

C593 John Ruskin to Annie, 28 July 1876

MS: Murray. *Contained in a brown leather-bound book, inscribed on cover 'RTR from A.I.R. 1890.'*

Brantwood, | Coniston. Lancashire. | Friday 28th. July.

Dear Miss Thackeray.

Your kind little note this morning finds my little fat pussy still not in quite purring state;¹ – she must needs sleep with her window open last night and is coughing again to day, and I fear I shall have to shut her up before she gets well.

If she is at all able she will certainly be with you on Sunday but I shall be too heavy-hearted to come myself. I wonder whether you could lunch with us tomorrow² – I have only lunch time for I'm bound to finish a drawing in the afternoon for little Kathleen,³ in which a leaf or two more ivy will make all the difference; and the rain has thrown me out to day.

I was looking myself this morning at some bits about the Valley of Cluse and the lake of Thun in the first two numbers of Deucalion, which I like better myself, than 'Frondes'⁴ – I have sent them, thinking they may possibly interest M^r Stephen also in some of their glacier talk.

Ever your's & his, | affectionately. | J Ruskin.

1. 'Pussy' was one of Ruskin's pet names for his cousin and sometime housekeeper, Joan Severn.
2. He noted this meeting, 'July 30th Sunday. Yesterday Miss Thackeray at lunch – then Susie – I hope they all liked coming.' *The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin*, ed. H. G. Viljoen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 24. The diary records seeing Annie on a number of occasions during this visit: on 7 July (he called on her), 9 July (she and Leslie came for tea), 1 July, 24 July (he went for tea), 25 July (Annie and Pinkie – wrongly identified as Laura by the editor – called in the afternoon) and 29 July.
3. 'Little Kathleen' is not identified. Ruskin cannot mean Kathleen Olander, whom he first met in 1887 when she was an eighteen-year-old art student.
4. *Frondes Agrestes* (Orpington, 1875) consisted of extracts from Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, selected by his friend Susanna Beever. His visits to the Alps resulted in his geological work, *Deucalion: Collected Studies of the Lapse of Waves, and Life of Stones*, which he began publishing in 1875.

C594 Annie to Blanche Warre Cornish, August 1876

MS: Eton.

[Coniston]

My Blanchie – I had been going to write to you at home but I may as well take Nellys pen & paper – y^r. mother looks up & says tomorrow is y^r. birthday. Pinkie is reading paragraphs from the Bravo case¹ & Nelly in pink & mathematics is copying her little formulas into a book. I ~~could~~^{can} almost see Meme in our little farm in the window pane it lies on a green Wordsworthian hill just opposite where Leslie is doing his proofs & ^{to wh.} M^r Field [is] wending his way – Dear as you may think I have no special raptures to send you but Im very glad we came & very glad they came & Leslie at last is rallying & looking more like himself. Meme trots about & never leaves off asking for “tories”, she is very faithful to Bill und Tissy & Magunddodo & to her beloved Ennie² – She woke up this morning in her little crib with such a sweet little sleepy smile & said “Ise ’wake Anna!” Meme calls me Anna I dont know why & Pinkie Pinna not Emily & O dont tell Mag & Dodo but she has thrown her ^{Pinkies} beautiful umbrella into the lake. ^{I dont think} Meme has ~~not~~ the slightest idea of anything having more right to be in one particular place than in another. ^{It is very odd to think that this is all morality.} This morning as I was looking at her asleep she made a little face that was so like Papa, it came over me with a happy sort of ache to think that the children carry about some positive real true identity of the dear still dearer ones whose life they were ^{live & still} are. No children can ever ever be to me what their elders parents are & have been, but how much ah how much, I never knew till now. I am very glad I had a little talk with my Min about it once. My heart does so ache for poor poor Katie of whom I know nothing but this saddest news.³ Job is in our house & Charlie [Brookfield] & writes very happily & contentedly & we are going back next week. It seems all over provokingly soon & we have had too many people here really to be much together, but this is a nice Brock Hill morning, after seeing M^{rs}. Oliphant off, & Pinnie is now playing a delightful sort of tarn or mountain stream music, w^h. is very refreshing to ones soul. I cant quite tell sometimes w^h. is music & w^h. are the things one is listening to with ones eyes. Goodbye dearest. Kiss my Chatie & the dear little ones.

I have never told you how well they all look & how much they seem to like this. Richmond has cut his hair & is reading Toqueville.

I wonder if Chatties letters are sent on from Paris, there is one of M^r Ruskins I sent on to her, about w^h. he is very anxious.

1. An investigation into the death of Charles Delaunay Bravo from antimony poisoning ran for several weeks during the summer, and became known as ‘The Balham Mystery’ in the press. The public’s interest was held by suggestions that his widow might have been

complicit in his death, and although the enquiry attached no blame to her, her reputation was severely damaged.

2. Pet names for Blanche and Gussie's children.
3. Kate Perugini had lost her child of a few months.

C595 Annie to Jane Senior, ?autumn 1876

MS: Beinecke. ■

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My darling Jeanie. I was correcting the maids of all work¹ last night which brought me to you very naturally & this morning I was thinking about you when I saw y^r writing under my eyes. I shall see you next week. Last week I came up for a day but it was all filled up with pipes & things. Dearest are you out of this horrid attack it was so good of Walter to send me word ^{abt you} Poor Milly is still bad with a feverish attack – It seems an epidemic her nurse had it & she got it nursing her. Leslie is gone to his Cornhill today, & Meme's little legs are trotting over head & I have not much to tell you only that strangely strangely soon the world has begun again & I feel as if while it lasts, I could go on once more. Dearest I think you know what I mean when I say how overawed I feel at my own blessings, at the thought of Minnys love & tender trust in her old sister. I can only say in my heart ^{to her} Darling we can't be not together & then it seems to me as if we were heart to heart somehow. O pray God death is not death there, any more than it is here –

My dearest Jeanie I send you my true love & am y^r. faithful AIT

1. 'Maids-of-all-Work and Blue Books' was republished in *From an Island and Some Essays* (Leipzig, 1877).

C596 Annie to Charlotte Ritchie, late September 1876

MS: Eton. ■

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My Chattie. I do so wish I could fly over & spend an evening with you. I am afraid you will be so lonely when y^r Pinkie has left you that is the only reason why I shant be glad to see her – But it will be very nice to have a little glimpse of her sweet face again. Caroline has come to stay while her house is being papered, & all day long we have been in a state of excitement with house agents & people coming about Southwell Gardens. Nobody went to see the house for months & months & now suddenly half a dozen people have been. I shall be glad, besides the money to see it with a look of habitation again.¹ Here is a note of Lionels.

He came – I was so sorry – just with M^r. Warr who turns to stone & depression at the sight of a Tennyson & to whom I wanted to be friendly so that dear Lionel wandered off, but I couldnt help it. Hallam promised to come but has never turned up.

The children are all very well & good thank God. Margie & Annie go off to their day school & we heroically breakfast at half past 8 with them,² Troy & Boxer come down (Boxer in a little flannel dressing gown) Meme doesnt wake & sleeps on & on, she has got a little new fur coat in w^h. she does look so sweet with her mommees own little sable hat. Today Meme began telling me all about that last time we crossed in the steamer, & then Mommee put on a waterproof for a pillow & den you did 'old me tight she said, & went through it all bit by bit. It seems so untrue that Minnie is not with us that I think it is not true somehow & often & often forget or feel as if it were only a dream from w^h. I shall awake. Dear Leslie looks very sadly again but people do think him better. Goodnight my darling. Take care of yourself a little bit & dont go up too many stairs.

1. See Annie's Journal, 27 October 1876, Volume 2.

2. See Annie's Journal, 23 October 1876, Volume 2.

C597 Richmond to Annie, 10 December 1876

MS: Eton. Postmark: CAMBRIDGE DE 11 76. Address: Miss Thackeray | 11 Hyde Park Gate South | London. S.W.

[Cambridge] Sunday

Sweetheart. I would have sent you a goodnight last night but Lionel [Tennyson] appeared just as I was beginning so I couldnt but you know I wished you one dont you? It is very nice his being here indeed but my throat feels parched with talking and this is literally the first moment Ive had alone today – I went to Chapel for the 1st time for about a month and somehow it chimed in with everything and seemed like a little bit with you. After all its much better only to do it occasionally as a treat and there then seems a reason for it – whereas if it comes round like the days of the week it is just a bit of machinery like everything – I got up to your letter this morning having gone to bed early and then took a walk in the sunshine which was like a little bit of the spring almost. My breakfast was a great success yesterday and to my surprise I found the master¹ went on talking to me about Latin literature after everybody had left which was gratifying but slightly terrifying.

