton Jones thereto I don’t know what may become of me.¹

Perhaps I may make an effort & clear both off – at any rate I will try – but I cannot do anything till I have got my volume of essays out – I am writing an introduction and it is very slow work – the longer I am at it the more trouble writing costs me.

I am going to town Saturday 28th to attend a meeting of Trustees B M & stay over R.S. Dinner – but I would go a day earlier if there were any chance of meeting with you.

1892

Did I not tell you ages ago that the Scylla of the R.S. was the politician-courtier and the Charybdis, the commercial-Engineer? I have read the advertisement of the 'water tap' with as great disgust as Mr Wilde.² The P.R.S. ought to drop all his trading as a Q.C. drops his briefs when he is made a judge.

Hooker & I used to groan over the medals – but it is hard to say how to mend matters – You certainly did well in Rücker's case.³ He is a very able man all round.

The storm here was as near a hurricane as I have seen in these parts. It slew all the young shoots as if they had been burned – otherwise we escaped damage.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

¹ George Busk had been dead for five years; Thomas Wharton Jones (1808–1891) had recently died, on 7 November 1891.

² Henry Wilde, FRS (1833–1919), an electrical engineer, had attacked Sir William Thomson in a letter to the council on 28 October 1891 which included an objection to an advertisement for 'Sir William Thomson's Patent Indestructible Water Taps'. See Marie Boas Hall, *All scientists now: the Royal Society in the nineteenth century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 124–125.

³ Arthur William Rücker (1848–1915), physicist, was awarded the Royal Medal of the Royal Society in 1891 in recognition of his work on thin films and terrestrial magnetism.

325

ALS H399

Hodeslea
Staveley Road
Eastbourne
Feb. 7 1892

My dear Foster

The Committee elections at the Athenaeum are coming on. Have you anybody to suggest?

Joyce is better but still kept in bed – The complaint seemed diphtherotic in some ways – but there is no "putting a name to it".

Ever yours very kindly

T. H. Huxley

326

ALS H400

Hodeslea
Staveley Road
Eastbourne
Feb 10 1892

My dear Foster

I thought F. Darwin was in the Athenaeum but I see he is not.¹ I shall bring him forward.

Wait till I cut you out at the Horticultural. I have not made up my mind what to compete in yet. Look out when I do!

I am glad to say Joyce is mending & I hope fairly on the way to convalescence.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ Francis Darwin (1848–1925), botanist, seventh child of Charles Darwin.

327

ALS H401

Hodeslea
Staveley Road
Eastbourne
Feb 14 1892

My dear Foster

Will you get into the head of the noble Lord the P.R.S¹ that if he cannot pay as much attention to the duties of his office as he does to water-taps he had better get out of it? His absence on Friday lost Stone's election.² Stone lay in his line & not in Evans' or mine and as he did not take the trouble to attend – we not only lost his vote (which would have counted two on the division which was very close) but his influence – I have put down

1892

F. Darwin but am not sure about picking him next time – as it might injure Stone's chances though Evans seems to think not.

Joyce is up & I trust we shall have no trouble with the cervical glands after all.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

I called at poor dear Hirst's place yesterday – but he could not see anybody. His house-keeper told me he had been sinking steadily for the last week.³

¹ William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, was president of the Royal Society 1890–1895.

² Edward James Stone (1831–1897), astronomer. This is presumably election to the Athenaeum.

³ Thomas Archer Hirst died on 16 February.

328

ALS H402

Hodeslea
Staveley Road
Eastbourne
Feb 20 1892

My dear Foster

R. Scott tells me he spoke to you about Lady Blake's¹ scheme for a Zoological Station in the West Indies – Lady Blake wrote to me about it & I promised her I would support her plan as soon as it was made public – But it has not been made public yet and as I told Scott, I do not think the Go^v Grant Com^c would entertain the project until it has taken some definite shape. However, it may be well to keep it in mind.

We have been snow covered & east wind bedevilled here for days. I was to have gone to poor dear old Hirst's funeral today but dare not.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ Edith Blake (1845–1928), wife of Sir Henry Blake, then Governor of Jamaica.

329

ALS H408

Hodeslea
 Staveley Road
 Eastbourne
 Feb 24 1892¹

My dear Foster

I retract my objurgations of Thomson² and hope he will vote early & often for the right people next time.

Roberts Austen will be a very good man to run. Somebody in his line should put his name down. But I am not so sure about Preece – never did exactly understand his claims.³ However, I am no judge of them.

Proud an' 'appy shall I be to belong to Horticultural if you will see to it.

Could send specimens of nailing up creepers if qualification is wanted!

Joyce is well of the tonsillitis – but chorea very troublesome – the wife bothered on her account otherwise we are flourishing.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

¹ This letter is catalogued as July.

² See letter 327. It was announced in the *London Gazette* of the previous evening that the Queen had conferred a barony on Sir William Thomson.

³ Sir William Chandler Roberts-Austen and Sir William Henry Preece (1834–1913), electrical engineer. Presumably Huxley is still referring to election to the Athenaeum.