Goodnight or I wont catch the post.

1. The master of Trinity at this time was the classicist William Hepworth Thompson (1810–86).

C598 Annie to Alfred Tennyson, 5 January 1877

MS: Eton. ■ Postmark: TUNBRIDGE WELLS JA 5 77. Address: Alfred Tennyson Esq | Farringford | Freshwater | Isle of Wight.

11, Hyde Park Gate South, | S.W. | Saxonbury Frant¹ | Jan. 5.

Dear & Kind S.

I was ~~ill~~ unwell in London when Harold came & I couldnt read or write comfortably & I brought thy Xmas book² down here to enjoy at leisure. ^{However, when I got here I found I had read it all without knowing how.} It comes without reading almost & I feel in some way about Tennyson as I do about Thackeray that the books are so much part of their writing ^{& of my own life} that I cant criticise I can only love the beautiful bits & accept them as a matter of course, & for I seem in a sort of way in communion with the ^{spirits that move the} hands that writ them. (I mean that for a quotation tell Hallam) The battle scene³ has got all round me this morning & is clanging round & round my bed & I dont know where my morality is for I have a sort of sympathy with Aldwyth too – There's a little bit about prisoners in their dungeons⁴ w^h. ~~does tell the story~~ did strike me so. When I went to Loches & down & down & down ^{into the black damp} & little Piere Freeman began to stamp & beat the damp walls in a fury of indignation, & up outside it was a beautiful hot summers day ^{it was just like Wulfnoth. I do so like the thing Wulfnoth says} I am so glad you have written it – & I am so glad you have written Harold & sent it to me. Did you send it to Kate Perry at Spezia, her delighted gratefulness made me very ashamed, & so wish I deserved ~~them~~ her thanks.

Dear M^{rs}. Jackson has taken us all into this kind nest, & warmed us & cooked us up. Leslie made my heart ache before we came but D^r. Jackson plies him with roast beef steadily without moving a muscle & little Meme feeds the chickens, & Pinkie & Richmond are faithful correspondents, & now & then comes a wallet from dear Cammie.

And goodbye & all good blessings upon you dear old kind friends. I am writing biblically but I feel very naturally, & am yours lovingly AT

Its 15 years since you began to be kind to me.

1. Annie, Leslie and Laura were staying with John and Maria Jackson.
2. *Harold: A Drama* (London, 1876). 'Thy' was the form of address habitual to the Tennysons when writing within the immediate family circle, but rarely used by Annie.
3. *Harold*, V.i.
4. *Harold*, II.ii.

C599 Annie to Margaret Oliphant, 6 January 1877

MS: Eton. ■ Postmark: TUNBRIDGE WELLS JA 6 77. Address: M^{rs}. Oliphant | Circus Crescent | Windsor.

Frant. T. Wells

My dear Friend

I say thankyou with all my heart, & then I dont write it down, so how can you guess how we liked your dear little letter – But I think you could know – I had been wondering how I should ever find a piece of string to tie some little Molières together I have got for you at home. I am going back tomorrow, & somehow or other, even [if] it sh^d. be red tape I will fix up the parcel please dont have the books already though the love we send with them is certainly yours. This little move has been a blessing, L. is certainly a trifle less languid & thin & I too have been out of sorts & am put in again, dearest little L. is like a little Swiss rivulet running over us. Goodnight my love to you & yours & all our best best wishes

Y^{rs}. affect^{ly} AT.

At the end of January, the intensity of Annie and Richmond's growing intimacy was such that, when Leslie walked in upon them embracing in the drawing-room, he insisted that they should decide about their future. Although he viewed the disparity in their ages with some distaste, and was decidedly reserved about Richmond (perhaps prompted partly by jealousy), when their mutual commitment was clear to him he worked hard on their behalf to reconcile those of the Ritchies who opposed the idea of marriage. An informal engagement appears to have been entered into, known only by a few. Not until May did they make this public, when Richmond secured a position as a civil servant in the India Office. They were married on 2 August. Meanwhile, Leslie's feelings for Julia Duckworth were beginning to emerge.

C600 Annie to Pinkie, late March 1877

MS: Eton. ■

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

Darling Here is y^r welcome letter, you dear beloved child to write at once – so much has happened since you left that it seems to me that days & days have passed. Dear when I went on Friday the news was very bad she had had a restless night, & was only quiet when Walter held her hand, that passing rally was her farewell to us all.¹ I came home for I was expecting Uncle Arthur & also I had to write all those Clifton letters. He was scarcely gone & the letters were scarcely posted when Duncan appeared, to say that Miss Shawe had just arrived – ^{There she}

was conversing in various languages & as lively as possible. It was altogether the vaguest most miserable jumble.² But things are far far better than I feared – It was a quarrel nothing worse, & the people certainly have behaved thoughtlessly. Poor dear she begged to stay with us in your little room where I took her up to rest, but it made everyone so nervous so uncomfortable that we thought it best to accept Maryannes offer to take her ^{to} her own home. Leslie & Richmond were so dear & kind ~~and~~ ^{Of course at first one was frightened but they} only laughed & made the best of it – and indeed now I am thankful she came off to us. I didnt dare ask for news of our sweet Jeanie Senior that ^{night I was so} tho all the time I knew what was – but in the morning Job came – She died ^{at 7 o'clock on Saturday} as she lived, loving them sparing them – no crepe she said for me no mourning only flowers. Carry me away on Monday.

Yesterday I met M^r. Stansfeld³ going to the door he gripped my hand & looked so pale. They have sent a great hamper of primroses from Freshwater w^h. they put all round her. I went to Minnies flower-place with the children & we got some great white flowers – they are all very quiet they have not even drawn the blinds. The river was all shining yesterday with a great spring holliday. I spent the day not with the children or with Richmond or Julia but in a hansom with M^{rs}. Newton driving from place to place in search of a home for poor Aunt Jane. I think I have found just the very place if she will only consent to come back to it in a few weeks.

Goodbye my own Pinnie give Chattie a hug for me. Something has come from Ceylon this morning, a letter from Hardinge [Cameron] & such a sweet little scrap of my darlings writing w^h. has only reached him after two years. Dearest we all miss you dreadfully. I couldnt have stayed here & got well without you, but I am quite well again tho' Saturday was a very sick day & we do miss you. My comfort is that now you will go & make Gussie well.

Bless you darling. Meme misses you too.

1. Jeanie Senior's long battle against cancer ended with her death on 24 March.
2. Jane Shawe's behaviour became increasingly eccentric in her last years.
3. As president of the Local Government Board, James Stansfeld had appointed Jeanie Senior as an inspector of workhouse pauper schools. See Annie's Journal, note 18 to 1873, Volume 2.

C601 Annie to George Smith, late March or early April 1877

MS: JMA NLS. ■

11, Hyde Park Gate South. | S.W. | Wednesday

Dear M^r. Smith

M^{rs}. Simpson¹ wrote to me yesterday saying that she wished I would write something about dear Jeanie Senior whose public works deserved to be recorded. I really could not just now, & anyhow someone else would do it better I think.

Leslie said he could not bear the idea of my straightway publishing an article in the C.H.M. – When it was old M^r. Senior I could set to work to make phrases & touch them up,² but anyone one loves is so different.

Only tho' I did not tell them so I thought I would just write this word to ask you if you w^d. have a little paragraph in the P.M.G. inserted just in the usual phraseology – I think it would please them & I am sure her two years work will be ^{long} remembered – I have been a little out of sorts again but my cordial is most wonderful. I do hope you have as good news from Cannes as we do.

Y^r. aff^{te}. | AT

1. For Jeanie's sister-in-law, Minnie Simpson, see Annie's Journal, note 4 to 1874, Volume 2.
2. Letters C273–4, Volume 2.

C602 Annie to Richmond, 15 April 1877

MS: Eton. *On reverse is a note dated 13 April from Richmond to Mrs Bateman, written from Brock Hill, Bracknell: 'I shall come up late on Sunday night, the 15th. | Richmond Ritchie.'*

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My my my¹ I am afraid you will be very cold & hungry before you reach M^{rs} Bateman. It seems less like a ^{nasty first} letter to send this one back – that's why I am using it up ^{not from economy} instead of putting it in the fire as you told me to. Darling I went to see Julia after you went away – I ended by crying this time not for us – but because it is so sad for her & Leslie & she doesn't know what to do – She said they envied us so this morning, & Leslie said that isn't parting & that we both looked so happy. Did you know that we look happy M^r. Richmond – I'm afraid Leslie is very very unhappy he says Julia has healed his wound but she cannot put back the blood – Now it is half past seven & you are in y^r train still & my little room seems all full of y^r love & tender care. I shall go to bed very early. Dearest as I think of you my heart overflows with thankful happiness. There is Leslie more lonely than I was & his happiness seems so precarious, there is Julia not knowing how to help him with that horrid parting hanging over her – There is Job worried & anxious – & whatever sorrow may come, I have had your blessing to kindle my failing life – Just for that instant I almost seemed to see you & now the feeling is gone again & I send you my very best lo.....ve.² Julia is coming to dinner I'm so glad I went to fetch her – Leslie has upset the ink & borrowed my nasty little bottle full.

Mr Montefiore³ has asked himself to lunch tomorrow.

There – I gave somebody's name a kiss – not M^{rs} Bateman

1. The repetitions are enclosed within a heart.
2. She stretches this break over the page turn.
3. Claude Montefiore. See Annie's Journal, note 10 to 1884, Volume 2.

C603 Annie to Richmond, c. 18 April 1877

MS: Eton. ■ *Ritchie Letters. Written on Hannah de Rothschild's monogrammed notepaper.*

[Mentmore]¹

My rr. I have just stolen this sheet of paper out of Miss Hannah's velvet & china writing book – There Ive torn off the awful black edges.² The more I think of it the more I feel as if a day might come when people will think of death with love & blessing & gratitude for the past & with less sorrow & gloom. Dearest I think that for those younger than oneself for lives that might have run alongside of ones own there must ever be anguish, but for those older & more tired whose days have been spent out – I think now if I had my way I should scarcely put on black ~~only gray or violet~~ – I didnt think so once – There was a great field full of lambs & hares yesterday & chestnut trees in bud w^h. put me more in mind of Minnie than all the gloom that ever was massed together, such sweet little lambs scampering & then hares darting right across & black birds wheeling upon the blue sky & rows of nests balancing on the tree tops – I did like it so – & then last night, when the day was over I woke up about one o'clock & my room was full of smoke & I got up & opened the window wide & then it was you I seemed to see for all the stars were lighted up & a silver crescent was dropping & a sort of faint flame seemed to come from the horizon ^{& fir trees} all round – It was so lovely & you do like starlight nights dont you – Oh I hope you looked out of window last night. The East wind is gone this morning & I got well for the first time & dressed comfortably. The children have gone to the Station with Hannah & a poor most odious creature half a monkey – a Miss Alice R.^d who came last night with the most revolting rattling stories from Paris – Oh! what a horrid lady – said the children – “What do you think I have for dinner when Im alone says she – Fish – no soupe – no entree – no relévé – fish, a roast, another dish of meat, two dishes of vegetables stewed fruit – nothing more. My Aunt Baronesse James, she dines at 6 with her companion. At eight she has a dinner party. They touch nothing until the Poulet à la Romaine,³ then they finish dinner ^{with} game & sweets with the rest, light dishes nothing heavy. My cousin Baroness Nathaniel is not wise – She has sweets ^{brought to her} in the middle of the night, she was ^{certainly} beautifully dressed – spiders webs & a diamond serpent wound round her waist head downwards” –

Now I shall leave a little bit in case I get a letter from anybody I like this morning – I was so pleased to get this one from y^r. mother.

Darling my post has come, I cant remember what my hryoglyphic [*sic*] was & the thought of you is a blessing. Lor what has being old to do with it how curious that be away-state & the be together state is but its the 2^d. w^h. makes the 1st quite different.

1. Mentmore Towers, Bedfordshire, owned by Baron Mayer de Rothschild since 1850. See Annie's Journal, note 76 to 1860, Volume 2.
2. The right-hand margin has been torn away, but the black edging remains on the left.
3. 'Chicken in the Roman style.'

C604 Annie to Richmond, April 1877

MS: Eton.

[Mentmore]

Heres another lovely mor^g. I do hope it will be fine next Monday. We had a great long drive yesterday for miles & miles w^h. was very nice & all the lilac hills came along with us & the villagers ^{women} stood platting their straw to see us go by. When we came back the ch.ⁿ who are now quite at home put up books in the new cases & then came a thunder of wheels like a scene at the play and Bⁿ: Ferdinand Rothschild was announced. He is the first of the relations who has appeared – He is Miss Alice's brother a widower.¹ The children cant bear him. He is very clever & polite but certainly I should be sorry if he were to marry Hannah. He sends George Eliot peaches & says he never forgets a ladies dress that he remembers several hundred thousand he drinks no wine ^{& wears grey kid gloves & pumps}. I went to bed very early & we looked over the marble gallery into the great hall. Hannah was singing the Baron was dapperly settling down into an arm chair & good old Miss Morke was chaperoning in the great Doges throne. [*sketch*] I am rather interested today by the arrival not of a baron but of Rose Carmichaels husband who is to be installed at once by the impetuous Hannah. She certainly loses no time & is very unlike another shillyshally person of y^r. acquaintance. Darling you are quite right to tell me to be happier I have a sort of terror of being happy & feel as if, if I leave off for an instant being frightened about people some harm will come. That is one thing & another is that I have hardly yet got used to being able to be happy ^{as a state of mind} – I wonder if I ever shall – but I can honestly like things when they come & yesterday as I was driving along I felt that it was fresh air & a real measure of enjoyment & I wasnt bothering about other things & it sounds absurd doesnt it – ^{I also thought} that you w^d. like it so much. I've just heard fⁿ. Julia. Meme isnt well & Leslie is very low & so I shall be home tomorrow & write there for Friday. Theres no letter today but I daresay it will come early tomorrow. Bless you & tell me some more abt. y^r. outings.

1. Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839–98), art collector and from 1885 MP for Aylesbury. He was a nephew of Baron Lionel de Rothschild, head of the London bank, whose daughter Eveline he married: she died in 1866. Mayer de Rothschild was another uncle. Mayer's daughter, Hannah, later married the Earl of Rosebery, whilst Ferdinand (Ferdy) built Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury, and filled it with paintings, fine furniture and Sèvres porcelain.

C605 Annie to Richmond, 1 May 1877

MS: Eton. ■

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My dearest. I went to see Job just now & most fortunately she was at home & Maglene was there. They think so very differently from me about these places, or rather from what I was inclined to think that I feel all becheered & beencouraged & Job & I went off then & there in a hansom to Sir Henry Cole, who had just come up from Manchester & sat in his arm chair uttering words of wisdom – Job says that it is always a pity to refuse anything, that old worldly wise M^r. Hayward used to say so, that in life its good to take & then if possible improve otherwise people are sometimes left regretting vainly. Maglene said Willy was most anxious to see you yesterday & would come & see you at C[ambrid]ge. if you liked or if ^{even} it would please me – w^h. did please me dearest. And then Sir Henry said that ^{as for} the post office [it] was a regular moneymaking tiresome humdrum drudgery of a life, not equal to other offices in social standing, & that if he were advising a son of his own he should put it quite out of the question.

The Record Office he said had many advantages. There were interesting documents & many interesting people to be seen there, for a man of quiet studious sleepy habits it was very suitable, ~~there were books~~ ^{are} given to be edited by the capable clerks, & there is literary stuff to make capital articles so that a man with a^{ny} turn for writing can easily earn between 3 & 400 a year after a few years study. But he said that for his ~~own~~ ^{a clever young man} with the power you must have to have come out as you have done, he should unhesitatingly recommend the India Office or the Home Office. In the India Office there are all sorts of wide interests stirring, a man can make his own mark in a little time it is under the direction of a Cabinet Minister, there are collateral things & jobs given. Your family connection w^d. certainly be of use, he said Greek was useful there – M^r Pecocke¹ the author was elected to a clerkship merely because of his Greek, (but this was a long time ago) & as for D^r. Playfair it had been so long talked about & was so problematical & vague that he really did not think it was seriously to be considered.²

Then this afternoon Hallam came & drove me down to Brompton Sq. He had been at M^r. Schoones³ & heard that the 8th. man in y^r. exam: had taken the home office – ~~F~~ ~~c~~ ~~a~~ ~~r~~ ~~r~~ I think this must be a mistake, but anyhow Sir Henry said the Home Office was certainly better than the Post or the Record Office – ~~Being~~ ^{as it is} also under a Cabinet Minister & of a different social standing to the other two. He had evidently got the whole subject up & was talked most interestingly. Magdalene said she was certain your mother would agree to anything you liked if you talked to her, & that she was so kind, & I think I shall write to Willy tonight & ask him to come & see me tomorrow morning.

One thing abt the Record O. is that if you wished to be a barrister you might combine it with the R.O. & M^r Cole said you might take up law cases in connection with it, but that of course w^d. only be while you were ready for the bar for if you were actually called & if you got a brief I suppose you could not rush out & come back again. I wish I could say all this instead of writing but perhaps after all it sounds clearer on paper. But when you told me what I thought darling that really was the truth, & I shall think anything you think. Only my opinions are very much less doubtful now at this minute than they were yesterday when I thought I was persuading you to be shelved both Magdalene & Job & Sir H seemed to think ^{these things} so good & not to be by any means overlooked, & even Hallam seemed to think so much of ^{it that I was much impressed}. I am so very very sorry about Lionel he got quite ill on Saturday & broke down & they were miserable about him, he has gone in again & quite rallied today, but they were all so wretched & anxious that I do feel utterly sympathising & sorry, & the D^r said his attack was merely overwork.⁴ JOB said if you were her son she should be wretched if you refused, ^{& that it had made her so happy she became 25 she was so pleased.}

Now I've told you all on one side darling just as I was on the other side yesterday. I wish you could get this this very minute before you write to y^r. mother thats why I telegraphed – I made Job send it for a change, perhaps you are getting it now & it is saying howdydo goodbye howdydo. I was so sorry after that I hadnt gone in the hansom with you.

Send me a telegram for I want a sign.

1. Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866).
2. A major inquiry into the organization and structure of the various departments of the Civil Service, including the processes by which appointments should be made, was chaired by Lyon Playfair. See Annie's Journal, note 15 to 1879, Volume 2.
3. For William Scoones's cramming school, see Annie's Journal, note 10 to 1898, Volume 2.
4. Lionel failed the examination for the India Office in May. At his father's request, Lord Salisbury then nominated him for entry and he was given a place, joining a few months after Richmond. "Nominees" had a very different status from those who entered by examination at the time and Lionel's career ... did not flourish.' A. Thwaite, *Emily Tenyson: The Poet's Wife* (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), p. 521.

C606 Leslie to Annie, 9 May 1877

MS: Eton.

8, *Southwell Gardens*, | *South Kensington*. | 11 H P G S | Wednesday | 9.5.77
Dearest Anny,

You know Richmond's sentiments better than I do, & you know therefore what effect my letter is likely to have upon him. I would rather not have sent it; but you can judge better than I.

I have only one thing left to say. You seem to fancy that I expect to be so much bored by R & you, that I would rather have you out of the house. At least, that is the only way in wh. I can account for your plan of taking a new house. I object to the plan altogether, because I entirely deny the force truth of your assumption. I should be deeply annoyed at your leaving me before your marriage. It would really hurt my feelings. It is quite true that I shall be worried about you, if the engagement is to drag on for a year or more; but I shall be equally worried whether you are in another house or in this. It would make me seriously uncomfortable to think of you keeping house alone. I really could not bear it. No, you must stay with me till you marry. I ask it of you as a special favour & I will be as good as I can in regard to Richmond. The separation would vex me far more than his presence. I would rather even that he lodged with us till his marriage than that you went away from me.

Besides my feeling about it, – wh. is very strong – it would be a great mistake in a pecuniary sense. You must begin to economize & it is needless to prove but a house of your own would involve you in all kinds of expense. But even this is a trifle. I implore you not to think of parting from me till the parting is necessary. That would really make me feel as if I were not fulfilling my duty to Minny.

I saw Moore yesterday at the Alpine Club.¹ He said that his only doubts about the goodness of the India Office were founded upon Playfair's Commission; but the commission will probably do nothing & is equally (as I understand) against all offices.

Laura is all right & jolly. I cant affect her little language, though I think that you would like it. But to say the truth, I dont remember anything that she had said lately.

I suppose that Gussy is back – I think you said that she was to come on Sunday & I shall go & see her; but I dont look forward to it. I shall be worried about R & Douglas. I shall say as little as I can, but little will be worrying.

I am all right – I had a talk with H. Spencer at the Athenaeum yesterday. He is very cruel.

I also met [William] Allingham. His wife is better but has been in great danger.

Your's afftely | LS

1. Secretary of the Alpine Club 1872–4, Adolphus Moore (1841–87) worked in the political department of the India Office. From 1885 he was private secretary to Lord Randolph Churchill, the Secretary of State.

C607 Annie to Richmond, probably 11 May 1877

MS: Eton.

[Freshwater]

Darling. I wonder if you are back at C.^{sc} today & shall I send this there to you. I have brought my inkpot down to the bay & as I write [*sketch*] all the little waves come flowing over the stones & your dear dear letter is with me. It has made me a very thankful happy woman. I wonder what you did & said & Oh, I hope it ~~was~~ the family meeting wasnt awful but nice & happy, tho I feel as if you were going through all sorts of terrible phases for my sake in w^h. I cannot help you. Only as you say explanations are much less fearful when they come. Only I do know how beloved they all are & that they are only thinking of what may be best. Leslie's letter yesterday was kindness itself & he was miserable at the idea of my taking a house & leaving him. He says would you come for the year. I am very glad that the whole truth is told now. I feel suddenly quite relieved & sleepy & peaceful & the sea has begun to flow & the hedges to give pleasure & your ladyship to realise the blessing w^h. is hers. I shall come home on Tuesday & I have a great blue book from Miss Rye this morning w^h. interests me very much & I want to concoct an appeal to the Times.¹

Dear love y^r. telegram came yesterday while I was up at M^{rs} Prinsep's & hearing Uncle Thoby read his life. It w^d really be very interesting to Gerald & describes India in 1809 & all the early laws & complications, – where does M^r Mill write ab^t office life?

I wish you were here & I send you my faithful old love f^m | your loving Ladyship.

1. Her letter in *The Times* on 22 May, headed 'Gutter Children', appealed for funds to support children emigrating to Canada, a scheme organized by the social reformer Maria Rye (1829–1903), at whose Peckham home the children were initially cared for. 'Mrs. Nassau Senior was a warm advocate of Miss Rye's good work, and if I quote her approval here it is because it seems to belong by rights wherever there is hope for trouble and good help for the weak and pitiful.'

C608 Leslie to Annie, 11 May 1877

MS: Eton.

8, Southwell Gardens, | South Kensington. | Friday

Dearest A.

I wrote the enclosed this morning & think that I may as well send it still, because it explains some of my views.¹ But matters have much changed since I wrote. I have seen Mrs Ritchie, who is incomparably the most sensible of the lot. She talked pleasantly about you & will do everything that is wanted. I have no doubt that she will consent to anything that you & Richmond may determine. ~~but~~ She said that she should allow him his £200 a year & was otherwise perfectly judicious in her remarks.

You must settle with R. when you return as to the proper course. I shall only say that I think he had better go in for his degree or, at least, promise to consider it; because it will please his mother & might be useful. But this question has, as I have said, nothing whatever to do with the marriage question.

I wont go on with this discussion of wh. you will have enough if you read the enclosed. The R's are a vexatious family in spite of all their merits. They work themselves up into such tantrums that they cant talk sense; but I wont stand their worrying you. I hardly think, however, that they will try.

Laura is all right & inspecting Eleanor [Freshfield]. I have no more to say – except that you may, I am sure, make your mind easy.

I dont like the looks of your correspondence. Just remember that you have now no right to waste money on Sarah R.² It would be really wrong to do so & simply plundering Richmond. I was strongly tempted to suppress her letter; but, on the whole, I will let it go.

Your's afftely | L Stephen

1. This letter, written earlier in the day, is included in Bicknell, pp. 206–7.

2. Not identified, but almost certainly one of the acts of philanthropy which Leslie knew Annie could ill-afford.

C609 Augusta Ritchie to Annie, 12 May 1877

MS: Eton.

16 Bolton Gardens | S. Kensington | Saturday

My darling Anny

I am so sorry to have missed the post yesterday for I know you are longing to hear from me. Well darling I suppose it is all settled. I am sure you know by y^r. self that I have many conflicting feelings but this is certain & uppermost that I love you most dearly and that I know you will be the dearest & most loving wife my Richmond could have won for himself – & that I most earnestly pray & hope that your love for each other which has certainly been well tested will keep you as it has now brought you to the same level as it were. The dear fellow has been two days with us and is very happy & radiant – I had a talk with Leslie yesterday and he was very kind & full of love for you and solicitude for y^r. welfare. I am very glad you have been away while all this has been arranged and I hope the quiet & sense that we are all thinking of you & planning for y^r. happiness has been soothing you & doing you good. When you come to town I shall come up again to see you and settle practically what is to be done next. We have not yet heard when R. will have to begin at the India Office but I am sure I can get him leave to finish this term at Cambridge & he will then have resided long enough to take his degree. And whatever happens he has promised to exert himself to the utmost to be prepared to go up for the Classical Tripos next March. Of course he cant take such a good place as I hoped he would when he began his college career but he says himself that if he is able to go on reading he ought to be in the 1st. class. I believe the work of his office at first will be very light, but I daresay he will not be inclined to put the rather severe strain upon himself which will be required. Frank & Willy & Douglas are all strong on the point of the importance of the degree and Leslie also says it would be a great pity to shirk it after having worked so many years for it. I know darling & this is my greatest comfort that y^r. influence will be always for his good so I rest on [*sic*] fully upon you to keep him up to this effort – We will discuss all arrangements when we meet. This will hardly bring you nearer to us than you are already, and have been for many years that you have been like a sister to the girls and a daughter to me. I shall be here till Tuesday afternoon. You will let me know when you are coming up, but don't hurry – Your health must be now the first consideration. Will you come to B[rock]. H[ill]. from Freshwater? Of course bring the children. I sh^d. like this very much. Gussie is so delightfully well. God bless you darling.

Y^r most loving | A.G. Ritchie

C610 Annie to Pinkie, after 12 May 1877

MS: Eton.

[Freshwater]

My Pinnie. I thought you were at Paris the sight of yr envelope gave me a sort of jump. O my darling I can only cry because I am so happy.

Give Gussie & Blanchie a kiss for me & the children & let them all kiss you darling for your loving faithful happy old A. How dear they have all been. O my dearest it ought to be you not me – no I wont say that but only God bless you my own Pinnie & give you the love and happiness you give to others.

C611 Annie to Pinkie, May 1877

MS: Eton. ■

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My Pinkie. Richmond came & we are to be married ~~on~~ⁱⁿ the middle of July & Im very well & very very happy – After ~~we~~ I first came back I had a horrid bout of purgatory & doubt but the moment I saw him a sort of conviction of blessed peace & reality came over me & he too said that he had been afraid I meant to put off & off ~~& so slide away for ever~~ & that he had been so worried that he had gone off to Nelly for a little consolation. Dear my worst doubts were for him for me I never could pretend to have any except indeed ^{some very insignificant ones} as to what people may think. Lady Stanley & I had a curious & very touching little sort of explanation she nearly cried & rushed out of the room & came back with another ^{a very} sweet old lady, who was also an old friend of Papas & who said – I have been telling Lady Stanley that when two people care about each other it seems to me ^{so} very simple that they should marry – This was Lady Russell¹ & dear old Lady Stanley said – “They all tell me he would have been fourth classic – I’m so glad you came, I have quite changed my mind, I now think just as Lady Russell does, bring him to see me, God bless you my dear Annie”, – You cannot think how kind & interested she was & in what a delightful excitement about him & she flung her old arm round me so did M^{rs}. Valentine Smith. It was very good of him to come straight off & see dear old M^{rs}. Smith who had given me a real fright she looked so ill the day before ^{& said she wanted to see him before she died} she sent you so much love & she beamed & Richmond looked so kind & tall & somehow M^{rs}. Smith suddenly got quite well & we all laughed & laughed & I did so enjoy it & wished for you darling. It was as nice as anything could be & Bowdler also beamed.

1. Frances, Countess Russell, wife of the former Prime Minister, Earl Russell. See Annie’s Journal, note 59 to 1895, Volume 2.

C612 Richmond to Annie, probably May 1877

MS: Eton.

[Cambridge]

Darling: your letters have been very faithful and good for me; so you shall have a real page in your turn though there is only the same thing to be said time after time. Yesterday was rather a futile day and gave me a headache but this morning the sun was shining and Bradshaw took me into the Kings gardens¹ where all sorts of birds and pigeons were cooing and twittering and a great gaudy butterfly came flickering through the sunshine and settled upon my knee for a moment and then went fluttering away. We sat under the tree where we sat last May and didnt understand one another and were so bothered about nothing. it seemed so unreal this morning all those recollections as I thought that the blessing had been there waiting all the time: and indeed I have the greatest blessing and help a young man ~~mi~~ can hope to come to him in his life. You see now even when I am bothered about you most, the blessing is still there; and the feeling that there is nothing to hold on to and cling by has gone right away out of my life – and my blessing goes on till you die. There is no reason to think that if you live to be as old as Methuselah, my feeling for you will alter; or ~~for the~~ as far as altering goes, if you die. You mustnt mind this my darling; but whenever the body begins to recover, I find that I am in a mood to look at things solemnly; and to take a solemn and to the best of one's abilities a real view of things isnt a bad thing and it helps instead of preventing ^{all the} bothering little duties – and I do know that by trying with all my heart to be a gentleman I can help you best of all; and while I feel that, why it is just that which makes you my blessing dear. I shall stop up here this week and then go away probably on Monday for a fortnight: and you shall have an equal share of me with ~~you~~ my family and may further name your day – it ~~will~~ is always rather nice to think about plans for coming.

My X goodnight.

It is all Gussies tonic that knocked me up, which I find contained strychnine and other horrors – so for the future you alone shall prescribe for me.

1. Henry Bradshaw was a fellow of Kings, as well as university librarian.

C613 Fitzjames Stephen to Annie, 16 May 1877

MS: Eton.

Saltburn by the Sea | Yorkshire | May 16. 1877

My dearest Anny

I had to come down here by an early train this morning on business & I had to dine out last night, so that I missed the chance of seeing you to give you my warm & heartfelt congratulations. It must have been a grief I should think to all your friends to see such a noble character as yours unprovided with the natural & proper objects of affection & I am delighted to think that henceforth you will know by experience what I have always regarded as the greatest happiness of life.

I think that to see you happily married would have been the one thing which could have increased dear Minnie's happiness if she had been spared to us all, and your dearest goodness to Leslie to say nothing of your sisterly affection to myself for all these years makes me feel quite as deeply as you yourself could wish everything that you could wish me to feel.

Believe me dearest Anny | Ever y^r. most affectionate friend | J F Stephen
Maine will be able to tell me what you want to know about the possibility of leave of absence. I have written to him.¹

1. In December, Henry Maine became master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. See Annie's Journal, note 17 to 1879, Volume 2. Annie must have been enquiring about Richmond interrupting his studies at Cambridge, rather than giving up altogether.

C614 Maria Jackson to Annie, 16 May 1877

MS: Eton.

Sax[onbur]y. | May 16.

My beloved Annie

One line – if it could bless you & Richmond it would. But blessing will not be wanting – it will pour down upon you as the dew from heaven. In spirit I put my arms about you and give Richmond what ever from me you like best to give him. My husband sends you his best love – I think he grudges you for every man feels aggrieved when another marries his favourite

Ever & ever darling | Y^r. loving old | M. J.

My love to dear Leslie – & a kiss to my Laura

C615 Mary Brotherton to Annie, 17 May 1877

MS: Eton.

Hookhill. Freshwater. | May 17 1877.

How glad I am dearest Annie, how glad I am – I cant tell you what joy your note gave me – & how I longed to tell you by a hug what no words can tell. God bless you darling – & I see you happy in the rest & peace of love & home. Have I ever seen him? Please write me more, I am hungry for more. As for the “years younger” no one that loves you can count your years by common people’s years. Our grand sweet Annie – most loving most loveable of women – Now I cannot regret any more that you slipped from us to such happiness instead of staying a little longer. And I suppose that silvery blue spring day on the downs, with the lark out of sight & the seagull sailing up & dipping down & vanishing, & the golden glory of the gorse all round, & the dear little tea at the Post Office afterwards, will be my last with my Annie Thackeray – I shall never forget it dear – Write very soon again if you can –

Ever y^r. very loving | Mary Brotherton

Of course they know at Farringford & the Briary. Lady Alwyne [Compton] says in a letter I am to tell you how glad it made her to have that sweet little full talk with you.

C616 Annie to Charlotte Ritchie, May 1877

MS: Eton. ■

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My own Chattie – Im afraid it is very cruel for you but it wouldnt be if you knew how happy Richmond is & O! how happier than I ever thought it possible to be I am to have his tender faithful noble love – It seems like a sunrise after the long darkness & my heart is very full of him & of all that I have here & there too. Dearest you will write & say god bless us and when I die I think it will seem as if no one had been so blessed as I with such wonderful love – indeed he looks happy & says he is happier than he has ever been. And people do not seem so shocked as I expected but on the contrary every one is kind & full of sympathy. Darling Chattie Im your loving | A

Give Felicie my love.

C617 Annie to Joseph Milsand, 17 May 1877

MS: Baylor. *Transcription provided by Michael Meredith.*

[11, Hyde Park Gate South] 17 May

I want to tell you to tell your two friends something about myself. I am going to marry my cousin he is so many years younger than I am that it seems a very difficult thing to ask sympathy for but he has cared for me so long & been so important a help & fact in my life that I can pray that he will not regret what he has wished nor what I have at last decided – I remember once in Paris being most miserable when you spoke of the cruelty of keeping a devoted friend through years of uncertainty & then I thought that if I had courage he & I were going to be parted. When my sister died I had no more courage left to refuse the familiar comfort & help of his presence & most youthful affection. I could not trouble myself then about his future. the other day at Freshwater I heard from dear Leslie and Mrs Ritchie that they had all talked it over & agreed with very perplexed & affectionate solicitude to Richmond's marrying me. I have hardly written to anyone only I wanted to tell you & Mr Browning & Miss Browning & I know you will all wish us well & I do not think Richmond will care less for an old wife than he has done for his old cousin & in that case I think he will be happy. I am sure I am. Yours affectionately, A I Thackeray

C618 Richmond to Charlotte Ritchie, 18 May 1877

MS: Eton.

Trin: Coll: Camb: | May 18

Dearest Chattie – the girls will have told you the end of the story at the first scene of which you assisted three years ago. I rather wished to be the first to tell you, but Gussie in her eagerness proclaimed the news before Annie herself had time to hear from me.

I am sure that if at Florence you had known our hearts, you would not have wished for any alteration in them,¹ and now I am equally sure that when you see our happiness, if without seeing you cannot believe, you will rejoice as much as anybody in our happiness. How anyone who knows Annie can fail to envy me in my blessed fortune I cannot see. Willie the other night said “You are going to marry the most charming creature alive, and you cant expect to have everything”. But for Annie it is different – I can quite understand and even sympathise with people who fear for her; all I can say in answer to their doubts is that myself I have such entire faith in our mutual love that my heart is quite secure from all apprehension – Otherwise I could not be so utterly happy as I am. You who

know us both and how severely our love has been tried ought to be happy in the prospect of our future.

For myself I can only say that for the first time for years my heart is perfectly light. I may have for a while sometimes forgotten, but the anxiety was always there waiting. It is all over however, thank God, and I can begin to think of leading a real life. Annie is as happy as I am, if not happier as her anxiety was far worse than mine: but she cannot help having misgivings of the opinion of the world at large. As for the happiness of those who really love her and her happiness, I tell her that it is doubting their love if she thinks it possible they should not rejoice with her rejoicing.

Give Felicie a kiss from me – I know that she will approve with all her heart yr loving nephew Richmond Ritchie

1. He refers to the occasion in October 1874 when Charlotte objected to the fast-developing relationship between Annie and Richmond. See Letter C510, Volume 3.

C619 Leslie to Charles Eliot Norton, 20 May 1877

MS: Houghton, bMS Am1088 (6915).

8. Southwell Gardens, | South Kensington.
11 Hyde Park Gate South | London S.W. | 20.5.77

My dear Norton,

I write to you at a short interval from my last letter because I should wish you to hear a particular piece of news from me. My sister-in-law, Anny T., is going to be married. Her future husband is her (2nd) cousin, Richmond Ritchie. He is a young man who has just entered the India Office. He is many years her junior – a fact wh. is the only objection to the marriage, for he is a thoroughly able & honourable man & devotedly attached to her. The story of their affection is a long one, and I have seen this coming for many months, though it is only of late that I saw it to be inevitable.

People will of course be surprised & probably some will be displeased. Women are not allowed to do such unusual things without criticism. On the other hand, the unusualness is in itself a proof of the strength of the feelings wh. have brought it about; & upon that side I have no fears. I am as certain as I can be of anything that the marriage will be as happy as mutual affection can make it. That is of course the great thing – almost the only thing.

At the same time, I will not deny that to me from a purely selfish point of view, the whole affair is a blow. It is painful to me to be separated from one, whose affection has been so warm & so valuable; and especially painful because it will break up so many associations. So long as Anny lived with me, I seemed

to preserve part at least of the new element wh. came into my life with my marriage. When she goes, I shall have a terrible gap between me & the past. It cant be helped & I shall learn to submit. But it is rather like cutting off one's left arm after one has lost the right; or more like giving another shock to one already struck by paralysis. This grumble, I need not say, is for you alone. I ought to rejoice at A's new happiness & I do rejoice – in a sort of way –

Anny herself is much better & I am inclined to attribute much of her previous ill health to the anxiety due to her previous melancholy about this affair. Certainly it's definite settlement seems to have given her an extraordinary amount of fresh strength.

The only thing that I shall add is that I shall continue to live here & expect that my sister will come to keep house for me. She is as fond of me as any sister can be; we shall get on well enough. Every thing will go quietly & comfortably with me so far as I can judge – unless fate has some new vexation in store; but anyhow “what has been, has been, and I have had my hour” – wh. is some consolation.

Your's afftely | L Stephen

I ought to have made this letter more cheerful. Consider it screwed up a few pegs.

C620 Annie to Margaret Oliphant, 21 May 1877

MS: Eton. ■ Postmark: BRACKNELL MY 21 77. Address: M^{rs}. Oliphant | Clarence Crescent | Windsor.

Brock Hill

My dear. Thankyou so much for your kind word – I seem to have none to say anything with, for indeed words dont seem to belong to all this but just hope & being grateful for such a wonderful tender affection – Once long ago I ought to have put it away perhaps, but then I could think of no possible result & it seemed simply wicked & ungrateful, & then not to be sincere to Richmond who I was so fond of & then we did separate in a way & then we made it up & then – that night as I sat by the fire with you I thought shall I speak about it & I couldnt & then you know what his wonderful tender fidelity has been ^{all this time} & now that it is settled – I dont quite know how ~~but~~ by Richmond himself & Leslie & dearest most generous M^{rs}. Ritchie who has only thought of him & of me in all this – Now that it is settled I can only pray that he may never be sorry ^{he is so happy} now & I am too thankful for words.

My Minnie would have understood how it has come about. Goodbye from y^r. ever affectionate | Anny Thackeray

please always call me my name – I thought you did.

C621 Annie to Nina Lehmann,¹ 3 June 1877

MS: Princeton.

11 Hyde Park Gate South | June 3.

My dearest M^{rs}. Nina

I have never written really to you tho' I have often thought of your sweetness & kindness to me – & ^{I have} gone on silently saying thankyou. It all seems very like a dream to me now for Richmond has been away ever since & except when people speak of it nothing is changed only that there is this something come into my life w^h. seems to make it full of gratitude & reality. Whatever my doubts may have been that is there & I do ^{in heart} thank God for it – & I tell you because you seem to belong to my Father & to my darling. I know that you do understand & will like to think of me ^{not apart from them but} with peace & gratitude in my heart & tho I do feel O so sorry for Richmond sometimes yet I cant when I see him he is so happy & singleminded it does seem such a miracle.

He will soon be coming up now for the India Office & you will come & see me wont you.

Y^r affectionate | AIT

I send ^{the acknowledgement} y^r. kind husbands magnificent benefaction. The poor little creatures must have been so tossed.

1. Nina Chambers (b. 1830), wife of Frederick Lehmann (1826–91). They were art patrons, and she was the subject of a Millais portrait.

C622 Annie to Blanche Warre Cornish, late June–July 1877

MS: Eton.

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My b. It was so dear of you to write for I was longing to hear from you, and now you will have seen Leslie & Memekin & they will have told you what there is to tell this lovely weather. It seems to put out talking & doing & even feeling just as very shining things do. Leslie writes ^{as if he were} much better, his nasty little attack gave me a slight qualm for two days w^h. is why I didnt write. Yesterday I put on my new bonnet & boldly went off to two parties to lunch at the Probyns¹ who knew of a house & to tea & Shakespear at M^{rs}. Martins. There was a M^r. Ainger [as] Shylock there who was perfectly wonderful. ^{He not only read most wonderfully} Sometimes he looked 16 sometimes 60,² if only Richmond & I could learn how to do it we might assort ourselves outside as well as we do thank God in our other selves.

[*sketch*] M^{rs} Martin was supported by a bishop & all the Brompton clergy who took various parts and a dear little old Miss Anna Swanwick³ was chorus. Professor Adams was there & that sweet kind M^{rs} Adams⁴ who have me a kiss & quite touched me: & then I came home via my old [Valentine] Smiths & found Richmond surrounded by straw & wedding presents & spoons. We always hold paper cutters in each hand now & May Hichens⁵ has bestowed a lovely set of nice old different grinning blessing apostle spoons, & I have asked the de la Prymes⁶ for Dickens' works ^{uncut for the benefit of the paper cutters} – Kind St. John [Thackeray] has sent a most beautiful thing, a sort of pearly dawning bracelet & as for Isabella [Irvine] I am quite ashamed of all her munificent kindness. I hope to go to Marlow tomorrow & that we shall drive over from Maidenhead to BH on Sunday. Being in the India Office is rather like being at Eton I should think, for there is 2 o'clock on Saturdays & 4 30 on week days, & a bell seems to ring about 10 when R. rushes off. He says he shall be able to get some reading before he goes. dear Alice Probyn & Isabella I: have both been writing to us about going to chapel: but that isn't insisted on he says there is some rather bad news w^h. is that a very good man out of the other ex[hibition]ⁿ. is going in against Lionel. My dearest Blanchie it seems so strange to be writing a letter like this once more, but I am so thankful to write it. M^r. Norton wrote Leslie such a sweet letter about Richmond & me w^h. seemed to me so true, & ^{he said} how a happy marriage could make life again & bind all that was shaken together once more, & dearest I do indeed feel this & as if for Richmond too there had been so much reality in his love for me that if he had left me & married someone else, what he might have gained in youth he might have lost in truth of feeling. if only And thank God I am quite clear now & from my heart I do feel that it was more real of us both to face the disadvantages & to thankfully accept the inestimable blessing. Just now meeting people & parting ^{from Leslie} & all such things makes the peace of not parting seem less vivid & ^{uppermost than a little while ago only all the same I know how} that horrible bugbear of parting was always in my mind, for I didn't feel as if our arrangement could go on; & ever since I have known it was gone ^{that the bugbear is gone} it has seemed as if I could breathe again & stay.

Douglas [Freshfield] has just come in the middle of my letter but as I am not up I c^d. not see him. Are you going to M^r. Luxmores water party? Goodbye dearest. My best love to you all.

1. For Alice and Tishy Probyn, see Annie's Journal, note 20 to 1863, Volume 2.
2. See Annie's Journal, note 13 to 1890, Volume 2. Better known as a cleric, Alfred Ainger had a strong dramatic gift, and as a boy was spotted by Dickens, who used him in his own home theatricals.
3. See Annie's Journal, note 25 to 1879, Volume 2.
4. Perhaps William Adams (1836–1915), professor of natural philosophy at Cambridge, and his wife Mary Dingle.
5. For Andrew and May Hichens, see note 3 to Letter C512, Volume 3.
6. See Annie's Journal, note 6 to 1863, Volume 2.

C623 Charles Eliot Norton to Annie, 20 July 1877

MS: Eton.

Ashfield, July 20, 1877.

Dear Miss Thackeray

Your very kind and tender note was the more welcome to us all that, while it was the expression of your sympathy in our sorrow, it was also the expression of your confidence in our sympathy in your happiness. I do truly rejoice in the prospect of happiness before you. There is no comparison between the life of which mutual love is the inspiration, and any other which can be led by man or woman. My only regret in the thought of your marriage was the new loneliness that it would bring to Leslie. But he has your happiness too much at heart to have a selfish thought in regard to it.

I know that your own heavy sorrow would give you sympathetic appreciation of the sorrow which has changed my Mother's & my sister's lives.¹ You will be glad to know that they are well. The retirement & quiet of this country home of ours are welcome to them, and they maintain each a steady & cheerful spirit for the other's sake, and for that of my children. My children are well, and there is still much happy life in this house where there is so much sorrow.

I believe that those who are familiar with grief are those who can sympathize most deeply with joy. May the blessings of your new life be all the fuller & the deeper for the sorrow of the past! I can wish you no better blessing than that you may be as happy as I have been, – for such happiness, – even if it may become the very measure of sorrow, – is the unchanging & everlasting source of deepest joy.

Pray offer my friendly regards to Mr. Ritchie, – & believe me, | Sincerely & gratefully yours | C.E. Norton.

1. Norton's sister, Jane (see note 1 to Letter C381, Volume 3), had died on 12 May.

C624 Annie to Gussie Freshfield, c. 21 August 1877

MS: Eton.

[Guildford]¹

Dearest Im so glad Leslie is going to see you tomorrow, I give you a fond blessing & think about you a great deal & last night when R^d. came back with kind M^r Smith he brought a bit of Lynton & a bit of all about you & Patterdale – & here is a little letter w^h. is interesting. I sent back Adolphe & this is the answer. Richmond likes being here very much & so do I. They are so kind M^r S[yng]e has adopted B, & I talk to Lizzie Smith & R. gets his lawn tennis, goes up & down with M^r S in a prancing brougham & every day seems to begin to be everybody else's every day – Last night I dreamt that we hadnt been married & that I said to Minnie – no I wont do it Im afraid of what people will say its too great a respon-

sibility, Ill go & you must tell Richmond Im gone & you mustnt tell anyone & then I went away with a curious ache & scorn, it was so strange & vivid. Dearest Gussie I woke up & I went to the window & looked out at the dawn & felt this much – that even if ever we are less happy w^h. I don't expect for one instant – we shan't ever love each other less or feel that we were not honest people.

All the neighbours are coming tomorrow & so we are going back. I've written to Felicie to come & stay, & if we go Sunday to Aldworth I thought perhaps it w^d. amuse her to come too. God Bless you & the dear children. Im so glad you like Betsinda² – I do rather too.

Y^r loving A

O how nice it must be to have three little girls but it must be weary weary work waiting even with W^m. to cheer you.

1. Having married on 2 August, Annie and Richmond based themselves in Guildford for about three weeks, where on 21 August they visited the William Synges. Guildford was close enough to London for Richmond to be able to travel up to the India Office.
2. Annie's 1877 pamphlet for the Council of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants. See Annie's Journal, note 35 to 1877, Volume 2.

C625 Annie to Isabella Thackeray, 28–9 August 1877

MS: Eton. *The letter covers 8 sides (2 folded pages). As the contents make clear, the original first page was discarded and rewritten, whilst the second page, written on the previous day, was retained.*

4. York Road | Tunbridge Wells | Wednesday

My dearest Mother

Part of this letter is today & the other part is yesterday and this is to tell you that the Honeymoon has come here for its last quarter – The Tennysons put us off ^{for another Lady} but I dont think anything was amiss. Victor Marshall wrote to Leslie that they had put him off too – I think it was only the general indefiniteness of the Tennyson blood ^{or the Gladstones or something.}

I began my letter yesterday impatiently waiting for M^r. Jacksons pony carriage & for news of my trousseau w^h. we had forgotten in the train: all our energies being absorbed by the bag & by meeting Leslie & Julia – She did look so sweet & so lovely as she welcomed us to our tidy home – She had prepared a beautiful five o'clock tea & homemade bread & butter. here ^{Its is a nice lodging,} we have a balcony & geraniums & brass bands & wateringplace polkas & a carpet with roses & its very clean indeed & Richmond seems very well indeed ^{and the trousseau has been found in the waiting room.} He was so tired when we came down on Monday that he didnt eat his dinner & I didnt ^{dont} send my first beginning ^{to you} for I was fussed & thought the railway was going to disagree with him ^{& that we ought to go back directly.} But yesterday he

walked up to Frant & dined & slept & breakfasted & went off just now so well & in such good spirits that I now think we ought to settle down here for good.

[*replacement sheet ends here; second sheet is annotated 'Tuesday' to indicate that it was written first*]

Tuesday

Leslie came to the station to meet us. He is woefully thin but otherwise he looks pretty well, only he has long hair & a wistful look in his face w^h. makes me rather miserable. It seemed so strange to watch him & Julia flitting down the little street together, & then I looked round & there was my dear young Richmond in absurd tender delightful spirits – Only if he doesnt eat more dinner tonight I think we had better cut this honeymoon short. He enjoyed his breakfast very much. I went to the house yesterday before we started & it was as nice as ever. There are panels (drab painted but real panels) on the staircase & I surreptitiously tapped the walls & heard the welcome little rat tat of wood. its much bigger than Carry Stephen's, but that is the sort of house it is. The poor old lady's face fell when I told her we had had a drawingroom carpet given us, but we couldnt take the furniture tho' I daresay some of it may be very useful – perhaps you may be up in town before the end of Sep.^r when it is to be ours¹ –

I then went to Wimbledon & then came back to the Station where poor Maryanne was waiting in tears with the BAG & the boxes & Richmond & a quantity of new fr. novels walked up from his office & I hope he is safe there now with the friendly M^r Armstrong.

Lionel was only going [*page missing? The letter closes on the first sheet*] regardless of the carriage itself – And I send them² my love & to you very much. And now this is really goodbye from y^r loving A

How I do hope you will have fine weather to the end & how they are looking for you at Lynton.

1. They planned to take a house in Kensington Square on their return to London (Annie had gone there on 27 August before coming to Tunbridge Wells), but in the event they went into lodgings before buying and moving to 27 Young Street during 1878. Young Street leads directly into Kensington Square, so perhaps this was indeed the same property. It gave Annie much pleasure to be living just across the road from 13 Young Street, the house she had shared with her father and sister, and where *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis* had been written.
2. Isabella's carers.

C626 Annie to Margaret Oliphant, c. 10 December 1877

MS: Eton.

153. Gloucester R^dDearest M^{rs} Oliphant

This enclosure gave me a g^t. wanting to see y^r autograph again & to send you mine & to tell you that you owe us a dinner & so do Cyril & Checo – shall you be coming to a play?

Richmond^{&1} can only say thank God – We are so thankful and somehow the very thought of all the sorrow & desolation w^h belongs to this time of year makes all the blessing of tender love seem even more great & more dear to me. Leslie is pretty well & Meme is preparing her Xmas tree & you will send an autograph for me wont you & say when you think of coming up.

We have a proud spare bed small as this absurd spot is, & we are only engaged on the Sat 15 & Wed^y & Thur^y. I hear the g^t. M^r Harper brothers [*sic*] is in London & I am very curious to see him. Its very rude of me but have you ever made a good bargain with him: I now telegraph boldly. M^r Ball tells me he gave G. Trevelyan £1000 for L^d Macaulay¹ & that he has been breakfasting at L^d. Houghtons.

Leslie flatly refuses to give up any of y^r letters so please put “y^rs very truly” on one bit of paper & y^r own self on the other.

Y^{rs}. with all my heart | AIR

1. George Otto Trevelyan, *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (London, 1876).

C627 Margaret Oliphant to Annie, 14 December 1877

MS: NLS.

Windsor | 14th. Dec^r.

Here is your autograph my dear Annie. I have never done such a thing for anybody before, but I am delighted to have a word from you (even though you have so cunningly disguised your new initials that I protest I dont know what the last one is!) and to hear something about you. I have been gleaning what scraps of information I could from the dear people at Brock Hill, who alas are at Brock Hill no longer. My holidays have begun – that is, I have got Cyril home and Cecco’s labours will soon be over and that you know is my special friend^{argument} for happiness. We must manage to get up to town early in the year, and get a glimpse of you among other pleasant things. I am glad the darkest of the dark winter days is over for you, dear, and that you have now support and solace by your side to counteract all the heavinesses of recollection.

The new will never quite push out the old, but happiness is certainly the one elixir of life.

We have been having M^r. Ruskin here again hawing in his usual celestial way, and we are planning theatricals with M^{rs}. Cornish in the part of Portia which I think is altogether suitable to her. Wont you come and see her? I am busy as usual, spinning continual webs that never come to much. I am very glad to see that you have begun again. I always feel you to be of the party with your pretty Felicias, and keep looking for you round the corner of every sentence.

God bless you, my dear, in all ways. I suppose I may, notwithstanding his dignified position as the head of a house, send my love to Richmond.
affect^{ly} yours | M.O.W.O

Towards the end of January 1878, it became evident that Charlotte Ritchie was dying, and her nephews and nieces made the pilgrimage to Paris to be near her at the end. Annie stayed in London; she was pregnant, and gave birth to a daughter, Hester, on 1 June, exactly a week short of her own forty-first birthday. It had been a problem-free pregnancy. The other main event of the first half of the year was the marriage of Leslie to Julia Duckworth, on 26 March. He moved next door, to Julia's house at 13 Hyde Park Gate South, leaving no. 11 to Annie and Richmond for the short time until they took possession of Young Street just before Easter.

C628 Annie to Pinkie and Blanche Warre Cornish, probably 30
January 1878

MS: Eton.

[11, Hyde Park Gate South]

My dearest darlings. I have just been to telegraph to you & I shall send this by Douglas or Willy tonight. I wish I was with you so, – I fear it is so lonely & silent for you & yet what a speaking voice Chatties will ever be. What a living living life as long as we all live. Live people become silent & change but the dearest & most Holy ones seem to be more & more themselves as time goes on. Just that first is so terrible, but that soon passes thank God. All last night while you were in such anxiousness I was dreaming of Papa & talking to him just as if 13 years had not gone. When Magdalene & JOB told me this morning I thought I would go to Richmond for I wanted so to see his dear face. & I thought he wd. perhaps like to see me He came down after a time looking very pale and then I came home & after luncheon I went to Gussie & to y^r Mothers – Gussie was on her sofa very calm & sweet & outstretching to you & Magdalene came in & Douglas too longing to start at once, only he was waiting to hear what Willy settled. Goodnight my dearests. God bless you both & make you her best record prays yr loving old Anny. I do hope you will get to sleep & poor poor old Felicie.

C629 Pinkie to Annie, probably 31 January 1878

MS: Eton.

[Paris]

Darling. It was very sweet of you to send us the telegram and I did so much like getting y^r. letter this morning. I daresay you will have heard about the end, it was just a falling asleep like a child and our own Chattie I know would never have believed how beautiful she looked in her utter peace and sweetness when she had been laid in her bed¹ – Do you remember the little alcove with the pictures of all her treasures – it seemed such a perfect summary of her glorious life, to see her with that radiant sweetness^{calm} in the room where she has suffered and loved and lived in her heroic loneliness. The most beloved soul I should say almost that ever lived – all the people who come and cry and say they have lost the best thing they knew, are so much more sympathetic than one could have thought –

These two days have been so busy,^{every single person Chattie knew has to be thought of!} I am again missing the post my darling but must just send you my love, and Witz

Your ever loving | Pinny

Felicie bustles about & talks just as usual and cries a little

1. Charlotte Ritchie died on 29 January.

C630 Annie to Hallam Tennyson, 27 March 1878

MS: Eton.

11. HPGS

Dear Hallam

I was so very very disappointed last night but I seemed to be so utterly done up after the marriage w^h. was as you may think very trying with all the blessing it brings us that I went to bed at nine & fast asleep, for I had been awake the night before. Julia looked marvellously beautiful in her lovely grey & Leslie very happy & I think they are all quite happy about it now.¹

How is y^r beloved mama & y^r Father. Could you come to lunch tomorrow Thursday to meet Meta Gaskell who is very nice indeed. I do wish y^r Father could come,^{& may I come to [lunch]. on Friday}

Y^r aff^{te} AIR

We stay here till Monday

1. Leslie and Julia married on 26 March.

C631 Annie to Lord Houghton, 4 April 1878

MS: TCC, Houghton.33.167.

11. Hyde Park Gate Sth. | April 4.

Dear Lord Houghton. It is so kind of you to ask us & I should like most much to come & the India Office always goes home to 5 o'clock tea, only I am all huddled up with shawls & chill & afraid it will be almost too much good luck to hope to be able to come to your hospitable dish of tea tomorrow – I had been thinking how much I should like to see you & your daughters again & Miss Fanny Blackburn¹ kindly promised to give a message one day. Then I had no double motive, now for the last half hour I have been wondering whether I might ask you to do us a greatest kindness & if you would think me most horribly pushing & presuming – But I'm sure almost that you would.

Richmond came in bringing your letter in his hand & saying how he wished there was anybody to advise him or to help him now – that all these changes are taking place at the India Office, Lord Salisbury is going & Lord George Hamilton is going & new private Secretaries are being appointed² – Do you happen to know who will be Lord George Hamilton's successor?³ Dear Lord Houghton you help so many people in so many different ways, could you make Richmond a private Secretary?⁴ I know I am writing nonsense now, but when I think of all he has given up for me & of the blessing of faithful tender affection & happiness I owe to him after all my bitter troubles, it seems to me that if others only knew him as I do, & his steadfastness & quiet grasp of mind & determination of character they would not think it unnatural that I should long for him to be trusted & promoted in the career he has chosen. If you could give us any advice or help I should indeed feel gratefully towards you & if not I shall not ask you to forgive me for writing, because I know you well enough to feel sure you will understand how it is I am coming to your ^{for not new} kindness & I'm

Yours sincerely | Anne Ritchie.

1. Not identified.
2. Disraeli reshuffled his ministers in April 1878. Lord Salisbury, the future Prime Minister, had been Secretary of State for India since February 1874, and was now appointed Foreign Secretary. Lord George Hamilton was Under-Secretary of State during the same years, and became vice-president of the Council.
3. It was Edward Stanhope (1840–1903), who held the position until 1880.
4. Houghton was hardly the right person to ask. Although he had been an MP since 1837, until his elevation to the peerage in 1863, Richard Monckton Milnes was not a distinguished parliamentarian, and never held office. His real influence lay in the London social and artistic world.